

Life and Times
of
Sir Pherozeshah Mehta

By

The Rt. Hon. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

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Edited by

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PREFACE

The first edition of this book, which had been published by Mrs. Anusuya Suryanarayana Rao in 1945, was out of print on the eve of the Birth Centenary of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri in 1949. When a request was made to Mrs. Suryanarayana Rao, who owned the copyright of the book, to bring out another edition of it to synchronise with Sastri's Birth Centenary, she expressed her inability and transferred her copyright in the book to me asking me to arrange for its publication.

In time, I succeeded in persuading Sri S. Ramakrishnan, Joint Director and Executive Secretary of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, to undertake its publication under the Bhavan's auspices. He stipulated that the printing of the book should be done in Madras under my care.

I also met Dr. Shorab P. Mehta, the eldest son of Sir Pherozezshah, with a view, to secure some photographs of his father for illustrating the book. Dr. Shorab said that Sir Pherozezshah had very rarely posed for photographs but had sat along with his Congress colleagues at the several Congress sessions. Yet he gave me a photograph of his father, taken in his youth, which adorns this book as the frontispiece. Lapsing into a reminiscent mood, Dr. Shorab said that he had found his father always active with his profession, the affairs of the Congress, the Bombay Corporation, University and of the Legislative Council. Dr. Shorab and his brothers while passing to and fro on tiptoe, would see their father sitting in the drawing room, and carrying on an animated conversation with his visitors and colleagues; the brothers had hardly any occasion to be with their father even for some minutes for days together. But their mother, Lady Mehta, an understanding and capable lady, took all her children to meet her husband once in four or five days when Sir Pherozezshah was relaxed and in a cheerful mood. But the sons were all amused to find that their father had neither remembered the correct names nor the age of any of his sons. Lady Mehta then would present each of their sons to her husband mentioning their names and ages in chronological order. After spending some time with his sons and making a few

affectionate enquiries about their welfare and progress in studies Sir Pherozechah would dismiss them.

Dr. Shorab further added that his father had a coach and a pair which he used exclusively for attending the High Court and meetings of the Corporation, the University, the Legislative Council, the Congress, etc. Neither Dr. Shorab Mehta nor his four brothers who were studying in a school a mile away, had their juvenile curiosity and pleasure of riding in the coach, satisfied. They had to walk the distance daily bothways.

It was Lady Mehta, he put in, who had sent all her sons abroad for higher professional education. All of them, he said, had done well in life.

The printing of the book got off to a promising start, when several impediments and obstacles intervened, but ultimately the printing has been completed and the book is now before the public.

This edition has some new features; the subject matter dealt with in each page is noted at the top of it; a chronology of events in the life of Sir Pherozechah Mehta; biographical notes of persons mentioned in the lectures; a glossary of non-English words; a bibliography; an index, and 17 illustrations.

It now remains for me to thank Sri S. Ramakrishnan of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, for publishing this book under the auspices of the Bhavan, Mrs. Suryanarayana Rao, for transferring her copyright in the book to me, Dr. Shorab Mehta, the University of Bombay, the Corporation of Bombay, the Government of Maharashtra for helping me with some of the photographs adorning the book, and a respected friend for seeing the book through the press, and the Gnanodaya and Manorama Press for their printing.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE TO THE
FIRST EDITION, 1945

Early in 1943, a few friends and admirers of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri prevailed upon him to give to a select audience, mostly consisting of young men interested in the history and evolution of Indian politics, a few talks on the life and work of the makers of modern India with whom he was associated. He readily responded to the request and chose the life and times of Sir Pherozezshah Mehta as the first topic in the series. It will be noticed that keeping Mehta as the central figure of his theme, Mr. Sastri has brought round him many other personalities of the day, giving an insight into their work and worth. Incidentally he has cited his own experiences, full of interest and instruction, gathered from his wide and varied experience in the public life of the country. We present the talks now to the public mostly as they were delivered to a private circle of friends. Readers will, therefore, notice a certain intimacy and fullness of revelation not usual in formal talks and make the necessary allowances for what might seem departures from propriety or decorum. As it was our intention to produce the publication to synchronise with the Mehta Centenary celebrations, we had to hurry it through the press. We are conscious there will be many lapses for which we are entirely responsible. We seek the indulgence of our readers.

Many are responsible for bringing out these lectures. We must, however, refer to a few friends through whose efforts the publication has become possible. These lectures except the fourth which was delivered at the Servants of India Society, Royapettah on the Gokhale Day when Sir S. V. Ramamurthi presided, were delivered in the house of

Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri who was in every way responsible for their regular and uninterrupted course. To Mr. V. Doraiswami, Secretary to Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer, who undertook the task of taking down the lectures as a labour of love, no meed of praise is too great; to Mr. K. Sundararaghavan who has spared no pains to see the publication through, but for whose earnestness and persistent endeavour, these lectures could not have been brought out in almost a record period of time. Above all, we are greatly indebted to the Madras Law Journal Press for undertaking the printing at such a short notice.

These talks also possess a melancholy interest. The late Mr. V. S. Ramaswami Sastri evinced keen interest and even made arrangements for their reporting by one of his assistants whose typed script also has assisted the publishers. We miss him now and we shall always miss his genial presence and friendly encouragement.

In presenting these talks, the publishers feel it would be an act of supererogation on their part to commend them to the public or even to add a line of appreciation of Mr. Sastri's great gifts of presentation and mastery of the English language. It is a pity failing health has prevented him from revising the substance of these lectures or reading the proofs at any stage.



PHEROZESHAH M. MEHTA
as a young man

INTRODUCTION

BIOGRAPHY, A BRANCH OF HISTORY

Biography is commonly considered a branch of history with its own peculiarities. In some respects it is more lively and interesting than the chronicle of events and movements; in others it is slightly more difficult and liable to errors of excess and defect. Dealing with men and women like ourselves, it is full of drama and engages our feelings of sympathy or antipathy. These very feelings are apt to warp our judgments and by reason of partiality or the opposite, lead us away from the truth. In India the tendency is to endow the subject with exaggerated qualities. Writers generally choose those persons in whom they are profoundly interested and for whom they entertain great love and esteem. Defects of temper, crochets and oddities of manner are either slurred or singled out for affectionate tolerance. Bad qualities and their consequences in actual life are generally ignored and non-existent virtues installed in their place. Of our legendary heroes and saints, and of our great poets and dramatists the accounts that survive are hardly credible. Even dates are lost in confusion. In the long story of our country and our peoples the trustworthy landmarks are disappointingly few, giving just foundation for the charge that we are lacking as a race in the power of accurate observation and veracious chronicling. Look at the strange marvels that are ascribed to the Mahatma even while he is among us and under the eye daily of thousands of people. The *Sadhus* and the *Fakirs* all round us become the centre—each of innumerable stories of cures and weird doings. A friend of mine with University distinction to his credit and in the enjoyment of a Government pension assures me out of his personal knowledge that his *guru*

Introduction

occasionally leaves his body behind with scarce a breath in it and after three or four days of inscrutable achievement in spirit-land returns to his gross tabernacle. Let but one of us possess a talent somewhat out of the ordinary; some admirers will not rest till they have traced it to the inspiration of some unearthly power, who may at will raise it to the pitch of miracle or reduce its potency to the level of flatness. This drawback of the Indian mind is by no means universal. Court annals and family records occasionally disclose materials of high value to the historian and the biographer. The habit of keeping accounts of money and other transactions and recording periodical occurrences was never wholly absent. No doubt the example of western nations has influenced our lives in this as in other ways. To-day there is an astonishing amount of biography both in English and in the vernaculars of the country. It is perhaps premature to expect a high level of excellence, but our achievement is full of promise and our standards of accuracy and attention to detail are developing fast.

The aspiring biographer still needs unfortunately to be warned against extravagant leniency towards his subject and over-emphasis of the brighter side. Partiality blunts the pen even when it does not blind the judgement. Human nature is human nature everywhere, and both young and old who read of the great dead must be accustomed to the deeps and shadows of life as well as to its brighter aspects. Men and women are, as our books say, the creatures of the three *gunas* *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—in infinite combination and inter-play. What they are and what they do is not to be judged by our limited vision as we know and assess them in our brief day. It is the large vision and perspective of extended time that gives the individual event its real character of good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, important or trivial. These distinctions themselves are shadowy in the extreme, and it is presumption on our part to assign to them a definiteness which is not theirs. Often the operation of nature is such that the reality takes long to disclose itself; what is virtue or vice, usefulness or harm, in the eyes of one generation assumes a different character in those of another. The wise writer of history therefore registers all he knows and believes in its fullness; to keep anything from posterity is to leave it without ampleness of material for judgement. It is not exagger-

rated humility to say, "How dare I judge for all tiem?" it is but the confession of a universal human infirmity.

Our heroes and heroines can well stand just as they are at the judgement bar of history. Their good has gone to their achievement and their evil as well. Our children, whom we wish to bring up to be wiser and more efficient than we have been, must know that we live and function as whole sound in parts and unsound in parts but as indivisible wholes. The contribution of sound and unsound makes up contemporary life, and a full knowledge of every available bit is a necessary part of the biographer's equipment. Let our sense of human values be robust. Let us be to our children in the pages of biography and autobiography no better and no worse than they see us in everyday life.

To speak and write of oneself is a weakness from which few are immune. Reticence, when not intentional or imposed, is a cultivated quality. When it goes beyond a point well understood in society, it is morbid and often only self-love thinly disguised. The rare possession called good breeding is the only guide in this branch of social behaviour. Who can define with precision the province and borders of taste? Only its possessor. In Sanskrit rhetoric the final court of appeal is the *sahrdaya*, the man of 'the well-trained heart. He has, however, no infallible indicia or marks of identification. We now see why autobiography has been described as the most alluring but at the same time the most perilous form of literature. It is a wholesome instinct of self-protection that keeps most people from essaying it. Among Indians of note, Sir Surendranath Bannerjee¹ and Pandit Jawanarlal Nehru² are two conspicuous exceptions. Surendranath's venture is obviously fragmentary and strictly limited in scope. Nehru's has great qualities and is a decided success. But it is too soon yet to place him. The Mahatma,³ as a self-revealer and self-critic is in a class of his own. The ordinary canons of criticism do not seem to apply to his book. Its very title forbids the ordinary approach. Mr. Gandhi does not call himself saint. But that is how his readers classify him. Small things assume great importance from the moral and spiritual standpoint. It would be rank irreverence to treat a body of teachings as a commonplace chronicle of events.

Introduction

Notes.—

1. (1848-1925) - Patriot, Orator Editor the *Bengali* Founder -Principal The Ripon College (1882); Member, Beugal Legislative Council (1893-1904); Member Imperial Legislative Council (1913) President, Indian National Congress (1895 and 1912); Minister—Government of Bengal (1921-1923),
2. (1889-1964) Barrister, Patriot, Secretary—Indian National Congress President, Indian National Congress, 6 times (1929, 1936, 1937, 1946, 1951 and 1954); Prime Minister of India (1947-1964). Author: *Autobiography*; *Glimpses of World History*; *Discovery of India*, etc.
3. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948); Barrister; went to South Africa; offered successfully non-violent resistance to the racial policy of the South African government in dealing with Indians; Returned to India (1914); started the non-co-operation movement (1920); won for India Independence (1947); was shot dead on 30th January 1948 by a fanatic. Called the "Father of the Nation."

LECTURE : I

I am going to deal to-day with a very important and memorable career. There is an abundance of materials, but they relate to the public life of the man as in most other cases. In this country, his private life is, more or less, hidden from our view. Sir Homi P. Mody¹, whom we may almost call his official biographer, has written two volumes. Biographies in India are not many and they are not very good of their kind. This one is exceptional ; I venture even to use the word meritorious. It makes very tactful use of all the abundance of materials that are available. The life extends over 70 years, from 1845 to 1915. Of the days he spent at school or at College not much need be said except that he had a meritorious career. He took his B.A. degree in 1864 from the Elphinstone College affiliated to the Bombay University and by special dispensation took his M.A. degree in six months instead of the year required by the regulation. At the end of his career, he found waiting for him a scholarship of very great value. A wealthy Parsi gentleman, son of a Baronet, who made a fortune during the American Civil War, Rustomji Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy² set apart a huge sum every year to be given to young men of ability and character proceeding to England to study for the Bar, from Bombay, from Madras, from Calcutta and in fact, from all parts of India. People were found to go from Bombay and Bengal but unfortunately none from Madras ! The gentleman from Calcutta was W. C. Bonnerjee³ for the year; the gentleman from Bombay was Pherozeshah Mehta. They made abundant use of their opportunity. They had the exceeding good fortune to be guided as to life and studies by Dadabhai Naoroji,⁴ who had settled there. Dadabhai was many years older than they. He was born in 1825. The gentlemen who went from India and placed themselves under Dadabhai's guidance made themselves peculiar in every respect in the strictness of their conduct. Even in their dress in London streets, these Indian gentlemen along with Naoroji made themselves conspicuous by their peculiar attire. They wore close coats for a time and they wore a cap that settled on the head and left tassels hanging over

the back. Soon, however, they changed to pukka European costume—did not want to be noticed too much perhaps!

Their activities were not confined to the study of law. They took part in the work of an Association which Dadabhai with his foresight and acumen had founded for the dissemination of information about India. I must say a word, though it may seem irrelevant, about this Association. It is an example of the way in which our actions do not redound to our benefit. Dadabhai Naoroji, in the year 1866, founded what is known now as the East India Association. It is very prominent in London and is exceedingly busy. It also publishes a magazine called the Asiatic Quarterly. You may have seen these volumes. When Dadabhai founded it, his object was that it should serve for the independent and disinterested advocacy and promotion by all legitimate means of the interest and welfare of Indian gentlemen. He received much co-operation and encouragement from his English friends. Not only did he devote a great part of his time to the reading of prepared papers before this body, but he got some of his well-known friends in England to do likewise and when it had planted itself firmly in London Society, he came over to India in order to popularise it. He made an extensive tour of the Indian States, amongst which his name was well-known, and there he interested the Indian Princes and got large sums of money for its upkeep, so that the Society was well-founded and well-financed. For some years it did very good work. Amongst those who wrote, Pherozeshah Mehta was prominent and he wrote a paper on the State of education in the Bombay Presidency, packed with facts and figures and remarkable for its comprehensive view as well as the valuable suggestion it made. Let us pursue the story of this Association for a few minutes. It is extraordinary and will interest you.

A few years later after much useful service in the cause of India, even when Dadabhai Naoroji was on the spot, a few very clever and enterprising Anglo-Indians belonging to the Civil Service captured it, as it were, from his friends and turned it to their own purpose. Soon Dadabhai was obliged to retire from it—poor man!—and instead of serving the cause of India, the Association ranged itself against India, thus causing acute grief and

disappointment to Dadabhai Naoroji and his friends. It had a very curious consequence. In the year 1916, this Association, Anglo-Indian in outlook and Anglo-Indian in management, celebrated its Golden Jubilee. At that time Dadabhai weighed down with years and ill-health, had come back and settled in India. There were two members in the Association, Dr. John Pollen and J. B. Pennington who, it is said drew twice as much pension from the Government of India as they had drawn as salary. They both wrote to him to say that they were preparing an excellent history of the Association and its activities and they were going to illustrate it by photographs and pictures, making a grand thing of it. Would Dadabhai, they begged, be good enough to send his reminiscences of it, or at least, his blessings and good wishes for its welfare? It was a sore trial to the man. The man was true like gold. You could not get an unintentional compliment from him. He had trained himself to be an absolute votary of truth. He wrote back in his very simple but direct way, that the Association had departed widely from its original aims, that it had caused him much anguish and so he declined to write a complimentary message! That is not what many of us would have done in similar circumstances; but Dadabhai wrote to them what he actually felt.

When Pherozezshah returned to Bombay he set up practice, but like other practitioners had to wait long for briefs. He was not otherwise quiet. Early in his life, he refused a First Class Judgeship offered to him by the Government of Bombay. Some of you may not know that Munsifs are called Sub-Judges there. He did not take it hoping that the practice of law would really bring him greater honour, but while he was still young and had not established himself amongst the barristers, he showed what stuff he was made of by taking part in public meetings and by playing a very prominent part by showing his independent spirit, originality and standing erect before Government-people. Three stories are told of his early life.

The first thing is connected with the revision of the Indian Evidence Act undertaken by the great jurist Sir James Fitzjames Stephen.⁵ It would appear in the preliminary discussion that Sir James or his Secretary had published certain strictures on Indian practitioners of

law. Some reactionary provisions were noticed in the Bill for which the misbehaviour of Indian practitioners was pleaded as justification. I do not know whether it was noticed in Madras. Not likely! In Bombay, however, the Indian practitioners met and Pherozechah took a prominent part in sending a strong representation, and Sir James took umbrage at this and stated that the representation was very strongly worded and that he was going to withdraw all those provisions in the Bill. The point was gained but a rebuke was administered to the memorialists.

The next thing is about a dinner proposed in honour of the great Judge of the High Court, Sir Joseph Arnould⁶ who rendered himself famous and exceedingly popular by his two great judgements—one about the Maharaj Libel⁷ case and the other about the Land Revenue systems in Bombay, which are now considered to be classics. When I first went to the Servants of India Society, I read both these judgements and I must say, they were worth reading. They not only showed considerable learning and research but a width of outlook and a desire to deal justice on the high level which are not noticeable so much these days.

Sir Joseph's farewell dinner was arranged by the English section of the Bar. It is curious that the English Bar and the Indian Bar were water-tight compartments. The English Bar arranged for the dinner at the Byculla Club, a Club common to both Indians and Europeans. Pherozechah and his compatriots resolved to protest against this. They went into the Press. They made speeches calling in question the propriety of this exclusive proceeding on the part of the Europeans. Mehta made that position clear and did not succeed in getting invited to the function and the people there made all sorts of evasive replies and the Leader of the Bar made a statement to Pherozechah which he did not consider quite satisfactory.

The next thing is a little more important and I should mention it to you because it shows very clearly what Pherozechah was worth. It seems he wrote strong letters in the Press and almost two or three letters appeared every week. He was a favourite writer to the Press and even the Anglo-Indian papers like the *Time of India* were

glad to open their columns to him and he availed himself of the privilege. He wrote that the Indian barristers were given step-motherly treatment. The papers were naturally very angry and they wrote editorial comments against the stand he took. He wrote again with the extraordinary result that his conduct was called in question by the Bar Association. They said he was behaving treasonably to the Association to which he belonged by going to the Press for ventilating his grievances. He said "I am a public man and not only a barrister, but as a barrister, I am much more than that. As a public man I am bound to ventilate the grievances of the Indian community." Pherozezshah then consulted Anstey, a man of very great ability, though considered eccentric. He advised Pherozezshah to say that he repudiated the jurisdiction of the Bar Association, and so he wrote a strong letter. He said "As I had done this as a newspaper correspondent and not as a member of the Indian Bar, you are not entitled to examine my conduct." Nobody knows the result as the proceedings of the Bar Association were conducted within closed doors and they did not publish their proceedings. What they did in this matter is even now a closely guarded secret. I suppose they were unable to do anything decisive.

There was a Bombay branch of the East India Association also. When the Association changed hands in London, they pursued the matter into our country also and claimed the funds of the Bombay Branch and appropriated them. Before that Bombay Branch he read a paper on the Grant-in-Aid system of the year 1869 which Charles Wood⁸ had formulated. It would appear that he then criticised the Bombay Grant-in-Aid system. It was the belief of Ranade,⁹ Telang¹⁰ and other people that the system, though it had its defects, was on the whole beneficial to India and calculated to promote private enterprise and stimulate the action of Government.

Then Pherozezshah took part in the great discussion that followed the institution of the Statutory Civilian system. You may remember that in response to the call in this country, the British people with their capacity for defeating in detail what is granted in principle, said that

there was justice in our claims and established a subordinate adjunct of the Indian Civil Service, the Statutory Civil Service, by appointing 5 or 6 people to it and choosing the men by executive discretion. The Governor of the Province was allowed to appoint and the system of competition was not brought into operation so far as this branch of the Service was concerned. Pherozeshah Mehta made an attack on this and then he read a paper in year 1833, when the Charter Act was renewed, influenced the Reforms so as to introduce competitive system into the mode of recruitment of the I.C.S. Pherozeshah was in love with that idea and he sought to popularise it in the country and maintained by argument, by energy and by quotations from historical records that the competitive system was any day superior to the nomination system and said that the Statutory Civilians must also be chosen on a competitive basis. Of course he lost his case for a long time. The position that he took was, again from Macaulay, that success in University career and in competitive examination generally accounts for success in life also and was therefore a safer test than any other. There are, amongst us now, a number of people saying that competitive examination is a mistake and examinations are an unmitigated curse and that our Indian students should be emancipated from both these curses.

Now we come to a very important phase of Pherozeshah's early activities. There was at that time a great deal of controversy going on in the Municipal Corporation which was caused by a rudimentary constitution. Bombay, however, was far ahead of other municipalities in India, as it is even to-day, and Pherozeshah, by some very happy chance interested himself early and maintained his interest day and night. The President was the unquestioned dictator of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Mehta began to lecture in public on the state of affairs. At that time there was a Commissioner belonging to the I.C.S. called Crawford who, some years later, became a very notorious person. He combined great ability, almost extra-ordinary ability and courage, with an extraordinary lack of scruple too. It was true that he found Bombay a disgraceful city and in a few years converted it into a healthy, beautiful and growing city. Pherozeshah Mehta had a sneaking admiration for Crawford. Crawford, however, owing to his great high-

handed behaviour and arbitrary conduct, wounded both Europeans and Indians alike, and there was a great degree of discontent. The people of Bombay united together for that meeting, and for a wonder, ran counter to the general condemnation of Crawford. Pherozeshah appeared at feeling. He seemed to say :

“ I am not here to defend Crawford. Let me clear myself. But I am here for the welfare of Bombay citizens, for the purification of Bombay, for the clearing of Bombay streets and for the driving away of the diseases and the epidemics established among us. Mr. Crawford has done inestimable service to the City and I am not going to blind myself to that side of his activities.”

In that way he made himself thoroughly unpopular and was driven out of the meeting. After allowing a few months to lapse, the subject came before the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. He read an elaborate paper giving the public life of Crawford with prolixity, almost unreasonable prolixity, and said that Crawford was a benefactor of Bombay. He went into the Constitution of Bombay and then he made out that the chief weakness of the municipal constitution was the Justices of the Peace who were responsible for the management of municipal affairs and they were appointed by Government. He said that the whole lot of them must be appointed on the elective principle, and that the executive power of the Municipal Corporation must rest in the hands of one man. It must not be divided amongst too many people. The executive power must be in one man and he must be responsible for the execution of the measures. This paper had a peculiar result. It was perhaps owing to the strong and aggressive manner in which the suggestion was made that drew from the Bombay Branch of the East India Association violent out-bursts. He was allowed to read his paper fully, and at the end objection was taken to his views. What happened was they passed a resolution condemning the paper in unmitigated language and said that the paper must be deemed not to have been read and be expunged from the records; and the Chairman found it necessary to give a guarantee that such a thing would never be allowed to happen again

Government published their scheme for a reformed constitution of the Corporation and they went along the lines that Pherozechah Mehta indicated in his paper, thus showing that they were quite willing to take suggestions of value even from a most unpopular quarter.

Now that was Pherozechah's fate all along. He very often went either against the authority of Government or against the popular view of the day. I must now come to the year 1874, when there was a great outbreak of what amounted to a rioting between the Parsis and the Muhammadans. Affrays took place in many quarters and there was agitation in the public press and on the platform. Parsis and Muhammadans exchanged vulgarest possible abuse. Women and children could not get out into the streets and the Parsis got the worst of it, being a small minority. Great indignation prevailed amongst the representatives of the Parsi community. They sought an interview with the officers of Government. Government were supine. They were unable to do anything or they did not care ; and the Parsis were sufferers and lost their houses and their business and on the whole they became the victims for many days. The police remained almost unconcerned. The Police Commissioner, a man named Souter, said :

“Do what you can to protect yourself. Don't trust the Police.” Of course there was a great demonstration of indignation when the riots died down and they represented matters to the Secretary of State. In the House of Commons the matter came up and, it is recorded at that time, that the European Community to a man considered that the Government and the Police had abdicated their functions and they joined in the general outbursts of disapproval and disapprobation of Government's attitude. In all this Pherozechah took a very prominent part. He took part in sending representations and wrote a great many letters in the public press. You may remember, those who have reached the age of 60, that about that time there was a Russian scare in this country—Russophobia. A Volunteer movement was started but unfortunately the Government of the time thought though the Volunteer movement was to be financed from the general revenues of the country it must be confined to the European and the Anglo-Indian communities only. At a large meeting held in the Town Hall, the Governor came to preside. The public was also

invited to attend. The public went. It was a great meeting and Pherozechah attended. When it became known that the movement was confined to the European community, our Indian friends thought that they must raise their voice of protest and Pherozechah being there, you may be sure, that his voice was heard in loud, stentorian tones. This is what he said (the Governor was in the Chair):

If the European inhabitants of this town had convinced themselves of the necessity and desirability of forming a volunteer corps among themselves, it was certainly open to them to have called a meeting of their own people, and to have taken such steps as they might think fit to carry out their project. But I must admit that it seems to me extraordinary conduct on the part of the promoters of this meeting to do this in the presence of all the inhabitants of the town. It seems to me, and though I say it with regret and diffidence I think I should say it boldly, that the native inhabitants of this town, when a proposition of this sort is laid before a public meeting of the inhabitants, are called to attend simply, if I may be allowed to say so, to assist at passing a vote of want of confidence in themselves. A proposition of this kind to a public meeting of the inhabitants of Bombay is simply asking the native classes to assist at their own execution¹²

He then moved an amendment on the formation of a voluntary corps excluding the inhabitants of the country. Telang seconded the amendment. He had to withdraw the amendment on the representation made by the Governor himself, who asked Pherozechah Mehta to withdraw the amendment because he said: "You have been invited to come and see. If, after this, you should form a corps of your own and make a representation to the Government the matter will be considered on its merits." Pherozechah Mehta considered this satisfactory enough and withdrew his amendment.

Now we come to the year 1878 when events pushed Mehta into prominence. This was the time of Lord Lytton's¹³ reactionary regime. You know what a perfect Tory he was. His brief reign in India was marked by many retrogressive measures. The most famous of them was called the "Black Act"—the Vernacular Press Act—which threatened the vernacular press with threats and penalties and instituted a vigorous censorship which gave Government power to punish them. This Act was marked

by many outbursts of indignation and public protest all over the country. Pherozezshah was not behind in raising his voice of indignation. Not only was the Black Act passed but it was passed in the most exasperating circumstances. The Europeans themselves disapproved of the way in which Lord Lytton carried on with this, overruling representations of newspapers and overruling the protests of high Government officials. Lord Lytton said that the Act must be passed in a hurry, as there was a state of emergency. The Bill was introduced in the morning and passed in the evening. People called it a Black Act and, for a long time until Lord Ripon¹⁴ came and repealed it, there was seething discontent amongst the people. The next thing is even more important to us to-day. You remember it was in Lord Lytton's time that the cotton duties were repealed at the bidding of Lancashire, who said it must be done. This was in the year 1879. Here too, the circumstances were most exasperating. From many provinces the Governors and their Councillors wrote against the abolition of these duties as being a spoliation of the finances of the country. Also Lord Lytton's Councillors, by a majority, refused to sanction the measure. Fancy that! And what did Lytton do? He wanted to please the Lancashire magnates and so he exercised his prerogative of overruling his Executive Council and passed the measure on his single authority—a most arbitrary and unjustifiable exercise of a very rare privilege for which he was severely censured all over the country, even in England. But Lord Lytton was a tyrant in every fibre of his. A memorial was sent to the House of Commons with a large number of signatures. Nothing came out. I mention this as this was in the year 1879 and in the document called **The Fifty Facts** for dissemination in United States, it is mentioned that although the Viceroy is armed with prerogative to overrule and act arbitrarily, this prerogative has not been used ever since 1879 and this was the occasion on which it was last used. That is true. It has not been used after 1879. From what I know of the Government of India, it has not been brought into operation only because there was no occasion for it, the Executive Council being only too ready to fall in with the wishes of the Viceroy. I must tell you that officials had more privileges in those days. The officials of Government in all ranks used to protest against what they considered was injustice. Amongst them there was complete

independence of one another. It was not considered improper. Professor Sundararama Iyer¹⁵ attended the Indian National Congress as a delegate in 1885 and it was not considered irregular in those days. It was only lately that official discipline stiffened. Even the Government of India used to protest against the interference of the Secretary of State.

Then we come to another great battle which Pheroze-shah fought. Sir Richard Temple¹⁶ was then the Governor. In his time he was a great administrative genius and a literary power. By some people, therefore, he was lauded to the skies but by many others, he was regarded as a highly autocratic Governor. He had a great many friends among the Indian community but Pheroze-shah did not like him and had a very large following. When he went away there was a large memorial meeting. Of course Mehta did record a statement. He was not a man to be silent. He protested and said the Indian community will not accord any honour to this man. He was induced to drop all idea of opposition only when it was explained to him that it was a meeting of the friends and admirers of the retiring Governor. That was the trick that was once adopted in Madras too! He wrote in the papers afterwards and took a different line and said that it is well-known that ambitious people got into the House of Commons and that as one who had acted as an able Governor of a province his words would be highly popular and he would be entitled to speak for Indians and so he protested against the meeting. He said: "This would give him a moral authority. It should not be accorded to him and I protest against the whole movement on that ground as it will be used for the illegitimate purpose."

Then in the year 1880, there took place a very remarkable case in the Municipal Corporation of Bombay. There was an Engineer a European Executive Engineer. He was a very corrupt officer and when a municipal work had to be carried out he went and took quarry from a municipal mine, thus benefiting the contractor and made all sorts of arrangements for his convenience. Pheroze-shah took objection to it. He came into the Corporation meeting and said that this officer must be dismissed. It was one of his longest speeches with all his legal learning. He

LECTURE 1 *A Corrupt Engineer-The Contagious Diseases Act*

threatened them that if they did not do this, he would seek other remedies and so on. The Europeans thought that they should screen this member of their own community. Nor are they ashamed in our own days to do so. In those days, that fellow-feeling was even stronger and they voted against Pherozechah and they got some of their Indian 'creatures' also to vote with the result that the motion was lost—27 against 26 ; but it was a moral victory. In order to please the Indian members of the Corporation, the European members passed what was partially a vote-of censure on the Engineer. That is another case in which Mehta distinguished himself for probity and for skill in the marshalling of facts. When he took up a case, it was quite sure that his voice would be heard. He was a strong and powerful man who looked lion-like, spoke with his powerful voice and struck the table before him, made menacing gestures using at the same time strong language. He was a power and few people could stand up against him.

In another remarkable instance Mehta came out with flying colours. Some of the elderly people may remember there was an act called Contagious Diseases Act. The Act was a very contentious piece of legislative business. Consequent to that, the Government wanted a large sum of money to be paid by the Corporation. A dispute arose and in the end Pherozechah agreed to the passing of a resolution by the Corporation agreeing that a sum of Rs. 15,000 annually should be set apart, if the circumstances of the municipal funds permitted it. He took care to put in this last clause, "whenever the conditions of the municipal funds permitted it." I suppose people did not care for that. They let it remain. The Government promptly deducted the sum of Rs. 15,000 from the contribution they were paying for police charges to the municipality. Pherozechah thought that this was irregular, and an encroachment on the privileges of the Corporation. He said: "We have put in this clause 'if the financial circumstances permitted it'. We are the judges. We are to judge whether our finances will allow this contribution. The contribution is inadmissible and we would not pay."

So he protested to the local Government; and they refused to yield. He said "I am going to teach you a lesson." When he was sure, nobody could shake him. He said "If you are going to deprive us of our privilege, we would write to the Government of India." He got the Corporation to memorialise the Government of India. They said that they had no power to interfere. Then he sent a strong memorial to the Whitehall. At that time these affairs were managed by the Marquis of Hartington. He wrote :

"The Municipality have expressly reserved their own power. This is a highly arbitrary act. This is an encroachment and I am not going to allow it. The money has been appropriated by Government. This is an illegal appropriation'. The government of Bombay grew very angry and said "What is the meaning of this? We are not going to pay monies we have appropriated. No one can ask us to do so"; and still they protested. In those days the Government of India and the local Governments had no cast-iron rules of discipline. Then after some time, Lord Kimberely¹⁷ as the Secretary of State, to please the Government of Bombay, said "I will excuse you from refunding the amounts taken, but in future, don't do it." It was a triumph for the Municipal Corporation.

Notes.

1. (1881-1969) A Businessman, Delegate, the First Round Table Conference, London 1929; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council (1941-43) Governor of Bombay. (1947); Author of *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, a political biography.
2. (1783-1859) Created a Trust of Rs. 1,50,000 to help one Hindu one Parsi, one Portuguese, one Muhamadan and one East Indian to be called to the Bar.
3. (1844-1895) Barrister, a great patriot, one of the founders of the Congress, First President of the Congress (1885), Member, Bengal Legislative Council (1894-1895).
4. (1825-1917) A great patriarch of Indian nationalism, one of the Founders of the Indian National Congress (1885); The first Indian member of the British House of Commons (1892); thrice President. Indian National Congress (1886, 1893, 1906) Member of the Welby Commission on Indian Expenditure London (1897). Author of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.

5. (1825-1894) Bart, Jurist, Judge, Legal member, Viceroy's Council Judge of the Queen's Bench Division, London.
6. (1874-1886); High Court Judge, Bombay, Knighted and retired (1869).
7. One Kursondas Mulje, a Social reformer of Bombay exposed the misdeeds of Gosaiyi Maharaj, a High Priest of Vaishnavas. Mulji was used for defamation. Sir Joseph who heard the case dismissed it.
8. (1800-1885), Chancellor of the Exchequer U.K. (1846-52). President, Board of Control (1852-55) Secretary of State for India (1859-1866).
9. (1842-1901) a Maker of Modern India, Scholar, Historian, High Court Judge, Bombay. One of the Founders of the Indian National Congress (1885) and Secretary for many years of the Indian Social Conference.
10. (1850-1893), Scholar, Judge, Bombay High Court one of the Founders of the Indian National Congress, and its Secretary (1885-90).
11. (1800-1859) Connected with the Edinburgh Review, Member of Parliament (1833) Law Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, author. The Indian Penal Code. (1834), Historian and Poet, Raised to peerage (1857).
12. C. Y. Chintamani *Speeches and writings of Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta*. The Indian Press, Allahabad, 1908, pp. 123, 124.
13. (1831-1891); Viceroy of India (1876-80); Author of some books under the assumed name of 'Owen Meredith'.
14. (1827-1909) Governor-General of India 1880-84, a friend of India.
15. (1854-1938) Of the Government College, Kumbakonam. Though not a delegate he spoke on the proposal for inquiry into conditions of India and annexation of Burma.
16. (1826-1902) Chief Commissioner, C.P. (1826-67); President Hyderabad (1867); Finance Member; Governor General's Executive Council (1869-73); Governor of Bengal (1874-77); Governor of Bombay, (1878-84); Member, British House of Commons, 1885-1895).

LECTURE II

We have come now to a period in Pherozeshah's life, where the story widens out into one of bigger chapters of the history of India.

The Ilbert Bill¹ agitation acquired a great deal of notoriety in its day, and is often referred to even in these days when men are reminiscent of troubled times. The story is not altogether pleasant, but at this distance at which we stand from it, it is full of interest and full also of instruction. You will, therefore, give me a little indulgence, for, I propose to deal at some little length upon its details, partly because I feel that in the issues it raises, it is likely for the younger part of this audience to be full of instruction.

You have heard a good deal of what is called extra-territoriality or to give the full expression, extra-territoriality. It may seem a far cry from the Ilbert Bill but it is not such a far cry as it may appear to the superficial student. Extra-territoriality is of some old date. As soon as peoples meet each other in friendly relations—nations at different levels of culture and civilization—wherever it was possible, what may be called the higher nation when it came to take its place and live amongst the people of the lower level, dominated and usually obtained, either owing to diplomatic or military pressure, privileges and immunities described under the word 'extra-territoriality'. The idea seems to be that the Jurisprudence, that is to say, not merely the law but the mode of trial and the incidence of trial, the whole judicial processes, take a colour from the culture or civilization attained by the people, and persons who are used to better developed form of Jurisprudence will find very great difficulty in courts, where a lower form of Jurisprudence prevails. Whether in civil or in criminal trials, these privileged people, therefore, demand that whenever they have cases to be tried in courts, they would prefer to have them tried in their own courts, that is to say, they would submit only to the jurisdiction of judges drawn from their own people. Where judges could not be appointed, they would submit to the jurisdiction of the Ambassadors or Consuls of their own nation. Occasionally, it was not so much a difference in Jurisprudence that dictated the grant of this immunity, but it was a feeling of racial superiority—the pride that told a man that he would be degrading himself

if he stood for a trial before a judge of what he considered to be of lower extraction. These people, therefore,—for instance, the British, the French and the Germans, in the country of China—obtained what is known as extra-territoriality, that is to say, they were freed from the operation of the laws of the territory in which they lived. That is extra-territoriality. They were taken out of the operation or jurisdiction of the territory where they happened to live; and that is the real meaning of the term extra-territoriality. Now extra-territoriality means that the laws of the land do not apply to particular individuals. Now, you will all at once realise that an Ambassador, for instance, or a Consular representative of high status, in the country to which he is appointed, is generally supposed to have extra-territorial rights. It extends also to his residence. The Ambassadorial residence or palace or mansion is supposed still to be in the territory of the King or the Government from which he proceeds, so that the German Ambassador in America wherever he lives in America is in Germany, and not in America. When I was in America, in Washington, curiously enough it was the time when Prohibition Law was in force. The British Ambassador's house was a very big place where he entertained on a generous scale, and it was a bit of England where Prohibition was not known. Whenever, for instance, an American friend of the Ambassador thought he would like to have a little drink, he contrived to have some business with him. And when he came to the Embassy, of course, the Ambassador knew what he was about, and wine would be offered freely. When I was there, the Ambassador was a man named Sir Auckland Geddes² and he was a very liberal entertainer. There were twelve or thirteen American friends always, and wine flowed freely at his table. That, however, would not apply to our country as regards the English people. I have brought it merely by way of analogy to explain the real nature of it.

In our country, the English people did not like to be tried by Indians. This was not obtained by treaty or by diplomatic pressure, as it was in other countries, but it was obtained by the law of the land. They made the law that they wanted. There was no extra-territoriality. They were not in the jurisdiction of Indian magistrates or Indian judges. Here it was a case not of lower jurisprudence,

but it was a case of having to be tried by men whom they regard as inferior to them, just as the English Tommies do not like to be commanded by Indian Captains or Majors. So here also a curious law was in operation. By law, an Indian magistrate or judge, unless he happened to be a Presidency Magistrate in a Presidency town, could not try a European. A Collector or a District Magistrate or a Divisional Magistrate, if he happened to be an Indian, could not try a European, while an Assistant Magistrate under him, if he was a European, could try. This was the very anomalous position of the Law. This matter was brought up to the notice of the Government many times. And once in 1872, they proposed to change the Law; but in those days, the entire Legislature was European and predominantly official. When the changes were proposed which would have given Indian magistrates jurisdiction over European accused, curiously enough, the votes divided 7 against 5, and amongst the five were—that is the extraordinary thing—the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the Governor of Bombay. In spite of these big people voting for the change, the other fellows, smaller in calibre, out-voted them and the Bill had to be abandoned. This was in 1872. Ten years afterwards, the matter was revived on the report of an Indian Civilian named Behari Lal Gupta. He was a very well-known Civilian of a literary turn of mind and high administrative fame. He was a Presidency Magistrate and used to try Europeans in Calcutta. He then went to a higher appointment in the mofussil later on, and found himself deprived of this particular jurisdiction. European magistrates under him had the power of trying Europeans, but he could not do it. He wrote to the Government to say, "I am practically degraded. I occupy a higher position, but I feel I am pulled down." They wished to rectify the Law. It was proposed to introduce a new Bill for the purpose.

The Bill was not very drastic. It merely aimed at giving the District Magistrates and the District Judges, of whatever nationality they were, the power to try European accused. The moment the Bill was published, the Europeans and Anglo-Indians, as we call them now, but Eurasians as they were called then, made common cause together, and they stirred up an unprecedentedly violent agitation. They did all sorts of things—things that today

would be called seditious and revolutionary. I shall presently read to you two pages out of Mody's book in which the disruptive activities of these people are described. The Viceroy, Lord Ripon, and the Law member—Sir Courtney Ilbert, a man of very high legal reputation—he gave his name to the unfortunate Bill—were subjected to all sorts of indignities. I shall merely read to you the things in which the communities thought fit at that time to indulge:

The Viceroy was insulted and hooted at various public gatherings and his state-arrival in Calcutta was made the occasion of a demonstration on the part of the English and Eurasian community, which was peculiarly disgraceful. In the words of an eye-witness, "as the Viceregal carriage neared the point where the mob had congregated, the Viceroy was about to bow, but seeing the hostile attitude of the crowd, he refrained from doing so. No man of the crowd removed his hat, whilst hisses, groans, cat-cries, shrieks of 'Take off your hat', and other demonstrations of public feeling created a hubbub perfectly disgraceful." The volunteers threatened to lay down their arms, and at a prize-distribution in connection with their corps, they received the Viceroy with studied coldness. Government House functions were tabooed by the English community generally, and at the St. Andrew's Dinner³ the toast of the Viceroy "was received in silence and not drunk, only about twenty people remaining standing. A feeble attempt to get up a hiss was made, but promptly suppressed."

There were various other edifying exhibitions of the temper of a Imperial race. A Cambridge graduate distinguished himself by ostentatiously declining to join a dinner at which Mr. Ilbert was to take the chair, an attitude which bears a curious family resemblance to that taken by an exalted individual, who recently suggested that no Englishman should consent to sit down at the same table with Mr. Montagu.⁴ A gathering of tea-planters hooted the Viceroy at a railway station as he was returning from Darjeeling, and it was with difficulty that Lord Beresford;⁵ who was on the staff as an A.D.C. was restrained from jumping into their midst to avenge the insult. How completely the English community had lost its head may be further evidenced by the story—which was widely believed at the time—of a conspiracy formed by a number of hotbloods in Calcutta "who bound themselves, in the event of Government adhering to the proposed legislation, to overpower the sentries at Government House, put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal Ghat, and deport him to England round the Cape." This extraordinary plot may well appear incredible, but according to Sir Henry Cotton⁶ the facts were understood to have been within the knowledge of the Lieutenant Governor and the Commissioner of Police. In another quarter, the planters were reported to have sworn that they would not accept the Bill if it became law, but "would deal in their own way with the first native magistrate who presumed to try a European." (Mody, pp. 125-127).

At Calcutta, this community, this enraged community, held a very big public meeting, at which a Eurasian Barrister named Branson⁷ well-known as "Tiger" Branson, with a lucrative practice, was the principal speaker, and his speech was resented by the Indian community at that time and exposed him to much danger at their hands. He used the words: "This native criticism of Englishman is verily and truly 'the jack-ass kicking at the lion'". These words, ordinarily spoken, might have been excused and probably our people might not have minded them. But as they were spoken at an excited time, our community resented them deeply and threatened pains and penalties, and he thought it prudent to submit an open apology.

But the story did not end there. The most gallant spokesman on our side was Lal Mohan Ghose⁸ whom you may have seen in 1893 at the Madras Congress. He had at that time returned from his campaigns in England and had established himself as a very prominent member of the Bar, and at the same time as a very graceful and polished speaker of English. He was in Calcutta at that time. He organised a very big public demonstration in that place and made a speech, in reply to this "jack-ass pronouncement." I will now read to you the relevant passage from his speech; but I must tell you also that this was in the year 1883. I was then in the Matriculation class and I had the singular good fortune of having for my master Rao Bahadur S. Appu Sastri⁹ who, in those days, was a very wide-awake student of contemporary affairs. He had a very liberal and progressive idea of the way he should train his young scholars. I used to be one of the most favoured of his pupils, and I remember how often he brought into the class newspapers, parliamentary records and history books and magazines in which some important event or proceeding in the legislature had been described. I remember very well that as soon as this speech was printed in the papers, he brought it to the class and read it with a great deal of gusto. I did not fully understand what he read to us, but I caught the spirit as it were, and it was in this class that my public spirit, as it may be called, was first awakened. I remember, therefore, very, vividly the way in which my mind was in those days stirred up to an understanding of the political spirit of the time.

Lal Mohan Ghose said : " If this, indeed, were the case nothing could be more presumptuous or ridiculous. But even the jack-ass is not foolish enough to insult the majesty of the lion. But if the pitiful cur chooses to cover his recreant limbs with the borrowed hide of the lion, then, I think the kick of the jack-ass is the only fitting punishment * * * Let the whole country throughout its length and breadth declare with one voice what it thinks of such conduct. If the author of these insults ventures to appear in any public assembly along with his friends let their ears be greeted with one universal hiss of indignation, so that stung with shame and remorse, they may fly from the country whose air they have polluted with pestilential breath".

I was then quite young—14 years of age. As I heard these words, I felt the blood boil within me. You remember, when he spoke of "the cur hiding his recreant limbs with the skin of the lion", you are reminded of Ballata's¹⁰ sloka.

आवद्धकृत्रिमसटाजटिलांसमिति-

रारोपितो मृगपतेः पदवीं यदि श्वा ।

मत्तेभकुम्भतटपाटणलम्पटस्य

नादं करिष्यति कथं हरिणाधिपस्य ॥

In every part of the country meetings were held and the Indian public gave strong expression to their feelings, first in support of the Viceroy and then of entire disapprobation of the way in which the Europeans conducted themselves. I think in Madras too some demonstration was made. But in Bombay the feelings of indignation were only somewhat less than in Calcutta, mainly because Pherozeshah and others kept the people under strict control. They were anxious that in Bombay, demonstration of the situation would become aggravated and would lead to very serious trouble.

On the other hand, Pherozeshah, Telang¹¹ and Tyabji¹² who were described as the Triumvirate of Bombay got

together. Always some one of the three moved, while the other two supported. Pherozezshah, generally speaking, delivered the most important speech, but he preferred to come second on this occasion. Pherozezshah made a speech. Pherozezshah was called "the Ferocious". Parsi people have a way of giving nicknames. Pherozezshah derived the name "Ferocious" from his name. Bhowanaggee was described as a man who "bowed and agreed." Dadabhai Naoroji, for instance, got into Parliament from Central Finsbury¹³ by a majority of three votes and was described by the British working people as "Narrow Majority."

The protest meeting was marked by great enthusiasm. Pherozezshah delivered the most prominent speech of the day, and it was generally held to have raised his reputation higher than ever it was before, and marked him as a powerful and at the same time a restrained speaker. I am going to read one passage from his speech. Pherozezshah was famous for two or three ideas which he frequently trotted out. One of them is in that speech.

You have heard of the inscrutable dispensation of Providence which has brought India and England together, I have been reprimanded for saying it. With the school of thought at that time headed by Dadabhai Naoroji and Ranade, this was a very common article of belief.

Bright¹⁴ once defined the position taken up by Anglo-Indians which was that "having won India by breaking all the Ten Commandments, it is too late now to think of maintaining it on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount". The policy of governing India on principles of Justice and Equality for all the sections of the people, of whatever caste or creed, had never been so openly and so furiously called in question. They derided the Queen's Proclamation and said the Queen's Proclamation was meant for some moral occasion, and need not be carried into ordinary application in legislation or administration. India had not been and never would be held by the sword, and the policy of the Englishman saying so is not a policy of justice but self-interest. These are Pherozezshah's words :

When in the inscrutable dispensations of Providence India was assigned to the care of England, one can almost imagine that the choice was offered to her as to Israel of old: 'Behold, I have set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing if you

will obey the Commandments of the Lord, your God, which I have commanded this day a curse, if you will not obey the Commandments of the Lord, your God, but turn aside out of the way, which I have commanded this day, to go after other Gods which ye have not known'. England has chosen wisely and well, she has discarded the temptations held forth by the passion of selfishness, prejudice and vain glory, she has chosen to follow 'the Eternal that maketh for righteousness'. She has deliberately declared by the mouths of her greatest and most trusted statesmen, she has proclaimed it through the lips of Her Gracious Majesty herself, that India is to be governed on the principles of justice, equality and righteousness without distinctions of colour, caste or creed.—(CYC p. 166.)

That is one of the passages in Pherozeshah's speech which at that time were widely quoted. The speech on the whole made such an impression that the Anglo-Indian paper, the *Times of India*, powerful at that time as it is to-day, and rancorous in its denunciation of whatever Pherozeshah did, forgot its hostility and wrote as follows of his speech :

The meeting was sufficiently numerous to be considered a representative one, and at least two or three of the speakers displayed knowledge of the English Language in its more subtle aspects which is gratifying to those of us, who believe that there is a great intellectual future before the leading Indian races. Indeed, three of the orators on the occasion, Messrs. Telang, Badruddin¹⁵ and Mehta, showed themselves to possess as great a mastery of our somewhat difficult idioms as Cierco¹⁶ ever did of the Greek, an accomplishment on which the famous Roman orator rather prided himself.

I read this passage now because it was supposed to have been written by one of the personal enemies of Pherozeshah, Lovat Fraser¹⁷ of very great reputation, of whom we shall hear again.

The matter ended this way. After a good deal of negotiation between representatives of the two communities, (negotiation was wearisome and dragged on for months) proposals which came very near consummation had to be abandoned at the last moment. Finally, what was known as a Concordat was concluded between the two communities and the Government. It was to this effect : That a District Magistrate or District Judge of whatever nationality had the power to try a European, but that District Judge or District Magistrate would be obliged, when he took up a European for trial, to ask him if he would prefer to be

tried by a jury of his own countrymen; and if he demanded such a jury, the Judge was bound to empanel a jury, of which the majority should be composed of Europeans.

This was resented by great bodies of the Indian community. They said quite properly, that a European jury was bound to be influenced, as we know as a matter of fact in cases where the Europeans were accused and the Judges were bound always by the verdict of the jury.

Trial by jury was a privilege proposed for the first time for Europeans as a part of this Concordat. Bengal threatened to continue the agitation. But before taking an extreme step, the Calcutta leaders, of whom the principal person was Man Mohan Ghose¹⁸—elder brother of Lal Mohan Ghose—wired to the people of Bombay asking them what their advice would be. From Bombay the advice went; "Support the Viceroy at all costs. Don't leave him in the lurch. He has been very friendly to us" and has suffered so much persecution. We must not abandon him. Follow the Viceroy". Good advice on the whole; and they followed. The Concordat, therefore, formed the basis of the Bill in the subsequent stages. But it had a very remarkable effect.

Pherozechah Mehta speaking afterwards at a public meeting said :

"This is not a privilege which we should welcome. No doubt we stand to lose on every occasion when a European is tried by a Judge and jury of his own race. If the Judge was acting by himself, there was a chance of the European being punished, but when he had a jury in every case there would be no justice and the accused would be let off.—(CYC pp. 177-178).

Our friends, both in Bengal and Bombay and in other parts of the country, began to set up a demand that Indians also should be given the privilege of trial by jury. They said : "The European is going to get it, The Indian also must get it." Pherozechah was against it. Somehow his conservatism at the moment got the upper hand and he said "You do not know what you are talking about. It is no doubt true that every European will hereafter get it. I would like that, instead of asking for trial by jury for Indians also, you should ask that in every case tried by a

jury and in which a European was let off very lightly or with a mild sentence, the accuser or the Government should have the right of appeal." That suggestion was supported by one of the best friends of India in Bombay at the time, a very great man who was Principal of the Elphinstone College, Wordsworth, grandson of the illustrious poet. Most prominent men of Bombay were his disciples and had a reverential regard for him, and he advised them to drop the matter; and Pherczeshah joined and the community were obliged to leave it alone. This was the language used by Pherozechah—it is well worth remembering—"It was no use purchasing equality of right at such a cost."

In the year 1884, Lord Ripon took leave of India and the Indian people. His departure from India is remembered as the occasion, when popular demonstrations were on the grandest scale and most enthusiastic in spirit. Nothing like it has ever happened since and the whole of the European community was stirred by a feeling of fear and terror as to what may happen, if Lord Ripon, who had touched the hearts of our countrymen, were to be sent amidst these unparalleled demonstrations. The *Pioneer*²⁹ which was at that time an I.C.S. paper, had an article which attracted universal attention. "If this be true", it said, "what does it mean? It means the greatest possible danger to the British Raj in this country. We must behave carefully and we must also behave with firmness". You know the kind of language in which these Civilians indulged.

When Ripon left for England, the scenes of enthusiasm and marked affection for him were such as would defy pen or tongue to describe. Where he sat, a huge pile of addresses, caskets and other souvenirs rose until it touched the ceiling, and many hours were spent in reading these addresses. Not all of them were read; and afterwards it is said Lord Ripon was so stirred that he made a speech of an hour's duration. It was pitched in the loftiest key of affection for the Indian people. He was called "Ripon the Good"; by some others, "Ripon the Righteous". He was a Catholic by religion, a very devout Catholic, one who went through the day feeling that God was about him.

and watching his doings and guiding him. His great qualities were appreciated by our people. Although his reign was not marked by any great achievements, the very spirit was truly appreciated, and men regarded him as a relation more than as a ruling representative of Great Britain. In that speech he thought it necessary to review with feeling the things that representatives of the British race had spoken and the way in which they tried to minimise the significance of the declarations every now and then made. He was full of indignation and emotion.

"To me it seems a very serious thing to put forth to the people of India a doctrine which renders worthless the solemn words of their Sovereign, and which converts Her gracious promises, which Her Indian subjects have cherished for a quarter of a century, into a hollow mockery, as meaningless as the compliments which form the invariable opening of an oriental letter"

"The doctrine, therefore, to which Sir Fitzjames Stephen has given the sanction of his authority, I feel bound to repudiate to the utmost of my power. It seems to me to be inconsistent with the character of my Sovereign and with the honour of my country, and, if it were once to be received and acted upon by the Government of England, it would do more than anything else could possibly do to strike at the root of our power and to destroy our just influence, because that power and influence rest upon the conviction of our good faith more than upon any other foundation, aye, more than upon the valour of our soldiers and the reputation of our arms."

That speech when it was delivered, gave the greatest possible joy and satisfaction to the whole of India.

I now come to what occurred in my own case. In 1918 the air was full of a coming Constitution, in which the Indian community and the European community would dwell in this country as brother and brother, not as superior and inferior, not as favoured and unfortunate; and I then thought that the proper moment had come for our country to take a forward step in its Legislation. I, therefore, gave notice in the Imperial Council of a Resolution abolishing this privilege of the European community. Lord Chelmsford thought that the moment was inopportune, and he took a step which officials and Governors occasionally take. You see they had a privilege of disallowing a Resolution or a Question. They still have it but they use it very sparingly. In this too, they were careful.

