

Speaking once about Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade expressed the view that in the case of gods and saints or *rishis* we celebrate their birthdays, while in the case of men we celebrate the anniversaries of their death. He proceeded to justify this distinction on the ground that men's greatness is not fully proven until the last moment. The time of passing away therefore acquires supreme significance and needs commemoration. Till last year the anniversary of Ranade's death was celebrated in Maharashtra. This year, when the day came round, you decided to let it pass in order that two days later you may celebrate the centenary of his birth with solemnity. By this change Ranade takes rank hereafter with Sankara, Ramanuja and teachers of like calibre, whom popular acclaim has enrolled among those to whom *Jayanthis* are appropriate but not *Sraddhas*. This elevation to sanctity of a dead person is attended in the Roman Catholic Church with formalities calculated to examine and publish the grounds on which it is based. The world is thus furnished with the credentials of the new saint. The proposal is registered before a Congregation of Cardinals, and in the manner of judges trying an important suit, they proceed to hear arguments on both sides. The objections to the proposal are first stated by an officer called *ADVOCATUS DIABOLI* or Devil's Advocate, who tries to make out that the person on whose behalf the honours of sainthood are solicited is not worthy of them. The Congregation of Rites next hears the *ADVOCATUS DEI* or God's Advocate, who answers the objections and maintains that the proposed elevation or canonisation, as

practised with an odd inversion of emphasis, तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः instead of remaining unaffected by praise or blame he would be impatient when praise was sounded in his ear, but greedily listen to blame, saying he must profit by it to the extent that it was just. An admiring friend once used this quaint phraseology in putting a favourable gloss on Ranade's inability to enter readily into the feelings of fellow-creatures: "He loved humanity at large, and men in units did not interest him so largely." How could a man with so many oddities and crudities win the affection of those around him? To be admitted into the blessed fraternity of saints, one must have had more attractive qualities and more lively sympathies than Ranade ever had. If we added together the comfort he gave to widows and orphans, the sympathy and help he extended to suffering neighbours and the tendance he bestowed on the sick and the afflicted, the sum would be small indeed, considering the opportunities and the facilities with which he had been liberally endowed.

I now take the field as God's advocate. I am upheld by the overwhelming strength of my case.

My learned friend has made the most of a bad case. If this is all he can say, my task is easy. Ranade was not a perfect man. What man is perfect? If a man's nature were fully rounded and smooth, other people could scarcely get hold of him at any point, and everytime they try to make contact with him they must turn back baffled, as from the touch of a freezing object. Don't we want our heroes to have a few human weaknesses to ensure our kinship to them? If they always did the right thing at the right time in the right way, we should suspect that they were not real, but creatures without blood belonging to the realm of pure fancy. Ranade, I admit without hesitation, had his foibles. I am surprised my learned friend did not mention to the Court that Ranade lost one of his eyes largely through

excessive reading in insufficient light and was in later years afflicted with a slight deafness. He generously forbore all allusion to the nickname of Baby Elephant, which his unusual size and awkward bearing earned him among his fellow-students. In the early days he did not join freely in sports and games but was engrossed in his studies, which had an uncommon range and made him an object of awe and wonder. His friends called him the *enfant terrible* of literature, with pardonable misapprehension of the phrase. Once his Principal, Sir Alexander Grant, caught him reading aloud from Alison's History of Europe, bare-headed and with legs sprawled on the table before him. Ranade should certainly have disposed of his lower limbs in less barbarous fashion and otherwise also remembered that he was not in his own private place. But if Sir Alexander himself took no notice, why need we? Certain of the shortcomings ascribed to Ranade are only seemingly such, they are really good points for which he must be given credit. For instance, it takes a really big man to recognise that even a rustic has some knowledge and experience which might be of use to the student of village life and village economy, and Ranade was too big a man to miss an opportunity of learning something. Some play was made with his setting tasks to people in order to drive them away. Each one of us knows of one or two fussy friends who have nothing to do and just come into our working room for a chat and will take no hint that you would prefer to be alone. Ranade might make enquiries about the average rainfall of Mahabaleshwar, the number of girls' schools in the Thana district, how Sri Rama disposed of the thousand odd *astras* that he acquired in his travels, the arguments against the *laissez faire* theory brought forward by the German economists or the exact doctrinal differences between the various branches of the Brahma Samaj.

