

**SPEECHES OF THE HONOURABLE**  
**Mr. G. K. GOKHALE , C.I.E.**

**Non-official Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council**

**Pub. : G. A. Natesan & Co. Esplanade,**  
**Madras**



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OF

THE HONOURABLE

# MR. G. K. GOKHALE, C.I.E.

Non-official Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION*

*AND A FRONTISPIECE.*

.....  
Price Rs. Three.  
.....

PUBLISHED BY

G. A. NATESAN & CO., ESPLANADE,

MADRAS.

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

The publishers desire to express their thanks to the Hon. Mr. Gokhale for his kind permission to bring out this publication. It is the first collection of his speeches and may claim to be fairly exhaustive, no important pronouncement of his having been omitted. The book contains four parts and an appendix. The first part includes all his utterances in the Supreme Legislative Council and in the Bombay Legislative Council; the second, all his Congress speeches, including his presidential address at Benares; the third, speeches in appreciation of Hume, Naoroji, Ranade, Mehta and Bonnerjee; the fourth, miscellaneous speeches delivered in England and India. The appendix contains the full text of his evidence both in chief and in cross-examination before the Welby Commission and various papers. These cover nearly a quarter of a century of a most strenuous, selfless and active public life and embrace the whole range of topics that have engaged and are still engaging the attention of the public. Full of instruction on every point and breathing in every line the moral fervour which is Mr. Gokhale's supreme characteristic, this volume, the publishers venture to hope, will command wide popularity.

The publishers would take this opportunity to thank Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri for the great help rendered by him in passing this volume through the press and for the valuable assistance he has been always giving them in the preparation of several of their publications.

## *ERRATA.*

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## INTRODUCTION

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**T**HE present time in India is full of portents. One never opens the day's newspaper without anxiety. Strange but powerful ideas have found lodgment in men's minds. The air is thick with shadowy visions of the future, fantastic plans, harrowing doubts, black designs, born of blind hope or unreasoning despair. Political postulates, hitherto accepted without question, are freely challenged. The very foundations of our public life are being torn up and examined. A feeling of intense uneasiness broods over the land, and the more susceptible spirits cry in anguish that they have been the victims of foul treachery.

A friendly and comforting voice at such a juncture must have eager attention. To those whose minds have not been unhinged by the misfortunes of the time, the speeches of the Hon. Mr. Gokhale are certain to bring relief and strength. Alarmed by the distracted cries of quacks, the public will be glad to listen to the calm counsel of one who has made public ills his special study. Keenly alive to every element of the situation, Mr. Gokhale, as will appear from the contents of this volume, bids us be of good cheer, advises no violent wrench from the past, and strongly deprecates violent remedies and desperate suggestions.



The Maharashtra Brahman, whom Mr. Gokhale represents at his best, is no favourite with Anglo-India. We all know his caricature by the *Pioneer*. Wiles, restless intrigue, and elusiveness are represented to be his strong points, while his political capacity is limited to the sphere of destruction. Amongst the last people in India to pass under the direct rule of the British, it is no wonder that he retains lively memories of Peshwa domination and exhibits the acutest political instincts of all races in India. In other parts of the country one may find large numbers of educated men in whose lives politics is of feeble interest at normal times, and but one of several powerful interests at abnormal times. With the Poona Brahman, politics is ever a passion, and it does not take much to raise the passion to a white heat. He readily sees the precise bearing and import of governmental measures, and, if his inferences as to motive be marked by suspiciousness, it is not altogether his fault. He is excelled in imagination, susceptibility, and even in the higher qualities of the intellect by the Bengalee; in keenness of grasp, clearness of vision, and sense of proportion the Madrassi is quite his match, if not more; but for vigour of mind, dogged persistence, and capacity for practical work, he is certainly unrivalled. The Maratha supremacy, short-lived as it was, is an eloquent witness to the constructive capacity of the race, and Poona boasts at the present day of more