Therefore, when they dislike a Resolution to be moved, instead of disallowing it, they generally tried to bring round the man who had given notice. They asked their Councillors to speak to the man, and usually make some promises. Sir George Lowndes²⁰ was the Law Member at that time. He had been Advocate-General in Bombay, became Law Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council and after he retired from the Executive Council he became a Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. He was a very able lawyer. He was asked to induce me to withdraw. He took me to his house, gave me tea, etc., and did all sorts of nice talks and promised things if I would be reasonable and so on, and asked me to withdraw. I said that it was impossible, and as I had given notice the Viceroy could disallow it if he did not like it. Finally, the Viceroy disallowed it. Being angry myself, I adopted a slight dose of non-co-operation. At the next meeting of the Viceregal Council, when my turn came to take part in the proceedings I got up and said, "I do not like to move my resolutions, because you have disallowed my resolution" and curiously enough two others followed me. One of them was Sachidananda Sinha.²¹

In the year 1921, just three years afterwards when the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms²² had been put into effect I became a member of the Council of State. I then asked for the appointment of a Committee to do this very same thing, to remove this inequality under which Indians suffered and put the Europeans and the Indians on the same level. My Resolution was accepted without a demur from anyone. A committee was appointed under Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. I then went away to London and could not be a member of the Committee. But I kept in close touch with things, and was gratified to learn that the Home Member, Sir William Vincent²³, was exceedingly favourable to the enactment of this change, but though he received very strong remonstrances in Calcutta and Bombay, he defied them. It was wonderful that Sir William changed for a little while after he became conservative again, and when the rules came into force, we found him very obstructive. But at that time, somehow or other, the Committee was successful in its efforts and with the exception of a very small provision which they found difficult to tackle, all the

distinctions were at that time obliterated so that now, in criminal trials there is no superiority which Europeans enjoy over us.

We come now to the period (1884-1886) when Pherozechah became President of the Bombay Corporation. I have told you before how he took part in shaping the Municipal Bill of 1872. The greatest reforms in the Municipal constitution are yet four years behind. We shall come to that a little later. In the year 1884, Pherozechah Mehta became for the first time President. Even at that time he had risen to such an undisputed mastery that he was called the King-maker of Bombay, the local Earl of Warwickshire.²⁴ No body could be appointed President without his sanction as it were. In 1884, for the first time, they asked him to be President, and in his office as President, he so conducted himself, notwithstanding his enormous powers, scrupulously with the observance of the formalities with such meticulous respect for Law and Procedure, that they called him the ideal President. His courtesy to all people was exactly alike, and all received the same treatment and he gave points of order absolutely impartially. His Presidency was so marked that they asked him to be President for the second year. They said, "You are the father of our City. You are the maker of the constitution. You alone have worked the law almost to its perfection." At their request, he continued to be the President for a second term. It was during this time that the body known as the Bombay Presidency Association²⁵ was created. It is still alive, though not so powerful as before. Pherozechah had been always its President. After him Sir Dinshaw Wacha²⁶ stepped in his place. You would have got my speech about Dinshaw Wacha. I wish you read it. It contains important references to Pherozechah Mehta also. (See Appendix 1.)

Now we come to the year 1885, and the birth of the Congress. It would appear that in the *Fifty Facts*, the Marquis of Dufferin²⁷ is referred to as the part-father of the Congress. As a matter of fact, he is often so described by our people. The Marquis of Dufferin, although he belonged to the Conservative Party, was a sound Liberal at heart. He was a very literary person and his knowledge of the world, its history and its politics, was so sound that in his day he was regarded as a great student of political theory,

and therefore his pronouncements were viewed with great respect all over the world. He had been in Canada before he came to India and therefore he had delivered himself of this idea. He told the youngmen of Canada: "No man can consider himself to be a full citizen unless he takes an active part and interests himself earnestly in the affairs of his native country, and in the affairs of his native city." That is to say, public spirit, participation in public affairs was the hall-mark of a well-developed citizen. He had given expression to such a statement and Pherozezshah was often fond of quoting it against him later on as we shall see. In the year 1884, A.O. Hume,²⁸ who had just retired from the I.C.S., and had the greatest possible affection for India, conceived the idea that it was necessary to bring all the leading men of India together to one central place, where they can meet and have personal contacts and friendships and tackle Indian problems in their entirety. At first, his idea was that this organisation should be entirely non-political, that it should not give offence to the officials, that it should not cause alarm of any kind to the authorities whether at the Centre or in the provinces and that therefore it should tackle only social and economic problems. It is claimed by the Theosophists that when he conceived this idea, he was a member of the Theosophical Society, and happened to be sitting at a Theosophist meeting. When he mentioned it, others took up the idea somewhat eagerly, and thus the Theosophists claim the Indian National Congress was born in their home and under their roof. That is the credit they take for the Indian National Congress. Now Hume was such a good man, and his reputation was so high that he went and sought an interview with the Marquis of Dufferin and he put his idea to him; and Dufferin in his simplicity said that they should not confine themselves to social problems and that it was best they tackled the political problems also "Let them attack," he said, "the Governmen and the Administration. Let them attack the Revenue Policy and let them attack everything. We shall then know their mind and be benefited by them". Hume then explained it to his other friends and that it why Dufferin is regarded as part-father of the Congress.

At that time, when people said Dufferin was the originator of the Congress, it was regarded as a reproach. The Anglo Indian community finding how the Congress developed, did not like that Dufferin should have taken part in it, and they used to abuse him as having brought danger into Indian affairs, and as having given the Indians a wrong lead. The origin of the Congress was not then taken as a credit by the European community. Now for the first time, when they went to pose in America as friends of India they mentioned this fact: "It was our own Viceroy that did this." As a matter of fact how Lord Dufferin deserves this compliment came out later on.

Then, within two years of the starting of the Congress, he found that they made so many demands, that he and his Government almost took fright, and he took an early opportunity of disavowing all connection with the Congress; and this is what he said about the Congressmen: "Some intelligent, loyal, patriotic and well-meaning men," said he, "are desirous of taking, I will not say a further step in advance but a very big jump into the unknown by the application to India of democratic methods of Government, and the adoption of a Parliamentary System, which England herself has reached by slow degrees, and through the discipline of many centuries." His Lordship ended by characterizing the educated classes as a "microscopic minority" and their demand for representative institutions as "eminently unconstitutional."

Then when Hume went and asked him "Now the Congress is going to meet in Bombay. Would you like me to ask Lord Reay to preside?" (Reay was the Governor of Bombay). It would have been well if he had come to preside, Dufferin woke up. He said, "No. I do not like that in a movement which I should like to be entirely unofficial, an official should be asked to sit as Chairman"; and so the idea was given up. Later on Lord Dufferin delivered himself of his views on University education; our community resented them as highly reactionary and felt suspicious. Well, that was Lord Dufferin! What he did was to ask the father of our Congress Hume to give a political as well as social foundation to the institution. He can claim no further credit. You know that when the Congress met, the first Chairman was W. C. Bonnerjee. He was of the same time as Mehta; he was a little older and

he was a remarkable man. He was quite equal to Pheroze-shah Mehta in all respects, and perhaps his superior in one respect. Pheroze-shah was in prominence everywhere, while Bonnerjee liked to be behind the scenes. But he was as great a man, as wise and as able a lawyer. He became so rich, that he early bought some land in England in a village called Croydon and built a fine little house for himself to which he retired for six months in the year. He came to Calcutta for six months and made a good deal of money. He was known as the person who actually met the expenses that Congress collections were unable to meet; Gokhale has often told me, that the sums he gave away to cover the deficits of the Congress were huge, ten thousand or twenty thousand rupees every year, and no body would know about it. He married an English woman, and by her had a son and a daughter. The son practised in Calcutta. He retired early to London. He had a daughter who married an Englishman and settled in London. W. C. Bonnerjee was regarded in those days as almost the leading man after Dadabhai Naoroji. He was much senior to all these people and had established his great reputation in those days.

When W. C. Bonnerjee was in the Chair, in contrast to all the speeches of later date, he made a very short speech; and he made it so well and in such businesslike style that all people said that they never heard a speech like Bonnerjee's brief and to the point with just so many words as were required to meet the case and no more. Well, he was a great man! When I wrote his life in Mr. G. A. Natesan's²⁹ "Four Anna Series", I concluded it with 'Vande Mataram', and I remember it, at that time being very much younger. 'Vande mataram' was then a trite cry. It was then fresh and had a little meaning. I mention this little incident because Chintamani³⁰ of whom you have heard and who was a very keen politician and an exceedingly strong Moderate did not like it.

Notes.—

1. SIR COURTNEY PERIGRINE ILBERT (1841-1924): Legal member, Executive Council of the Governor General of India. (1882-86); President, Governor General's Council, (1886); Vice Chancellor, Calcutta University, (1885-86); the Author of the controversial Bill, known as the Ilbert Bill; Author of *The Government of India*.

2. SIR AUCKLAND GEDDES (1879): British Politician, Professor of Anatomy, McGill University, Montreal, Director of Recruiting, War Office, (1916); Ambassador of U.K. to U.S.A., at Washington (1920-24).
3. ST. ANDREW'S DAY: Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland, and Nov. 30th is observed as St. Andrew's Day by the Scots all over the world.
4. EDWIN SAMUEL MONTAGU: Secretary of State for India, (1919-1922); Principal, author of the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, 1919. Author of *An Indian Diary*.
5. LORD BERESFORD (1847-1900): ADC to the Viceroys of India, from (1875-1881) and Military Secretary to the Viceroys, (1881-1894).
6. SIR HENRY JOHN STEDMAN COTTON: Born in Kumbakonam where his father was sub-collector, 1845. Entered the Bengal Civil Service (1867); Chief Commissioner of Assam, (1896-1906); President, The Indian National Congress, (1906); Member British House of Commons, (1906-10); Author of *New India or India in transition*, and *Indian and Home Memories*.
7. 'TIGER' BRANSON: Both in appearance and speech, he seemed to answer to a Tiger.
8. LAL MOHAN GHOSE (1849-1909): Barrister, Orator and Politician of Calcutta, went to England to present a monster petition regarding the Civil Service. A very powerful orator full of sarcasm; President, the Indian National Congress (1903); stood for election to British House of Commons in 1884, failed; Member, Bengal Legislative Council (1893-95).
9. RAO BAHADUR S. APPU SASTRI (1855-1932): A distinguished Educationist, a descendant of the great Advaitic Scholar Appayya Dikshitar, Founder and Headmaster of the Native High School, Kumbakonam. Government honoured him with the title of Rao Bahadur for his educational work. He also started the Advaita Sabha at Kumbakonam.
10. BALLATA: A Kashmiri Brahmin poet and author of *Ballata Sathakam*; lived in the second half of the 9th century. King Sankara Varman (883-902), was his patron.
11. KASINATH TRIAMBAK TELANG (1850-93): Advocate, Sanskrit Scholar, Indologist, Translated into English *Manu Dharma Sastra* in the Sacred Books of the East; Social Reformer; Secretary, Bombay Presidency Association; Judge, Bombay High Court (1889); Vice Chancellor, Bombay University (1892); One of the Founders of the Indian National Congress and its Secretary for many years.

12. TYABJI, BADRDDHIN (1844-1909): Lawyer, Bombay; Member, Bombay Legislative Council (1882); Judge, Bombay High Court; President, Indian National Congress (1894); A Nationalist Muhammadan.
- 12A. BROWNUGGREE SIR MENCHARJI, M. (1851-1933); Judicial Counsellor, Bhavanagar; settled in London; elected to Parliament in Conservative Interest (1895); Chairman, Parsi Association of Europe.
13. FINSBURY: A Central Metropolitan Borough of London which for the first time in its history sent Dadabhai Naoroji to Parliament. The residents of this borough were mostly artisans with whom Dadabhai seems to have had close contact.
14. JOHN BRIGHT (1839-1889); British Politician, Member of Parliament from 1847 till death. Was a friend of India.
15. BADRUDDIN see entry No. 12 above.
16. CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS, B.C. (106-43): Roman Orator, Statesman and Man of Letters; Killed by Antony's followers for the violent speech he made against Antony.
17. LOVAT FRASER (1871-1926): Editor, *The Times* of London; visited India at the time of the Coronation Durbar at Delhi in 1908, and in 1912 Author of *India under Lord Curzon and after* and *At Delhi*.
18. MAN MOHAN GHOSE (1844-1896): an elder brother of Lal Mohan Ghose, an eminent Barrister and publicist, Calcutta.
19. *The Pioneer*, an English newspaper which was the mouthpiece of the European I.C.S. and the ruling community, entirely hostile to the Congress and India's national aspirations.
20. SIR GEORGE LOUNDES: Advocate General of Bombay; Law Member, Viceroy's Council (1921); Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, London.
21. SIR SACHCHITHANANDA SINHA, Barrister, Editor, '*The Hindustan Review*,' Patna, Chairman of the Constituent Assembly (1947) before the election of the President. A well known publicist of Bihar; Member of the Bihar and the Indian Legislatures; Member, Executive Council, Bihar.
22. MONTAGU -CHELMSFORD REFORMS: known after the names of the sponsors Edwin Samuel Montagu, the Secretary of State for India and Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India. Introduced Dyarchy and Separate electorates for the minorities. The verdict of history is that the reforms failed.
- 22a. SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU (1875-1949): An eminent Jurist, Advocate. Allahabad High Court; Member, U.P. Council (1913-16); Member, Imperial Legislative Council

- (1916-1920); Member, Viceroy's Executive Council; Privy Counsellor; Member, Round Table Conference, London (1930-31); A Liberal politician.
23. SIR WILLIAM VINCENT: The most reactionary member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1921); Officiating Judge, High Court, Calcutta (1901-1910).
 24. EARL OF WARWICKSHIRE (1428-1471): Richard Neville Warwickshire. He helped his cousin, Edward of York to secure the throne. The King left the country leaving the Government to Warwick. When the King secretly paralysed his policy, Warwick captured the King. Soon, the king turned the tables on him, Warwick fled the country, but he soon returned and imprisoned King Henry VI, but soon made him king again.
 25. THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY ASSOCIATION. A political association established in Bombay in 1885, 'for the promotion and advocacy of the public interests of this country,' by Dadabhai Noaraji and others. The Madras Mahajana Sabha, the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha and the British Indian Association of Calcutta were started with similar objects about the same time.
 26. SIR DINSHAW EDULJI WACHA (1844-1936): Member, Bombay Corporation, for 30 years; its President, (1901); Member, Bombay Legislative Council, Indian Legislative Council and the Council of State; President of the Indian National Congress, (1901); and its General Secretary, (1896-1913).
 27. MARQUESS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA, (1826-1902): under Secretary of State for India, (1864); Governor General of India, (1884-88).
 28. ALLAN OCTAVIAN HUME, I.C.S. (1829-1912): Ornithologist, and 'Father' of the Indian National Congress, (1885); Prepared a scheme for the redemption of agricultural indebtedness and village Panchayats; Declined offer of Lt. Governorship; Retired (1882); Secretary of the Indian National Congress for many years.
 29. G. A. NATESAN, (1873-1949): Editor, *The Indian Review*, Madras: Was a member of the Madras Corporation for many years; Member of the Senate of the Madras University; Member, Council State, Tariff Board and a well known Publicist.
 30. SIR C. Y. CHINTAMANI, (1880-1941): Editor, *The Leader* of Allahabad, (1909-1941); Member, U.P. Legislative Council (1916-1923); and (1926-36); Education Minister, U.P. (1921-23); Resigned his Ministership over differences with the Governor on the interpretation of his ministerial responsibilities; Member, The First Round Table Conference, London, (1930); President, Indian Journalists Conference, (1935), President, The Indian National Liberal Federation, (1920 and 1931); Editor of speeches on *Indian Social Reform*, (1901); *Speeches and Writings of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta* (1905); Andhra University Lecture, on *Politics since the Mutiny* (1937).

III

Last time, I mentioned the origin of the Congress and the connection that the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava¹ had with it. The scene shifts a little as we begin to-day. The year is 1888, and we are concerned with the great Municipal Law of Bombay. I suggested that you might read the pamphlet* that I gave you last time about Sir Dinshaw Wacha. If some of you had done so, as I hope you have, you will see that I make a prominent reference there to the conspicuous part that Sir Pherozeshah played in the very making of the Act. It was in the very beginning of his practice as barrister that he took up the question of municipal reform; and night or day, he was always at it afterwards.

In 1872, which was one of the milestones in the making of the Act, he took prominent part and had the satisfaction of seeing many to his suggestions accepted and carried out. The year 1888 saw the enactment of the Act, more or less, in its present form; and that is also, in a preeminent measure, due to the constant attention that Pherozeshah paid to the subject. The measure was introduced by an able Bombay Civilian, but from the first it took shape in Pherozeshah's expert hands, so that in the end there was more 'Pherozeshah' in it than all the others. I shall read presently one extract from Masani's² book to show you what stress Sir Pherozeshah laid upon the relation that should subsist between the executive and the legislative in municipal affairs. We are told that the Commissioner-system that has now established itself in our Presidency is largely due to the initiative that he took in Bombay. It was he that was responsible for the division, sharp and definite, between the legislative, or as we may call it, the deliberative and the executive in municipal administration.

Pherozeshah's contention from the beginning was that municipalities are usually mismanaged because the councillors took up the duties of the executive and this ruined things. They want to make appointments, promotions; they want to have their fingers in every small matter of daily routine, thus crippling the executive and then blaming them for all the mistakes that occurred. His point was that while the municipal corporation should be supreme in laying down policy and should at the same time have supervisory and critical powers over the executive, they should not themselves take up the executive work. He was against the idea, so common in India and even elsewhere, of giving the executive work not to the Commissioner or the Secretary

*See Appendix.

as the case may be, but to a number of Committees, so that on each committee—whether it was school, whether it was health or taxation or whether it was public works—you have a number of people, seven or eight, and there was division of counsel, factiousness came in and work did not get on. He was dead against that. He used to say, "Give the executive power to the Commissioner, and then take him to task if he goes wrong; watch over him carefully". That was his idea. I shall presently read the section over which he is said to have spent many nights. In the meanwhile. I shall tell you what Lord Reay⁸ said, to show what part he took in the framing of the Act. In those days the Governor took the Chair at all meetings of the Legislative Council. I have already mentioned that Lord Reay was one of the most progressive Governors that Bombay had. He spoke very appreciatively and bore generous testimony to the valuable work of Pherozezshah. This is what he said:

I appointed the Honourable Mr. Mehta on this Council, so that we might have the benefit of his intimate knowledge of Municipal affairs in the Select Committee and in our debates. The honourable member has taken a considerable share in facilitating the passage and improvements of this Bill, which, I believe, meets his views, which, I take it, are representative of those of the community, though, I may be permitted to add, his views were characterised by that independence of judgment, which marks a representative as distinct from a delegate. (Mody. 204-205)

Now, that is a point I should like to mention to you as we seem to be rapidly degenerating in this political idea, When important affairs are discussed by selected people, when, for instance, a Round Table Conference meets for the settlement of important issues; when from two or three contesting sides men are chosen finally to settle matters, when, for instance we have Mahatma Gandhi, Jinnah,⁴ and Savarkar⁶ meeting together,—which would be the consummation devoutly wished—when we have them meet together, it is not right, as often happens, for the parties to tell their representatives, "This is what we want you to secure. These are the corner-stones of our policy. We will not tolerate any departure from these. In all your negotiations, never let these things go." To tie down a man who has to settle with other people as a matter of compromise, is to secure before hand the frustration of the whole idea, and yet our people do not realise it. In groups and crowded meetings our men are trusted. The leaders are supposed to be soft; pliable and ready to listen to evil counsels, so that they are bound down and made delegates instead of

being representatives. This is an old distinction which Burke⁶ used to make in his day. But it has not lost its importance. Its importance is greatly enhanced by a pronounced tendency in a contrary direction of parties and people, half ignorant of things and never caring to know the other points or the other sides to a controversy, to take it upon themselves to bind down the representatives with stringent mandates. That distinguishes a representative from a delegate. A representative, carefully chosen, is permitted to use his discretion. He listens to other views and he compromises, so far as may be necessary, yielding some points to get others. Now that distinction is not carefully borne in mind and I shall tell you of a recent experience. I have written about it in the public Press; but there is no harm in repeating it in perfect confidence to you.

When Mahatma Gandhi came to the Round Table Conference, although he had, as you may know, the same ascendancy over the Congress as he now has, he chose to come there as a man bound down by mandates. In our talks he used often to say, "But the Congress won't agree to it. They have bound me". As a matter of fact, I happened to know at that time that he himself desired to be bound by the Congress Committee before he left India. He discussed matters with them and told them, "You had better bind me down, so that I may have no temptation whatever to depart from this position and I can say 'I have a mandate on this subject.'" Now if a man like Gandhi, who can think for himself in all exigencies and who can judge carefully and never let go a point, if he, having the power that he had to convince the Congress, found it necessary to bind himself down by mandates, the fate of the Round Table Conference was settled before hand; and that was the case. I complained to him about it. I told him, "You have no business to bind yourself by mandates and come to a meeting of this kind. We have got to talk things over, and if you say you won't yield, not because you are not convinced, but because you are bound down by a mandate, it makes things impossible." Now that, I think, is one of the evil tendencies of the time. It marks not a stage in the growth of democracy, but I think, is fraught with evil and symptomatic of grave degeneracy.

Lord Reay, you see, complimented our friend Mehta on his having been a representative in the true sense and not a delegate of the Corporation which he represented. The Duke of Cannaught⁷, was then in India at that time. He has also paid his own tribute to the Municipal Constitution of Bombay, and to the great work that Mehta did. The Municipal Corporation of Bombay bears the indelible mark of genius stamped upon it by Sir Pherozeshah. His personality dominated the stage. As I said I would read out from another book which sets out in legal parlance the relative position of the deliberative and executive parts of a Corporation.

The keystone of the constitution is to be found in the following clauses of Section 64 of the Act, which defines the relative positions of the Corporation and the Commissioner :—

Except as in this Act otherwise expressly provided, the Municipal Government of the City vests in the Corporation.

Subject, whenever it is in this Act expressly so directed to the approval or sanction of the Corporation or the Standing Committee and subject also to all other restrictions, limitations and conditions imposed by this Act, the entire executive power for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act vests in the Commissioner. (Masani, *Evolution of Local Self-Government of Bombay*, p. 291)

That, Pherozeshah contended, was the secret of municipal success. It has been copied all over India and in this Province also. We have departed to the worst in some respects, for the reason that our corporators are not of the same calibre. It is unfortunate, and therefore Government have found it necessary to say that the Commissioners in Municipalities have final power in certain matters and that the Municipalities cannot criticise them. I fear it is wrong to place the Commissioner in a position of undisputed authority.

Now, let me come to the Congress once more. The Congress was started in 1885, as you know in Bombay. In 1886 it went to Calcutta and was presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji. Then it came to Madras in 1887. I well remember in 1887 I was in the Senior B.A. class, and came here for my language examination from Kumbakonam. In those days, the B.A. examinations were held in Madras City. Coming here I was told that the National Congress was holding its session and that it would be interesting to go

there. Having no ticket to go with, we just hung outside the pandal when something remarkable took place. Two or three very important speakers could be heard outside the pandal; and I had the good fortune to go in there at a critical moment. It happened that the Arms Act was then being discussed. The Arms Act, as you know, prevents every Indian from bearing arms or being found in possession of arms. That is the way in which we have been disarmed and are disarmed. The Congress used to attack this problem from the beginning and it demanded that the Arms Act should be completely repealed, and that Indians carefully selected, unless debarred for reasons to be specified, must have the privilege of bearing arms. Some of our own people were unappreciative of the wisdom of this Resolution. So, every year, as the Resolution came up, some important man used to stand up and say, "I object". Hume was one of those who objected always. Telang also objected to it. When I was there Chandavarkar⁶ got up on the platform and without making a speech, merely said he was against the Resolution. That brought Surendranath Bannerji jumping to the platform. The moment he said "I object" he delivered one of his greatest orations. I have never heard such a speech in my life. The impression that it then made on my mind is still a vivid memory. How his sentences rolled on as he denounced them, every word distinct, the accent perfect! The sentences rang as they came out of his mouth, the delivery slow, emphatic and marked by suitable pauses, the voice rising and falling! Oh, it was a splendid, splendid treat for us. The result of it was that when the vote was taken, the dissent was nowhere, and the proposition was carried with acclamation.

The next year when the Congress met in Allahabad the subject was taken up and in the same manner both Chandavarkar and Telang objected to it. Then Pherozeshah and Surendranath both took the field against them and Pherozeshah made a strong speech. The speech is very interesting, and I mention it in order to point out how these old subjects never settled, came up again and again clamouring for proper solution and causing a good deal of ill-feeling by not being carried into effect. I have only to read the passage to you and you will see it at once. Pherozeshah caught the point. He said :

These are peaceful times. But a time may come when this disarming of the whole nation will prove to be a terrible calamity

when large armies may have to be put into the field for the safety of India and then what will you do? If you demilitarise our people, if you train us completely in ways of peace and never habituate them, as they always should be habituated, to a military life, you will find it very hard. (C. Y. C. p. 263).

The speech was so good and so prophetic in tone and illustrated, in the fashion of a local leader, by means of a story. It is worthwhile reading it :

A good many of you, he said, would remember the case of James II, who, when in his hour of peril, appealed to the Duke of Bedford (whose son had been judicially murdered by the King) for help. was told by the old nobleman, 'I had once a son whom I could have sent to your assistance. But I have not got him now'. In the same way, in some hour of need, India might have something similar to say to England. The speaker recognised the difficulties in the way, but he maintained that if they followed a far-sighted policy, they would realise from the lessons of History that it could never be wise to emasculate a nation. (*Ibid.*, p. 264.)

In the year 1889, the Congress went to Bombay; and then, as always it happens, Mehta was invariably the Chairman of the Reception Committee. There could be nobody else. When he was Chairman in 1889, Bradlaugh⁹ attended the Congress. He had recovered from a serious illness just then, and when he came to India his idea was to ask the opinion of the Indian leaders on a certain Bill he had prepared for the Reform of the Legislature in this country. He consulted several people and obtained leading Indian opinion. The year 1889 was remarkable for another reason; the number of delegates was also 1889.

In the previous year, Allahabad had great difficulty in holding the Congress. The Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces had been as obstructive as possible, and he had besides organised an opposition to the Congress, which was called the "Anti-Congress United Patriotic Association". In those days people thought of describing the whole of the objects in the name itself! Two leading people, Sir Syed Ahmed¹⁰ the famous Muslim leader, started the trouble, and a man named Shiva Prasad,¹¹ who had lots of money and did not know what to do with it—I suppose!!—between them they caused very great trouble to the Congress and it was part of their tactics to ask Shiva Prasad to go into the Congress as a delegate and there make mischief. He did all he could, his tactics were foiled by one of our great leaders,

the father of Pandit H. N. Kunzru¹² the famous Pandit Ayodhya Nath Kunzru¹³. He took the lead in the Allahabad Congress and was able, notwithstanding the bitterest opposition from the Government, to hold a successful session of the Congress. This was referred to by Pherozechah, as Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his speech welcoming the delegates. I was then a new teacher in the Municipal High School at Mayavaram; and I remember, I read it with the greatest possible enjoyment. It is a remarkable passage :

They were so like the Scotch terrier, who was so covered with hair, that you could not tell which was the head or which was the tail of it. (*Laughter and cheers*). Sir Syed Ahmed pulled vigorously one way, Rajah Siva Prasad as vigorously the other and they so pulled between them the poor popinjay they had set up, that it burst, and poured out — to the amazement of a few and the amusement of us all — not the real patriotic stuff, with which it had been announced to be filled, but the whitest and purest sawdust (C.Y.C. p. 283.)

Pherozechah was very fond of these strokes of sarcasm. He really pulverised his adversary by making fun of him.

In the year 1890 he was President of the Calcutta Congress and then made a remarkable speech. I will read the passage just for your information. I will do nothing more. Pherozechah was then accused by his own co-religionists of running about the country, calling the country his, and the nation his. Even then there were a few Parsi gentlemen who criticised Pherozechah and Dadabhai for betraying their own community. As a matter of fact, they did their duty by the community; wherever they were in trouble, they did help them. But there were a certain set of jealous people who cannot bear that their favourite should attend to any object, except the one pertaining to themselves, even if he did his duty and then spared a little energy for the Congress. Unfortunately the Parsi community had then fallen on evil days. This is how he replied to them in his Congress speech.

To my mind, a Parsi is a better and a truer Parsi as a Mahamedan or a Hindu is better and truer Mohamedan or Hindu, the more he is attached to the land which gave him birth, the more he is bound in brotherly relations and affection to all the children of the soil, the more he recognises the fraternity of all the native

communities of the country, and the immutable bond which binds them together in the pursuit of common aims and objectives under a common Government. (C.Y.C. 292-3).

This passage is often quoted to the credit and honour of Pherozechah.

In the year 1892, something happened in the life of Pherozechah which struck as a curious one and which no one was able to explain. By this time he was a very powerful person, almost a dictator in the Corporation, playing a great part in Legislature, and in the enjoyment, at the same time of a very lucrative and highly selective practice. Notwithstanding this it occurred to him that he should widen his experience by working in an executive capacity somewhere or other. I don't know how, but that was the explanation he offered at the time. He took up in the State of Junagadh an appointment on Rs. 2,000 for six months every year. He was called the Judicial Commissioner, and his duty was to reform the Judiciary and re-organise it in that State. People wondered why he took it up. It appears during his time as Judicial Commissioner there was a State trial in which 70 or 80 persons were involved and he was asked to conduct the trial. He was the President of the Tribunal. The *Times of India* and the *Bombay Gazetteer* and the *Indian Daily News* spoke of his performance of that duty as supplying the most brilliant example of how a State trial should be conducted. Deliberate, observant of all the forms, always giving satisfaction to the accused that they had a fair trial, never hustling the Counsels on either side, careful that the ends of justice were not defeated. Pherozechah was an ideal President of an important State trial. Except for that episode, the appointment was not marked by anything else. After two years, he returned to his original duties.

In the year 1893, the Councils were widened, and for the first time, the Municipalities and District Boards were given elective representation. You may remember that it was in one of these municipal constituencies that K. Kalyanasundaram Aiyer¹⁴ came up to the Council. Pherozechah also was one who came into the Legislative Council, but he represented the Corporation. If he expressed a desire to stand, he was sent; and once appointed

nobody could stand against him and he was a life-long member of the Legislature of Bombay, representing the Corporation.

It was in that year (1893) that that famous Resolution on simultaneous examinations was passed at the instance of Herbert Paul in the House of Commons. It is not now possible to go into the history of that. Although Herbert gave his great name to it the entire work behind the Resolution and subsequently its wide popularisation was done by Dadabhai Naoroji. Unfortunately it was described as a snatch-vote, but though a snatch-vote, the Liberal Government of Gladstone announced a desire to give effect to it. The Executive Government had enormous power of defeating in detail, what they lost in principle. They raised one objection or another, and chaos broke up, but finally something extremely tricky was done, and Lord Kimberely¹⁴ who was then the Secretary of State although in a Liberal administration, fell into Tory hands and expressed it as his conclusion that the Resolution had no moral authority and need not be carried out. This caused the greatest possible disappointment in India and several meetings were held all over the country and the conduct of Government was seriously condemned.

The local Legislative Council had also the power of sending a representative to the Imperial Council. In that very year, the Legislative Council of Bombay sent Pheroze-shah Mehta to the Imperial Council at Calcutta. In those days, it was possible for a man to be in two Legislatures in both places—Imperial as well as Provincial—and for a time Gokhale too was in both places. When he was sent to the Imperial Council great things took place which made a mighty sensation at the time. Till then, all the seats in the Imperial Council were filled by nomination and the non officials were in a minority and were titled representatives from different parts of the country. They carried no weight whatever. They were generally ignorant men and did not care what happened. Not a word was uttered by them and the course of the Legislature was smooth—just doing what the executive desired and nothing more. When Pheroze-shah went there, things altered and the great man took mighty offence and complained against him.

The first thing that came up was the Cotton Excise Duties, a very troublesome problem. You remember that they taxed the imports from Lancashire. Lancashire merchants said that the local producers would have a start and that therefore they must tax them also; and therefore the Cotton Excise Duties were imposed by the Legislative Council. In those days there was a number of officials who resented this injustice to India and protested openly.

The very man who presented it to the Council put on a wry face and said "What bad luck is mine! I have got to do it!" The man in charge of finance was Sir James Westland.¹⁶ He did not like these Excise duties, and while complaining put them forward as the authorities compelled him to do so. Then curiously enough, there was a barrister, Sir G. Evans¹⁷ in the Legislative Council who had a great reputation as a lawyer. He gave it as his opinion that the members of the Legislative Council, even though they were officials, had freedom to vote as they pleased, and encouraged them to vote according to their conscience and not according to their mandate. You will be surprised to hear that Pherozeshah it was that enunciated a contrary proposition. Pherozeshah Mehta said it was not proper and said "The supreme authority over this country is the House of Commons and when the House of Commons expresses its will through the Secretary of State for India and if the Secretary of State for India makes up his mind, he has the power to direct the Government of India which is only a subordinate Government to do as he pleased. Once his order is issued, the Council can only follow, and at any rate, the official part of it. You cannot have an independent vote"; and he argued that point so well that the Viceroy was very thankful to him and said that he had made things clear.

It was not a mere whim on Pherozeshah's part to have done this. He himself explained the point at considerable length on a later issue that was before them which was known as the Contagious Diseases legislation. The part played by the Government of India in respect of the Contagious Diseases Act has always been brought up against them as most immoral. After three or four years of bitter controversy, the Secretary of State laid down certain

lines along which this legislation was to be introduced. When this suggestion came up, the Government of India took up the matter. Once more Sir G. Evans took up the constitutional issue. He said that this position was absurd obeying the mandate of the Secretary of State. H.R. was a big Government—Government of India—ruling over 200 millions of people; they must be allowed complete freedom to think for themselves and decide for themselves; and therefore he induced the Government to take up a strong line and he said: "The initiative in the House of Legislature belongs to this Government. We cannot be told what to legislate and how to legislate". Some of these officials took up this point and much was made of the theory of the 'man on the spot'. The local authority should be trusted to do it; and it was also ingeniously described by them as Home Rule. "That is the Home Rule for India! We bureaucrats of the country must have power to determine what legislation should be made in the country". And they asked all the non-officials to come round and defend them against the Secretary of State. Whoever else agreed, Pherozeshah did not and he said in similar words.

This is wrong. It is not the correct constitutional position. I cannot listen to you. Our aim is to build up a popular Government. Once it is done we must be supreme in our land. Till then the House of Commons is the supreme authority and we must have it in our power to go to them in appeal over you. We cannot allow you to be the final authority against us. You know you are bureaucratic and you want this and you want that. We shall not have a moment's peace in this country. So, unless the power that you mark out as yours is transferred to the representatives of the people, unless we are in a majority as it were in the legislature here, and can control you, the power of the House of Commons over you cannot be removed. You cannot be supreme. Either you must be subject to the House of Commons or place yourself under our control.

That was the point he argued and that is the correct constitutional position. Sydenham¹⁸ was a strong champion of the 'man on the spot' theory. I will just read the passage to you:

So far as the natives of this country are concerned, we must take care not to be carried away by the bait of so tempting a phrase as Home Rule. Home Rule to us, for a long time to come, can only mean the substitution of the rule of Anglo-Indian bureaucracy for that of the House of Commons and the Secretary of State as controlled by it. Under either rule, the country cannot always be safe against the occasional attacks of powerful interests, but after all it is safer to trust to the ultimate sense of justice and righteousness of the whole English people, which in the end always asserts its nobility than upon the uncontrolled tendencies of an officialdom trained in bureaucratic tendencies, and not free from the demoralising prejudices incidental to their position in the country. (Mody-322-3)

Now we come to the same year, but to an important piece of legislation which was severely contested—the Police Act. It had all along been not touched. Great reforms were proposed to it, and one section of the reforms related to what is known as the punitive police. The punitive Police are stationed in places where there were riots or other disturbances, as a way of punishing the locality. All people there are taxed in order to meet the cost of this Police. This piece of legislation was not working properly and they wanted to put it on a proper basis, and it was taken up on this occasion and several changes were proposed, all of which were commended to the Council as great improvements by the bureaucrats. Pherozeshah saw through the trick and exposed them all thus showing how they proposed to reform.

Under cloak of redressing a wrong, it was in fact an attempt to invest magistrates with extraordinary powers in supersession of the ordinary Courts of law. They were to have a free hand in singling out individuals for punishment. The guilty and the innocent were equally at the mercy of the executive. Those who lived in the disturbed areas were just as much liable to punishment as absentee landlords, who might be hundreds of miles away. The measure was in fact nothing else than an attempt, as Pherozeshah characterized it, to convict and punish individuals without a judicial trial, under cover of executive measures for the preservation of order.

That sort of thing was objected to very strongly, and his speech irritated the officials. In his speech, he said :

This is a vicious principle in legislation to give indefinite and drastic powers to the executive without the legislature having a say in the matter.

I will read to you, how he argued the case in order that you may realise how he offended people :

My lord, I cannot conceive of legislation more empirical, more retrograde, more open to abuse, or more demoralising. It is impossible not to see that it is a piece of that empirical legislation so dear to the heart of executive officers, which will not and cannot recognise the scientific fact that the punishment and suppression of crime without injuring and oppressing innocence, must be controlled by judicial procedure, and cannot be safely left to be adjudged upon the opinions and moral certainties of men believing themselves to be capable, honest and conscientious. . . . Empirical and retrograde as it is, this new proposed legislation would be no less demoralising to the executive officers concerned. I have not the least desire to speak disparagingly of executive officers, most of whom, I have no doubt, are anxious to perform their duties conscientiously and to the best of their ability. But it would be idle to believe that they can be free from biases, prejudices and defects of their class and position.

(CYC 406)

This offended Sir James Westland so much that he made a violent speech in reply. This is how he began :

As the first member of your Excellency's Executive Council who has an opportunity of speaking after the extraordinary observations which have fallen from the Honourable Mr. Mehta, I desire to enter a protest against the new spirit which he has introduced into the Council. I have never heard the conduct of the administrative officers of the Government, as a whole, mentioned here without admiration of the qualities they bring to the execution of the work with even-handed justice. Today for the first time within the walls which have been distinguished by the presence, through half a century and more of the most eminent of the executive officers of the Government, who have contributed to the framing and the consolidation of the Indian Empire, I hear them all arraigned as a class as a biased, prejudiced, utterly incapable of doing the commonest justice, and unworthy of being relied upon to do the duties which this legislature imposes upon them. From Your Excellency downwards, every executive officer falls under the ban of the Honourable Member's denunciations, and I for one protest against any Honourable Member so far forgetting the responsibilities he owes to his position as to take advantage of it to impugn, by one general all-comprehensive accusation, not only the capacity but even the honesty and fairness of the members of a most distinguished service—a Service of which it is my pride to have been a member. Their reputation is too well-established and too widely recognised to suffer from calumnies directed against them. The Indian Empire itself is the witness to the capacity they show in the administration of their duties; it would not last for one year if there were any truth in the accusation now made. I feel sure I can claim the concurrence of every member of Your Excellency's Council in utterly dissociating myself from the remarks which have been made, and which I conceive to very greatly detract from the reputation which the Council has justly acquired for the dignity, the calmness and the consideration which characterise its deliberations.

You see this was bound to be taken up all over the country and it was in the most vigorous fashion as I shall

tell you presently. The "New Spirit" was the phrase he unfortunately used; and it was taken up everywhere, and our newspapers said, "The New Spirit! What is its origin? How has it come there? Why did it enter along with Pherozechah?" They said it was not only a great feather in the cap of Pherozechah, who was an honourable representative and a very powerful person, but then showed the extraordinary superiority that the elective principle had over the nominative principle. So long the Viceroy had it in his power to nominate colleagues sitting in careful supplication to him, never opening their lips except to pay an adulatory homage to him. So this gave rise to the new spirit in the country. I shall tell you how it had a curious reaction in my case, in some of my doings.

When this took place in 1894, I was a teacher in the Salem College. I used to be a careful reader of newspapers. I came into contact with—I mention it now with great pleasure because it opens the beginning of the debut that I made in politics and as a public man—I came under the influence of our Salem patriot, C. Vijayaraghavachariar¹⁸ He was at that time the most prominent figure in Salem and he was called the 'Salem patriot', the hero of Salem. He had also a great part in the political life of the province. There was nothing in Salem of a political nature that could be done without him. At that time Salem was greatly agitated over the executive problem concerning the Municipality. The Municipality had never been free from trouble. I was in the Salem Municipal College. I could not therefore directly take part in it. At that time the Collector was Gabriel Stokes, brother of Sir Henry Stokes, who was Member of the Executive Council here—a good man but thoroughly priggish! It occurred to him that the Salem Municipality was badly managed by unofficial agency. He therefore recommended to Government that the Salem Municipality should have an official Chairman with a salary of Rs 500-700. The non-official Chairman was Viraswami Aiyar—a very good man but completely in the hands of Vijayaraghavachariar who was, although he was not in the Council, still a dictator like Gandhiji who is not even a four-anna member of the Congress. As soon as the Government declared their intention to replace the non-official Chairman by an official Chairman, several persons applied, and there was a man Jiddu Kothandaramiah, brother of the father of J. Krishnamurthi of Theosophical

fame. He was a Deputy Collector there. Vijayaraghavachariar objected to this, and he organised an agitation, in the shape of newspaper articles, protest meetings and so on. As I was an English teacher in the College, I was asked to draft some of these things. I am afraid I did some of these things.

I remember at that time the question of simultaneous examination came up. One of the points that Pherozezshah and others had made in their agitation on the simultaneous examination question was that they agreed the men who pass in the examination in this country should, before being actually appointed to their posts, have a term of English education and then come here and start their career. That was the way in which we tried to reconcile the British people who were afraid that if Indians trained in this country were put in charge of a district the British character of the administration would be lost. Put the British character on, we said, and send them here. Pherozezshah and others took that line, and I took that line also. There was a public meeting held over this examination question and I was asked to move a proposition. I moved it. In moving it I brought in this idea. C. Vijayaraghavachariar took exception to it, being even more orthodox, and he said that our Indians should not go to England. He objected to it strongly but I did not yield. The proposition was carried against him, and he noted me and then wanted to know who I was, and I used to see him. When the official Chairman agitation sprang up, he naturally thought I would be of assistance to him, and I had the honour to write two or three leading articles to the *Hindu* and I remember now that in one of those articles I brought in this 'new spirit' idea and abused the bureaucratic tendency calling it 'Westlandish', on the analogy of 'outlandish'. I thought I was its inventor, but I found that it was used by several people all over the place :

It was not only Sir James Westland that took offence; but over this question and over others, specially over a discussion of the Budget, Sir Charles Elliot¹⁹, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal spoke chastising our friend in severe language. I must read that passage also to you:

The feeling left on his mind, he said, was one of absolute despair as to what help they could expect to get from a gentleman

in the position of the Honourable Member. He had come to them with a great reputation as one of the ablest men in Bombay and one of the most leading men in the forward movement of the time. Almost in the first speech that he made in the Council, he had launched an insinuation against the probity of its official members which had caused a shock to the whole Council, which was accustomed to think and had reason to know that the company which sat round that Board was a company of honourable gentlemen. His Honour felt constrained to ask, what possible good could arise from criticism of such a character?

Now this made Pherozeshah at once the darling of the people. All over the country, his speech was quoted and praised in the very highest terms.

In the year 1895, Mehta was, I think, the recipient of addresses and congratulatory messages without number. Almost in every place in India meetings were held, and it was said that all these addresses were finally presented to him at a great public meeting in Bombay. We had a provincial Conference in each locality. Belgaum in 1895, held a very big Conference at which Pherozeshah was complimented. An important speech on the occasion was made by Gokhale.²⁰ I am going to read to you a passage which has become famous in political literature. This is what he said about Mehta:

A friend of mine in Bombay, a shrewd observer of men and things, once said in speaking of Mr. Telang, Mr. Mehta and Mr. Ranade, that Mr. Telang was always lucid and cultured, Mr. Mehta vigorous and brilliant, and Mr. Ranade profound and original. I think, gentlemen, you will agree that there is much in that observation. At the same time it must be said that, though some men think that Mr. Mehta's particular qualities are vigour of intellect and brilliancy, it does not follow that he is in any way deficient in the other qualities. To my mind it has always appeared that Mr. Mehta to a great extent is a happy combination of the independence and strength of character of the late Mr. Mandlik, the lucidity and culture of Mr. Telang and the originality and wide grasp of Mr. Ranade. (Gokhale's Speeches Vol. III-p. 276).

One other sentence of Gokhale's deserves to be read and commented upon:

We are proud that even our friends in Calcutta thought his services to be so signal that under the leadership of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, they presented a public address to Mr. Mehta and expressed their sense of gratitude. (*Ibid* p. 277-8.)

Note the words 'even our friends in Calcutta' in the speech. Thereby hangs the invidious eminence which the Bengal people have acquired. I am afraid it is true. I am now talking to you in confidence. The Bengal people and the Madras people stand contrasted very sharply. The Madras people are apt to neglect their own leaders and fall at the feet of outsiders in the most reverential manner. An outsider has only to come here and he gets all sorts of honour. All moderation is lost. You go to Calcutta. Nobody, however brilliant, however meritorious, will be recognised in a public manner by the Bengalees. Bengal, to them, represents, the high water-mark of Indian culture, Indian scholarship, Indian patriotism and Indian public spirit. Every other province is inferior and the men from outside it are inferior. Gokhale had not much honour in Bengal, though he tried his best to please them. That is why Gokhale used the expression, 'even our friends in Calcutta'. It must be noted that the Bengalees are very sparing in their laudation of other people while we in Madras want to mark our displeasure in small matters of our own men by unduly panegyrising people from other parts of the country. That is a common failing.

In 1896, Mehta distinguished himself in Bombay over an important principle in Lord Curzon's²¹ time. His point was that specialisation is an evil in University studies. Once you let this specialisation come in, once you allow the specialist to define his course, he wants more and more time given to his own subject, and allow other subjects to go to the wall. He wants his students to attend only to his subject, and therefore, Pherozeshah's point was that in order a man may be fully educated for a citizenship of the country, it is necessary that the graduates should not specialise too far, that there should be a grounding of literature, of the mother-tongue, and likewise of history, politics, and a little philosophy. Pherozeshah said that it was ill-fashioned to see a student ignorant of the affairs of the country when he came out after two years of University study. The specialist is a very hard-hearted man. I can tell you from my knowledge of the Annamalai University and even of Madras University. The Chemistry man has nothing else to do in the world than mixing more and more of substances and he is competent for nothing else. I am afraid that is an evil which has become permanent.

Now let us finish up by an amusing incident. About this time, Bhowanuggree became a member of the House of Commons, for Bethnal Green. It was when he was a member, that he was furious in his attack upon all the public men in India and denounced them as unpatriotic and all sorts of things and he used against Gokhale the words, "disgraceful perjurer" in the House of Commons because he had laid a charge which he was unable afterwards to substantiate!

This Bhowanuggree had made himself thoroughly odious. Bhowanuggree became a member of the House in the Tory interest, always praised the officials and held non-officials to scorn. Mehta was very, very angry with him especially so because he was a Parsi and a disgrace to his community. Once when Bhowanuggree had made himself specially disliked Pherozezshah made a rather remarkable speech holding him up to contempt and execration as Pherozezshah alone could do, and gave vent to his sarcasm:

"A certain class of Anglo-Indians have decorated Mr. Bhowanuggree with a little gold lace, and he is set up as a great political oracle of 'credit and renown' (loud laughter), and he has been made oracularly to denounce the educated classes as sowing discontent and sedition by their perpetual and selfish and unscrupulous attacks against the English in India. (Renewed laughter). Gentlemen I for one recognise the singular competence of Mr. Bhowanuggree to formulate such an indictment, for I have a very vivid recollection of an incident that took place some years ago. I was returning from Kathiawar, where I had gone on some professional work, and a friend joined at Wadhwan in the compartment in which I was travelling. We got out for dinner at the refreshment room at Ahmedabad station on returning to our compartment we found an Englishman installed in it with a huge and fierce-looking dog by his side (Laughter). Both my friend and myself had very strong objections to travel in such company for the whole night, and finding on enquiry that the gentleman meant to keep the dog with him, we tried to persuade him to relegate his companion to the dog-box in accordance with the railway regulations. On his refusal I spoke to the station-master, which so irritated the dog's owner that very soon my friend and he came to high words and some not very choice language, and I had just time to rush between them to prevent them from proceeding to blows. (Laughter). As I took my friend aside and tried to pacify him the English gentleman complained to people gathered about how utterly unreasonable and provoking our conduct was in objecting to the company of his dog. 'I never object to travelling even with natives in the same

compartment,' he said with the most aggrieved air in the world. You can scarcely conceive gentlemen, the paroxysm of fury into which my excited friend was thrown at this comparative description of the status of the dogs and natives, none the less stinging because made with the most perfect unconsciousness of its insolence. I thought it advisable to take him and myself to another compartment where I tried to moderate his somewhat violent tirades against the intolerable rudeness of Europeans towards natives of all classes from Princes downwards, by telling him not to generalise overmuch or take individual cases too seriously. But he was not to be consoled; he scouted all attempts to explain away the insolence of the treatment of the natives by Europeans as anything akin to the estrangement caused by the exclusive character of native social and religious ways. He called to mind many of the stories on this point related in that excellent article in the October number of the *Contemporary Review*, from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Bonner, whose accurate statement of facts, those who are acquainted with things below the surface can fully verify. My friend added many others with which natives are familiar, including that relating to the English Gymkhana in Bombay. I capped it with the doings regarding the Frere Hall in Mahabeshwar, built largely by native donations, but which has been substantially handed over to a European Club which debars, by one of its rules, any native visitor being allowed even on the verandah of the Club premises. (Cries of 'shame'). Though feeling very sleepy, I was regaled by my friend for half the night with croaking fears as to the permanence of British rule owing to this galling behaviour towards natives, of the same character as are now denounced in the mouth of educated natives. This friend of mine, the hero of this story, was, gentlemen, no other than Bhowanuggree (loud laughter and cheers), who has now recanted the errors of his old ways and is posing as a reformed character before Anglo-Indian audiences to denounce the folly and danger of allowing the educated classes to make perpetual attacks on and criticise Europeans in India, who, if they have faults, have them only as the sun has spots. (Laughter) (C.Y.C. pp. 476-8)

Bhowanuggree had at that time come to India and had the ambition that he should be received like Dadabhai Naoroji, even while going from Bombay to Lahore and back. Our friend wanted to have similar honours from Parsi satellites. They tried to get up meetings. Poor Bhowanuggree had a bad time. Although he was received in many places, he was received by small assemblies of friends and so his ambition was not fulfilled. He did not like his own countrymen, and he said Pherozeshah was envious of him because he was in the House of Commons, as if Pherozeshah was likely to be envious of Bhowanuggree for anything in the world. This brings us to the end of 1896. I have dealt with 8 years of Pherozeshah's public life. In this year 1896, he proceeded to England. This was his second visit. The visit was somewhat important.

1. LORD DUFFERIN (1826-1902): Under-Secretary of State for India (1864); Governor General of India (1884-1888).
2. SIR RUSTUM PESTANJI MASANI (1876-1966): Municipal Commissioner, Corporation of Bombay, Vice Chancellor, Bombay University. Author of *Dadabhai Naoroji*, and *Evolution of Local Self-Government in Bombay*.
3. LORD REAY (1839-1921): Governor of Bombay (1885-1890); Under Secretary of State for India (1894).
4. MOHAMED ALI JINNAH (1876-1948); Barrister, Bombay High Court. Member, Imperial Legislative Council (1910). President of the Muslim League for four terms, architect of Pakistan, President of Pakistan (1947-48).
5. VINAYAKA DAMODAR SAVARKAR (1883-1966); A fervent patriot who worked for India's freedom from British domination. Prosecuted for sedition, sentenced for transportation for life to Andamans (1911); transferred to the Yerawada Jail. (1921); Interned at Ratnagiri, (1923); Released (1933). Opposed Partition of India (1947). Author of the *Indian War of Independence*, *Hindu pad padshahi*, President of the Hindu Mahasabha for 7 years.
6. EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797); British Parliamentarian, and political thinker, wrote for the Annual Register. Secretary to the Whig Premier, Lord Rockingham. Represented Bristol and Malton (1774-80) and (1780-84) respectively in Parliament. Burke's writings the most illuminating since Aristotle's. They deal with India also.
7. DUKE OF CONNAUGHT (1850); Third son of Queen Victoria, held the command of the Indian Army, Bombay (1886-1901); visited India to inaugurate the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1920).
8. SIR NARAYAN GANESH CHANDAVARKAR (1855-1921) Lawyer, Editor, *Indu Prakash*. Member, Legislative Council Bombay (1887-1899); President, the Indian National Congress (1900), Vice-Chancellor, University of Bombay (1914)
9. SIR SYED AHMED KHAN (1817-1898); Founder of the Mohemmadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, now the Aligarh Muslim University; Nominated member of the

- Viceroy's Legislative Council (1898); opposed the Indian National Congress, held at Allahabad (1888).
10. SHIV PRASAD (RAJA) (1823-1895); Inspector of Schools, N. W. Frontier Province; Member, Imperial Legislative Council; joined hands with Sir Syed Ahmed to throttle the Indian National Congress at Allahabad (1888).
 11. H. N. KUNZRU (1887) joined the Servants of India Society (1909). Author, *Public Services in India*, (1916); President, Servants of India Society since 1935; President, Indian Council of World Affairs, N. Delhi; Member U.P. Legislative Assembly, the Imperial Legislative Assembly, the Council of State and the Constituent Assembly (1947); declined Bharat Ratna (1968).
 12. PANDIT AJODHYANATH KUNZRU (1840-1892); Professor, Law College; Advocate, Allahabad High Court; Member of the Senates of the Allahabad and Calcutta Universities; started the *Indian Herald* (1879). Chairman, Reception Committee, Indian National Congress (1888) Allahabad.
 13. K. KALAYANASUNDARAMIER; Advocate, Tanjore; Member, Madras Legislative Council from Municipalities of Tanjore (1908); Founded the Kalayanasundaram High School.
 14. LORD KIMBERLEY (1826-1902); Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1894-96); Secretary of State for India (1882-86).
 15. SIR JAMES WESTLAND Finance Member, Government of India (1893-99); Member, Council of India, London (1899).
 16. SIR GRIFFITH (HUMPHREY PUGH) EVANS (1840-1902); Member, Viceroy's Executive Council (1892).
 17. LORD SYDENHAM (*Sir George Clarke*) (1848-1933); Royal Engineer, Egyptian Expedition (1882); Eastern Sudan Campaign (1885); Governor of Bombay (1907-1913).
 18. C. VIJAYARAGHVACHARIAR (1852-1944); Lawyer. opposed appointment of an official as Chairman of the Salem Municipality, played a heroic part during the Hindu Muslim riots in Salem; Member, Salem Municipal council (1892); Member, Madras Legislative Council (1893-1910 1914) Member, Imperial Legislative Council (1913); President Indian National Congress, Nagpur (1920).

19. SIR CHARLES ELLIOT (1835-1911); ICS, Famioe Commissioner, Mysore, (1877); Census Commiss'oner (1880); Member, Viceroy's Executive Council (1887-1890); Lt. Governor of Bengal, (1890-95).
20. GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE (1866-1915); Life Member of the Deccan Education Society, Poona, Builder of the Fergusson College, Edited *Sarvajanik Sabha Quarterly* (1890); Member Bombay Legislative Council (1819); Member, Imperial Legislative Council (1912); Founder, Servants of India Society, (1905); President, the Indian National Congress, Banares (1905); Acknowledged by Mahatma Gandhi as his political Guru.
21. LORD CURZON. (1859-1925); Under Secretary for India (1891-92) Viceroy and Governor General of India (1898-1905). A thorough-going Imperialist.

