

# THREE DEPARTED PATRIOTS

...

ANAND MOHUN BOSE,  
BADRUDDIN TYABJI,  
W. C. BONNERJEE

...

With appreciations by

D. E. WACHA & G. K. Gokhale

For lovers of nation &  
**THREE DEPARTED PATRIOTS.**

SKETCHES OF  
The Lives and Careers of  
THE LATE  
**ANANDA MOHUN BOSE,  
BADRUDDIN TYABJI,  
W. C. BONNERJEE,**

WITH THEIR PORTRAITS

COPIOUS EXTRACTS FROM THEIR SPEECHES  
AND WITH APPRECIATIONS BY

**Mr. D. E. Wacha & The Hon. Mr. Gokhale.**

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## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

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**A** PART from their value as records of notable Indians, it is hoped that these little biographies will serve a useful purpose at this particular juncture in the history of the country. The virtues that Messrs Tyabji, Bonnerjee, and Bose had in common are just those that public life at present needs most. They are just those which it is necessary to infuse into the composition of the national character. They are just those which education must seek in every possible way to develop in the young. They are just those which the young must learn to admire and to cultivate if they would be worthy sons of the soil.

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**ANANDA MOHUN BOSE**

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## **ANANDA MOHAN BOSE.**

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.



 F the three great Indians whose death at nearly the same time has left the country poorer and the Congress cause sensibly weaker, Ananda Mohan Bose had, perhaps, the most striking characteristics. Pre-eminent by pure intellect, he was likewise pre-eminent by those virtues which Hindus are proud to claim as the distinctive features of their civilisation. Perfect humility of heart, devout prayerfulness, undoubting reliance on God, and whole-souled service that looks not too eagerly to the result,—these are the marks of the truly religious spirit everywhere, and they dwelt in Mr. Bose as they dwelt in few other public men. His speeches contain more references than those of any other patriot to Providence. Where others would speak of the need of union and the utility of sinking small differences, he preached the gospel of love,—love of motherland and love of all her

children. Patriotism was with him a passion. His address as President of the 14th Indian National Congress held in Madras brought tears into many eyes. And his last public appearance at the Federation Hall in Calcutta, when a deep sense of wrong done to his people made him quit his bed of illness to speak a word on their behalf,—what can be more pathetic, more impressive than that? Even the famous ‘dying speech’ of Chatham does not touch our hearts so nearly, tainted as it was by a desire for effect which it would be a sacrilege to suggest in the case of Mr. Bose.

#### CAREER AS STUDENT.

A. M. Bose was born in East Bengal in 1846. From the beginning his acute intellect brought him distinction above all his fellows. He secured the first place in the Entrance Examination of 1862 when he was sixteen, and kept that place in the higher examinations also. He was educated at the Calcutta Presidency College, where he was specially marked for his aptitude for mathematics. The Principal, Mr. Sutcliffe, on the occasion of a Viceregal visit, presented him to the august visitor as a brilliant Indian student. Later, on his taking the M. A.



degree, he was complimented by Sir Henry S. Maine, who, as Vice-Chancellor, declared, in his Convocation Address, that Mr. Bose's abilities would have secured him high distinction in the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge. On leaving College, he competed for and won the Premchand Roychand Scholarship of Rs. 10,000. After serving a short term as Professor of Mathematics in the Engineering College, Mr. Bose proceeded to England in the same ship with Babu Keshab Chunder Sen. There he joined Christ's College, Cambridge. During his three years' residence in that University he devoted himself to a study of the exact sciences, and his ability and character were so marked that he was President of the Cambridge Union for some time. His career was crowned by his coming out sixteenth Wrangler at the Mathematical Tripos,—an achievement which, being the first of its kind for an Indian, raised the prestige of the whole nation and was regarded as of happy augury for its future. A few months afterwards Mr. Bose was called to the Bar, and returned to India in 1874.

#### AT THE BAR.

Industrious and keen-witted, Mr. Bose might have achieved a great distinction at the Calcutta

Bar, but, somehow, he turned his attention at the commencement to mofussil practice. In this he soon reached a high degree of success and made enough money to invest some of it in the Assam Tea Industry. On one occasion his defence speech in a criminal case before the High Court Sessions received a warm encomium from Mr. John D. Bell, then standing Counsel in Calcutta, who referred to it in a speech of his own at the Trades' Dinner as the most splendid defence he had ever heard out of Westminster Hall.

#### EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY.

Law and tea enterprise could not engross Mr. Bose's energies. It would have been a wonder if his mind had not been attracted to the problems of education. He was the *beau ideal* of students, and in all that concerned them he took a lively interest. In 1877 he was appointed Fellow of the University, and next year, while yet barely thirty-two, he was elected to be Syndic in the Faculty of Arts. He made a large number of proposals for the improvement of education generally, one of them being a vigorous plea for the conversion of the Calcutta University into a teaching University. In this, of course, he did not succeed. But he succeeded

in getting the age-limit for Matriculation candidates abolished, and in remodelling the Premchand Roychand Scholarship Examination so as to make it an incentive to future work, rather than a reward for past labours. His position among educationists was now so eminent and his character was so high that Lord Ripon, it is said, offered him the Presidentship of the famous Education Commission of 1882. The honour was declined by Mr. Bose, who saw that his being a native would detract from the weight of the Commission's recommendations. If the story is true, it adds another claim to the long list of claims he has to the admiration and loving memory of his countrymen. It must bring the blush to the cheeks of those public men who hanker after office, official favours, and official decorations. Though he declined the Presidentship of the Commission, he cheerfully accepted a seat on it, and we can guess, though we have no means of knowing, how useful he must have been to Sir W. Hunter and his other colleagues. Some time before this, *i.e.*, in 1880, he had started a school teaching up to the Entrance Standard and manned it with able young men from the University. On this institution, known

as the City School, and located at first in a small building, he spent much of his anxious thought. It provided better instruction and more wholesome discipline than most other institutions, and so it rapidly grew into what is now known as the City College. By the year 1884, that is to say, within four years of its starting, it acquired a building of its own, which was opened by Lord Ripon. To the catalogue of Mr. Bose's educational services, already long, have still to be added the watchful care and sacrifice with which he kept up a school for girls, until the Bethune College Committee amalgamated it with their institution.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES.

In the political sphere and in the religious, Mr. Bose was no less active. He was nominated, in 1886, to the Bengal Legislative Council by the Government, and in 1895 he sat in the Council for the second time as the representative of the Calcutta University. Of his labours there, which were worthy of his great renown, we need only mention two efforts which were specially brilliant. One was his speech supporting a proposal to amend the Act of Incorporation of the Calcutta University with a view to give it a teaching side ;

the other was his criticism of the Village Chaukidari Bill. Besides this, he was a Municipal Commissioner, and took a prominent part in founding and establishing on a firm basis the National Indian Association, and the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. Like all emotional persons, Mr. Bose was intensely religious. He became a follower of Keshab Chander Sen and was a devoted adherent of his, till the Kooch-Bihar marriage broke up the Samaj; and then Mr. Bose, with others, founded the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. His piety and zeal were most unaffected, while his private life was marked by firm friendships and the most open-handed charity.

#### IN ENGLAND AGAIN.

Towards the end of 1897, his health failing, he was advised to try the waters of Germany. After a short stay he felt strong enough to go to England, where he spent a few months. During this period he placed his services at the disposal of the British Committee of the Congress, and addressed many public meetings, pleading for the redress of India's wrongs. He did magnificent work on this occasion, but at great cost to his health. On his return after an absence of nearly

twelve months his grateful countrymen paid him the highest honour in their gift.

#### CONGRESS PRESIDENT.

In 1898 he was chosen to preside over the 14th Indian National Congress. The roll of Congress Presidents has many illustrious names, but Mr. Bose's is not the least illustrious among them. He more than justified the choice of the Madras public. His oration yields to none in its literary polish, and as it was delivered in accents of earnestness and faith, its eloquence had a telling effect. Its recapitulation of Congress politics we need not here reproduce. But Mr. Bose's reference to Mr. Gladstone who had just died must not be passed over. The departed statesman's religious side appealed strongly to Mr. Bose, and the tribute that he uttered came from a full and sympathetic heart. His appeal on behalf of the Motherland was one of the most stirring appeals that were made to the hearts of Congressmen, and they must have been hard, indeed, who did not feel as if they were about to cry when the orator asked, "Shall India, brother-delegates, be a living or a dying nation?" We shall quote the brilliant peroration here:---

## THE MOTHERLAND.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I began with a reference to Mr. Gladstone and I will finish, too, with a reference to that great man. It was a cold morning and closely muffled up pale and ill, the great statesman was entering his carriage at Bournemouth making the last journey of his life on his way to Hawarden there to die. A crowd had assembled at the station to bid him farewell, to have a last look at the face not much longer destined for earth. In response to their cheers and salutations, Mr. Gladstone uttered these words—the last he uttered in public—he who had so often held audiences of his countrymen spell-bound by the magic of his voice, “God bless you all, and this place, and the land you love so well.” The words were few, and the reporters added the voice was low. But there was in them, the last words of the parting hero, a pathos of farewell and of benediction, a deep thrill as of another world, which produced an effect not less, perhaps but more, than the great efforts of a happier time. And let us, too, following those simple words of Mr. Gladstone, ask God that He may bless us all and this dear land of ours. Do you, do we, Brother-Delegates, love that land, the land that gave us birth; the land beloved of the gods, they say, in ages gone by, when the world was young and darkness lay over many of its peoples, the land where knowledge lighted her earliest torch, the arts of life and civilization found their home and philosophy pondered deep over the problems of life: where Rishis sang those hymns to the Father in the Shining Sky, the earliest of the Aryan world, which still live and throb in our hearts, and the eyes of the Seer saw

visions of things not of this world : that land where after ages the Sundered streams of Aryan life unite once again in the present day ? That land, Brother-Delegates, deserves all our love. Love her the more, cling to her the closer for her misfortunes of the past, of the shadows and the clouds that have hung over her in the times that have gone. After centuries of darkness, the dawn of a better day has now opened for her, and the golden light has already begun to stream over her fair face. It depends on us, Brothers and Sisters, Fellow-citizens of this ancient land, it depends on us, on our sense of duty, on our spirit of loving sacrifice and earnest effort, whether the streaks of that light shall broaden and grow unto the lovely day. At length has India awakened from the stupor of ages, the fire of her intellect, of her heroism, of her piety, dimmed but yet not wholly extinguished, and waiting but the breeze of manly effort and kindly help to burn once again in the time to come, let us hope, with splendour and lustre as of old.

Lord Salisbury spoke the other day of the living and dying nations of the world. Shall India, Brother-Delegates, be a living nation, shall the glories that were hers remain for ever a memory of the past, or shall they once again be realities in the time before us ? On us, Brother-Delegates, depends the answer, on our efforts, on the lives we live and the sacrifices we make, not in the political field alone but in many another field ; and let us not forget that never was progress won without sacrifice. And in that effort, depend upon it, we shall get, as indeed we claim, the loving help and the ardent sympathy of the



great Nation into whose hands Providence had entrusted the destinies of this land.

The German host marched to its triumph to the cry of "God and Fatherland." Let ours be a still dearer cry, the cry of "God and Motherland," as our mission also is the holier and nobler enterprise of peace, of love, of loyal progress, of every duty to our Beloved Sovereign faithfully discharged, of individual growth and national regeneration. Hear we, my friends, the trumpet-call of duty resounding to us amid the stirring scenes, the moving enthusiasm, the thrilling sights of this great gathering? Yes, the call sounds clear, but let our hearts gather the strength to respond to that call, and to be true to her, our Common Mother, the land of our birth, to be true and faithful to the light that is within us, and to every noble impulse that stirs within us. And may we, as we return to our homes, to the spheres of our daily duty, carry a little more of the living love to our country than when we came, a little more of the earnest longing to be good and true and useful before the day closeth and our life's work is done.

One other passage, containing a personal reminiscence, must be quoted also. After speaking of the detention of the Natu brothers, Mr. Bose proceeded :—

At the conclusion of a meeting, I think it was at Oldham, in which I had taken part, several of the audience came up to speak to me; and I happened to mention that, should it please the Government so to act, which I trusted it would not, there was nothing to prevent their

dealing with me on my return to India as they had dealt with the Natus. I shall not easily forget the scene that followed. One of my hearers, a working-man, I believe, with indignation and excitement depicted on his face, told me "We know you, Sir. Should the Government treat you in this way, Lancashire men will know the reason why." I am sorry to say, Ladies and Gentlemen, I forgot to ask his name or to note down his address. But as I told him, I trust his interference on my behalf will not be needed.

For an adequate illustration, however, of Mr. Bose's style of oratory, one must read his concluding speech to the Madras Congress. It was *ex tempore* and abounded in that sort of diction that the highest pulpit oratory affects. It is in one key of exalted feeling. It is too long to quote here, and no extract will do it justice.

#### LAST SERVICE.

His health broke down after this effort, and he practically retired from public life. But there was to be another occasion for his service. From what he himself described as his last bed of illness he was borne on a litter to lay the foundation-stone of the Federation Hall which was intended to mark the determination of the Bengalee nation to remain united, notwithstanding the late Viceroy's attempt to split them

asunder. He was not able to stand or read the whole of his address. But his presence must have been inspiring; the spectacle of an old and tried friend of the people conveying his last message is a priceless memory which the Bengalees ought to cherish as their dearest possession.