than one institution which proves his power of practical organisation and sustained zeal in unselfish causes. From the high polish, the graces and refinements of civilised life, he is distinctly averse. His poverty precludes him from great industrial or commercial undertakings. In the sphere of religion, the practical genius of the race has produced great devotees and saints. Literature, music and the other arts, he has cultivated to a high degree. For physical culture his aptitude has continued to this day. He has profited to the full by the opportunities available under British rule for developing the civic virtues. Sturdy and self-assertive, he always makes himself heard in the national councils, and, until the other day when the Bengal troubles began, held the first place for sacrifices made and sufferings undergone in the public cause. Social reform has all along remained his special field, woman in the Deccan enjoying, perhaps, greater freedom and respect than elsewhere in India. Nor is the contribution of Maharashtra to the roll of contemporary Indian greatness small. Chiplonkar, Ranade, Telang, Mandlik, Apte, Bhandarkar, Gokhale, Paranjpe, are names that no province of India can match except Bengal.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was born in 1866 at Kolhapur. His parents were poor, but had him educated in the local college. After passing the Intermediate Examination, he took the B. A. course

principally in the Elphinstone College of Bombay and partly in the Deccan- College of Poona. As a student he was known for a high degree of ability, a strong memory, and steady application. On taking the B. A. Degree in 1884, he was admitted to membership of the Deccan Education Society,\* which appealed to his ardent nature not merely by its aims and principles, but by the great names already associated with it, Apte, Agarkar, and Tilak. The now-famous Fergusson College had been recently started. Within a short time of his joining the staff, Mr. Gokhale was called upon to lecture to College classes on English Literature and occasionally on Mathematics. But it was the chair of History and Political Economy that he filled for the most part of his twenty

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\* Life-members of this Society bind themselves to serve in the Fergusson College and in the schools of the Society for a period of 20 years, after which they may retire on a pension of Rs. 30 per mensem. During service they get a monthly salary of Rs. 75 and their lives are insured for a sum of Rs. 3,000, the Society paying the premiums. Professors may build quarters on sites freely granted within the compound, and the Society undertakes to buy up the buildings on the retirement of the owners. Latterly, no member is admitted unless he has served a probation of six months and has taken the M. A. Degree. Religious education is excluded from the course of studies and is not given even out of college hours. A large hostel houses over 100 scholars and a number of messes, each managed by its own members. The Society now owns buildings and other property to the value of nearly 4 lakhs, and the College receives State aid on the most favourable scale, viz., Rs. 10,000 a year, besides a special grant of Rs. 50,000. The Bombay Presidency at large, and the Deccan, in particular, liberally support the College. Last year it received as a gift the valuable library of the late Rao Sahib V. N. Mandlik, estimated to have cost him between 50 and 60 thousand rupees.

years' service. Into the study of Economics he threw himself with such fervour and delight that he became an acknowledged authority on it, and his lectures came to be so highly prized that, when he retired at the end of his full term, it was felt that he inflicted a serious loss on the college. It was not merely as Professor that he laboured for the institution so dear to him. Though he may not share the glory of its foundation, the credit of establishing it on a sound financial basis is largely his. For several years he devoted all his holidays to the work of collecting funds, travelling incessantly, bearing hardships, and submitting to indignities which only those can understand who have tried to raise money for public purposes in India. To such as Mr. Gokhale, however, duty is a religion, and all suffering for it is a joy; and the man whom all India now delights to honour tells the story of his early begging as a priceless experience and without the least trace of personal vexation or annoyance. In this way he is said to have brought the college coffers upwards of two lakhs. Add to such work great earnestness and enthusiasm and a sound judgment; is it then a wonder that for many years Mr. Gokhale occupied a commanding position in the college, and that though he never was Principal, his influence was the greatest in the conduct of its affairs?