LECTURE IV MEHTA AND GOKHALE COMPARED

I start with some nervousness after listening to the weighty and inspiring words of our very respected chairman. Those words were full of his love and service and understanding which he mentioned, and I was deeply touched too to note that there was some poetry in them and certainly some mystic philosophy, not unlike that which we hear very often from the lips of our sages. Mr. Ramamurthi¹ has somehow retained after many years of deadening work in an office, the freshness and buoyancy of outlook that belongs to youth. One never hears him, but has some fresh points of view; one never sees him, but longs to know him better. With these words I shall address myself to my subject.

Today I intend, having often spoken before of my master, to deal with a particular aspect of the subject, the attitude of Mehta and Gokhale, the one to the other. Sir Pherozeshah was many years senior to Gokhale; twenty-one years is the difference between them; and that you may well see, partly determines the attitude of the junior. It was one of respect and admiration. This attitude never changed throughout their lives, and throughout their association in the work of the country. Sir Pherozeshah and Gokhale resembled each other in many qualities which we value. They had burning love of the country, they had earnestness, they had courage, they had industry, and they had profound knowledge of the conditions of India and her people. They both worked in exalted spheres; and their work has the common characteristics of lasting value and inspiring patriotism. Sir Pherozeshah conquered you almost the moment he said "I love you". So did Gokhale. But they did it in very different ways. There was, in the look of either, not merely beauty, but impressiveness of character. You felt that they were men to know whom was to receive a great influence in your life. You felt at once that both were above all other countrymen of theirs, in the extent of their knowledge and in the extent of their influence. But I must say at once that their attraction differed greatly. Sir Pherozeshah seemed to dominate you. When you saw him full in the face, there was a squint in his eyes which fixed you almost. You felt that you were in his power. I have seen him in the Legislative Council speak with authority and with vigour, that drew everybody's attention to him; and I have seen how, when any member of the Council spoke, every

two minutes or three minutes he used to turn to know what impression he was producing on this master of the House. I cannot say that Gokhale's authority shone to the same extent on his face. He captivated you also; but there was a pleasingness, if I may say so, in his look, a brotherliness, and lovingness, a tenderness almost of familiarity which drew you to him with a bond of affection. But there the similarity ends. Sir Pherozeshah had a rich and sonorous voice; when he spoke to an audience, without effort he could be heard in the most distant corner. Even his whispers did not fail to catch your attention. And then his diction was dignified and powerful; and when he chose to criticise people, it was such as hit hard. If he was minded to attack a person, there was no mercy in the way he handled him. He could be rough, if he pleased; he could be gentle. And there was a wide range of voice, which Gokhale utterly lacked. Gokhale spoke also so as to command the attention of his hearers, but his voice was different; it was pitched in a lower key. When you heard him, you felt drawn to a person who spoke with his full heart, and meant every word of what he said and every syllable of every word that he uttered. You saw sincerity and conviction stamped on his features and in his voice, and then there was no banter; there was no ridiculing of the adversary; there was nothing like hitting hard. There was argument piled upon argument; there was reasoning; there was large number of statistics drawn from registers and returns, and above all there was a note of mild controversy, and there was a note of persuasion, which you felt was that of a friend, of a man who meant to convert you to his opinion, and not of a person who desired to bear you down with authority or confound you with subtle reason.

Then there was in their personalities also, a wide difference that an observer could not help noticing. Sir Pherozeshah came every day to his chambers and sat there with a number of admirers gathered round him, a small faithful band who never failed him, but stood loyally by their master, obedient to his call and breathing the same sentiments as he did. It was, as it were, a levee that he held every morning in his chambers. You could see about ten people, sometimes fifteen, but they were there always talking about matters of public importance, talking about the Bombay Corporation, talking about the great

friends of India in this country and in Great Britain, talking about what mattered vitally to the country. When he came to an assembly, such as the Indian National Congress, all eyes were directed to where he sat. Hardly a person but felt that when he was there, his very soul of direction was there. Nothing could go wrong so long as Sir Pherozeshah was awake and had the strings in his hands. He had a commanding personality, a personality which nobody could ignore.

I could not say the same of Gokhale. Gokhale was not nearly so and did not carry the same authority. In fact, in Gokhale's bearing and general attitude, there was a touch of shrinking and modesty, a disinclination to put himself forward. In fact I am now leading on to this point, that in Gokhale's composition there was a great element of reverence. Towards his elders, towards those who had gone before him in the service of the country, towards those who had done any public service worth mentioning, towards those who not merely in age but in patriotism and character rose above the ordinary rut of humanity, towards these Gokhale never failed to show personal respect. Therefore, Gokhale in his attitude towards Dadabhai Naoroji, towards Ranade, towards Mehta, and even towards Mahatma Gandhi who was his junior by about four years, towards all where he thought respect and reverence were due, he yielded them from his very soul. You could observe it in his very attitude. You could observe it in the way he addressed them, in the way he valued their opinions; and was pleased when they were pleased.

It was said, towards the latter part of their united lives, that Sir Pherozeshah felt a kind of aloofness from Gokhale, as he felt that he was catching the ear of the country, that he was making a mark, and that a rival was assuming importance over him. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish at once to give the lie to that sentiment. Neither of them by character or by conduct gave the smallest reason for the spread of such an idea. Sir Pherozeshah had established himself so securely and so unshakably in the affections and homage of his countrymen, that all envy of another taking his place was out of the question. And so far as Gokhale was concerned, I can tell you from personal knowledge, which I shall presently elaborate by quotations, that the idea of rivalry or eclipsing Sir Pherozeshah never, never, would have taken shape in his

simple and adoring heart. No; he never felt like that, His was a noble soul; and to speak of him as trying to usurp the name or affection of another, is to do wrong to his memory, I will first read to you what Gokhale himself said in a letter that he wrote to Sir Pherozeshah in 1901, when Sir Pherozeshah had resigned from the Imperial Council. This is not the time to tell you of Sir Pherozeshah's work in the Imperial Legislative Council. Suffice it to say at this point that he covered himself with so much distinction, that most people despaired of ever taking his place worthily. Then Gokhale who had been just elected to the local Legislative Council, expressed a desire in a letter, so full of feeling and so charged with personal pathos, that in the reading of it now at this distance of time, it still produces strong feelings in me of tenderness. You might not have read the letter before. It is long. But I think I will not tire you as I read these most eloquent words, charged with his personal emotion and at the same time conveying to Sir Pherozeshah that feeling of reverence that I have just mentioned.

(Gokhale to Sir Pherozeshah Mehta—15th Jan. 1901)

I am about to retire from the Fergusson College² to which I have dedicated the best years of my youth, and I intend to devote the rest of life to political work in India and in England. I feel that unless young men come forward to devote all their time and energies to public work in the spirit in which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji¹ has been working for fifty years, not only is much real progress possible but even the ground which has been already gained is in danger of being lost. My wife's death has destroyed the principal tie which bound me to family life and settled home; and I can now carry without much effort into the field of politics the devotion with which I have been working for my college. I have built up for myself a small income of about Rs. 125 a month, which, with my monthly pension of Rs. 20 from the College, is enough to keep me in comfort. What I want now is a chance of making myself useful to my country. Of course every one will be sincerely pleased if you continue to represent Bombay in the Supreme Council as long as health and energy are vouchsafed to you. *Your great talents and unique record place you absolutely beyond the reach of competition.* But it is rumoured you are going shortly to retire from the Council. On personal grounds I should wish the resignation to come later.

I was hoping that you would, even if you did not stand for a fresh election, at any rate complete your present term, which does not expire till the middle of 1902; that during the time I might show some useful work in the local Council, so that when you retired you might consider me as not quite the least deserving among those who are working for public good in this presidency at a good and respectful distance behind you. Every one feels — I state what I honestly think—that on the score of

gifts, natural and acquired, on the score of prestige, on the score of those numerous qualities which are indispensable in a political leader, there is no equaling you or even coming near you.

The same cannot be said, of course, of the men who aspire to succeed you, and there being little difference between the qualifications of the various candidates, I ask for your sympathy and encouragement. I am conscious I am too young for the position, but the fierce mental anguish which I have had to endure since 1897 has made me older in judgment and experience. In any case it is not wholly a disadvantage that I shall begin the new career at a comparatively early age. I beg to assure you it is no mere personal ambition which is urging me to seek the honour. My reasons are different.

* * *

In 1897, when a perfect storm of fierce criticism broke over my head in connection with my unhappy share in the incidents of that year, nothing wounded me deeper than Bhowanugree's denunciation of me in the House of Commons as a 'despicable perjurer'. The words burnt into my heart, and the night I read them, I made up my mind to devote my life, as soon as I was free from my pledge, to the furtherance of our political cause in England, to which I had without meaning it, done such serious injury. And for this work a brief period of membership of the Viceregal Council will be very useful. The painful affair of 1897 will perhaps be brought against me again and again, but the testimony of Lord Sandhurst himself and my membership of the Bombay and Supreme Councils, subsequent to that incident, will go a long way towards silencing my critics. The English work is dear to my heart also for the reason that it will please Sir W. Wedderburn,³ Mr. Hume and Mr. Dadabhai, on whom I was instrumental in bringing humiliation four years ago.

* * *

I have written frankly and without reserve, and hope I shall not be misunderstood. I already owe much to you in public life, and I feel I may lay bare to you the aspirations as well as the wounds of my heart without being repulsed for doing so.

(Sastri: *My Master Gokhale*, pp. 246-7)

Next year, there was the Report of the famous Raleigh Commission on Universities, published at the bidding of Lord Curzon, which created a violent agitation throughout the country. The University bodies felt that there was danger in their recommendations; and the Bombay Senate was the earliest to take account of the danger, and appointed a committee, to consider the recommendations that Sir T. Raleigh⁴ had made. Sir Pherozeshah took a leading part in examining these recommendations minutely, and he was instrumental in getting a

committee, composed of both Europeans and Indians unanimously to pass a report which was, to say the least, strongly critical of their recommendations and their tendencies. Gokhale knew at that time being in Calcutta, how in Calcutta, although there was a violent feeling of hostility to the recommendations, it was not possible to get the University Committee to do likewise. They were divided. No one was strong enough as Sir Pherozezshah was to impose himself on the others, and produce a report which could be said to combat Lord Curzon's intentions to officialise the University (that was the word). Gokhale wrote

That you should have got the European Members of the Committee to join in all your criticisms and proposals, except one is a remarkable triumph for us all; and everybody must recognise that it has been achieved mainly owing to your great tact and influence and your powerful personality. It is felt here that, if the Bombay Senate adopt this report, as most probably will now be the case, the opposition to the Commission's recommendations will be enormously strengthened. They have no hope here of getting their own Senate to condemn the Report as ours has done, or rather will shortly do, and the difference in calibre and political grit between their leaders and ours is therefore at present being freely recognised here. You know how emotional these people are, and how easily swayed. The very men who, after the Congress of 1901, were violent in their denunciation of your and Mr. Bannerji's high-handedness in extinguishing Nundy's Indian Congress Committee, are now praising you to the skies and recognising in you — very justly — the greatest political leader of India in our time. (Sastri: *My Master Gokhale*, p. 248)

Gokhale was in Madras in 1904 and spoke on the political situation. I remember the occasion very well. I had not joined the Society at the time, but the meeting is still fresh in my mind. Gokhale then said about Sir Pherozezshah words, which impressed themselves on my mind at that time;

This then is the lesson we have to learn from Japan — (Japan was not then thought of as a possible enemy. The whole world so admired Japan, and we all liked to know everything about Japan) — that if our work is to be successful, our efforts cannot be concentrated unless leaders received from followers that disciplined obedience that you find in Japan. It is true that we have not got many single-minded leaders in the country to lead us, but we are not wholly without them. We have one such man in Sir Pherozezshah Mehta, earnest and patriotic, possessing high abilities, and qualified in every way to lead the country. But these men must receive more implicit support from the bulk of our educated men. (Gokhale's Speeches 1967, Vol. II, pp. 178)

Three years later there occurred a remarkable agitation in Bombay city. Sir Pherozezshah who had established his

ascendancy in that Corporation beyond all dispute became the object of envy and jealousy to the European community there, who had resolved to band themselves together and unitedly bring their whole influence to bear on the electorate, so that Sir Pherozezshah at the next opportunity may not be elected to the Corporation at all. Well, it was known that the party against Sir Pherozezshah was led mainly by the officials of Government of Bombay—disgraceful to that Government, which is most shameful to recall at the present time. The important men of the Corporation, the Accountant-General, the Collector of Bombay and the Police Commissioner banded themselves together and openly canvassed the electorate called the Justices of the Peace. These exalted people had to elect sixteen persons, and the influence of the Accountant-General and the Collector and the Police Commissioner and other people was so great that it was possible for them so to arrange the polling that when the votes were counted Sir Pherozezshah came seventeenth in the list. Luckily his keen eyes discovered that one of the sixteen was a contractor in the Bombay Corporation and that he was not qualified to be elected at all. So in a trice, that man was displaced and Pherozezshah got in. But that is another matter. The fact that there was a movement by the leading Europeans, backed by the *Times of India* and by other papers who had risen against this great leader and had banded themselves together and tried to get this man out of the Corporation, which was proud to call itself his child, and very often postponed its business if he was not able to attend, drew the attention of the whole country at that time. An enormous public meeting was held, and it was felt that Gokhale who was then in Calcutta, doing his duties as member of the Imperial Council, should be summoned to be the Chairman of this meeting. He came and was received with great ovation as the man in all India, who could voice the feelings of indignation and resentment, that were prevalent in the city of Bombay. I quote a passage from his speech; the whole speech is worth reading:

A man with the great, transcendental abilities of Sir Pherozezshah Mehta, placing those abilities freely and unreservedly at the disposal of his City for nearly 40 years, is bound to attain a position of unrivalled predominance in any Corporation and in any country. That such a man should tower head and shoulders above his fellowmen after such a record, is only to be expected, and those who complain of this, quarrel with the very elements of our human nature. Such predominance implies deep gratitude on the part of

those to whose service a great career has been consecrated, joined to that profound confidence in the wisdom and judgment of the leader, which goes with such gratitude. Sir Pherozezshah's position in the Corporation is no doubt without a parallel in India; but there is a close parallel to it in the mighty influence exercised by Mr. Chamberlin⁵ at Birmingham, and it is not dissimilar to the position occupied by Lord Palmerston⁶ for many years in Whig-England, and later by the great Gladstone⁷ in the counsels of the Liberal Party. (Gokhale's Speeches, Vol. II pp. 237-8)

The next letter that I should read is testimony of a kind which cannot be impeached. It was not written to Sir Pherozezshah, and it was not uttered at a public meeting. I give it to the world for the first time. It is a private letter written to V. Krishnaswami Aiyer⁸ of this place. At that time, this was in 1908, the Reforms proposed to be introduced by Lord Minto⁹ were expected to be announced in time for the 1908 Congress, the first official Congress held in this very city, Madras. Gokhale had had laboured hard, along with Lord Minto, to give these Reforms liberal shape and a progressive character. He was very proud of the part he had taken in them and he wrote to V. Krishnaswami Aiyer, a letter in which Sir Pherozezshah's name is mentioned with honour :

It is now certain that the forthcoming reforms will be of a substantial character and that they will be announced before next Congress meets. For obvious reasons I cannot give you any particulars in this letter, but I know you trust me and will not hesitate to take it from me that our faith in Lord Morley¹⁰ will be fully vindicated in December. What is, however, necessary in order that these reforms should produce their full effect on the public mind in India is that they should be accompanied or immediately followed by important conciliatory action in several directions. And I have strong reasons to believe that the chances of such action being taken largely depend on the manner in which the constitutional party in India rallies round the new Congress and the pronouncements it makes at the next gathering. It is, therefore, of supreme importance that earnest and thoughtful constitutionalists should assemble in large numbers from all parts of the country next Christmas and that the Presidential chair should be occupied by the foremost constitutionalist, Sir P. M. Mehta. The Presidential address of this year will have practically to restate the basis on which our public life is to rest in the immediate future, and the pronouncement is awaited with the utmost interest in influential quarters. Pressure, therefore must be put on Sir Pherozezshah from all sides so as to overcome his reluctance and the enormous advantage of his presence as President secured to the next Congress. And every possible effort must be made to make the session an eventful one. (Gokhale papers, S. I. S. Madras, pp. 242-3).

It shows you in what great veneration, in what high regard, Gokhale held Sir Pherozeshah. He thought of him as the properest President at a crisis in India's affairs, when the old Congress had been practically dissolved and a new Congress on a new basis was to take its place; and Lord Minto, intending to conciliate India, announced a scheme of Reforms, in which Gokhale had taken part, and which to him appeared to be fraught with a great deal of benefit to the country.

In 1915, both Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah departed this life; Gokhale, in the beginning and Pherozeshah at the end of the year. The death of Gokhale naturally created a very great sensation in the country, and at the great public meeting attended by Lord and Lady Willingdon¹¹ in Bombay to commemorate Gokhale's name and service, when all others had spoken, Sir Pherozeshah was reluctantly called to the platform. He was too much under the influence of grief and sorrow to take part in the proceedings. The reporter said that his face had lost its leonine power, his features had fallen, his muscles were drawn, and age, infirmities and grief had combined to mark his brow with wrinkles never seen before; and Sir Pherozeshah, when he appeared to take part in the proceedings, had almost to hold himself with an effort of the will. In a voice choking with emotion he made a short speech, and this is the very kernel of it.

Even if I attempted to make a long speech, I feel I could not have spoken connectedly and coherently for the reason that I feel so sad, so depressed, so forsaken, advancing as I am in years, on seeing valued and beloved colleague after colleague dropping away from my side..... Telang has been gathered to his fathers, Ranade is no more amongst us, Badrudin has passed away; our, our beloved Gokhale alas! has now closed his eyes for ever and for ever, and many others whom I could name, are leaving me, one after another, forsaken and desolate. I feel almost alone in the stupendous work for the country which is still pending before us. (J.R.B.J. p. 482).

I cannot but recall with a keen sense of regret what plans Gokhale had laid down, what hopes he had entertained, what work he had chalked out for himself for the development and advancement of the country which he had loved so dearly. Without his help, guidance and co-operation, I do not know how to persevere with the task which we have set before ourselves".

(*ibid*, 482)

Ladies and gentlemen, there were differences between these great men. There is no hiding that fact. As a

matter of common experience, you will understand how it is not possible for two great men devoted to the country in the same way and attacking the same problems with the same equipment of knowledge and patriotism, you can well understand how it is impossible for the two always to agree. In fact it would be ominous if they did agree. I shall now mention to you rapidly instances in which differences arose between them, but they were not such as to disturb their mutual confidence, as to make one think ill of the other, or to suppose that he was blocking his own progress or advancement, or marring the good work he had begun. Such feelings never were possible.

The first item of difference is the time in the Bombay Legislative Council when Sir Pherozeshah staged, along with a few friends of his, what is known, strange to mention it in connection with Liberal Leaders, a walk-out. The Bill which was criticised by him and his followers as being very drastic in its character and went so decisively against the interests of the ryots and peasants of the land that Sir Pherozeshah felt his blood boil; and as an amendment which he had moved strongly to have the matter postponed, had been voted down by the mechanistic majority of Government, he walked out three or four others like Chandavarkar, followed him, and Gokhale also followed, but after a break, which I shall now explain. When they were arranging this walk-out, as they well knew what fate awaited their amendment, Gokhale had protested against it, "This is not becoming of us" he said, "we should not do such a thing". But Sir Pherozeshah was very keen. So he wrote to Gokhale to say that he could not change his resolution. Then Gokhale fell into line. He said, "Well, I will follow you. I would rather be in the wrong with you than in the right by myself". And when his turn came to take leave of the Council, he did not leave abruptly and in a mood of resentment, as the others had done. He made a speech before he left :

Your Excellency, May I offer a word of personal explanation? In the remarks which I made this afternoon, I did not like to say anything as to the course I should take if the amendment were lost. I think it my duty, My Lord, now to say that I must follow the course which has been taken by some of my honourable colleagues. I take this course with the greatest reluctance and regret. I mean no disrespect to Your Excellency or to your

colleagues personally. It is only an overwhelming sense of duty which urges me to take this step because I am not prepared to accept even the remotest responsibility of associating myself with this measure which my further presence here would imply.

(Gokhale's Speeches, Vol. I p. 444).

Then, I think, Gokhale followed. But he did not quite please Sir Pherozeshah, because he did this after offering a personal explanation to His Excellency and to the Council, which, in Sir Pherozeshah's opinion, they did not deserve. They had forfeited all title to such deferential conduct on our part.

Here is another letter, not hitherto published, which I mention to you. This was written in 1906 and refers to a subject which has been almost forgotten. You may remember, those who know Dr. Besant's¹² activities, that a Bill was often contemplated, containing section after section in the form of a statute, of the Reforms that Indians should desire in the constitution of the country. Many people had suggested that such a Bill should be prepared, about 1905 and forwarded to Parliament by some influential member. Mr. Telang had taken great pains in preparing the Bill, and the Bill was almost in shape, when he consulted Sir Pherozeshah, who put his foot down upon it. His instinct in these matters was sounder, and he knew exactly what would happen on any given occasion. There was great danger, he said, in doing so. Therefore, Gokhale wrote to V. Krishnaswami Aiyar.

I start again for England on the 14th April. A serious difficulty has arisen about the draft Bill which I had intended taking with me. Sir P. M. Mehta has taken a strongly hostile attitude on the subject. He urges that we should not commit ourselves to any definite proposals embodying them in a draft of our own, but that we should ask for as much as we can and throw the responsibility of determining the next instalment of reform in the matter on the Government. And in deference to his opinion, which considering his position in public life and his unrivalled experience as Member of Provincial and Supreme Councils, it will not do to ignore, it seems best not to take any draft Bill from here. (Sastri: *My Master Gokhale*, p. 256).

This shows what profound respect was paid to Sir Pherozeshah's opinion on these matters even by those who came so near to him as Gokhale did.

There are three other important matters in which they differed. I am afraid I cannot quote to you any long

extract but I may tell you this. When Gokhale started the Servants of India Society in 1905, he laid the prospectus and his ideas before Sir Pherozeshah. Sir Pherozeshah strongly disapproved of the idea. I did not know what lines he took; but this Gokhale told me. He told Gokhale that since the lives of the servants of India were to be led on austere lines, since they were to take small allowances from the Society, and since they were forbidden to earn anything for themselves or to attend to their personal affairs, Sir Pherozeshah feared that would constitute a sort of superior caste among those, who did not do service to the country in the same way, and that their bearing towards their colleagues and other patriots would be marked perhaps by a feeling of moral superiority. They would hold themselves to be entitled to greater respect from their lay brethren. I mention it, as it is a matter of some importance. You know the kind of people that we are. We do not assume any superior airs. On the other hand, some of you may have noticed that we go about the country almost as if we were marked for an inferior position amongst you.

The next point is the famous Press Act for which Sir S. P. Sinha¹³ made himself responsible: Gokhale who was then his colleague, took strong objection to the provisions of the Press Act, introduced many amendments and fought it at every turn. But in the end though he did not vote for it, he did not vote against it either, and for a reason which I must mention to you, for it is full of interest to the young people especially. You may remember, or you learn for the first time from me, that Lord Sinha was the first Executive Councillor to be appointed to assist the Viceroy. Lord Morley had taken very great trouble about it, in fact he was opposed by all the leading politicians and statesmen in Great Britain—but he put them all aside. Unfortunately, Lord Sinha, as soon as he took office, had to introduce this Press Bill, which he hated with all his soul. Its provisions were so restricted, so stringent, and so repressive in character that he said, he was not going to be responsible for it, and said that he would not pilot it in the Legislative Council. He said he would resign; and fearful of what might happen in case he resigned and what damping influence it would have on Lord Morley, many of Sinha's friends gathered round him together with the Chief Justice Sir Lawrence Jenkins¹⁴ in private counsel night and day, and helped him with a great many amendments, which pulled

the teeth out of the Bill. Still it was a vicious Bill, and Gokhale, who supported Lord Sinha in all this endeavour behind the scene, told him, "I must take your leave to oppose this Bill at every turn". Then Sinha said, "If you are going to oppose it, allow me to get out of this at once". He threatened to resign and held Gokhale down, as it were not to oppose the Bill. But Gokhale, out of deference to him and out of fear also of what might happen in case he did resign and should this precedent be not appreciated sufficiently in the country, said, "I will go thus far with you. I will speak on the whole in favour of the Bill, but refrain from voting against it, but at the same time in deference to my own conscience, I won't vote for it either". When this matter came to the ears of Sir Pherozeshah, he was very angry. He said Gokhale had no business to enter into any pact with Sinha. Sinha knew his own business. Why should the representative of the Bombay Presidency go out of his way and stand shoulder to shoulder with Sinha, taking a large part of the odium on himself? He should have voted against it and made his vote known, as having been hostile to that Act. Sir Pherozeshah never would forgive Gokhale for it.

Then again, there was the Elementary Education Bill in which Gokhale failed to carry Sir Pherozeshah with him for many reasons connected rather with the administration or legislation than with the policy-side of the matter. Sir Pherozeshah did not agree with Gokhale sufficiently in this.

But the chief point on which they differed was with reference to South Africa. You may remember that in 1914, there was a famous Smuts-Gandhi Pact for the settlement of some of the outstanding points of dispute between the white people and our Indian community. The settlement was produced as it were, with a great act of surrender on our part. Both Gokhale and Gandhi agreed that to save our people—very nearly one and a half millions—from the terrible plight into which they had fallen, it was necessary to give up what was then called the right of free immigration of any Indian subject of His Majesty throughout the Empire. This right of immigration was there only in our assertion and in our claim. It was not there recognised by the Constitution or by the Law. It was expressly denied by all the Dominions. It was

therefore, a kind of right, which we asserted, but which on the other side was never allowed. It was, therefore, forced upon our people, and both Gandhi and Gokhale, had to say to the South African Whites, "We will no longer claim the right of immigrating to this country as often as we like and in such numbers as we like. We will give up the right, and you may pass a law of Immigration, preventing our people from landing on South African shores, if you so like". Sir Pherozeshah did not think that this was a good thing to do. He felt strongly that whatever our troubles were we should not have yielded this. He felt this so strongly that he did not attend any of the meetings which Gokhale or Gandhi subsequently addressed, describing the state of affairs in South Africa. I may tell you, what nobody at that time could have foreseen, that events have justified Sir Pherozeshah to a great extent. We have withdrawn a great right. This was not due to any weakness on the part of Gokhale or Gandhi, but it is due to the extraordinary notions that the White people in the Dominion had of the Indian community and their right to preserve their civilization from all debasing and degrading association, and furthermore, the economic aspect of maintaining the high standard of life for which they have made great sacrifices.

I am only going to mention two other points. One was the great desire of Gokhale and most others in the country that the differences that arose at Surat between moderates and extremists should be composed and that the Congress should again become a large, united all-party Congress. Gokhale was always for reconciliation. His mind did not move on sharp edges. He was a kind, tender-hearted man. He often told us in the Society, "I want you not to live under the same cloud of dissension, under which most our lives were spent. I wish you to come into an atmosphere of greater cordiality among the people of this country". He took great pains over this reconciliation; but he did not succeed. But Sir Pherozeshah was very angry with him for it. He said, "Let me tell you, we cannot hold them within the Congress and as our friends with a brotherly embrace for a long time. People will come in, and start trouble, and then you will have to pass under conditions of far greater difficulty and far greater national sorrow".

The other one was the attitude that the progressive party in the country should take towards Dr. Besant who was fast pushing herself in the forefront and threatened to over-reach the Congress and take first place in the political field. Sir Pherozeshah and Wacha and many others looked upon her as the greatest danger. Gokhale, however, had actually joined the Theosophical Society ¹⁵as a member, and though he had taken no part whatever in Theosophical consultations and counsel, continued still to be a passive member, and his natural attitude of reverence made him look upon Mrs. Besant as a great figure in the world, remarkable for learning, for world-wide experience, for titanic energy spent in great causes and for untiring service to this country, in education, in religion, and, now, in politics as well. He could not, therefore, bring himself to be in any way antagonistic to Mrs. Besant, and, although I shrank from some of her movements, he has often told me, "Do not do that. Stand by her". But Wacha and Sir Pherozeshah were absolutely irreconcilable. They never could conquer their suspicion of her; and therefore to the very end prevented Gokhale and others from having any bargain with her. They also tried to prevent Dadabhai Naoroji from becoming President of the All-India Home Rule League. Dadabhai, in a moment of enthusiasm joined it, and Wacha and Pherozeshah protested against it. I told you Gokhale was different altogether by nature; and therefore he paid Mrs. Besant, personal respect, and made us all pay her a great homage and respect and profound attention.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have said enough to show that between Gokhale and Mehta, the bond was one of mutual affection and respect and never-failing co-operation, and that they were united as colleagues. They studied national problems, and served the national cause with equal devotion and equal enthusiasm and worked in great causes so intimately, so loyally and so fruitfully on the whole.

1. S. V. RAMAMURTHI; a very distinguished member of the ICS; A capable and popular administrator, was an adviser to the Governor during the Advisers' rule in Madras State. Member, Planning Commission; Governor of Bombay; A distinguished mathematician.
2. JAMES FERGUSSION (1832-1907); M. P. (1854-58); and (1885-1906); Under-Secretary for India, (1866); Governor South Australia (1873); Governor of Bombay (1880-85); The Deccan Education Society named their College after Fergusson who was helpful and sympathetic.
3. SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN BART, I.C.S. (1838-1913) Judge Bombay High Court, (1885); Chairman, Governing Body, Deccan Education Society (1884-87); helped maintain the Congress organ *India*; in England, Member, British House of Commons (1893-1900.) President of the Indian National Congress, (1889 and 1910).
4. SIR THOMAS RALEIGH (1850)-Law Member Government of India. (1899-1904).
5. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN OF BIRMINGHAM (1836-1914); Mayor of Birmingham; represented Birmingham in Parliament from 1876, till his death in 1914.
6. LORD PALMERSTONE, Henry John Temple (1784-1865); Entered parliament in 1807, and sat till his death in 1865, representing the University of Cambridge Hampshire and Tiverton.
7. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE (1809-1898); Prime-Minister of England four times, (1874, 1880, 1886, 1892); Retired (1894).
8. V. KRISHNASWAMI IYER (1862-1911) High Court Vakil of note; Founder of the Madras Sanskrit College, the Venkataramana Free Ayurvedic dispensary and College; Chairman, Reception Committee; Congress, of 1908 in Madras Executive Councillor; Madras Government and Judge, Madras High Court. A great patriot and statesman.

9. **LORD MINTO (1847-1914)**; Governor General of Canada (1898-1904); Viceroy of India (1905-1910) is trans Joint author of Minto Morely Reforms.
10. **LORD MORELY OF BLACKBURN (1838-1923)**; A liberal statesman and writer Secretary of State of India (1905-1910); Joint author of Minto Morley reforms of 1909.
11. **LORD WILLINGDON 'Baron of Ratton (1866-1941)**; Governor of Bombay (1914); Governor of Madras (1919-24). Viceroy of India (1931-36).
12. **DR. ANNIE BESANT (1847-1933)**; An active Fabian in early life; coadjutor with Charles Bradlaugh, the Atheist; meets Blavatsky and joins the Theosophical Society (1889); President of the T. S. (1907-1933); President of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta, (1917); Founder, the Central Hindu College, Banaras, (1899) Started the Home Rule League; interned at Ooty and Coimbatore for her political activities, (1917); Organised the Home Rule movement for India (1917).
13. **LORD SINHA OF RAIPUR (1864-1928)**: Barrister, Calcutta Advocate General (1905-1909); The First Indian Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1909-1910); first Indian Under Secretary of State for India (1919); first Indian Governor of a province-Bihar (1927); President the Indian National Congress Bombay, (1915).
14. **HON. SIR LAWRENCE HUGH JENKINS (1857-1928)**; Judge Calcutta High Court (1896); Chief Justice, Bombay High Court (1899); Member. India Council (1909), Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court (1909).
15. **FOUNDED BY MADAME BLAVATSKY.** and Col. Olcott in. Its aim is to promote Universal Brotherhood and the study of comparative religions. It is based on the Hindu theory of 'Karma' and Reincarnation. Its International Headquarters are at Adyar, Madras.

LECTURE V

MEHTA'S COUNCIL WORK LANDED

Last week's talk at Royapettah was a kind of backward and forward glance through Mehta's life, in order to discover what relations existed between him and Gokhale. It was somewhat discontinuous, but all the same, it saved a good deal of labour, because in our journey through Mehta's life, we may take many things now for granted. It was in the year 1895 that a great many meetings were held in the city and Province of Bombay to congratulate Pherozeshah on his work in the Imperial Council. As is usual with him, all these laudations were pitched in a very high key and almost excited the envy of Englishmen. The English community did not generally like tall poppies in the Garden of India. An exasperated writer signing himself 'Englishman' was led to remark in a letter to the papers :

We have seen equally fine words used in commemorating the achievements of men whose names have lived in history. But we have never seen quite so many used all at once. We have only given our readers a few specimens of the panegyrics pronounced by Mr. Chandavarkar, Mr. Sayani¹, Dr. Bhalchandra,² Mr. Dinsha Wacha and others. If the late member of the Viceroy's Council had been Demosthenes,³ Socrates⁴ and Julius Caesar⁵ rolled into one, his admirers would scarcely have said more about him.

In the next year, however, owing to ill-health, Sir Pherozeshah resigned his seat in the Imperial Council, and then they did not know whom to send in his place. It was a kind of suspense as it were, of the membership and his seat remained practically vacant. There was a kind of reaction, apparently among the official members of the Council—after they had indulged in all sorts of abuse against him—when some Bill had to be referred to the Select Committee and Pherozeshah's name which was included in the Select Committee had to be removed because he had resigned. Handsome references were made to him and P. Anandacharn⁶, was put on that Committee. In suggesting the substitution, Sir Alexander Miller⁷ who was then Law Member said:

The Select Committee originally included the name of the honourable Mr. Mehta, who has since, I regret to say, ceased to be a member of this Council, and therefore I desire to fill up the place on the Committee which he has vacated. And I should like to take this opportunity of saying, speaking for myself alone, that I regret exceedingly the absence of the Honourable Member, whose extreme fairness and great attention to all the

business I have had to transact with him in the Select Committee have in my opinion, made Mr. Mehta one of the most useful members that I have met at this table. I have indeed more than once been obliged to differ from him in opinion on public matters, but with that I have nothing to do at present, nor did such differences detract in the least from my sense of his legal acumen and judicial fairness on general questions.

The reason for Pheroeshah's resignation was ill-health which broke down, and he seemed to have developed stone in the bladder which caused him acute pain. A man of great fortitude, people did not see from his external behaviour the acute suffering he underwent. He was advised to undergo an operation at once. It was thought that the operation would better be performed in England, and so they advised him to make a voyage which he did in the year 1897.

We have got to record now a feature of Sir Pheroeshah's life with which ordinary people in ordinary circumstances may not have much sympathy. Sir Pheroeshah's voyage to England, and his life there, were marked by great luxuriousness. He spent tons and tons of money in providing for himself with all kinds of comforts and luxuries. He took with him a doctor, and his family from Bombay, toured with him all over Europe, and when he went to England, settled in a house near London because he refused to go into a hospital. Doctors had to be sent for from Germany and they came. The operation was performed in the grandest possible style of expenditure, and as he went through Europe both before and after his recovery, the description of the style in which he made his triumphal journey is extremely interesting. His biographer Sir Homi Mody with all his partiality for his subject could not forbear to have a dig at the magnificence which characterised Pheroeshah's life in England.

Pheroeshah's mode of life during his travels was very much what it was in his own home in Bombay or Matheran. It was characterized by the same luxuriousness and extravagance which he loved to indulge in wherever he went. He travelled with an alarming quantity of luggage, and stayed at the best hotels. He would send for a hair-dresser from the smartest establishment in the place to shave him and do his hair. His fondness for cosmetics, face-washes and powders was well known, and he indulged in these feminine tastes to his heart's content. He affected the most expensive clothes, and was always particular in dressing for dinner even in out-of-the-way places, where tourists love to discard some of the conventions of civilization.

His mode of life described

With equal disregard of place and circumstance, Pherozezshah would keep to his usual habits. He would rise late, and spend his morning between breakfast and the performance of his elaborate toilet. He did not care for sight-seeing, and was indifferent to historical associations. He mostly kept his own company, and seldom mixed with people he met on his travels. His only enjoyment was a long drive before dinner. His fastidiousness with regard to food was extraordinary, and was persisted in wherever he went. Ordinary drinking water in a strange place he looked down with horror, and he would not touch it even in places noted for the purity of their water supply. He was also particular about his tea and tobacco, which he generally carried with him in a chest, regardless of customs duties and considerations of a like character which never seemed to trouble him. There were few things he relished more than a good cigar after dinner, when he retired to the seclusion of his room, and lay in an easy-chair with a pile of papers and some favourite volume near at hand. He always carried his Thackeray and Dickens with him, and a tattered edition of the Bible.

(Mody, p. 390-1.)

As a matter of fact in 1904, when we went to his house to talk with him, we were told with a great deal of gusto by his admirers that nobody could see him before 10'0 clock. His toilet occupied several hours. He himself told us how he never went out to receive anyone in the morning. Lord Curzon had then come for the second time. He said, "In all my life I have gone out early only once in my life and that was to receive Sir Henry Cotton".

The Secretary to the Bombay Governor wanted to see him and had to wait an hour or so because his toilet was not over. In fact people used to say that no lady ever minded her toilet so carefully as Pherozezshah did. There are some people who spend a lot of time in beautifying themselves. I know one or two. I remember a Chief Superintendent at an University examination. He came late by ten minutes almost every day because he had to do his *Pancha Kacham* scrupulously. I wonder whether there was a proportionate return for all the pains that people took. They grow so accustomed to this habit that later they like to say "I kept so and so waiting while I dressed". You know one of the men was Sir R. Venkata-Ratnam⁸. He was very difficult to see in his house without giving him ample notice. I remember because once he kept me waiting for more than half an hour and told me that he dressed all the time I waited. Some people are so very particular.

When Pherozezshah returned from his English tour, the vacancy in the Imperial Council has not been filled up

and there was a contest. He said "I don't care to go back to the Imperial Council." One of the influential barristers of the day N. N. Wadia relying on Mehta's promises to keep out of the contest entered the field. Unfortunately Mehta allowed himself to be persuaded by some flatterers to change his mind, and at the last moment, he himself announced his candidature. Ness Wadia said: "You asked me to stand and I stood. I have gone and seen people." "I am afraid I cannot withdraw now". They contested the seat. There was a good deal of angry criticism, most of which was justified. Finally he won, no doubt, by a majority of one, and his vote was amongst those that carried the day. He voted for himself and got in. There was much dispute then as to the ethics of this remarkable procedure. In an electioneering contest, is a man justified in voting for himself? There are some people who think that the candidates should arrange between themselves that neither should vote for himself. Of course that settles the matter between them. But there are cases, where one man is determined to vote for himself, and the other has to. There are some purists, however who maintain that it would not be quite proper for a man to vote for himself. There was a good deal of controversy over the ethics of it, and I may just mention for your information what our good friend Prof. Ramanathan⁹ said who on all these matters had very conscientious scruples as to what to do and what not to do. He used to vote for himself. His defence was "If I do not think I am a good candidate how can I ask another to vote for me?". I think what was good enough for Ramanathan, is good enough for the rest of us in these matters. As a matter of fact, the *Bombay Gazette* of the time referring to the whole controversy summed up in a magisterial way, and it is just as well that we go through the arguments one way or another in order to be sure what people have to say on this side or on that :

The mere fact of his standing in opposition to Mr. Wadia showed that Mr. Mehta desired to re-enter the Legislative Council, from which ill-health alone compelled him to retire two years ago and neglect to exercise the franchise in his own favour would have been inconsistent with his candidature as well as with commonsense. In the British Parliament, members are not supposed to vote upon private bill legislation which directly affects their own pecuniary interests, though they often do so. But it is no violation of the unwritten law of party politics for a minister to vote against a motion for the reduction of his own salary or against proposals threatening the position of the Government of which he is a salaried member. Still less does it offend against good taste for candidate for parliamentary or civic honours at home, or anywhere

else to vote for his own election. This is the common practice in Municipal ward-elections in this city, and we should like to see a candidate for one of the Corporation seats on the Standing Committee who would admit that he voted for other competitors and left the space on the paper against his own name blank! It is generally understood that when a man becomes a candidate for any public honour, he uses all legitimate means to secure it; and if he does not make the best of his opportunities, he is written down by his neighbours in terms similar to those which Dogberry¹⁰ accepted as a just description of himself.

About this time, there occurred an incident at Matheran which is quite characteristic of Pherozezshah's attitude. It was the year of plague, and it raged furiously and carried away victims right and left. Matheran was then controlled in all matters of health by a Superintendent who had very great powers assigned to him. He was a military man named Major Collie. He passed all sorts of regulations and rules and carried them out very rigidly. One of the rules that he made was that anyone who took up residence in the station should sign a very big statement about himself, giving all kinds of information, height, weight, vaccination etc., and finally say "I promise to report myself for being examined at the office of the Superintendent every day at such and such an hour". Pherozezshah went there after these regulations were in force for some time, and when this paper was placed in his hands, he read it and struck out the portion promising "to attend the office of the Superintendent, etc". The Superintendent said, "I will force you to come". "Try" said Mehta, and between them there was a tug for a few days. The Superintendent repeatedly summoned Pherozezshah, but Pherozezshah said, "I am perfectly willing to be examined if you come to my house". Major Collie then asked the Government what to do and the Plague Commissioner said "We have caught a Tartar. The law seems to be on his side, and he is a terrible fellow, for litigation. Don't bother about him", and so, the regulations had to give way. Major Collie said: "People like His Majesty's Judges are obeying the regulations, and who are you?" "Well, I am a different man" said Pherozezshah and won his point. He then wrote to the Press, quoting section after section, and in the end he got his point, and the Government exonerated him. They found by reference to the lawyers that the regulation commanding people to attend the office was illegal and exceeded the bounds of law.

Several such incidents are recorded of Pherozezshah. One however, is of interest as it is somewhat typical of the

LECTURE V

*Anglo-Indian trespassers of the
Mahabaleshwar Club cleared out.
State landlordism,
Bombay Land Revenue Bill.*

attitude assumed by the Anglo-Indians of those old days. I have seen occasionally, when I went through the Indian States, that we are sometimes invited to huge places, fine mansions, kept in great style, where, however Europeans have a club. It is usually found on enquiry that the club is not their property, but they have taken it away from the possession of the Maharaja, and then made regulations prohibiting Indians from entering it. Several such things have happened. Once, it seems, at Mahabaleshwar a certain set of Europeans took hold of the club premises which were public property, laid out a number of tennis-courts and enjoyed themselves and would not allow any Indian to come near. Pherozeshah said: "This is all arbitrary. The building is our property, and it is our money. The tennis-courts too were laid out at our expense, and you exclude us. I will see what the fun of the matter is". He wrote to the Press, complained, and got people to trespass; proceedings were started, and they had to move off to another place. That kind of thing happened more than once in his life.

In 1901, Mehta retired from the Imperial Legislative Council altogether. He got tired, and then Gokhale succeeded him. This matter I mentioned at the last talk. I referred also briefly in passing to a certain Land Revenue Bill, the discussion of which led to the famous walk-out. I then had no time to tell you what the Bombay Land Revenue Bill was. It is very interesting. The Government of Bombay made an insidious attempt to have the doctrine of state landlordism established on the soil, as it were. Attempts were made to do it openly before, but they were all foiled by the vigilance of the lawyers and land-lords. But at this time they slyly introduced a regulation, the nature of which was as follows: Whenever a land came for public auction, and Government sold it at public auction, they said, the buyer could not acquire full rights but could only hold it on a kind of temporary tenure. This was with regard to the agricultural land. Whenever the Collector chose he could change the tenant at will, so that, instead of becoming an absolute landlord by the sale, future buyers were to become tenants at the will of the State. This was believed by Mehta and his friends as an assertion on the sly, of the doctrine of state landlordism. Communists think that this is quite proper. At that time the doctrine had scarcely come above the horizon. The Government were trying to usurp

extraordinary powers and our friends resisted the law. Of course, Government disowned all such intention, but they carried out the law as it was introduced and that led to a great dispute to which I made reference last time. There is a passage here which will bear quotation. When Pherozeshah and his friends walked out of the Council Chamber, people thought it was a strange thing for moderately minded gentlemen to do. There was a good deal of criticism at the expense of Mehta and his friends, and the list, you remember, included Gokhale too. The *Times of India* made mock of the incident at the expense of these walkers-out. This is what it wrote. *The Times of India* in those days, was edited by Lovat Fraser¹¹ an extraordinary fellow for gifts of expression, and a master of satire. He wrote:

It is difficult to contemplate seriously the spectacle of Mr. Mehta striding towards the door, in order to emphasize the novel theory that of the true patriot is to run away, while the gentlemen who rather sheepishly stole after him only excite feelings of compassionate amusement. Mr. Mehta does not often make tactical mistakes, but he blundered rather badly in his pre-arranged exit from the Council Hall. Meant to be dramatic, his performance was merely comic. Mr. Mehta had evidently forgotten the wholesome lesson of Burke and the dagger¹², or he would never have permitted himself to move the Presidency to smiles, when he wished to be particularly impressive. He forgot, too, that little scenes of this description should at least convey the idea of spontaneity; whereas a good many people knew before hand what was going to happen. It is a risky experiment for public men to take to histrionics towards the end of their career. They may like Finsbury in the "The Wrong Box"¹³ rehearse the necessary walk with telling effect; but they are tolerably certain to come to grief in the stage management.....A toga would have been useful; it can be flung over the shoulders at the last reproachful pause on the threshold. But Mr. Mehta had not a toga at hand; his exit was anything but dignified; and somehow the shallow artifice fell flat. The Revenue Bill remains where it did and everybody is laughing. That is, generally the fate of these performances as Mr. Mehta's ingenious followers will do well to remember next time they meditate amateur theatricals.

In 1902, occurred a strange incident in Pherozeshah's career. Lord Kitchener¹⁴ who had triumphed in Egypt was appointed Commander-in-Chief of India and he came to this contry with a great deal of enthusiastic comment on all sides. There was no section of the Press, which did not hail the appointment as a great thing in Indian history. Pherozeshah did not like all this, and when he came to Bombay, the Corporation was naturally moved to present an address to Lord Kitchener. Pherozeshah thought that

he should put his foot down on this proposition. He went to the meeting and opposed the motion in a violent speech of about an hour and more, contending on the purely technical ground that, going over the long history of the Bombay Corporation he never could come across a case of an address being given to anybody except a Royal Personage, Governor of Bombay or the Viceroy or someone occupying a position similar to these. After a terrible fight in the Bombay Corporation, after much shouting and mutual abuse, Pherozezshah carried his point by a large majority, and once more he had a storm of abuse bursting upon his head by the Anglo-Indian Press. He did not mind a bit. He thought it was a good thing to have a fling at Kitchener & Co.

We now come to the year 1903—the year of the Madras Congress presided over by Lal Mohan Ghose. Our Madras friends were somewhat inclined to have a Congress Constitution. Most delegates in Madras held the opinion that it would be good to the Congress to have a constitution, that it had lived long enough now, to regulate its behaviour according to well-known rules. Pherozezshah was always an opponent of Constitution. Curiously enough he was described as the foremost constitutionalist by Gokhale. By constitutionalist we mean not a man who loves constitution but a man who is willing to obey a constitution when one is imposed on him. I do not suppose he was quite willing to indulge in the pastime of making a constitution for an institution like the Congress. Our good friends in Madras, *The Madras Standard* in particular and Parameswaran Pillai¹⁵ chiefly, wrote leading articles, and specially invited Mehta to come as he had neglected to come for several Congresses before. After all he came and when he came a funny thing happened. The usual practice is for the Presidential speech to be printed beforehand and for copies to be given to the leading members of the Congress, so that they would come in full knowledge of what the presidential oration was to be like. On this occasion Lal Mohan Ghose had indulged in some sarcastic flings against Mehta and others due to some kind of personal jealousy among the Bengal people that he would not mix with ordinary people. So, Lal Mohan Ghose had given expression to the general feeling against Mehta and had written in his presidential address that there were a few people who talked the language of patriots, but trod in the

footsteps of despots, and finally spoke of Mehta, nearly to him personally, as a political *yogin*. Pherozezshah received a copy of it beforehand. He thought "I will steal a march over him", and when the President had to be elected, he moved the election of the President. In making his speech for electing Lal Mohan Ghose he alluded to this fling somewhat covertly, obviously to the enjoyment of all, and turned the tables on Lal Mohan Ghose himself for after his famous contest he himself retired, and never came to the Congress for many years. He practically defended himself with such skill that Lal Mohan Ghose felt fully embarrassed and confused, and when his turn came for reading the address, he did not know what to do, whether to strike out those passages to which Mehta had already replied or proceed with what he had written. So far as I can remember he closed the printed address and said a few sentences by way of hinting at the idea but failing to elaborate it. At the end they shook hands, I remember.

At that meeting—it was the Subjects Committee meeting—a good number of us were gate-crashers. I remember going in although I was not a member; we broke through the volunteers' lines and appeared on the dais. At one stage, our friends V. Krishnaswami Aiyer and P.R. Sundara Iyer¹⁶ took charge of a proposition demanding that the Congress should have a constitution, and Gokhale himself who was present favoured the idea. Pherozezshah stood unmoved, and when all the fire-works were over on each side, he made a short speech. "No constitution for the Congress. Not yet! Not yet!" he said. The point was not pressed. The majority were on his side, and we gave the thing up. But there was a good deal of criticism of the way he handled the affair and played the chief part. At that time, our friend G. Parameswaran Pillai of *The Madras Standard* made himself famous. I want to read to you a certain passage where he came to the rescue of Mehta against all his critics. He had a very nice leading article in his peculiar style. I shall read the article from *The Madras Standard* :

Mr. Mehta thinks that the word despot has been applied to him. We do not know who did so; but in our opinion, he is anything but a despot. He is a leader of men, but not of the despotic sort. In his own sphere, he is a Rupert of debate, but with none of Rupert's defects in the field of action. He is great, but not as the man to whom the term Rupert of debate was first applied by Lytton,

LECTURE V 'The Madras Standard' praised Mehta.
Mehta knighted; Tribute by 'The Times of India.'

the novelist and statesman. He beats his opponents by the weight of his facts, by the overwhelming force of his arguments. A man who is nurtured, and lives in the atmosphere of debate, where all are alike and free to use their own weapons, cannot certainly be a despot. Even if Mr. Mehta be a despot, we would rather have the Congress led by him than by the most popular of our democrats. If the Congress is to be under the despotism of one man, it will be to its advantage to be under the despotism of such a man as Mr. Mehta, perhaps the ablest and the most picturesque of Congress leaders. He can fire the imagination and stir the hearts of Congressmen more effectively than anybody else who is a Congressman. By the prudent vigour of his counsels, by his tact, by his judgment, and by his deep knowledge both of the condition of the people and the working of the machinery of the Government, he would lead the Congressmen with success, and give satisfaction to the public at large. It is better to be led by such a despot than by a whole generation of democratic leaders.

I suppose in writing this, Parameswaran Pillai was led by antipathy to local leaders than by anything else, for he was not known for any qualities of hero-worship.

In the year 1904 when the Birthday Honours were published, Pherozeshah appeared as a K. C. I. E., and at that time the rejoicings amongst his friends and amongst those who usually had been ranged on his side in politics were of a very high and enthusiastic kind. I want to read to you what *The Times of India* said on this occasion.

It is good for you to see how even English people who usually are your opponents, on occasions when your real merits come in for examination are generous and do not stint their language. They may fight you on most occasions, but when your personal qualities are under scrutiny, they are not wanting in appreciation.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the list is the Knight Commandership of the Order of the Indian Empire conferred upon the Honourable Mr. Pherozeshah Mehta. There have been frequent occasions when we have found ourselves in antagonism to Mr. Mehta upon controversial questions. But we have never failed to recognise that he is unquestionably the ablest representative of the non-official native community now in public life in India. This Presidency is proud to claim him as one of her sons. But his reputation and his work alike extended over the whole community. To great experience, sound judgement, a cool head and an exceptional gift of eloquence, he adds a sturdy courage in opposition and a resolute and unswerving independence which have long earned for him the admiration of his supporters and the respect of those who sometimes differ from his views. Time has mellowed and chastened the perhaps unrestrained ardour of

Mr. Mehta's earlier years, but one honourable characteristic has been exemplified throughout his whole career. He has never stooped to palter with his own convictions in order to earn official approval, but has fearlessly fought for the right as he conceived it. An alert and strenuous antagonist, he has never forgotten that meed of courtesy to opponents which is one of the finest traits of English public life, and in that respect, as in many other ways, he has set an example which some of his compatriots might well profit by...Without him the Bombay Corporation as it exists today would be a body commanding in an appreciably less degree the confidence of the public. Had he done nothing else than exalt his high ideal of fine citizenship before his countrymen, he would have deserved well of the Government. And in commending him to the notice of the Crown, Lord Curzon has shown that generous appreciation of great ability and strength and honesty of purpose, which one would have expected from a statesman of his reputation.

People said at the time that Pherozeshah having received this signal honour at the hands of Lord Curzon would lower his flag and cease to oppose Governmental measures and would now range himself as some others have done on the side of the authorities. Only a few months passed and Pherozeshah gave striking evidence that he was not one of that kind. About the middle of 1904, it was known that Lord Curzon having gone home on leave was about to return for his second term of Viceroyalty, and the Bombay Corporation was moved to present him the usual address of welcome. Pherozeshah who began by admiring Lord Curzon and praising him in public had discovered that Curzon's temper and qualities had changed and that he had become a very bad type of bureaucrat,—thoroughly anti-Indian,—and did not deserve this honour. So, he opposed this address. He went into the Corporation and denounced Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty in the latter part of it. He said "This is not the man to be honoured. He has already received a customary address when he went. Why give him a second address? I oppose this" and his speech was delivered with all his usual vigour. He was taking a step from which even his friends shrank. He was at that time extremely unpopular, and his friends and associates warned him against the course he was taking. Unfortunately he found that the success of the motion was not quite certain. He found half the Council for him and half against. So he thought of an expedient. He said, "I will move an amendment. Instead of giving him an address as the Governor General and head of the Indian Government, make this address an address to the Viceroy and Represent-

tative of the Crown, "I will support it". They refused to accept the amendment. So the thing had to be voted—27 and 26; 26 for Mehta. He lost by one. The account of the proceedings was given to me—I forget now by whom, perhaps not by Mehta but by Wacha. My recollection is that it was reported at the time that the vote was calculated by Mehta and arranged so that there was one against himself. He had so carefully manipulated things that he would lose it only by a majority of one, so that when Lord Curzon knew about the voting, he should if he had any sense of decency, refuse to receive the address against which there was such strong opposition. This is not put in the biography written by Sir Homi Mody. I heard also another story about the same. It was in the middle of 1904. At the end of the year 1904 he became Chairman of the Congress Reception Committee and we met him more than once. This was what happened. When Lord Curzon came for his second term of Viceroyalty receptions and dinners were accorded to him. Mehta refused to appear at the levees and receptions and came only to the dinner given by one of his Bombay friends. He told us he wanted to look at this fellow and see how he took all these stings. It would appear that where Curzon sat, Mehta was sufficiently near him to observe him. He looked on certainly, but Mehta never looked at him. At the end of the dinner, finding that Mehta took no notice of him, Lord Curzon came to where Mehta had drifted, far away, came and sat near him, and before he began to talk, he nearly sobbed. He asked Mehta: "Why do you persecute me? What have I done that you should turn your back on me in this fashion? What is it?" Mehta said: "We were old chums at Oxford. When you came over as Viceroy, I did every honour towards you. I did everything I should to show that I was a friend. You became arrogant. You became unbearable. And you refused to recognise that I was a Member of the Imperial Council when I was away at a hill station. You wrote through your Private Secretary. You did not care for me. I want to show that I have teeth also". I think he told us rather gleefully that Lord Curzon murmured a kind of apology and left him. Here again I do not vouch for the authenticity of the story, but I think it was widely believed at that time. I think that a great part of it must have been true.