Few passages in the whole range of patriotic literature can rival his speech on this occasion in power or beauty. We are sure none of our readers would grudge it if we reproduced it here entire; but we must resist the temptation, and give only parts of this gem of Indian eloquence:

It is, indeed, a day of mourning to us, when the province has been sundered by official fiat, and the glad-some spirit of union and of community of interest which had been growing stronger day by day, runs the danger of being wrecked and destroyed and many other evils into which this is not the occasion to enter are likely to follow in its wake. And yet in the dispensation of Providence, not unoften out of evil cometh good: and the dark and threatening cloud before us is so fringed with beauteous gold and brightening beams, and so fraught with the prospect of a newer and a stronger national union, that we may look upon it almost as a day of rejoicing. Yes, as our glorious poet has sung in one of his many noble and inspiring utterances "Mora Gangee-Ban Ashe-chse" the dead, currentless and swampy

river has felt the full force and fury of the flood and is swelling in its depths. Have we not all heard the booming of that national call and its solemn summons to our hearth? Let our souls mount forth in gladness to the throne of the Most High, at this sacred natal hour of the new and united Bengali nation; let us bear in mind, as a writer in the *Patrika* has said, that from dark clouds descend life-giving showers, and from parted furrows spring up the life-sustaining golden grain, that in bitter biting winter is laid the germ of the glorious spring. I belong to the sundered province of East Bengal and yet, my brethren, never did my heart cling more dearly to you or your hearts cherish us more lovingly than at the present moment and for all the future that lies before us. "The official" separation has drawn us, indeed, far closer together, and made us stronger in united brotherhood. Hindu, Mussalman and Christian, North, East and West with the resounding sea beneath, all belong to one indivisible Bengal: say again, my friends, from the depth of your hearts, to one indivisible Bengal, the common, the beloved, the ever-cherished Motherland of us all. In spite of every other separation of creed, this creed for the common Motherland will bring us nearer heart to heart and brother to brother. And this Federation Hall, the foundation-stone of which is being laid to-day, not only on this spot of land, but on our moistened tearful hearts is the embodiment and visible symbol of this spirit of union the memorial to future generations yet unborn of this unhappy day and of the unhappy policy which has attempted to separate us into two parts. It will, I trust,

be a place for all our national gatherings ; in its rooms will be held social reunions and meetings for different purposes.                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*

For they, indeed, fatally misapprehend this movement, who imagine that it is the student community or any other single section or two in the province that has caused this upheaval. I thank you all for the ardour, devotion, and spirit of sacrifice which have so far distinguished your efforts. I have heard of people and even of respectable journals which speak glibly of the lawlessness and disobedience to authority of our student community. Let me bear testimony—and this I can do from personal knowledge—as to what is thus described as lawlessness and disobedience on the part of students of British Universities, whom our students would not even dream of approaching in this respect. But I will not pause to give examples, numerous and glaring as they are, but wonder whether our rulers and our critics most of whom, I presume, have passed through the universities of their country, have so completely forgotten the experience of our student days. Why, our students are absolutely spotless, in comparison with British youths, as indeed, I believe, they are spotless, not as a matter of comparison only but by themselves. Let us, my friends, continue in the same career, regardless of our own personal interest and all individual and sectional jealousies, if such indeed there be. For if the true spirit of loving sacrifice and nothing of a baser admixture be ours, surely God will provide for us, and for you my student friends, and grant us true happiness and the true

blessing—how great only those who have tasted it can say— of a self-consecrated existence.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

One has heard of different orders in this country for religious and philanthropic service, of vows of self-sacrificing devotion carried to life's last day. Enter you, my friends, into what I might call the order of the Motherland or of Bangabhumi, and with characters unstained, aims that are placed high and spirits that are pure and noble and absolutely self-forgetful, serve the land and suffer for the land of your birth. Hindus and Mussalmans, let us in the name of God all unite in this sacred crusade for the welfare and prosperity of our common mother. We have come, most of us, bare of foot and in garbs of mourning to the site of our future shrine. Silent are the busy marts of men and silent is the roar of trade. Throughout the town and its suburbs Hindus, Mussalmans and Marwaris are closing all shops, in fact, except the small fraction owned by Englishmen. We are present in tens of thousands here and millions throughout the province, I believe, are fasting to-day and no fires shall be kindled in our hearths. But let the fire burn in our hearts, purify us and kindle an enthusiasm which shall be all the brighter and all the warmer for the quenched fire in our homes.

And now, farewell, my friends with these, which may perchance be the last words which I shall utter to you on this side of Eternity. Farewell on this day of fraternal union when the bond of Rakhi is tied in our arms. Much that comes pouring into my heart must remain unsaid. Ours is not the Land of the Rising Sun, for to

Japan, victorious, self-sacrificing and magnanimous belongs that title, but may I not say that ours is the land where the sun is rising again, where after ages of darkness and gloom with the help, let me gratefully acknowledge, of England and English culture, the glowing light is bursting once again over the face of the land. Let us all pray that the grace of God may bless our course, direct our steps and steel our hearts. Let action and not words be our motto and inspiring guide. And then shall my dream be realised of a beautiful and blessed land by nature and filled by men true and manly, and heroic in every good cause—true children of the Motherland. Let us see in our heart of hearts the Heavens opening and the angels descending. In ancient books the gods are described as showering flowers and garlands on the scene of a notable battle. See we not, my friends, those flowers dropped to-day from the self-same hands, welcoming us to the new battle, not of blood but of manly and stern resolve in the country's cause?

And Thou, Oh God! of this ancient land, the protector and saviour of Aryavartta, and the merciful father of us all, by whatever name we call upon Thee be with us on this day; and as a father gathereth his children under his arms, do thou gather us under thy protecting and sanctifying care.

#### CONCLUSION.

Death was close at hand. A life of sixty years cannot in India be called short, and when it has been marked by so many honours and so many useful services, it may even be called long and

full. Mr. Surendrath Nath Bannerjee summed up his life truly when he said : " There is lying on the litter the earthly remains of one of the greatest, noblest, and purest of the mortals." Mr. Bose used his rich gifts of head and heart in the furtherance of unselfish causes and for the advancement of his country. He lived a life of piety, charity, and noble endeavour. He died honoured and mourned by a whole nation.

Judged by his achievements, Mr. Bose's career will not, perhaps, rank with the highest. Born to be eminent in anything he undertook, Mr. Bose, however, did not reach the first place in any field. His services were great in education, in politics, in religion. But everywhere he fell just short of the highest. That is the penalty of being many-sided. None but the most gifted mortals can reach pre-eminence in many fields of activity. But to Mr. Bose belongs the glory of having performed everything that he undertook, and he undertook a great many things, in the true spirit of unselfish patriotism. If the spirit be everything and the actual result immaterial, then Mr. Bose is entitled to the highest honours.







**BUDRUDDIN TYABJI.**

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## THE LATE MR. BADRUDDIN TYABJI.

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### BOYHOOD AND EDUCATION.

**M**R. Tyabji was born on the 8th October 1844. His father was a wealthy Arab merchant settled in Bombay. Tyabji Bhai Miyan Sahib, who dealt extensively with foreign countries, was a very enlightened Muhammadan and resolved to send all his sons to England for education. The subject of our sketch was the youngest, the two others being Shujauddin and Camruddin. Shujauddin took charge of his father's business. Camruddin, at the end of his training in England, was enrolled as a Solicitor of the Bombay High Court and became successful in his line. Like his brothers, Badruddin learned Urdu and Persian at Dada Makhra's Madrassa and subsequently joined the Elphinstone Institution. After a few years there he had to be sent to France for treatment of the eye. On being cured he went to London and joined the Newbury High Park College in his 16th year. He matriculated at London Univer-

sity and entered upon higher studies, but these were interrupted by ill-health, in consequence of which he returned to India for a time. Even after recovery, he was pronounced unequal to the strain of University studies, so that, in the end, he became a law student at the Middle Temple and in April 1867 was called to the Bar.

#### AT THE BAR.

In November of the same year he set up practice at the Bombay High Court, being the first native barrister of the place as his brother had been the first native solicitor. His initial difficulties must have been great, but they yielded to his ability and industry, backed as these were by the powerful help of his brother. Fluency of speech, choice though somewhat diffuse diction, lucidity of exposition, skill in cross-examining, above all, a perfectly dignified and earnest bearing are qualities which would have ensured success in any case : but when they were combined, as in Mr. Badruddin's case, with high character, sweet manners, and single-minded application, they soon raised him to the front rank in his profession. Two anecdotes deserve to be remembered. A criminal case before Mr. Justice Wes-

tropp had ended, thanks to Mr. Tyabji's defence, in acquittal, but the *Bombay Gazette* characterised it in its legal columns as rigmарole and nonsensical. Next day as soon as Court began the judge said to Mr. Tyabji :

Mr. Tyabji, I am glad to see you here, and also the reporter of the *Bombay Gazette*, as I wish to make some observations upon the report of the case which was concluded yesterday. The paper represents you to have made ' a rigmарole and a nonsensical speech ' in defence of your client. As these remarks are not only unfair but likely to do harm to a young barrister, I deem it my duty to observe that, in my opinion, there is not the slightest foundation for those remarks. I consider the case was most ably conducted by you, and that the acquittal of the prisoner was mainly due to the ability and skill with which you addressed the jury.

The other anecdote illustrates the strength of the man, the quality that has been generally acknowledged as characteristic of him both as barrister and as judge. We take it from an appreciation that appeared in the *Bengalee*.

It is some years since he appeared as counsel for an accused person in a criminal appeal before a Division Bench consisting of Mr. Justice Parsons and Mr. Justice Ranade. The case had excited some sensation at the time and it was during the hot days of May that the two judges sat to hear the appeal. Mr. Tyabji began his argument with some prefatory remarks giving a general

view of the case, and that occupied about half an hour. He then commenced reading the evidence. He had not gone on for more than ten minutes when Mr. Justice Parsons, who always liked a short argument, said :—‘We have read the evidence, Mr. Tyabji.’ Mr. Tyabji met the remark with a cool ‘Yes’ and went on reading the deposition all the same. Mr. Justice Parsons :—‘What is the use of reading the depositions and wasting the time of the Court when we have read them all ? Better confine yourself to such comments as you may have to make on the evidence.’ Mr. Tyabji : ‘I dare say, my Lord, your Lordships have read the evidence but you have read it in your own way. I am here to make your Lordships read the evidence in my way and it is only then that you can follow my comments.’ And Mr. Tyabji had it his own way. For two days he kept the Court occupied hearing his arguments, with the result that at last he secured an acquittal for his client, and the remark went round the Bar that Mr. Tyabji had given a good lesson on patience to the Bench.

#### PUBLIC WORK.

For ten years and more he allowed nothing to distract him from the pursuit of law, putting away the frequent solicitations of Messrs. Mehta, Telang, and Ranade with “That sort of thing is not in my line.” It was in 1879 that he definitely joined that illustrious band of patriots which was Bombay’s unique boast. To that band he remained attached to the end. His maiden speech was

against the abolition of import duties on cotton goods and brought him great applause. From this time he was in great request at every public meeting, and from the numerous speeches that he made, we may select for special mention those on the Indian Civil Service question, the Ilbert Bill and Lord Ripon. The Local Self-Government measure of Lord Ripon was to be carried into effect in Bombay in 1882, and Sir James Fergusson, the then Governor, nominated Mr. Tyabji to the Legislative Council. His work in connection with the Municipal and Local Board Bills was highly commended at the time and the Governor paid him the compliment of saying that he would have been listened to with rapt attention even in the House of Commons. Close reasoning, clear statement, and studied moderation, then as ever, distinguished his speeches. He shares with such men as Messrs. Hume, Bonnerjee, Naoroji, and others the rare privilege of having assisted at the birth of the Indian National Congress which met for the first time at Bombay in December 1885. Calcutta had its turn in 1886, and when next year Madras had to welcome the delegates, the unanimous choice of the country for the place of President fell on Mr. Badruddin Tyabji.

## CONGRESS PRESIDENT, 1887.

Never was choice better justified. Three speeches stand out in the memory as giving that session of the I. N. C. its peculiar glory. Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao's address of welcome was couched in diction which suggested the cunning of the Taj Mahal chisellers, and which an Anglo-Indian journal, broad-minded and generous in those happy days, declared was "such as few persons in the continent of Europe ever speak". For pure dash and brilliancy nothing in the whole range of Congress oratory can equal the short speech by which Mr. Surendra Nath Bannerjee carried the Arms Act Resolution in the teeth of the opposition of such leaders as Messrs. Hume and Chandavarkar. Inferior to neither in weight or impressiveness, but superior to both in dignity and grace of delivery, was Mr. Tyabji's Presidential address. The present writer still cherishes as one of his most precious intellectual possessions the memory of the scene where, as a mere stripling, he stood behind a vast crowd, drinking in with rapture every word as it reached him, clear and apt, none so apt, he thought, and catching now and then a glimpse of the handsome countenance which beamed with earnestness, good

humour, and perfect self-possession. He began by saying that he had accepted the office of President in spite of ill-health, not so much because it was the highest honour that the people could confer on an Indian, as because he was anxious to demonstrate in his capacity as a representative of the Anjuman-i-Islam, of Bombay, that there was nothing in the aims and methods of the Indian National Congress which could justify his co-religionists in keeping aloof from it. He then went on to impress on his audience the need for moderation, caution, and forbearance,—a need always present, but at that time of the infancy of the Congress most imperative.

