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THE

Late Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji

ON

SWARAJ

Presidential Address at
the Calcutta Congress
1906.

Price Two Annas.

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Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's Presidential Address
at the Twenty-second Sessions of the
Indian National Congress held
in Calcutta in 1906.

INTRODUCTION.

Raja Peari Mohun Mukerjee, Dr. Rashbehari Ghose, and my friends:—I thank you from the bottom of my heart for proposing me to be the President of the Indian National Congress on this occasion. You may rest assured that I feel from the bottom of my heart the honour that you have done me and in my humble way I would fulfil the important duty you have called me to perform. I cannot undertake at present to read my whole address though I expected I would be able to do so. I would ask my friend Mr. Gokhale to read it for me. I would just make the beginning and say that I thank you most sincerely for honouring me for the third time by electing me to the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. I hope I shall have your co-operation, help and support. I am obliged to express my deep sorrow at the losses which the country has sustained by the deaths of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, Mr. Anand Mohan Bose, Mr. Budrudin Tyabji and Mr. M. Veeraraghava Chariar.

Mr. Gokhale then read the following Presidential Address at the request of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji:—

THE ADDRESS.

“ Good government could never be a substitute for government by the people themselves.”

(Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, 23-11-1905.

“ But this I do say that political principles are after all the root of our national greatness, strength and hope.”

(Mr. John Morley, King's Hall, Holborn, 4-6-1901).

"But if you meddle wrongly with economic things, gentlemen, be very sure you are then going to the very life, to the heart, to the core of your national existence."

(Free-Trade Hall, Manchester, 19-10-1903).

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I thank you most sincerely for honouring me for the third time with the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress. I hope I shall have your cordial help and support.

I may here express my deep sorrow at the loss India has suffered in the deaths of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, Justice Budrudin Tyabji, Mr. Anand Mohan Bose and Mr. Veeraraghava Chariar.

I offer my sincere thanks to the "Parliament Branch of the United Irish League," the Breakfast Meeting, the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club and the National Democratic League for their enthusiastic and cordial godspeed to me.

This is the first Congress after its having come of age. It is time that we should carefully consider what the position of the Indians is at present and what their future should be.

In considering this important matter I do not intend to repeat my lamentations over the past. I want only to look to the future.

The work of the Congress consists of two parts:—

First and most important is the question of the policy and principles of the system of Government under which India ought to be governed in the future.

Second is to watch the operation of the administration as it now exists, to propose from time to time any reforms and changes that may be deemed necessary to be made in the various departments, till the present system of government is radically altered and based upon right principles and policy in the accomplishment of the first part mentioned above.

I desire to devote my address mainly to the first part of the work of the Congress, *viz.*, the policy and principles which ought to govern India in future.

What position do the Indians hold in the British Empire? Are they British citizens or not is my first question? I say we are British citizens and are entitled to and claim all British citizen's rights.

I shall first lay before you my reasons for claiming that we are British citizens.

REASON I, THE BIRTHRIGHT.

The acknowledgment of this birthright was declared on the very first occasion when England obtained the very first territorial and sovereign possession in India. The British statesmen of the day at once acted upon the fundamental basis of the British Constitution and character that any one who came howsoever and wheresoever, under the British flag was a free British citizen as "if born and living in England."

The fundamental basis in the words of the present Prime Minister is:—

"Freedom is the very breath of our life.....We stand for liberty, our policy is the policy of freedom."

In the words of Mr. Morley:—

"Yes, gentlemen, the sacred word "free" which represents as Englishmen have always thought until to-day, the noblest aspiration that can animate the breast of man."

This birthright to be "free" or to have freedom is our right from the very beginning of our connection with England when we came under the British flag.

When Bombay was acquired as the very first territorial possession, the government of the day in the very first grant of territorial rights to the East India Company declared thus:—

(Extract from the Grant to the First East India Company of the Island of Bombay, dated 24th March 1669.)

"And it is declared that all persons being His Majesty's subjects inhabiting within the said Island and their children

and their posterity born within the limits thereof shall be deemed free denizens and natural subjects as if living and born in England."

And further all the terms of the first grant are extended in it to all future British territorial acquisitions. Thus is the claim of Indians to be "free" and to all the rights of British natural subjects as "if living and born in England" are distinctly acknowledged and declared from the very first political connection with England.

Having given the declaration made some two and a half centuries back in the 17th century that the moment we Indians came under the British flag we were "free" citizens, I next give you what two of the prominent statesmen of this, the 20th, century have said. When the Boers were defeated and subjugated, and came under the British flag, the present Prime Minister said (14th June 1901):—

"These people with whom we are dealing are not only going to be our fellow-citizens; they are our fellow-citizens already."

Sir William Harcourt at the same time said:—

"This is the way in which you propose to deal with your fellow-citizens."

Thus the moment a people came under the British flag they are "free" and British "fellow-citizens." We Indians have been free British citizens as our birthright, as "if born and living in England" from the first moment we came under the British Flag.