In 1904, Sir Henry Cotton presided over the Congress and Pherozeshah was Chairman of the Reception Committee.

It was his by right of his eminence. I will dismiss the personal aspect quickly. He gave the Madras delegates a small tea-party. Mr. G. A. Natesan¹⁷ was probably responsible for the idea; Krishnaswami Aiyer, Veeraraghavachari,¹⁸ Gopaldaswami Mudaliar¹⁹, C. V. Krishnaswami Iyer, Ramanathan and Venkatarangam²⁰ were present. It was a small but interesting gathering. Pherozeshah spoke about his devotion to the civic business of the City and how he held himself bound to attend all the meetings. He said "I value my work for the Bombay Corporation more than anything else in my life. Our Corporation sits every Thursday and I accept no engagement however remunerative on Thursday and the Judges of the High Court know my ways and would not take up any case on Thursday". He asked Krishnaswami Aiyer to do likewise. "Whatever public business you undertake, give yourself to it in this spirit. Consider that has precedence even over your profession". That is the part of his advice that I remember most.

Now, about his great speech as Chairman of the Reception Committee. I would recommend everyone to read the whole of that speech as it is full of interest. I will first read to you what *The Times of India* said of that speech. It is a speech worth reading as literature of the old days:

It is no flattery to say that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta's address, though bearing signs of hasty preparation—one portentous sentence of three hundred and fifty words must have left the worthy knight breathless—was incomparably the better effort of the two. It was witty and pungent, and contained one or two clever home-thrusts; the delightful quotation of Sir Joseph Bowley's point of view was one of the greatest things heard on the Congress platform for many a long day. We can forgive much to Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in that he is never dull, though it is really time he read more poetry and allowed certain overworked verses a little rest and when we discover him modestly comparing himself to Oliver Cromwell²¹, we find ourselves murmuring that perhaps a more suitable standard of comparison is found in Boanergers.²²

Shall I read to you that portentous sentence of 350 words, packed full with ideas and sentiments of the time? He speaks, first of all, of his faith as a Congressman. Confession of faith, he calls it. It may sound a little old fashioned, but please listen to it with sympathy, and also remember that I am reading an address of the year 1904,

LECTURE V

*Mehta's portentous sentence
of three hundred and fifty words!*

which is ancient in comparison with modern times. This is what he said and that brings into prominence another great man of the time, Ranade.

I am an inveterate. I am a robust optimist like Mahadeo Govind Ranade. I believe in divine guidance through human agency. It may be the fatalism of the East, but it is an active not a passive fatalism, a fatalism which recognizes that the human wheels of the machinery must actively work to fulfil their appointed task. My humility saves me from the despair that seizes more impatient souls like those who have recently preached a gospel of despondency. I always seek hope and consolation in the words of the poet :

"I have not made the world, and He that has made it will guide."

* * * * *

My steadfast loyalty is founded upon this rock of hope and patience; seeking the will of Providence, like Oliver Cromwell, in dispensations rather than revelations, seeing God's will like him in fulfilment of events. I accept British rule as Ranade did, as a dispensation so wonderful, a little island set at one end of the world establishing itself in a far continent as different as could be, that it would be folly not to accept it as a declaration of God's will,

(C.Y.C. p. 813.)

He spoke of the hope expressed by the Viceroy that there may be two parties, England and India. There was a kind of idea that in England all persons should unite on the subject of India, usually on the subject of foreign policy. Liberals and Conservatives unite as regards their foreign policy, and regard India as foreign to that extent.

Such a hope is unreasonable and impracticable while the pledges about equality of the Great Proclamation²³ of 1858 are kept in the letter and broken in the spirit; while the distinctions of race, colour and creed abolished by our Magna Carta²⁴ are re-introduced under the plausible guise of being distinctions based on the distinctive merits and qualifications inherent in race; while the burdens of the Imperial Empire, which should be borne by the Empire including the Colonies, are disproportionately and heavily thrown on Indian finances; while attempt after attempt is made to pass on to the Indian Exchequer military expenditure supposed to be necessitated by the vulnerable position of India, but really designed to meet supposed Imperialistic exigencies; while the Indian subjects of His Majesty are allowed to be deprived of their rights of equal citizenship, in the undisguised interests of the white races against the dark, in a way which responsible Ministers of the Crown have gravely declared furnished a just cause of war against the Boers; while the economic relations between the two countries are adjusted more in the interests of the predominant than of the impotent partner; while the development of the industries of the country is neglected or hampered for fear of competition with English industries; while the "consuming love" for India in the breasts of the rulers has more the colour and character of affection towards a foster-

child or a step-son than the equal and engrossing love for a natural son; while the results of a really *bona fide* and laborious Commission like the Public Service Commission imperfect as they were, are attempted to be set aside and restricted by autocratic action, while the percentages of the admission of natives into the public service are estimated, not by the only true test of comparison with the promises made and rights established after public enquiry and deliberate action, but by the increases and decreases with those of years long previous to such pledges and promises, totally ignoring the recognition of subsequent years of the "Just claims of the natives of India to higher and more extensive employment in the public service" as stated in the Resolution of the Government of India appointing the Public Service Commission; while the people are being emasculated by the wholesale operation of the Arms Act to the future detriment of the interests of both England and India; while the small modicum of independence possessed by the Indian Universities is ruthlessly annihilated and the Universities turned substantially into departments of Government, so that the breeding of the discontented B.A., "that distinct political danger" may be stopped or limited, and while—but it is not needful to go on any further. (Loud cheers) * * * I wish to speak with all respect for these disinterested advisers; but I cannot help comparing them to that delightful 'Poor man's friend,' Sir Joseph Bowley, so admirably depicted by Dickens: 'Your only business, my good fellow, is with me. You needn't trouble yourself to think about anything. I will think for you; I know what is good for you; I am your perpetual parent. Such is the dispensation of an all-wise Providence.....What man can do I do, I do my duty as the Poor Man's Friend and Father; and I endeavour to educate his mind" by inculcating on all occasions the one great lesson which that class requires, that is Dependence on Myself. They have no business whatever whatever with themselves. (C.Y.C. pp. 814-16.)

This quotation is from *The Chimes*, a novel by Dickens. Now, I come to the last quotation.

At first, the Congress was purely political. A little while later, the Indian Social Conference was added. Thereafter the Industrial Conference and Exhibition was included and then we had three branches of this national gathering, political, social reform and industrial.

Laden with these gains, the Congress comes back to "its own native land." I well remember the day when we launched it anxiously, but hopefully, 19 years ago. When it came back to us in 1889, a babe only five years old, it had already broadened and strengthened wonderfully. It again comes back to us fifteen years after, a handsome lad on the point of attaining his majority. It has not escaped some jealousy and rivalry. Other children whom we are assured were excessively pretty and handsome have been pressed upon us as specially deserving our love and affection. Well, gentlemen, our hearts are large and our minds broad and what we have done is that we have incontinently adopted them all. Cheers). One you will see in this very pandal, a gentle and solemn little lady in a

grave gathering assembling immediately after us. Another you will see robust and vigorous, decorated with jewels and ornaments wrought in this very country, on the Oval yonder. But, gentlemen, our affections remain unchanged from our eldest-born, and we refuse to deprive him of his rights of primogeniture (Applause).

(C.Y.C. p. 824.)

Before I take leave of this Congress, I shall refer to what took place in the Subjects Committee, for it brings some prominent characteristics of Mehta and the enormous and almost unprecedented influence he had over the members of the Congress to whatever party they belonged. Here is a wonder-man. We may differ from him now and then, but it is impossible to shake off his influence or authority. Even Tilak²⁵, who feared none, and Lajapat Rai²⁶, even these people were afraid. When they came before him, their attitude was deferential and listened to him; and even when they differed from him spoke in tones of modest and shrinking difference of opinion. They did not hurl back word for word. I remember once in 1904, finding Tilak not amongst his party, and wishing to say something against his point of view, Mehta asked, "Where is Tilak? Bring him. I cannot go on without him". Tilak was hanging about the place and he talked very politely and respectfully.

Then the question of the Constitution came up in 1904. Lala Muralidhar²⁷, "Lion of the Punjab", moved the proposition in the Subjects Committee and he complained: "Time after time, we bring this proposition and although we are thoroughly convinced about it, Sir Pherozeshah comes and turns it down at the last moment. The matter does not progress. We consider it vital to the Congress". Then Pherozeshah made a strong speech. "People think I am against this", said Pherozeshah. "Yes, you do!" cried Muralidhar from his place. "Do I? and why do you think I do?" "Because of your great personality!" said Muralidhar. Pherozeshah was not at all taken a back, but merely turned a full circle around, and then coming back to the position said, "Now, gentlemen, how can I help my personality?" (Laughter). The proposition was lost by an over-whelming majority as before. There was not much argument by using the word 'personality.' A cloud of prejudice against him had put a powerful weapon into his hand.

Now only one thing more—the most important incident in his life! In 1905, the Prince and Princess of Wales²⁸ visited India. During the violent disturbances and agitation that took place all over the country, it was

believed that if the Prince and Princess visited the country, people would be calm and be restored to their normal state of loyalty and so forth. We have no idea of loyalty at all in that sense towards the line of Hanover. Now that the Prince and Princess came, they were to be received by Bombay at first. They said the Mayor will be the first person to receive Their Royal Highnesses and it must be by their First Citizen. Mehta was the President for the third time. A most extraordinary thing happened. A few days before the visit was to take place the whole city was busy decorating, raising platforms and preparations were made. Pherozeshah asked the Secretary to send a letter to the Bombay Government, in which precedents had been looked up and examined and it had been put on record that when the Royal personage came several years ago, the Mayor, the Commissioner and the head of the Improvement Trust were the first persons to receive. Government did nothing. Four days before the visit an announcement was made to the effect that so and so will be present at the Pandal to see Their Royal Highnesses but amongst the names those of the Mayor and the Commissioner did not appear, and the whole City was in a blaze of "fury". The Corporation has been slighted an affront has been flung upon it, and we won't submit to it, - they thought; and so he summoned the Corporators back and put the steel of obstinacy to fight this out to the bitter end. What I have heard is that since nothing was done two days before all over the city, structures and pandals were dismantled, and word was sent round that nobody would appear in the streets, no acclamation and no addresses and Their Majesties would have to pass through a city of solemn silence. Then, the Government woke up, at the last moment, but they were still to the day previous and Mehta said "nothing doing". Government took fright and sent the Chief Secretary to Sir Pherozeshah's house. The story is that Mehta told him "I shall be in my office room at 12 O'clock. Come and see me there". This is not mentioned in Sir Homi Mody's book. He wanted to slight him. The Chief Secretary went to his office and waited there. Mehta asked "What is your business?" "The Government wish me to tell you that they will alter all the arrangements and give you the place of honour" he said:

"If that is so, you better go back. I will ask the Corporation to meet me in an hour," replied Mehta. The

official put in "You must send word 'Yes or no'. Only one of these two."

At the Corporation meeting, the word 'Yes' came.

Then the visit took place, and Mehta read the address in his usual stentorian voice, with the proper emphasis, proper accent and so on that Their Royal Highnesses were so pleased and they bade him to come and see them in private. It goes without saying he impressed his personality on Their Majesties.

NOTES

1. SIR RAHMATULLAH SAYANI (1847-1902) Solicitor, Bombay; Member, Bombay Corporation (1896); Fellow and Syndic, Bombay University; Member, Bombay Legislative Council (1888) and Imperial Legislative Council (1896).
2. DR. SIR BALA CHANDRA KRISHNA (1852); Distinguished medical practitioner, Bombay; (1885); Member Bombay Legislative Council (1902); Member Bombay Corporation; Fellow Bombay University Dean Faculty of Medicine.
3. DEMOSTHENES (383-322 BC): The Great Athenian orator and statesman, leader of the Hellenic world; awakened his countrymen to the menace of Philip of Macedon; in a battle with Philip the Greeks were defeated; Demosthenes committed suicide to avoid falling into the hands of Philip.
4. SOCRATES (470-399 BC); exposed the contradiction of popular ideas about morals and politics; he was accused of corrupting the morals of the young and introducing new divinities in place of those recognised by the state. He was awarded death penalty. A month later he drank the hemlock. In his last days he was discussing the immortality of the soul with a group of his disciples. His wife Xanthippe was a shrew.
5. CAIUS JULIUS CAESAR (B.C.302-44); Roman soldier and statesman; conquered Gaul (France), Britain, Asia Minor, Africa, and Spain; On account of rivalry and jealousy, his friends, the conspirators, Caska, Bhutus and Cassius, murdered him.
6. P. ANANDACHARLU (1843-1908); Lawyer, Madras High Court; Member Municipal Council, Madras; Member, Imperial Legislative Council; President, The Indian National Congress, (1891); Hon'y Secretary, Madras Mahajana Sabha.

7. SIR ALEXANDER EDWARD MILLER (1828-1903): Legal Member, Viceroy's Executive Council (1891-96).
8. SIR R. VENKATARATNAM NAIDU (1862-1939); A distinguished educationist, and Brahmo; Leader of the anti nautch movement; Principal Maharaja's College Pithapuram, Vice Chancellor, Madras University.
9. PROFESSOR K. B. RAMANATHAN (1862-1927): Distinguished educationist, and English scholar; Principal, Victoria College, Palghat; First President of the Triplicane Urban Co-operative Stores; Professor of English, Pachaiappa's College, Madras and Maharaja's College, Trivendrum (1920-24); Member of the University Commission of which Brown was Chairman. Toured great Britain, France and Switzerland.
10. DOGBERRY, a stupid egotistical constable in Shakespeare's *Much ado about nothing*. One who does not make the best use of his opportunities.
11. LOVAT FRASER (1871-1926); Editor, *The Times* of London; visited India at the time of the visit of Prince and Princess of Wales in 1905, and at their Coronation Durbar in 1911; author of *India under Lord Curzon and Ayer, At Delhi etc.*
12. BURKE AND THE DAGGER: during the French Revolution, Edmund Burke threw down a dagger on the floor of the House of Commons, exclaiming "There is French fraternity for you. Such is the weapon which the French Jacobin would plunge into the heart of our beloved king" Sheridan spoilt the dramatic effect and set the house in a roar by his remark, "The Gentleman I see has brought his knife with him, but where is his fork?"
13. FINSBURY IN THE WRONG BOX: R. L. Stevenson, Lloyd and Osborne wrote the novel "THE WRONG BOX," one of the brothers in the novel, Joseph and Masterman Finsbury, had to disguise his appearance and mannerism as a part of the plot to win a large inheritance.
14. LORD KITCHENER of Khartoum; Horatio Herbert Kitchener, (1850-1916): A British soldier saw active Service in Egypt For his successful campaign he was made raistd to the peerage and called Lord Kitchener of Khartoum (1898); Commander in Chief of India (1902-09) During the first great world war he left for Russia to organise the army in cruiser *Hampshire* which was wrecked and Kitchener was killed.
15. G. PARMESWARAN PILLAI (1864-1903); Editor, *The Madras Standard* and author of *Representative Indians*,

NOTES V

16. P. R. SUNDARAIAER; A contemporary and friend of V. Krishnaswamy Iyer a leading lawyer who was raised to the Bench.
17. G. A. NATESAN (1873-1949): Editor, *THE INDIAN REVIEW* and an intrepid publisher of national literature; Member, Madras Corporation; and the Senate of the Madras University; Member, Council of State and member Tariff Commission.
18. M. VEERARAGHAVACHARI (1857-1906); Teacher Pachayaippas College; Secretary, Madras Mahajana Sabha and joint Editor of the *Hindu*.
19. GOPALASWAMI MUDALIAR; an advocate, Secretary of the Madras Mahajana Sabha and a staunch Congressman.
20. VENKATARANGA RAO; an earnest student of public affairs and the Secretary of the Madras Landholders Association.
21. OLIVER CROMWELL (1599-1655); Member of Parliament (1628-29); In the Civil War he won a victory at Naseby As a member of the Rump he signed the warrant for the execution of King Charles, I (1649) Cromwell refused the crown that was offered to him.
22. BONARGES: a noisy preacher or shouting orator (from the Greek word meaning sons of wrath); a loud mouthed vociferous preacher or orator.
23. THE GREAT PROCLAMATION (1858): After the Indian War of Independence of 1857, the British Parliament passed an Act under which the administration of India by the East India Company was vested in the British Crown. The change in the governance of India was ushered under the Governor General Lord Canning on November 1st, 1858 by a great Durbar held at Allahabad, when the proclamation of Queen Victoria was read. This was repeated in all provincial capitals like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. This great Proclamation was rightly called Magna Carta or the great charter as it promised a just and righteous government to the people of India.
24. MAGNA CARTA: This Latin word means the Great Charter. This refers to the document which secured national liberties to the English people which was signed and sealed by King John of England in 1215; it declared that no man should be punished without fair trial, that punishment must be proportionate to the offence and that justice may not be denied, delayed or sold to any man.
25. BALGANGADHAR TILAK, 'LOKAMANYA' (1856-1920): Mathematics professor, Fergusson College, Poona; Editor, *The Mahratta* and *Kesari*. A nationalist leader

who took a leading part in the Surat Congress of 1907. Imprisoned for sedition and sent to Mandalay. Author of *Gita Rahasya*, *The Orion* and *The Arctic Home of the Vedas*.

26. LALA LAJPAT RAI (1865-1928): Pleader, Lahore; a prominent member of the Arya Samaj; a follower of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak; collected Rs. 5 lakhs for the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore; took a leading part in organising relief of distress of all kinds; Member of the Congress Deputation to England (1905); deported to Burma for sedition (1907); to escape political harassment he spent 8 years in America where he conducted a paper called *The Young India*; President, Calcutta Spl. Congress (Sep. 1920), which adopted the non-cooperation programme; author of *Unhappy India*, *Arya Samaj*, etc.
27. LALA MURALIDHAR: A pleader from Ambala, Punjab; "Assumed the role of a jester to the Congress".
28. PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES: There is a bronze plaque on the pedestal of the statue of the Prince of Wales standing in front of the Prince of Wales Museum, in Bombay depicting the scene in which Sir Pherozeshah Mehta as President of the Corporation is seen reading the welcome address to the Prince and Princess of Wales, striking a majestic pose while standing with his one foot on the step leading to the dais.

LECTURE VI

UNIVERSITIES ACT OF 1904 - OFFICIALISING UNIVERSITIES

When I spoke last at Royapettah, you remember my fleeting reference to the Universities' Act passed in 1904. It was regarded, all over the country, as an attack on the independence of the Universities and as proceeding from a desire on the part of Lord Curzon who was a Prince of bureaucrats to bring the Universities more under the Government domination than they had been before, and to make the curricula and the teaching in the Universities more conformable to the bureaucratic ideas of Government. It was, therefore, attacked by the politicians with extraordinary vigour. Even a man like Gokhale, whose heart was for education, was compelled by the force of circumstances to take a political view and in the Imperial Legislature attacked this piece of legislation with vehemence. His speech on the Universities' Bill is generally regarded as one of his best performances, not only most powerful but most representative of the public opinion of the country. In doing so, he was even condemned by some pronounced educationalists as being unable to rise above political level, and view educational problems in their true light. One of those who took that view and admonished Gokhale in public was his own Sanskrit Professor, Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar¹. He was a great man in his own line; he was the highest representative of Oriental Research in this country and was acknowledged by Western scholars as competent to deal with all problems of historical research. He particularly lamented in the Imperial Council the way in which Gokhale took a non-educational and political view of the legislation so much so that Gokhale departed from his practice and mentioned Dr. Bhandarkar in his own reply. But the whole of this had a sequel.

The Legislation, having been rushed through against the bitterest opposition, was soon brought into effect. Lord Curzon sent round circulars to Provincial Governments asking them to bring the provisions of the Act into operation as promptly as they could and remodel the Senates and Syndicates, so that they might attack all University problems in the manner desired by him. In doing so, the Local Governments, each acted as seemed best to them. Some took legal advice, others did not do



Pherozeshah Mehta in middle age

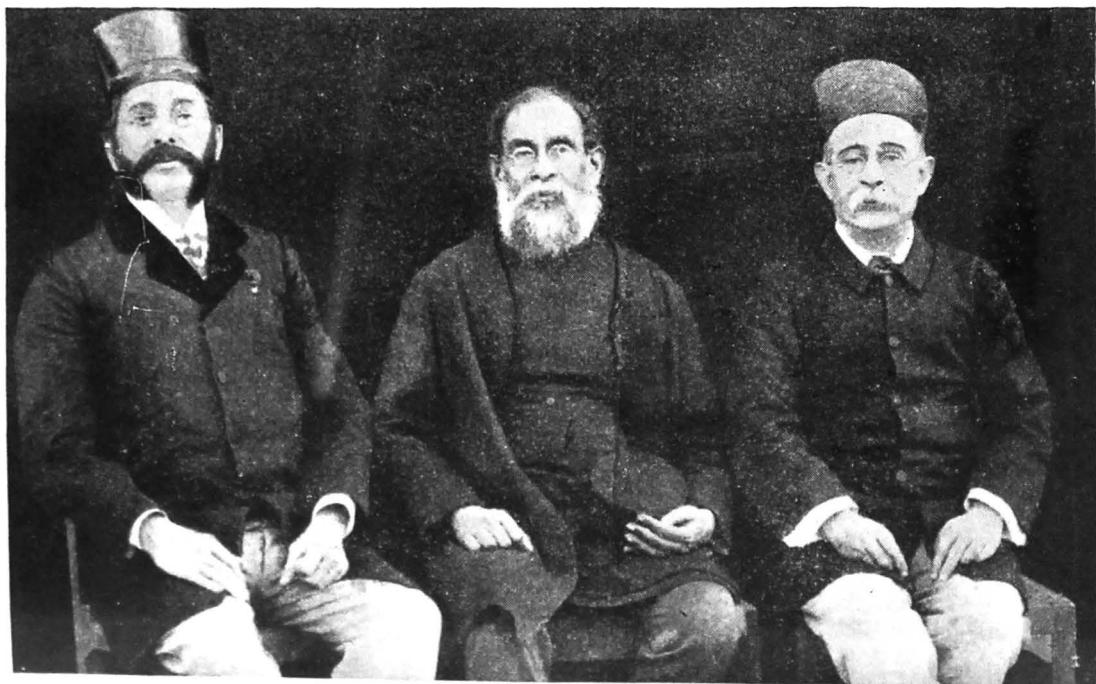


Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri
The author of these lectures

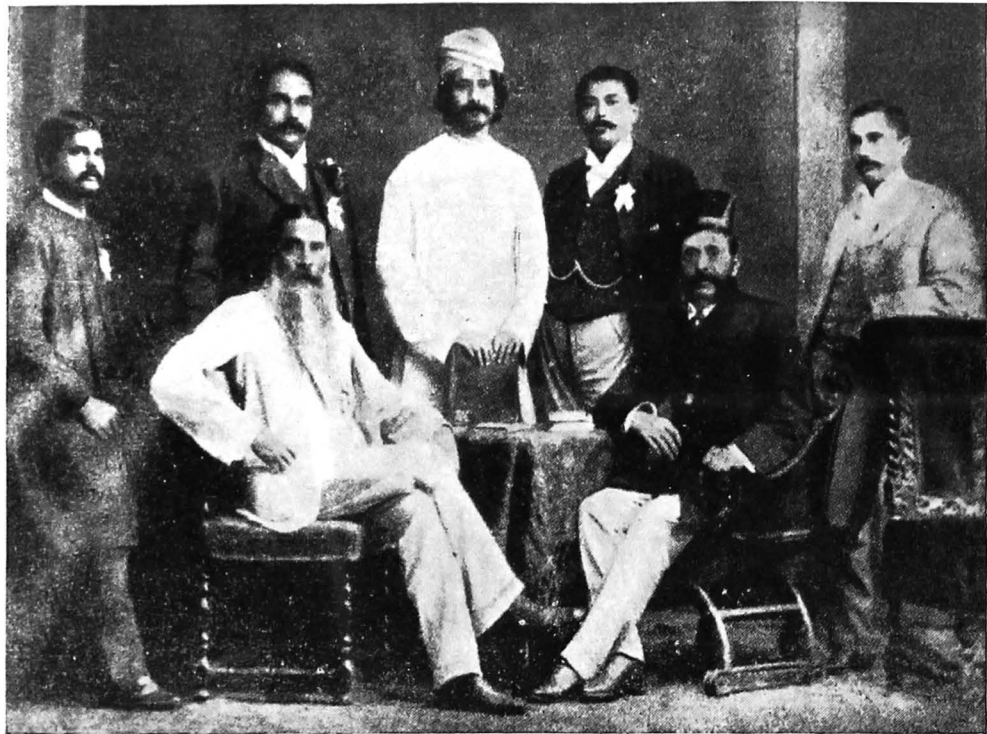


THE FIRST INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1885, BOMBAY.
Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta is seated 6th from right with a tall hat.

Three Founders of the Congress, 1885.



Sir Pherozeshah, Sir Surendranath, Sir Dinshaw Wacha.



THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, CALCUTTA, 1890.

Seated from the right: Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Womesh C. Bannerji
Rabindranath Tagore is standing in the centre



INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, BOMBAY, 1904.

Standing: Fifth From left — G. K. Gokhale.

Sitting on Chairs; 1. Sir Dinshaw E. Watcha, 2. Sir William Wedderburn,
3. Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta, Chairman, Reception Committee. 4. Sir Henry Cotton, President,
5. Sir Surendranath Banerji



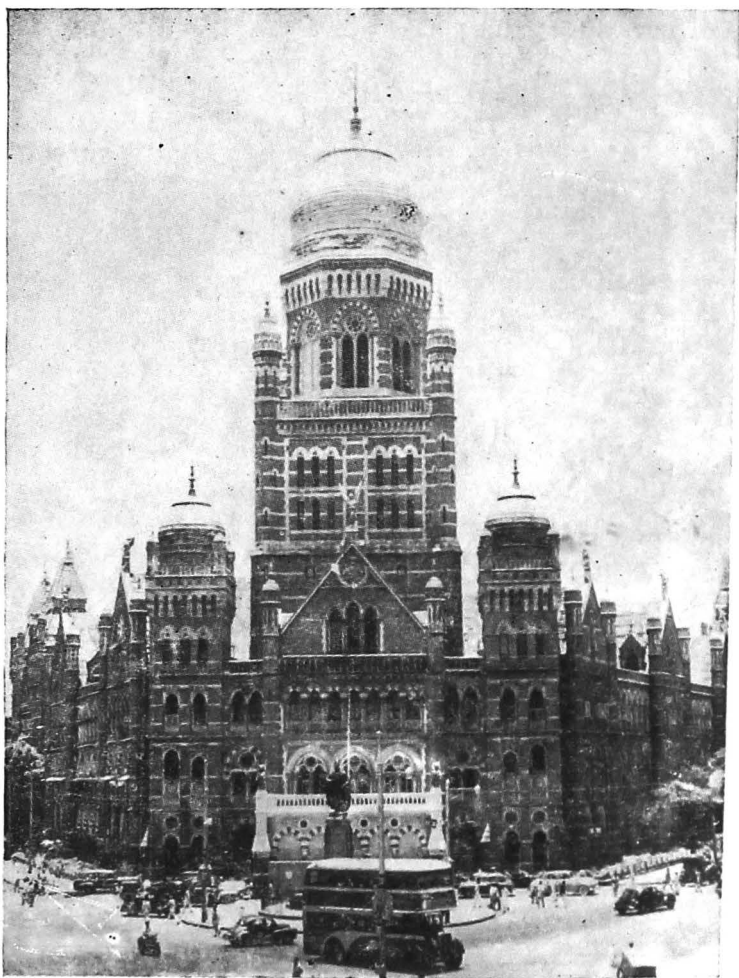
Statue of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in front of the Corporation Building, Bombay.



INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, BOMBAY, 1904.

Standing: Fifth From left — G. K. Gokhale.

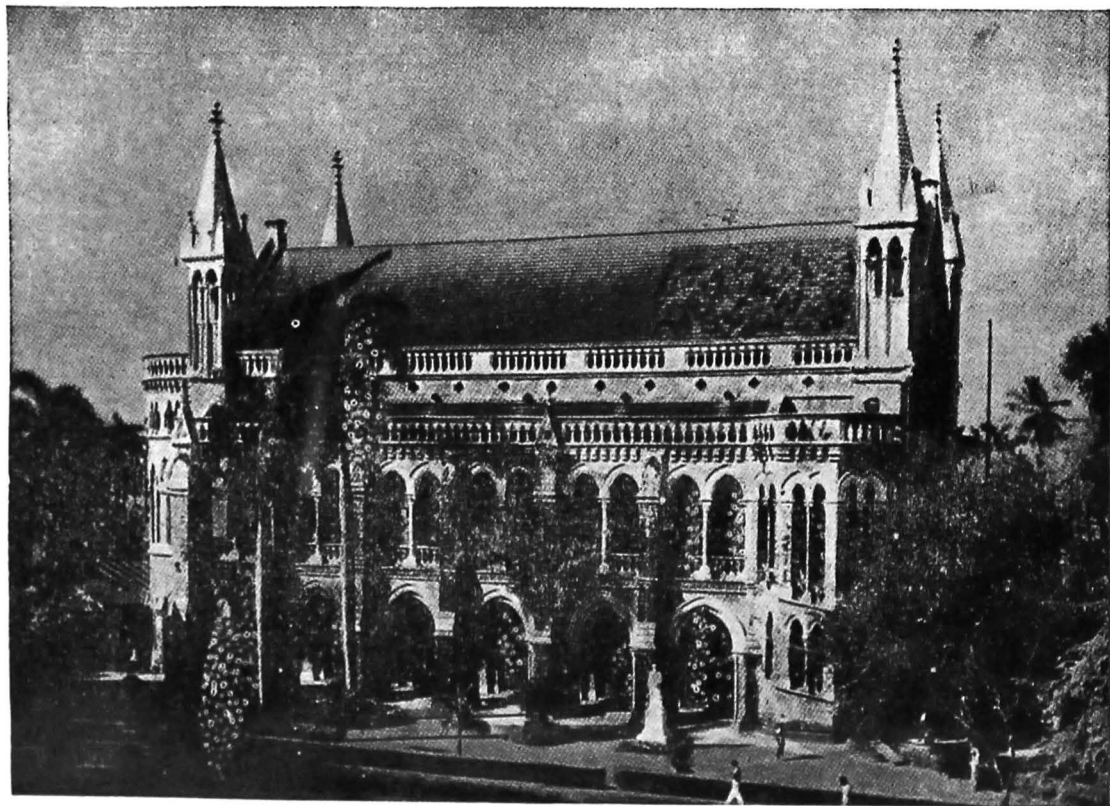
Sitting on Chairs; 1. Sir Dinshaw E. Wacha, 2. Sir William Wedderburn,
3. Sir Pherozechah Mehta, Chairman, Reception Committee. 4. Sir Henry Cotton, President,
5. Sir Surendranath Banerji



The Corporation Building, Bombay.



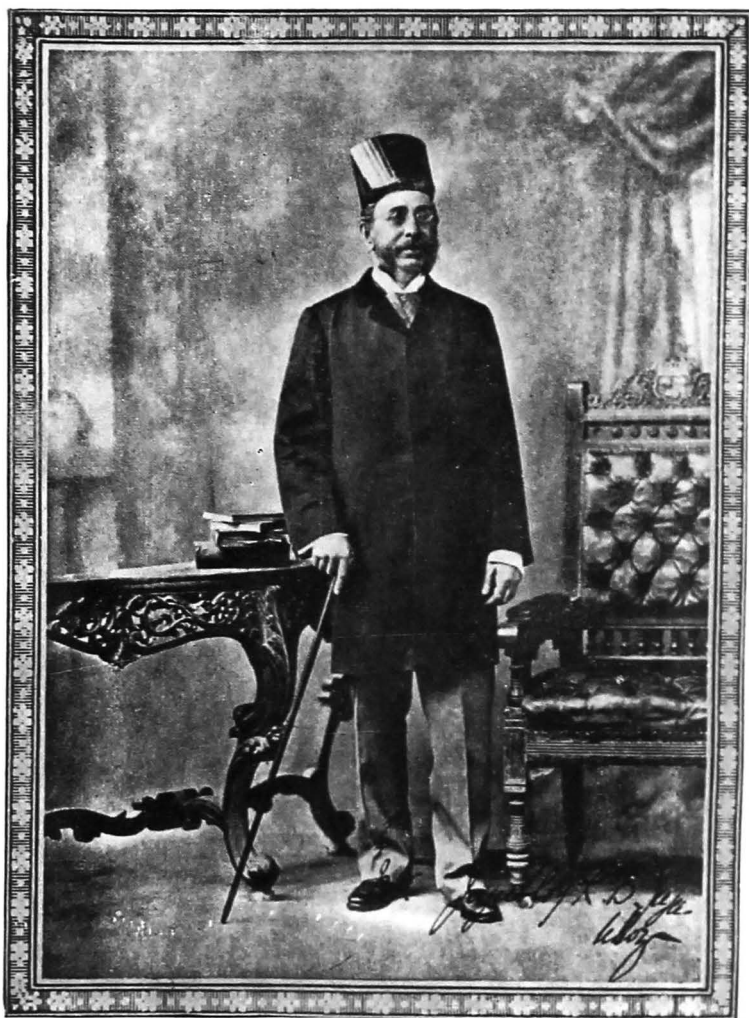
Sir Pherozeshah M. Mehta as Vice Chancellor, Bombay University 1913.



A view of the Bombay University, of which Sir Pherozezshah was the Vice Chancellor



Gopal Krishna Gokhale



From
Yours Very Sincerely
Pherozeshah M. Mehta

31 Dec 04

My dear Mr Natesan,

Will you and
your friends do me the
favour of coming here
to take tea with me
tomorrow at 3 o'clock
in the afternoon

Yours sincerely
Pheroze Shah M. Mehta

(Facsimile of Sir Pheroze Shah's Letter.)

31 Dec. 04,

My dear Mr. Natesan,

Will you and your friends do me the favour of coming here to take tea with me tomorrow at 3 O'clock in the afternoon.

Yours Sincerely
Pheroze Shah M. Mehta

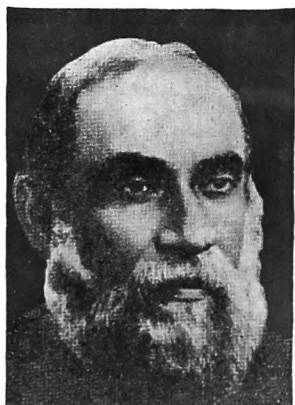
I. G. A. Natesan, Editor 'The Indian Review' Madras.



Dr. Rash Behari Ghose
President Surat Congress 1907,
and Madras Congress 1908



B. G. Tilak
Leader, of the Extremists at Surat



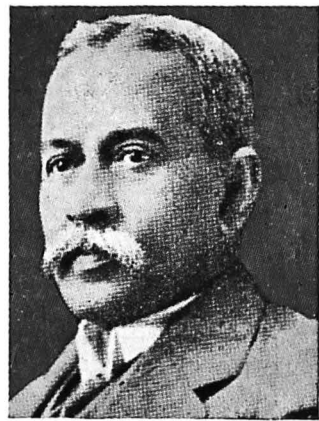
Sir Surandranath Banerji



Lala Lajpat Rai



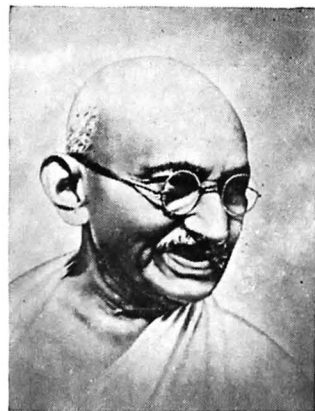
V. Krishnaswami Aiyar
Senior of the Congress. 1908



Sir Satyendra P. Sinha
President Bombay Congress, 1951



G. A. Natesan
Editor the Indian Review.



Mahatma Gandhi



The Gateway of India was built on the spot where the Prince and Princess of Wales landed in India in 1908 and were received by Sri Pherozeshah Mehta as President of the Bombay Corporation

*Popular opposition to it met by a
Validating Bill*

so, and where they took legal advice, it was not as sound as may have been in the circumstances. There was an extraordinary result. In Bombay and Calcutta, particularly—I believe the same thing was done in Madras, but Madras public men did not take note—the fellows were wide-awake and they watched all the operations of the Local Governments with jealousy. The Local Governments in their hurry took many steps which were not in conformity with the Act and which were in violation of the established practices in the various localities. The result in Bombay especially was that Government perpetrated error upon error, and those, who had opposed the legislation from the beginning, found that they had an excellent handle put into their hands for attacking the measures adopted by Government. Many things were done in excess of the law and in violation of the express provisions of the law.

Pherozezshah Mehta who had a keen eye for all these transgressions of Government and never let any escape his attention, took steps formally to attack certain of these measures in the Courts. He had his friends put applications for mandates, and actually suits were filed against the Government with the object of putting spokes in the wheel. One, two, three such applications were made in the Bombay High Court, and it was openly stated that the High Court Judges in their private talks allowed their opinions to escape their lips and the Government took fright, and reported to Lord Curzon that they were in fear that their actions might be challenged and might indeed be exposed in the Courts. In order, however, to forestall the actions of these judicial bodies, Lord Curzon, who stopped short of nothing to carry out his previously formed resolutions, introduced legislation in his own Legislature, for the purpose of validating those acts of the Bombay, Calcutta and other Governments that had been threatened with exposure in the Courts. This was called the Universities' Act Validating Bill, briefly. It was really for the purpose of validating measures taken by the Local Government in furtherance of the provisions of the Universities' Act. As soon as this Bill was brought forward for validating what were regarded as invalid or irregular acts of Provincial Governments, powerful protests were raised all over the country, that this was an abuse of executive power and the Validating Bill was assailed in the Imperial Legislature with the same vehemence as the original Universities' Bill itself, and the brunt of the fight fell on

Gokhale. But you may take it for granted that Gokhale was inspired throughout by Mehta. He it was that started the trouble in Bombay and gave it a pointed direction in the Imperial Council. Gokhale took a skilful line but all to no purpose, because in those days the non-officials had not a majority and even such strength as they had was scattered and could not be brought to a head on any point. Madras was represented on that occasion by Bilderbeck*. Gokhale took this line. First of all, he said. "Let this Bill be sent out to all the Local Governments for opinion, and be considered six months hence." It is a technical way of saying that the Bill be postponed indefinitely. He made a good speech to move this amendment. Of course it was defeated. The next amendment he moved was "Let the Bombay University be left out of the operation of this Validation Bill". That too was negatived, and finally, he had to oppose the Bill in a strong speech. I am going to read his brief and concluding speech, as it will be of interest not only because that speech is the coping stone of the opposition to the Universities' Bill, but because it brings together the main theoretical objections to all validation proceedings.

In books of Legislation, you will find, generally speaking, disapproval of all validating measures. Gokhale has brought in that speech all these theoretical considerations and as some of you are still young and may not have your political ideas formally defined, you should know the objections to validating legislation. Before I read it I should like to mention that the Universities' Act was not as baneful a measure as Pherozeshah and Gokhale and others made it out to be. Talking to you frankly and from an educational point of view, this is the general tendency in the Legislature. Bills are brought forward in the Legislature by Government, and the opposition examines them very minutely and with a view to expose their defects, but in their zeal they overdo their part, and in my personal judgment, they deliberately overdo it. The party-system with its rancour lays it as an injunction on the opposition to attack Government through and through, even to represent the good they do as evil. The opposition is there to oppose. That is the theory! It gives no quarter in any direction to the Government. So it happens that legislative measures are criticised more severely than they deserve, and, when, in spite of opposition, Government carries the day, puts the Bill on the statute book and proceeds to work it out administratively, it is

found on the one hand that the benefits predicted by Government do not come in full; nor do the harmful results prognosticated by the opposition in their fulness. The Bill does some good. But on the whole the country goes along in much the same way. Neither heaven nor hell is brought down on earth as might have been predicted on the one side or the other. Upon the whole, subsequent events have shown, that while excessive enthusiasm was displayed by Government in bringing the Universities' Act into effect, a good deal of benefit did follow it; and it was, from the point of view of efficiency and concentration of effort, a measure in advance. But from the point of view of popular element showing itself in educational matters, it was certainly a little retrograde. With these remarks, which subsequent events have justified, but which at the time of the legislation had not disclosed themselves in their feelings, let me read this speech. I do not make an apology for reading it because, as I told you, pointed and brief the speech is and in its effect, educative to those who do not know all about Legislation:

My Lord, I have already spoken thrice on this Bill, but I cannot let it pass without a final word of protest. My Lord, British rule in this country has hitherto been described—and on the whole, with good reason—as the reign of law. A few more measures, however, like the present, and that description will have to be abandoned and another substituted for it, namely, reign of Executive irresponsibility and validating legislation. My Lord, the Government are paying too great a price for what is undoubtedly an attempt to save the prestige of its officers. But is prestige ever so saved? On the other hand, an occasional admission of fallibility is not bad—especially for a strong Government like the British Government. It introduces a touch of the human into what ordinarily moves with machine-like rigidity. It enhances the respect of the people for law, because they are enabled to realize that even the Government respects it. And it strengthens the hold of the Government on the people, because they see that, in spite of its strength, it has a tender and scrupulous regard for the limitations imposed by the Legislature upon it. My Lord, may I, in this connection, without impertinence say one word about your Lordship personally? Whatever differences of opinion there may be in the country about some of the measures of Your Lordship's administration, the impression hitherto has been general that during your time the Local Governments and Administrations have had to realize more fully than before that there is a controlling and vigilant authority over them at the head, and that this authority will tolerate no irregularities on their part. It is a matter of disappointment that this impression should not have been justified in the present instance. My Lord, public opinion in this country being as feeble as it is, the only two bodies that control the exercise of absolute power by the Executive are the Legislature which lays down the law, and the High Courts which see that the law is obeyed. If now the

Government is to destroy the protection which the High Courts afford by means of validating legislation, and if the Legislature is to be reduced to the position of a mere handmaid of the Executive to be utilized for passing such legislation, what is there left to stand between the people and the irresponsible will of the Executive? My Lord, I feel keenly this humiliation of my country's Legislature; for though we, Indian Members, have at present a very minor and almost insignificant part in its deliberations, it is after all our country's Legislature. Moreover, I have a faith that in the fulness of time our position in it will be much more satisfactory than at present, and anything that lowers it in the eyes of my countrymen cannot but be regarded with profound regret. My Lord, I will vote against the passing of this Bill. (Gokhale's Speeches, Vol. III, pp. 71-72).

Perhaps it has not come out prominently. I shall draw it out by means of a sentence or two. What he meant is this: The Executive Governments of Bombay and Calcutta and other places having behaved irregularly and unlawfully are protected by the Legislature of the land. In other words, the Executive uses the Legislature as a handy instrument for protecting them from the consequences of their own irregularity. That is the chief objection to all validating legislation. If it is indulged in too much the Executive could behave with recklessness and still be protected from the High Courts by the operation of the Legislature. As a matter of fact, as soon as the Validating Bill was published its effect was to prevent the High Courts from hearing cases that had been filed in the High Court. That is the most important point against validating legislation. Well, that was in the year 1905.

The next year (1906) threw up its own trouble. This also was common to the entire country, but it was taken up only in Bengal and Bombay. It may hurt our Provincial pride to some extent when we consider that in these big matters, the fight was in those old times confined to Calcutta and Bombay. We may think we are wiser and stronger and more patriotic. Perhaps these admirable qualities did not find expression in opposition to Government measures to the same extent as in Bombay and Calcutta! We have always been considered level-headed, practical-minded—and all good words to cover bad qualities.

I am referring now to the great change made by Lord Curzon, who was the author of many great changes, in respect of what is called Standard Time all over the country. He introduced one time to operate everywhere. Instead of each locality regulating its own time according

to astronomical considerations, Lord Curzon introduced uniformity. Now you may think Lord Curzon was right, and I think so too. Where there is one Railway system, shipping and mercantile operations covering the whole country, all having more or less uniform features, it is a great thing to have time also reduced to uniformity. It is not of course in conformity with the considerations which Nature puts forward, but we have to take Nature by the hands as it were, and shape her to our own purpose in many matters. Uniformity in certain matters is pernicious, but in others, it is necessary. In the human mind, there is what is called inertia, which objects to change whether beneficial or harmful. All change is unwelcome to a certain type of minds. The strength as well as the weakness of conservatism is that it wishes to preserve what *has been* and *is* not thinking that what *is* or *might have been* will have to give way to what *will be*. It is a good thing when kept under control, but a bad thing when allowed full sway. I do not say that conservatism is a special quality of Eastern people as some Western critics would say. In fact, properly considered there is no country in the world, so conservative as England. Do you know that while all the continents of Europe and America have adopted a uniform system of weights and measures, England and following England, India are the two countries that resist it still? England will not have a uniform system of weights and measures. Of course our system of weights and measures varies from district to district, and there is no means of regulating it. Because of the conservatism of our people to look at change, no Government in this country can introduce changes in the desirable direction.*

Still, the introduction of Standard Time was opposed both in Calcutta and Bombay with the utmost vigour. We are concerned now with the part played by Mehta in Bombay but it is necessary to cast a glance at the doings in Bengal before we fix our eyes on Bombay. In Bengal, the opposition was so strong the Government themselves gave way and allowed the City of Calcutta to fix what it called "Calcutta Time" for all municipal and local purposes. The Standard Time was adopted by the railway and by the shipping concerns. The Standard Time was midway between Bombay and Calcutta time—it was in advance of Calcutta time and behind Bombay time.

* Independent India has passed the Standard weights and measures Act of 1956; so has England, recently.

Curiously enough, while the Government went out of its way to meet the opposition in Calcutta and yielded, in Bombay things took the opposite direction. At that time Pherozezshah was President of Bombay Corporation and while he was President he had imposed on himself the rule of neutrality and observed it rigidly. He would not take sides in any matter. When Standard Time was introduced he observed it rigidly though he allowed it to be known that he was dead against it and would attack it when he was a free man. His followers, therefore, wished to see that the Bombay time was not affected. There was fierce opposition in the Corporation, when some one nominated by Government proposed that Standard Time should be introduced in all municipal clocks and in the Crawford Market and the municipality should observe it in future.

Pherozezshah was silent, but his men were hard at work. The debate was fierce, but in the end as Pherozezshah himself could not take part, his opponents had the day before them, and they won. The Municipal Corporation by a slight majority voted in favour of Standard Time, but Pherozezshah was saying pretty openly, "See what I am going to do when I am a free man." He was free in about four or five months and he gave notice of a proposition that the previous resolution of the Municipality should be negatived and that Bombay time should be reintroduced wherever the Municipality was concerned. The bitterest opposition was raised by Government. They said it was too soon to upset the resolution of the Bombay Corporation itself, they must be ashamed to go back upon their previous position and so on. Pherozezshah Mehta said, "Yes, yes. But when we have found that we were at fault and have discovered it, it is not too early to change"; and so he made a powerful speech lasting 1½ hours bringing all his skill to bear, and the result was that by a decisive majority, Standard Time was quashed and Bombay time was re-introduced and on the very next day it was ordered that the Crawford Market and other municipal clocks do show Bombay time, *i.e.*, 39 minutes behind Standard Time and all engagements in the city, social political or of other character were to be regulated by Bombay Time and not by Standard time. This gave rise to bitter feelings between the pro-Government and pro-Mehta party. Even now you will find that the Crawford Market shows Bombay time and the municipal clocks show Bombay time and if you go to Bombay all engagements by our people are

regulated by Bombay time. Even in the Railway Time Table books you will find against Bombay two entries, Bombay time and Standard Time. The same in Calcutta also—Calcutta time and Standard time. I want to read a passage in which Pherozechah sums up his objections in somewhat strong terms to the introduction of Standard Time.

I frankly tell you—you might call it a matter of sentiment or of prejudice—that the one important argument which bears upon the subject is the integrity, the dignity and the independence of the city. It is not fair and proper that the population of the city should be driven like a flock of dumb cattle because the Chamber of Commerce and the Port Trust adopted Standard Time regardless of the special circumstances of the city of Bombay. This is one of the things which has influenced me in coming again to enter a strong protest against an action of this character—a measure adopted by the Government without consulting the feelings and sentiments of the people, and without giving them an opportunity of expressing their opinion. Perhaps, it is a matter of mere sentiment and prejudice, but I will always take a pride in standing up for the integrity, the dignity and the independence of the immense population of the city of Bombay. (J.R.B.J., pp. 177-8).

And so, Standard Time³ for the city of Bombay was knocked on the head! Madras will say that it did not much care, because Madras time and Standard time did not differ very much! It was only a matter of 9 minutes! Of course in this case, we have that defence. But even if it was anything like 20 or 25 minutes, I do not suppose we would have behaved very differently.

Now Standard Time was reversed, but Pherozechah had to pay for it, because the sequel was damaging to him. While he carried this point, the opposition, the Government people and especially the European community was greatly embittered; and this, coupled with his opposition to the presentation of an address to Lord Curzon when he returned for the second time. These two things made his name an object of hatred amongst the European community. The Europeans had a large following among Indians with the result that the next year, the city of Bombay saw the birth of what was called a Caucus against Pherozechah. I have mentioned it already in my Royapettah speech, when I had to say what part Gokhale played in the resuscitation of Sir Pherozechah Mehta. The point that I am at now is that this Caucus was joined by a great many Indians who had their quarrel with Pherozechah, and for a time it exposed one of our national weaknesses, our inability to march

quietly and in an orderly fashion under the banner of a chosen leader. The Accountant-General of Bombay, the Commissioner of the Corporation and the Collector of Bombay combined together and the newspapers supported them and they all put pressure on the Constituency which had always elected Sir Pherozezshah—the Justices of the Peace. The Justices of the Peace were about 300 in number and they were all under the control of some Government man or other. They can get into the office only under the patronage of some one of these big people so that if they made up their minds, they could do it easily. Notwithstanding each man disliked it, because his material interests were bound up with the will of the Government people they protested hard. As a matter of fact the J.Ps had power to elect sixteen people. And would you believe it that it was with the consent of the Members of the Executive Government of Bombay that the whole thing was done without shame and openly. The men went about this business, and they sent their accredited agents to those people, and the arrangement was, that not only should they refuse to give a place to Mehta, but further more, each one should not obey Sir Pherozezshah or join his party or do anything. Each of the 16 chosen candidates was made to declare that he would try to keep up his power in the Corporation. Fancy such a thing being done! And it was done openly. Pherozezshah Mehta and others repeatedly asked the Government to take notice of these people. No notice was taken and when the polling took place in the Town Hall the crowd in the Town Hall was something never heard of or seen before. The whole place was packed full of people and they kept crying "Pherozezshah! We want Pherozezshah! We won't have a Corporation without Pherozezshah! The Corporation is Pherozezshah! The City is Pherozezshah!"; but the result showed that the ticket-system was completely successful and Pherozezshah took only the 17th place.

Now as I told you before, Pherozezshah discovered that amongst the 16 there was a municipal contractor who had no business to be there. So he filed a suit in the Bombay High Court but while the case was under enquiry a man named A. S. Dikshit, one of Pherozezshah's followers who had been previously elected, resigned for the purpose of seeing that Pherozezshah got in. But before Pherozezshah could decide whether he was to take advantage of Dikshit's

loyalty, the Court declared Wahed to be unfit to be a member of the Corporation and he was ousted. Pheroze-shah did not know what constituency he should choose, and so he said to Dikshit "Very good of you, but take your place and I will take my place among those elected by the J.Ps."

And the sequel of it is interesting. When the new Corporation met, everyone of the fellows had sworn that he would not be a member of Pheroze-shah's party. But the moment the Corporation met, it was discovered that the 16 people were more or less dummies and none of them knew anything about municipal affairs. They were perfectly manageable dolls that the Executive could manipulate. Every time the Municipal Council met, Pheroze-shah had to take the lead. He knew everything from A to Z. Every detail was arranged by him, and his ascendancy was re-established as it were. It happens always so. This is a point, where one may derive a lesson. Anything done artificially against the normal course of circumstances may for the moment seem to succeed but as soon as the enthusiasm wanes and as soon as the excitement decreases, normal course of events is re-established. So, our good friend Sir Homi Mody writes at the end of the chapter "the Caucus triumphed and the Caucus failed", because at the moment they were able to keep him out, and as soon as the excitement was over, once again, he was in the saddle regulating the affairs, as usual.

Now, we have got to attend to some other aspects. Let us turn a little to the Congress. This Caucus business made Pheroze-shah's stock go up in the market. The year 1905 saw the peak of the agitation against the Partition in Bengal. We have to take note of the strong agitation that the people of Bengal made against their Province being divided and the noteworthy effects it had on the great institution of the National Congress. Ideas of boycott and national education had established themselves. B. C. Pal⁴ had made himself the chief opponent of Surendranath Bannerjee, although Bannerjee was in the vanguard of the anti-partition movement. Even as early as 1905, Bala G. Tilak in Bombay, B. C. Pal in Calcutta and Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab "Lal, Bal, Pal"—this word had come into vogue already. There was a division and there were two camps. The Congress was presided over by Gokhale. He was elected President, chiefly for the reason that he was

regarded as standing between the two main parties. In the year 1905, the trouble did not become acute, although it made itself felt in the Subjects Committee. Those who attended the Subjects Committee will remember how much Gokhale regretted the absence of Mehta. Though he was President and had a majority of the Delegates with him he had gone down on his knees and asked Pherozeshah to come and take the lead as usual, but Pherozeshah for some reason said "We should not go to Benares." He left things to be managed by Gokhale and Wacha and other people. The chief trouble on that occasion was created by Lajpat Rai. It is not connected with Mehta but I mention this to show how in his absence, people felt that they were not quite equal to deal with movements of a subversive nature. Lajpat Rai made a speech in the Subjects Committee actuated by opposition to the accepted ideals of the Congress. Gokhale and Lajpat Rai were personal friends and between them the bond of personal affection was very strong. There had been however, a small rift in the lute, as it were. They had both gone to London in 1904 for Congress agitation. It happened that Lajpat Rai was addressing mass meetings of working men all over the country; and Gokhale addressed meetings of the parliamentarians and the aristocracy and the great Liberals of the land. Their audience were therefore of two different calibre—Gokhale dealing with more intellectual and politically-minded classes and Lajpat Rai dealing with the more aggressive, the more noisy and the more liable clap-trap people as it were. When he came to take his place in the National Congress in Banars somebody started this difference between Lajpat Rai and Gokhale. They played upon these notions, and between these two friends, good true friends, some difference was created. Lajpat Rai in the open Congress was controlled, but in the Subjects Committee, imagining that he was free, he started to make a speech, and although for about 15 minutes he controlled himself, he lost his balance and let himself go. I heard myself. It was one of the strongest, most impetuous and stormy speeches that ever he had delivered. It was extraordinary that both Gokhale and V. Krishnaswami Aiyer took fright for him. Our friend C. V. Munuswami Aiyar⁵ was Congress-reporter at that time. Krishnaswami Aiyer told him, "Please omit all these passages in Lajpat Rai's speech" and he made Gokhale repeat the caution to Munuswami Aiyer. Although the proceedings of the Subjects Committee are confidential,

they are not, in fact so, as you all know. A great many C. I. D. people in ordinary dress were among the delegates. So, Lajpat Rai had let himself in for trouble, and it was prevented by the foresight of Krishnaswami Aiyer and Munuswami Aiyer.