Though I maintain that the educated natives as a class are loyal to the backbone, I must admit that some of our countrymen are not always guarded, or cautious, in the language they employ. I admit that some of them sometimes afford openings for hostile criticism; and I myself have observed in some native newspapers and in speeches, sentiments and expressions which are calculated to lead one to conclusions which are not intended. They have not wholly realised the distinction between "license" and "liberty" and have not wholly grasped the fact that "freedom has its responsibilities no less than its privileges." I trust that not only in the debates of this Congress, but on all occasions, my countrymen will bear in mind, and impress



on all, that in order to enjoy the rights of public discussion, liberty of speech, and liberty of the press, we must so conduct ourselves as to demonstrate by our conduct, moderation and justness of criticism, that we fully deserve the great blessings which an enlightened Government can confer on its subjects.

Now, it has been sometimes urged that Europeans do not fully sympathise with the just aspirations of the natives of India. In the first place, this is not universally true, for I have the good fortune to know many Europeans, than whom no truer and firmer friends of India breathe on the face of the earth. And, in the second place, we must be prepared to make considerable allowances for them, for their position here is surrounded by difficult questions, not only of a political, but of a social character, which tend to keep the two communities asunder, in spite of the best efforts of the leaders of the Europeans, no less than the leaders of the natives. . . .

Be moderate in your demands, just in your criticism, correct in your facts, and logical in your conclusions, and I feel assured that any proposals we may make will be received with that benign consideration which is characteristic of a strong and enlightened Government.

#### HIGH COURT JUDGE.

In 1895, he accepted a place on the High Court bench,—a promotion which, on a former occasion, ill-health had compelled him to decline. As Judge he maintained his reputation for

strength, judicial temper, and unfailing courtesy to the Bar. He cared more for equity and substantial justice than for legal abstractions so dear to the heart of those lawyers who are ambitious to be known as jurists. Once, indeed, he is said to have declared: "These law reports are becoming a cumbrous affair, and I sometimes wish we could manage to get on without them."

#### WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND FREEDOM.

Perhaps, Mr. Tyabji's most solid work was done in connection with the Anjuman-i-Islam, of which he was at first Secretary and for some years before his death President. He held advanced views in regard to the condition of the women of his community and strove hard to weaken the power of the zenana system. Unlike many reformers who show their vehemence only in the denunciation of others, Mr. Tyabji, cautious as he was by nature, acted on his convictions in his own family circle. His daughters have come out of the purdah and received their education in England. Indeed, the Mubammadans of Bombay owe much of their present prestige and enlightenment as a community to his watchful and unremitting labours on their behalf.

## PRESIDENT OF THE M.A.O.E. CONFERENCE.

When he presided in 1903 over the Muhammadan Educational Conference held at Bombay, he made a powerful plea for the abandonment of the purdah system and for a liberal education for the women of his community. But the part of his address that will be most remembered by his countrymen is the one in which he declared his adhesion to the principles of the Indian National Congress,—a declaration which derives additional force from the circumstance that among his hearers on the occasion was the Governor of Bombay. One cannot help contrasting with it the miserable tone of apology that other Congressmen assume both when they are in the running for Government favours and long after they have secured them.

Gentlemen, you are no doubt aware that, although the Conference has been in existence for several years past, I have not hitherto been able to take an active part in its deliberations. No doubt, there have been many reasons for this, to which it is unnecessary to refer. But there is one in regard to which I must say a few words. You are no doubt aware that I have always been a supporter of the Indian National Congress. In my younger and freer days, when I was not trammelled with the responsibilities imposed by my present office, and

when I was, therefore, able to take a more active part in public life, and especially in the politics of the Empire, I deemed it my duty to support the Congress, and, as you may perhaps know, I had the honor of presiding at the Congress held in Madras some years ago. On that occasion I described my election as the highest honor that could be paid to any Indian gentleman by his fellow-subjects of the Empire. Being of that opinion at that time and being still of that opinion now, you will readily understand that it was not possible for me to take any part in connection with any institution which had or could be supposed to have the slightest trace of being hostile or antagonistic to the Congress.

This must be hard food to swallow for those who are endeavouring now to represent the recent Muhammadan deputation to the Viceroy as being anti-Congress and anti-Hindu, and *on that account* entitled to the sympathy and countenance of Government.

#### LAST DAYS IN ENGLAND.

In the beginning of this year he went to England for a cure of his eyesight which had begun to give serious trouble. He progressed remarkably well and felt strong enough to make long motor tours. He was even present at two great meetings and spoke with his usual candour and vigour. His theme at a meeting of the East India Association in March was moderation and courtesy in politics and progress and enlightenment at home.

Although I have oftentimes in former days criticised the acts of Government, I would ask my young friends to remember whether they have not very much to be grateful for, although they have no doubt also many causes to complain ; but, in looking at the acts of Government, it does not do either for young India, or, for the matter of that, middle-aged India, or old India, always to fix its eyes upon the faults of the Government, and entirely to forget those blessings which we enjoy under the aegis of the British Government. I have generally found that, when any matter of public interest is brought forward before the authorities, if the memorials are couched in decent and respectful and proper language, they have always been listened to. and I have never yet had any cause of complaint with reference to the reception of any of these memorials and addresses that have been sent up from responsible parties ; but when people, instead of pressing their requests in proper language, use language which goes beyond the bounds of mere decency, I think one cannot be surprised if oftentimes the replies which they get from responsible authorities are couched in language which, perhaps, is not so pleasant to listen to. But, then, Governments, after all, are the same as private individuals. If a request is addressed to a private individual in a manner that appeals to him properly, I think we must all admit that there is much more chance of its being listened to and possibly assented to. If the request is addressed in another set of words, that request may be refused, and I have, therefore, always, whenever I have had anything to do with public work in India, impressed

on my countrymen the desirability of keeping within temperate, moderate language, and of addressing the Government in those tones which we ourselves like to be addressed in. I feel perfectly certain, for example, that when the proceedings of the Congress are carried on on these lines, they are listened to with greater consideration than if they were carried on on different lines.

Now, as regards the attitude of Government towards the Congress. Although we have been reminded that this is an occasion on which political views may be discussed, it must be borne in mind that in the position which I occupy at present, I am not at liberty to discuss any political questions of a controversial character, but I believe that Government perfectly understand and recognise that the Congress is not a seditious body. I believe they recognise that the Congress does consist of a large body of people speaking with authority upon the question, and although they do not like their acts to be criticised openly in the way that sometimes they have been, I believe that the resolutions of the Congress are really considered by Government in a sympathetic spirit; and as far as they think any effect can be given to them, I believe that they are desirous of giving effect to them and to the desires of the nation as expressed through the Congress. But after all—speaking for my own countrymen—I think we have to address ourselves more to the question of education and to the question of social reform. I am afraid that young India has fixed its attention too exclusively upon politics, and too little upon education and upon social reform. I am one of those who think that our improvement and pro-

gress lies not in our efforts simply in one direction, but in various directions, and that we ought to move side by side for the purpose of improving our social status and our educational status quite as much as our political status. It is no use labouring together for a representative Government of a very advanced type if the majority of our own countrymen are still steeped in ignorance, and experience shows that the majority of the Indian subjects have not appreciated the advantages of that higher education upon which, I think, the fate of our nation really rests. Look at the Mussalmans, I have often in my judicial capacity had to deal with wills made and executed by my own people, and I have found that a very wealthy individual who dies, if he has no near relations, his one idea is to devote his fortune to some old-fashioned charity—such as the feeding of fakirs, the building of old-fashioned tanks, or making pilgrimages to Mecca, or reading so many hundreds of times the pages of the Koran, or things of that kind—very excellent things in themselves, but which, unfortunately, do not advance the fortunes of the nation. Now, if when young India becomes old and is about to make its will, it will only remember, instead of leaving their fortunes to these old-fashioned charities, to devote their fortunes to the advance of education, I think we should have very much less cause of complaint against Government, because probably we should be able to do that ourselves which we now ask Government to do. As regards the employment of the people in Government service, I think it a perfectly legitimate aspiration on the part of the natives of India to be employed in larger and

larger numbers in the higher degrees of the public service. Natives of India possess very high natural qualifications for employment in many branches—such as the judicial, the public works, the railways, the telegraphs—and I, for one, am unable to see why much larger numbers of the natives of the country should not be employed in these departments not only without prejudice, but with great advantage to the Empire.

In July he attended a dinner of the Aligarh College Association, and expressed his deep sympathy with the movement. He was in favour of Aligarh becoming a university, and appealed to his brethren for active help.

It has been well remarked by Sir Thomas that one college, however good and important, cannot possibly be sufficient for the requirements of fifty or sixty million Mahommedans in India. We must have these institutions all over India, and it has always seemed to me of the greatest possible importance that the educational institutions we have in other parts of the country—some of them fulfilling the laudable mission of imparting primary education, and others reaching up to the high school standard, should be raised to or supplemented by collegiate institutions. The well-wishers of our community present to-night as guests will be pleased to hear that efforts in this direction are being made (and not without success) in other parts of India. If, as I hope, Aligarh develops into a university, it will become the centre of attraction educationally for all Mahommedans, not only from the various Mahommedan schools and colleges o



India, but also, it may be, from other parts of the Mahomedan world. And it certainly is a very pleasant symptom that we have so recently seen, in connexion with the Royal visit, such large contributions made for the endowment of chairs at Aligarh, the donations including a lakh of rupees from a private Mahomedan gentleman in Bombay, and a large contribution from that very enlightened, most intellectual, and public-spirited nobleman, the Aga Khan, who, I may point out, is much more directly connected with Bombay than with Upper India. Having received so much help from Western India, our brethren in the North may permit me the friendly criticism that they seem to have greatly neglected the cause of female education. This is a reproach to men of their enlightenment, and I have noticed with the greatest pleasure that recently efforts have been made to remedy that state of things. This is a reform in respect to which my Mussalman friends in the North may not despise to take a leaf out of the book of their Bombay co-religionists. I need only add that I hope the college will develop into a real centre of Moslem education and enlightenment not merely for the North-West, but for all India. There is not a Mussalman in India, certainly not in Bombay, who does not wish all prosperity and success to Aligarh.

These were fated to be his last public utterances. To all appearance, he was in excellent health and being amongst his own children, enjoyed a degree of peaceful and contented joy that, perhaps, only an Indian parent can appreciate. But unsuspected,

save by a doctor who kept his own counsel, an insidious affection of the heart was sapping his vitality and carried him away on the 19th August without pain. Among public men, he will be long remembered not merely for his sagacity and eloquence, but for his absolute fearlessness and fidelity to the popular cause.

## WOMESH CHUNDER BONNERJEE.



Few words, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was great in deed. He was made in one of Nature's generous moods. Intellect, luck, wealth, power over men, character,—all were given him by a large measure. He stood a giant among his countrymen. India was too narrow for this colossus. If he had been born in Europe, nations would have hung on his word. When a *Gandharva* of old sinned, he was doomed to pass a life in the contracted sphere of Aryavarta.

Yet Mr. Bonnerjee bore his greatness lightly, as only Nature's great men do. Almost the Dictator of Congress, he seemed scarcely conscious of his power. His soul dwelt apart from all faction, strife, or jealousy. He was too high for personal rivalry or envy. The arbiter of all differences, India hath need of thee at this hour! He carried with him unaffected smiles, oil for troubled waters, and rupees that never jingled. Like the ideal schoolmaster his



**WOMESH CHUNDER BONNERJEE.**

presence was always felt, but seldom seen. To young Congressmen he is unknown personally, having removed his activities to England for some years. But his memory pervades the Congress pandal, and his name can hush for a moment even the voice of discord. Here was a Cæsar, when comes such another !

His success at the bar, which far transcended all ordinary measure, was paralleled only by the result of his advocacy of Congress. He it was that netted Pandit Ajudhia Nath, Mr. George Yule, and Charles Bradlaugh. Who else could have won for India the championship of the bravest soldier of freedom of modern time ? Twenty years ago, when the great movement was started, and they wanted for their first President a man of true elevation of soul and unchallenged weight, they could think of none but W. C. Bonnerjee. Since that time he held the first place in the Congress Council, sharing it for some time with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji till the G. O. M. settled in England and being its sole occupant subsequently till he too followed. Only those who attended the Subjects Committee meetings, at which the work of Congress is really shaped, can know the reverence with which his

advice was listened to and the consummate tact and wisdom that he brought to bear on the settlement of differences. Thanks to his own powers of organisation and those of his early associates, the Congress has now an established body of traditions and rules of procedure, and though without a rigid constitution, can stand even such rough weather as threatened till almost yesterday to wreck it. Long ago we learned to be independent of Mr. A. O. Hume, and get along with only his bright example and an occasional letter to rouse our flagging zeal. For some years past we have been, so far as Congress work in India is concerned, independent of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee too. For while life lasted it was not possible for him to withhold from the British Committee the benefits of his unrivalled knowledge or of his unexampled munificence. So it must be with all movements that have to last beyond a lifetime. The first leaders must infuse a self-perpetuating principle into their constitution so that the succession of leaders may be both continuous and efficient. We live in our descendants. As the Sanskrit proverb says, the father is born again in his son, and is proud to be eclipsed by him. Nothing betrays

the unworthy leader so much as a fear that power is slipping through his fingers or retirement from the helm with offended dignity at the first sight of a junior begging to be taught the secret.

Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee was born at Kidderpore, in his grandfather's estate, in December 1844, the same year in which Mr. Badruddin Tyabji was born. His grandfather, Babu Pitambar Bonnerjee, was banian of a firm of attorneys in Calcutta named Collier, Bird & Co. His eldest son, Grees Chandra, first entered his father's office as clerk, and, after being articled to two lawyers successively, passed the attorney's examination in 1859 and finally became partner of a firm named Judge and Bonnerjee. His practical knowledge of law and skill in conveyancing were remarkable. The subject of our sketch was Grees Chandra's second son. He thus came of a family of lawyers, and it was from his father's firm that he got his first case at the Calcutta bar. His career at school was not promising, private theatricals proving a stronger attraction than books. First at the Oriental Seminary, then at the Hindu School, he received some education till 1861 when he ought to have appeared for the Matriculation

Examination. Instead, however, his father got him articled to an attorney named W. P. Downing. Next year he joined the office of Mr. W. F. Gallanders, and acquired an intimate and thorough knowledge of the art of writing out deeds and pleadings that was to stand him in good stead later on. It was during this part of his career that he established the *Bengalee* as a weekly newspaper, --the first manifestation of that public spirit which could not be suppressed even by the most absorbing legal practice.

In 1864 he competed for, and being the only competitor obtained, one of the five scholarships which Mr. Rustomji Jamsetji Jeejeebhai had founded for the benefit of Indian students proceeding to England for the study of law. He joined the Middle Temple where his good fortune procured him the tuition of two eminent lawyers, T. H. Dart and Edward Fry. Here one of his fellow-students was Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, who was to share with him for many years the honours and the anxieties of political leadership. While studying law, he took part in the establishment of the London Indian Society, which has since become a powerful factor in Indian politics.



In 1867 he was called to the bar and set up practice in the High Court of Calcutta next year. His first brief has been already referred to. It was but the beginning of what was to become the most extensive and lucrative practice of any barrister in India. His strong memory, prodigious industry, and genial disposition combined with early training in the business of the attorney and the ungrudging professional help of a thriving barrister named Pitt-Kennedy to raise him to the very top of the bar. There were only two other Indian barristers before him,—Mr. Michael Madhu Sudan Dutta and Mr. Mana Mohan Ghose. The former did not take his profession seriously, while the latter cared only for mofussil practice in the criminal line. Though thus almost without an Indian rival, Mr. Bonnerjee seems at first to have suffered for his colour. He himself told a friend that “at the outset he received but scant courtesy from those members of the legal profession (attorneys, presumably) who were of his own race. Some fought shy of him before he had obtained a certain footing at the bar, others, indeed, were jealous of the young practitioner who, conscious of his superior strength, looked down upon them sometimes with a dis-

dainful smile." His father had died just before he joined the Calcutta bar, but his place in the firm had been taken by his uncle Babu Joykissen Gangooly. Other relations too and friends Mr. Bonnerjee had among members of the legal profession. Among his best patrons and well-wishers at this time was an influential member of the aristocracy named Maharaja Kamal Krishna Bahadur. To this gentleman Mr. Bonnerjee paid to the end the greatest respect and showed the liveliest gratitude. He always stood bare-legged in his presence and named his eldest son, after him, Kamal Krishna Shelley Bonnerjee. One of the early ambitions to which he gave playful expression was that he should earn ten thousand rupees a month. This he realised in a very short time, and his income at its highest often exceeded twice that amount. Though latterly he spent half the year in England, he was often engaged by cable in important cases, and his assistants met him in Bombay and instructed him on the way to Calcutta. He gave a helping hand, whenever he could, to deserving juniors, and some Englishmen have been recipients of his generosity. He officiated as Standing Counsel for four years, and declined a Judge-

ship of the High Court more than once. It would have been a strange thing if he had given up his unique income at the bar for a third or a quarter of it on the bench. He rendered eminent services to the public in espousing the causes of Messrs. Surendra Nath Bannerjee and Robert Knight, two editors whose outspoken and fearless criticism had made them obnoxious to the powers-that-be. His career as a lawyer may be summed up in the semi-official pronouncement of Mr. Sinha, Officiating Advocate-General.

His career at the Bar was one of exceptional brilliance. Within a few years he almost reached to the top of his profession. On the Original Side, I venture to think, there has not been, for at least many, many years, a practitioner in whom the Judges, the attorneys, and the litigating public had the same amount of confidence as they had in Mr. Bonnerjee. After having attained to the highest practice possible on the Original Side, Mr. Bonnerjee commenced to practise on the Appellate Side, and his success on that side was as rapid as on the Original Side of this Court. A sound lawyer, a perfect draughtsman, and a brilliant cross-examiner, Mr. Bonnerjee was to many of us the ideal of a perfect advocate of this Court. His merit was appreciated both by the public and the Government of this country, and in 1883 he was appointed to act as Standing Counsel to the Government of India, which appointment he held for more than four years.

Official honours came to him in due course. He was appointed Fellow of the Calcutta University in 1880, became President of the Law Faculty in 1886, and represented the University in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1894 and 1895. To this period Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt refers in these terms :

In 1894 and 1895, Mr. Bonnerjee and I worked together in the Bengal Legislative Council. I had been nominated by the Government, and Mr. Bonnerjee held the higher position of being elected by the people. We seldom differed in our views, and on more than one occasion Mr. Bonnerjee's manly fight for his countrymen was fruitful of good results.

The official recognition, however, that was extended to him is nothing to the honours that the nation paid him. It was in 1885 that Bombay witnessed the first session of the Indian National Congress, destined to become the instrument of untold good to the country as well as "the soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to the British nation." Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee has himself told the story of the origin of the Congress. It deserves to be repeated here, as it has, unscathed, run the gauntlet flung down to it by the indiscreet and injudicious biographer of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava.

It will probably be news to many that the Indian National Congress, as it was originally started and as it has since been carried on, is in reality the work of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava when that nobleman was Governor-General of India. Mr. A. O. Hume, C.B., had, in 1884, conceived the idea that it would be of great advantage to the country if leading Indian politicians could be brought together once a year to discuss social matters and be upon friendly footing with one another. He did not desire that politics should form part of their discussion, for there were recognised political bodies in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of India, and he thought that these bodies might suffer in importance if, when Indian politicians from different parts of the country came together, they discussed politics. His idea further was that the Governor of the Province where the politicians met should be asked to preside over them and that thereby greater cordiality should be established between the official classes and the non-official Indian politicians. Full of these ideas he saw the noble Marquis when he went to Simla early in 1885 after having in the December previous assumed the Viceroyalty of India. Lord Dufferin took great interest in the matter and after considering over it for some time he sent for Mr. Hume and told him that, in his opinion, Mr. Hume's project would not be of much use. He said there was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition did in England. The newspapers, even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable, and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and

their policy in native circles, it would be very desirable in the interests as well of the rulers as of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved; and he added that an assembly such as he proposed should not be presided over by the local Governor, for in his presence the people might not like to speak out their minds. Mr. Hume was convinced by Lord Dufferin's arguments and when he placed the two schemes, his own and Lord Dufferin's, before leading politicians in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and other parts of the country, the latter unanimously accepted Lord Dufferin's scheme and proceeded to give effect to it. Lord Dufferin had made it a condition with Mr. Hume that his name in connection with the scheme of the Congress should not be divulged so long as he remained in the country, and this condition was faithfully maintained and none but the men consulted by Mr. Hume knew anything about the matter.

A proud man must Mr. Bonnerjee have been when at the first gathering in Bombay of the hundred best men in all India, Mr. A. O. Hume proposed, the Hon. Mr. S. Subrahmania Aiyar (now Sir Justice) seconded, and the Hon. Mr. K. T. Telang supported, the motion that "Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee, Standing Counsel, Bengal, be invited to assume the office of President of the Congress." His opening speech was characteristically short. It could not be shorter,—or more

weighty. He first claimed that the Congress was representative.

Surely never had so important and comprehensive an assemblage occurred within historical times on the soil of India. He claimed for it an entirely representative character. It was true that, judged from the standard of the House of Commons, they were not representatives of the people of India in the sense the members of the House were representatives of the constituencies. But if community of sentiments, community of feelings, and community of wants enabled any one to speak on behalf of others, then assuredly they might justly claim to be the representatives of the people of India. It might be said that they were self-elected, but that was not so. The news that this Congress would be held had been known throughout the year in the different provinces of India, and they all knew that everywhere the news had been received with great satisfaction by the people at large, and though no formal elections had been held, the representatives had been selected by all the different Associations and bodies, and he only wished that all thus selected had been able to attend, instead of their having now to lament the absence of many valued coadjutors, whose attendance had been unhappily barred by various unfortunate circumstances.

It is somewhat curious to read at this distance of time the tentative, vague, and perhaps too obvious statement that the President made at the time of the objects of the Congress :

(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the (sic various ?) parts of the Empire.

(b) The eradication by direct friendly personal intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

(c) The authoritative record after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day.

(d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests.

The concluding paragraph contains one of those protestations of loyalty that in the early years of Congress every speaker thought it necessary to make in defence of himself and of the movement in general. Though perhaps the young Congressman of the present day considers it galling to be under the necessity of repeating these sentiments of loyalty, the time is not altogether past when suspicion of the basic motives of the movement may break out on a large scale. Indeed, such a suspicion has now gained ground in the mind of our enemies to quite as large an extent as ever.



Surely there was nothing in these objects to which any sensible and unprejudiced man could possibly take exception, and yet on more than one occasion remarks had been made by gentlemen, who should have been wiser, condemning the proposed Congress, as if it were a nest of conspirators and disloyalists. Let him say once for all, and in this he knew well after the long informal discussions that they had had amongst themselves on the previous day, that he was only expressing the sentiments of every gentleman present, that there were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him. In meeting to discuss in an orderly and peaceable manner questions of vital importance affecting their well-being, they were following the only course by which the constitution of England enabled them to represent their views to the ruling authority. Much had been done by Great Britain for the benefit of India, and the whole country was truly grateful to her for it. She had given them order, she had given them railways, and, above all, she had given them the inestimable blessing of Western education. But a great deal still remained to be done. The more progress the people made in education and material prosperity, the greater would be the insight into political matters and the keener their desire for political advancement. He thought that their desire to be governed according to the ideas of Government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper

and legitimate share in it. The discussions that would take place in this Congress would, he believed, be as advantageous to the ruling authorities as he was sure it would be to the people at large.

For the second Congress in Calcutta in 1886 Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee laboured hard. At the actual session, his main business was the piloting of a proposition on the Jury System in India. Indeed, this subject he made one of his specialities in Congress. It was intended to secure finality for verdicts of acquittal, the power having been recently given to District Judges of referring cases to the High Court when they happened to differ from such verdicts. There was great opposition to this, for in those early days public opinion had not assumed a definiteness on many matters. In the end Mr. Bonnerjee and Mana Mohun Ghose were together able to clear many misconceptions and get the proposition accepted by a large majority. The only other proposition he moved was to the effect that Standing Congress Committees should be formed in all the provinces of India, for without them "it is quite impossible to keep up a regular correspondence between all the different parts of the country and so to arrive in due time at a general agreement as to the

various questions on which action is to be taken at the Congress."

At the third Congress in Madras in 1887, Mr. Bonnerjee proposed the name of the President, Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, his old friend and fellow-student in England. Mr. Tyabji was doubly welcome for himself and for the race that he represented. Mr. Bonnerjee naturally referred to the significance of the choice, and in these days when designed efforts are being made to set the communities by the ears and a few innocent Muhammadans are gulled into anti-Hindu demonstrations, it is just as well to quote an early statement of the Congress attitude in the matter by such a leader as our hero.

But in this connection, it is necessary for me to remind you that he is also a Mahomedan gentleman. I am very sorry, indeed, to have to say it, but there is no disguising the fact, that in Bengal, in some quarters, amongst our Mahomedan friends, some misapprehension as to the scope and objects of our National Congress still exists, and it is absolutely necessary that that misapprehension should be removed, and that we should be in fact, as we are in thought, one community and one country, owing allegiance to one Sovereign. The misapprehension under which those Mahomedan gentlemen (some of them at least) labour, who do not cordially sympathise with us, is due, I believe, to an apprehension

that the question of "Representative Government" which was presented to the Congress of the year 1885, which was again pressed by the Congress of the year 1886, and which, I believe, will be once more urged by us here will not, if given effect to, practically prove to be conducive to the interests of the Mahomedan population of this country. I am very glad to hear these murmurs of dissent from this assembly of delegates, a large number of whom, I see, are Mahomedans, because, I was just going to say that this apprehension was perfectly unfounded. There is nothing in the objects and scope of this National Congress, which can, directly or indirectly, be in any way inimical to the interests of our Mahomedan fellow-countrymen, or of any other section of the community. We want a representative Government in its truest and best sense, and I, for one,—and I am speaking in this matter on behalf of, I believe, the whole of the Hindu delegates—do not desire a hole and corner representation, but a representation of every community in the country, so that the whole of India may be perfectly represented to the governing authorities—so that their grievances may be remedied—so that everything necessary to make the nation contented and happy, may be done by the governing authorities. It is not necessary for me to detain you at any length upon this subject, as I see we are all agreed upon it.