The Boer war cost Britain more than two hundred millions and 20,000 dead, and 20,000 wounded. India, on the other hand, has enriched Britain instead of costing anything—and the blood that was shed was largely Indian blood—and yet this is a strange contrast. The Boers have already obtained self-government in a few years after conquest, while India has not yet received self-government though it is more than 200 years from the commencement of the political connection.

All honour and glory to the British instincts and principles and to the British statesmen of the 17th century. The Liberals of the present day and the Liberal Government have every right to be proud of those "old principles" and now that a happy and blessed revival of those sacred old principles has taken place, the present Government ought fairly to be expected to act upon those old principles, and to acknowledge and give effect to the birthright of Indians as "if living and born in England." England is bound to do this. Our British rights are beyond all question. Every British Indian subject has franchise in England as a matter of course, and even to become a Member of Parliament. Nobody in England dreams of objecting to it. Once in my case, from party motives, an objection was suggested to entering my name on the register as an elector, and the revising barrister at once brushed aside the objection, for that as an Indian, I was a British citizen.

REASON II, PLEDGED RIGHTS.

The grant to the first East India Company cited in Reason I is both a declaration of the rights of Indians as British citizens as well as a pledge of those rights by that declaration.

Queen Victoria, in her letter to Lord Derby asking him to write the Proclamation himself, said:—

"And point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown and prosperity flowing in the train of civilization."

Thereupon the Proclamation then declared and pledged unreservedly and most solemnly calling God to witness and bless:—

"We hold ourselves bound to the Natives of our Indian Territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to our other subjects, and these obligations by the blessing of Almighty God we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil."

Can there be a more sacred and solemn pledge before God and Man?

On the occasion of the Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India, she sent a telegram to Lord Lytton which he read in the open Durbar consisting of both Princes and People. In this telegram the Queen Empress said:—

“That from the highest to the humblest all may feel that under our rule, the great principles of liberty, equity and justice are secured to them, and that to promote their happiness, to add to their prosperity and advance their welfare are ever present aims and objects of our Empire.”

And it is clear that this object of promoting our happiness &c., &c. can only be attained by our enjoyment of the principles of liberty, equity and justice, *i. e.*, we must have the British liberty of governing ourselves.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of 1887, the Queen Empress again pledged and emphasised the pledges of the Proclamation thus:—

“Allusion is made to the Proclamation issued on the occasion of my assumption of the direct government of India as the Charter of the liberties of the Princes and People of India. It has always been and will be continued to be my earnest desire that the principles of that Proclamation should be unswervingly maintained.”

We are now asking nothing more or less than the liberties of our Charter,—our rights of British citizenship.

The present King-Emperor has pledged:—

“I shall endeavour to follow the great example of the first Queen-Empress to work for the general well-being of my Indian subjects of all ranks.”

Again the King-Emperor in his speech on 19th February 1906, said:—

“It is my earnest hope that in these Colonies as elsewhere *throughout my dominions* (the italics are mine) the grant of free

institutions will be followed by an increasing prosperity and loyalty to the Empire."

And the prime Minister clinches the whole that:—

"Good government could never be a substitute for government by the people themselves."

How much less is then an economically evil government and constitutionally an unconstitutional despotic government, a substitute for self-government—and how much absolutely necessary it is to produce "increasing prosperity and loyalty to the Empire" by "the grant of free institutions."

With the solemn pledges I have mentioned above, we have every right to claim an honourable fulfilment of all our British pledged rights. And so we claim all British rights as our birthright and as our solemnly pledged rights. Britain's duty, humanity, honour, instincts and traditions for freedom, solemn pledges, conscience, righteousness, and civilization demand the satisfaction, to us of our British rights.

REASON III, REPARATION.

All our sufferings and evils of the past centuries demand before God and Man a reparation, which we may fairly expect from the present revival of the old noble British instincts of liberty and self-government. I do not enter into our past sufferings as I have already said at the outset.

REASON IV, CONSCIENCE.

The British people would not allow themselves to be subjected for a single day to such an unnatural system of government as the one which has been imposed upon India for nearly a century and a half. Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman has made a happy quotation from Mr. Bright:—

"I remember John Bright quoting in the House of Commons on one occasion two lines of a poet with reference to political matters:—

There is on Earth a yet diviner thing,
Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King."

Then Sir Henry asks :—

"What is that diviner thing? It is the human conscience inspiring human opinion and human sympathy."

I ask them to extend that human conscience, "the diviner thing," to India in the words of Mr. Morley :—

"It will be a bad day indeed if we have one conscience for the Mother Country and another conscience for all that vast territory over which your eye does not extend."

And now the next question is—What are the British rights, which we have a right to "claim?"

This is not the occasion to enter into any details or argument. I keep to broad lines.

(1) Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments and details is in the hands of the people themselves of that country, so should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments and details should be in the hands of the people themselves of India.