But college duties, exacting as they must have been in the earlier years, could not engross Mr. Gokhale's energy. Public life claimed a share of his attention and had its claim liberally allowed. It could not be otherwise while the Deccan lay under the guidance of that choice and master spirit of the age, Mr. Ranade. Of the rare gifts of that personality, not the least rare was the power of choosing young men of promise and so informing their minds and chastening their souls as to make them yield the highest service to the country of which their nature was capable. It has been said that Mr. Gokhale is Ranade's greatest legacy. And his greatest memorial. For fourteen years, the ample measure of ancient discipleship, Mr. Gokhale sat at the feet of his *guru*, learning to read the world aright and mastering the great lessons of life,—the progress and destiny of nations, the inner meaning of events, the far-off results of action, the discipline of failure, service and sacrifice, faith and prayer, the infinite play of human passion. But not alone the open book of Nature and Man,—other books, too, they read together. Nothing that was useful was overlooked. The ephemeral press was ransacked. Heavy tomes laid bare their treasures. Government publications, formidable in red, green and blue, had no terrors for this pair. Statistics in dread array yielded up their secrets. Earth has no fairer sight than the close communion of two such master-

souls. That blessing who would exchange for all the treasures and honours of the world? No wonder Mr. Gokhale says that, since the departure of his *guru*, the world has never been the same to him as before. An angel, once seen, leaves a perpetual hunger in the heart.

The Sarvajanic Sabha of Poona was then at the height of its usefulness. Second to no public body in standing or weight, it commanded the respect both of Government and the country, and its quarterly journal, which owed, it has been computed, about two-thirds of its contents either directly or indirectly to Mr. Ranade, performed with signal ability the dual function of forming and disseminating public opinion, especially on questions of Indian finance and Indian administration. In 1887 Mr. Gokhale, then twenty-one, was called to the important office of Editor of this journal; and this office, together with that of Secretary of the Sabha, he held until dissension, the original curse of Indian humanity in Maharashtra as elsewhere, compelled the founding of another political body called the Deccan Sabha, of which, too, the Rising Star of the Deccan, as Mr. Gokhale had come to be called, became Secretary. He was likewise for four years one of the editors of an Anglo-Marathi weekly of Poona, named the *Sudharak*. He was Secretary to the Bombay Provincial Conference for a similar period, and when in 1895 the Indian National Congress held its eleventh

session in Poona, Mr. Gokhale's services were at its disposal as one of the Secretaries. In 1897 he proceeded to England, along with men many years senior to give evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure presided over by Lord Welby. One would fain have a peep into the young hero's heart as it rose and sank like the ship that bore him with hopes and fears and dreams of the coming ordeal. Suffice it to say that, thanks to the training he had received under Mr. Ranade, his grasp of principles and mastery of details were so thorough that he was enabled to stand the severe heckling to which the expert Commissioners subjected him, and he received encomiums for the way in which he had represented the case, and enhanced the reputation, of his countrymen. It is hardly possible to summarise the criticisms or the suggestions that he then advanced; but the special attention of the reader may be drawn to his analysis of the leading facts in the history of Indian finance, his examination of the constitution and expenditure of the Indian Army, and his remarks on the subordination of the interests of the taxpayers to those of the European services and the exclusion of Indians from the higher branches of public service.

While in England on this occasion, he received letters from Poona containing bitter complaints against the plague policy of the government of

Lord Sandhurst and describing the atrocities of English soldiers on plague duty. His indignation at the wrongs of his countrymen and countrywomen impelled him to communicate the substance of these letters to the English Press. A great sensation was immediately produced, and the Bombay Government, put upon their trial, challenged Mr. Gokhale to produce his proofs. On returning to India he found his province lying prostrate and panic-stricken under the double scourge of plague and governmental oppression, and no evidence could be obtained wherewith to substantiate the charges. He then took the only step that a man of honour could take and openly apologised. For this act he was severely censured at the time by a section of his countrymen. But he himself has never regretted it, and maintains that he would repeat it, should the wheel of time bring those events round again. There can be no doubt that he acted in accordance with the best traditions of English public life, and won the approval of those most competent to judge. Some critics of the time who passed the apology condemned its terms as too abject. But no reparation to the wronged parties would have been handsome which was not thorough, and if the apology had contained reservations, it would have been alike graceless and ungenerous. Unpleasant as the episode was, it served to bring out the true gentleman in Mr. Gokhale, and showed that in his



hands the honour of his political opponents was as safe as his own. For the time, however, the tide of unpopularity rose high and burst angrily over his head. He bore it without a murmur, feeling that it was a discipline meant for the strengthening of his heart; and instead of being upset by it as a less balanced nature might have been, he kept on his course straight and soon won the hearts of all, official and unofficial, by untiring exertions in mitigation of the plague.