bottom. Ranade's heart was gentle and peace-loving. His father was apparently a tyrant and made no attempt to understand Ranade's progressive spirit or his zeal for reform. Occasionally he appears to have adopted questionable tactics to keep Ranade from moving forward. Ranade no doubt struggled and struggled hard, but would not break up his home and go his own way. Many of his friends lamented his failure as an apostasy. But enough has been said to convince those who can judge with charity that Ranade's principle of carrying the community along was the mainspring of his action, and not merely the fear of his father's extreme displeasure. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who was close to Ranade in the work of reform, said of him: "The idea of displeasing anybody was too much for him, and he wanted all to unite and work together. He erred because his soul was gentle, his heart charitable." My learned friend on the other side adopted without reserve or qualification the verdict which the prejudice and passion of the time delivered against Ranade. I have not the hardihood to assert that Ranade was wholly right. But it is safe to assume that, where a complicated question of principle was involved, a man of the moral stature of Ranade struck the balance true and fair and did not allow mere expediency or cowardice to determine his conduct.

Ranade was cast in a big mould in body and in mind. He was a giant. His studies had amplitude and depth far beyond the common. History, politics, economics, blue books, Sanskrit literature and Marathi literature,—these and similar subjects made up his gargantuan fare. His knowledge and experience in the official and non-official sphere were at the service of a patriotism, fervent and sleepless, which comprehended all the sections and elements of our population. Like a true *rishi* he had toleration and mercy for all and planned and laboured for all alike. His

Marathi sermons are considered by competent judges to constitute a valuable and inspiring course in the doctrine and practice of theism. He rehabilitated the character of Sivaji and the empire that he founded. Of Indian economics he laid the ground-work, showing how the maxims and principles of English writers would not apply to the conditions of our country unless corrected in great part by the writings of German authorities on the subject. He took a leading part in the growth of the Indian Economic Conference, studied the conditions of agriculture and the peasantry in their various phases and became an unequalled authority on questions of land revenue, land tenure and land improvement. On Indian Finance his views commanded equal attention and equal respect with those of Dadabhai Naoroji. His close study of constitutional and administrative problems of India and other countries was laid under contribution by the organisers and leaders of the Indian National Congress, and it is well known that his advice and guidance were at the disposal of the Subjects Committee wherever it met year after year. The Indian Social Conference was founded by him in 1887, and at every subsequent meeting of that body during the next 13 years he presided and delivered addresses replete with wisdom, comprehension and insight. His mind was also devoted to problems of Indian education, and his membership of the University governing bodies was signalised by unremitting efforts on behalf of the Marathi language and literature and of the health and longevity of Bombay graduates. In all departments of national endeavour and uplift he was a pioneer, and it would be the bare truth to say of him that he was the most considerable and influential among the builders of Modern India. He himself once enumerated the elements that go to the making of a great man—"earnestness of purpose, sincerity in action, originality, imagination and above