This is not only a matter of right and matter of the aspirations of the educated—important enough as these matters are—but it is far more an absolute necessity as the only remedy for the great inevitable economic evil which Sir John Shore pointed out a hundred and twenty years ago, and which is the fundamental cause of the present drain and poverty. The remedy is absolutely necessary for the material, moral, intellectual, political, social, industrial and every possible progress and welfare of the people of India.

(2) As in the United Kingdom and the Colonies all taxation and legislation and the power of spending the taxes are in the hands of the representatives of the people of those countries, so should also be the rights of the people of India.

(3) All financial relations between England and India must be just and on a footing of equality, *i. e.*, whatever money India may find towards expenditure in any department—Civil or Military or Naval—to the extent of that share should Indians share in all the benefits of that expenditure in salaries, pensions, emoluments, materials, &c., as a partner in the Empire, as she is always declared to be. We do not ask any favours. We want only justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word—“Self-government” or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.

Mr. Morley says very truly and emphatically (Banquet King's Hall, Holborn, 4th June 1901):—

“But this I do say that political principles are after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope.”

So, for India also, there can be no national greatness strength and hope except by the right political principles of self-government.

Now the next important question is, whether it is practicable to grant these rights of self-government at once or when and in what way? Nobody would, think, say that the whole present machinery can be suddenly broken up at once and the rights which I have defined of self-government can be at once introduced.

RIGHT No. 1 : EMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES.

The right of placing all administration in every department in the hands of the people of India. Has the time arrived to do anything loyally, faithfully and systematically as a beginning at once, so that it may automatically develop into the full realisation of the right of self-government?

I say,—yes. Not only has the time fully arrived, but had arrived long past, to make this beginning. The statesmen of

nearly three-quarters of a century ago not only considered the point of making a beginning, not merely made a pious declaration, but they actually passed an Act of Parliament for the purpose. Had that Act been honourably and faithfully fulfilled by the Government from that time to this, both England and India would have been in the position, not of bewailing the present poverty, wretchedness and dissatisfaction of the Indian people, but of rejoicing in the prosperity of India and of still greater prosperity of England herself.

In the thirties of the last century, England achieved the highest glory of civilization by its emancipations of the body and soul of man—by abolishing slavery and by freedom of conscience to enjoy all the rights of British citizenship. During these glorious days of English history, the statesmen of the time did not forget their duty to the people of India. They specially and openly considered the question of self-government of India, not only in connection with Britain, but even with the result of entire independence from Britain. When the act of 1833 was passed Macaulay made that memorable speech about the duty of Britain towards India of which Britain shall forever be proud. I cannot quote that whole speech here. Every word of it is worth study and consideration from the statesmen of the day. I shall give only a few extracts. He first said:

“I must say that, to the last day of my life, I shall be proud of having been one of those who assisted in the framing of the Bill which contains that Clause’ . . . ‘It would be on the most selfish view of the case far better for us that the people of India were well-governed and independent of us than ill-governed and subject to us.’ . . . ‘We shall never consent to administer the pousta (a preparation of opium) to a whole community—to stupify and paralyse a great people, whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control.’ . . . ‘We are free, we are civilized, to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and

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civilization.' . . . "I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour.' . . . 'To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would, indeed, be a title to glory all our own.' "

Such was the glorious spirit in, and auspices under which was enacted in Macaulay's words "that wise, that benevolent, that noble clause:—

"That no native of the said territory, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said company."

I would not repeat here what I have often stated about this clause. Sufficient to say that simultaneous examinations in India have been declared authoritatively as the only honourable fulfilment of the clause.

Here is, then, the beginning that can be made at once not as a new thing but as one fully considered and settled by Act of Parliament 73 years ago. The power is ready in the hands of the Secretary of State for India to be put into execution at once without the necessity of any reference to Parliament or any authority.

And, in connection with this step, I would earnestly urge upon the Secretary of State to retrace the pernicious step which has lately been taken in India of abolishing competition for the services to which admission is made directly in India. In England competition is the basis of all first admissions in all the services and the same must be the basis in India as the fairest and most in accordance with justice.

This beginning will be the key, the most effective remedy for the chief economic and basic evil of the present system.

Mr. Morely has truly said:—

“But if you meddle wrongly with economic things, gentlemen, be very sure you are then going to the very life, to the heart, to the core of your national existence.”

And so the economic muddle of the existing policy is going to the life, to the heart, to the core of our national existence. A three-fold wrong is inflicted upon us, *i. e.*, of depriving us of wealth, work and wisdom, of everything, in short, worth living for. And this beginning will begin to strike at the root of the muddle. The reform of the alteration of the services from European to Indian is the keynote of the whole.

On the score of efficiency also foreign service can never be efficient or sufficient. Sir William Hunter has said:—

“If we are to govern the Indian people efficiently and cheaply we must govern by means of themselves.”

The Duke of Devonshire, as Indian Secretary, has said (23rd August 1883):—

“There can in my opinion be very little doubt that India is insufficiently governed.”

In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise. After the simultaneous examinations are carried on for some years, it will be time to transfer the examinations altogether to India to complete the accomplishment of the rights (No. 1) of self-government without any disturbance in the smooth working of the administration.