During 1900 and 1901 Mr. Gokhale was an elected member of the Bombay Legislative Council. How seriously he took the duties of this responsible position may be judged by the half-dozen speeches of the period published in this volume. They furnish evidence not only that he studied thoroughly the official papers placed at his disposal, but that he diligently sought information and guidance from all possible quarters. The revenue administration of Bombay and the famine operations there seem to have been singularly wanting in consideration for the sufferings of the people affected. The non-official members found it necessary to attack official acts persistently. Mr. Gokhale's slashing criticism of famine relief operations in his first budget speech is a laborious piece of work, and forms a fitting prelude to his subsequent performance in the Imperial Legislative Council. The most powerful speech delivered by

Mr. Gokhale in the Bombay Council is the one in which he seconded the motion made by the Hon. Mr. Mehta to adjourn the consideration of the Bombay Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill of 1901. Most readers will remember the bitterness of the controversy that raged round this bill on account of the theatrical departure, as Anglo-Indian papers used to call it, of Mr. Mehta and other non-official Councillors as soon as the amendment was rejected. After proving that the legislation could not protect the ryots or break the power of the sowcar, both of which it aimed at doing, Mr. Gokhale proceeded to show how it would facilitate the inflow of the government revenue and establish indirectly the revolutionary principle of State landlordism, and wound up by an appeal to the Governor not to flout non-official opinion, but to use the giant's strength of the government majority in a large and conciliatory spirit. The appeal failed; and when the other members of his party withdrew from the Council Chamber, he followed them, unwilling, as he said, to bear even the small degree of responsibility for the bill that his presence at its further stages might seem to imply. The speech, however, told on the Council by reason of its earnestness, cogency, and fervour of pleading; and a European member is said to have remarked that after Mr. Gokhale's speech the Act fell still-born.

In 1902 when the Hon. Mr. Mehta vacated his seat on the Viceroy's Council, it was felt that the only suitable successor was Mr. Gokhale. Never deaf to duty's call, he accepted the exalted position and continues to occupy it to-day, having been elected for the fourth time by the Bombay non-official Councillors. Mr. Mehta had been accused by an Anglo-Indian official, and in consequence admired by the whole Indian public, for introducing a 'new spirit' into the debates in the Supreme Legislative Council. His successor went farther and in his first speech gave a new tone altogether to non-official criticism of the Budget. His attack on the surpluses as a grievous burden on the taxpayer, his plea for reduction of taxation, and his refutation of the official theory of the prosperity of the people at once arrested the attention of the whole country. It was clear that the new member would be a thoroughly competent and unsparing critic of Indian finance, and that no show of authority and mere beating of the official drum could make him pass official shibboleths unchallenged. It marked him out, as no less an authority than Mr. R. C. Dutt observed on a recent occasion, as 'the coming man' in India.

In the latter part of this year, 1902, Mr. Gokhale retired from the service of Fergusson College, which he had done so much to build up. Two more years

were wanting to make the full term of twenty years; but Mr. Gokhale had many months' leave to his credit, which he was allowed to enjoy preparatory to entire withdrawal. It was at eighteen in the first flush of youthful enthusiasm that he had vowed to serve the College on Rs. 75 a month. Another eighteen years, and we find him, with experience and wisdom, but with no less enthusiasm, making another but far harder vow,—to serve the country exclusively and whole-heartedly on very little beyond his pension of Rs. 30 a month. Public life in India, he said in bidding farewell to the college, has few rewards but many trials; and yet he felt irresistibly drawn to it. For a touching parallel he told the story of a fisherman whom the sea lured in all its moods, and who finally put out in a frail skiff and, though beaten back more than once, still ventured into the open waters and was before long swallowed up. In truth, however, whatever disappointments he may have experienced, the nation has nobly stood by him. In the land where Puran Bhagat is a familiar phenomenon, splendid sacrifice like Mr. Gokhale's cannot fail to evoke genuine admiration and loving gratitude. Political opponents too, even those closely associated with the Government, feel attracted by the absolutely disinterested character of his patriotism, and the tireless industry with which he toils for his mother country. Lord