The storm, however, did not burst in full fury till next year, 1906. That was the year when the tempest gathered fury. Nagpur was selected as the place for the Congress of 1907. 1906 was the Dadabhai Naoroji year. He had been brought in through a clever manoeuvre on the part of Bannerjee and B. N. Basu^a aided of course by Mehta. This was behind the screen. Dadabhai gave his consent almost at the last moment to be President of the 1906 Congress in order to save it as it were from the fury of the Extremists. Gokhale was then in England with Dadabhai. It did not become public, but was known to some of us.

B. C. Pal then a firebrand, as bad as any firebrand in the country, telegraphed and cabled to Dadabhai threatening him with the exposure of all the frauds and malversations of which he had been guilty in the Mercantile House to which he belonged some twenty years before. He said "I will expose you. Don't come!"; and Dadabhai showed the cable to Gokhale, and when Gokhale was thinking what to do, Dadabhai said "This seems to be no moment for hesitation. This is an absolute invention. There is not a vestige of truth in it, Don't you bother. Let B. C. Pal do his worst. I can't refuse it simply because he threatens me and just because he threatens me. Because my friends have sent me an S. O. S., I am convinced the trouble is extremely grave. The Congress has to be saved from the hands of those idol-breakers. I must go there;" and so he came out and the way he saved the Congress you all know. He saved the Congress by putting into his speech, mostly reasoned and otherwise powerful as a piece of Congress propaganda the word *Swaraj* for the first time. In his Presidential speech of the Congress the word *Swaraj* was embodied and then it became the watchword of the Congress. That bought off some of the opposition. B. C. Pal had a strong following. On the platform there was this old man sitting like that! He was not able to read his speech. Gokhale read it for him. But he *was* there and it acted as magic on a certain class of men. The proceedings of the Congress were disturbed by shouts and hisses and the trouble was most

acute in the Subjects Committee meetings which went miles ahead of Banares which was bad enough. Supporting Dada-bhai Naoroji, there sat immediately to his right Pherozezshah Mehta and after him Wacha. B. C. Pal and his followers shouted "Down with Mehta. Down with Mehta. Kick him out," and this happens always when there is a party and the hatred and fury fall on the head of the party. Pherozezshah was regarded as the evil genius of the Moderates. The old man was left alone and all the fury fell on the head of Mehta. This was kept up.

But Pherozezshah sat there just like a statue, grave, and looked straight ahead. The storm was at its worst when it broke on Surendranath Bannerjee. Not a syllable could be heard at the Subjects Committee. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer and P. R. Sundara Aiyer spoke at the top of their voice, but they could not be heard. I won't bother you with details but I am mentioning it now just to show that this was a good preparation for Surat.

Everybody knew that the next year was bound to be a tussle between the Extremists and Moderates. The chief thing that I want to mention to you is that when the shouts were at the worst and Pherozezshah was howled out, they asked Surendranath Bannerjee whose voice was supposed to be quite as strong as B.C. Pal's to take the field and to shout out. Surendranath Bannerjee shouted at the top of his voice, and most of those who shouted were students. He raised his voice as loud as he could; but they shouted more and drowned his voice. Then Bannerjee shrieked "What? In my own city has it come to this?"; and the Palites rang out "Yes! It has come to this!" No more decisive demonstration was necessary that when Congress next met, it must split. It was inevitable. Bannerjee had met with this reception in December 1906. December 1907 was therefore to be the culmination, and it was the culmination. But during 1907, I joined the Servants of India Society in the very beginning, and my political education began. Among the many lines upon which I was educated was attendance at meetings of the Bombay Legislative Council. The Bombay Legislative Council meets for part of the year in Poona, from July through August and September. I was then in Poona and Gokhale asked me to attend the Poona Session of the Legislative Council. I went there thinking that the ordinary business of the Legislature would have to be watched, but as good luck would have it, when I went there,

the most important batsman was at the wicket and sent the ball all over the field. The first day I attended, a dramatic turn was given to the proceedings. I shall read a letter which I wrote to Krishnaswami Aiyer describing the proceedings, but before I read it I shall tell you the exact thing. Pherozechah played a very great part that day. He rose to his full height and when I reported the proceedings to Gokhale, he clapped his hands with delight, and said "Only Pherozechah could do it. You never can catch him napping" and asked me to write to the local newspaper *Mahratta*. I wrote a short report but I was not pleased myself and so I wrote a full account to Krishnaswami Aiyer which is interesting as you will see.

Letter to V. Krishnaswami Aiyer, dated 21st June, 1907:

I must now hasten to tell you of Sir P. M. Mehta's latest act of prowess. At the recent Council meeting at Poona (the day before yesterday) the Hon. Mr. Parekh⁷ read a well-reasoned and powerful indictment of the oppressive and cruel way in which the land assessment had been collected. This was too much for a Mr. Logan, Bombay Customs Collector. He made a violent speech denouncing the Congress' orators (and their political propaganda) who represented the interests of the landlord and the sowcar in the Council, while the poor voiceless ryot had only himself and another gentleman who could be trusted to safeguard his interests. The country was increasing in prosperity and the ryots were well off except when the landlords oppressed them. They were quite able to pay the taxes, but were occasionally contumacious and recalcitrant because they were encouraged and incited by people who inculcated habits of dishonesty. He entirely disapproved of the India Government's leniency in regard to suspension and remission of taxes. The few real cases of revenue officers' oppression were inevitable owing to the innumerable instances of fraud and dishonesty with which they had to deal. The sowcar took between 12 and 60 per cent. interest from the bleeding and starving peasant; and yet here were people who never said a word about him recommending leniency, mercy, and all that to Government which advanced loans at $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and so on through the stock arguments of the worst civilian. The tone and manner of the speech were most irritating, and I felt strongly impelled to box his ears then and there. After two or three others had spoken or read stupid essays, Mr. Mehta's turn came. He rose with alacrity and addressed two sentences rather fast to H. E. and his Councillors on the right and left. I could not catch the words, but fancied (wrongly I find) they might allude in some caustic manner to the caucus episode. Then came his time-honoured joke of ploughing the sands. With his genial smile he blamed Setalwad⁸, Parekh and Ibrahim Rahimatulla⁹ for having deprived him of all the materials of his speech. However, the Hon. Mr. Logan had earned his gratitude by furnishing much matter for an effort on his part. Then he assumed a severe manner, made his face rigid and raised his voice. His gestures became abrupt and violent, so much so that the Council

seemed to feel uneasy. The Bombay Revenue Officer, he said, is the Bourbon; he never learns and he never forgets. Time after time his pet theories have been exploded, his methods have been condemned, and his acts have been reversed. Still he persists in his oppression. He continues to believe as firmly as ever in his infallibility, and has no patience with his critics. He imputes motives and abuses. How long is this to go on? The Government of India lays down rules in vain; even the severe castigation of the Macdonald Commission has had no effect. What facts has the Hon. Mr. Logan to urge in support of his strictures? None whatever. He merely trots out the old, old Anglo-Indian stories of prosperity budgets and prosperous people. Who does not see through this trick now-a-days? We all know the origin of these surpluses. They are the result of currency policy which indirectly taxes the agriculturist. Having taken from the poor man both directly and indirectly a great deal more than he can give or you need, you turn round and say he is prosperous. People paid their taxes in Gujerat easily enough twenty years ago. Yes, it is true. But why? Mr. Logan says people were not contumacious and dishonest as they have since become. The fact is, as he himself knows there were no famines at all in Gujerat twenty years ago. Why should ryots object to pay when they easily could? Mr. Logan says that orators (I suppose he means us of the Congress party) inculcate habits of dishonesty. *I strongly resent it, and I throw it back in his face.* He accuses us of representing the landlord and the sowcar, and calls himself the champion of the ryot. Did he or any Bombay Revenue Officer stand up for the ryot on this occasion or on that? (mentioning two). You play the *ma bap* when it suits you and give him over when it does not suit you. Then as to the sowcar, it is positive ingratitude for Government to persecute him. He has enabled the constant stream of revenue to flow into public coffers. His absolute necessity in the economy of the village has been admitted on high authority. It is not quite fair to accuse him of exacting high interest, and to compare him with Government in this respect. In lending out money he has to face enormous risks and must charge high rates. Government has a system of grind and thorough which brings the maximum money for minimum expenditure. I have felt it necessary to address these remarks because the Hon. Mr. Logan has expressed offensive statements in a particularly offensive manner. I have now done with him. Let us now turn to the Hon. Mr. Armstrong. And here his expression relaxed and his manner grew gentle and he frequently smiled on Mr. Armstrong as he looked at him. The contrast was quite striking. Mr. Logan sat stunned all the time and his eyes grew red. Only after Mr. Mehta had done with him he bent down a bit and muttered some words now and then. He looked the picture of misery. H. E. and Council had one eye on Mr. Mehta and the other on Mr. Logan. One could read anxiety on every face. Mr. Mehta uttered *Bombay Revenue Officer* about twenty times and *political propaganda* about fifteen times. I felt a thrill as he said: "I resent it strongly and I throw it back in his face". In one word, it made me proud that there was a man who could stand up to the full height and speak as an injured gentleman speak to the injurer. If only each Province had two or three such men! When I told Mr. Gokhale of it he felt elated, and exclaimed more than once: "Only Mr. Mehta can do it, Oh! he is the man for it." After the sitting was over, H. E. came over to where Mr. Mehta sat, and spoke a few words as if

to show that he cherished no ill-will. Then Mr. Mehta moved away, but coming to where Mr. Logan was standing, turned back sharply, Mr. Logan as if by the same impulse turning back on his part.

To-day Mr. Khare¹⁰ began by feeble attack on Mr. Logan. Nothing particular has happened till lunch. Mr. Selby made a very good speech (Council has resumed).

Sir Steyning Egerley,¹¹ Junior Member, did not refer to the episode except when he made a passing remark: "In my unregenerate days when I was a Bombay Revenue Officer." The Senior Member, Mr. Muir Mackenzie, took it up seriously and confirmed every one of the obnoxious statements of Mr. Logan. The only thing he did was to exempt the members of the Legislative Council from the charge of inculcating habits of dishonesty. "Out of this Council plenty of such persons," he said; and when he instanced the paper *Vande Mataram*, Mr. Mehta promptly stood up and asked whether he was speaking of Bombay Province or the whole of India. "Of Bombay Province" answered Mr. Muir Mackenzie in a deliberate manner. The controversy, he wound up by saying, need not disturb private and personal relations. His Excellency said he enjoyed the exciting passage-at-arms. In the peculiar conditions of political controversy in India, Government never finds a champion outside its own ranks. But it is unavoidable, His Excellency felt sure, each combatant was armed in triple brass, so that no serious danger need be apprehended.

As I read over the letter I find I have not reproduced Mr. Mehta's language with any approach to faithfulness, but the substance is all right. His expressions were a trifle stronger I should fancy; when he uttered them in his emphatic manner they seemed forcible.

I will now stop as it is eight o' clock.

(Sastri's Letters pp. 18-22)

NOTES

1. DR. RAMAKRISHNA GOPAL BHANDARKAR (1837-1925): Educationist, Indologist and Sanskrit Professor, Elphinstone College, Bombay (1859); Deccan College, Poona (1864); Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University (1893-95); Member, Imperial Legislative Council (1903-04); author of *First and Second Book of Sanskrit*, and several research papers and books.
2. JAMES BOURDILLON BILDERBECK (1857): Principal, Kumbakonam College (1885-87); Member, Imperial Legislative Council (1903-04).
3. THE STANDARD TIME: The Law, Revenue and General Purpose Committee of the Bombay Corporation in their resolution No. 2092 of 14th March 1950 resolved that the Standard Time be adopted for all municipal purposes.
4. BEPIN CHANDRA PAL (1858-1932): A journalist, writer and politician; belonged to the school of Tilak, to which Lala Lajpat Rai also belonged. So this group of Tilakites pursued an extreme policy and programme in political matters and therefore earned the sobriquet, Bal, Lal and Pal.
5. C. V. MUNISWAMY IYER (1869): Reporter, *Madras Mail* (1892); reported the proceedings of the Indian National Congress for many years; at the Surat Congress he was asked not to report the speeches of Tilak and the members of the extremist group lest the C.I.Ds. should get hold of them and prosecute the Tilakites.
6. BHUPENDRA NATH BASU (1859-1924): Attorney at Law, Calcutta; President, The Indian National Congress (1914); Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University; Member, India Council, London (1917-24).
7. GOKULDAS K. PAREKH (1847): Pleader, Bombay; Member, Bombay Legislative Council (1897).
8. SIR CHIMANLAL SETALVAD.: (1886-1947) Lawyer, Bombay; Member, Bombay Legislative Council, (1894-96); Imperial Legislative Council, (1915); Fellow & Syndic, Bombay University, (1908); Member, Executive Council, Bombay (1921-23); Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University, (1917); Five times President, Indian National Liberal Federation.
9. SRI. IBRAHIM RAHMATULLAH (1862-) Merchant, Bombay; Member, Bombay Legislative Council (1899-1901); President, Municipal Corporation Bombay (1879); Member, Imperial Legislative Council; Revenue Member, Bombay Government, (1922). Attended the Madras Congress (1927).
10. DAJI ABAJI KHARE (died in 1916): Vakil, Bombay High Court; Secretary, The Indian National Congress; Member, Bombay Legislative Council; Fellow and Syndic, Bombay University.
11. SIR STEYNING EDGERLEY: Member, Decentralisation Committee (1908).

LECTURE VII

THE FULL STORY OF THE SURAT SPLIT

It has been suggested to me, friends, and I think it perfectly reasonable, that you would all be interested in hearing the full story of what is known as the Surat Split. It is no doubt full of interest as an episode which has been of the greatest consequence in the history of the Congress, and it also throws a kind of sinister light on the way in which differences arise but are not quelled. If you read the story of Surat, you will find that a great deal of the language used will, without much change be, the same as the language you now read in the papers about the lack of unity and the absolute necessity of establishing it, to forget and forgive and to make compromises. How the differences arose, it is not difficult to explain.

This belongs to the year 1907, 36 years ago, and yet I can see all Surat before me and the scenes being re-enacted. But there is a lot for you to know which prepared the events for the Surat catastrophe. I spoke of 1906 and the Congress of that year under Dadabhai Naoroji. I said how the boycott resolution was a matter of the keenest dispute. The boycott resolution was a kind of approval by the whole of the Congress of what the people of Bengal had felt compelled to do in order to get their partition grievance redressed. They had made every attempt within the limits of what we regard as reasonable agitation. They had exhausted what were then called constitutional methods, and finding no remedy anyware above the horizon, they resorted to this drastic measure of boycott, and the boycott was understood by some extremists as a wholesale boycott, a boycott of everything connected with Britain and the British Government, not only, boycott of British goods but boycott of all colleges and schools either managed by Government or aided by Government or in some sort controlled by Government, Government service, stipendiary and honorary, and everything connected with Government. Obviously, this extreme type of boycott made familiar since by Mahatma Gandhi's methods, was then new and startled a great part of the moderate patriots in the country. Naturally, they looked upon these with the greatest alarm and amongst the steady and sober elements of the Congress this was looked upon as liable to be used by Government for the purpose of putting down the Congress. But Bengal had become desperate and therefore,

In 1906, the greatest dispute gathered round this resolution of boycott. But this boycott resolution was debated at considerable length in the Subjects Committee. Our Madras friends, chiefly Krishnaswami Aiyer and Sundara Aiyer stoutly opposed it; and finally, owing to the strong pressure put by the Palites, the resolution was adopted in a somewhat modified form so as to please all the parties. But the feelings at that time ran so high that although the Subjects Committee passed the boycott resolution with certain reservations, when it came to be spoken to in the open Congress, a wide split was again visible. B. C. Pal who was asked to speak, gave it a very wide interpretation which had been expressly prohibited in the Subjects Committee. Then Gokhale had to stand up, although his name was not in the programme and he protested against the wide interpretation given to it by B. C. Pal. B. C. Pal interpreted the words to mean that the boycott was comprehensive and that it extended to the whole of the country and not merely to Bengal. Gokhale explained with some warmth that the boycott was to be only boycott of British goods and that it was to be confined to Bengal. The Congress gave its consent to the boycott movement that had been started already in Bengal. It did not at all justify its extension to other parts of the country. That was what he then said in order to make it acceptable to the majority of the delegates. I make this preliminary explanation in order to make clear to you how a great deal of the differences that arose subsequently really related to the most important of the resolutions. As soon as 1907 dawned, Tilak went over to Allahabad and started what is called the Extremist campaign, and B. C. Pal and Sri Aurobindo Ghose¹ did not allow the grass to grow under their feet so far as Bengal was concerned. Their propaganda began with vehemence all over the place, and after the Imperial Legislative Council session was over, Gokhale went to Allahabad, Lucknow and other places and made a series of speeches intended to counteract the effect of Tilak's propaganda. The two men were then brought into direct collision. Gokhale in spite of his great tact and the moderation of the language he used, although he relied entirely on arguments and statistics was roundly abused all over the country by the extremists as a person who had openly declared himself on the British side and an emissary of the Government. That of course, as you know, is the usual abuse flung at moderates by their rivals. I can tell you in one word how Gokhale was

abused. He was called the Vibhishana of Indian politics. Vibhishana, amongst the orthodox people is regarded as an ardent type of *Bhakta*. We regard him as the chief of *Bhaktas*. To be called Vibhishana therefore, ought to be the greatest honour, and yet there arose at that time all over the country, among our own people, devout students of our ancient literature, a feeling that although Vibhishana might by orthodox people be called a *Bhakta*, really he was the most reasonable person, and his name became a bye-word for betrayal of his own people. You would be astonished to hear that in a paper called *Bande Mataram*, a leading article written in very strong and fine language, was headed "Exit Bibhishana" meaning by that that Vibhishana had declared himself openly, and we may now kick him out from the national ranks as the fellow had left Lanka to join the enemy of the country, that is Rama. Even today there is a set of people chiefly young patriots who regard Vibhishana in a bad light and think that whatever might have been his good qualities, he certainly was wrong in his last act—running away from his own friend and of joining the enemy who had come to destroy Lanka and the whole Rakshasa race. That was the title and you know in what light Gokhale was regarded at that time by these apostles of the new creed. Now, I come to more intimate matters and I am afraid, you will have to be a little tolerant with my detailed story.

The campaign of vilification reached great heights or depths unknown before and the chief victim of this abuse was no doubt Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta. Unfortunately, with him the whole Parsi race was also denounced, because there was Wacha and a lot of other people; and Gokhale was regarded as only one of the numerous persons following Mehta. The abuse was so great that even Bhupendranath Basu was somewhat ashamed at the way in which Bengal papers attacked him and so he wrote to Mehta asking that he must not take all these abuses very seriously and saying that for his part, he dissociated himself from the main body of Bengalee opponents and his admiration for Mehta's work and for his courage did not abate at all. I should like to read one sentence which is quoted indirectly from Bhupendranath Basu's letter:

Mr. Bhupendranath Basu writing to Pheroze Shah from Calcutta gave expression to the deep sense of humiliation, which was felt

by him and many of his friends, at the rudeness displayed by some of the truculent young politicians of Bengal towards one who was "by common consent the leading statesman and politician in India" Such manifestations after 22 years of the Congress made him, he said, lose all faith in the future of his national life. Had the Congress been a failure in bringing them to a higher level and placing a nobler ideal before the people? Mr. Basu was aware that Pherozeshah with his unconquerable optimism and inspiring faith would deny the charge, for he had too stout a heart to be troubled by the contemptible manifestations of impotent malice and spite which were so much in evidence in Calcutta.

Now, at the end of the Calcutta Congress, Nagpur had been selected as the venue of the next session, and at Nagpur, the ardent Congress folk began to make arrangements early enough. But soon the Congressmen there divided into Moderates and Extremists, and the Extremists made up their minds that they would not allow the Congress session to be held unless it was to be managed by them according to their own lights. Now begins the dividing line, as it were, and you must not accuse me, if I seem to narrate the events from one point of view as things appear to me only from my point of view. However much I try to understand the other side, I cannot help feeling that the moderate view was, upon the whole, the truer and juster view, and therefore all these events that I shall deal with are narrated from that point of view. The scenes in Nagpur at the meetings of what was called the Reception Committee were extraordinary. The Reception Committee was composed of a great number of people, many of them extremists, many of them moderates. Every meeting was marked by a great deal of rowdyism and disorder. You must remember that of all the provinces in India, Nagpur is one where all meetings readily glide into rowdy ways. At other places there is some restraint, but in Nagpur there is very little and this year, when preparations had to be made, such systematic opposition was offered and blows were freely exchanged at several of those meetings.

I must tell you, as I am talking in confidence, that the Chairman of the Reception Committee was Sir G. Chitnavis². He was in the chair and conducted the meeting. The opposition became so violent that they threatened that he would be driven out of the chair. Instead of vacating it, he stuck to his place.

After a little difficulty Dr. Rash Behari³ was elected President of the year. But many people did not like it and they never accepted the appointment although he had been duly elected, though the opposition was very strong. In fact there was an open movement for electing B. G. Tilak. He had some discontent. Amongst his followers it was felt that he had for some time been quite ripe for the presidentship of the Congress and that to exclude him even after his young rival Gokhale had been made President, was a piece of injustice which must not be tolerated. So, in Nagpur, the movement in favour of Tilak and against Dr. Rash Behari Ghose's election became stronger and stronger and its expression was more and more pronounced. But Tilak found that all over the country the feeling was strongly for Rash Behari Ghose and therefore it occurred to him that the tactical thing would be not to press his own name any more but just withdraw it for the moment¹ and try some other name and discussed for a day or two, and he wired to say, "I am not going to stand against Rash Behari Ghose, who has been duly elected." Then they tried the name of Aswini Dutt.⁴ Although Dutt was the best of the three, being a man of the highest character and the most unquestioned patriot, he was not a man of all-India fame and therefore his name would not be acceptable all over the country; hence it fell flat. So Dr. Ghose's name was the only one before the country. But Tilak's name was not dropped and there was a feeling that he should in some way or other be put into the chair. The movement though hidden was very marked in his favour and, as we shall see when we come to the actual doings at Surat, it seems to have very strongly coloured all the proceedings of this party. Now, the friends of the Congress in Nagpur felt that things were getting out of hand. Nothing was possible. So, about September they began to give up: 'We can no longer hold the Congress. Let some other station take up the Congress.'

Krishnaswami Aiyer gallantly came to the rescue. He said: 'I will take the Congress to Madras'. But as soon as he said so, as you can very well understand, knowing Madras well, some said that it was impertinent for him to say that he would run the Congress in Madras. And so, when Bombay heard how Krishnaswami Aiyer might find difficulty, they finally met in Pherozezshah's chambers

LECTURE VII

Krishnaswami Aiyer's offer to hold the Congress in Madras declined — Surat was chosen — Congress meets in great alarm.

and said 'We won't put Krishnaswami Aiyer to trouble. We will take the Congress to a place where there would be no trouble and no opposition.' They chose Surat, for Surat was the stronghold of Pherozeshah and Gokhale; and there without a word of opposition a strong Reception Committee was formed. Abundant money was subscribed and a strong force of volunteers was also formed because it was known that there would be a good deal of opposition. All kinds of threats were made and therefore Surat people subscribed large sums of money, and appointed a great many Goondas, ready to take the field, if necessary, and run the Congress at any cost. Within a few weeks' time everything was got ready, and unfortunately, Pherozeshah Mehta was once more abused, and the threats seemed likely to be carried out. I was in Bombay at the time and heard every day of the doings of these extremists.

Large sums were subscribed, each paying 1, 2 or 3 rupees, and thousands came into their coffers. Tilak and Pal in Calcutta organised a large number of delegates sworn to follow them, and they took them by special trains three days before the Congress was to meet at Surat. Trainloads of people came, and when we went on the day before the Congress, we were told that already the Extremist camp in Surat was full of people who had been harangued day after day, three to four times a day, full of fury against the holding of the Congress. We knew it; and there were several hundreds of them and they set up their own camp. Now comes the trouble. As I told you, Surat was prepared for this and when the Congress met on the 26th there was an enormous gathering of about 6000 spectators and 1700 delegates, all in a state of alarm and expectation. Something was in the air, and something was going to happen! Everybody knew that the proceedings would not be smooth. Both sides had brought a large number of lathis. The whole Congress was full of men armed with long sticks, some of them having iron hoops at the end. The day before the Congress, having failed to secure an alternative nomination, they started another story that the managers of the Congress were going back on four among the most important resolutions of 1906, the four resolutions being, one on self-Government, that is Swaraj, the next regarding boycott, the third Swadeshi and the fourth on National education. Self-Government, Boycott, Swadeshi and National education—those were the four resolutions which the Extremists took special credit for. Their story wa

without foundation. They said that the Moderates had resisted all these things, and in their heart did not like these resolutions and they would do their very best to drop them. Without the slightest foundation, Tilak and others went about saying 'You will see that the agenda paper does not contain these four resolutions. You see they will not bring up these four resolutions'. And that night Gokhale went round the camps and told everybody that the four resolutions were there: 'Who can change them? The Subjects Committee alone when it meets has got the power of shaping the resolutions. That would be done in the usual course.' But they said, 'You are going to deceive us. We will therefore make trouble beforehand.'

Now the four resolutions, I think, I should read at the first opportunity. Perhaps this is the best moment. The resolution on self-Government is in four parts, I shall just read the principal portion.

1. "The Indian National Congress has for its ultimate goal the attainment by India of Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by other members of the British Empire and a participation by her in the privileges and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with the other members; and that it seeks to advance towards this goal by strictly constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and improving the condition of the mass of the people."

"Those who accept the foregoing creed of the Congress, shall be members of the Provincial Committee."

"All who accept the foregoing creed of the Congress..... shall be entitled to become members of the District Congress Committee."

"From the year 1908, delegates to the Congress shall be elected by Provincial and District Congress Committees only."

2. "This Congress accords its most cordial support to the Swadeshi Movement, and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success by earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and stimulate the consumption of indigenous articles by giving them preference, where possible over imported commodities."

3. "Having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration and that their repre-

representatives to the Government do not receive due consideration this Congress is of opinion that the boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that Province was and is legitimate."

4. "In the opinion of this Congress time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise an independent system of education, Literary, Scientific, Technical—suited to the requirements of the country."

Why the Moderates should have been at great pains as they suspected, to drop these resolutions, it was not clear, but when it was said that they would drop them they started a movement in defence. They abused people right and left for a thing which they did not intend to do. When on the 26th December, the Moderate leaders came upon the platform, there was a great deal of enthusiastic reception, for there was no doubt that the Moderate element was strong and the Reception Committee had taken care to bring in a very large number of people pledged to see that the Congress went smoothly on. When Malvi, the Chairman of the Reception Committee read his speech, there were hisses, voices of dissent; but on the whole, he was allowed to read his speech; and then the name of the President was proposed. Surendranath Bannerjee got up to second it and as soon as he rose in his seat, there were welcome shouts and there were hisses of unusual strength. There were only a few, perhaps a hundred people amongst the delegates, who did not like Bannerjee for he had taken part in some very moderate movements in Bengal, and Bengal had begun to hate him. In 1907, when he came to the platform and stood up to second the motion, there was a great deal of howling against him. All kinds of things were said: "We don't want to hear you. Get away. Ask Tilak to move it. Ask Lajpat Rai to move it." And all kinds of cries were heard, and although Bannerjee tried his voice at its very top, he could not make himself heard. Several times Malvi got up to ask people to listen to Bannerjee quietly, but it was impossible. So, at the very moment when the President's name had to be seconded, a violent outburst of opposition came and after repeated appeals to the audience to keep quiet, the Chairman of the Reception Committee on the advice of Pherozeshah Mehta and others had to declare that the Congress was adjourned to the next day. The scenes of disorder were so confusing. The meeting was adjourned and then some 20 to 30 of the

Dr. Rash Behari Ghose being duly proposed and seconded, occupied the chair.

LECTURE VII.

delegates met and they drew up a kind of appeal to the delegates begging them to see that on the next day at least the proceedings went off all right.

So, the next day, the Congress met. It was hoped by the Moderates who did not know what the Extremists had done in the mean time, that everything would go off smoothly. But the Extremists had made their own plans, as we shall see presently. We came to know of it as events disclosed themselves. The second day, when the proceedings began, there was no doubt a good deal of enthusiastic reception on the one side and violent hisses and execrations on the other; and violence was specially directed in the quarter where Pherozeshah Mehta sat. He was the special target of vilification and abuse all the time, even Gokhale receiving only a minor share of it. Just as the Chairman of the Reception Committee was coming into the meeting, somebody slipped a note into his hand. He just glanced and put it into his pocket and went up. That was what was seen. That note was really a letter written to him by Tilak. This was the note:

Sir, I wish to address the delegates on the proposal of the election of the President after it is seconded. I wish to move an adjournment with a constructive proposal. Please announce me.

Yours sincerely,

B. G. TILAK,

Deccan Delegate (Poona)

You see this letter was really an announcement of his intention to move an adjournment of the whole Congress even on the second day. I suppose the Chairman of the Reception Committee read the note and found that it was not possible. He must have consulted Mehta and made up his mind not to allow Tilak to speak before the President's name had been proposed and seconded properly. Now, quietly they all listened to Bannerjee who was good enough not to make a long speech, but after a dozen sentences left the platform. Pandit Motilal Nehru supported the motion, and after Nehru had spoken, Malvi, the Chairman of the Reception Committee declared that R.B. Ghose had been duly elected as President and, Rash Behari Ghose took the Presidential chair; an exchange of places took place between them—the Chairman and the President.

LECTURE VII

As soon as the election was received with acclamation by his partisans, he got up to read his Presidential Address; but as he began, Tilak mounted the platform and when a few words had been uttered by the President, Tilak asked "What about my request?" Malvi explained that it was not proper for anybody to question the President's election. "How could I have allowed you to move an adjournment of the Congress before the presidential election?" he said.

Tilak said "I must move my amendment". Obviously the adjournment was to be made before Rash Behari Ghose was elected. Tilak's idea was that the amendment should be moved before Rash Behari Ghose was elected, and then the meeting should be adjourned. That was an extraordinary proposal and therefore the management of the Congress said at the time, "Your proposal is out of order and could not be allowed. Please allow the President to proceed with his speech."

Tilak and his followers in the pandal began to shout and some persons were even heard to say "No President has been elected." While this event took place, Tilak said, "If you won't let me move my amendment, I will appeal to the members." He turned round to the delegates. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose had already read a sentence. At that time, naturally, the followers of the Congress management began to say 'We can't allow this. This is too much and the strong volunteer force round the President said: "We will chuck this man from the place if he is going to be obstinate." And they were about to lay violent hands on him. He said 'I won't move unless you take me bodily and remove me' and kept crying 'I must move my amendment.' The whole thing had come to a dead-lock and then we all saw that Tilak folded his hands and planted himself firmly right in front of the President and began to address the delegates. At that moment it was that the volunteers gathered round him and would have laid violent hands on him. The only paper that made mention of this was the *Indian Social Reformer*. As they were about to handle him, Gokhale rushed forward and enveloped him in his arms and protected him from being manhandled. It was noted at the time, but I am very sorry to say that Tilak's papers did not mention it and did not allow any credit to poor Gokhale for this. When Tilak

said he would not budge unless he was bodily taken out, our volunteers said, 'We will help him.' Then began a great deal of violence. People became restive over the whole episode and began to display their lathis. Just at that time there was thrown from the pit a Mahratta shoe on the platform and it just grazed Bannerjee and struck Pherozeshah Mehta in the chin. It was aimed obviously at Pherozeshah and as Bannerjee sat very near him, it nearly touched him and struck the target. It was marked afterwards that the shoe was a Mahratta shoe and that it had a sharp point and its back was studded with lead. All this appears in a description given by the correspondent of the day whose name you must have heard before. He was H. W. Nevinson.⁵ I shall say a word about him presently, and you must know what type of character he was. I shall read first what he wrote :

Suddenly something flew through the air. A shoe!—a Mahratta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed shoe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendranath Bannerjee on the cheek; It cononed off upon Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them to be Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian Congress dissolving in chaos. (Nevinson *The New Spirit* pp. 257-8)

Henry Nevinson was one of a remarkable class of Englishmen not regularly connected with newspapers, but a somewhat valued correspondent engaged by papers on great occasions. He wrote the book called *The New Spirit in India*. He was one of those people who moved about freely and whether it was war or a peace Conference, came to attend and got hold of all things to be reported to his employers. Nevinson was one of the most graphic correspondents of the chief London newspapers. He was not first or the second but he was very good—there were people better than he. He liked particularly all popular movements in the world. Wherever there was a movement resisting tyranny and oppression, even if it was violent and perhaps a little too violent, he was in the thick of it. He longed to be there. He liked disturbed air and as a matter of fact although he stopped with us for a day in Poona and was Gokhale's guest and was a great admirer of Gokhale, his heart beat in response to the Extremist move-

ment. He was really an Extremist at heart. Like Lajpat Rai, while his intellect drew him to the Moderates, his heart was strongly inclined towards the Extremists. Nevinson was a dear fellow. I knew him very well. He has written two or three very excellent books describing some of the prominent men and memorable events in the history of the world. One mistake he made about me. Nevinson stayed with us and took a little meal at which Gokhale had asked all the members of the Society to gather around Nevinson. I was not there at the time, but subsequently, many years afterwards, he met me in London and when I told him that I had not met him before, he said "No Mr. Sastri, you have forgotten. You had a meal with me in your own Society". He thought all the members were present and I was one of them, as Gokhale told him that everybody was there. He wrote that in a book *Fire of Life* published later in 1935.

As soon as the shoe was thrown, the scene became utterly tragic. The confusion was indescribable. When the shoe was thrown actually, the lathis on the one side began to play; and Tilak's followers mounted the platform and they rapidly got hold of the chairs and flung them freely. I was present among the persons. In those days I was a little more courageous than I am now, and as soon as the first chairs were flung, I rushed up the platform. And what did I see? I saw a young fellow taking a chair and about to strike. I looked up at him. I met one of my own pupils, an old student of the Hindu High School. He had his chair ready to strike me. As soon as he saw me, he exclaimed, "ஐயோ நீங்கள், ஸார்! (Is it you, Sir)." The man became worse and worse afterwards among the Extremists. Finally he drifted to Germany and was there for about 25 or 30 years. There he was reduced to the utmost poverty and for days and days he told me, he was exposed to the cold and had very little to eat. He used to write to me very pathetic letters. He ran away from the Law here and could not return back. Nobody would give him passport. Long afterwards he came to see me at Poona. He was then, believe me, very nearly a skeleton. The hardships he had suffered were indescribable. He was really starving.

Then what happened was, the ladies of whom there were a good number were taken away under careful escort. They were not molested, and all the leaders were escorted from the platform by a back entrance. All the people, nearly everybody, had a broken heart, but Pherozezshah alone was completely self-possessed, and what he said to a Press reporter immediately after these events is put down in Mody's book, and I shall read it to you to show what a strong heart he had even at that moment. As we are talking about Pherozezshah, you will allow me to read about him. Otherwise, it would be irrelevant:

Poor sensitive Gokhale trembled with excitement and indignation. Almost alone among the old leaders, Pherozezshah walked about calm and unmoved. Not all the execrations and calumnies directed against him for months past, not even that Deccani shoe, were able to impair the robust confidence of the man, or affect his clarity of vision or political judgment. Interviewed shortly afterwards he smiled and said, he knew it was coming very soon, and that he was inclined to regard it as a blessing in disguise. The Congress would emerge stronger and healthier from the ordeal, and would not be dragged at the heels of the noisy politicians, who threatened to destroy its reputation for moderation and sanity. The separation was inevitable, unless the Congress was to submit itself to the rule of the Extremists. He was very glad the Moderates had managed to avoid the grand mistake of using force against Mr. Tilak and has thus placed the onus of the split on him. (Mody, p. 540).

Now we come to the next day's proceedings. After the break-up immediately some of the moderate leaders met at Pherozezshah's place. To be brief they wrung their hands and said, 'What are we do?' It was our Madras hero, V. Krishnaswami Aiyer who said, 'Let us have a Convention. The Congress has broken. There is no good trying to reconstruct it. Let us have a convention of delegates whom we can trust and bind them down, make sure of their loyalty to the Congress and rebuild the Congress on that plan.' And he instanced how in the history of England such a thing had taken place. It is said that Rash Behari Ghose and Malvi immediately accepted this suggestion and he was himself asked to prepare the draft and here sits before me a young friend* who drafted it in his own hand to the dictation of V. Krishnaswami Aiyer, which developed afterwards into the

* S. Natesa Aiyer, Advocate and a nephew of V. Krishnaswami Aiyer.

Creed of the Congress. I must read the Creed as it was drafted and finally adopted. The Creed is very important in the history of the Congress because for many years it was the basis of the Constitution. This is the Creed:

(1) That the attainment by India of Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and participation by her in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members is the goal of our political aspirations.

(2) That the advance towards this goal is to be by strictly constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of existing system of administration and by promoting National Unity, fostering public spirit, and improving the condition of the mass of the people.

When that was settled before hand, the Reception Committee in that place made very careful arrangements to see that next day when the Convention met in the very pandal, admission was given only to people to whom after signing a copy of this printed document a ticket of admission was given. But it was feared at that time that a great many of the others would sign and come in and make trouble. So, many local leaders were stationed at the gate to see that none who was known to be on the other side, although he might offer to sign it, should be admitted. I know it was said at the time that it was arbitrary. The local men were posted to see that such people were not even given these declaration-forms to fill in. Still about 900 people came in, genuine Moderates. The only other resolution that Malvi moved was the appointment of Dr. Ghose to be President of this Convention. Lala Lajpat Rai was there also. Then they appointed a Committee to draft the Constitution in greater elaboration, and to that Committee was appointed a great many people who later met in Allahabad. The Allahabad constitution in accordance with which we held the Congress next year in Madras was then framed.

After the break-up and the appointment of this committee, the Surat Split was the one topic of conversation and for newspapers for many a long time. Both parties published their respective documents. The Extremists

issued their statement, how innocent they were and how the Moderates wreaked their vengeance on them. It is difficult for you now if you read both documents to know where the truth lay, but there are one or two things that emerge from the controversies of the time. It appeared that the Extremists were extremely anxious that the split should be healed as early as possible. So what they did in opposition to this Convention was to appoint from among their own number what they called the Congress Continuation Committee. Their idea was that the Congress was still alive, and therefore it had only to continue; and it was considered that the Congress Convention and the Congress Continuation Committee were a kind of opposed schools between which the good people in the land must make a kind of reconciliation. Attempts made to bring the two people together were most upsetting and when the other people went about saying that they were anxious to come to a settlement, even many Moderates changed their hearts and said 'Let us give up the Convention. Let us continue the Congress'. As soon as people promised to behave better, you know how our people soften quickly, anxious for a reconciliation. Then it was that, people appealed to Pherozeshah once more. They said 'What do you say now? There is a strong movement everywhere asking the Moderates and the Extremists to join. What are we going to reply?' Mehta gave answer for which he got plenty of abuse. It is strong, uncompromising, and it shows the stuff of which the man was made. I am going to read this passage to you, so that you will realise how at that moment Bombay felt for Mehta. You may think it was somewhat irreconcilable on his part. Perhaps it was! But amongst the Moderates, it was felt that although he might have expressed himself with a little more sympathy and a little more civility, his point of view was correct. This is how it starts :

The events which took place in Nagpur and Surat, and the circumstances under which the Congress broke up in Surat make it now absolutely essential that the unwritten law on which the Congress was based from the very commencement, namely, that it was to be a legal and constitutional movement carried on by our organization which loyally accepted British rule, should be now put in express words, at once clear and unambiguous, unassailable by any such dialectical chicanery as was practised in the last Congress on the Boycott resolution, when the words agreed to as meaning one thing were attempted to be explained into another and a very dif-

ferent thing. It is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact within our knowledge, (I can speak with authority as regards so-called Extremist leaders in the Bombay Presidency) that some secretly cherish the idea of using the Congress for aims and methods not altogether constitutional. It is impossible, therefore, to let any doubt exist as to the character of the Congress organization and movement. (J.R.B.J., p. 215).

Because the Moderates used the word 'constitutional', because they said, 'Everything must be legal and constitutional', the Extremists said, "What constitution can there be in India? We cannot obey the Constitution and the Government." They wrote in the *Mahratta*, article after article, every week, saying that it was absurd to talk of Constitution. The word 'Constitution' gave in India no meaning whatever. The Moderates who employed that word are not patriotic by any means. And yet, when the Moderates turned round and said, 'Are you, then, unconstitutional, proceeding on illegal lines?' 'Perfectly constitutional', they said, and Tilak was sometimes afterwards accused of having behaved unconstitutionally. I was present in the Bombay High Court when the poor man was held up. For a number of days he argued his own case. No vakil would plead as he wanted to plead. He took many days to argue his own case. I was present throughout the case. I admired the courage, bravery and pertinacity with which he defended himself. He never lost his head for a moment. He was strong and pleaded as if a first-class pleader would plead the case of somebody else. He was a lawyer himself and a lecturer on Law for sometime. One strong line that he took was that he never said one seditious word or expressed one seditious sentiment. He was within the law, and he said, 'Of the passages brought up against me let me take a dozen important ones'—each one of this dozen, he paralleled with quotations from Sir Pherozeshah Mehta's and Gokhale's speeches. 'These people have said this very thing. When they say it, it is all right. When I write it, it becomes unconstitutional.' And as one heard his argument, there was a good deal in it. He took that strange line. I wrote then to V. Krishnaswami Aiyer describing my feelings as I sat listening to the judgment pronounced in the end:

I was in Bombay during the last three days of the trial. When the catastrophe was reached at the end of an extraordinary night-sitting lasting till 10 o'clock, and Justice Davar read out his sen-

tences in slow solemn tones amid death-like silence the effect on us was crushing that we—I mean Dravid⁶ and I—left Bombay precipitateiy, causing no longer delay than was necessary to pick up our things.

Yesterday we had a longer letter from Mr. Gokhale. We wrote back promptly—adding a request that he should use his influence with Morley and others to secure Mr. Tilak something like the considerate treatment accorded to political prisoners.

I needn't say that Poona lies prostrate under the blow which is felt in every home. The one thought of every one is the great gap left in the ranks of public men. No single man can take his place. The *Dyan Prakash* forgot old quarrels and paid the fallen hero a generous tribute. Mrs. Tilak's condition—she has had acute diabetes for some weeks—threatens to add a tragic touch to the situation. Tilak himself, manfully as he bore himself throughout and clear as his voice rang as he called on the higher powers that guided the destinies of nations, looked greatly pulled down by age, diabetes and the terrible strain of the last fortnight, and few hope to see him alive at the end of his exile. In the general depression, however, a clever young lawyer bids us cheer up. The misjoinder of trials under different sections is a radical error, says he; and as he read to us the different sections of the Cr. P. C. dealing with misjoinders, we thought the matter so patent that we suspected something deeper as we couldn't conceive of a High Court Judge making such a mistake. "But you don't know Davar" says he, "and we lawyers generally prepare legal traps in these trials." We could only open our lips in ignorant wonder. (Sastri's Letters, pp. 26-7).

The Judge declared that Tilak was guilty and sentenced him to 6 years' R. I. He pronounced his judgment as though he was pronouncing a curse on a very black sinner before him. If you are a judge and have to try such a great man, why not go decently about it? The language was bad, the manner was bad and it was half-past ten at night when he pronounced the sentence; and the whole of Bombay was full of soldiers stationed all over the place because it was feared that as soon as the people heard that Tilak had been sentenced to imprisonment, they would rise up in arms; and they were very nearly doing it. But the presence of the soldiers and the arrangements that Government had made were so skilful that no demonstration took place. The whole thing was protracted late into the night in order to prevent all possible demonstration. He was immediately removed. He was taken away to Mandalay in Burma and confined there.

NOTES

1. **SRI AUROBINDO GHOSE (1872-1950)**: Had a distinguished career in Cambridge, passed the I.C.S. Examination creditably but failed in horse riding; disqualified. Professor, Baroda Maharaja's College, (1893-1905); Principal, National College, Calcutta (1906); took active part in the Congress split at Surat. (1907); deeply involved in extremist activity, suspected and prosecuted. Defended by Deshabandu Das, sought asylum at Pondicherry; achieved world-wide renown as a great seer, scholar, writer, interpreter and saint.
2. **SIR GANGADHAR CHITNAVIS (1863-1929)**: Represented the landed aristocracy of Madhya Pradesh in the Imperial Legislative Council (1910).
3. **DR. RASH BEHARI GHOSE (1845-1921)**: Lawyer, Calcutta; Member, Bengal Legislative Council (1889); Imperial Legislative Council (1891-1893); President, Faculty of Law, University of Calcutta (1893-95); President, Indian National Congress, Surat and Madras (1907-1908).
4. **ASWINI KUMAR DUTT**: Pleader, Barisal, Bengal. Secretary, Barisal Peoples' Association (1906); Organised Famine relief work in Barisal (1906); Chairman, Barisal Municipality; Deported for his opposition to the Partition of Bengal (1906) and for supporting Swadeshi. A staunch Congressman. Manager-Principal of the Brij Mohan College, founded by his father.
5. **HENRY WOOD NEVINSON (1856-1941)**: A correspondent of international reputation, visited India as the Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* (1907); Author of *The New Spirit in India* (1908).
6. **NATESH RAO APPAJI DRAVID (1871-1952)**: One of the Foundation members of the Servants of India Society (1905); organised the Branch of the Society for Central India at Nagpur (1911); Editor, *The Hitawada* (1911-1932); Member of the Central Provinces Legislative Council (1923-26); was also the Editor of the *Dynana Prakash*, the Marathi Daily of the Servants of India Society (1905 to 1910).

LECTURE VIII

MEHTA AND THE "CAUCUS"

We finished the story of Surat the other day and went on to consider the sequel in part—what it led to in the next year. Though the story continues without a break, we shall have to look back a little at the year 1907—a rather important year in Pherozeshah's life. This year was the famous Caucus year. You may remember me reading out of Mody's book a humorous statement to the effect that the caucus triumphed and the caucus failed. The caucus triumphed because the Justices of the Peace did not elect Pherozeshah Mehta and it failed because immediately thereafter, his importance in the Corporation was re-established. There occurred this year, one of those violations of political propriety of which the Government of India are frequently guilty. It is one of the unwritten conventions that where there are elected and nominated seats to the same body, a person who fails at the election ought not to be nominated by the Government, the idea being that as the people have rejected him, it would be wrong for the Government to flout the wishes of the electorate and thrust a man whom they did not want. Nomination of a person defeated at an election is considered to be improper so that some of these people who have, as it were, some standing with the Government and at the same time would rather get in by election are thus advised by Government: "Don't stand and be defeated. Best you come by nomination straight-away. Make sure of your entry." The Bombay Government at the time of this caucus stood behind the favourite of the Accountant-General, the Collector and the Corporation Commissioner to such an extent, that when the contractor Wahed was disqualified by order of Court and had to vacate his seat, the Government of Bombay nominated him to the Corporation. The Government felt they were committed to these people. One other feature of this caucus I did not mention to you before, but I think I cannot long postpone it, as we have come to another caucus. We shall study the first and then come on to the second. A great many people not in Government service, nor immediately dependent on the Government in any way joined a movement against Pherozeshah. As we know in Madras right before our eyes, when a person of influence opposes Government many of his friends desert him. They range

themselves openly on the side of the Government, or in a negative way seek to reduce his importance. That thing happened to Pherozeshah at the time of the Caucus. Many people had, in their hearts, felt jealous of his importance and felt rebuked in his presence. They felt diminished and small in his presence and nourished a sort of ill-will against him and thought that this was the time to fling a stone at him. I do not know how it happened that Sir N. G. Chandavarkar and Mr. Natarajan¹ who were like Siamese twins, were against Pherozeshah and our friend Mr. Natarajan was a frequent contributor to the *Times of India*. He was known, however, to be an independent man and he never adopted the policy of that paper entirely. On this occasion, he was against Pherozeshah and I think he wrote some articles against him. I remember at the time being in Poona and Gokhale saying that he felt very sad about Mr. Natarajan's behaviour. Subsequently, I asked Mr. Natarajan himself. He said he did that not out of any private feeling but out of a genuine public impulse, to put down a man who had grown almost uncontrollable in power and exercised it without any restraint whatever. He was one of those who recognised that a blow dealt at Pherozeshah's importance was a public service; and the biographer of Pherozeshah moralises a bit at this stage. He wonders at this phenomena that when amongst great difficulties a non-official rises to prominence and challenges the authority of the biggest officials of the land, some of our own people, instead of standing by him and being proud of him, should join together and try to lower him in public estimation. Now, against Mr. Natarajan, nothing can be said by way of adverse criticism. He is a sound man. In times, when opinions are hard to form on which side the balance of justice and propriety lies, I have always felt inclined to turn to the pages of the *Indian Social Reformer* to find what Mr. Natarajan thought. That is the estimate in which I hold Mr. Natarajan. He generally judges correctly and from a high standpoint. If, therefore, he opposed Sir Pherozeshah, it would be cheap criticism to say that he did so out of a personal motive. It was therefore a kind of *Dharma Sankata* between his loyalty to justice and his desire to stand by a countryman in trouble. Justice must have prevailed, and he must have thought that it was necessary to teach him a lesson.

In the same year 1907, another important event occurred in Pherozezshah's life. As I told you, Pherozezshah stood up for the Corporation of Bombay. He was the Bombay Corporation. Between the Corporation and Government there were always some very ticklish matters in dispute. There had been a very bitter dispute with regard to the 'police charges'. Owing to the confused beginnings of the Bombay Corporation, a bad principle had been established and it had gone on unrectified; the charges of the police in the City of Bombay were cast on the revenues of the Bombay Corporation. This mistake had occurred in the early days, and Pherozezshah had always stood up against it on grounds constitutional and otherwise that municipal corporations ought not to be made to pay for service which they did not control. When they are called upon to pay for any item, they must be the judges of that item. The police are outside the control of the Bombay Corporation, so Pherozezshah contended 'Then we shall not pay for them, unless you make them a municipal police'. But it was there in the Act of the Corporation and the Government were unwilling to change. This had been in dispute for a long time. Pherozezshah took this dispute for the first time to the Government of India and the Secretary of State and failed. In the year 1907, however, the Government of India felt it necessary to fall into line with one of the correct principles of Lord Ripon's famous Local Self-Government Resolution, which laid down that in future the rule ought to be for every municipal Corporation to control the services for which they were asked to pay. That principle was enunciated in 1883 but owing to disputes of an acrimonious kind, the rules had not been changed. Now, the Government of Bombay thought that they should change it and brought in a bill. Instead of the police charges which they proposed to take over, they cast upon the Bombay Corporation, an equal amount, but under the head "Medical relief and hospitals". That was considered a legitimate municipal item. The Government therefore said: "We shall take away this item from the municipality but replace it by a legitimate item, 'Medical relief and hospitals.'" The amounts were not exactly equal. The police charges are growing and the medical relief charges are also growing, so that neither party will gain very much over the other. Therefore take it." Pherozezshah said that it was a good idea and the change was effected after a good deal of adjustment. I

am now mentioning this in some prominence because this occurred in the very year of the caucus 1907. Pherozeshah Mehta had been humbled and in the Corporation there were only a small minority of his followers. All the rest were sent in on the written understanding that they were not to follow Mehta. Nevertheless, in the same year, Sir Steyning Egerly, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay wrote to Pherozeshah as soon as the Government introduced the Bill. They wanted his assistance, as this was a legal problem, as a good deal of wrangling over constitutional and legal matters would have to be adjusted and as Pherozeshah Mehta could make trouble to prevent the Bill passing through. Pherozeshah high-mindedly consented, and said, 'If you can adjust, I shall help'. The measure was put on the Statute Book; and he introduced many amendments, several of which the Government accepted and in the end, when they were about to declare the Bill an Act, Pherozeshah said: "You have now cast upon us a big item. This is going to be a white elephant. The exchange is not going to be beneficial to us." At that time Sir Steyning Egerly said something which was very wise and which made everybody shake hands with each other. He said: "Why do we bother. Let both items grow and let the Corporation pay 'Medical relief, etc.' charges and the Government pay police charges. Where is the trouble? When the Government pays, the people of Bombay give. When the Corporation pays the citizens give. Either way it is the people of Bombay, the City of Bombay that stands to gain. Why should we quarrel?" With these words the dispute ended which had lasted for nearly forty years.

Now we come to the year 1908. Let us take up the story of the Congress. About this time was the beginning of my connection with Bombay and Poona. I happened to be an eye-witness to a great many of these things. About this time, Pherozeshah had attained a position in life where he was unchallenged in authority and power, and therefore people found it difficult to approach him. He was not accessible. His habits were peculiar. He rose late and spent two hours on toilet. When he came out he used to receive people sharply and with very few words, went and sat in his chambers. In the chambers, he had a number of followers who attended on him. They were

worshippers at the temple where he was their idol. Naturally, the incense of flattery being constantly burnt before him, he got to be a bit stiff and a little rough, quick to administer a rebuff and seldom knowing what it was to apologise. Men were afraid to come into the room to see him. He appeared to be a little superior, and smaller people in the political side who had business with him had to make an appointment beforehand and then come with their cases fully prepared so as to occupy as little of his time as possible. All this made him slightly removed, it was said, from the popular sphere. He began to be a kind of dead-weight in politics, and a very big person who was hard to move from his position. When he took up a position, it was impossible to change him. I know, as a matter of fact that Gokhale often felt this, but he would say at the same time, "What can we do? He is the only man who understands things, takes up things and carries them through." In the year 1908 therefore, they decided upon having a Convention Congress in the City of Madras. Pherozeshah had not written a line about this. He did not tell V. Krishnaswami Aiyer or Gokhale. He did not take share in the preparations and we were not sure whether all that had been done had Pherozeshah's sanction or not. It was difficult to get his previous consent, and no one was ever sure of his subsequent ratification. We had to move in the dark. People felt that very often. When he came out and made pronouncements they were in the nature of high decrees, as it were, of royalties. Sometimes, he would be rough and that was what he did. Bhupendranath Basu urged him to say what should be done, and whether we should listen to the appeals and cries of the Extremists. The Extremists were in a bad plight and thought that they had made a blunder. Besides, the Government caught hold of Tilak, prosecuted him and sentenced him to six years. Lajpat Rai was at that time in some sort of difficulty. He had recently been released after having been detained in Lord Morley's time. Morley, by this time, became the Secretary of State for India. He was in those days misunderstood a good deal. Unfortunately, he was new to Indian affairs. He was bold enough to take up the Secretaryship of India and for the first time in his life he felt that he had to consult the authorities to an extent he had not done even in the case of Ireland. Indian authorities were peculiar in this respect. While in England, the Civil

Service were subordinate to the Ministry, which is composed of non-officials who were elected by the people, who had the principal say in every matter. In India, on the contrary, it was the Indian Civil Service that held the reins of power. The non-officials had to take the second place. Their voice had to contend against enormous odds and when any important question arose, it was only the newspapers and the speeches of a few people that showed the popular side. All the documents and statements told the tale of the Government. What was poor Morley to do? In spite of his Liberalism, he had to listen to these people. He did not understand the full question. He had a great ambition, perfectly laudable ambition,—don't mistake the word 'ambition'—great desire, to introduce some reforms into the Indian administration and wanted to raise its standard; he was also eager to give non-official India privileges they did not enjoy before. He thought he could do this if he had the I.C.S. behind him. It was not possible to carry a reform to which the I.C.S. were strongly opposed, for the I.C.S. had such a tremendous backing in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords too—a stronger backing—that Lord Morley thought that it was best that he had to work everything through them and with their consent. Their consent came to him on account of his great name. He had a name that carried a great deal of weight in all matters concerning politics and the philosophy of politics. The I.C.S. were willing to bend up to a point. He was also a very cautious man. He had to learn everything anew. I will mention now a little secret about Morley. He was a great personal friend of the Aga Khan² who was in his Executive Council at that time. He found that the Hindu case was strong. He saw Gokhale rather frequently; and when the Reforms were adopted in the House of Lords, they said of Morely that he had been under the influence of a Hindu intriguer. That was what they called Gokhale. Morley had to protest strongly against it: "I know you are referring to Gokhale. Everytime I saw him I saw a Muhammadan to balance." Then there occurred a small incident which I shall narrate to you because it is full of interest. In those days, Lord Elgin,³ an ex-Viceroy of India, was in the House of Lords. He was in the Tory interest. When Morley protested that he had not been unduly influenced by anybody, Lord Elgin who did not quite

believe him and did not want to say so, said so in a different way. He said, "I advise Lord Morley not to forget Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. A story is told of how Johnson in the height of his power began to visit a Scottish clergyman named J. Campbell, who had a great reputation for wisdom and learning in ecclesiastical matters, Johnson had a great fear of death. He would every now and then consult J. Campbell. He went every Sunday to him for about 5 or 6 weeks, and suddenly stopped going. Then Boswell asked him, 'How is it you do not go to Dr. Campbell?' Johnson told him 'Look here. I have a reputation to maintain. If I go to Dr. Campbell frequently, then any wise thing that I say, the people will begin to say that I have taken from Campbell. All my wisdom will be supposed to be borrowed from him. I don't want that.'" Lord Elgin told this story in the House of Lords by way of reminding Morley, "You must not see either a Hindu or a Muhammadan as it will be supposed that you followed them."