At this Congress, too, the President had great difficulty in conducting the proceedings, for several propositions were either opposed or often amended. The one on Military Colleges evoked a

great deal of criticism, and at one stage the expression *native of India* was introduced. At once up rose a delegate and asked for its meaning. The President appealed to Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee who made it the occasion for advancing one of the principles of Congress :

I thought it was well known, that all Hindus, all Mahomedans, all Parsees, all Eurasians, all East Indians and all domiciled Europeans, and *all* persons born in India of domiciled parents are, in the eye of the law, "*natives of India,*" and are defined to be so by statute. The words "*as defined by statute*" have to be introduced, because they will prevent misunderstanding on the part of such of our brethren as are Eurasians, East Indians, or domiciled Europeans, or the children of these, all of whom are really included in the legal term "*native of India.*" We are now perfectly agreed that these colleges should be for the benefit of the whole of India. Let it not be said that this Congress has put anything in such an uncertain way that it might hereafter be said that Eurasians and East Indians and domiciled Europeans were not included in the term "*native of India.*"

Next year Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee proceeded to England for the sake of his health, but did not take his time altogether easily. With the help of Mr. Dadabhai and some English friends, he succeeded in establishing a political agency for India in England. He also addressed several meetings

in different parts of that country to make known\* Indian grievances and rouse the Imperial public to a sense of their duties to India. These speeches exhibit Mr. Bonnerjee's style of speaking at its best. Plain, brief, direct, entirely free from claptrap and finely-turned sentiments, they yet show perfect mastery of the facts and a business-like method of exposition. They are pervaded by a tone of perfect loyalty to the Government of Britain and by a degree of faith in the love of justice of the British nation which seems to us now-a-days to have savoured of the romantic. A few passages are culled from his English utterances to show his political views.

On the Russian scare, and the best solution thereof, he said :

When Russia was thousands of miles away from India, and was gradually civilising Central Asia, it used to be the cry, that as soon as Russia came to a place called Merv, she would seize India. Russia reached Merv many years ago, and India still remains an English possession ; and I am in a position to say on behalf of my countrymen—I am a Native of India and belong to one of the various castes, which caste is the caste of Brahmin—in a position to tell you that they would no more allow Russia, notwithstanding the neglect with which they have been treated, to take India, than they would allow the Hottentots to do so. My countrymen are loyal

to England to the backbone. They will, when necessity arises, fight shoulder to shoulder with Englishmen for the purpose of retaining English rule and sending away any intruder. Your Tories do not understand that: they wish to keep everybody down with a firm hand. Your Tory does not believe it is possible to rule by affection, and to claim the good-will and the willing service of the people. He only believes in his big army, with its big guns, some of which, as you have heard to-night, cost £200 to fire one shot. I do not believe that Russia has the slightest inimical intention towards India. For the purpose of preventing Russia going to India money is being wanted in the way Dr. Aubrey has referred to, and in order to provide money for this purpose the Government of India has actually raised the tax upon salt which, as I have before said, is one of the necessaries of life of the people.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who added a few obnoxious provisions to our Penal Code, came in for a hard knock or two:

In the year 1870, to our very great misfortune, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen was appointed law member of the Viceroy's Council. He went out to India and the first thing he took in hand was called "The Amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code." That amendment consisted in this—that he took away the finality from the verdict of the jury: he gave the power which no judge in India had ever possessed before, of enhancing sentences on appeal; and he made the Criminal Procedure Code almost Draconian in its severity. You have, I have no doubt, heard that the people of India are as law-abiding

as any people on the earth—and yet in a country like that the Criminal Procedure Code has been made the severest of any in the civilised world. I will tell you what happened under this law. This is an instance, you may call it an extreme instance, but it took place, and there are others which take place every day, to the great oppression of the people of the country, who protest, but nobody listens to their protest. A man was tried in one of the districts in Bengal for murder. The trial took place, not before a jury, but before what are called assessors—two assessors and a judge. The judge concurring with the two assessors, found the man not guilty of murder, but found him guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced him to hard labour for five years. He appealed against his conviction—he had the right of appeal, the trial having been held with the aid of assessors and not with the aid of a jury. The case came before the High Court of Calcutta. He was a poor man and could not be properly represented. The judges upset the conviction as regards man-slaughter, found the man guilty of murder, sentenced him to be hanged, and notwithstanding petitions for mercy from nearly the whole country that man was hanged. He had in the meantime undergone nearly two months of that imprisonment, so that he was kept in rigorous imprisonment for two months, and at the end of that was hanged. Now this created such a shock in the minds of the people that it is impossible to describe the sensation in the country at the time; everybody wept aloud almost, but there was nobody to take any notice of that. Our district officers thought that the prestige of the High Court would be lost if the Govern-



ment interfered and allowed that man to live. The High Court had the power, and could have sentenced him to transportation for life; but no—the man was sentenced to be hanged, and hanged he was accordingly. There are many instances where a man has been fined, after Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's law he has appealed, and the result has been that the judges, instead of affirming the fine, have sent him to hard labour for many months. Now I saw the scene created in this country when it was reported, and truly reported, that some Country Court judges in Ireland had enhanced the sentences on appeal. There was a tremendous outburst, and the result was that even Mr. Balfour was obliged to send instructions to his Country Court judges not to enhance sentences on appeal. But a thing like this goes on in India almost every day. The people cry aloud against it, but there is nobody to pay heed to their cry.

Here is another :

This very Sir James Fitzjames Stephen passed what is called the Evidence Act for India. It is the substance of Pitt Taylor's book boiled down considerably. Well, one clause he has introduced is that at a criminal trial the previous conviction of any prisoner may be given in evidence at any stage. That is to say, in the year of grace 1888 a man is charged with picking another person's pocket, you may give evidence against him, that in 1830 he was guilty of bigamy. And what do you think is the reason given for this? Sir James Fitzjames Stephen says in his report to the Legislative Council: "it is said that evidence of this description may

prejudice the prisoner. My answer is that if the prisoner is guilty"—mark the logic—"if the prisoner is guilty I do not see why he should not be prejudiced, the object of giving evidence against a man being to show whether he is guilty or not." And laws of this description have been passed, people have protested, but there is no heed paid to these protests.

Speaking of members of the Legislative Council appointed by Government, Mr. Bonnerjee told a funny anecdote :

One of these gentlemen was a very constant attendant at meetings of the Viceregal Legislative Council, and was one of the supporters upon whom the Government relied. One of his friends asked him how it was that he voted upon every question in a particular way, seeing that he did not understand a single word of what was taking place. His answer was: "It has been the pleasure of the Viceroy to instal me in this place as one of his councillors, and it is my duty to vote for him on all occasions." He was then asked how he knew the way in which the Viceroy wanted him to vote, and his answer was: "When the Viceroy lifts up his hand one way, I know he wants me to say 'Yes', and I say 'Yes'; and when he lifts up his hand in a different way, I know he wants me to say 'No', and I say 'No'."

If they ventured to vote against the wishes of the Government, this is what happened :

It is no use telling the civilized world that you have the people of India with you in your Councils. You know that these people of India are dependent for their

position in the Councils and for their position in the country upon your goodwill. If they do not support you, you never re-appoint them ; you have things reported against them, and their life is a burden to them. Anyone now appointed to these Councils by the favour of the Government comes there with his life almost in his hand, because if he is found to be in any way independent he is not only not re-appointed but his position in the country is made intolerable for him.

That Indians have never had representative institutions is one of those fallacies which our leaders have time after time exploded, but which are still repeated by interested Anglo-Indian critics. Only the other day we were surprised to hear that this old libel was uttered by the Governor of Madras. So long ago as 1888 Mr. Bonnerjee had answered the charge :

I will only say that the objection which has been raised by some persons in this country and also in India of a conservative turn of mind that the people of India are not fit for the kind of Government Mr. Bradlaugh has in view, is of no force whatever. Any one who is acquainted with the village system of India knows that at a time when civilization was unknown in this country representative institutions of a kind obtained in that country. Representation is ingrained in the minds of the people. From the time the East India Company first obtained ascendancy in the country they have not had many opportunities of giving effect to the principle,

but it cannot be said that they have forgotten it. The village system, which is based upon representation, is still to be found in the country, and in some parts it is still in full operation.

From this arduous campaign in England he returned to India in time for the Congress session held at Allahabad under the presidency of Mr. George Yule whom he himself had persuaded to accept the onerous office. Not only the President of this year, but the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Pandit Ajudhia Nath, was Mr. Bonnerjee's acquisition for the Congress cause. In a speech of his own as President of a later Congress sitting in that very city; he told the story of their conversion :

With Pandit Ajudhianath has passed away that other great Congress leader, Mr. George Yule. These were the two most prominent figures in the Congress held in this city in 1888 : Pandit Ajudhianath as the Chairman of the Reception Committee ; Mr. Yule as the President of the Congress. It was my singular good fortune to have been the means of inducing both these gentlemen to espouse the Congress cause. I was here in April, 1887, and met Pandit Ajudhianath, who had not then expressed his views, one way or another, with regard to Congress matters. I discussed the matter with him. He listened to me with his usual courtesy and urbanity, and he pointed out to me certain defects which he thought existed in our system ; and, at last, after a sympathetic

hearing of over an hour and a half, he told me he would think of all I had said to him, and that he would consider the matter carefully and thoroughly, and then let me know his views. I never heard anything from him from that time until on the eve of my departure for Madras to attend the Congress of 1887. I then received a letter from him in which he said I had made a convert of him to the Congress cause, that he had thoroughly made up his mind to join us, that he was anxious to go to Madras himself, but that illness prevented him from doing so, and he sent a message that if it pleased the Congress to hold its next Session at Allahabad in 1888, he would do all he could to make the Congress a success. And you know—certainly, those of you who attended know—what a success he did make of it. Our venerable President of the Reception Committee of this present Congress has told us the difficulties which had to be encountered to make that Congress a success, and I do not belittle his services or those of any other worthy Congressman who worked with him at the Congress, when I say that it was owing to Pandit Ajudhianath's exertions that that Congress was the success it was.

When it was time to select a President for recommendation to the Congress of 1888, it was suggested to me, I being then in England, that I might ascertain the views of Mr. George Yule, and ask him to preside. I accordingly saw him at his office in the city, and had the same kind of conversation with him as I had had, the year before, with Pandit Ajudhianath. He also listened to me kindly, courteously and sympathetically, and asked me to give him all the Congress literature I had. I had

only the three reports of the Congress meetings of 1885, 1886 and 1887, and I sent these to him; and to my great joy, and, as it afterwards turned out, to the great benefit of the Congress, Mr. Yule came to see me at my house and told me that he entirely sympathised with the cause, and that, if elected to be the President of the Congress of that year, he would be proud of the position and would do what he could for us. Those who had the good fortune to attend the Congress of 1888, know how manfully and how well he sustained the duties of his position; how he pointed out that the chief plank in the Congress platform--namely, the reform and reconstitution of the Legislative Councils of this country--was by no means an invention on the part of the Congress; that that point had received the attention and had been favourably considered and spoken of by that marvellous English statesman, Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. He told us that we were treading on the footsteps of that great man, and that if we perseveringly stuck to our colours, some time or other we should get what we wanted. From that time to the day of his death, Mr. Yule worked with us, gave us his valuable advice and helped us considerably as regards our working expenses. Pandit Ajudhianath, as you know, from the time he joined the Congress, worked early, worked late, worked with the old, worked with the young, never spared any personal sacrifices, so that he might do good to his country and to the Congress, and his lamented death came upon him when he was coming back from Nagpore, after having worked there for the success of the Nagpore Congress of last year. Those who ever so slightly knew

Pandit Ajudhianath and Mr. Yule will never be able to forget the great services which those gentlemen rendered to the Congress cause.

In the 1888 Congress, however, Mr. Bonnerjee came upon the platform only once,—to move that the resolutions arrived at should be submitted to the Governments of India and England. From his speech on the occasion we will take only one passage counselling patience and moderation :

Now, Brother Delegates, one word more and I have done. Do not be cast down, do not be disheartened, if immediately you put forward a request it is not granted by those who are responsible for the good government of the country. Be patient, be moderate, be true to your cause and to yourselves. Remember that even now there are many reforms about which large majorities are agreed, which the English people are themselves asking for and which they have not yet got. If you are true to yourselves, if you are moderate, if you are reasonable in your demands, and if you go on agitating, agitating and agitating loyally and constitutionally, believing that the British public—and in that public I include our Anglo-Indian friends in this country—is a truth-loving and a justice-loving public, you will be sure to get what you are asking for in the end. Give a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, and you reach the shores of victory in no time.

We are now brought to the Vth Indian National Congress, one of the most memorable sittings

it has had, memorable for the witty and sparkling address of Mr. Pherozechah M. Mehta as Chairman of the Reception Committee, for the presidency of Sir W. Wedderburn, and for the presence and short, but animating, speech of Charles Bradlaugh. For the last blessing the country was indebted to Mr. Bonnerjee and the delegates knew it. He was, therefore, not the least remarkable among the remarkable men that sat round Sir W. Wedderburn. To him fell the honour of proposing the election of the President and he did so in a neat little speech which contained one of the few instances of humour to be discovered in his utterances,—a humour, however, which had been anticipated by Mr. Mehta on a similar occasion the preceding year.