all, the power of magnetism—we might call it vital or spiritual magnetism”. These he possessed in rich measure. Add to them the achievements catalogued above, and you have a record of greatness so imposing that a teacher or *rishi* of old may be proud to call it his own. The name *rishi* was in his judgment so exalted in import that, when he desired to pay anyone the highest honour for character, he applied the name to him. More than once in his speeches we see Mr. N. M. Parmanand described as “our political *rishi*”. Why, Ranade himself was deserving of the title in the eyes of many of his contemporaries. It was surely nothing uncommon in his life as well as afterwards for his admirers to speak of him as the modern *rishi*. A scene vividly comes to my mind when this happened in my hearing. Some time after I joined the Servants of India Society, Principal F. W. Bain lectured in the Small Hall of Poona, and Sir Pherozezshah Mehta took the chair for him. Mr. Bain, the crusted tory that he was, made some remark deprecatory of the general character of our people or of some particular movement of the time, I forget which. Sir Pherozezshah at the end of the meeting castigated him in vigorous phrases and with emphatic gestures, which were greeted with rounds of applause. But the applause rang louder than ever when he cited for authority “the late M. G. Ranade, the modern *rishi*”. The order of *rishis* exercised a powerful fascination over Ranade’s mind. In the hierarchy of homage he would accord them the throne of eminence. In the address called *Vasishtha and Visvamisra*, the last in the great series (which Gokhale had to read for him in Lahore) the concluding passage is a paean to the glory of these semi-divine teachers and a devout wish that their line may be continued without end. It is my proud office to-day to plead that Ranade be admitted to this Holy Order and that this celebration be the first of a succession in future which will redound to the

benefit of posterity as well as to the fame of the man who came into the world a hundred years ago to-day.

My task is not complete. I have yet to make out that, if our latest *Acharya* had wisdom pure and undefiled, he had also a tongue, eloquent and commanding, with which to proclaim it. There must be a good few here who have sat at his feet more than once and heard his discourses. That good fortune came to me only once. The scene was in Anderson Hall, Madras, and the time was an evening in December, 1898. A great crowd waited expectantly to hear Ranade on "Southern India a hundred years ago". We felt surprise without a touch of admiration, as a big figure moved forward with slow deliberate steps. As the lineaments became clear, a faint feeling of disappointment rose in our breasts, but we kept it under as somewhat premature. But in a few seconds the figure pulled a kerchief, coloured as I remember, and applied it to the nose which was running and made strange noises. The opening words did nothing to reassure us, and as the handkerchief and the nose persisted in their joint activities, our spirits sank within us. Whispers of dissatisfaction and poutings of lips went round, but scarcely relieved our feelings. Soon, however, things seemed to change. One good remark caught our attention, we strained our ears. Lo, and behold! the handkerchief went back to the pocket, the voice gained distinctness, the sentiments captured our fancy, and as if by magic the face became bright with intelligence. Half a dozen sentences, and our eyes were fixed on the speaker. Thereafter, all through the speech he held us as in a spell. I thought I was listening to a superior being, all aglow with wisdom which seemed a part of him,—so easily, so naturally, so unostentatiously did it keep flowing into me. There was pindrop silence in the hall, I don't think the audience laughed or cheered once. If they did, I didn't hear it.

The published speeches have solidity and mental nutriment which are astonishing. One may go again and again to them with profit. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar's eulogy is not overdone. "Those weighty and eloquent annual addresses, wise with the wisdom of the heart, powerful with all the power of his great intellect, majestic with the majesty of his lofty and commanding personality." There is no art either in the sentences or in their grouping. You don't come across a light, humorous remark; no passing allusion to the trivialities of thought or gossip. The nearest he comes to a joke is when he asks: "Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country's Zoology and Botany?" The nearest he comes to impatience or indignation is in this passage: "If we were stronger and more manly, more prudent, more abstemious and more thoughtful, millions would not live and breed as if they were members of the brute creation, and not men and women made in the image of God for a higher purpose than to live and die like the butterflies." The joke and the indignation are alike grim ~~and meant to sting, not to amuse~~. As you read through, you seem to see Ranade slowly assembling the details from one quarter and from another, inviting your gaze to the accumulation, and slowly and patiently leading you to a realization of your duties and prospects. The style is by no means varied, picturesque or pleasing. But it is weighty without being ponderous; profound without being mystic; edifying without being homiletic. One reader complains that Ranade has no partiality for Anglo-Saxon. Another grumbles that grammar and idiom do not get the respect due to them. A third is saddened by the frequent inelegances and solecisms. But all are subdued to attention by the dignity of the diction and the high level on which the argument