Curzon, who was struck by his conspicuous ability and said it was a pleasure to cross swords with him in Council, was struck even more by his unexampled selflessness, and, in communicating the honour of a companionship of the Indian Empire, added a wish that India had more such sons to serve her. He sits enthroned in the hearts of his countrymen, who have given him the highest honour in their gift. To-day, if we omit our Grand Old Man, he is the one man in India who retains the esteem and love of all parties. The character and motives of every other patriot have been questioned by Extremist idol-breakers. Even during the last brief session of the Congress at Surat, when passion ran high and men did not weigh their words, the worst that one heard of Mr. Gokhale personally was that he was a good man in a bad cause. Full of honours, though not of years, with a record behind him of which any patriot may be proud and for which the future may have bright pages in store, Mr. Gokhale can, in the poet's words, "read his history in a nation's eyes," and is far indeed from the weather-beaten, tempest-tost, and shipwrecked mariner which he feared he might one day be, when first he set forth on the perilous voyage of public life.

In 1904, he visited the city of Madras in his capacity of Joint-General Secretary to the Indian National Congress, to which place he had been appointed at its previous session. The southern capital gave

him a magnificent reception. Like the rest of the country the good people of the south had been violently agitated over the Indian Universities Act and the Official Secrets Act, and observed with equal pride and thankfulness how valiantly Mr. Gokhale bore the brunt of the hopeless struggle in the Imperial Legislature, and how unweariedly he engaged now one combatant and now another, not excepting the sphere-shaker Lord Curzon, though the odds were so overwhelmingly against him. Sober men had been impressed to admiration by his three Budget speeches. Religious-minded people had discerned a heart deeply responsive to things of the spirit in the passionate outpourings of grief and affection with which he cherished the memory of his late *guru*. So it was that all classes joined with unaffected joy in the grateful task of welcoming and entertaining the illustrious visitor. The Press, including Anglo-Indian papers, published notices of his life and gave much space to his utterances. Students presented addresses, public bodies welcomed him, visitors thronged his quarters, and friends feted him. One function must have gladdened his soul, the laying of the foundation stone of the Ranade Library at Mylapore. "Remember," he said to the audience on the occasion, "remember when you come here that the eye of a great master, though himself no longer amongst us, is on you. Let that stimulate you to take the utmost advantage of the

facilities which this Library offers you. In proportion as you do this, you will have raised a true memorial to Mr. Ranade." Simple words, but minted from the heart and ringing true !

The year 1905 brought heavy work and heavier anxiety to Mr. Gokhale. The duties of Secretary to the Congress he shared with Mr. D. E. Wacha. In the Viceroy's Legislature, he had to resist strenuously, though ineffectually, the enactment of the extraordinary Act which, seeking to validate, thereby published, the ignorance, obstinacy, and irregularities of Provincial Governments to the world. Then he had to compile laborious tables from State returns for exposing at Budget time the disingenuous calculations by which Lord Curzon had tried to demonstrate 'the unexampled liberality' with which the British Government had admitted Indians to the higher ranks of its service. He had undertaken besides the Indian agency for the weekly periodical called *India*, which was nearly being given up for want of adequate support from the very people in whose name and for whose exclusive benefit it had been conducted against odds by the philanthropy and noble self-sacrifice of a few steadfast friends, European and Indian. The work of collecting funds for the Ranade Economic Institute was a sacred duty, which no distractions could long keep out of his mind. His mature experience and most anxious thought had been bestowed on the devising and

organising of the Servants of India Society, the first members of which were sworn in on the 12th of June this year. Besides, there devolved on him the mission to England which all the Provinces of India had undertaken at the previous Congress, but which only Bombay and the Punjab performed in the event. As if all this was not enough, just before he left India, a duty was cast on his shoulders far transcending the cumulative burdens already there both in the solemn responsibility it carried and in the severe strain it involved on his overtaxed constitution. In face of strong protests and overcoming his most unaffected reluctance, the Reception Committee of the forthcoming Congress at Benares would have him and none other for their President, and the country with one voice ratified and acclaimed the choice.