Co-ordinately with this important beginning for Right (No. 1) it is urgent to expedite this object that education must be most vigorously disseminated among the people—free and compulsory primary education, and free higher education of every kind. The Indian people will hail with the greatest satisfaction any amount of expenditure for the purpose of education. It was free education that I had at the expense of the people that made me and others of my fellow-students and subsequent fellow-

workers to give their best to the service of the people for the promotion of their welfare.

Education on the one hand, and actual training in administration on the other hand, will bring the accomplishment of self-government far more speedily than many imagine.

Heavy expenditure should be no excuse. In fact if financial justice, to which I shall refer hereafter, is done in the relations between England and India, there will be ample provision even from the poor revenues of India—and with every addition of Indians in place of Europeans, the resources of India for all necessary purposes will go on increasing.

RIGHT NO. 2: REPRESENTATION.

In England itself Parliamentary Government existed for some hundreds of years before even the rich and middle classes and the mass of the people had any voice or vote in it.

Macaulay pointed out in 1831 that the people living in the magnificent palaces surrounding Regent's Park and in other such places were unrepresented. It is only so late as 1832 that the middle classes obtained their vote, and it is only so late as 1885 that most of the mass of the people obtained their franchise. Women have no vote. Adult franchise is yet in struggle.

It is no use telling us, therefore, that a good beginning cannot be made now in India for what Mr. Gladstone called "living representation." The only thing needed is the willingness of the Government. The statesmen at the helm of the present Government are quite competent and able to make a good beginning—such a systematic beginning as that it may naturally in no long time develop itself into full legislatures of self-government like those of the self-governing colonies. I need not go into any details here of the scope and possibilities of representation. The educated and thinking classes in India who have attended English schools and colleges are not the only people to be reckoned with. There is a large body who

now are informed of the events of the world and of all British institutions by the vernacular press and literature in their own language.

The peasants of Russia are fit for and obtained the Duma from the greatest autocrat in the world, and the leading statesman, the Prime Minister of the free British Empire, proclaimed to the world "the Duma is dead, long live the Duma!" Surely the fellow-citizens of that statesman and the free citizens of that Empire by birthright and pledged rights are far more entitled to self-government, a constitutional representative system, than the peasants of Russia. I do not despair. It is futile to tell me that we must wait till all the people are ready. The British people did not so wait for their Parliament. We are not allowed to be fit for 150 years. We can never be fit till we actually undertake the work and the responsibility. While China in the East and Persia in the West of Asia are awakening and Japan has already awakened and Russia is struggling for emancipation—and all of them despotisms—can the free citizens of the British Indian Empire continue to remain subject to despotism—the people who were among the first civilizers of the world? Modern world owes no little gratitude to these early civilizers of the human race. Are the descendants of the earliest civilizers to remain, in the present times of spreading emancipation, under the barbarous system of despotism, unworthy of British instincts, principles and civilization?

RIGHT NO. 3: JUST FINANCIAL RELATIONS.

This right requires no delay or training. If the British Government wills to do what is just and right, this justice towards self-government can be done at once.

First of all take the European Army expenditure. The Government of India in its despatch of 25th March 1890 says:—

"Millions of money have been spent on increasing the Army in India, on armaments, and on fortifications to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent

the invasions of the warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British Power in the East."

Again the Government of India says:—

"It would be much nearer the truth to affirm that the Imperial Government keeps in India and quarters upon the revenues of that country as large a portion of its army as it thinks can possibly be required to maintain its dominion there, that it habitually treats that portion of its army as a reserve force available for imperial purposes; that it has uniformly detached European regiments from the garrison of India to take part in imperial wars whenever it has been found necessary or convenient to do so; and more than this that it has drawn not less freely upon the native army of India towards the maintenance of which it contributes nothing to aid it in contests outside of India with which the Indian Government has had little or no concern."

Such is the testimony of the Government of India that the European Army is for Imperial purposes.

Now I give the view taken in the India Office itself.

Sir James Peile was a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and represented the Indian Secretary on the Royal Commission (Welby's) on Indian expenditure. Sir James Peile, in a motion, after pointing out that the military policy which regulated Indian Military expenditure was not exclusively Indian, urged that:—

"It is worthy of consideration how far it is equitable to charge on a dependency the whole military cost of that policy, when that dependency happens to be the only part of the Empire which has a land frontier adjacent to the territory of a great European power."

Here then these extracts of the Government of India and the India Office show that the European Army expenditure

is entirely for British imperial purposes, and yet with flagrant injustice the burden is thrown by the Treasury upon the helpless Indian people.

In the same way all the Government expenditure in England which entirely goes to the benefit of the people in England, and which is for British purposes, is imposed on the Indian people while the Colonies, do not pay any portion for similar expenditure in England. This expenditure should in common justice not be imposed on India. It is unjust. Here then, if we are relieved of burdens which ought not in common justice to be imposed upon us, our revenues, poor as they are at present, will supply ample means for education and many other reforms and improvements which are needed by us. This question is simply a matter of financial justice. I have put it on a clear just principle and on that principle India can be quite ready to find the money and its own men for all her own needs—Military, Naval, Civil or any other. For imperial expenditure we must have our share in the services in proportion to our contribution.