If you look back to the Presidents that we have had from 1885, you will see that the selection of Sir William Wedderburn has been arrived at by a sort of logical process. The first Congress in 1885 was comparatively an insignificant one, and you were presided over on that occasion by an equally insignificant individual. The Second Congress had the honor of being presided over by one who has devoted the whole of his life to the cause of his country, and who, even in his old age, is at the present moment appealing to the electors of one of the constituencies of England in order that, if returned to the House of Commons, he may be able still more effectively to serve



that country. Can I name Dadabhai Naoroji without calling from you enthusiastic applause. The third Congress was presided over by a gentleman of the Mahomedan persuasion, who, having distinguished himself at the bar and in public life, was thought to be the fittest man to contradict the rumours that had been sedulously cast abroad that this was a Hindu Congress and that Mahomedan gentlemen had no sympathy with it. The next President ought, according to the process which we followed, to have been a gentleman belonging to the Eurasian community; but at the time when it became necessary to select a President, *the* man amongst the Eurasian community whom the whole of this country would have hailed with one voice as President of the Congress, Mr. D. S. White, was lying ill in bed; and while he was in that condition it would have been improper for us to ask any other Eurasian gentleman to take his place. Now, unfortunately, he is no more; and India has lost one of her brightest sons and best patriots in Mr. D. S. White. Failing Mr. White, we had to go to that other community in India—the Anglo-Indian community—and there we found our late respected President Mr. George Yule. Of him I need say no more than this, that having retired to England he is still devoting his time and his money to the furtherance of the cause of the Congress. From the non-official European community to the official European community is but a slight descent, but unfortunately it is impossible for us to get a gentleman at the time actually belonging to the official classes to guide our deliberations. However sympathetic they may be, however much they may

wish success to the Congress, the rules of the service to which they belong prevent their publicly joining us and taking a prominent part in our proceedings. But ex officials do not occupy such a restricted position : they are able to exercise their judgment in matters political. And we have in Sir William Wedderburn an ex official who has throughout his career in this country, extending over 25 years, shown the deepest sympathy with the aspirations of the people of this country, and who is one of the few men in the service who have had the eye to see and the heart to feel that the Government of India, conducted though it may be upon generous principles, is not all that is required for the best interests of the country, and that its institutions require to be liberalized in order that they may harmonize with the conditions of the present day.

He proposed this year another resolution praying for certain modifications in the rules and practices of the House of Commons and for the Indian Budget being brought before that House at an early date so as to secure an adequate discussion of Indian grievances. He then told the familiar story of the empty House with a personal reminiscence.

If the statement could be brought forward at an earlier date, many of the most influential members who take an interest in Indian affairs, would remain in London and take part in the discussion, but at present it is impossible that it should be so. I remember when I was present in the

House last year, to listen to the Budget Statement, there was a time when the only members present were the Chairman of Committee, Mr. Courteney, and Sir R. Lethbridge, who was addressing the empty benches of the House. There was not another soul present, Mr. Bradlaugh having withdrawn for two or three minutes to the smoking-room.

Though he had himself invited the Congress to assemble in Calcutta in 1890, illness and domestic affliction prevented his presence at its sitting. No doubt he was sorely missed and the sympathy of all the delegates went out to him. Mr. Mana Mohun Ghose referred feelingly to his absence, and the President, Mr. Mehta, paid a compliment in his own inimitable fashion to his absent friend. At all previous Congresses Mr. Bonnerjee had moved the re-appointment of Mr. A. O. Hume to the General Secretaryship, and as the time came round this year for a similar motion, it had to be passed on to another Congress veteran—Mr. Surendra Nath Bannerjee.

At the 1891 Congress at Nagpur, Mr. Bonnerjee moved some important propositions. The first embodied the determination of the country to hold a Congress every year in India 'until all necessary reforms have been secured.' This was against the suggestion of the British Congress Committee that

the Indian sittings be suspended till the Congress should have assembled once in England. The second resolution he moved was to record the Congress's high estimate and deep appreciation of the great services of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and thank the electors of Central Finsbury and all others that had furthered his candidature. The entire speech is here.

Is there any one amongst you who has not heard the name of Dadabhai Naoroji, or, having heard it, does not revere it, does not love it, does not carry it about with him as a household word? From the time when he was a young man to the present day when he is over three score years old, he has devoted himself, his fortune, his talents, his life one may say, to the cause of the country. There is no publicist among us who knows the economical condition of India so well as Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. He has fought, and, in my opinion, fought successfully, many a tough battle with the adversaries of India. Chief amongst them was that very superior person Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, who, when he was in India, only corresponded with such high personages as Prince Bismarck and the Empress Frederick. Now Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, not for any personal advantage to himself, but only for the sake of his country, has been trying for some years to get into the House of Commons, so that there, in the midst of the representatives of Great Britain herself, he may plead the cause of his native country. You know how difficult it is even for Eng-

lishmen to get into the House of Commons. He has failed once, but the spirit which led him to devote his life to his country is still in him and stirring him on to do the best he can to get a seat in the House of Commons. All that I ask you to do by this resolution is to say that you have your old confidence in the old man, and that you will be sincerely grateful to any constituency in Great Britain that will do itself the inestimable honor of sending Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to the House of Commons.

The third resolution that he moved was his own by prescriptive right. Both Messrs. Hume and Pandit Ajudhia Nath had expressed a desire, owing to ill-health, to be relieved of their duties as General Secretary and Joint-General Secretary respectively. But Mr. Bonnerjee was able to announce that they had both yielded "to the persuasion that had been brought to bear on them." Of course, the persuasion could have come only from one source.

Next year (1892) the Congress Presidentship came round to him a second time,—a signal honour which only Dadabhai and Surendra Nath share with him. We have already quoted from his inaugural address. For a man generally averse 'to speechifying,' this effort was long ; but it is packed full of good sense and sound

wisdom. The success of Congress he attributed, above all other things, to the influences of British rule.

The persons to whom I have referred have been troubling their brains, from almost the very commencement of the movement, to find out how it is that this movement, which they are pleased to call only a "native" movement, has been such a success. And they have hit upon one of the causes, which they have iterated and reiterated in season and out of season, as the cause of the success of the Congress; namely, the influence over us of that great man--Allan Octavian Hume. That Mr. Hume possesses, and has exercised, a vast amount of influence over the Congress movement, and over each single Congress which has met, is a fact. We are not only not ashamed to acknowledge it, but we acknowledge it with gratitude to that gentleman, and we are proud of his connection with the Congress. But the movement is only to some extent, and I may say, only to a limited extent, due to the influence which Mr. Hume has exercised over us. It is not the influence of this man, or of that man, or of any third man that has made the Congress what it is. It is the British professors who have discoursed eloquently to us on the glorious constitution of their country; it is the British merchants who have shown to us how well to deal with the commodities of our country; it is the British engineers who have annihilated distance and enabled us to come together for our deliberations from all parts of the Empire; it is the British planters who have shown us how best to raise the pro-

ducts of our soil ; it is all these, in other words, it is all the influences which emanate from British rule in India that have made the Congress the success it is. The Congress is a mere manifestation of the good work that has been done by all those to whom I have referred (and I ought also to have referred to the British missionaries who have worked amongst us) ; and all that we wish by this movement to do, is to ask the British public, both in this country and in Great Britain, that, without any strain on the connection which exists between Great Britain and this country, such measures may be adopted by the ruling authorities that the grievances under which we labour may be removed, and that we may hereafter have the same facilities of national life that exist in Great Britain herself. How long it will take us to reach the latter end no one can tell ; but it is our duty to keep the hope of it before us, and keep reminding our British fellow-subjects that this hope shall always be with us.

Mr. Bonnerjee held somewhat peculiar views on Social Reform. He did not believe in public discussion of social questions, and felt that each separate community had its own troubles for which it ought to find its own solution. So he was averse to the Congress, as such, concerning itself with these vital and thorny problems.

I am one of those who have very little faith in the public discussion of social matters ; those are things which, I think, ought to be left to the individuals of a community who belong to the same social organisation,

to do what they can for its improvement. We know how excited people become when social subjects are discussed in public. Not long ago we had an instance of this when what was called the Age of Consent Bill was introduced into the Viceregal Legislative Council. I do not propose to say one word as to the merits of the controversy that arose over that measure, but I allude to it to illustrate how apt the public mind is to get agitated over these social matters if they are discussed in a hostile and unfriendly spirit in public.

I may point out that we do not all understand in the same sense what is meant by social reform. Some of us are anxious that our daughters should have the same education as our sons, that they should go to universities, that they should adopt learned professions; others, who are more timid, would be content with seeing that their children are not given in marriage when very young, and that child-widows should not remain widows all the days of their lives. Others, more timid still, would allow social problems to solve themselves. It is impossible to get any common ground, even as regards the members of the same community, be it Hindu, Mahomedan or Parsee, with respect to these matters. Thus it was that social questions were left out of the Congress programme; thus it was that the Congress commenced and has since remained, and will, I sincerely trust, always remain as a purely political organisation, devoting its energies to political matters, and political matters only. I am afraid that those, whether belonging to our own country or to any other country, who find fault with us for not making social subjects a part of our work,



cherish a secret wish that we might all be set by the ears, as we were all set by the ears by the Age of Consent Bill and that thus we might come to an ignominious end. They mean us no good, and when we find critics of that description talking of the Congress as only fit to discuss social problems, I think the wider the berth we give them the better.

Touching the recently agitated question, whether India ought to be a party question in British politics, Mr. Bonnerjee held decided views.

The Cabinet is so troubled with the affairs of the vast British Empire that the members really have no time to devote to India as a body, and leave her to their colleague, the Secretary of State for India. When any Indian question comes before the House of Commons, what do we see? The Cabinet of the day has always a majority in the House, and it always finds supporters among its own party, whether they are would-be placemen or whether they are country gentlemen who go to the House of Commons as the best club in England. And in non-party matters and they make it a pretence in the House of Commons to regard Indian affairs as matters non-party,—in all non-party matters, the Government of the day can always rely upon a large amount of support from the Opposition. There are a few members of the House of Commons who make it a point to devote a portion of their time and energies to the consideration of Indian questions. But they are only a few; they have hardly any following; and if they press any matters on the attention of the House, with any degree of zeal, they are

voted down as bores by the rest of the House of Commons.

He held forth at length on matters of civil and criminal justice with which he had unequalled familiarity. Of the infamous Jury Notification of Sir Charles Elliott he had many hard things to say, of which the concluding observation is too good to be omitted.

It is said that trial by jury is foreign to this country. We who have cherished our Panchayet system for generations, to be told that trial by jury is foreign to us, to be told so at the fag-end of the nineteenth century, why, it is strange indeed! No, no, gentlemen—it was on our Panchayet system that Lord Cornwallis proceeded when in 1790 he ruled that we should have trial by jury. It was on that system that Sir Thomas Munro based his regulation which his successor promulgated in 1827. It was on that system that the Bombay regulation on the subject was introduced, and when these regulations were codified in 1861, it was on that system the law was based. We must have the system extended to the whole country and not withdrawn from any part of it, and we must therefore join together and agitate on the subject from one end of India to the other, and say, that this notification, which has given rise to so much discontent, was not required, and that it should be withdrawn, and withdrawn as speedily as possible and the policy of which it is the outcome reversed.

The Congresses of 1893 and 1894 Mr. Bonnerjee did not attend. In 1895 at the Poona sitting he moved an important proposition on the system of trial by jury, giving in brief the history of the system in India and condemning in scathing terms the proposal of Sir Alexander Miller to empower District Judges to call upon juries to give special verdicts. The whole passage dealing with this last subject is worth reproducing.

Suddenly early this year Sir Alexander Miller introduced a Bill in the Supreme Council, one of the provisions of which is that juries should be called upon to give special verdicts. Juries should be called upon to give a general verdict, and if the Judge is not satisfied with it, he may ask questions and get answers to those questions in the shape of special verdicts. In other words, I cannot help feeling that it is intended to allow a Judge, if he differs from the verdict of juries, the power of cross-examining jurymen and putting them into a corner. Now, we may well say whether a person is telling the truth; we may very well arrive at a conclusion whether a case made against a prisoner is a true case or a false one. Five men, perfectly indifferent to the prisoner and perfectly indifferent to the Crown, may be expected to arrive at a right verdict; but unless they are trained lawyers, unless they have the logical faculty of assigning reasons for their opinions in a taking shape, you cannot expect the jurymen to give such verdicts as would

be acceptable to everybody ; and if a juryman gives reasons which are not acceptable and which appear on the face of them to be foolish, the Judge would go to the High Court and say, " Look at the verdict, look at the reasons which these men have given for the verdict ; they are foolish and their verdict must be upset," though their verdict may be perfectly just under the circumstances.

I was trying, with the help of a friend of mine, whom I am glad to see present here, to find from Cox's Criminal Reports whether in England there is such a thing as special verdicts in criminal cases. We find hundreds of special verdicts in civil cases, but we could not find from the beginning of the existence of the English nation down to the present time a single case of a special verdict in a criminal case. When you consider, gentlemen, that in this country we are almost free from serious crimes, and when you consider that the percentage of crime is as low as it is possible to imagine, and when you consider, on the other hand, that the percentage of crime in England is as great as can be imagined—while you have in England no such special verdicts in criminal cases, we are to have special verdicts in criminal cases in this country ! Therefore, I say, we all ought to unite in protesting against those changes in criminal law that are being made, and what is worse, are being threatened almost every day. We, from this Congress, ought to send up a strong protest against a thing of this description. For, after all, as my friend Mr. Ghose has so well put it, the real popularity of British rule and the real reason of the loyalty of the people are the belief on the

part of the people that justice, criminal justice, is being administered in a fair and impartial way. If you interfere with these things so often, and interfere needlessly, and interfere with the view of putting more power into the hands of District Magistrates and District Judges, that confidence in the impartiality of British justice will be destroyed and we shall be brought to a position which I fear to contemplate.