This year also saw the beginning of the extraordinary ferment in Indian public life which has continued unabated to this day. Coming on the top of a succession of reactionary measures and provoking speeches, the partition of Bengal, carried out under every circumstance of exasperation and humiliation, drove the highly sensitive Bengalees nearly mad. In the general wreck of moderation and faith that followed, even the Curzon-Kitchener controversy, culminating in the removal of the hated cause of Bengal's woes from the scene of his mischievous activity, brought no sensible relief. Boycott of everything foreign was



preached to the people, even schools and colleges falling under the indiscriminating ban; and in the course of this hysterical propaganda, schoolboys and editors often collided with the authorities. Sir B. Fuller, whose temper was too imperious to allow for the disturbed state of his subjects, began that course of hectoring, repressing, and terrorising that finally recoiled on himself. Swaraj, in absolute independence of the selfish and hateful Feringhee, was held up as the goal of our aspirations, and though the prominent apostles of the new faith expressly disavowed the use of force or violence of any sort, the popular mind could not always remember the distinction between passive resistance and active resistance. Physical courage was sedulously cultivated; *lathi* play became the chief pastime of youth; an affray with the police was celebrated as an encounter with tyranny, and martial honours were given to young men on whose bodies constables had left marks of their anger. Undignified and even puerile as these things might seem, they were but the extravagances of a radical and serious change that had come over the spirit and temper of the people. Men thought with shame of the vices and weaknesses of character that had lost them their beautiful country and longed eagerly for the experiences which should put grit into their bodies and rage into their souls. The Government was cruel, it was unjust; it impoverished, emasculated, and

trampled on the people. What else could it be or do? Was it not foreign? Aye, there's the rub! True, there was order in the land, there was security, there were roads, railways, and other material appliances of civilisation. But surely they were only rendering the administration easier and more profitable to the foreigner. On the people's minds they acted like a hypnotic illusion or *maya*, which must be dispelled at once. Welcome then oppression and disorder! The more these grow, the quicker will sound the doom of the foreign yoke. Even history has its own lessons for sour hearts. England has never been a friend of freedom except where her own interests made such a role profitable. Look at Ireland. To her own people nothing in the nature of a privilege was granted without violent agitation, windows smashed, bones broken, and mobs fired on. Away with remonstrances and mile-long memorials! Our only charter, the Queen's Proclamation, was the result of the Great Mutiny. If our demands be not granted, we must be resolved to know the reason why. How were the plague atrocities stopped in Poona? What is the inner history of the resignation of Sir B. Fuller? Why did Lord Minto refuse his assent to the Punjab Colonisation Bill? Again, are Englishmen more than human? They must hold their interests dearer than ours. Every concession granted to us is a blow to their prestige. Every contraction of their market means starvation to

hundreds of their workmen. Every post thrown open to us is a post denied to their sons. They must be mad if they yield anything so long as they can help it. Ideas like these, now openly inculcated, now conveyed in impressive whispers, and brooded over by eager minds smarting under a sense of wrong, could lead but to one result. They destroyed the faith that the younger generation might have had in the old lines of public work, and disposed the new patriotism to the adoption of methods which were fancied to be at once more manly, stern, and efficacious. On the other hand, a clear gain has been the remarkable wave of feeling that has swept over the entire land, uniting millions by that strongest of all ties, sufferings shared together. The idea of a common nationality has almost for the first time emerged into the general consciousness as an end to be striven for at all costs. *Swadeshi* and *Vande Mataram* are names that at once signify and sanctify the new programme and the new spirit; and they supply the watchwords so indispensable to the spread of a great cause, watchwords that evoke the highest service and sacrifice, invest life with a new meaning and a new dignity, and transmute suffering into joy and death into a deathless destiny.