These just financial relations can be established at once. They require no delay or preparation. It only needs the determination and will of the British Government to do justice. Lastly as to self-government. If the British people and statesmen make up their mind to do their duty towards the Indian people they have every ability and statesmanship to devise means to accord self-government within no distant time. If there is the will and the conscience there is the way.

Now I come to the most crucial question—particularly crucial to myself personally.

I have been for some time past repeatedly asked whether I really have, after more than half a century of my own personal experience, such confidence in the honour and good faith of British statesmen and Government as to expect that our just claim to self-government as British citizens will be

willingly and gracefully accorded to us with every honest effort in their power, leaving alone and forgetting the past.

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall give you a full and free answer.

In 1853 when I made my first little speech at the inauguration of the Bombay Association, in perfect innocence of heart influenced by my English education into great admiration for the character, instincts and struggles for liberty of the British people, I expressed my faith and confidence in the British Rulers in a short speech from which I give a short extract:—

“When we see that our Government is often ready to assist us in everything calculated to benefit us, we had better than merely complain and grumble, point out in a becoming manner what our real wants are.”

And I also said:

“If an association like this be always in readiness to ascertain by strict enquiries the probable good, or bad effects of any proposed measure and, whenever necessary, to memorialise Government on behalf of the people with respect to them our kind Government will not refuse to listen to such memorials.”

Such was my faith. It was this faith of the educated of the time that made Sir Bartle Frere make the remark which Mr. Fawcett quoted, *viz.*, that he had been much struck with the fact that the ablest exponents of English policy and our best coadjutors in adapting that policy to the wants of the various nations occupying Indian soil were to be found among the natives who had received a high-class English education. And now, owing to the non-fulfilment of solemn pledges, what a change has taken place in the mind of the educated!

Since my early efforts, I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel.

My disappointments have not been of the ordinary kind but far worse and keener. Ordinarily a person fights—and if he fails he is disappointed. But I fought and won on several occasions, but the executive did not let us have the fruit of those victories—disappointments quite enough, as I have said, to break one's heart. For instance, the "Statutory" Civil Service, Simultaneous Examinations, Lord Lawrence Scholarships, Royal Commission, &c. I am thankful that the repayment from the treasury of some unjust charges has been carried out, though the Indian Secretary's salary is not yet transferred to the Treasury as it was hoped.

But I have not despaired. Not only that I have not despaired, but at this moment, you may think it strange, I stand before you with hopefulness. I have not despaired for one reason—and I am hopeful for another reason.

I have not despaired under the influence of the good English word which has been the rule of my life. That word is "Persevere." In any movement, great or small, you must persevere to the end. You cannot stop at any stage, disappointments notwithstanding, or you lose all you have gained and find it far more difficult afterwards, even to begin again. As we proceed we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage, but persevere we must to *the end*. If our cause is good and just, as it is, we are sure to triumph in the end. So I have not despaired.

Now the reason of my hopefulness which I feel at this moment after all my disappointments. And this also under the influence of one word "Revival"—the present "revival" of the true old spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions in the hearts of the leading statesmen of the day. I shall now place before you the declarations of some of the leading statesmen of the day and then you will judge that my faith and hope are well-founded, whether they will be justified or not by future events.

Here, I give you a few of those declarations—but I give an Appendix A of some of these declarations out of many.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

"We believe in self-government. We treat it not as an odious necessity, not as a foolish theory to which unfortunately the British Empire is committed. We treat it as a blessing and a healing, a sobering and a strengthening influence. (Bradford, 15-5-1901.)"

"I remain as firm a believer as ever I was, in the virtue of self-government. (Ayr, 29-10-1902.)"

"But here is another—self-government and popular control—and we believe in that principle."

MR. JOHN MORLEY.

"Yes, gentlemen, the sacred word 'free' which represented, as Englishmen have always thought until to-day, the noblest aspirations that can animate the breast of man.

(Palmerston Club, 9-6-1900.)"

"In his view the root of good government was not to be found in bureaucracy or pedantocracy. They must seek to rouse up the free and spontaneous elements lying deep in the hearts and minds of the people of the country.

(Arbroath, 23-10-1903.)"

The study of the present revival of the spirit, instincts and traditions of Liberty and Liberalism among the Liberal statesmen of the day has produced in my heart full expectation that the end of the evil system, and the dawn of a Righteous and Liberal policy of freedom and self-government, are at hand for India. I trust that I am justified in my expectations and hopefulness.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have all the powerful moral forces of justice, righteousness and honour of Britain, but our birthright and pledged rights and the absolute necessity and

humanity of ending quickly all the sufferings of the masses of the people, from poverty, famine, plagues, destitution and degradation &c. On our side if we use those moral forces, which are very effective on a people like the British people, we must—we are bound to, win. What is wanted for us is to learn the lesson from Englishmen themselves—to agitate most largely and most perseveringly, by petitions, demonstrations and meetings, all quite peacefully but enthusiastically conducted. Let us not throw away our rights and moral forces which are so overwhelming on our side. I shall say something again on this subject.