moves without once declining on a false or discordant note. When you are lifted above the small and the grovelling, when you are freshened by the gentle breezes of the upper air, you forget the unsightly objects you have left behind and the inconveniences through which you have ascended. Or maybe you feel like a tourist that has been dragged through mean lanes and pebbly tracks, and suddenly finds himself entering a stately edifice with imposing corridors and noble columns and spacious halls, the *ensemble* harmonizing in every part and ravishing his inner soul with a beauty of proportion and symmetry of which he had never dreamed. Criticism is hushed, judgment is awed, and the only feeling left is one of joy and complete satisfaction. To prove that I have not been indulging my imagination, I pray you to listen patiently while I read a certain passage which concludes one of his addresses. It is not the most familiar of the Ranade quotations, but it appears to have flowed without effort from the body of the discourse.

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“The chief point, however, that is to be considered in this connection is, who should be these Gurus of the future? It is with this view that I have endeavoured to place before you a brief account of the true Gurus of the past, namely the Rishis who were both Brahmarshis and Rajarshis, only distinguished from one another by their individual inclinations and abilities. We must keep that ideal before us, if we mean to prove ourselves the worthy descendants of our earliest ancestors. Of course the teachings and the methods and the subjects taught in these days must be made to suit our new exigencies and environments, but the spirit animating the teachings must be the same as that which led the first settlers to cross the Vindhya Range, and establish their colonies in the South. By reviving our ancient traditions in this matter we may hope in the near future to instil into the minds

of our young generations lessons of devotion to learning, diversities of studies and personal loyalty to the teacher, without which no system of school or college education can ever bear any fruit. This, however, is not all. In addition to these lessons, our new teachers must know how to introduce their pupils to a correct appreciation of the forces which are at work in the wider world outside, and which, in spite of temporary checks or seeming reverses, represent all that is best in human efforts for the elevation and happiness of man. Our teachers must enable their pupils to realise the dignity of man as man, and to apply the necessary correctives to tendencies towards exclusiveness, which have grown in us with the growth of ages. They must see that our thoughts, our speech, our actions are inspired by a deep love of humanity, and that our conduct and our worship are freed where necessary from the bondage of custom and made to conform as far as possible to the surer standard of our conscience. We must at the same time be careful that this class of teachers does not form a new order of monks. Much good, I am free to admit, has been done in the past and is being done in these days, in this as well as other countries by those who take the vow of long celibacy and who consecrate their lives to the service of man and the greater glory of our Maker. But it may be doubted how far such men are able to realize life in all its fulness and in all its varied relations, and I think our best examples in this respect are furnished by Agastya with his wife Lopamudra, Atri with his wife Anasuya, and Vasishtha with his wife Arundhati among the ancient Rishis, and in our own times by men like Dr. Bhandarkar on our side, Diwan Bahadur Raghunatha Row in Madras, the late Keshab Chander Sen and Babu Pratap Chandra Mozumdar and Pandit Shivanath Shastri in Bengal, and Lala Hans Raj and Lala Munshi Ram in your own province. A race that can ensure a

continuance of such teachers can, in my opinion, never fail, and with the teachings of such men to guide and instruct and inspire us, I, for one, am confident that the time will be hastened when we may be vouchsafed a sight of the Promised Land."

Ever since I gave Ranade a definite place among my heroes, my heart's adoration has gone to him in ^{fuller} measure every day. Which one among his qualities grips me most? His elevation and detachment. Wordsworth's immortal line occurs to me whenever I think of him. "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart." True he mingled in men's affairs and strove with all his matchless strength to improve them. His life was one long and unbroken sacrifice. In a pre-eminent sense he was—

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

Nevertheless, after his duties to the world were fully done, there remained a part of him above attachment and clear of taint. There his *bhakti* reigned alone and he kept converse with his God in his triple nature as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*. Where the air is serene and rare, gross beings cannot follow him. The simple but noble words of Goldsmith are the aptest I know.

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

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