England too was on the eve of a General Election when Mr. Gokhale landed. Mr. Balfour's effete ministry fell ingloriously, and the country was to

transfer confidence and power to the Liberals with an unprecedented majority. Lala Lajpat Rai, the Punjab delegate, was likewise there; and a vigorous and unbroken campaign was kept up with the generous aid of our English friends. Mr. Gokhale was his own secretary, amanuensis, and attendant as well, and the strain on his frame and nerves may be imagined when it is said that he addressed more than 45 meetings in little over 50 days, travelling frequently to keep his engagements, writing notes and letters, interviewing and being interviewed in the few gaps of time that remained. His general health began to be affected, while his throat was so sore that on his return he had to undergo an operation on board the steamer. Even so his voice was too feeble to bear the strain of the President's work at Congress, and after the first effort completely broke down. Of his actual performance in England praise is simply superfluous. His criticism was fearless and thorough. Lord Curzon's *regime* gave no end of themes for attack. But the poverty of the people, their appalling ignorance, the increasing death-rate, the indebtedness of the peasantry and the frequency of famines, the low state of sanitation furnished a gruesome background for the picture. The devouring Military expenditure, the enormous drain of the country's resources, the denial even to competent Indians, at one time tacit, but now avowed, of a

due and proper share of the higher services, the subordination and neglect of Indian interests in the management of finance and conduct of affairs, and the profound moral debasement caused by the disarmament of the whole nation and compulsory disuse of the highest faculties of pluck, initiative, and guidance of bold policies, each had its due place and just emphasis in an indictment admirably conceived and aptly phrased. The benefits that India had obtained from British rule did not fail to get generous appraisal and praise. And the demands of reform put forth were adjusted with scrupulous care to the capacity of slow-moving India, the susceptibilities of jealous Anglo-India, and the practical sense of the British people averse to theories and systems in politics. It would be useful to state the more important of these demands as nearly as possible in Mr. Gokhale's own language.

Fifty years ago an English representative on the Council suggested a reform with which they would be satisfied to-day. It was that half the members of the Viceroy's Council should be nominated by the people, that these representatives should have power to divide the Council on financial as on other matters, that the Viceroy should have the power of veto. So that if the Council carried a vote against the Viceroy, the Viceroy would be able to veto it if he thought fit. He (Mr. Gokhale) was prepared to limit the right of each member of the Council to one amendment. With regard to Provincial Councils, he asked that they should have more control because they dealt with internal affairs. He would ask for another reform. In the Secretary of State's Council for India, they had a system under which the Secretary of State, who had never been in India, was advised by a Council of ex-Indian officials—all able men, but hardened in the traditions of the service. The people had a right to ask that at least three or four should be representa-

tives of the Indian people, so that the Secretary of State should always be sure of having the Indian view of any question on which he was asked to decide. The fourth thing he would ask was—and no doubt that would be more difficult—that half-a-dozen Indian representatives—say two from each of the three leading provinces—should have places found for them in the British House of Commons. Six Indians out of a total of 670 members would not introduce any great disturbing influence—but, at any rate, it would ensure that the Indian view of Indian questions would be submitted to the House of Commons and the country. Their numbers would be small, but when they were united they would represent a great moral force. Moreover, it would associate them with the controlling body of the whole Empire, and elevate them from the position of a subject race to an equality with the rest of the Empire.

On returning to India Mr. Gokhale was welcomed both at Bombay and at Poona with every token of approbation and gratitude, and it was remarked at the time as a good omen for the future harmony of public life that Mr. Tilak joined in the congratulations and admitted the necessity of such political missions to England. Mr. Gokhale had no time for the repose that he so much needed. From one tumult of sensations he was to be hurried into another tumult of sensations and whirl of duties at Benares with but a brief interval in Calcutta for the composition of the Presidential address for which all India and a considerable part of England were straining their ears. The address opened with a striking comparison of Lord Curzon to Aurangzeb, dealt fully with the Partition of Bengal, justified the boycott of British goods by Bengal, unfolded the implications of the Swadeshi doctrine at its highest, expounded the aims of the Congress, showed up the opposition of the bureaucracy, recom-