In the year 1908, the Reforms took shape though they did not come before the Legislature, upper or lower, before another year. Their outline was well-known. Morley was slow and he was apt to be a little peevish. Though he was a Liberal he did not like to be frequently questioned. In those days, Lajpat Rai was apprehended and Ajit Singh too was apprehended with him. Many arbitrary acts took place, Deportations, imprisonments, detentions, without trial, one after another! The Bengal people had taken to the cult of the bomb. Many outrages occurred so that no trial could be held anywhere in Bengal. Either the witnesses were frightened or they had to pay heavy price for their lives. Such things happened and there was a wave of terror all over Bengal. The Government met this by terrorism on their part, deportations, imprisonments, fines, convictions, etc., for all of which Lord Morley was held responsible. He had to stand up and answer. He had to defend all kinds of weak things on the part of his Government. That was his job. There were many people from the Liberal ranks who constantly questioned him. They wanted to annoy him. He showed his peevishness to a great extent—I say this by way of digression. Morley was short-tempered and when angry he was not easily pacified. His colleague was Sir William Harcourt?, a great man, and he belonged to the same side

of politics. Both were big men and between them there was a kind of rivalry. They did not speak with each other, and yet they were both in Gladstone's ministry. This disharmony was a reason for Morley's obstinacy and glumness. Therefore when his friends who ought to have supported him came and worried him and said 'You are turning Tory,' he was put out tremendously; and among those was Sir Henry Cotton. Sir Henry Cotton was the Lieutenant-Governor of Assam and he was a pro-Indian. Everybody was very fond of him. He was President of the Congress and had otherwise shown his great friendship for Indians. He was idolised by our people. He had an unsatisfied ambition. He retired from the Lieutenant-Governorship of Assam, instead of being promoted to a Governorship. Retiring, he went into the House of Commons and then he expected to be made a member of the Secretary of State's Council. Morley however listened to the advice of the Government of India and did not appoint him. He, therefore, nourished a feeling of great discontent against Morley and from his place in the House of Commons put all sorts of nasty and annoying questions as he knew all the secrets of India. He put them all from an intimate angle. Morley grew angry. (This is true but has not come into the history book). Though he had said that the partition of Bengal was so settled a fact that he could not annul it, he was secretly aiming at altering the partition sufficiently to afford some satisfaction to the Bengali nation. He had nearly perfected it, and Gokhale told me that he was thinking as to when he could announce it to the House of Commons. At that time, having come to know some of the details, Cotton worried him with a question which it was highly inconvenient to answer. In his anger he said: "I am not going to touch that question while I am Secretary of State." He took that stand most unfortunately, and therefore it was left to his successor to undo it. Otherwise, this would have happened in his time.

That was the state of affairs in 1908. We, in Madras, who had undertaken the great task of holding the first Convention Congress had therefore to have our ears strained for any tidings that could come from London, what would the Reforms be like? Unless the Reforms were of a satisfactory kind, Lord Morley's reputation would go to pieces

in the land. I was one of those who wrote against him. I took colour from the surroundings. Wacha denounced him, Suorahmanya Iyer denounced him and Krishnaswami Aiyer—all were against him. He was not standing up and he was yielding to the Indian Civilian. Morley's name was very much down here. At the end of the year 1908, there was a break in the cloud. We were all working here for the Congress. All the news from England was disheartening and was so uncertain that we felt we were not assisted as we should be and although the Extremists were then very weak, they had it in their power to create a certain amount of sympathy for themselves. A man who may be troublesome in power is hated, but when he lost power and came down, the public generally sympathise with him. That is the way in which public feelings usually move and these Extremists went about humbly saying "We want to come into the Congress. Help us." People listened attentively to them and said, "It is the Mehta-gang that stands in the way". The feeling in Madras among Congress ranks was that these people could not be trusted yet, and Krishnaswami Aiyer had alone to bear the brunt all the time of standing strongly by Pherozeshah. He had many opponents. I wrote in an article how broad Krishnaswami Aiyer's shoulders were and how strong he could be against very heavy odds. It was then that he showed his full mettle. As the difficulties grew, his power of resistance grew too. C. Vijayaraghavachariar threw his strength against the Congress. Anandacharlu did so. *The Hindu* paper did so. Many others well-known in political circles threw their weight upon the wrong side. They said, "Hold a united Congress. Drop the Convention idea, or don't hold any Congress at all." The 'Dont hold Congress' view, though it was taken up by a minority of people, was shouted from housetops. Although Krishnaswami Aiyer was the strongest amongst the Congress people, he was loyally assisted by a few of us. I am happy to think, now after all this time, that I was one of those who strongly supported Krishnaswami Aiyer to the extent of my power. Chintamani was another and there were others too. He and I went about in the province enrolling Congress-minded people into the Congress committees and in some places we had difficulties. The greatest difficulty was experienced in Salem where Vijayaraghavachariar was the uncrowned king. He was an old friend of mine. I learnt the A.B.C. of politics

under him. It was, therefore, with great difficulty that I stood against him in Salem. Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar⁹ was a rising member of the bar but unfortunately he was with Vijayaraghavachariar. I remember at that time being asked to state the Congress case fully, chiefly as regards the questions of the functions, propriety and also as regards the four resolutions which it was feared that the 1908 Congress might drop. At that time having broken away from the Extremists, we felt much opposition to go our own way. I remember reading a paper at that time, and Krishnaswami Aiyer was very pleased, to a select party of ardent Congressmen. The paper was then printed. I tried to find out that paper, but I could not. In that paper I had discussed the four resolutions in full, and also examined, as far as I could, the validity of the charge brought against us that we were an unlawful, illegitimate body and that we could not function and so forth. I remember how I then quoted a number of passages from Macaulay's *History of England* relating to the period where in English history, a Convention had to be set up when Parliament and regular institutions had been destroyed. It is this English history that put Krishnaswami Aiyer on the scent as it were. I want to read that passage. I had put that in my paper. That paper was printed in many magazines at that time. When Rash Behari Ghose was appointed President, he took that from my paper and included it in his address. He did not mention from where he took it; but it does not matter so long as he had taken it and put it into his speech. I shall read that passage to you in Dr. Rash Behari Ghose's address. The paragraph is:

We have been charged with having imposed a new constitution without a mandate from the Congress. But I hardly believe that our accusers are serious. In the first place, there is no question whatever of compulsion or of a brand new constitution. The constitution is not brand new and nobody is compelled to accept it. In the second place, is it not the idlest pedantry to say that the convention which we were driven to summon at Surat when the regular machinery broke down—a Convention at which over eight-hundred delegates were present—had no authority to act at all in the unforeseen emergency which had risen? If we were always obliged to move only in the beaten path, we could not in a time of crisis move at all. "In a wilderness," said Maynard on a historic occasion, "a man should take the track which will carry him home and should not stand crying. 'Where is the King's highway? I walk nowhere but on the King's highway.'" (Laughter and cheers.) There are also other precedents familiar to every student of history. But what is the

use of speaking of precedents or of history or of the counsels of common sense, to those who for their own purposes are determined to belittle the Indian National Congress. (Natesan : Congress Presidential Addresses, pp. 929-30).

Now, I must come back to Mehta. I have been wandering a bit. Mehta was supposed to be behind all that was taking place on behalf of the Congress. Morley's success so far as Indian Reforms was concerned was also in part traced to him; and many a man in India thought that although Mehta was silent, his hand was visible everywhere. That was true to a great extent. I must hasten to tell you how Mehta was supposed to be behind the whole of the Moderates. It is stated in an Anglo-Indian paper the *Capital*. After referring to the Indian Councils' Act of 1892 the writer went on to say :

For seventeen years he was the most prominent and potent force in the vindication of the right and ability of Indians to share in the administration of their country. His genius inspired the devotion and stimulated the endeavour of Mr. Gokhale. Between them they created a body of respectable public opinion which is the true justification of the Reforms Scheme of Lords Morley and Minto. It is not too much to say that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta is as completely identified with this great measure of relief as Daniel O'Connell¹⁰ with Catholic Emancipation I, therefore, regard the Reforms Scheme as a great personal triumph for Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It is the fulfilment of the prophetic vision he had in the Congress tent at Calcutta nearly twenty years ago.

Once before, I have said this to you and it is necessary to repeat it to you. In all the movement for Reforms we were inspired by the example of Japan. It is now carrying odium with it but at that time Japan's triumph over Russia was so wonderful. We were all students of Japanese history and it was the inspiration first of all to establish that the East could triumph even in military matters over the West. Everybody including the Viceroy felt that this example of Japan had created a spirit of unrest in the country and added to the bomb cult in Bengal. They used this to convince the Tories in England. Our I.C.S. friends put up the Tory people so that Morley and Minto had to contend very much against these reactionary tendencies. In combating the reactionary tendency they made use of the effect of Japanese victory over Russia on the Indian mind. Minto said:

All Asia was marvelling at the victories of Japan over a European power. Their effects were far-reaching. New possibilities seemed to spring into existence, there were indications of a popular demand in China, in Persia, in Egypt and in Turkey. There was an awakening of the Eastern world, and though to outward appearances, India was quiet, in the sense that there was at the moment no visible acute political agitation, she had not escaped the general infection.

They used things of that kind to persuade the people at home that Reforms were necessary in India. You all remember that when Morley made his famous speech and gave the first outline of his Reforms, he used a certain unfortunate expression to persuade the I.C.S. and the reactionaries around. He said "Don't be alarmed. I am not conferring Parliamentary institutions upon India. I am only making a humble beginning. For as long as I can see, I don't think India will be fit for parliamentary institutions." He went a little farther than necessary in order to bring comfort and consolation to the Tories there, but that word was caught up by people here; and we began to abuse him. It was not Morley alone who said that. Here, in India, Minto allowed himself to say these things. When a big Parliamentarian makes a statement, it is sometimes meant for his friends, and sometimes for his rivals and critics and sometimes it has to be interpreted by both people and each interprets it according to his own wishes. It is not always fair in political debate to take a man exactly at his word and hold him down by the letter of his utterances. This is what he said:

We have distinctly mentioned that representative Government in its Western sense is totally inapplicable to the Indian Empire, and would be uncongenial to the traditions of the Eastern populations, that Indian conditions do not admit of popular representation, that the safety and welfare of this country must depend on the supremacy of British administration, and that supremacy can in no circumstances be delegated to any kind of representative assembly.

As I told you, there was a good deal of criticism about this statement. But Pherozeshah knew how to interpret these things. He recognised that all this was meant to carry the reluctant Tories through. He could not say so to us. We were criticising Morley and Minto. So he sailed close to the wind when he said:

With his usual caution Lord Morley has remarked that the Parliamentary system in India was a goal to which he did not aspire. I venture to think that this might have been left unsaid, considering the upheaval throughout the whole of Asia. When Persia and China talk about representative Government and parliaments, one does not care to set any particular seal of importance on India. But I have always been against looking too far ahead. I have for a long time deprecated the fashion of talking of ideals. In India, at any rate, at present, let our aims and goals be practical, looking forward to the near future without troubling ourselves as to what may be the ultimate goal.

Here Mehta showed the acuteness of his mind and the political sagacity which he had learnt after a good deal of experience of English Parliamentary institutions.

Now, I must say a word about another paper that I read. Unfortunately that paper also is not now forthcoming. I have lost it. That paper was read to my colleagues in the Servants of India Society. Gokhale was in the chair. I described therein in somewhat graphic terms my experience as I went about among our Congress folk from district station to district station to organize working committees. Everywhere I went there were a number of spies and my footsteps were always dogged by them. When I went to a district centre I did not go to the most important man. I went to a small and obscure man in order not to give trouble. I put all this down in a paper. My friend took the paper from me the evening he went to Nagpur. He lost the brief bag with the paper in it. I mention this because I have put down many of my experiences; I only recollect this with pride. When I read the paper Gokhale intended that it should be discussed by the gathering and said: "I want to let you discuss that paper. It was so grand, so beautiful that any description will spoil it." I remember it with pride because praise from him is praise indeed!

I have referred to a wish expressed by Gokhale that Pherozezshah should be made the President of the 1908 Congress. He wrote this from England to Krishnaswami Aiyer and of course it was felt all over the country that as Dr. Rash Behari Ghose was not allowed to address at Surat, as he had not been the President though elected, it was felt that he should be the President, actually deliver his speech and conduct the proceedings of the Congress once at least. He was therefore re-elected President for

the Madras Congress. I was Captain and also Secretary. My Captainship was subjected to very severe trials. You may be interested to hear of it. I had a lot of trouble. It was feared here that the Congress would be exposed to attacks of all kinds. Naturally we had an attack by a tremendous force of spies and C.I.D. people. I was often appealed to, 20 people came dressed and 150 others came without dress, but every time, the policeman at the gate used to say, "Please allow this man." The volunteer would not allow and I had to come. I said: "This will do. Just wait." In that way, 100 people came. The whole place was littered with spies. That is the way in which the Government behaved when they were panicky. They immediately enrol a very large number of additional force. That was one of my troubles.

Another of my troubles! I hope you will learn something from it for your own conduct. There was a Vakil who lived in Triplicane near the Hindu High School. He was a good friend of mine. This gentleman behaved in a peculiar way. He bought a small ticket for about a rupee or two and went and sat where only ten-rupees ticket-holders were allowed—right in the most prominent part of the dais where he could see the President and other important people. The volunteers, the Vice-Captain and I tried to get him out, but he would not move, and pulling a man so near the presidential chair was very hard. I tried to tell people about him. Several people went and told him. He would not listen. His spirits were up. Whatever you may say he would not stir. "I have come and I am going to stay," he said. It was not possible to pull him out because 20 people said "Why don't you pull him out?" and 200 people said "Leave him alone". What was I to do? Was I to see that the right thing is done or not? Luckily there are very few people who take this brilliant line. Amongst our people only some are very troublesome in that way and think that they are emancipated from the ordinary law and are a little above all things. I hope none of you would follow that example and will do well to learn to obey the rules in force. The most important point of the proceedings of the Congress you need not bother about. The important part is at the very end. You remember when a lady

*Discussion about reforms was delayed
to allow the opponents of the reform
to get rid of their poison*

LECTURE VIII

writes a letter, she somehow puts all the useless and unimportant matter in the body of the letter and puts the most important part in the postscript. That is how some of our visitors behave. When I was very busy counting my minutes a man would come to me putting all sorts of questions and he would tell me all sorts of things. If I asked 'Kindly tell me what business you have got' the man would absent-mindedly get up. This kind of thing has happened to everyone of you. But it is not a good habit. It is a habit which the business people have not got, but with us time is not so nearly valuable.

Well, in the Congress proceedings of that year, the most important part came right at the end as a portion of a speech on a complimentary resolution. Gokhale held himself back all the time. The Reforms were announced three days before the Congress met and therefore people had no time to study them. There was only a telegraphic summary. The man who knew all about everything in the Reforms scheme, instead of helping, kept matters in the background, did not speak of it until the last. The Reforms resolution came. He did not speak. Curiously enough he thought, perhaps wisely, that the proper plan would be for most people to get rid of all their poison, as it were, against the Reforms, and he might come at the end, to teach people what the Reforms were.

I remember one thing he spoke. It was a speech meant to be the subject of thanksgiving to Hume and Wedderburn. In those days, they were connected with our Congress. A branch of the Indian National Congress was maintained in England at our cost in those days. We were not very regular in paying the expenses. They had to din us; we seldom paid, but fell into arrears for three or four years. Therefore, Hume and Wedderburn paid out of their pockets; W. C. Bonnerjee too did likewise. Still the whole thing was supposed to be at our cost so that this thanksgiving was really meant in all earnestness and Gokhale reserved himself for that speech on Hume and Wedderburn and the British Congress Committee in general. He brought in as one of those to be thanked Dada-bhai Naoroji also. Now for Naoroji, Gokhale had a divine veneration. You remember his famous saying that

it is only in the presence of three people that he felt like a devotee in the presence of a divine power. They were, Dadabhai Naoroji, his master Ranade and Mahatma Gandhi. He used to say 'When these people are there, I feel that I am in the presence of some superior power'. Gandhi was four years his junior. Now about Dadabhai he wanted to say something very nice. It was not in the resolution. I remember I was an early riser on the day he was to speak. He got up in the morning; I was downstairs and he was upstairs. Early morning I heard a noise upstairs. It was Gokhale moving up and down. When Gokhale wanted to think hard on anything, he could not sit. He had to get up and move forward and backward. And then I heard a low murmur. He kept repeating some passage. Subsequently, I asked what it was. He said 'I shall tell you confidently. I was preparing a sentence about Dadabhai Naoroji. I want to be correct and perfect, and it was perfect. I shall read it to you. Gokhale was nothing of a stylist, but he wrote very good English and used words charged with feeling which came from the heart. This is what he said about Dadabhai Naoroji :

In the first place, it was deprived of the assistance and the watchful care which it received in the past from Dadabhai Naoroji, the foremost Indian of our time, the man without self and without stain, our aged chief who bears on his head the snow of years but carries in his heart the fire of youth. (Gokhale's Speeches, Vol. II, p. 291).

It was this sentence which he was preparing. The words are most apt, the phrases are beautiful and rhythmic. Then I want to read another passage in which he summed up the main features of the Reforms scheme, presented them in detail first and grouped them under suggestive heads so that the whole scheme hangs there. You know how Lord Morley with his aptitude for constitution-building had touched nearly every part of the Indian Constitution and introduced reforms so that the new spirit might be incarnated all through the constitution. I shall read that passage the next time. I shall go one step forward and speak about 1909. The Congress was to be held in Lahore. People felt it was a great loss to the first Convention Congress that Mehta was not there. Therefore, Gokhale induced the Punjab delegates to invite the Congress to Lahore and the Lahore people also were glad to do it. Because in the year 1908, there was a

despatch prepared by the Government of India and sent round, containing suggestions for reforming the constitution. These suggestions were mainly along the lines that Morley indicated. Those who have read his *Recollections* would be reminded that between Minto and Morley there was a sort of decided rivalry in the claim for the credit of the Reforms. Was the Reform scheme the work of Minto or Morley? Minto wanted credit and wanted to be first in the picture. Morley was a man of Letters and therefore beforehand he produced his book *Recollections* where he put down everything and anybody who reads that book would come to the conclusion that Minto played a very subordinate part. If you have not read those chapters, you must read them. The point is that in those *Recollections* reference is made to the scheme that Minto had sent. The Bombay Presidency Association, of which the President and the moving spirit was Sir Pherozeshah, went into this scheme fully, criticised it in detail, and produced a big paper which was printed as part of the parliamentary papers. In that paper reference was made to the Muhammadan question in the most statesmanlike type, examining the numerous claims put forward by the Muhammadan community and putting them in their proper place. In the Punjab, the pressure of the Muhammadan community was felt from the beginning. As this scheme had been ably criticised by Sir Pherozeshah and as the Muhammadans had been put in their place, the Punjab people went out of their way to hail Mehta. When this criticism of the Bombay Presidency Association was published in the papers, they were so full of praise and gratitude to Mehta that they said 'Write to him. Let him be our President. We forgive everything because he has put the Muhammadans in their proper place.' I was then in Poona, and when this was known I was staying with Gokhale. I want to read an interesting bit I wrote at the time to our friend Krishnaswami Aiyer:

(Letter to V. Krishnaswami Aiyer, dated 10th July 1909.)

Talking of Congress, Lahore hopes to pull through somehow, Mr. D. A. Khare has just returned to Bombay from Lahore, where he saw men of all parties. His message is that, if Sir P. M. Mehta consents to be President, they will all join. Sir Mehta's answer is characteristic, "Tell them I may not improbably consent."

LECTURE VIII

*Sastri's letter to V. K. Aiyer
about the relenting of the Punjab
towards Mehta*

In times of trouble even the cantankerous Punjabee knows where to turn for strong and sure support.

It surprises me exceedingly,—this relenting of the Punjab towards Mehta. They attribute it to his last message to the Viceroy as President of the Bombay Presidency Association on the Muhammadan question. That being their outstanding trouble now, they feel they are safe in his hands.

And yet the telegram, every word of it is Mr. Gokhale's though Mehta has adopted it cordially. "Write so to Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyer," I was told; he has an uneasy feeling that I am not sound on this question. (Sastri : V. K. Letters, SIS, Madras. p. 229).

You see how we felt alike on the Muhammadan question—Gokhale, Krishnaswami Aiyer and myself. The Muhammadans were going too far—greedy, troublesome and obstructive. This was in 1908! They have not so far improved. Every year they got worse and worse. Where are we now?

Gokhale was credited with a little weakness for the Muhammadans at that time, and between him and Krishnaswami Aiyer a few letters passed on the question.

NOTES

1. **KAMAKSHI NATARAJAN (1868-1948):** Editor *The Indian Social Reformer*, Bombay for fifty years; a great social reformer. Author, *West of Suez*.
2. **THE AGA KHAN** Sir Sultan Mohamed Sha (1877-1957): a descendant of the Prophet Mohamed, Religious head of the Ismalia sect of Muslims; he took care to safeguard the interests of Muslims in India by demanding separate electorates. Was a member of the First Round Table Conference in London 1930. Author, *India in Transition*.
3. **LORD ELGIN (1849-1917):** Viceroy and Governor General of India (1894-99).
4. **JAMES BOSWELL (1740-1795):** Introduced to Samuel Johnson (1763); He spent much of his time with Johnson and kept a record of the great man's conversation and habits; Author of *Tour with Johnson in the Highlands, and Life of Johnson*.
5. **SAMUEL JOHNSON (1706-1784):** Peot, Lexicographer, literary critic, dramatist, essayist; edited Shakespeare's plays. Founded the famous Club of which Joshua Reynolds, Burke, Goldsmith and others were members. He is known for his witty, pungent and sarcastic observations.
6. **AJIT SINGH:** A colleague and coadjutor of Lala Lajpat Raie; was a delegate to the Indian National Congress at Calcutta (1906); later deported for his revolutionary activities.
7. **HARCOURT, SIR WILLIAM (1863-1922):** Viscount-Secretary, for the Colonies (1910-15).
8. **C. RAJAGOPALACHARI (b. 1879):** Gave up legal practice and joined Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation Movement; founder of the Swatantra Party, author of the *Ramayana, Mahabharatha, and the Bhagavat Gita*; a great scholar and philosopher statesman, First Bharata Ratna, First Indian Governor-General.
9. **DAVID O'CONNEL (1775-1847):** Leader of the Catholic emancipation in Ireland, founded the Catholic Association,, (1823), elected M.P., refused to take the Oath; Bill on Roman Catholic emancipation (1829); re-elected unopposed, took his seat (1830); worked for the Repeal of the Union, Arrested (1843); tried for sedition and sent to prison, House of Lords reversed the decision.
10. **D. A. KHARE (died 1915):** Vakil; Secretary, Indian National Council. Bombay. Member, Bombay Legislative Council; Fellow and Syendic, Bombay University.

LECTURE IX

GOKHALE SUMS UP REFORM PROPOSALS

Gokhale in his speech in 1908 at the Madras Congress ably summed up the Reforms proposals and their general tenor. I will read this because not merely it is a good summary of what happened, but even more because it is somewhat characteristic of Gokhale's style of speaking. It has nothing to do with Mehta, but I have not been observing the rules of relevancy very strictly:

Hitherto, we have been engaged in agitation from outside; from now we shall be engaged in what might be called responsible association with the administration. It is still not control over administration, but it is association and responsible association in administration. There is plenty of scope for growth here, and as we grow and discharge the responsibilities that devolve on us properly, I am sure there will be progress further and further towards our having what may be called responsible administration. From agitation to responsible association and from responsible association—a long and weary step but the step will have to come—to responsible administration. (Cheers). Now these large and generous concessions which have been made by the Government and the Secretary of State must receive at our hands that response which they require. They impose upon us two responsibilities in particular: the first is that a spirit of co-operation with the Government must now be evoked amongst us instead of mere criticism of Government. The scheme will fail of its purpose and will prove absolutely useless in practice if our attitude is one of constant antagonism. Therefore, the first responsibility that rests upon us is that the scheme should evoke in us a spirit of co-operation with Government. The second is that the new powers should be exercised with moderation and with restraint and they should be solely used for the promotion of the interests of the masses of the people. (Hear, hear). There are so many questions awaiting solution, but under the existing system somehow the officials do not find sufficient time for their proper consideration. There is the question of mass education, there is the question of sanitation, there is the question of indebtedness of the peasantry, there is the question of technical education and so forth. I do not deny a good deal is being done, but I saw much more can be done when the Government has the co-operation of the Councils. I am sure much more will be done in the future in these directions than in the past. Therefore, these new powers must be exercised with moderation and restraint, and they must be exercised in the interests of the masses of the people. If this is done I really have no fear about the future. Gentlemen, let us not talk so much of

that veto which Government have reserved to themselves as some of my friends have been doing. To attack the veto or to expect or hope that the veto would be done away with in the near future is not to understand constitutional Government anywhere in the world. Even at present the House of Commons works under what may be called a double veto, namely, the practical veto of the House of Lords and the theoretical veto of the Sovereign. They are a self-governing people, and yet they bear all the inconveniences of this double veto. Let us grow to the full bounds of the new opportunities and it will be time enough to talk of circumscribing the veto which is vested in the Government. (Gokhale's Speeches, Vol. II, pp. 297-8).

That was his summing up. I may perhaps read the concluding para also, partly because it is characteristic of Gokhale and partly because it contains a passage which is well known as Gokhale's, and which you may be reminded of in this connection:

One word more and I have done. We are most of us in India, Hindus, Mahomedans and Parsees, a somewhat dreamy race. Of course, the Hindus are most so. I do not deny that dreams occasionally are a source of pleasure, even if they effect nothing else. Moreover, I admit the importance of dreams in shaping our aspirations for the future, but in practical matters we have to be practical men and have to remember two things. Life is not like writing on a clean slate. We have to take the words existing on the slate and add other words so as to make complete sentences and produce a harmonious meaning. Secondly, whatever you may ask for, that is not the same thing as what you will get or will be qualified to get or in practice maintain if you get. Let us therefore not go in pursuit of more idle dreams and neglect the opportunities which the present offers to us. On the manner in which we, especially the younger section of our countrymen, grow to the height of the new opportunities will depend the future of the country. None of us wants to be satisfied with the things as they are. But first we must prove that we can bear these responsibilities before we can ask for any more. I have often said, and I repeat here again, that I do not want any limits, any restrictions on the growth which should be open to our people. I want the people of our country, men and women, to be able to rise to the full height of their stature as men and women of other countries do. But our growth can only be through the discharge of responsibilities; they must first be well discharged before we can think of further responsibilities. Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you heartily for the manner in which you have listened to me and for the way in which you have received me. (Ibid., pp. 298-9).

Let me proceed with the precise subject of these lectures. We left Pherozeshah writing in a controversial spirit about the split which followed Surat, how he held that the split was one that was bound to come and that we

should make no attempt by foolish or weak methods to bridge. In the year 1909, I wrote a letter in which reference was made to Mehta's views on the Muhammadan question, which views, however, Gokhale claimed as his own. Mehta was elected by the Punjab people as President for the 1909 session of the Congress, and it was expected that he would make a strong and emphatic pronouncement. It was expected to be an authoritative declaration of the moderate and constitutional point of view. Many therefore, including great officials of Government, looked forward to this pronouncement. There were, however, in this country a great many others who felt that Pherozeshah might make the task of the peace-makers most difficult and impossible by making declarations condemning the Extremists in very strong and unequivocal language. There would be great difficulty in treating with them. Then everywhere attempts were made to bring them back to the Congress fold; there were a great many Moderates who felt that it was not fair to keep them out on account of one act of very serious indiscretion. To punish the whole of the extremist party merely because of what happened in Surat in a moment of intense excitement was felt by many on Pherozeshah's side to be a harsh deed and it was therefore very strongly pressed upon us that we should make every attempt to heal the wound and bring the Tilakites back. That would be impossible if Sir Pherozeshah should from the Presidential chair rule it all out as *bunkum*, and he would have done that. But a strange thing happened. About 12 days before the Congress was to meet in Lahore, a telegram was published in the newspapers in Lahore which took the people by storm. It was from Mehta: "I deeply regret", said he, "that owing to a combination of unexpected circumstances, I am compelled to relinquish the honour." This was sent to Lala Harikishen Lal¹ who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Pherozeshah let down the office. He would not go to Lahore. At once, there sprang all sorts of guesses as to why he took this extraordinary step and at such a time when it would be impossible for another person to take his place. Within twelve days, how can we expect anyone of the Congress to assume the Presidentship and make a responsible statement to the public? People did not know what to do. They sent frantic messages and telegrams to him, but Pherozeshah, this time, assumed one of those sphinx-like attitudes which was annoying. He said: "I won't see anybody. I won't

*Mehta refused the honour.
Lady Mehta succeeded
where Calpurnia failed. Mehta's third
visit to Europe.*

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talk to anybody. I don't want to make a statement further than that. I won't go to Lahore." People said all sorts about him: "The poor old man is frightened. He knew that the Extremists would hurl the shoe more accurately." Some people said that his life might be in danger. Well, we don't know to this day, the cause. Nor is it one we need probe into, but I will tell you one gossip which was believed in Pherozeshah's, and in our Society also. It was that his wife, Lady Mehta, had put her foot down and prevented him from going, just as Calpurnia² did when Julius Caesar went to the Senate, the only difference being that Lady Mehta succeeded while Calpurnia failed. It was the belief in the Servants of India Society, that she took fright because many people had frightened her that she would soon be widowed, if she allowed her husband to go to Lahore. Anyhow that is a conclusive argument and we cannot go into it. This was what a friendly newspaper said at the time: "The pilot whom the country had trusted as the fittest man to steer the barque to haven when gathering clouds betokened a tempest, suddenly abandoned the port, and left the ship to drift as it might over troubled waters."

As a matter of fact it was Madan Mohan Malaviya³ who came to the rescue. He took up the office, delivered a long speech of about three hours' duration, and for half an hour he read out of some manuscript, he had prepared. It is said, but I have not looked up the figures, that it had the smallest attendance—about 800 people attended! There was nothing very special about that session of the Congress.

We now come to 1910: Pherozeshah Mehta went to Europe for the third time. His kidney began to trouble again, and it was necessary for him to have prolonged rest. As usual his was a triumphal progress. This time he went through Italy and then went to France and then finally to England. It is said that everywhere he was noticed partly because of his extraordinary presence and partly because of the great state in which he travelled. It was generally believed by the proprietors of hotels and chief men in shops which he frequented that he was the Shah of Persia. That was because of his strange Turkish cap. When he went to England, he did some very important political work. Morley had by that time

LECTURE IX *Mehta's political work in England—Exchange of views with Crewe, Wedderburn and the Aga Khan, Mehta and Bombay University.*

retired from office and had been replaced by the Marquis of Crewe.⁴ In 1910, the Congress was to take place in Allahabad and Sir William Wedderburn was very anxious that his office of Presidentship of the Congress should be marked by a very earnest attempt at reconciliation between the Hindus and Muslims. The split had become wider, and Wedderburn felt that the progress of India might be hindered by a continuance of this great evil. Having been the author, in Lord Minto's time, of the Separate Electorate System, the Aga Khan posed in England as the friend of the people; and he very frequently saw Wedderburn, persuaded him that he was one of those most anxious to bring about an understanding between the two communities, and said that as soon as the Congress finished its labours there should be a joint conference of the chief men in both camps, and they should make it a point that their meeting should bear fruit. Sir Pherozeshah naturally encouraged the idea, but without going into details. I may tell you, that although this time it was very influentially supported and carried out with every promise of success, it again ended in a big zero. As usual, the Muhammadans were stressing on impossible things and so this time also the men returned empty-handed, full of sorrow for the pains they had taken. This was within a few years of the beginning of the trouble. This story has gone on repeating itself. I cannot go into it now, except to say that we do not seem to be at the end of the trouble yet. It is most acute to-day.

We now enter on a phase of Pherozeshah's public activities which are concerned with education—University education. The Senate of Bombay was one of the most enterprising and independent of the Senates in the whole of India at that time—not like the Senate of Madras to-day where the voice of a strong man is never heard. In 1910, the Government of Bombay under Sir George Clarke who afterwards became Lord Sydenham, acted in a most remarkable manner—I should say—in a most objectionable manner. The natural course of things is for all the academic changes in the Senate to take origin in the Senate itself, and for the Government sitting in authority over the Senate finally to exercise their judgment on the resolutions of the Senate and accept them or

Mehta resented Lord Sydenham sitting in authority over the University matters ignoring the Senate and opposed his measures.

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reject them, or accept them in part and send back to the Senate with suggestions. Lord Sydenham took the unusual step of elaborating a programme of reforms himself, including an outline of the curricula for the various examinations and courses of study, and sent them to the Bombay University. This was resented by the independent-minded people, chiefly by Pherozeshah as an inversion of the proper order of procedure; and as happens usually, when you are in a state of excitement, over-enthusiastic, you go a little too far. Pherozeshah read the whole of the letter of the Government; he was of the view, that the Government wished to reduce the Senate to a state of slavery, that they were going to dictate everything, and they should not submit to it. So, Mehta organized an agitation; and in the Senate, when the question came up for consideration, he took up things one by one, and went for all the proposals indiscriminately, some good, some bad. Two things I must mention particularly. One of them was that Lord Sydenham recommended the abolition of the Matriculation examination. The same thing happened here. Sir Pherozeshah was against it. In fact he was opposed to all the proposals. He saved the Matriculation examination by making a strong speech. The Senate voted with him and so the Matriculation was saved. But there was an examination of the University which was between the Matriculation and the Intermediate called the "Previous" examination. The examination which takes place in the Colleges at the end of the Junior Intermediate class was in Bombay in those years a University examination. The Matriculation was a University examination and the next year the Previous examination was a University examination too. It was an entrance examination to certain branches of study. They could not dispense with it easily, and Pherozeshah was unwilling to sacrifice it. He moved an amendment that the Previous examination was to be retained. After a heated debate, it was thrown out by the casting vote of the Chairman. Then, after the amendment was so thrown out, the Chairman called for the vote on the main proposition which was that the "Previous" should be abolished. You know when men's minds are disturbed and when arguments are advanced in the same degree, people don't know their minds easily and some lift their hands. The result was that this proposition was also

thrown out by one vote, so that the amendment and the proposition shared the same fate. And the Senate was reduced to the stupid position of having voted down the amendment and also the proposition. What was the fate of the "Previous?" Was it retained or abolished? Nobody knew. Some time later, when all these propositions had to be brought before the Senate once more for confirmation, Sir Pherozezshah moved that the "Previous" examination should be retained. He did not succeed. Then the vote was decisively against him. In those days the B.A. was a broader examination than now. A person who studied for the B.A. in those days would have studied not merely English and his optional language and also the special subject he had taken—History, Mathematics, Philosophy or Science—but every candidate for the B.A. had to learn a certain amount of History and Philosophy. They formed part of the curriculum. The Bombay people attached great importance to this. They were not enthusiasts for specialisation as we have easily become—and I am afraid—somewhat disastrously. On the other hand Sir Pherozezshah was one of those who held strongly that specialisation was only beneficial when it was based on a good system of general culture and that no man was entitled to call himself a Graduate unless he knew a certain amount of History and Philosophy of the world. Anyhow, whether one agreed or not, that was his view and he pressed it on the Senate with great vigour. Lord Sydenham's proposal was that this History part of the B.A. should be removed, and so, he put his hand on the English History first. There was a course of History in the B.A. Sydenham said, "Take that away!" Sir Pherozezshah said, "Whatever you do, I won't allow that to be touched." Naturally the whole controversy turned on the question of its discontinuance in the B.A. "It is English History that is at the bottom of the political trouble. Men learn a lot of politics. This won't do in this country, where politics have to be kept on a low level and where good men must be silent men too"—that was the way in which the argument for the abolition of English History was pressed and that was the way in which it was replied. You can see therefore how hot the debate must have been. And here I want to tell you one thing that makes us sometimes wonder how good men can be found on the wrong side with the best of intentions. Who

*Natarajan's role in this matter enigmatic.
Gokhale resents the D. P. I. issuing whips.
Mehia's strong speech against it.*

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was it that moved the proposition in the Senate? It was Mr. K. Natarajan! How he was persuaded to play that part, we do not know. To this day it is a mystery to me, why upon him should have fallen the burden and the odium of standing up in the University of Bombay for the removal of English History from the curriculum. English History was believed to be the seat of all undesirable political feeling in the country. Anyhow, he did it, and the debate was prolonged and acrimonious. During the debate I was in Poona and Gokhale who as a member of the Senate took his part in the debate used to come and tell us about it every night. One day he told us: "To-day there has been a debate in the Senate." At the Senate meeting it was said Gokhale accused Sharp, the Director of Public Instruction, of having sent round a whip, "Vote for the abolition of English History" to all the nominated Senators and the nominated Senators in those days were in a great majority. He sent round the whip to all the educationists. I knew Sir Henry Sharp very well in the Imperial Council, Extremely Tory in his views, he had a particular animus against all prominent political leaders. He had sent round this whip at the instance of the Governor, and so he had the authority of the Governor. Gokhale who found the audience against him lost his temper and said: "You are all under the influence of the whip sent round by my friend Sharp and you are going to vote against me. How independent and how useful you all are as Senators!" There was a great commotion, and all the people felt that they were insulted. Thereupon Sharp rose up and said, "Whip? Yes! I sent round the whip! Does not Sir Pherozeshah send whips every time?" Then Sir Pherozeshah was provoked, and he indignantly repudiated the suggestion:

Mr. Sharp will be surprised to hear that in the course of a public career which has extended over 40 years, not only in this University, not only in the Municipality, but also in the Legislative Councils of this country, both Imperial and Provincial, there has never been a time when I have issued a whip. And why? Because I was brought up in the historical traditions of the great beings who have guided the educational history of this Presidency, whose antecedents and traditions have been respectfully watched by people like me, and who have always taught us that in a body constituted like the Senate of the University, it was wrong, improper and objectionable to issue a whip. (J.R.B.J., p. 255).

The whip was successful and Mr. Natarajan's proposition, although he made a feeble speech, was carried by a mechanical majority.

There is an interesting sequel to this. I told you of an attempt made by Sir Pherozezshah to redress the wrongs. When finally, this proposition came up for confirmation by the Senate, he tried to move a proposition restoring English History. He felt that a great wrong had been done to the B.A. course and that a most improper attempt was made to emasculate the University Graduates. He tried to reintroduce it. But there was a regulation to say that nothing should be revived within a year or so; and this was within a year. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar was Vice-Chancellor at the time, and he ruled the proposition of Sir Pherozezshah to be out of order. It was not very often that Pherozezshah's proposition would be summarily pushed out like that. He said, "I am going to contest your ruling." Chandavarkar said that a proposition to contest the ruling would also be out of order; and he produced one of the regulations of the Senate in which it was expressly stated that the Chairman's order was final and that his rulings should never be questioned on the floor of the Senate. Pherozezshah was wrong and Chandavarkar was quite right. But it was generally felt by the people at the time that as Pherozezshah was on the losing side and since he was making a fight on behalf of one of his favourite propositions, the Vice-Chancellor who had a discretion in the matter might have used it in his favour and allowed him to move the proposition. That he did not do so was considered an arbitrary use of the Vice-Chancellor's powers. But it had a strange sequel. Pherozezshah said: "Even in the House of Commons, when the Speaker gives a ruling, it is open to people to argue with him. Sometimes the Speaker is not quite sure of his ruling and he asks for advice. He names some people and asks them to advise him. A ruling is discussed sometimes to enable the Speaker to make a proper ruling." Sir Narayan Chandavarkar said, "That may be the rule in the House of Commons, but here is our rule. I won't let you." Sir Pherozezshah was not the man to take a rebuff easily. A few months later he gave notice of many changes in the regulations of the Senate. When the matter came up for discussion, one of

the changes he proposed was that the Chairman's ruling should be open to discussion, he must take the sense of the meeting in order to enable him to come to a proper decision; he argued like that. He lost it but not before something awkward had happened. Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar who had been the Vice-Chancellor before, and had some experience of the misbehaviour of the Senators said: "It is all bad politics come into these things. Pherozechah is very quiet when there is a European Vice-Chancellor, and he never argues for these rights. But when an Indian is there, instead of supporting his own countryman, treats him in this manner." Pherozechah got angry: "If any other man had spoken like that, I should have been very furious. I appeal to you all! Have I ever given away a brother Indian at any time? Is that my career? Have not I stood for all my countrymen in all the places of authority and contest? I have stood for my countrymen always. For me to be talked in this manner, of having taken liberties with a Vice-Chancellor because he was an Indian is a thing I cannot bear." Well luckily, Sir Chandavarkar kept his temper. Nothing happened beyond that. I remember Gokhale coming and telling us: "Hot discussions are always bad. Even big men are drawn into them and they make statements that they cannot defend." He was referring to Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar who was held in the greatest personal respect by everybody, who was not only sound as a scholar, whose learning was on most modern and ancient lines of scholarship and who had established himself as an eminent Orientalist. He was held in great reverence by Eastern and Western scholars. It was therefore a most unwelcome task to stand up against him. We shall now leave the University.

When Sir Pherozechah returned from Europe in 1911, he committed two of the biggest blunders of his life. They will explain one of the weaknesses of human nature. When a person is on a certain high pinnacle and looked up to by people, sometimes it happens that that fortunate man is the victim of his own good fortune and is not able to take a balanced view of things. Before he came to India, before he landed, letters had gone to him requesting him to stand for an election which was pending to the Parsi Charitable Endowments. There were a number of Trustees who had great properties to manage, worth

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*Mehta defeated in the election to the
Parsi Charities. Sought election
to the Mayoralty; elected by one vote.*

crores and crores of rupees. These positions were sought by busybodies as there was money to handle, like the Directorship of a Bank. Sir Pherozezshah had never taken part in any Parsi gathering. He did not attend a single Parsi wedding or funeral. He did not attend any public meeting of the community as such. He was an Indian first and a Parsi afterwards. "Let me not be found even by mistake in a Parsi gathering" he used to say. Why he should have allowed his name to get mixed with a Parsi Trustee election, it is impossible to make out. When he came to India, he was met by a furious opposition, because the Parsi Trustee election was a matter in which the orthodox and backward elements took a serious part. Men recorded votes for small sums of money. While most of the intelligent and cultured people voted for Pherozezshah, the great majority voted against him and it was a disgraceful failure. Sir Homi Mody in his biography moralises on this subject, and says that it is due to the wrong advice that his friends gave him. Why should friends tell him? He knew everything. That is another of our weaknesses. When a big man makes a mistake, we all think that some fellows must have screwed him the wrong way—his wife or servant or clerk, or somebody. That is the way with big people.

Another mistake that he made was in the next year, also about the election. Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary visited India. There was the great Delhi Darbar at the end of 1911. When Their Majesties came, you remember me saying that the Mayor of Bombay was the first man to offer the address and give them a welcome. It was felt that Sir Pherozezshah was the only man to do so. He had the honour twice before. This time too his friends told him: "You must be the man". Sir Pherozezshah allowed himself to be a candidate. It was a subject of the bitterest controversy, because that was the year in which by one of those rotatory conventions a Hindu was to take the place of Mayor. Sir Manmohandas Ramji was nominated, a very rich and respectable man who would have done honour. Another candidate also stood, Sir Sassoon David.⁶ Three candidates and the polling booth was tremendously crowded. Outside the Municipal Corporation a huge crowd waited to know the result. He was saved by the skin of his teeth. He got 26, Ramji 12 and Sassoon 25. People said,

"Why should Sir Pherozezshah get this honour by a narrow majority of one vote and barely escape disgrace? The man was the King-maker. Why should he enter this contest, and put himself to the risk of a rebuff? Some *Graha-charam*, or otherwise this was a very unwise thing." Once he was elected, people all gathered round him and congratulated him and said "You are the man"; and when Their Majesties came Sir Pherozezshah bore the honour with every mark. He prepared the address himself. They all said that nobody else could have done so well. Perfectly true! It was a mistake and I must tell you that the Editor of *The Times of India* summed up the thing beautifully on that occasion. He was Sir Stanley Reed, one of those who made the paper popular. Whenever there was a strong speech, he always took the middle line between the English and Indian, tried to question both the points of view. He summed it up beautifully :

The selection of Sir Pherozezshah for the office in what will be a historic year, secures that the City shall be represented by a distinguished figure, and one who has laboured hard for its welfare. Yet fully recognising the value of his services, we think it would have been more graceful if Sir Pherozezshah had not offered himself as a candidate at the eleventh hour, and had remained aside in favour of the men who have been less richly gifted with civic honours. The Corporation recognizes his great services, but it has not been backward in acknowledging them. It has given him a monopoly of its representation in the Legislative Council, even to the extent of disfranchising itself during his absence in England, and all members willingly stepped aside to make way for him when Their Majesties came to India as Prince and Princess of Wales. Worthily as we know Sir Pherozezshah will represent the City on this occasion, 'it is a pity that the King and Queen should be laid under the impression that there is only one fit for the highest civic honour in the City of the Empire, or that people should begin to think that Sir Pherozezshah desires to monopolise the civic honours that have been so cheerfully and ungrudgingly accorded to him in full measure in the past.

I now come to a passage which involves a point of language. It would interest you. When Pherozezshah went to England for his health, they organised an enormous demonstration in his honour. The Europeans and Indians alike felt that he should be given a public farewell by the citizens of Bombay. The reception and welcome were on the grandest scale possible. The Governor was also present, and then, after the speeches were made in the highest possible terms, Sir Pherozezshah replied. In the reply, he alluded to an event which I have mentioned also to you, how as soon

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'Public Service' and 'Service to the public' distinguished and differentiated by Mehta and Sastri.

as he came as a barrister from England, they offered him a Munsiff's place of the first grade which however, he declined with thanks. He referred to that old incident in his life, and said 'I have all my life believed in the superiority of non-official public life, to that of a public servant.' Then it was that he made use of two phrases exactly alike but to which he chose to attach different meanings. I am going to distinguish between "public service" and "service of the public." If he had accepted the Munsiff's place, he would have entered public service but not doing so, he entered the service of the public. I am going to read to you something that I myself wrote on this point after Mehta's death. Before doing that I shall read what Sir Pherozezshah said about this subtle difference between "public service" and "service of the public." This is what he said:

I remember that, immediately after I began my career, I had to make a choice between entering public service—I mean official service—and entering, if I may so discriminate, the service of the public. It is not known even to some of my most intimate friends that very shortly after my return from England, after being called to the Bar, an eminent member of Government—a most broad-minded man and a man of high, liberal culture—sent for me and offered me the post of first-class sub-judgeship. It was a problem that I had to solve, for though I had joined the lawyer's profession, briefs were not too frequently coming in those days, and some of my friends taunted me that my income just enabled me to go to an ice-cream shop. But I unhesitatingly chose to enter the service of the public. And the reason why I am grateful to you for this gathering and hospitality is that you accept what I have done during the last more than forty years as showing that I have not entirely thrown away the years without doing some little and abiding good. (JBRJ. P. 260)

He took credit for himself for having chosen the non-official line of usefulness to the public. Between Government service and non-official service, there is a great deal of difference and my opinion has been from the beginning that everybody is not fit for non-official service, which Sir Pherozezshah called the "service of the public." To be a good, efficient, faithful public servant under the Government, you require no doubt very good qualities, but those qualities are not of a very high order. To be however, a successful non-official leader, you want also high qualities but they have to be qualities of a unique order of eminence, chiefly command over men and ability to initiate new policies and new courses of action. That is the office of a non-official leader of the public. For that, therefore, not every man

is fitted. When you find a man fit for non-official walks of life, going through and making his mark and doing real good service on a high level of merit, it is a sight to see. It is one of the appropriate things that Brahma makes now and then. When you see all kinds of persons entering a non-official work, using unscrupulous methods, putting their own interest above the interest of the public, getting paid for it, using the position for sordid purposes, when you find a man covering himself with discredit, and bringing the whole of the non-officials down, it is nothing but disservice; and that disservice is a big harm in a country like India.

Immediately after Sir Pherozeshah died, I made a contribution to *The Indian Review*. It appeared too in *The Bombay Chronicle*. Let me read it to you:

It was a sound instinct that led Sir Pherozeshah Mehta to reject official preferment when it came to him. He would no doubt have been a most successful and distinguished servant of the Crown and benefitted his country to the greatest extent that was possible to an Indian official. But his conspicuous talents and extraordinary personality were peculiarly fitted for eminence in non-official life, and there can be no doubt that they could not have yielded to India half the benefit they have actually done if their possessor had chosen to be a Judge of the High Court or even a Member of the Executive Council. There is a certain sort of talent which, though of high quality, requires for its fullest display a pre-existing organization, opportunities and channels of exercise ready made, the discipline of established things which provides work for every hour and constant scope for the beneficent use of authority. Office is the most appropriate destiny for a person endowed with it. The gifts of Sir Pherozeshah were of a different stamp. They could in a sense make their own environment. Thrown on the trackless sea of public life without chart or compass, he was able in storm and in sunshine to steer clear of rocks and shoals, and though he never reached the Happy Isles which are beyond human ken, he must be reckoned amongst the great pioneers who made the voyage comparatively safe for the adventurous people to whom the quest has irresistible attraction. No one in official bondage could have given to the City of Bombay fifty years of uninterrupted and disinterested service or have fought repeated battles for civic freedom and wrought such an intimate connection between the fortunes of that great city and his own name as to compel an Anglo-Indian paper to write of him, "Bombay Corporation is Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta is the Bombay Corporation." No one in official bondage could have kept the western presidency within the limits of moderation and loyalty to the British Throne in the troubled times that followed the Ilbert Bill or the Bengal Partition. The political school represented by the Indian National Congress has

been moulded into its present shape by firm-minded and far-seeing patriots, amongst whom from the beginning Sir Pherozeshah was one of the most influential and in later years almost the most influential. When it was threatened with dissolution some years ago, anxious Congressmen all over India looked to him almost instinctively, as children in a house might to their father when the wind howled outside and the rain beat on the roof. It is a great pity that he has been taken away at this critical hour in the fortunes of India when her final place in the British Empire is under serious consideration. His unrivalled power over his countrymen and his unique position in the non-official world of India rendered his goodwill and co-operation so useful to the highest authorities that it is no wonder Lord Curzon and Lord Sydenham regretted to have been deprived of them for a time. Of strength of will and courage of conviction he had more by far than the common share. These qualities preserved for him the respect and homage of his compatriots even during the periods when he had apparently lost his popularity. It used to be said even of his ablest personal foes that, whatever they spoke and wrote of him ordinarily, their address when face to face with him was couched in accents of deference. Few could resist the persuasiveness and versatility of his conversation or the charm and finished courtesy of his manners. Once at a meeting of the Subjects' Committee of the Congress in Bombay, answering a charge that used to be brought against him during successive years of autocratically preventing the framing of a constitution for the great National Assembly, he asked a Punjab veteran: "Why did you not call me to account there and then?" The old man answered amidst laughter that he had been cowed down by Sir Pherozeshah's personality. "My personality!" answered he, looking smilingly round, "how can I help it, gentlemen?" The wrath of his assailants was turned away and nothing more was said on the subject that sitting. Another picture of him that dwells in the memory relates to the famous Calcutta Congress of 1907, when the passions of a certain section of Bengalis had been worked up to a high pitch and they chose the great Bombay autocrat as one of the victims of their fury. When the Subjects' Committee assembled, his forceful figure was seen on the dais in proximity to that of the President. Young Bengal thought that the Grand Old Man was in the shadow of a malignant planet, and cried out repeatedly: "Down with Sir Pherozeshah!" But there he sat, calm and unmoved, with the unconcern of a lion until the execrations died down. He exhibited the same composure and self-command in the still more exciting scenes at Surat. His personality, imposing as it was, could not account entirely for his vast influence. People met in him a person of matchless debating power, mastery of details which the ablest officials might envy, and that overpowering interest which earnest advocacy commands when it is for unselfish causes. I have watched him more than once in the Legislative Council, always keen and on the alert for points of order and procedure not slow to signify his approval or disapproval as speaker after speaker turned, as if by fascination, to where he sat to find out what impression he was producing. Even the President of the Council was not altogether exempt from his interruptions. On one occasion, when the Land Revenue Administration of Bombay had been severely criticised by the Hon'ble Mr. Gokuldas Parekh, an official member who had been stung to the quick,

forgot himself so far as to say that the ryots were becoming more and more contumacious because of their friends and supporters in the Council and outside were inculcating habits of dishonesty. When Sir Pherozeshah's turn came to speak, the scene in Council was worth-seeing. He was obviously agitated, and while the house listened with tense feelings, went into the history of Bombay assessments and remissions, he showed how the Government of India had to intervene to rescue the ryot from the oppressiveness of the Bombay revenue official, and wound up finally by raising his voice and exclaiming with a minatory gesture; "As for inculcating habits of dishonesty, I cast the accusation back in the teeth of him who made it." When I related the story to Mr. Gokhale, he clapped his hands in admiration and said: "Only Mehta could have done it; he never fails to rise to the occasion." It was his manly outspokenness of utterance and the tone of equality with the highest in the land that came naturally to him, which had sounded so unfamiliar and so unseemly in the ears of an earlier generation of officials when first Sir Pherozeshah's voice was heard in the Imperial Legislative Council in the last years of Lord Elgin and the first years of Lord Curzon. General Sir Henry Brackenbury gave the member from Bombay lofty and patronising advice in the approved official style, and Sir James Westland complained of the "new spirit", that had been introduced into the Council. The expression was seized by the Bengal public who were delighted to find an Indian that could stand up to exalted officials and tell them unpleasant truths as man to man. A public reception was given to him in Calcutta and an address was presented in which the phrase "the new spirit" figured prominently. This demonstration, remarkable as coming from the inhabitants of Calcutta, was mainly due to the exertions of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, most generous of friends and stout-hearted of patriots. Twice afterwards in Bombay Sir Pherozeshah was the recipient of addresses voted by the public in appreciation of his eminent services. Such striking recognition has fallen to the lot of few public workers in India. A long career of fifty years lived in the full glory of the public eye could not but bring Sir Pherozeshah now and then into collision with those that wield the destinies of the country. On such occasions Sir Pherozeshah did not flinch in his determination to withstand the policy and measure of officials. The opposition which he led to the notorious Bombay Land Revenue Bill of 1901 attracted a great deal of attention at the time because, after the failure of a heroic effort to get the consideration of the Bill adjourned, he and some of his followers, including Mr. Gokhale, left the Council meeting as a sort of demonstration, declaring that they would not even by their presence, participate in the enactment of so harmful and so unpopular a measure. In one of those fits of wrong-headedness which at happily rare intervals possess the officials, he was excluded from the place of precedence that was due on the occasion of the visit of their Imperial Majesties as Prince and Princess of Wales, although he had been elected President of the Bombay Corporation for the year expressly for the purpose of welcoming Their Royal Highnesses as the foremost citizen of the foremost city in India. Popular feeling was roused in an unusual degree, and the Bombay Government saw the wisdom of retracing their false step before it was too late. Another time certain high officials openly joined a caucus which tried to keep Sir Pherozeshah out of the Bombay Corporation, where, it was alleged, he exercised an over-

powering and unwholesome dominance. Once more a wave of popular indignation swept off Sir Pherozeshah's assailants, and he stood vindicated as the father and champion of the Corporation. It was about this time that the centralising tendency of Lord Curzon imposed a Standard Time on all India. But the cities of Calcutta and Bombay in indiscriminating opposition to everything that emanated from him, would have none of it. Sir Pherozeshah stood out for Bombay time and it is owing to his uncompromising attitude on the occasion that the visitor to Bombay still sees the municipal clock over the Crawford Market show a time much behind that which he observed at Victoria Terminus. Notwithstanding these episodes, however, the European community of Bombay, both official and non-official, true to their sportsmanlike qualities have always been generous in recognising Sir Pherozeshah's great qualities and eminent service, and given due meed of gratitude and praise for his unswerving loyalty to the British connection, and his powerful advocacy of the virtues of the British Empire in critical times. Not the least remarkable feature of his remarkable ascendancy over the Bombay Corporation was its complete immunity from imputations of jobbery or personal aggrandisement of any sort—an example of shining purity for all aspirants to distinction in the sphere of local self-government. It is one of my vivid and inspiring memories, the evident pride with which, in one of his confiding moods, he told a small party at his own tea-table that Thursdays were consecrated to "my Corporation." No fee, he said, could tempt him from Municipal business. He had been often compared by English friends to Chamberlain and Gladstone. One hesitates to assert where personal knowledge fails. But there can be no doubt Sir Pherozeshah was one of the strongest and wisest men of his time, exercising a powerful influence to noble and unselfish ends. India has recently suffered great losses—Ganga Prasad Varma⁷, Satish Chandra Banerjee⁸ Gokhale, Sir Henry Cotton and now Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. Who next? We cannot stay the hand of Death. All we can do is to treasure the memories of the great dead, to recall their virtues and so far as we may, benefit by their example.—(*Indian Review*, November, 1915).