With such very hopeful and promising views and declarations of some of the leaders of the present Government, we have also coming to our side more and more Parliament, Press and Platform. We have some 200 Members in the Indian Parliamentary Committee. The Labour Members, the Irish Nationalist Members, and the Radicals are sympathetic with us. We have several Liberal papers such as "The Daily News," "The Tribune," "The Morning Leader," "The Manchester Guardian," "The Star," "The Daily Chronicle," "Justice," "Investors' Review," "Reynolds," "New Age," and several others taking a juster view of India's rights and needs. We must make "India" a powerful organ. We have all sections of the Labour or Democratic Party, the British Nationalist Party, the Radicals and Liberals generally taking larger interest in Indian matters. The large section of the British people to whom conscience and righteousness are above every possible worldly thing, are also awakening to a sense of their duty to the vast population of India in their dire distress, and poverty, with all its dreadful consequences. When I was in Parliament and the only Indian, I had the support of the Irish, Radical and Labour Members. I never felt helpless and alone, and I succeeded in several of my efforts. We must have many Indian Members in Parliament till we get self-government. Under such favourable circumstances let us not fail to make the most of our opportunity for our political eman-

icipation. Let us, it is true, at the same time do, what is in our power, to advance our Social and Industrial progress. But for our political emancipation, it will be a great folly and misfortune for us to miss this good fortune when it has at last come to us, though I fully admit we had enough of disappointments to make us lose heart and confidence.

I base my hope upon the "revival" of the old British love of liberty and self government, of honour for pledges, of our rights of fellow British citizenship. Within the short life, that may yet be vouchsafed to me, I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable and conscientious adoption of the policy for self-government for India—and a beginning made at once towards that end.

I have now expressed to you my hopes and reasons for such hopes for ourselves. But as the Moral Law, the greatest force of the Universe, has it,—in our good will be England's own greatest good. Bright has wisely said:—

"The good of England must come through the channels of the good of India. ... In order that England may become rich, India itself must become rich."

Mr. Morley has rightly said:—

"No, gentlemen, every single right thing that is done by the Legislature, however moderate be its area, every single right thing is sure to lead to the doing of a great number of unforeseen right things. (Dundee, 9-12-1889.)"

If India is allowed to be prosperous by self-government, as the Colonies have become prosperous by self-government, what a vista of glory and benefits open up for the citizens of the British Empire, and for mankind, as an example and proof of the supremacy of the moral law and true civilization !

While we put the duty of leading us on to self-government on the heads of the present British statesmen, we have also the duty upon ourselves to do all we can to support those statesmen by, on the one hand, preparing our Indian people for the right

understanding, exercise and enjoyment of self-government and, on the other hand, of convincing the British people that we justly claim and must have all British rights. I put before the Congress my suggestions for their consideration. To put the matter in right form, we should send our "Petition of rights" to His Majesty the King Emperor, to the House of Commons and to the House of Lords. By the British Bill of Rights of 1689—by the 5th Clause—"the subjects have the right to present petitions to the Sovereign."

The next thing I suggest for your consideration, is that the well-to-do Indians should raise a large fund of patriotism. With this fund we should organise a body of able men and good speakers, to go to all the nooks and corners of India and inform the people in their own languages of our British rights and how to exercise and enjoy them. Also to send to England another body of able speakers, and to provide means to go throughout the country and by large meetings to convince the British people that we justly claim and must have all British rights of self-government. By doing that I am sure that the British conscience will triumph and the British people will support the present statesmen, in their work of giving India responsible self-government in the shortest possible period. We must have a great agitation in England, as well as here. The struggle against the Corn Laws cost, I think, two millions, and there was a great agitation. Let us learn to help ourselves in the same way.

I have said at the beginning that the duties of this Congress are two-fold. And of the two, the claim to a change of the present policy leading to self-government is the chief and most important work.

The second part of the work is the vigilant watch over the inevitable and unnecessary defects of the present machinery of the Administration as it exists and as long as it exists. And as the fundamental principles of the present Administration are unsound there are inherent evils, and others are naturally ever arising from them. These the Congress has to watch

and adopt means to remedy them, as far as possible, till self-government is attained, though it is only when self-government is attained that India will be free from its present evils and consequent sufferings. This part of the work the Congress has been doing very largely during all the past twenty-one years and the Subjects committee will place before you various resolutions necessary for the improvement of the existing administration, as far as such unnatural and uneconomic administration can be improved. I would not have troubled you more but that I should like to say a few words upon some topics connected with the second part of the work of the Congress—Bengal Partition and *Swadeshi* movement.