At the 1896 Congress in Calcutta, Mr. Bonnerjee moved a proposition expressing the country's confidence in Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and wishing his re-election to Parliament. His speech on the occasion must be given to our readers entire.

This resolution was entrusted to me without my consent and in spite of my remonstrances. I believe myself that our Subjects Committee were, at the last moment when they made up their minds to force this upon me, under fatalistic influences. I remember I moved a similar resolution in the Congress of 1891, which was received as enthusiastically as this has been received by you to-day. In 1892 there was a General Election in England, and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji was returned at the head of the poll as member for Central Finsbury. I suppose the Subjects Committee thought that if this resolution was again brought before you, and brought before you by the same individual who presented it to you in 1891, a similar result might follow. At any rate, here is the resolution, and I can only say that it does not require any words from any one to make it acceptable to you. The example that Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has set us all is

perfectly unique. Here is an old man, over 70 years of age, working, you may say day and night, night and day, for the benefit of his countrymen. He has had to banish himself from his own country and live in a foreign land away from his old friends, only for the sake of this country. Some little time ago our only Member of Parliament, that is to say, the only Indian gentleman who succeeded in finding a seat at the last election—Mr. Bhowmagri—came back to this country, and some foolish friends of his wanted to get up a demonstration in his honour to equal the demonstration which Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji received when he came to his country to preside over the Lahore Congress. I have no quarrel whatever with Mr. Bhowmagri. I am very proud to know that a native of this country is a Member of the House of Commons. You cannot expect everybody to be of the same opinion as yourself. I should have been very pleased if, instead of being a Conservative, Mr. Bhowmagri had been a Radical. But then I am sure that if he had been a Radical, he would not have obtained a seat in the House of Commons at the last election. So there is, perhaps, some advantage in his having been a Conservative. But for any friend of Mr. Bhowmagri to consider that he is the Member for India, or that he possesses the confidence of the people of India that Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji possesses, is an absurdity. Very few people have heard of Mr. Bhowmagri outside the Bombay Presidency; and although we all rejoice that he is in the House of Commons, and although we all hope that he will be of service there, we cannot but hope and trust that we may find our Dadabhai there before long. Nothing will con-

tent us but to have the old man sitting again in the House of Commons doing his duty to his constituents, and doing his work for his country. One reason why he failed to secure his seat in the House of Commons this time was that, while he was discharging his duties night after night, his opponent, who has now been successful, was canvassing the constituency, and trying to take away support from him, and obtain it for himself. I hope you will carry the resolution with acclamation, and carry away a hope that Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji will soon obtain a seat in the House of Commons.

The Sedition Law of Mr. Chalmers, of which the occasion was Mr. Tilak's conviction, was on the legislative anvil in 1897, and the delicate duty of moving the Congress Resolution on the subject was entrusted to Mr. Bonnerjee.

Mr. Chalmers, to make his proposed amendment of the law palatable to us, says that his only object in proposing the amendments is to assimilate the law of sedition in this country with the law on the same subject as it exists in England. Well, I have no objection at all to the law of sedition in this country being made the same as the law of sedition in England, provided, of course, Mr. Chalmers gives us in this country the same machinery for the administration of the law here as exists in England. In England, as we all know, trials for sedition are held before a judge, who is a countryman of the prisoner, and by a jury, who are also countrymen of the prisoner, and no trial can take place unless a true bill has been found against the prisoner by a grand jury, who are also coun-

trymen of the prisoner. Let Mr. Chalmers give us this mode of trial, and we shall hail him, however severe he may make the law, as the greatest law-giver that has ever come to this country. But does he intend to do so? No. So far from doing so, he is trying in his amendments of the Criminal Procedure Code to empower district magistrates to try cases of sedition—district magistrates who are officers of Government in the strict sense of the term and whose promotion entirely depends upon the good-will of the Government for the time being. The present machinery for trial of cases of sedition in this country is bad enough in all conscience. In the Presidency towns such trials must be had by jury. But so far as Her Majesty's British Indian subjects are concerned, that jury may consist entirely of Europeans, and not a single one of them need know the language in which the seditious speech is alleged to have been made or the seditious article to have been written. That is appalling enough, but to entrust trials for sedition to district magistrates is still more appalling. I do not think, —I say so with all submission to Mr. Chalmers,—that his Bill proceeds on the lines of the English law of sedition at all. He is entirely mistaken in thinking it does. But assuming it does, Mr. Chalmers is prepared to give us the poison in the shape of his amendment, and not the antidote to the poison in the shape of the English machinery for its administration.

Then, in his concluding paragraph, he touched a deeper chord of feeling than ever he had done



before and assumed a tone that he had never been compelled to assume, — betraying that even his calm head and tranquil heart had been sorely agitated.

I should have thought that seeing that the country has just been passing through the last of a very severe affliction in the shape of famine, that there has been a recrudescence of the plague in various parts of it, and that other circumstances, notably the press prosecutions in the Bombay Presidency, have stirred the mind of the people to its very depth, this is just the time where a wise legislator, even if there was necessity for it, would hesitate long before embarking on a process of action which is sure to give rise, as Mr. Chalmers' Bill has undoubtedly given rise, to great terror on the part of the people. But we, of course, according to our rulers, have no idea of the proper time and occasion for changes in the law. Lord Elgin's Government are all wise, and I am afraid that, notwithstanding our protest, and I make bold to say the protest of every right-thinking person in the country which will go to the Government, this Bill will be forced into law. All the protests will be in vain. We must, however, carry our protest before a higher authority than even Lord Elgin's Government. We must go before the British public. We must explain to them how the agents they have sent to govern the country on their behalf and in their name are dealing with the people; that is, dealing in a manner wholly unworthy of the British name and the British love of freedom. And if we can convince them that we are right, I have no doubt that-

the British nation will rise in their wrath and free us from the trammels which Lord Elgin and his Councilors are forging for us.

That was the last time his voice was heard in the Councils of the Indian National Congress which he loved so well. From the year 1888 he took a trip every year to England during the *pūja* holidays. He had bought a house of his own at Croydon which soon became a frequent meeting place of all Indians in England. His children were all educated in England. In fact, he had so completely Anglicised himself that the one regret with which his memory is associated in the minds of a certain section of his countrymen, is that his ideals of life should have been cast in a mould so entirely alien to them. Even they acknowledge, nevertheless, the depth and sincerity of his feelings for all his orthodox relations and the liberality with which he defrayed the expenses of their numerous ceremonial observances. It has even been said, with a great deal of probability, that his spiritual isolation from his own kith and kin often brought tears to his eyes. To his mother he cherished to the last the tenderest filial affection. Notwithstanding these strong ties, Mr. Bonnerjee resolved in 1902 to quit India altogether and take

up his residence permanently in England. In a short time he picked up a considerable Privy Council practice. The British Committee of the National Congress occupied a great part of his energy and time; and, as has been more than once observed, India will never know the exact amount of her pecuniary indebtedness to him. He sought a place in Parliament that he might be of greater use to his country, but, unfortunately, while he was wooing the electors of Walthamstow, an affection of the eye developed and brought his general health low. He recognised the hand of Death in this attack and wrote to Mr. Dutt at Baroda that his illness was incurable and that the end was near. So it proved. On July 21, this year, he passed away in peace.

It is impossible to close this sketch without making a quotation from the patriot's last message to the Congress which met at Benares last December. Patience and hope were the theme of the short letter which each Congressman read and re-read as if it were addressed to himself.

It seems to me that we are passing through critical times in India and that we ought to exert our best to make the events that are happening further the cause of our country and to enable the Congress fully to achieve the ends for which it was established now 21 years ago.

Young people are apt to feel disheartened because no immediate result is visible in any agitation they may undertake. They forget that existing institutions cannot be changed without years of patient struggle in endeavouring to convince those who are guardians of the institutions that their alteration and reform would be of benefit to the country. What we have to keep in mind is that the mere fact that we desire self-governing institutions for our country is not enough of itself to justify the grant of such institutions of our rulers to us. We have to show that our progress has been such that the grant of such institutions would be an advantage alike to India and to England. We ought to call to mind that in the early days of what are now the self-governing colonies they were mere crown colonies and that they were not invested with the privileges, duties and responsibilities of self-government until long afterwards. The early settlers in these colonies were emigrants from Great Britain and belonged to the same race and had been trained in the same way as those that remained in the mother country, and yet self-governing institutions were not conferred on them immediately they demanded them. They waited and agitated, agitated and waited, and at last got what they wanted. We do not belong to the ruling race and have never been brought up in the same way as they have been. Our case, therefore, is more difficult of achievement than that of self-governing colonies, and we must wait and agitate, agitate and wait longer than they were destined to do. With patience, perseverance and persistence, I am sure we shall reach the goal of

our desires in time and, therefore, we must never lose heart. Your recent visit to this country must have shown you that the people you came across both in your public meetings and privately are disposed to be just—yea generous—towards our aspirations, all that is required is that we must show to them that we are capable of self-government. The members of the Congress are rightly convinced that we are, and if we keep up our agitation and prefer our demands in season and out of season, thus showing that we are in earnest about the matter, I am sure we shall succeed in convincing the British public that our desire for self-governing institutions is just and legitimate, that we are capable of understanding and working these institutions and that the grant of them to us would be alike beneficial to our country and to England, and once convinced of these facts the British public, you may be sure, will not long hesitate to invest us with these institutions. To convince the British public that we are in earnest, a constant agitation of matters Indian ought to be kept up in this country, for it is the British public who are alone capable of giving what we want; and to show to them that our agitation in this country is based upon a solid foundation, strong agitation on the lines laid down by the Congress must be kept up in India. The agitation in India must be the lever on which the agitation of this country must be worked. Let me, therefore, implore you to impress upon our Congressmen from your Presidential chair the necessity of maintaining the Congress, of keeping up the agitation in India on the lines laid down by it, and of vigorously continuing the agitation in this country.

Adorned with every virtue, public and private, placed by fortune in towering eminence, and endowed with the greatest gifts of head and heart, Mr. Bonnerjee acted through life on the conviction that all his virtues, fortune, and gifts found their noblest use only in the furtherance of his country's interests. He will have lived in vain indeed if, reading of him, the generations that are to come do not learn to regard their talents and opportunities as a sacred trust for the honour and glory of their motherland.---*Vande Mataram.*

## APPRECIATIONS.

### APPENDIX—A.

#### Bonnerjee, Tyabji and Bose.\*

BY MR. D. E. WACHA.

MR. CHAIRMAN, — I think, Sir, that next to yourself I may claim in this hall the privilege of having enjoyed the close friendship of the three true and good men who have so silently passed away leaving the country all the poorer for their sad loss. The hand of the Reaper seemed to have been too busy in depriving us of these three distinguished countrymen of ours before their time when their need was the sorest. It was a cruel stroke of fate which cut them off so early, ere the good work which remained to the lot of each to be achieved was fully accomplished. But our will is not our own. It is the will of Him who is the giver of all life. All that remains to us, therefore, is to mournfully place on record the sense of that great loss which we, along with the rest of the country, have sustained by their untimely death.

The speakers who have preceded me have borne most eloquent testimony, each from his own point of view, to the principal incidents of their public life extending over more than a quarter of a century. There remains for me but little to add to that testimony. As far as Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose is concerned, my friendship began with him during the second Congress at Calcutta which, Sir, was held under your own distinguished Presidency in 1890. But the more I came into contact with him personally and by correspondence, the more his personality impressed me. His forensic ability in the profession he took up was well known. But to me he seemed as if Nature had made him more to shine in the pulpit than in the forum. His cast of mind was such. There was to be perceived in him a deep sense of religious fervour which so often found itself revealed when preaching in his own church the creed of which he was one of

\* Speech delivered by Mr. D. E. Wacha at the Memorial Meeting held at Bombay.

the strongest pillars. In him was to be discerned all the gentleness, all the reverential spirit and all that earnest piety which distinguish the man of God. The last time I had the privilege of meeting him was in his own house in Dharantola in 1901. I can never forget that benign countenance, that extreme affability, and that polished courtesy with which he bade me good-bye, though even then he was far from well. And yet who would not admire that patriotism and that undying devotion which, in spite of extreme physical debility, impelled him to render what he deemed to be his last duty by his country and countrymen. What a pathetic figure he made, as was so feelingly described by the leading Bengalee organs of opinion, when almost in a dying condition he was carried in a sedan chair to lay the foundation stone of the Federation Hall which is destined to consecrate for ever the spirit of Swadeshism and keep its flame steadily burning among his people! This was Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose, a fine specimen of a highly cultured and intellectual Bengalee who had strenuously, unobtrusively and unselfishly devoted himself to the service of his country almost to the last hour of his death! Such a person deserves to live in the memory of us all.