NOTES

1. **LALA HARIKISHEN LAL** (1864-1937): Barrister, Lahore; Member, Punjab Legislative Council (1908-1912); Started the Bharat Insurance Company. During the Jallianwa'abagh Tragedy tried for conspiracy and deported (1920).
2. **CALPURNIA** Wife of Caius Julius Cæsar; She seems to have had an ominous dream on the night before Caesar was murdered and to have implored her husband not to go out that day.
3. **PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA** (1861-1946): Lawyer, Allahabad; Founded the Hindu University of which he was the Vice-Chancellor (1919-1940); Member, U.P. Legislative Council; Member, Imperial Legislative Council; (1912-1918); President of the Indian National Congress several times.
4. **MARQUESS OF CREWE** (1858-1945): Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1842-95); Leader, House of Lords (1908); Secretary of State for India (1910-15); British Ambassador to Paris (1922-25).
5. **KING GEORGE V** (1865-1936): As Prince of Wales he and his consort Princess Mary visited India (1905); Both of them came to India in 1911 to the Coronation Durbar in Delhi. The last British Emperor and Empress to visit India. Inaugurated the First R. T. C., London on Indian reforms.
6. **SIR SASSOON DAVID** (1849-1926): A well-known cotton merchant and Mill owner of Bombay; had trade connections with the Far East; Sheriff of Bombay (1905); Member, Corporation of Bombay (1909).
7. **GANGA PRASAD VARMA** (1863): Proprietor of *Hindustan*; Editor, *The Advocate*; Member, U.P. Legislative Council; one of the founders of the Indian National Congress (1885).
8. **SATISH CHANDRA BANERJI**: Advocate, Allahabad; Member, All India Congress Committee (1912); Principal of a College, Allahabad.

LECTURE X

PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION

As a witness before the Public Service Commission under Lord Islington,¹ Pherozechah Mehta played a very peculiar part. I have now come to the point when I should mention ✓ as I make these talks rather gossippy than of a serious nature. I had better mention a little talk that was then common. Before the Islington Commission was actually appointed and perhaps when it became slightly known that such a Commission would be appointed, in the Imperial Legislative Council which then sat in Calcutta, our friend N. Subba Rao,² brought in a motion to the effect that the conditions of the public services, with special reference to the position of Indians therein, should be examined by a Commission. Generally speaking, when action in pursuance of a resolution or a question is taken by the Government, the man who actually moved the resolution or put the question is recognised. People, therefore, expected that N. Subba Rao would have a place on the Commission. Instead, Gokhale, who was not here at the time when the resolution was moved, was appointed. I do not suppose anybody would have grudged Gokhale his place there. But the non-inclusion of Subba Rao was made the subject of some unfavourable comment. The Bombay Presidency Association, always to the fore on such occasions, put in a very elaborately reasoned memorandum to which, as its President, Pherozechah had to speak; and he was heckled by the Civilian members amongst whom our Madras man Sir Murray Hammick³ made himself unpleasantly marked. Sir Murray was not one of the able Civilians of our Presidency, nor was he known for anything in particular. But he had a strong feeling for his Service and felt particularly offended when Pherozechah indulged in a hobby of his. He was generally fond of saying that while he agreed that the English spirit should be introduced into the working of the Indian Constitution, that English spirit would be better manifested by educated Indians than by European Civilians. He was always fond of rubbing it in. His point was that while in our better schools and colleges a high type of education and a fair degree of acquaintance with English institutions as they were worked in their own home was taught, the Indian educated official had the additional advantage of being by instinct and by association intimately aware of the conditions and feelings and natural predilections of the Indian people. This important element, this intimate knowledge of the Indian affairs was denied to

*Mehra contested Europeans' Officials' claim
to know rural conditions; demanded
Simultaneous Examination.*

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the European. But the European claimed every now and then, rather loudly, that when he went to the villages and had first-hand dealings with the agriculturists at the plough he picked up more knowledge of rural conditions than even the educated Indian who, as soon as he got into upper classes of the high school, put off his relations with the villages and never went there again. For that reason the Europeans claimed an advantage over the Indians but Pherozechah was always fond of quoting his own experience. He used to say to the high fliers of the I.C.S., 'I go to the village more often. You are posted to out-of-the-way places. But we, lawyers, have to go to villages often and see the villagers in conditions more conducive to knowing their real mind'. He used this very frequently. He had put this down elaborately in the Memorandum of the Bombay Presidency Association, and in his preliminary speech, he made it even more prominent as a part of his representation. Sir Murray Hammick took offence at it, and having put him some questions and got more and more emphatic answers, he said 'What is the use of the European element in the I.C.S.? Is it your point that we should all go back?' Pherozechah said 'I never meant that. I always desired a certain percentage of you to remain here. You may read my speeches and satisfy yourself on that point. I never took the argument to that length.' He made a great stress on the failure to introduce simultaneous examination which was in those days a great point of contention between us and the Europeans in this country. He maintained that the institution of simultaneous examination was essential to carry out the promises of the Queen—the promises of equality of all under the British Flag and of the idea that no person should be excluded from office, by reason of colour, creed or caste. That too, was somewhat displeasing to the Europeans of those days. They don't mind it so much now. But having been rushed hard and asked repeatedly they said, 'Are we not making progress in this direction? Don't we show greater and greater desire to meet your wishes? Does not the Indian element increase steadily?' and so on. Pherozechah broke out into an exclamation: 'That is not what I mean. You don't make enough progress to satisfy us. While the country is progressing, you stand still. Every now and then a movement springs up to call a halt to the progress in the country'. He quoted a saying which I have never met with except in his

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Death of Gokhale. Islington Commission Report receded into the background. Last days of Mehta not pleasant.

speech. He quoted a saying of Lord Clive,⁴ "To stand still is dangerous; to retreat is ruin". I don't know from where he got it, but he quoted it. This shows how well-read Pherozeshah was in all this Constitutional literature in the history of this country. The Islington Commission after going round and after having a sitting even in England left without writing its Report at the outbreak of the 1914 war; and as that war broke out, the expectation in India was that great strides would be taken in Constitutional advance at the end of the war. The small and petty recommendations that the Islington Commission would make receded into the background and people paid no more attention to it. The war made the Commission utterly out-of-date. But before the report-stage came on, it was felt that there was nothing in the Commission. In fact, the Commission had a more sad blow inflicted on it. Gokhale died before the report-stage came on. In fact, how much our people expected from the report owing to the presence of Gokhale in it comes out in the dissenting minute that Sir Abdur Rahim⁵ wrote at great length, and he mentions that his own dissenting minute would suffer by reason of the fact that Gokhale was not alive to sign it along with him.

During all this year, and a little before and a little after, one thing was observable in Pherozeshah's life—not altogether pleasant to him. That was the opposition to him and to his ascendancy in the town of Bombay, the opposition on the part of the European community in general and, unfortunately, of the Governor of Bombay, in particular. The Governor, Sir George Clarke, was a man about whom a remark has to be made. His life as Governor of Bombay divides sharply into two unlike halves. During the first half, both his wife and daughter were alive. This is not generally mentioned in books written about them, but I mention it to show how in European circles and especially in highly educated European societies, the companionship of a wife, of a sister or a daughter of advanced and cultured views makes a great difference to the life of even the highest officials. Lady Clarke (at that time, he was not a Peer) and his daughter were both remarkable for their complete freedom from all racial taint. They moved freely with Indians and

*Companionship of a cultured wife—
what Sir G. Clarke gained Lord Sydenham lost
He assailed Sir Pherozeshah Mehta's obstinacy.*

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Sir George was, perhaps unwillingly, swept along with them. His popularity therefore was greatly increased by the way the two ladies behaved, especially, the young daughter who made it a point to get into Indian societies with a view to get acquainted with the prominent Indians of Bombay and find out exactly what they thought, and, with the desire, often expressed also, of making this point clear to her father. That was a wonderful way in which Sir George Clarke's popularity and usefulness to the public was increased by these two ladies. Unfortunately, they both died in the middle of his life and that made a great difference to him. He married afterwards and his second wife was no good from this point of view, so that what Sir George Clarke gained, Lord Sydenham lost rapidly; and one of the ways in which the change was noticeable was the bitterness with which he assailed Sir Pherozeshah and always attempted to reduce his importance. Sir Pherozeshah too, it must be said—and here I would take the liberty of saying to you something which might be noticeable even by the younger ones amongst you, of how we, after 50 years of age, cease to grow—became stereotyped in our views. Even our phrases repeat themselves. Our sentences have a way of recurring to the point even of disgust, and you may often find too that we are utterly unable and unwilling to appropriate new ideas and adjust ourselves rapidly to changing conditions. Some of us may wish to take credit for this unchanging nature by calling ourselves consistent, steady and so on, but the world, in general, is not nearly so charitable as we are to ourselves, and uncomplimentary epithets are used against us. Sir Pherozeshah, I am afraid, had got into that stage of life when he ceased to grow and thought that he need not grow and when he often stood his ground with obstinacy, repeating phrases and expressions that he had repeated a hundred times before. In that respect, our great men, Governors, Viceroys and Executive Councillors are lucky. They hold office for 5 years and then disappear. They have not time enough to do this. In five years their day is done. But Pherozeshah had lived for nearly 50 years in the public eye, and there never was an occasion when he did not play a prominent part. His views were all well-known and people felt that he was

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*Lord Sydenham imposed a
time limit on Mehta's speech.
Mehta's flaming protest letters to the Press.
Medical Practitioners' Bill in Madras
and Bombay. Mehta's strong opposition.*

disgustingly repeating himself. One day, in the Legislative Council when some measure was rushed through, Lord Sydenham driving the car as rapidly as he could, got disgusted with Pherozezshah and said "Two minutes more, Sir Pherozezshah." Sir Pherozezshah had never been addressed like that. He got up, and said "Two minutes, your Excellency. I cannot use those two minutes better than by recording an emphatic protest against the way you use your power! You will hear more of this" and he sat down. He straightaway sent flaming letters to the Press. That was his way. The Governor was very much annoyed. He said 'My ruling from the Chair should not be discussed outside.' Sir Pherozezshah said that on the floor of the house, he was bound to obey but when he felt annoyed or injured, he thought he had a right to ventilate his grievances in the Press. That sort of thing occurred more than once. Another time he moved an amendment which Lord Sydenham said was out of order and refused to allow. He tried to argue but was put down. Once more he took to the Press which was always hospitable to him. No paper would refuse his contributions. He was so popular with them. The third was more lively. You remember, I am sure, there was at one time a Bill called Medical Practitioner's Bill intended to register all those who practised medicine in the Western style. I was in the local Council at the time Dr. Zainulabdeen was a member also. Dr. M. Krishnaswami Aiyer had brought on himself some undesirable attention on the part of his allopathic brethren, who thought that he was too intimate with the practitioners of Unani and Ayurvedic systems of medicine. You know in the medical parlance, that Act is called infamous. At that time we all opposed the Bill here. A similar Bill was introduced at that time in Bombay also and Sir Pherozezshah fell upon it with all his strength, and when he was asked repeatedly what it was in the Bill to which he objected, he is reported to have said: 'It is not any part of it I object, but the whole Bill. The very idea of compelling registration and putting people in a register in order to get hold of them—that is what I object.' Then, Lord Sydenham in order to expose Pherozezshah to ridicule, told the story of a soldier who had been brought before a

Court-martial. It seems a soldier tried by a military court has power to challenge the jurors on the panel. One soldier who felt that he was unjustly taken up very severely was asked: "Do you object to any person on the jury?" The poor man looked round and said: "I don't object to anybody. I object to the whole of my trial here." That raised a laughter against poor Pherozeshah. In that way, Lord Sydenham and he often came into collision, and Pherozeshah felt that for that reason his position was being undermined. In this very year 1913 there occurred some other important events in his life. Two of them I have reason to mention now because they live after Pherozeshah and are monuments of his practical good sense and abounding public spirit. It was in that year, that he took up a tottering institution and practically re-founded it—the Central Bank of India of which Pochkhanawala,⁶ who was knighted later, was then the managing agent. This Bank got into trouble and people made a rush upon its deposits and it was about to collapse, when Pherozeshah made herculean efforts—and pulled it through the crisis. He did what is rarely done. He placed all his title-deeds and made all his friends do the same as part of the deposits in the Bank, which was a sure sign of confidence. I am not aware of the history of banks to such an extent as to know whether this was a trick. But it was felt at that time that Sir Pherozeshah did a great deal to put the Bank on its legs. Certainly it recovered quickly, and if you go to the Central Bank of India today you will see Pherozeshah's bust exhibited in a prominent place. The Directors were very grateful to Pherozeshah at that time for having resuscitated the Bank. Another great thing that he did was the founding of the *Bombay Chronicle*. The three great newspapers of Bombay were all in the hands of Anglo-Indians, and although personally Pherozeshah had a great pull in all these papers they were not the champions of the Indian cause to the extent he desired, and some of them even did great harm by their opposition—calculated and persistent opposition—to the Indian interests. It appeared therefore necessary to have a paper devoted heart and soul to the promotion of the Indian cause, and with that object, he founded the *Bombay Chronicle*. He easily raised the money in Bombay, and for 3 years while he was alive, he kept tight control over its editorial policy; and the paper had an excellent start and soon established itself as the premier English

journal conducted on behalf of the Indian community and their causes. *The Bombay Chronicle* underwent great many changes afterwards, and today it is a paper given to the extremist cause; and even though it is so, it still contains on its front page the writing "Founded by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta". Mr. B. G. Horniman⁷ was its editor and now a Muhammadan, Mr. Brelvi,⁸ is in his place. It maintains its position still, but it is now known to espouse only the more advanced views of the Indian community.

Now, these two events belong to 1913 and must be remembered as amongst the chief events of Pherozeshah's life. Two speeches of this time are also worthy of note. I mentioned it in my Royapettah speech the other day when I enlarged upon the relations of Mehta and Gokhale. The question at issue was the compromise into which Gandhi and Gokhale had entered with the white people of South Africa. I had no time to explain this matter fully on that occasion, but as time is not the essence of the matter in this meeting, you will probably let me dwell a little further upon it. One of our fundamental ideas of Empire, one of our strong pleas with reference to the British Empire is that all the territories of the Empire are equally open to us. In theory somehow, at all events, we believe against the law or against the practice, that we are entitled, by reason of our being subjects of the Empire, not only to travel all over the Empire but also to settle where we please and to pursue what occupations we please. That has become somehow or other one of the elements of what is called British Imperial Citizenship. Pherozeshah Mehta had a strong belief of this nature. So then Mahatma Gandhi (he was not Mahatma at that time) entered into an understanding with General Smuts, that he would, on behalf of the Indian community, surrender the right of free immigration to South Africa provided General Smuts on his part would assure equal and just treatment to the Indians who had already settled down in South Africa. If this reciprocal understanding were maintained on both sides, Mr. Gandhi was willing to close the bargain. They then passed a law excluding Indians. All that Gandhi stipulated was that Indians should not be excluded as Indians by name, but they could be excluded as people living between certain latitudes and certain longitudes. They said it was all right and mentioned the degrees of longitude and latitude and put them down in their books. The law therefore did not mention

Indians as specially excluded, but people living in certain parts of the earth's surface. They cut the Indians out; the only other condition that Gandhi made was that six Indians, specially invited by the Indian community already resident there, should be allowed every year to go there annually, such as doctors, teachers for the schools, or priests for the orthodox community, or priests for the temple, etc. General Smuts who was glad to come to a compromise said to Gandhi, "Why do you want only six? I would give you ten free entrants every year." He was generous at the time. And one more thing Gandhi wanted was that the men there should be given fair and equitable treatment. General Smuts said "yes" to that also, and then a law was passed excluding Indians. I had reason to know that Smuts was very slippery. "Slim" is the word that they use in South Africa, and Smuts is the slimmest of the slim. When Lord Irwin⁹ came out as Viceroy, he wished to send out a delegation to meet a South African delegation at the Cape and discuss the differences between the two Governments. He asked me whether I would care to go there as a member of the delegation. I said I should be very glad to go; only Smuts and I had already had some very unpleasant passages. I said it won't be very nice for the Viceroy to send a person for whom Smuts may object. But Smuts was not Prime Minister, but was the leader of the opposition. "Why do you fear anything from him?" asked the Viceroy. I then told Lord Irwin what I knew of Smuts.

What Smuts did was that he did not carry out his part of the contract. He got us to surrender our free right of immigration by passing his own law and shutting out all Indians, except ten whom he would permit, but at the same time he did not carry out the promise he had given to Gandhi of giving fair and just treatment to the residents, so that their grievances are still there, except a point here and there, which has been redressed.

When Gokhale came back to India from his tour at the end of 1913, a great reception was organised for him. Pherozeshah refused to go there; he was very angry. He said "This man comes after having given away our cause. He and Gandhi between them, in their anxiety to save a lakh and a half of Indians, have surrendered our most important right of immigration. We must not support him at all". He had somehow or other the instinct that Smuts would not keep his contract and it was so. "We have lost

LECTURE X

Lord Haldane told Sastri that our case was weak from legal and constitutional points of view; so did Smuts.

our right, and we are going to get nothing in return," he said. Then he made two speeches this year, questioning the wisdom and propriety of the compromise which Gokhale and Gandhi had entered into with Smuts.

I wish to pursue this point a little more with reference to the way in which Lord Haldane¹⁰ disappointed me. It is a very important point and although it does not concern Mehta and the regular course of his story, I bring it in here as I may not have occasion to refer to it again. I just branch off here and there to make things interest and instruct you. Some years later, after Gokhale had passed away, when I was in England, I happened to meet Lord Haldane at his own house. He took me to dinner and we had a long conversation. Lord Haldane was supposed to be a great friend of General Smuts and that was what induced me to go to him. I begged him to use his well-known influence with Smuts on behalf of the Indian community. I said: "I have come here to press the Indian case. I am going to argue it before official people, and will you please try to mention and discuss the matter with Smuts asking him to be nice and agreeable?" He said "No use. Smuts is a very difficult man to deal with. He is a great friend of mine, it is true, but he has got fixed views on all colour problems and it is no use my talking with him." I asked "Have I lost my case?" "No, but I would ask you to bear in mind that your case is, from a legal and constitutional point of view, very weak. You have no case at all. That is what I wish to say to you. In the British Empire Law, as it is now understood, there is no free right of immigration recognised. In the British Empire, no Imperial citizenship is recognised. Nothing of the kind. On the other hand each Colony which has a legislature has been given by Parliament, the power to discriminate against any class of His Majesty's subjects. They may pass laws adverse to some sections of His Majesty's subjects. They may impose disabilities on certain classes from which other classes are exempt. Differential treatment is known to and recognised by British law and is expressly sanctioned by Parliamentary enactments. There is no use arguing from a constitutional point of view". Then is Smuts right? As a matter of fact Smuts did maintain it to me and subsequently he put it down in solemn document and put it down as one of the White papers issued by Parliament. In that Paper he accused me personally

Haldane told Sastri 'As an agitator you are within your rights; but the law has not been changed.' Mehta opposed a register of possessions in the Town Survey Bill.

saying 'This gentleman is going about in the Dominions and advocating absolute equality among all classes of His Majesty's subjects and raising expectations which neither law nor practice nor expediency can sanction. Imperial institutions are not based on equality'. He wrote expressly that they are based on inequality. I mentioned this to Lord Haldane who said, "He is quite right so far. But why are you so anxious about that? You are not a lawyer, you have not come here to plead this point. From the point of view of existing law, what you want is that this law should be changed and you want to agitate from the political point of view for the extension of your rights. You want Imperial citizenship to be newly created. You are entitled to do so, though I cannot give you any encouragement from the strictly lawyer's point of view. As an agitator, you are within your rights." That law has not been changed. It is still there. That is a thing that I wanted specially to mention to you because most of us start with the theoretical idea that belonging to the Empire, owning the British flag as ours, and seeking its protection confers on us equality of immigration. It is not so and that we have to understand.

I want to mention something that I read in Mody's book. It is of great interest to lawyers. I mention it only to show that Mody is anxious that all students of Mehta's life should know that Mehta had a very keen eye for hidden constitutional points. Sometimes, he discovered things which nobody else could discover. In the year 1913, the Town Survey Bill was introduced. In that Bill there was a provision made for a register of possessions to be created. That register was to show the title of individual holdings. This formed an insignificant portion of the Bill which was introduced. While it was being discussed, Pheroze Shah, who was turning over the pages, lighted upon this provision for a register of possessions, and he at once stood up and said 'This register of possessions which you propose to introduce will be a means of trouble. The officers whom you appoint will go into every holding—every holding may consist of many fragments—and they will try to settle claims in an executive way. Many legal and subtle points of law would be involved and if your men went in a rough way trying to settle possession, it would create a great deal of confusion in the minds of the people'. When he said this

LECTURE X

Attempt to admit into the Congress the Extremists; Mehta opposed while Gokhale & others favoured.

everybody protested that that was not the case. But he insisted that that would be the inevitable result, and he was able to show that 20 years ago a provision similar to this was attempted to be introduced in the legislature and that he pointed it out then to the law officers who were convinced of his arguments and finally withdrew. 'You must do the same now' he said; and most unwillingly and after a protracted debate, they agreed with him and finally dropped the matter.

To this date, 1913-14, belongs also a phase of the quarrel between the Extremists and the Moderates. The quarrel between the Extremists and Moderates of 1907 had been carried on all this time, and the Convention Congress had kept out a great many who were anxious to re-enter the Congress. Pherozeshah Mehta was one of those who stoutly opposed the re-entry of those who had withdrawn. He would make no provision whatever to make it easy for them to come in again. He said, "We are well rid of them", but the demand in the country and the reaction was so strong that Gokhale separated himself from Pherozeshah in this matter and along with many others of influence, Surendranath Bannerjee, B. N. Basu, Subba Rao and Mrs. Besant, and some men in our own province, tried to bring about rapprochement. Pherozeshah Mehta refused to yield and time after time, Gokhale carried on private negotiations; and, I remember, towards the end of 1914 after the declaration of the War, when Gokhale returned from England, he was visited by a great many people anxious to see that when the Congress met in Madras, it should be made possible for the Extremists to come in. N. Subba Rao was there at the time as also Dr. Besant. You have no idea how Dr. Besant in spite of her great age and her physical weakness used to go about without minding trouble at all, her anxiety being to bring the Congress once more to its original position of being an association of all politically-minded people in the country, advanced as well as backward.

Now, Mrs. Besant and Subba Rao went to Tilak and spoke to him. Gokhale and Tilak seldom met in those days. Gokhale and Tilak did not see each other for many years. This year 1914, during these pourparleys they once met in our Society and then the troubles began. But Bhupendranath Basu who was to be the Madras President

had the ambition that the Extremists and the Moderates should come together. He took very special pains that these Poona talks should bear very good fruit. He and Gokhale were in correspondence and Gokhale wrote to him at first, three weeks before the meeting of the Congress. At that time it was expected that everything would be settled amicably.

To be frank, Mehta and Wacha were jealously watching what Gokhale was doing. They did not like his independent line of encouragement to Tilak and other people. And they expressed their disapproval in strong terms when Gokhale had very nearly concluded everything. Having received this warning, he was shaken a bit. Luck, however, played into his hands. Tilak, in one of his talks with N. Subba Rao, was frank with him. He said, "When once this thing is put through, do you know what I am going to do? I am going to flood the Congress with my men, and I will overwhelm you and change the creed of the Congress. And I am going to agitate in the country for the severance of the British connection", and so on. Subba Rao that very evening came and told Gokhale what was going to happen. Gokhale had already been shaken, as I told you. As soon as he heard this from Subba Rao, he wrote to Bhupendranath Basu 'All these negotiations are at an end. I shall no longer take part in them.' B. N. Basu disclosed this letter; and of course, Gokhale was made the recipient of abuse of the vilest kind. Tilak used all his papers and all his skill in showing that Gokhale having given his word, was going back on them. All sorts of unimaginable things were said. Mrs. Besant stood by Gokhale. She did not like the way in which Gokhale was being abused. She felt that Gokhale was being used very badly. She wrote as soon as Gokhale died in February 1915, 'What hastened Gokhale's death was the bitterness with which he was assailed by Tilak and his organisers.' Well, that was the unfortunate thing!

To carry on the story a little, in that year, 1914, the Congress met without the Extremists as before. But in 1915, the Extremists said "We have stayed out long enough but we are going to come in this time." Their efforts would have been successful but for the fact that Pherozeshah resolved to invite the Congress from Madras to Bombay, his chief object being that the whole of the Congress arrange-

LECTURE X

*Lord Sinha chosen
as President of the Congress.
Four years, 1914-18 —
Heyday of Indian politics.*

ments should be in his hands and in his own power, to prevent this fusion between the Moderates and the Extremists from happening.

Before we pass on, I must mention a small episode which is not mentioned in any book or magazine, so far as I know. Pherozeshah Mehta had to choose a man to be President. 'We want a strong man. We want a man who knows his own mind' said Pherozeshah, and chose Sinha. He was one of the most remarkable men of our time. You do not know his very great qualities. In contrast to his fate, he was a most modest man and of retiring disposition, but fate willed it that all the best things in India should come to him first so that he was thrust into positions of prominence against his will. Well, he declined the Presidentship of the Congress and said 'I won't go'. Then Pherozeshah sent a telegram — just four words — characteristic of him, 'You dare not refuse'; and he was President. That brings us to the Congress of 1915. Unfortunately Gokhale died that year and Pherozeshah who had made all the necessary arrangements also died two months before the Congress so that the Congress was held without Gokhale and Mehta.

At this point I am going to tell you how the disappearance of these two men marked the beginning, as it were, of what I call — do not think it unreasonable, the heyday of Indian politics, to the end of 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918. These four years from the end of 1915 to the middle of 1918 marked the high watermark as it were of Indian politics. Hindus and Muhammadans joined forces together and these years marked the attainment of full understanding between the Extremists and the Moderates in the Congress — the holding of the Congress and the Muslim League in the same place and the two bodies sometimes meeting together and allowing their managements to mix together. Then we fell away again. These four years mark the time when it was the common chapter of Indian politics.

NOTES

1. LORD ISLINGTON (1866-1936) : President of the Royal Public Services Commission in India (1912-1924).
2. NYAPATHI SUBBA RAO PANTULU (1855-1940): Vakil, Rajahmaundry; Municipal Commissioner, Secretary, The Indian National Congress (1914); Member Imperial Legislative Council (1910); Chairman, Reception Committee, Madras Congress (1898).
3. SIR MURRAY HAMMICK (1854-1936) : Member Executive Council, Madras (1906-13); Member, the Islington Commission (1912-1914).
4. LORD CLIVE. ROBERT (1725-1774) : British soldier adventurer ; came to India in 1753 ; won in the Battle of Plassey against the Nawab of Bengal (1757); Made a peer and knighted; Severely arraigned in Parliament for his misdeeds in India. Committed suicide (1774).
5. SIR ABDUR RAHIM. (1867-) : Bar-at-law, Judge High Court, Madras. Acting Chief Justice (1916 and 1919); Member Islington Commission, (1912). President, Indian Legislative Assembly, New Delhi.
6. SIR PESTONJI POCHKHANAWALA (1881-1937) : First General Manager of the Central Bank of India (1911-20). A financial expert.
7. BENJAMIN GUY HORNIMAN (1873-1948) : Associated with the *Bombay Chronicle* founded by Sir Pherozechah Mehta ; Editor (1913). Deported to England for his pro-Indian outlook and active interest in Indian nationalist movement. Returned to India via Colombo (1912); Founder Editor, *The Indian National Herald* (1926-29) Editor-in-Chief. *The Bombay Chronicle* (1933-45); Author, *Amritsar and our Duty to India*.
8. SYED ABDULLA BRELVI (1891)—Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*; President All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, Madras (1943).
9. LORD IRWIN (Edward Frederic Lindley Wood) (1881-1959); Viceroy of India (1926-31) Party to the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement (1930).
10. LORD HALDANE (1856-1928); Lawyer and British Politician; entered the House of Commons (1885); Secretary for War (1905); Lord Chancellor (1915); Made a peer the same year; Lord Chancellor under the Labour Government (1924) a philosopher of distinction,

LECTURE XI

LIBERAL LORD WILLINGDON SUCCEEDS

LORD SYDENHAM

I said yesterday just before we left that I intended to dwell in detail on the years 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918 as years during which our political fortunes seemed to be on the up-grade. Since then we fell into our usual bad luck. Now, of course, we are very much down. But these are the years which marked the top reached by our united wisdom. I will perhaps allude to it in a scattered sort of way, partly to-day and partly, the next time. It is of some importance but of course, it is after Pherozeshah's period. Though it is after his time, it is intimately connected with the events which he had to deal with. One of the last acts of his was the securing of Sinha for the Presidency of the 1915 Congress. I told you how Sinha was unwilling to accept that onerous office as he knew that it would be attended with difficulty, but Pherozeshah insisted and sent him a four-word telegram which brought Sinha down on his knees as it were. Unfortunately, Mehta did not live to attend that Congress. Before we actually come to the Congress itself, I shall say a word about the change that came over the relations between the head of the Bombay Government and our hero. I told you how during the last years the horizon was somewhat darkened by the hostility that the Governor, Lord Sydenham, exhibited in a somewhat naked form to our most illustrious leader. It was a pity but when Lord Sydenham retired, the skies brightened because he was succeeded by Lord Willingdon. Lord Willingdon came with the reputation of a sound Liberal and he was a very sound and much respected Liberal. He showed himself that he tried to reverse the policy of Lord Sydenham in many respects. I told you Sydenham's Governorship was divided into two halves, the first being liberal and popular during which he was respected and loved by his people, while in the second he became hard-hearted and scoffed at public opinion. He showed many of the undesirable features of the Tory mind and I had a very sad experience of it when I gave evidence before the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Commission. This relates to 1914-15. He left in 1914-15 and Willingdon came to the *Gadi* and he was, as later on he proved to be in Madras, a perfect gentleman. His behaviour was a *ll* that was desirable. In fact, he and his wife Lady Willingdon, threw open the doors of the Government House to Indian guests and European guests indiscriminately and they made it a point to show by their behaviour and conver-

*Lord and Lady Willingdon popular;
Bombay Corporation Golden Jubilee.
Willingdon presided.*

LECTURE XI

sation and by their readiness to accept engagements that they would make no racial distinction whatever, and that their social relations were very marked. Lady Willingdon had admirable social qualities. I remember when I was in Bombay, occasionally from Poona, people told me how they found a remarkable change in the Government House. Hardly a man was not invited to a very select party in which both husband and wife mingled with Indians on equal terms without the slightest effort. That was remarkable about the Willingdons. They met men and women and behaved like men and women. Once I remember when the Public Services Commission was there Bhupendranath Basu telling me that he had just stepped into the Government House to say 'How do you do?' to these people but they asked him to stay with them and he did. Pherozeshah naturally changed towards the Government House and there were two things of public importance in respect of which this great change became manifest. One was the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Bombay Corporation. You remember how Mehta had built up the Corporation to be the model for all India, to be the second City in the Empire, and where the honours of the country were paid to him on the visits of Royalty. Mehta had done it twice before and now the Bombay Corporation was celebrating its Golden Jubilee. It started four years before I was born and it celebrated its Jubilee in 1915. Lord Willingdon came and presided. All sorts of toasts were proposed and naturally Pherozeshah was the hero of the day; and Lord Willingdon himself made a humorous speech in the course of which he just threw a casual hint. He said: "It seems this Bombay Corporation Members do not know how to conduct business. They always obstruct things and my official members, and my Commissioner complain to me that all schemes for improvement of the City are 'opposed' and so on. He did not know anything about it but just a chance shot and he said it in such a way that it did not hurt anybody; and then Pherozeshah was equally humorous and said, "Well. Your Excellency, if costly schemes of improvement are proposed, it is no wonder that our people opposed them. Your Commissioner and your official members did not pay for these schemes. They put their hands very liberally into our pockets. Naturally they should be liberal in their proposals and we, who have to pay the bill must hesitate and enquire about the necessity. It is our duty to see that people do not pick

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Mehta made Vice-chancellor by Willingdon which honour had been denied for long by Sydenham.

our pockets too easily" and so the thing went. He was the recipient of great honours at this function.

The other thing that I would mention is towards the end of his life. Pherozechah was a man in whose many-sided activities grew a devotion to and a deep knowledge in all the educational problems of the Presidency. He had been a Senator for a great many years and took part in all the proceedings. You remember how it was he who brought to light many of the arbitrary actions of the Governor of the day in carrying out some of the provisions of the Universities Act of Lord Curzon. The Government was caught as it were, doing many illegal acts. Mehta consulted lawyers and conducted legal proceedings against the Governor. Lord Curzon stepped into the breach and tried to save his subordinates by passing a Validation Act. You remember I explained about validation bills and their effect generally on the public before. The hostility that Lord Sydenham showed towards Mehta was recognised as a public shame, and Mehta neglected him somewhat. When Lord Hardinge¹ visited Bombay soon after he became Viceroy, this matter was mentioned to him and he was told also of what Lord Sydenham who felt that he had neglected Pherozechah did indirectly to put a question to him: 'Suppose, I appoint you Vice-Chancellor, would you be agreeable to make the changes that I wish to make?' Naturally the authority of the Vice-Chancellor and his initiative would go a great way and would advance or hinder proposals of the Government. Mehta said that he would examine everything on its merits and Sydenham was not confident that he would get his assistance and so appointed Chandavarkar.² This fact was mentioned to Hardinge also. When Hardinge met Willingdon at his house, he told him, 'You have got to make reparation to Pherozechah. It would be a shame if you do not make him Vice-Chancellor for some time at least'. Pherozechah agreed to be Vice-Chancellor and he was appointed. This was a long-delayed honour but unfortunately he did not live to use this high position to the advantage of the Presidency. You may not know, having lived in Madras all the time that only in our University at Convocation time some fellow is asked to deliver the customary address to the graduates of the year — but elsewhere the Convocation address is delivered every year by the Vice-Chancellor

himself. Everybody was expecting Sir Pherozeshah would make one of the most remarkable pronouncements upon the subject of education of which he certainly was a master. It was a pity that although he was appointed early in 1915, it was not possible for him to come to Bombay till about August. In the year 1915 he devoted his time between the health resorts of Poona and Deolali near Nasik. He was in Deolali for three months and for the next three months in Poona and was unable to spend any time in Bombay. They postponed the Convocation. Two days in August were fixed. It was a pity he came to Bombay specially to attend the Convocation and deliver his address; he came on the morning of the previous day from Poona and on the advice of doctors and on his own inclination, kept himself completely free of engagements and would not see anybody, would not write much and conserved his strength for the next day. As ill-luck would have it, somebody said that some important business was being conducted in the Corporation and that he must go there. Much against his better judgment he resolved to attend the Bombay Corporation—that was his weakness and somebody played upon it. He took part in the business, forgot himself and exerted himself a little; and the same night he fell ill. He passed a very uneasy night and the next morning he was very ill, and doctors forbade his going to the Convocation. So, his great speech at the Convocation was never delivered and towards the end of that year he passed away.

I ought to mention that on one of the days he was in Bombay, I visited him. Gokhale had died early in the year and they made me succeed him in the headship of the Society. I had till that time kept away from the great ones of Bombay. Having become the President of the Society, it would not do me any good to neglect these big people amongst whom Gokhale had a very prominent position. His successor must make himself known at least, and so I went with a good deal of hesitation and with very natural diffidence. I was asked to see Pherozeshah at his Chambers. He was there at that time, and he held Court, as it were, about 15 or 16 people sitting around him—all relaxed and making merry, discussing matters with great freedom. When I went I found out where Pherozeshah was—he could be easily found whatever company he may have. I saw him and having made

my bow, sat down unable to open my lips, but he was very affable. He was a man who could come down; and he put me at my ease and asked me a nice question or two. I lost my nervousness and began to talk with interest. I shall tell you one of the chief topics of conversation; it is very relevant to our subject.

I told you how he was always a little suspicious in respect of the Congress. He thought, with very good reason, that Gokhale was somewhat weak and that he was negotiating with the Tilakites and arranging a sort of compromise so that the Extremists could come back to the Congress. He knew that and he wanted to know what sort of person I should be because of his disapprobation of Gokhale's action. He began to ask me about Gokhale and his relations with Besant. After Gokhale, she had assumed the negotiations for the rapprochement with the Extremists. I then told Pherozezshah what I knew. Gokhale's relation to Dr. Besant was generally known but it was very interesting. I shall mention to you, although it is a departure from the subject, as showing some characteristics both of Gokhale and Besant. Gokhale had a mind inclined towards religion and was strongly pulled towards the things of the other world. He was a religious man but he had no positive beliefs. He believed in a sort of way that a Higher Power was guiding the destinies of the Universe as well as of individual men and women. Once or twice, he had told me that this belief was so strong and vivid that he nearly felt that he was under the immediate guidance of this Higher Power but about the nature of the Higher Power and how the influence came, he did not say. He was a strictly scientific man in certain respects. How he managed to combine this with astrology passes me. Everything of supernatural interest and ultramundane would attract him. Once when Dr. Besant visited Poona, a stream of young people went and saw her and Gokhale was among them. He wanted to understand two of the secret doctrines and so sat before her and put her a few questions. Not many of you have actually met and talked with him. He would take things quick and throw himself heart and soul into the business and show how active his mind was. He was not like me, but very quick. Even

though I understand things I do not make it appear so and am cautious in nature. He would put questions one after another, and as answers came would put questions bearing on them even before the answers were given. He engaged too much of her attention. Dr. Besant in her life was accustomed to people falling down prostrate before her and she did not like the way in which this young man put her a stream of questions, and when he put a very intimate question 'How do you know it?' or just like that, she became somewhat haughty and like a teacher to an impertinent pupil, said 'Young man, you will understand the why and how when you are older.' That finished him with her. Notwithstanding this rebuff, he entertained great respect and regard for her, as he knew of the great things that she had already won before she came to India. In England, amongst the great ones of that country, she had established a high position for herself. Long afterwards, I met Bernard Shaw. He was one of her early associates. He told me in 1928, how Dr. Besant had already gone nearly to the top of the public people of the time. I need not tell you Bernard Shaw was a witty man. He told me how he crossed her like Puck. He told me that she had mastered popular Science, Philosophy and had read in the departments of History and Economics, that she was one of the most learned persons of the time and took part in all the forward movements. Mrs. Besant in those days could attend to four men's work. Take any of the four of the most industrious men, her output would be more than the four. When a man like Bernard Shaw tells you that story, you must believe it cent per cent. That is why people here were afraid of her—people like Wedderburn and Mehta who went about their work in a leisurely sort of way. How could they stand to her whose dynamic energy took one thing after another. That is why they did not like her at all to come into Indian politics. They looked upon her with suspicion: 'This woman will land us in difficulty. We shall not have a day's peace'; and so they kept her out of it. She was not one to be kept out. She would come through the first door, back door or through the windows; and somehow she came in. Mrs. Besant, as I told you, tried her best in 1914, to bring about the reconciliation. She wanted that Subba Rao and other people should not mix up with this thing too much. She thought that she should take the lead herself. She went to Calcutta and talked with Surendranath Banerjee, Motilal Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose and

B. C. Pal and having talked to them knew their minds, and then came to Poona. When she came there she wanted to stay in the Society with us. Gokhale was yielding but did not know how Pherozeshah and Wacha would take it. She stayed with Gokhale in his own house and was pounding him hour after hour. He gently put her off.

When I went to Pherozeshah, he put a few conventional questions and then asked: "What is your position towards Dr. Besant? Are you one of her men?" I said I was not one of her men.

"Wacha, what do you say?" he asked turning to Wacha.

It was his customary question to Wacha always and of course Wacha said: "Yes." He was a Yes-man for Mehta.

Then he asked me what Gokhale said about it.

I told him that he did not have any difficulty with her, but asked me to be always careful with her as I lived in Madras very near her and that he wanted me to keep on the soft side.

'And have you observed it carefully?' he asked.

'Yes' I said.

'Are you not associated with any of her movements, Home Rule League?' I said I was not in the Home Rule League. 'Are you not in the Theosophical Society?' 'Gokhale was,' I replied; and then he asked, 'Are you a member of her wonderful Parliament in the Y.M.I.A.?' I said, 'Yes I am.' 'How many Bills have you introduced?' he queried. 'I have not introduced any Bills. I am a silent Member. I did not take any part. She asked Gokhale "Why don't you become a Member?" and then she asked me to join.'

"Wacha, do you hear?" he queried.

He thus tried to draw out of me all the weaknesses Gokhale had. Then, he said "Young man, we here are very careful, too. Don't become one of her satellites, for soon you would be sucked in." I said that it was not so easy to suck me in.

I should tell you about the Home Rule League. It was one of the great ideas that came to Dr Besant almost suddenly. She found out that the Indian National Congress was somehow or other not easy to grapple, with a man like Bannerjee in Calcutta and Mehta in Bombay; and Tilak though not easy to manage, was on her side. She thought that she would do wisely if she could turn politics in her own way in India and started another organisation. She consulted people and they advised her that if she started an organisation on independent lines she would be opposed by all these people. They said 'Take care, as it will be a sort of challenge to the Congress.' 'I won't put it in rivalry to the Congress. This will be an auxiliary to the Congress, meant to help it' she said. And so, all through 1915 she hovered over us, asking 'Will you join?' Very few were willing and when she came to Bombay she had a big meeting. Mehta was alive but he did not attend. He said we should not join it. 'You may now say, Mrs. Besant,' he said, 'you won't run as a sort of rival to the Congress but it will become a rival to the Congress. You will put Congress aside, for our Congress meets once a year and you would be doing things between the meetings. We refuse to allow you to start a Home Rule League as an adjunct of the Congress'. When we opposed, she would listen but would take advantage when we weakened. She went to Dadabhai in his Versova home without any of us knowing it and reminded him of how she helped him in his Parliamentary campaign about fifty years ago. He said 'Yes. I remember'; and they became great friends. 'I want you to be the President of an organization which I want to start to help the Congress' she said. 'Nothing better!' said the old man, and so she got him to become the President. He said, 'I am an old man'. She said 'You will be the head of the whole organization. It will have an Indian branch and an English branch. The English branch would be conducted by Wedderburn and the Indian branch by Subramanya Aiyer. I have written to Wedderburn asking him to be the President of the European Branch. You will

be President of the whole organization.' The old man said 'All right' and gave his consent. Then she went about saying, "I have got Dadabhai Naoroji, Subramanya Aiyer and Wedderburn." Very few people were intercoated. Then she found that Pherozechah's consent was also essential to her plans. She went to see him. He was in Deolali at that time very ill, and he died in November; and this was about end of September or October. He was not able to see her. She waited for a full day, and yet he did not see her. She was very much aggrieved. Pherozechah was not a man who would refuse to receive a lady. He was very particular about his toilet and if he wanted to see her it would have cost him two hours of preparation and hard work. She said afterwards that she had never suffered this sort of humiliation.

Then Mehta and Wedderburn wrote to Dadabhai and took him to task: "Old man, we took care of you. How can you give your consent to be President without consulting any of us?" It was a tough job dealing with him. He said 'Where is the harm? I have agreed to be President of an organization which would be an adjunct of the Congress'. He spoke in that very simple way. A few days later, a letter came from Wedderburn: 'What have you done, old man? This lady is a restless woman. She would give no peace. I wrote a letter telling her that as I was the Chairman of the British Congress Committee, it would be awkward for me to be President of another organization in the same place'. Thus he put her off. So, Mrs. Besant was unable to start the League in 1915, nor even in 1916. She started it in the middle of the year 1917. By that time, before Dadabhai could really be President of the League his end had also come, and he passed away. This is the story of the Home Rule League in the last days of Pherozechah

There is hardly much to say about his last days. One thing of great importance, however, happened which I have kept to the last. This is an extremely important matter. It relates to the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915. I told you of Lord Willingdon's wonderful Liberalism and his intense desire to do something for the constitutional advance of the country. He was very anxious that in his time the great work of pushing India some steps in advance should be taken. He used to

tell people frequently:] "Well, I want the British people, slow as they are and unwilling as they are, immovable as they are, I want them to take up this matter before the Indian agitation grows too strong. If the agitation grows too strong, we shall lose the credit of having given that for which the time was ripe and Indian people were all too loud in demanding". He said that things should be pushed on, in order to make that possible, he wanted to find out what Indian opinion would be satisfied with. What is the reform and what are the various steps that should now be taken? What improvements are wanted in the Indian Constitution? These he discussed with Pherozeshah, Gokhale and the Aga Khan. They all said: "We shall all put our heads together and give you something". Lord Willingdon expected and arranged that these three should put into his hands a kind of demand which he could send Home as the joint demand of these people who were of a thoroughly representative character and who would carry the country with them. Gokhale had just returned from England. War had been declared and he had come home. A great meeting took place in Bombay in which people reiterated their loyalty and promised faithful assistance; and so the atmosphere was propitious to the starting of a big move like this. Unfortunately, Pherozeshah, Gokhale and the Aga Khan could not find time to meet, and they wanted Gokhale to draw up a scheme and call for a meeting at Poona. Gokhale put it off until 1915 began. In 1915 Willingdon began to ask for this. Then, in his last days, about 15 days before he passed away, Gokhale took up a piece of paper and wrote in pencil his own ideas of what the future constitution of India should be; and he wrote to Pherozeshah and the Aga Khan that he could not meet them unless they came. Mehta found it difficult to come but the Aga Khan came. He wrote it in the presence of Gokhale and put his mark on it as it were and Gokhale did so. I want to tell you that the Aga Khan had followers all along the West Coast of India and the East Coast of Africa. He had enormous clientele in East Africa and South Africa too. His men were doing all the retail trade all along the coast and were accumulating fortunes. Whenever he went there, he would bring lakhs and lakhs without any difficulty. His best following was in Tanganyika, German East Africa. The Aga Khan was far-seeing. He is one of the first-rate diplomats, and my private opinion is that the best diplo-

rats are amongst the Muhammadan community. He was most acute and saw farther than other people and as he was a man who held a commanding position by reason of his wealth, experience, exalted position and personal acquaintance with Royalty, he had an insight into the political problems of all the important countries in the world. There was no country on the Continent which he had not visited, and he knew everything about everybody in all countries. Kings, Queens, Ambassadors and high personages were his friends. To him it appeared that some political adjustment in respect of territory would be made as soon as the War was over. He knew Germany had vast possessions all over the world and that every Dominion had something to gain definitely at the end of the War. First-class prophecy that came true! He thought, 'Why should India not get something? Australia is going to get, New Zealand is going to get and why should we not have a share of the spoils?' He did not recognise that India was hardly a Dominion. He thought our share also was certain and asked Gokhale to put one paragraph at the end:—"It would be well if German East Africa conquered from Germany should be made an Indian colony and be placed under the Government of India." This had nothing to do with the Constitution. It was one of the great ambitions of the Aga Khan who saw far ahead. Gokhale said 'Who is going to care for us?' 'No, no, Gokhale, put this thing,' he said, 'Let it stand.' You know how it ended. Nobody ever thought at the end of the War, India as a sharer of the spoils. It is true all the Dominions got mandated territories. The matter did not end there. This German East Africa which was conquered by England from very Tanganyika was a mandated territory of great Britain and so far from our governing the place, they excluded us from that territory. The White people in Tanganyika, as soon as they settled down said "No black person, no yellow person, no brown person, should be allowed to settle here." We were excluded and attempts were made to expel those who were there and it was with the greatest difficulty we could keep them there. They were harassed and humiliated by the white people there, not only British, but the very Germans who occupied the territory before and whom we had driven out, joined the British in driving us out. That is the position that India is now in. Fancy, the Aga Khan imagining as he did and asking for the German East Africa!

This document, the last political will and testament of Gokhale was, as I told you, drafted in pencil. This was meant to be kept very secret. There were only four copies of this; one we gave to Lord Willingdon. We kept one copy and gave a copy each to Pherozshah and the Aga Khan. Each one of the copies had a history.

The copy that went to Lord Willingdon was by him sent to England with his recommendations; he might have suggested modifications. The copy that went to the Aga Khan was taken by him to England. He did not publish it immediately but did so when Montagu had made his famous declaration in 1917. The Aga Khan thought that it would be the proper time and published a statement. He published it with a preface of his own which was not quite accurate. As soon as the news was cabled, I got hold of our copy and published it here, before the post could bring the published copy by the Aga Khan, with my own statement.

We must come back to Mehta. Hardly much to say about him. It appears from Mody's biography, that the author was present at the last interview between Mehta and Gokhale. Before Gokhale had returned to Poona from England, Mehta had fallen ill. The meeting took place a month before Gokhale passed away. They had a very intimate and exhaustive talk about all kinds of things; and Mody says that Mehta and Gokhale were not cordial but between them a sort of coldness had sprung up. I found that they were most cordial to each other and where topics of the day came in review each disclosed his heart freely to the other. If you read the proposals of Gokhale to-day you would laugh at them. They are so backward. You would wonder that Gokhale, with the approval of the Aga Khan, Willingdon and Mehta had produced such a document; but it was much in advance of that day.

One of the proposals is that there should be fifty per cent Indian Executive Councillors. In the nationalisation that we talk of to-day, it is so backward. We want the Executive to be responsible to a Legislature. He wanted a kind of legislature with an executive subordinate to it, but by no means responsible. That was the line in which Gokhale wanted the Indian Constitution to be made

Mehta was saying all the while 'You are wrong. You are wrong. We must progress along British lines. British Parliamentary Government is the thing we want; just as they make the executive responsible to the Parliament. That is the line we should take.'

We have all discussed Mehta's work in some detail, but it would be well to take as it were a measure of the work he had done and how he differs from other men especially from those who resemble him in other qualities. I think I will try and do, as it were, the summing up of Mehta. I have considered him as a politician and statesman, and have not said anything about his private life—how he conducted himself in other matters and some few words will be required, before we have done with Mehta.

Lecture No. XI, Notes.

1. LORD HARDINGE (1858-1944); Viceroy of India (1910-1916); played a sympathetic role regarding the problems of Indians overseas.
2. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (1856-1950); an Irish Dramatist; a Fabian; a musical and dramatic critic; champion of antivivisection and vegetarianism; awarded Nobel Prize for literature (1923); his philosophy is contained in his introductions to his plays.
3. MOTILAL GHOSH (1847-1922); Editor, *Amrit Bazaar Patrika* (1897); Member, District Board, Jessore; Delegate to the Congress (1886)
4. SIR S. SUBRAMANIA IYER (1842-1924); Lawyer; Judge, Madras High Court (1895-1907); Member, Madras Legislative Council (1884-1888); Hon. President, Home Rule League (1916); Wrote the famous letter to President Wilson asking him to bespeak India's right to freedom to Britain; He surrendered his knighthood to Government on the internment of Dr. Besant, in protest

LECTURE XII

THE LAST SCENE

We have only the last scene left. Pherozezshah Mehta was one of those fortunate people who died without much struggle for life. He had been declining steadily. On the last day, 5th November, he rose as usual, performed his toilet and his ablutions, and read the papers that came to him, and his *tappals*. Doctors saw him and pronounced, 'All right—no trouble'. Then, as he went in, he felt a sudden spasm near the heart and just stood near the bed, as if unable to move. People rushed to his help and put him to bed. A little brandy was administered by the doctor, but it had no effect and without saying a word, he passed away.

We have followed him from the beginning right up to the end, through seventy years of a very active and eventful life during which he had abundant opportunities such as are open to non-officials in Indian public life, of rising to the highest level, of showing the stuff he was made of, of doing the work that came to his hand with all his might, and of leaving a solid and meritorious mark on the affairs of the time. Pherozezshah's character has now to be viewed in its lights and in its shades. We have studied him from only one point of view, view, having mostly followed Mody's book, which is described as a political biography. Obviously, it has its limitations. It does not touch the other parts of Pherozezshah's life. Soon after his death, the *Times of India* wrote an obituary notice in which it summed up this active side of his career. I shall read the extract now as it is a very favourable, but by no means too favourable or optimistic account of the great man. Mention is there made of the particular features of public life on which he made his impress, the deepest and most enduring. It is a very short extract.