In the Bengal Partition, the Bengalees have a just and great grievance. It is a bad blunder for England. I do not despair but that this blunder, I hope, may yet be rectified. This subject is being so well threshed out by the Bengalees themselves that I need not say anything more about it. But in connection with it we hear a great deal about agitators and agitation. Agitation is the life and soul of the whole political, social and industrial history of England. It is by agitation the English have accomplished their most glorious achievements, their prosperity, their liberties and, in short, their first place among the nations of the world.

The whole life of England, every day, is all agitation. You do not open your paper in the morning but read from beginning to end it is all agitation—Congresses and Conferences—Meetings and Resolutions—without end, for a thousand and one movements local and national. From the Prime Minister to the humblest politician, his occupation is agitation for everything he wants to accomplish. The whole Parliament, Press and Platform is simply all agitation. Agitation is the civilized, peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force when possible. The subject is very tempting. But I shall not say more than that the Indian journalists are mere Matriculators while the Anglo-

Indian journalists are Masters of Arts in the University of British Agitators. The former are only the pupils of the latter, and the Anglo-Indian journalists ought to feel proud that their pupils are doing credit to them. Perhaps a few words from an English statesman will be more sedative and satisfactory.

Macaulay has said in one of his speeches:—

“I hold that we have owed to agitation a long series of beneficent reforms which would have been effected in no other way the truth is that agitation is inseparable from popular government Would the slave-trade ever have been abolished without agitation? Would slavery ever have been abolished without agitation?”

For every movement in England—hundreds, local and national—the chief weapons are agitation by meetings, demonstrations and petitions to Parliament. These petitions are not any begging for any favours any more than that the conventional “Your obedient servant” in letters makes a man an obedient servant. It is the conventional way of approaching higher authorities. The petitions are claims for rights or for justice or for reforms,—to influence and put pressure on Parliament by showing how the public regard any particular matter. The fact that we have more or less failed hitherto, is not because we have petitioned too much but that we have petitioned too little. One of the factors that carries weight in Parliament is the evidence that the people interested in any question are really in earnest. Only the other day Mr. Asquith urged as one of his reasons against women’s franchise, that he did not see sufficient evidence to show that the majority of the women themselves were earnest to acquire the franchise. We have not petitioned or agitated enough at all in our demands. In every important matter we must petition Parliament with hundreds and thousands of petitions—with hundreds of thousands of signatures from all parts of India. Taking one present instance in England, the Church party has held till the beginning of October last 1,400 meetings known and many more unknown,

against the Education Bill and petitioned with three-quarters of a million signatures and many demonstrations. Since then they have been possibly more and more active. Agitate, agitate over the whole length and breadth of India in every nook and corner—peacefully of course—if we really mean to get justice from John Bull. Satisfy him that we are in earnest. The Bengalees, I am glad, have learnt the lesson and have led the march. All India must learn the lesson—of sacrifice of money and of earnest personal work.

Agitate; agitate means inform. Inform, inform the Indian people what their rights are and why and how they should obtain them, and inform the British people of the rights of the Indian people and why they should grant them. If we do not speak, they say we are satisfied. If we speak, we become agitators! The Indian people are properly asked to act constitutionally while the Government remains unconstitutional and despotic.

Next about the "settled fact." Every Bill defeated in Parliament is a "settled fact." Is it not? And the next year it makes its appearance again. The Education Act of 1902 was a settled fact. An Act of Parliament, was it not? And now within a short time what a turmoil is it in? And what an agitation and excitement has been going on about it and is still in prospect! It may lead to a clash between the two Houses of Parliament. There is nothing as an eternal "settled fact". Times change, circumstances are misunderstood or changed, better light and understanding or new forces come into play, and what is settled to-day may become obsolete to-morrow.

The organizations which I suggest, and which I may call a band of political missionaries in all the Provinces, will serve many purposes at once—to inform the people of their rights as British citizens, to prepare them to claim those rights by petitions and when the rights are obtained to exercise and enjoy them.

"Swadeshi" is not a thing of to-day. It has existed in Bombay as far as I know for many years past. I am a free-

trader, I am a member, and in the Executive Committee of the Cobden Club for 20 years, and yet I say that "Swadeshi" is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle. As long as the economic condition remains unnatural and impoverishing, by the necessity of supplying every year some Rs. 20,00,00,000 for the salary, pensions, &c., of the children of a foreign country at the expense and impoverishment of the children of India, to talk of applying economic laws to the condition of India is adding insult to injury. I have said so much about this over and over again that I would not say more about it here—I refer to my book. I ask any Englishman whether Englishmen would submit to this unnatural economic muddle of India for a single day in England, leave alone 150 years? No, never. No, Ladies and gentlemen, England will never submit to it. It is, what I have already quoted in Mr. Morley's words, it is "the meddling wrongly with economic things that is going to the very life, to the very heart, to the very core of our national existence." (*Vide* Appendix B).