I need not say that my relations with Messrs. Badruddin Tyabji and W. C. Bonnerjee were of a most intimate character. Indeed, as far as the first named is concerned, the friendship might be said to be hereditary. His father and my father were next-door neighbours, residing in Old Mody Street in the Fort. Both were merchants and both had great regard for each other, as my father more than once used to tell me and recount some interesting reminiscences of the past. It was a curious coincidence that the sons became equally known to each other. More. My children in turn were friends of the late Mr. and Mrs. Tyabji and their children. And I for one am glad that this hereditary friendship with the members of the Tyabji family is continued from sire to son, so to say. Such ample justice has been already rendered with a wealth of details to his public life by the speakers who have preceded me that I find myself quite a bankrupt as to what I could say more. The only supplemental obser-



vation that suggests itself to me is this. Mr. Badrud-din appeared to have been born a statesman. The more I knew him and the more I heard from his lips, many an observation on the condition of the country, its administration, and the right and proper duty of ourselves as citizens, the deeper that conviction grew on me. Had his *Kismet* been cast elsewhere, say, in a great Native State, Hindu or Mahomedan, I am perfectly certain that Mr. Tyabji would have risen to fill the highest post. He would have been another Sir Salar Jung. There were in him all the great qualities which contribute towards the making of an eminent statesman—talents of a high order, political sagacity, tact, judgment, suavity of manners, and, above all, catholic sympathy. As a Moslem, he was devotedly attached to his creed, and thoroughly understood its ethics with a broad-mindedness and tolerance which deserve the highest praise. Moreover, his early training and education in England had had its great formative influence on his character which was all through discerned in his public life. As a westernised Mahomedan, he could not sit inactive without reforming his community. He rightly conceived that the first and most important element of social reform among his co-religionists was education. The backwardness of Mahomedans in this respect he seems to have perceived from an early day; and he perseveringly endeavoured, and endeavoured with success, to lay the foundation of educational progress in his community. He chalked out the broad lines on which it should proceed. He knew well that reform meant reform first within his own domestic circle; and *pari passu* reform for the community by slow and easy gradients: in other words, on the lines of least resistance. Thus it was that he first lighted the torch of social reform in his own family and later on held it aloft, illuminating the way for those who had his force of character and resolution to associate with him in that noble and most beneficent work. We all know how his energies and efforts were directed towards the establishment of the Anjuman-i-Islam, and how these were crowned with success. It will for ever stand as an imperishable monument of his great social work.

In the entire community of Mahomedans in India, he was recognised as a towering personality and a power and influence for good. But more than a Mahomedan, he was proud to call himself an Indian. His heart beat in unison with the aims and aspirations of our national organisation, while his head had clear conceptions of the ultimate triumph of those objects. In his death, therefore, India loses one of her best sons, a pillar of progress, justice, freedom, toleration and catholic sympathy. It is to be feared it would be long before the country discovers another Tyabji.

There remains for me to add a few more words before I sit down with regard to Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee. It has been said by the great English essayist and politician that the lineaments of the man are to be discerned in the child. Mr. Bonnerjee was not a child in 1867. He was twenty-three years old, finishing his law course in London to qualify himself for the Bar. But at that very young age he showed those lineaments which as he grew old made him so regarded and esteemed not by his own men of Bengal but by his countrymen throughout the land. Perhaps some of you are aware of that most excellent paper he read on Hindu Law in London before the London Society, and another, later on, at the East India Association. The subject of the paper read before the latter was no other than the one about which so much is being said and written at the present day, namely: "Representative and responsible Government for India." To have read that most thoughtful, well-informed, and highly interesting paper at the age of 23 showed what remarkable talents Mr. Bonnerjee possessed. It would be out of place to refer to its salient points here, but, Mr. Chairman, you at least were present there, along with Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and could therefore speak from your personal experience as to the quality of that paper and the impression it produced on the hearers. Among them, there was that distinguished lawyer of Bombay, no other than the late Mr. Chisholm Anstey, a name still to be conjured and regarded with the highest respect. Some very independent and refreshing observations which fell from the lips of that constitutional and learned lawyer

deserve to be reproduced here, and I crave the indulgence of the meeting for a minute to refer to them. Mr. Anstey said: "I can safely say that Mr. Bonnerjee's paper, which contains so much that is novel and interesting and in which he has treated his subject in so fair and liberal a spirit, and with so much ability would, if adopted, go very far to a complete realisation of the view. I always have advocated in the matter \* \* What Mr. Bonnerjee has presented is this great truth, that when you seek to introduce this species of representation into India, you are not introducing a new thing, but only a new form of that which already exists there, which has existed there for thousands of years, and which cannot be rooted up out of the minds and hearts of the people, unless you exterminate the people itself. We are apt to forget in this country, when we talk of preparing people in the East by education and all that sort of thing for Municipal Government and Parliamentary Government that the East is the parent of municipalities \* \* Let us not be frightened by that bugbear incapacity; there is no nation unfit for free institutions. If you wait for absolute perfection, the world will come to an end before you have established your free institutions." Mr. Bonnerjee's profession, no doubt, kept him confined to it, but it did not signify that he had allowed politics to slide. The Congress, which took its birth in this city twenty-one years ago, revealed what kind of personage he was as its very first President. The rest is history and I will not travel over the same ground which Sir Bhalechundra and others have travelled. Having been closely allied with him since 1885, I can say with perfect confidence that there is not a leader of the Congress who has known the true political bearings of the country so well and thoroughly, and who has understood them so clearly. Whenever he has spoken with such profound knowledge and prescience as to make us exclaim why Mr. Bonnerjee would not speak oftener and enlighten his less fortunate brethren. But the traits above all others which characterised him were his shrewd commonsense, his penetrating judgment, his extreme modesty, his unobtrusiveness, a remarkable

presence and coolness of mind which tells us of the great steersman at the bark who can weather the storm and hurricane, and bring it to a haven of rest and safety. Had he entered Parliament he would have made his mark in that deliberative assembly and proved what splendid materials he had in him of a far-sighted and most discreet statesman. And as to his personal qualities, you had only to come into intimate contact with him to know what a personification of amiability, courtesy, and gentlemanliness he was. And how under a somewhat passive exterior there throbbed within a warm heart—a heart which burned with a steady flame for the greater good of the country, but in harmony with existing facts and circumstances. His also was the policy of proceeding on the lines of least resistance. Again, he too was a social reformer, but the reform was confined to his own household which to him was a thing of joy and beauty, seeing that he was surrounded by children whom he had brought up and trained after his own ideal. But alas! he too has gone to his last resting place, leaving behind him good, silent and patriotic work which shall scatter its fragrance all over the country for many a year to come. Not only Bengal but all India is poorer for his loss which it will be most difficult to fill.

In conclusion, I can only say that in the deaths of the three eminent Indians we have lost a veritable trinity of great souls, lofty sentiments, disinterested patriotism, and deep sympathy. Pure in faith, winningly sweet in courtesy, noble and kind, they have gone to their last resting place greatly loved and honoured by a whole nation. They knew naught but that ancient maxim which prescribes that the noblest motive is public good. They never cared for journalistic trumpets and rolls of newspaper drums. Indeed, I do not think I am using the language of exaggeration when I say that they belonged to that class of men who are greater than those who only seemeth great.

“There they rest from their toil  
 In meadows immortally fair,  
 And the Master of all brave souls  
 Crowns them with fadeless leaves.”

## Mr. Gokhale on Mr. Bonnerjee.\*

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—We are assembled here to-day to give public expression to our grief that the hand of Death has removed from our midst our illustrious countryman,—Mr. Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee. The event, it is true, has not come upon us as wholly unexpected. For some time past it was well known that Mr. Bonnerjee's health has been completely shattered, that there was no hope of recovery, and that continued existence in that state was to him only a prolongation of agony. However, now that the end has actually come, and we are forced to realise that our great and trusted leader, whom it was a joy to love no less than to follow, is no more with us, the mind feels as completely bewildered and overwhelmed as though the great Destroyer had come with stealthy and noiseless steps and had inflicted on us our loss without warning, and with the shock of a sudden blow. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Bonnerjee was a man whose death would leave humanity the poorer in any age and in any part of the world. To India, in her present stage of transition, with difficult and complicated problems arising on all sides, his passing away is a national calamity of the first magnitude, and we indulge in no exaggeration when we say that our loss is truly irreparable. It is not my purpose to-day to attempt here an estimate of the character and career of our great countryman. Our loss is still too fresh and our sense of it too acute and poignant to permit of my undertaking any such task in a meeting of this kind. And all I beg leave to do in commending this resolution to your acceptance is to say a few words expres-

\* Speech delivered by Mr. Gokhale at a Memorial Meeting held in London for expressing sorrow at the death of Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee.

sive of my profound admiration of the many noble qualities, both natural and acquired, of our departed leader, and of my humble appreciation of the great, the signal services which he has rendered to our national cause. Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that Mr. Bonnerjee was one of the most distinguished, as he was one of the most successful, lawyers that our country has produced. Now, if he had been only that and nothing else, even then his title to a public expression of our admiration and respect would have been unquestioned. National life, to be complete, must be many-sided; and a man who brings honour to the Indian name, no matter in what field, advances thereby our national cause and deserves to be honoured by us on national grounds. But Mr. Bonnerjee's claim to our admiration and gratitude rested, of course, on a much wider basis than his pre-eminent attainment as a lawyer. He was, in addition, an ardent patriot, a wise and far-sighted leader, an incessant worker, a man whose nobility of mind and greatness of soul were stamped on every utterance and every action of his life. His intellectual gifts were of the very highest order. Endowed with an intellect at once critical, vigorous, and comprehensive, a truly marvellous memory, luminous powers of exposition, captivating eloquence, great industry, and a wonderful habit of method and discipline, Mr. Bonnerjee was bound to achieve, in whatever field he chose to work, the most brilliant success. Then he had a wide outlook on life, deep and earnest feeling and a passionate desire to devote his great gifts to the service of his country. And added to these were a fine presence, an extraordinary charm of manner, and that combination of strength and restraint which made him one of the most manly men that one could come across. Such a man must tower above his fellow-men wherever he is placed. In a self-governing country he would, without doubt, have attained the position of Prime Minister. We in India twice made him President of our National Congress, and what was more, when the great movement was started twenty-one years ago and the first Congress ever held in India assembled in Bombay, the delegates unanimously elected Mr. Bonnerjee to guide them in their delibera-

tions. And since that time down to the moment of his death, Mr. Bonnerjee, with two or three others, was the very life and soul of that movement. He ungrudgingly gave to the cause his time and his resources—and this far more than is generally known. He cheerfully bore all its anxieties, his exertions for its success were unwearyed, and no man's counsel was valued higher by his countrymen, where the Congress was concerned. His courage was splendid, and it rose with difficulties, and his nerve and his clear judgment were a theme of constant admiration among his countrymen. With Mr. Bonnerjee at the helm, everyone felt safe. His was the eloquence that thrills and stirs and inspires, but his was also the practical sagacity that sees the difference between what may be attained and what cannot, and when the need arose no man was firmer than Mr. Bonnerjee in exercising a sobering and restraining influence. I can recall at this moment more than one meeting of the Subjects Committee of the Congress, at which really all important deliberations take place, where Mr. Bonnerjee's far-sighted wisdom and the great weight attaching to his personality steadied the judgments of wilder spirits, and established harmony where discord was apprehended. The loss of such a leader, no words that I can employ can adequately describe, and he has passed away at a time when he was more indispensable than ever, in view of the signs one sees of the vessel of the Congress being about to encounter somewhat rough weather. Ladies and gentlemen, it is really superfluous that I should dwell at any length before an assembly composed so largely of my own countrymen on the distinguished services rendered by Mr. Bonnerjee to our national cause. And, if I refer briefly to one or two of them, it is because they are not very widely known, and they illustrate how immense is the debt that we owe him. You are aware that no Englishman has ever served India more nobly or more zealously than the late Mr. Bradlaugh. Now, it was Mr. Bonnerjee who enlisted Mr. Bradlaugh's sympathies on our side and secured his powerful championship for our aspirations. Then the part Mr. Bonnerjee has played in

keeping together all these years the British Committee of the Congress and in maintaining unimpaired its activity in this country, will always constitute one of his best claims to our affection and gratitude. Very few, indeed, of our countrymen have any idea of the difficulties that have had to be overcome from time to time in this connection, of the worries they have involved, and of the sacrifices they have required. But, if our great friends, Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. Hume had been here to-day, they would have told you, as, indeed, our venerable chairman may, if he speaks a few words at the end, how invaluable have been Mr. Bonnerjee's co-operation and assistance in this matter. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you longer. Many of us lose in Mr. Bonnerjee not only a great leader, but also a warm generous friend. Who that has ever enjoyed the hospitality of his beautiful home at Croydon—now, alas, plunged into the depths of grief—will forget the singular charm of his personality, the charity of his judgments, his touching devotion to those around him, or the kindness he loved to lavish on all whom he admitted to the privilege of his friendship! And, speaking in this connection, may I say how our hearts go out to-day to the bereaved family, whose loss is beyond words, and especially to that stricken lady whose life has now been rendered desolate and to whom the world will never be the same again! One word more and I have done. Mr. Bonnerjee has now crossed the line which there is no recrossing. But he is not altogether gone from us. He has left us the precious inheritance of a noble example. He has left us his name to honour, his memory to cherish. Above all, he has left us the cause—the cause he loved so dearly and served so well. Our very sorrow to-day speaks to us of our duty to that cause and no tribute that we can offer to the memory of the departed will be more truly fitting than a resolve to recognise and an endeavour to discharge this duty according to the measure of our capacity and the requirements of our country.