In his devotion to Bombay he was, I think I may say without exaggeration, the greatest citizen any city has ever produced. He gave it his best for over forty years. Nor, with the wider field now open to Indian publicists, and the growth of a more materialistic spirit, is he ever likely to find a successor. . . . It is a truism to say that no man in this world is indispensable. It is a humbling lesson to see how rapidly the places of the most distinguished men are filled. But with these thoughts before us, it is equally true to say that Sir Pherozezshah's place in the life of Bombay will never be filled. . . . We all feel the poorer by his death. The dauntless patriot and the eminent citizen will never

be replaced; outside these great activities, thousands will mourn the death of a good friend and a very likeable man, one who fought hard, but fought fair, one who nourished a robust faith in the Empire and in the future of India in the Empire, and one who gave the best of his life to the service of his country, and to the city which he was largely instrumental in raising to the status of the best-governed in India and the second in the Empire.

The language is glowing with sympathetic appreciation, but I must say, it is by no means exaggerated. We have seen enough of his great merits to appreciate the place he filled in the Bombay Corporation of which he was what is called the boss—the unquestioned boss for a long time. He made the Corporation, laid the main lines of legislation for shaping the City, framed its constitution and then watched over its growth from every point of view with paternal care. In fact, one of the great lessons of Pherozeshah's life, perhaps the greatest lesson, which it is not possible for us to learn in its fullness but of which we may catch a glimpse, is the pride he took in the City of his birth. He was proud of Bombay; he was proud of its Corporation; he was proud of its wealth and splendour; he was proud indeed of the way in which it set the example of the proprieties and glories of civic life for the whole of India. I have already mentioned that to his credit, unchallenged and unchallengeable, stands the signal quality of pure and unselfish service. In spite of his unparalleled influence in the City, in spite of the great opportunities he had for enriching himself or for advancing the interests of his friends, he kept his hands absolutely clean, and did not sully them by the remotest touch of favouritism or nepotism of any kind. I think this cannot be repeated too often. My friends, I am not without sympathy with our people's failings, but I cannot bring myself to forgive or even to talk with toleration of the pliant way in which we all look on the lapses of our representatives in the Corporation and elsewhere, refer to their failings away from propriety as if they were the merest trifles in public life, of which any man may be guilty without losing his character. No, it is to me, an unutterable shame that although we have had civic institutions of a fairly high level since 1882 when Lord Ripon's famous Resolution was promulgated, although we have had municipalities and rural boards more or less well developed, although we have prided ourselves through the centuries of being the inheritors of venerable village

institutions, we have not shown, either in this sphere or in the sphere of the management of our temples, charities and public endowments, that regard for honour, character, for devotion to the interests of institutions committed to our care which alone will entitle us to the honours of Self-government. I feel this to be a great shame and I never demur, when I have an opportunity, of holding up Pherozeshah's name as a shining example for all time, of a man who did great things for our municipal life, who established our character for purity and clean handedness and who showed how a man should be a worthy and proud citizen of a great City in this country. To that feature of Pherozeshah's character, the panegyric of the *Times of India* draws our attention.

Now, let me pass on to consider what were the chief features of his character that contributed to what may be regarded as his great position. He was richly endowed by Nature who made him in one of her generous moods—gave him a most handsome and impressive exterior, a look and a countenance which you could not fail to see a second or even a third time if you had the opportunity, a powerful voice, consummate abilities, vast learning, great acquisitions in the sphere of constitutional and political law, great courage of heart, high-hearted endeavour for the public welfare a spirit which stood up for his own honour and that of his country whenever they were assailed and which enabled him to stand up face to face with the highest amongst the authorities of the land. And all these he carried with so much ease and so much effect that the Viceroys, Governors and all other people felt that they met more than their equal in him; a man of whom we should be proud from every point of view. These opportunities, as I said, he used for the public good. There is no doubt that he established his fame and became the first Citizen of India and the man in India to whom all politicians and statesmen looked for approbation and guidance. Yes, he achieved this proud position for himself naturally and easily. He made no very special efforts to acquire it by any adventitious arts or by questionable employment of his talents. They came to him as the very natural and spontaneous reward of a life well-spent, of strength expended in good cause, of merit displayed to its greatest advantage in the furtherance of the country's welfare. Nobody need grudge him the eminent position he acquired, but it is to

his greater merit still as he used all these opportunities not for selfish ends at all, but exclusively and altogether for the benefit of the public.

One word more of this bright side of his life. I must add that he was singularly emancipated from the pettiness to which public life is exposed. His were no narrow ambitions. He did not rise to greatness on the ruins of other people's reputations. No one in India, no one among the thousands who aspire for renown in the public ranks, none amongst his rivals or admirers could whisper a word assailing his singular probity. But still, there are littlenesses in our character. Even a King does not like tall poppies to grow in his garden. There is a kind of greatness which is jealous even of humbler greatness in others, which wants to be a solitary peak in a wilderness, and which may not take its glory won by right from amongst peers and equals. Look around from your limited experience, survey India from one end to the other and tell me how many you can enumerate among the great figures that make a noise amongst us of whom it can be said that he was not jealous in the least, that he held out a hand of help and uplift to the young people about him, who wished to rise up the ladder of fame and who throughout his long life said a good word if he could of rising men. Well, all this stands to his credit.

But then, human greatness is many-sided. Merit has a good many features that grow to make it up. None of us is perfect. None of us can be. All development is partial. Fame is jealous. In fact, as they say, even the Gods are jealous. Our own Gods cannot stand the accumulation by our saints of power and the performance of great sacrifices by our kings. As soon as the dial goes up to 99, some difficulties or other were created just as sending down a bewitching maiden or stirring up a Rakshasa to destroy it. They cannot bear perfection in humanity and there are grave gaps in Pherozechah's character which I should mention.

You know, my friends, that ever since people began to write, ever since anything like literature grew, there has been a species of satire in which poets have revelled, age after age in ridicule and of lifting the lash of ridicule and

letting it fall, tearing the flesh of the people's backs if they ever touched the enjoyment of luxury. Luxury in any form, the good things of life, happiness, the company of the great ones, rich food, delicious drinks, handsome mansion, wealth, equipages, these are things given to the few and looked upon with envy by the many. These, if they had the gift of poesy, have used it without compunction to bring down in the world the name and fame of those to whom fortune has been kind all through life. Our saints and poets have held up the spirit of asceticism as the proper spirit for man to cultivate. Pherozechah Mehta must be pronounced to have not been a very prominent example of this quality. He was a lover of good things of life—a man who earned with both hands and spent with both hands too, mostly on his own enjoyment. He never saved much money. He did not die a rich man but lived like a rich prince. Nobody who had crores and crores of money knew how to spend half as well as he. He lived in the very lap of the Goddess of Luxury. No one of the many ways in which life could be enjoyed was unfamiliar to him. He drank the cup of life brimming to the very lees. In his life, he did not at any time hear of the poor or the lowly. They did not seem to exist so far as he was concerned. I do not think he ever bothered himself about the problems of labourers or the workmen who keep this world going. That side of life's problems did not touch him except as a matter of pure theory. He lived a life far above the rest of humanity. Completely aloof and forbiddingly aristocratic in his bearing, he knew nothing of the miseries of life—the shadows that darken the valley where we all live and move and have our being.

Well, to some people, it may seem to be a happy life. I dare say Pherozechah felt it so and enjoyed it. But when we estimate his character, we have got necessarily to compare it with the lives of other people, no less famous and no less conspicuous in the service of humanity, no less elevated, but famous, and conspicuous and elevated in a different way, of men who thought that it was their duty to be in such perfect sympathy with the poor as to be poor themselves, of men who, born rich, gave everything away and embraced poverty as the only proper destiny of a human being, of men who lived amongst the poor, just like the poor and partook of their sufferings and their

joys. Some generations ago, a great social worker, man or woman, was a person who kept his or her station, but sometimes descended to the level of the poor, visited their homes like an angel of mercy, gave them clothes, food and medicine and won the hearts of people in that way and established himself or herself as a friend of humanity. Not that they did not live their own lives or enjoy their wealth or high social position, but that they were content to come down now and then and then from that high level in order to condescend, as it were, to take a place down, consciously live amongst the poor, talk words of much charity to them, full of pity and tenderness, but not have that fellow feeling and sympathy which flows from one to another of the same station in life. About forty years ago, a little before the time when I joined the Servants of India Society, there came into prominence in the West amongst social workers a theory, fully carried out in practice, that to be a social servant of the true quality, you had to live with those people whom you choose to help; you had to do the work they did, you had to live in the houses where they lived, you had to go through the sufferings through which they went and you have to be one of them in order to be able to do the service on the highest level and with the greatest efficiency. That theory then came into prominence and you had a number of people taking up the burden of the poor on themselves as Mahatma Gandhi did here travelling third class, stripping himself almost naked, calling himself and living the life of a Harijan. He took this as a lesson from the West where it had come to be established. That is the kind of service which has now gained ground as the typical service that the world wants. It is one of the saving qualities of the modern world that such a type of humanity is developing. It is not only the Missionaries that do this; it is by no means the high-placed Brahmin who does this; it is a kind of intellectual in England and on the Continent who thinks that this is the true Christian life, to strip yourself bare, to be the poorest among the poor, the most wretched among the wretched and then serve them. I remember the scene in the year 1915, soon after Gokhale's death, when the Mahatma, who was not then a Mahatma and who had to find his destiny yet, had made his promise of a year's apprenticeship to our Society during which he had to travel all over the country to see and learn. He was taking our leave a few months after

Gokhale's passing away. We were thus untried—all of us different—not knowing what to do, but we were anxious to find out what was in the mind of this singular man with a singular reputation from South Africa and how he would stand with us. We questioned him. It was a most intimate and searching talk on both sides. I still remember vividly where he sat, a little aloof from the rest of us and how he talked to us in raspin tones, condemning our lives, giving us no credit whatever for making any sacrifice to join the Society, and telling us in as sharp a language as human vocabulary could find: "You pride yourselves on being Servants of India. You don't go amongst the poor Harijans and labourers. I wonder what you do, you who live this sort of life here. You don't live amongst them. You don't know the language they speak. You don't eat their food. You don't suffer their sufferings. And what good is it?"; and so he went on, piling misery upon misery until our poor fellows lost colour completely and felt themselves thoroughly humiliated. Many of them sat speechless with despair. I had been recently elected President in Gokhale's place. I felt I had to stand up for these young men; and I spoke in as gentle a tone as I could assume, to the critic. 'Please be merciful. The type of social services that you depict is new even in Western countries. You too have just taken to it. It is only two or three years ago that you began to travel third class. We may learn still. We promise to learn. Just be merciful.' He felt that he had gone a little too far. Then, for the first time and not often afterwards, he made an apology. He said 'I was perhaps somewhat unsparing in my criticism. I should not have been so harsh, as to discredit you all. I am sorry.' I mention this to you to show that there is a view of life which considers asceticism, poorness, denial of the flesh and of life as the only proper directions in which the work of humanity may be done. I don't agree with them. I rather think generally, that the *Bhagavad Gita* is right when it holds up to our adoption the ideal of "*Yuktahara Vihara*." To be of the greatest use to our kind, you must go to neither extremes. Stand in the golden mean. The golden mean too shifts from age to age. Take that saying of the *Gita* and I am a full believer in it. Then you touch both sides. You are between the extremes. Neither side is alien to you and you can serve both. After all when you come to look at it, the true

philosophy is to deny yourself only in order that other people may have plenty. The man who says I have denied and so shall others is not a benefactor. You must say 'I shall suffer so that others may not suffer.' You must not say 'I suffer let others suffer too.' That kind of feeling is not beneficial to other people. It is against other people. Well, it seems to me, therefore, that this is not service which is necessarily of the purest type. However, I am only going to say now that Pherozechah certainly erred and erred most grievously in the other direction. From that point of view he was not a good man. For amongst Indians particularly, the negative ideal is prevalent; the ideal of deprivation, the ideal of renunciation and giving up. *Nivritti* is our strong point. Pherozechah had not a spark of it. He was an utter stranger to that view of life.

There were other great defects too in him. Another thing that I have to point out is that our sense of biography is extremely weak. We do not examine other people's lives in order to draw lessons therefrom. We do not study their lives in order that it may give us the richest lesson. No, we do not. I am often thinking why that should be the case, and why, to us, biography should have been such a barren field of literary effort. We have written lives of people but they are all romantic and full of incredible things. Amongst credulous people that is the kind of thing which anybody will believe. Nobody knows much about Kalidasa,¹ Shankara² and such others. I have been looking at the growth of Western biography: It is also of recent origin. Perhaps the cause is here and I am trying to speculate. You may take my statement for what it is worth. But it is a great and cardinal difference which we of the East have to pursue to its foundations. I think this difference has arisen because of the growth in the West of what may be widely and somewhat loosely described as democratic spirit. I will just open your minds to this main thought, I cannot do more. It is only recently in the West that the work of life, the work of public polity, the work of public institutions, the work of huge organizations, is all done by the many. In former days, all this was done in a very sparing manner, and on a small scale by the select few. Now everybody takes a share in public life, and it has expanded most luxuriantly so that there is room for every one of us to show what stuff he is made of. We can do something, all of

us. There is abundance of opportunities to call forth what there is in us. Each one of us in his little way and in a little measure can contribute to the public welfare, so that the great ones, meritorious ones in public life, are not confined to the top grade only but are to be found in all grades of life even amongst the very poor. Biography, therefore, has begun to yield profit. The life of a humble man is rich with lessons for us. Autobiography is a branch of biography. We have no autobiographies worth mentioning. Take the famous autobiographies of Western people—what are they? Some only have gone into all the secrets of their lives. Private life amongst them has become the least important part of the whole of their life. Distinguishing between public and private life, private life has shrunk to a small place in the West. Here in India still and in former times almost wholly private life was the only thing standing to the credit or debit side of each man. There was not much worth mention; and private life is not easy to state. It is by no means a fit subject for exposing to other people's gaze. It is full of warning rather than example. Of all forms of biography, I have known none where for instance the private life of a man is examined in a dispassionate and realistic manner. It cannot be. One most lamentable result of it is that the merits also have to be hidden along with that which is dark and sinful. In the West, portions of private life are veiled from the curious man's gaze. On the whole, it is a wise instinct. I have nothing but reprobation for the prurient. I know in the West, sex is not absent but is not very much in evidence. They have got one honourable rule. In their talking about other people and in estimating their character, in analysing their good and bad points, in dealing with their lives as subjects of biography, they have a generous blindness to that side which we have to copy. I do not say that that serves the cause of truth. I say that until we revise all our notions of sex proprieties, until we revise our notions of what is due to a woman and what woman can be for herself, a good working rule is to say nothing about it, and if possible to think nothing about it.

As I have told you he was one endowed with great responsibilities and susceptibilities, a man whose eyes and ears went out readily—*Pravritti* was his great feature. And then, if we examine his life still more and in direc-

tions where a little curiosity is permissible we also see that he was lacking in some of these elements of greatness. I have not heard of his having left large bequests for charity. I have not heard of his giving scholarships to pupils or of his endowing schools or libraries. He did not bestow his monies on these things so profitable to the public. I do not think anything there is standing to his credit in this direction. He earned with both hands and spent with both hands too, but largely on himself.

Well these are defects which cannot be passed over when we survey a great man's life. Greatness has been defined in many different ways. Goodness has been defined in many different ways. A few people are both great and good. Some are great, some are good only, and of good ones unless there is some little greatness mixed with it there is no chance of our hearing quite enough. But of the great ones, we may hear a good deal. Pherozezshah, I should say, examined from this point of view, might merit the title of *great* but I should hesitate to call him *good*. Somehow or other, I may be right or wrong, whether in the East or in the West, goodness requires a certain element of tenderness to others, of a fellow-feeling, of a desire to help others in their troubles, of a desire to share your prosperity with others, of a desire to be just and kind. We want that gracefulness, that touch of tenderness; otherwise, we don't wish to call a man good. I don't think Pherozezshah at any time showed much of goodness, so defined and so understood. He was a great man. He was an unselfish man in some respects. I have said enough to bring before you not only the public aspects but also even those other aspects which may be called somewhat private of Pherozezshah, in order that you may have before your mind's eye a picture of the whole man. I think I have said a good deal that will help you, but perhaps I should add another word. In India religion plays so large a part and we should all wish to find out whether judged in that way, Pherozezshah would come out as an object of admiration. We think a man must be good, benevolent and all that but we also desire to know whether he was a godly sort of man. Was he religious? Had he any pious doctrines he turned over in his mind and tried to work out in his life? Are there any yogic practices with which he may be credited? These are the questions which people would like to ask. By way of lightening the gravity of the topic I may mention to you a wonderful experience of mine.

In the last days of Gokhale, we had a visitor in Poona, a man who had curiosity developed in an abnormal measure. He wanted to know all about Gokhale, and put us a hundred questions. We were not fully equipped with the answers, and the prying curious way in which the questions were put made us hesitate to give such answers as we could give. One of the questions that this man of prurient curiosity put was, "What is his religion, tell me? Does he perform his father's and mother's *Sraddha*? Does he perform his *Sandhyavandanam*? Does he go to the temple? Does he do any of the pious acts on sacred days?" We were obliged to say 'No' to all these things. He was thoroughly vexed, and then he put us this question above all. 'Does he wear the *yagnopavit*?' I am only mentioning all this to show that this desire to know about a man's religion is exceedingly strong, that we have this idea—strongly rooted in us all by tradition as well as by the great examples of our history and literature—that no man can be perfect and that no man can touch the high altitude of greatness unless he had in his life, an active Religion. We want this element present in a man's life. Religion played a vital part. I could tell you that examining Pherozeshah's career in that way, it is not a blank. I have seen in his writings many references to a Providence in which he believed. Somehow he seems to have had the faith, whether it was likely or not I cannot say, but he seemed to have thought that there was a guiding spirit and that the Universe was being turned round to good purpose by that Power and that as part of that Universe, India too was improving her destiny and might one day reach the level reached by other prosperous and independent countries in the world. In this Providence he has expressed his faith several times. I do not believe a man like him, in whose hands language had full meaning, who had full control over it and who used it with great care and with deliberate purpose, who spoke of Providence as he did, could be entirely without an element of belief in something beyond himself. There are some of us to whom religion must come fully armed, as it were, with rules and prescriptions for every hour of the day and for every circumstances in life. There are others to whom religion yields an abundance of good fruit even when it is only a distant and vaguely felt influence. For my own part, I am not disposed to look with cheap pity or scorn on those whose religion is of this vague but potent variety. I do not think a man loses his

religion by not observing the meticulous performances for every day of the week and for every hour of the day. They may have their prayers and thus penitence is not without use, but I do not believe it could be claimed by any student of our Vedanta that without them a man's life is ungodly or irreligious and that it is waste and thrown away and that to such a man this life is a blank and life beyond is a still darker blank.

Notes :

1. **KALIDASA :** The most illustrious Sanskrit poet, dramatist author of Raghuvamsa, Kumara Sambhavam, Meghasandesam, Ritusamharam, Sakuntalam, Vikramaorvasiyam, Malavikagnimitram. Supposed to have lived in the first century B.C. by some, and by others in the 4th Century A.D. Goethe the German poet has sung the praise of Kalidasa in a poem ;
2. **SANKARACHARYA :** The greatest of the Hindu philosopher preacher, scholar writer and LOGICIAN. founder of the Advaita school of philosophy. He had four disciples who spread his message with their centres at Dwaraka, Puri, Kanchi and Joshi Mutt, with the Headquarters of the Mutt at Sringeri. He is said to have lived from 788-820, A.D.

APPENDIX I

In unveiling the statue of the late Sir Dinshaw Wacha, in Bombay on 9th April, 1940, the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri said :

You have done me conspicuous honour in assigning to me the principal part in to-day's ceremony. I do not deserve it either by intimacy of association with the illustrious man whose statue I am about to unveil or by a high position in the public life of the country. The meaning of your invitation, as I understand it, is that Sir Dinshaw Eduuji Wacha did not belong to Bombay alone, but that distant Madras, as indeed every part of India, can claim his memory as a cherished possession. During the last ten years or so of his life Sir Dinshaw was unable to take prominent part in the public affairs of India. And let it be admitted that the liberal party, of which he was one of the leading lights, has for some years lost the influence which should properly belong to it by reason of its past record and by reason also of the personal merits of its members. Nevertheless a review of the main features of the long and honourable career of one of its luminaries will not be without profit, even to the present generation, which repudiates the political doctrines that are the immediate parents of its own school of thought.

Sir Dinshaw was 92 years old when he passed away in 1936. He was born into a period of our history very different from to-day, so different indeed that it would take a great effort of the historical imagination for a young man to form a just picture of it in his mind. Let us remember that Wacha was well in his teens when the Great Indian Mutiny occurred and led to the famous Proclamation of the Queen of 1858. Political agitation and indeed political aspiration had hardly assumed definite shape. Our hero had entered on his forties when he was called upon to take his share in the proceedings of the gathering of Indian leaders which subsequently took the great name of the Indian National Congress. The social reform and the educational movements were then in a rudimentary state. The city of Bombay had already started on its career of commercial prosperity, but no one could have predicted that its destiny was to become within a generation or so the second city of the British Empire. Nor was the Bombay Corporation anything like the pattern of municipal efficiency and civic enlightenment that it is to-day. Wacha had the rare distinction of seeing things grow from the humblest beginnings all through the stages of trial and error, of hope and hesitation, of careful planning and haphazard growth, of rising tides of prosperity and struggle against adverse circumstances. In this drama of exciting change and spirited endeavour, Wacha was no mute and unconscious sharer, no mere passive observer, but an active and brilliantly active participant. Of his early education we have a few glimpses from his own vivid pen. In a volume of reminiscences written over the humorous name of "Sandy Seventy," a few chapters describe the early efforts of Christian missionaries and a few private bodies to give the elements of education to their

children before the duty of public instruction was recognised as part of the functions of government. This volume is a rich mine of information regarding Bombay of a hundred years ago, which may be recommended to a student of original records. Wacha went, like many promising students before him, to the famous Elphinstone institution, but was not destined to complete the course that was available. This circumstance he seems to have regretted. To one who marks the vividity and vigour of his style, the copiousness and power of his diction, and the range and depth of his observations, it does not appear that he suffered any real loss by the premature end of his scholastic education. At twelve he recited an English piece so well before Lord and Lady Canning¹ that Her Excellency patted him on the back. He heard the great Proclamation of Queen Victoria² assuming the direct sovereignty of India read aloud to the assembled citizens by Lord Elphinstone,³ who stood on the spacious verandah of the Town Hall surrounded by the dignitaries of the day arrayed in robes of state. Who would not envy his good fortune when he saw and heard that prince of African explorers, Dr. Livingstone⁴ led into the Town Hall by Sir Bartle Frere⁵ of happy memory? He does not fail to mark, the changes that time has wrought in our dress and manners, changes not always observed as they take place with exceeding slowness in society. We learn from the luminous pages of the book called by the picturesque name of "Shells from the Sands of Bombay" that in his boyhood Indian gentlemen of all classes, Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, and Parsis appeared on formal occasions in snow-white and flowing *Jama* and *Pichoree* or *Kumerband*. We learn also to our astonishment that there was a time when even Parsi ladies were content to remain within doors and in ignorance. The year 1858 and the occasion of the Queen's Proclamation deserve to be remembered not only for their own intrinsic importance, but as the time of emancipation for Parsi womanhood. For they came out for the first time in open carriages, venetians down, mark you! Our chronicler writes boastfully that they were attired in rich silk saris and bejewelled and that the *Purdah* was literally lifted. Amongst his early inspirations was a study of Sir Joseph Arnauld's classic judgments in the Maharaja Libel case and in the Aga Khan case — judgments which no student either of Indian law or of Indian social history should omit to read. Sir Dinshaw tells us that he acquired his passion for the study of economics and finance from a certain Professor Hughlings, who had fitted up a reading room at his own cost, where he would often sit with Sir Dinshaw and explain learned articles in the 'Economist' of James Wilson, who afterwards became the first Finance Minister of India. Of this original inspiration we have the mature fruits in the writings and speeches which he poured forth in abundance during a long life of conscientious and devoted study. What a lad of fine sensibility and high enthusiasm he must have been to write as he does of the emotion that warmed his breast when first he visited the hallowed precincts of that great house of thought, that great temple of learning, a valhalla where lay buried the great thoughts of great men of all the centuries—which is his own description of the Literary Society founded by Sir James Mackintosh! Only on two other occasions did our hero feel a similar exaltation of spirit, once when he visited the library of the British Museum and again when he was within the precincts of Westminster Abbey.

Is it any wonder that with such subtle and powerful stimuli Wacha acquired a voracious appetite for knowledge, which made him to the end of his days a great buyer and reader of books? Nor was he a mere acquirer of all kinds of knowledge. He gave freely to the public out of his vast store of information. There is hardly a man within my recollection who has written and spoken as abundantly as Sir Dinslaw Wacha. His output, if we could in public life. Anonymously, pseudonymously and over his own proper name, he was an untiring contributor to magazines and newspapers of every degree of influence. And the marvel is that he never took a pie of remuneration for it all. I have it on good authority that he never employed a stenographer, but wrote always in his own hand. His private correspondence was of colossal proportions. He wrote regularly to friends in England and innumerable people in India. As often as a thought occurred to him, I fancy he took pen and paper and wrote it down for somebody's benefit. I fancy also he wrote nearly as fast as he thought. He did not pause for the most appropriate word or the most inoffensive phrase. I have had occasion to read a good deal of his manuscript, for he wrote often and with complete freedom to Gokhale. I do not remember a scratch or an erasure. It was the same even, parallel-lined, fine-looking, fluent calligraphy. The attraction, however, was only on the surface. The trouble started as soon as you put on your glasses and began to read. You came up against an illegible scrawl and could make progress only with many a stumble and many a break, to which you said to yourself you would come back when your organ of vision had regained its tone.

In his public work Wacha was associated with several colleagues of similar calibre. And it used to be said that for many years Bombay had the singular good fortune of having a galaxy of brilliant men who placed their talents at the disposal of the community. In civic matters the ascendancy of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, extending over nearly two generations, was an advantage which other cities over metropolitan rank might have envied. His great example of devotion to municipal duties drew to the service of Bombay a wealth of talent and experience, which might else have been dispersed among diverse small interests and yielded little public benefit. Of about the same age, Wacha seconded his friend with his own uncommon ability. It is a just claim made on their behalf that their unsurpassed influence in the Corporation was never perverted to any jobbery or patronage, but exerted to keep policy and principle free from all taint of unworthy ends. In many quarters Pherozeshah Mehta's domination excited jealousy and resentment. But be it said to the honour of Sir Dinslaw and many others that they were not only content but glad to rally round him like soldiers round a brave and gifted general. Wacha in particular regarded his eclipse as a dedication. I was anxious soon after Gokhale's death to call on the notables of Bombay. I was ushered into a room where Pherozeshah Mehta sat beaming among his accustomed companions. Naturally backward in speech, I felt hushed in the great presence, but soon a number of kindly queries broke my reserve; and as the talk flow-

ed easily over a wide range, I remarked how every now and then Mehta would turn round and appeal to Wacha for confirmation of what he had said, and Wacha would assent without using too many words. His book on the Municipality of Bombay, especially the chapter dealing with the inauguration in 1888 of the present constitution, gives due meed of praise to Lord Keay, Mr. Leiang, Mr. Forbes Adam and other stalwarts of the time, but accords first place ungrudgingly and convincingly to Pherozesah Mehta, whose vigilance, intrepid advocacy and far-seeing vision transmuted the halting and timid proposals of the authorities into a golden measure of local government, which has nobly stood the test of time and furnished a model of municipal government throughout India. Wacha outlived his great friend by more than 20 years, during which period he was called upon to occupy the vacant place of primacy as far as he could. This was the case not only in the Corporation, but in the Legislature first of Bombay and then of All India, in the Bombay Presidency Association and in the Indian National Congress. It might be said of this brilliant pair, in greater measure than of any others in the country, that their eminence in municipal affairs led as a natural and almost inevitable consequence to equal eminence on the broader stage of national affairs. Be it also recorded for the benefit of other patriots that they never allowed their zeal for the civic welfare of Bombay to be dimmed or diminished in any way by larger and may be more exalted pre-occupations. Wacha was one of the seventy odd leaders of India who laid in 1885 truly and well the foundations of the Indian National Congress. His interest in this organisation grew with its growth. He was its Secretary for many years and President at the 1901 session in Calcutta. He took a prominent part in its debates, and Congressmen of all ranks soon learned to appreciate and love the sterling qualities of the small lively figure who seemed to frisk and jump on the platform as he denounced, in a squeaking voice and apparently through very thick spectacles, the military policy and expenditure of India in vehement accents and with torrential eloquence. His utterance could not be commended for distinctness or melody of tone, but his earnestness and mastery of facts and figures ensured for him patient and respectful attention. Before the Welby Commission on Indian Finance he made a gallant stand for equitable apportionment of charges between England and India, and along with Gokhale gave invaluable support to Dadabhai Naoroji, who was a member of the Commission as well as the most learned and formidable witness on the Indian side. As an economist Wacha belonged to the school of Cobden³ and John Stuart Mill⁴; and though in later years he countenanced the policy of discriminating protection for the industries and manufactures of India, his original homage to the pure water of free trade was a lifelong obsession. He was instrumental, along with Mr. Manmohandas Ramji and others, in founding the Indian Chamber of Commerce on this side of the country, and when other Chambers had sprung up elsewhere, he induced them all to join together and act as a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Nothing could be more eloquent testimony to his lofty principles and his unselfish and unworldly character than that throughout his life, though money lay all about him, he never possessed more than a competence and for some time before his death he was without even that competence. It would be a mistake to suppose that,

while he specialised in finance and economics, he neglected other aspects of study. His pronouncements on education are entitled to respectful consideration, and he was no mean authority on history in general and international affairs. Writing over the pseudonym of "Raiduari," he surveyed for many years in the "Indian Review" the course of events as they shaped themselves in the world, with a wealth of detail and a sureness of grasp which were the admiration of readers.

Wacha's was a simple nature. There was never any difficulty in understanding him. He was subject to strong emotions and expressed his likes and dislikes with disconcerting candour. As Secretary of the Indian National Congress he had to collect monies, call for reports and require conformity to ordinary canons of public business. In the discharge of these duties he had to reprove, to dun, to scold, to threaten. People complained bitterly of the severe terms in which he castigated slackness or evasion of duty. To the end he never learned how to suffer fools gladly or temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Especially in recent years few of his colleagues or correspondents altogether escaped his verbal chastisement. I had my share. But we all remembered how like a child he was and how utterly innocent of the arts of polite circumlocution and of pretended friendship. If he was quick to scold, he was equally quick to forgive and to befriend. As he himself said in one place, if he was a lion in the chase, he was a lamb at home. For my part, while I seldom remember the sharpness of phrase with which he expressed his disapproval of my doings, I recall with mingled pride and pleasure his appreciation of the unrelenting vigilance with which, as captain of volunteers at the Congress session of 1908 in Madras, I guarded the proceedings, which were in special danger in consequence of the animosities and bickerings of Surat.

Experience will have taught many of you here, as it has taught me, that, ever since the two schools of moderation and of extremism emerged with more or less defined frontiers, nearly every moderate has been suspected at one time or another by his orthodox compatriots of leanings towards the wrong side. In the Servants of India Society that has been the fate of almost all. I sometimes think that the suspicion under which I lay at the beginning still clouds my name, and Gokhale was never wholly sure of me in his inmost mind. Gokhale himself, if the truth be told, would not have been raised to the Cardinalate in the Vatican of Bombay. Going higher still, was not Pherozeshah Mehta accused by the archangels who surrounded the Viceregal throne of introducing a new spirit of question and cavil in those serene regions where seemliness and perpetual obeisance were the attributes of the chosen denizens? It was the esoteric belief of the moderates of Bombay, Madras and U.P. that most of our compatriots in Bengal were tarred with the extremist brush and could not be admitted into the *sanctum sanctorum*. Pride must not blind us to the danger lurking in the nature of us all, a tendency, whenever we have unchecked power, to erect the stake and light the fire of inquisition. Wacha was particularly subject to this frailty. Markedly when he was young and less markedly when he had attained middle age, he was playfully and not untruthfully called

the firebrand of western India. His views were strong, and the words he chose to express them were stronger. No one could listen to his early speeches or read his early writings without being struck by the uncommon range and sweep of his vocabulary of disapprobation and denunciation. His finger could in those bounding days read the pulse of popular feeling unerringly. If his private letters could be recovered and arranged in the order of date, they would furnish a faithful chronicle of the various phases of feeling through which the general mind passed on the questions engaging it. One instance I may be pardoned for mentioning to-day. His letters to Gokhale during the years 1906, 1907 and 1908 are a mirror in which could be seen vividly reflected the initial hope, the scepticism, the bewilderment, the indignation, the despair and finally the reviving hope and satisfaction with which the eager Indian politician watched the changing moods and fancies and slowly evolving reform proposals of Lord Morley. Gokhale was by no means unaffected by the vicaries of the political barometer; but because of his proximity to the central orb of the firmament, his faith never wholly disappeared, but shone like a star, now bright, now dim, but always there. He gently reprimanded us for failure to make full allowance for Morley's difficulties and misgivings, and it is pleasing to recall now the happy ending of the episode when he expounded the main features of the coming constitution to the Congress of 1908 and successfully communicated to the audience his own expectations of a happy and prosperous future.

Wacha is a striking and forceful illustration of the sobering effect of time. We could see how he gradually shed his optimism, moderated his demand and saw things through authoritarian glasses and weighed events in the scales provided by Government. This swing-over is noticeable in the careers of other politicians as well. I can recall more than one occasion on which the late Sir B. N. Sarma and I were roundly censured by him in the Council of State for attacking the Government of the day. But we were amused and half consoled when in his own turn he would get up and belabour Government with the verve characteristic of the redoubtable oppositionist we had known and admired of old. At such times he reminded me of a fond but temperamental mother who might beat her child mercilessly when she was angry, but, if anybody else threatened violence to it, would fly at his throat in a fit of fury.

The year 1918 marked a crucial turn in the fortunes of the Congress. When it became apparent that the extreme section of our politicians had made up their minds to denounce and declare unacceptable the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals of reform, the elder statesmen, if one may be pardoned for appropriating that term, decided to secede from the Congress and create an organisation for themselves. After much anxious consultation and frequent searchings of the heart, of which the memory is still poignant, the members of the Servants of India Society threw in their lot with the All-India Liberal Federation. The two mighty pillars of the movement were Wacha and Surendranath Banerjee. At the

end of the inaugural session in Bombay, I likened them to those unchanging hills in the landscape by which Sri Rama identified the various regions of the Indian continent when, during his return home after fourteen years of exile, he found no other distinguishing marks, for they had all, rivers and plains and forests and the habitations of men, shifted enormously and obliterated all boundaries. That similitude seems to me not inapt after the twenty-two years that have since passed. A few of us, alas, a continually diminishing few, still stand where we stood, pointing the finger of warning, like Wordsworth's "Peele Castle" amidst the wreckage of a fearful storm.

Rather a succession of fearful storms. For many years now our country has not known tranquillity except for brief periods. While we sit here, tens of thousands of people all over the country are preparing for mass civil disobedience, and the campaign may begin any day. However non-violent it may be, the authorities cannot afford to look on, but must meet it by violent measures. Not improbably communal discord may add itself to the disturbance and convert civil disobedience into something like civil war. The demand for partitioning India into two political entities with separate national interests staggers the imagination and makes it impossible even to guess the next step in our movement. Has the teaching of Sir Dinshaw any guidance for us in this predicament? The answer is not for a moment doubtful. We have all heard of the claim made in Congress circles that, if Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale could be brought back to life among us, they would take their stand with the author of non-violent non-co-operation and mass civil disobedience. It is difficult to say how many that actually knew these departed worthies would allow the claim. I do not allow it. In Wacha's case nobody would dream of advancing such a claim. It is well known how Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and he did not countenance in the faintest degree the Home Rule League movement started by Mrs. Besant and how they endeavoured to induce our Grand Old Man to withdraw the consent that he had given to be its President. To Mrs. Besant as a political force in India they had an invincible antipathy. Of Gandhiji's aims and methods Wacha had an instinctive dread. His condemnation would have been clear, complete and caustic. He had no patience with the judicious frame of mind which weighs pros and cons with meticulous precision, and after making full allowance for purity of motive, pronounces a half-hearted verdict against the particular method at the particular time. I confess to a natural aversion for cocksure, uncompromising, final judgments in any sphere of human conduct. One can never know enough to judge aright. Still, when one is racked by doubt and appalled by the prospect of disaster, one is drawn by the sovereign instinct of safety to the voice of a leader of men who sees clearly into the future and points the way with confidence. In the interests of posterity we cannot afford to let Sir Dinshaw Wacha's fame become dim or his example cease to inspire coming generations. That is why Sir Chimanlal Setalvad⁶ and his Committee have in their wisdom erected Wacha's statue on this prominent spot, within hailing distance, in case the shades of great men should wish to commune with one another, of Tata, Mehta, Naoroji, Ranade, Gokhale, and Montagu.

Notes :

1. **DR. DAVID LIVINGSTONE (1813-1873)**: Scottish Missionary and Explorer; and medical practitioner went to South Africa to help one Dr. Moffat; in Africa Dr. Livingstone won the esteem of the natives and discovered many unknown facts about South Africa, the land and its people.
2. **SIR BARTIE FRERE (1815-1884)**: British administrator; Entered Bombay Civil Service (1834); Governor of Bombay (1862-67).
3. **RICHARD COBDEN (1804-1865)**: British politician and economist; Responsible for the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846); Member of Parliament (1841-47 and 1847-57).
4. **JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873)**: British philosopher and economist; Employed in the East India Company, London; Member of Parliament for Westminster (1865-68); His chief works are: Principles of Political Economy (1848), On Liberty (1859), Subjection of Women (1869). Warmly defended the rights of the working classes and advocated suffrage for women.
5. **SIR B. NARASIMESWARA SARMA (1867-1932)**: Pleader and Municipal Councillor Vizagapatam; Secretary, Mahaiana Sabha, Madras (1916-17); Member, Madras Legislative Council (1914-1916); Member, Viceroy's Executive Council (1920-25).
6. **SIR CHIMANLAL SETALVAD (1866-1947)**: Lawyer, Bombay; member, Bombay Legislative Council (1904-96); Member Imperial Legislative Council (1915); Fellow of the Syndicate, Bombay University (1908); Member, Governor's Executive Council, Bombay (1921-1923); Vice Chancellor, Bombay University (1917); five terms; President, The Indian National Liberal Federation.

Glossary :

Fakirs : Muslim ascetics.

Grahacharam : Fate; bad times.

Gunas : Temperaments.

Guru : Preceptor.

Harijan : A word coined by Gandhiji meaning that the depressed classes or the Panchamas as they were called, were the Children of Hari or God.

Jama : A flowing white frock extending below the knee worn by Parsis on ceremonial occasions, the priests wearing it always.

Kamarband : A white sash wound round the waist over the Jama by Parsis and allowing the two ends of it to fall gracefully on the right side.

Panchakacham : A nine cubit long cloth worn by the orthodox Hindus tucking it in five places, the cloth swathing their lower limbs in graceful folds, and pleats.

Mahap : Parental Government which gives you what it pleases.

Pichoree : A part of the orthodox Parsee dress.

Pravriti : Relating of the material life, pursuit of earthly pleasures.

Rajas : The second of the three Gunas or constitutive qualities : of all the material substances it predominates in men as Sattwa and Tamas predominate in Gods and demons respectively. It is supposed to be the cause of great activities seen in creatures.

Rakshasas : A demon.

Sadhu : A Hindu ascetic.

Sandhya : The morning and evening and moon ablutions and prayer and meditation enjoined on the twice born.

Sanctum Sanctorum : The Holy of Holies.

Satwa : The quality of goodness or purity regarded as the highest of the three Gunas.

Shraddah : Offering of oblations to the manes of the ancestors on their death anniversary.

Swadeshi : Patronising products of one's own land.

Tamas : Darkness, the gloom or darkness of hell, the attribute of demons or Rakshasas.

Vandemataram : A famous song which has become the National Song of India. Its author is the great Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji. This figures in his novel *Ananda Mutt*.

Yagnapavita : The sacred thread of three strands, spun by twice-born with their own hands and worn to remind them of the Dharma.

Vedanta : The ultimate goal of Veda representing the systems of Hindu Monism and Pantheistic philosophy based on the Vedas.

APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF SIR P. M. MEHTA.

- 1845 August 4 — Birth of Pherozechah Mehta in Bombay.
- 1850 Early education in Ayrton's School.
- 1855 Studied in the Branch School, a cradle of several distinguished men in Bombay.
- 1861 Joined the Elphinstone College in Gwalia Tank Road, in Tanker Ville; Pheroze, one of the eleven of the College Cricket Team which went to Poona; was a pioneer of Cricket in West India.
- 1864 Took his B.A. Degree; awarded the Dakshina Fellowship; was specially invited by the Governor, Sir Bartle Freere, for an interview.
- Allowed to appear for M.A. Examination as a special case within six months of his passing his B. A Examination.
- 1868 December: Left for England with W. C. Banerjee for being called to the Bar with a scholarship given by Mr. Rustamji Jamsetjee Jheejeebhoy.
- Stayed with Dadabhai Nauroji for a while in England. Learnt French.
- Read a paper on the Educational system in the Bombay Presidency before the East India Association, which was founded by Dadabhai Nauroji.
- Called to the Bar and referred to Bombay.
- 1869 Spoke on the grant-in-aid system in Bombay, at the Bombay Branch of the East India Association.
- Mehta and Indian Barristers protested against their exclusion from the entertainment proposed to be given to Sir Joseph Arnauld, the Judge in the Byculia Club.
- 1871 June 30 — J. P.'s meeting at Town Hall; supported Crawford's administration as Commissioner despite the great discontent among a section of the people.
- November 29 — Read a paper on "Municipal Reform" at the Bombay Branch of the East India Association at the Framji Cowasji Institute.
- 1872 Bombay Municipal Act based on the ideas of a Municipal Government expounded by Mehta in his lecture,

- 1873 , May 9 — Criticised in the columns of "*The India Statesman*" the distribution of offices which were subject to the patronage of the Chief Justice; was called upon to explain his conduct by the Bar Association which was dominated by English Barristers; refused to recognise its jurisdiction and claimed privilege as a journalist.
- 1874 Bombay riots; attack on Parsis by Muslim mobs for the alleged insulting reference to the prophet in a book written by a Parsi; visited the scene of riots unmindful of the danger to his life from the miscreants; petitioned to the Secretary of State as the police was ineffective.
- April 12 — Addressed a public meeting and seconded a resolution protesting against the conduct of Government and the police during the Bombay riots.
- 1877 June 30 — Meeting at Bombay Town Hall with the Governor in the Chair. After the resolution for the formation of a European volunteer Corps had been seconded, he objected to the formation of such a Volunteer Corps composed exclusively of Europeans.
- Severely criticised in a letter to the *Times of India*, "the Vernacular Press Act" of Lord Lytton, as discriminatory legislation.
- 1879 May 3 — Read the petition to be submitted to the House of Commons protesting against Lord Lytton's Government's remission of duties on various articles including the coarser variety of manufactured cotton goods of Manchester and Lancashire at the Cowasji Institute.
- March 25 — Malabar Hill Reservoir scandal. Motion to remove the Engineer Mr. Watson. Mehta's masterly speech indicting Watson's conduct. Motion defeated.
- 1880 April — Criticised the administration of Sir Richard Temple as Governor and opposed the proposal to erect a statue for him.
- Sir Richard Temple asked the Corporation of Bombay for a contribution of Rs. 15,000 to work the Contagious disease Act in the city of Bombay. The Corporation declined under Mehta's advice.
- 1881 June — Mehta's representation to the Secretary of State for India objecting to the mode adopted by the Government, and meddling with the independence of the Corporation. The Bombay Government arbitrarily withheld that sum from their contribution to the Corporation in respect of police charges.

- 1882 May — Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty. Announcement of the extension of Local Self-government; was made a member of the committee to effect improvement in the Municipal Act.
- 1883 Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for India upheld Mehta's contention that the independence and dignity of the Corporation were not upheld by the Bombay Government.
- April 28 — The Ilbert Bill proposing to invest Indian Judges with the right to try European British subjects. Tremendous opposition to the Bill from the Anglo-Indian community his support to the Bill in an able speech in the Town Hall. On circulation to the local Governments, the scope of the bill was greatly curtailed according to the compromise formula of Mr. Evans of Calcutta. Mehta's letter to the *Bombay Gazette* discountinancing the compromise formula.
- 1884 December 19 — Chairman of the Bombay Corporation at age 39; Lord Ripon laid the foundation of the present Bombay Corporation building at his request.
- 1885 January 31 — Bombay Presidency Association founded by Mehta, K. T. Telang and Badruddin Tyabji.
- December 28 — Indian National Congress founded — First session in Bombay by Mehta and others.
- 1886 Supported the move in the Bombay University Senate to include French as a second language in the University curriculum.
- 1887 Appeared in the Municipal Octroi case against Eduiji Mancherji; wild public enthusiasm.
- Bombay Inquiry; another case of Mehta's brilliant advocacy.
- July 26 — Bombay Municipality Act amending bill introduced; appointed a member of the Bombay Legislative Council; had great share in liberalising its provisions.
- 1888 Ventured into the field of journalism by reviving the *Advocate*; Promoted the Graduates Association of the Bombay University; made a trenchant and incisive criticism of educational policy of the Government and the recommendations of Lord Ripon's Education Commission.
- 1889 Crawford Scandal; Inquiry Committee appointed. Crawford found guilty; effectively countered the Police Commissioner, Ommancy's aspersions on Parsis.

1889 July — Was made the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Bombay University.

January — Gave evidence before Public Services Commission.

Allahabad Congress; seconded a resolution on the Recommendations of the Public Services Commission, urging larger employment of Indians on grounds of political and economic necessity and the holding of simultaneous examinations in India for I.C.S.

Bombay Congress, Chairman of the Reception Committee.

1890 President, The Indian National Congress, Calcutta.

1892 October— Judicial Counsellor, Junagad State on Rs. 2,000 a month to reorganise its judiciary.

1893 May 4 — Made Corporation's representative in the Bombay Legislative Council.

Fought to relieve the Corporation from the burden of maintaining the police in the city, and for separation of judicial from the executive functions.

October; Selected to the Imperial Legislative Council.

November 1 — Submitted his memorandum on the separation of Judicial and Executive functions for the Provincial Conference held at Ahmedabad.

1894 Made a C.I.E.

December — Protested against Cotton Duties Bill and the Exchange compensation allowances intended to benefit the English elements in the services.

1895 January — Spoke against the limited scope of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act; pleaded for an equitable adjustment of the relations between the ryot and the Government.

February 28 — Rukmabai's case; moved an amendment authorising courts in fit cases to order that a decree of restitution should not be enforced. Attacked the alarming growth of government's expenditure.

April 1 — Great reception given to Mehta by W. C. Banerjee in Calcutta. Called the "Uncrowned king of Bombay". Re-elected to Bombay Legislative Council by the Corporation.

Eighth Provincial Conference, Belgaum; Gokhale moved a resolution appreciating Mehta's massive services; Receptions by the citizens of Bombay.

January 26 — Resigned his membership of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. Took greater interest in the Bombay University.

July 27 — Representation to government to reconsider their grant to University.

Condemned; Police Act of 1861 (325 V-1) Amendment introduced the "New Spirit" of frank, free and fearless criticism in the Legislative Council.

September 26 — Presided over Gandhiji's lecture on Indians in South Africa and submitted a lengthy representation to the Secretary of State for India.

1897 May 15 — Visited England for an operation for stone in the bladder.

Visited Brussels, Lucerne, Lausanne and Geneva.

1898 January 6 — Resigned his seat in the Legislative Council but was re-elected.

February 12 — Returned to India.

February 14 — Gave his general support to the Bombay City Improvement Trust Bill.

Won a contested election to the Imperial Legislative Council.

1899 At Matheran: The Holiday incident; refused to report himself at Major Collic's Office, according to plague regulations.

Letter to the Plague Commissioner, who expressed official regrets to Mehta. This was followed by a controversy in which he exposed the vagaries of English rulers in India.

1901 April — Resigned his membership of the Viceroy's Legislative Council; G. K. Gokhale was elected to the Viceroy's Legislative Council in Mehta's place.

August 23 — Speech on the Bombay Land Revenue Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council opposing it; Mehta, Gokhale and others walked out.

1902 September: Corporation of which he was President refused the motion to present a welcome address to Lord Kitchener, India's Commander-in-Chief.

- 1902 March 4 — Examined by the University Commission on the Memorandum jointly submitted by him and Setaiwad. Gokhale commended his Memorandum which opposed Curzon's University Reform Commission's proposals.
- 1903 Attended the Madras session of the Indian N. Congress and stole a march over the President, Lal Mohan Ghose, who had criticised leaders like Mehta as ones who "spoke the language of patriots and trod in the footsteps of despots".
- 14-The University of Bombay under his guidance appointed a Committee to examine the reactionary recommendations of the Commission, and passed a resolution approving the Committee's views which were opposed to the Commission's recommendations.
- 1904 Chairman, Reception Committee, Indian National Congress, Bombay. One portentous sentence of 350 words in his speech.
- Birth-day Honour -- Mehta made a K.C.I.E.
- Resolution by the Bombay Corporation to present an address of welcome to Lord Curzon on his return for a second term as Viceroy; Mehta opposed the resolution which was however carried by a majority of one.
- 1905 Visit of H.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales (Late King George V and Queen Mary). Mehta the President of the Corporation was denied the honour of receiving the royalty; the Corporation and he took it as a deliberate insult and conveyed to the Secretary to Government, the public feeling in the matter.
- November 8 — Meeting of the Corporation to consider the Government order; Secretary's interview with Mehta prior to the meeting; Secretary was told of the consequences that would follow if the Corporation was ignored; Government relenting Mehta presented the address shook hands with the Royalty.
- Battle of Clocks — Introduction of Standard Time by Lord Curzon Mehta opposed it.
- 1905 April 23 — Notice of a motion to revert to Bombay Time; he supported the move and 15000 people signed a petition in favour of it for submission to Government. Motion carried.
- June 28 — Motion to introduce Standard Time by Harrison, the Accountant General of Bombay for putting forward the hand of the clock by 39 minutes, was again defeated in the Corporation;
- The "CAUCUS", of English officials with their evil genius Harrison was put an end to formed to Mehta's 'domination' in Bombay Corporation.

1907 February 22 — Mehta sought re-election to the Corporation from one of the sixteen seats allotted to the Justices of the Peace; was elected as the successful candidate immediately preceding him was disqualified.

Gokhale's criticism of the 'Caucus' and lauding his services.

December 27 — Growing differences among Congressmen, between the Liberals led by him and the Extremists led by Tilak; Surat; chosen as the venue of the Congress by him; confusion and ultimate split.

28 — Convention held under Dr. Ghosh's presidentship, as suggested by V. Krishnaswamy Aiyar of Madras for resuscitating the work of the Congress.

November: Death of his first wife.

1908 February — Drafted a memorandum on Minto-Morley Reform proposals analysing some of its reactionary proposals.

December 18: Letter from the Government of India on the changes in the curriculum; Bombay University appointed a Committee to consider the letter; as Member of the Senate moved that the letter of the Government and the report of the Committee be recorded, as an interference of Government in University affairs; characterised it was "unfortunate, unjust, unwise and impolitic"; his proposition carried.

1910 April 23; Left for Europe for a change with his second wife Lady Mehta. Interviewed Lord Morley, Lord Crewe, and the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge on the need to annul the Bengal partition and on the Hindu Muslim problem; consulted Amer Ali and the Aga Khan — outlook appeared to be hopeful.

1911 February — Returned to India; was proposed as a Trustee on the Board of Parsi Panchayat; by six representatives of the Orthodox section; was opposed by another Caucus of his own community; was advised to withdraw but declined and faced defeat through hired votes.

Moved a resolution appealing to the Improvement Trust that the deepest religious feelings of the Parsis were concerned in the maintenance and preservation of the integrity of the properties in question in the Chowpathy Street Scheme, that the Scheme was not an improvement scheme as such, and in consequence properties should not be acquired. He was appointed a Member of an influential Committee to take necessary steps to safeguard the interests of the Panchayat; the Committee's recommendations were accepted by the Trustees.

- 1911 3rd April: Elected as President of the Corporation in a triangular contest;
- Helped to found the Central Bank of India of which he became the first Chairman.
- Visit of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary for Coronation. Address drafted by Mehta on behalf of the Corporation and presented to their Majesties.
- 25th July: Annual Budget discussion in the Bombay Legislative Council — Mehta's protest against President, Lord Sydenham gagging him with a time limit.
- 1912 July: Appointment of Royal Commission on Public Services in India.
- Improvement Trust Bill: Lord Sydenham ruled out of order an amendment moved by Sir Pherozeshah, Mehta protested against this in the columns of the 'Times of India' Lord Willingdon, a Liberal succeeded Lord Sydenham as Governor of Bombay; opposed the South African agreement entered into with Smuts by Gokhale and Gandhi on the ground that Indians could never give up the great and vital principle or Imperial Citizenship.
- 1913 March; Mehta was examined by the Public Services Commission in Bombay on the Memorandum submitted by the Bombay Presidency Association.
- April: Mehta founded *the Bombay Chronicle*.
- 1914 August 13: Presided over a public meeting in the Town Hall to give expression to the feelings of deep loyalty and patriotism of the Indian masses on the eve of the first World War.
- December: Opposed the Town Survey Bill introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council.
- 1915 March 5th: Spoke on Gokhale at the condolence meeting under the chairmanship of Lord Willingdon.
- " March: Appointed as Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University.
- " March 2nd: Golden Jubilee of the Corporation celebrated. Mehta participated in it in his happiest vein.
- " July: The Bombay University conferred the Degree of Doctor of Laws on Mehta.
- " April: Stayed in Mathern recouping his health. Came to Bombay to preside over the Convocation of the University, but could not do so on medical advice.
- " November 5th: Mehta passed away due to heart failure.
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Page	Line	For	Read
38	3	with it,	with it.
39	27	yon	you
77	heading	LANDED	LAUDED
79	14	10'O clock	10 O' clock
83	43	contry	country
85	6	aluded	alluded
86	27	peopel	people
91	7	commparison	comparison
...	33	whatever whatever	whatever
102	8	is	its
111	33	thay	they
117	9	reasonable	treasonable
...	21	friend	friends
122	19	brings	bring
...	21	has	his
...	32	ho wling	howling
139	39	nswer	answer
170	4	mention	mention it
181	2	cometogether	come together
192	4	intercoted	interested
194	41	wi	we
199	16	mya	may
203	8	raspin	rasping
211	5	the sentences beginning with, 'There is' and the next are jumbled.	

They should read as follows: -

"There is hardly a man within my recollection who has written and spoken so abundantly as Sir Dinshaw Wacha. His output, if we could assemble it all would easily equal that of any two of his compeers in public life."

15 Art plate top left, Second Line read, 'Savior for Senior'