Among the duties which I have said are incumbent upon the Indians, there is one, which, though I mention last, is not the least. I mean a thorough political union among the Indian people of all creeds and classes. I make an appeal to all—call it mendicant if you like—I am not ashamed of being a mendicant in any good cause and under necessity for any good cause. I appeal to the Indian people for this, because it is in their own hands only just as I appeal to the British people for things that are entirely in their hands. In this appeal for a thorough union for political purposes among all the people I make a particular one to my friends, the Mahomedans. They are a manly people. They have been rulers both in and out of India. They are rulers this day both in and out of India. They have the highest Indian Prince ruling over the largest Native State, *viz.*, H. H. the Nizam. Among other Mahomedan Princes they have Junagad, Radhanpur, Bhopal and others.

Notwithstanding their backward education, they have the pride of having had in all India the first Indian Barrister in

Mr. Budrudin Tyabji and first Solicitor in Mr. Kamrudin Tyabji, two Mahomedan brothers. What a large share of Bombay commerce is in the hands of Mahomedans is well-known. Their chief purpose and effort at present must be to spread education among themselves. In this matter among their best friends have been Sir Syed Ahmed and Justice Tyabji in doing their utmost to promote education among them. Once they bring themselves in education in a line with the Hindus, they have nothing to fear. They have in them the capacity, energy and intellect, to hold their own and to get their due share in all the walks of life—of which the State Services are but a small part. State Services are not everything.

Whatever voice I can have I wish Government would give every possible help to promote education among the Mahomedans. Once self-government is attained then will there be prosperity enough for all, but not till then. The thorough union, therefore, of all the people for their emancipation is an absolute necessity.

All the people in their political position are in one boat. They must sink or swim together. Without this union all efforts will be vain. There is the common saying—but also the best commonsense—"United we stand—divided we fall."

There is one other circumstance, I may mention here. If I am right, I am under the impression that the bulk of the Bengalee Mahomedans were Hindus by race and blood, only a few generations ago. They have the tie of blood and kinship. Even now a great mass of the Bengalee Mahomedans are not to be easily distinguished from their Hindu brothers. In many places they join together in their social joys and sorrows. They cannot divest themselves from the natural affinity of common blood. On the Bombay side, the Hindus and Mahomedans of Gujarat all speak the same language, Gujarati, and are of the same stock, and all the Hindus and Mahomedans of Maharastic Annan—all speak the same language, Marathi and are of the same stock—and so I think it is all over India.

excepting in North India where there are the descendants of the original Mahomedan invaders, but they are now also the people of India.

Sir Syed Ahmed was a nationalist to the backbone. I will mention an incident that happened to myself with him. On his first visit to England, we happened to meet together in the house of Sir C. Wingfield. He and his friends were waiting and I was shown into the same room. One of his friends recognising me introduced me to him. As soon as he heard my name he at once held me in strong embrace and expressed himself very much pleased. In various ways, I knew that his heart was in the welfare of all India as one nation. He was a large and liberal-minded patriot. When I read his life some time ago I was inspired with respect and admiration for him. As I cannot find my copy of his life I take the opportunity of repeating some of his utterances which Sir Henry Cotton has given in *India* of 12th October last.

“ ‘Mahomedans and Hindus were,’ he said, ‘the two eyes of India.’ ‘Injure the one and you injure the other.’ We should try to become one in heart and soul and act in unison; if united, we can support each other, if not, the effect of one against the other will tend to the destruction and downfall of both. ’”

He appreciated when he found worth and freely expressed it. He said:—

“ I assure you that the Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can truly say that they are really the head and crown of all the communities of Hindustan. In the word ‘nation’ I include both Hindus and Mahomedans because that is the only meaning which I can attach to it.”

Such was the wise and patriotic counsel of that great man and our Mahomedan friends will, I hope, take to heart. I repeat once more that our emancipation depends upon the thorough union of all the people of India without any obstruction.

I have often read about the question of a constitution for the Congress. I think the gentlemen who raise this question would be the proper persons to prepare one like a Bill in the House of Commons in all its details. The Congress then can consider it and deal with it as the majority may decide.

Let every one of us do the best he can, do all in harmony for the common object of self-government.

Lastly, the question of social reforms and industrial progress—each of them needs its own earnest body of workers. Each requires for it separate, devoted attention. All the three great purposes—Political, Social and Industrial—must be set working side by side. The progress in each will have its influence on the others. But, as Mr. Morley truly and with deep insight says:—"Political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope," and his other important utterance which I repeat with this one sums up the whole position of the Indian problem. He says: "The meddling wrongly with economic things, that is going to the very life, to the very heart, to the very core of our national existence"

This meddling wrongly with economic things is the whole evil from which India suffers—and the only remedy for it is—"Political principles are, after all, the root of our national greatness, strength and hope." And these political principles are summed up in self-government. Self-government is the only and chief remedy. In self-government lies our hope, strength and greatness.

I recommend to your serious notice the treatment of British Indians in South Africa.

I give a small Appendix B of some facts and figures which I need not read now.

Well, ladies and gentlemen; I have finished my task. I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and contrymen, I say: be united, persevere, and achieve self-government so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine and plague, and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilized nations of the World.

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- नं. २. साम्राज्यमां स्वराज्य शा भाटे ?
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