mended a list of reforms on which the Congress should concentrate its efforts, and concluded with a reference to the new Secretary of State and a quotation from Mr. Ranade calling up a vision of India in the future. Taken up entirely with topics of immediate and practical interest, the address had no room for those maxims, sallies, and generalisations which enliven and adorn other Presidential orations. Particular interest attaches to the terms used of Mr. Morley who has since dashed so many hopes to the ground and caused such bitter anguish in ardent Indian hearts. Sensitive as Mr. Gokhale is to every breeze of hope and every breath of fear, it is wonderful how reserved and delicately balanced his early anticipations were. "And as regards the new Secretary of State for India, what shall I say? Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles as it had never hoped or trembled before. He, the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone,—will he courageously apply their principles and his own to the government of this country, or will he, too, succumb to the influences of the India Office around him and thus cast a cruel blight on hopes which his own writings have done so much to foster?"

It was hard work to hold the reins firmly at the meetings of the Subjects Committee. The forward

party, since called the New or Extremist party, were not then in a position to try conclusions, but could make themselves felt. They made difficulties about the Congress welcoming Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and sought even then to impose the boycott on the whole country in the name of the National Congress. Vehement was the discussion that raged round these questions, and the President was often compelled to interpose his authority to keep it within the limits of strict propriety and usefulness. In general, however, it must be said that the debaters gave him cordial co-operation and were anxious that, when every shade of opinion had had full and free expression, the proceedings should be regulated in accordance with the usual practice. Still, to compose angry differences, settle the right of speech, explain obscure points, give rulings on points of order at the right moment, keep excited delegates from straying away from the points at issue, and do all this without any aggressive assertion of authority, called for a combination of tact, watchfulness, firmness, and courtesy to which Mr. Gokhale was easily equal. The Congress sealed its approbation of his Presidency appointing him its delegate once more to press its demands on the British public.

Next year, 1906, he made his fifth budget speech, the first in the Viceroyalty of Lord Minto. After assailing vigorously the military policy of the Gov-



ernment, he proceeded to tackle the condition of the raiyat, and suggested several meliorative measures : (1) a reduction of the State demand on land, especially in Bombay, Madras, and the United Provinces, and a limitation of that demand all over India ; (2) an experiment in a limited area for the composition of the raiyat's debts and after this, and after this only, restriction of his powers of alienation ; (3) the establishment of Agricultural Banks like those of Lord Cromer in Egypt ; (4) improvements in Irrigation and Scientific Agriculture ; (5) the promotion of technical and industrial education ; (6) free and compulsory primary education ; and (7) works of sanitary improvement, such as good water-supply and drainage. A peroration in simple solemn words all athrob with characteristic feeling drew the new Viceroy's attention to the menace to peace and order that was gaining a foothold in the minds of the coming generation. " A volume of new feeling is gathering, which requires to be treated with care. New generations are rising up, whose notions of the character and ideals of British rule are derived only from their experience of the last few years, and whose minds are not restrained by the thought of the great work which England has on the whole accomplished in the past in this land. I fully believe that it is in the power of the government to give a turn to this feeling, which will make it a source of strength and not of weakness to the Empire.

One thing, however, is clear. Such a result will not be achieved by any methods of repression. What the country needs at this moment above everything else is a Government, national in spirit, even though it may be foreign in personnel,—a Government that will enable us to feel that *our* interests are the first consideration with it, and that *our* wishes and opinions are to it a matter of some account. My Lord, I have ventured to make these observations, because the present situation fills me with great anxiety. I can only raise my humble voice by way of warning, by way of appeal. The rest lies on the knees of the gods.” It is difficult to believe that this warning and appeal were without influence on the heart of a good man like Lord Minto. Rather should we take their apparent infructuousness as a proof how little a Viceroy can impress himself on Indian administration if he wishes to deflect, be it never so slightly, and not merely to reinforce, its spirit, and how mighty are the forces of disorder when once they get free play in the affairs of a country.

Irritated at every turn and irritating in return, Sir B. Fuller and his subordinates continued to convulse new and old Bengal with high-handed action of one sort or another. Mr. Gokhale was on his way to England when the eyes of the whole country were drawn in amazement and dismay to Barisal, already through the strong and lovable personality of Babu

Aswini Kumar Dutt the best organised centre of the boycott movement. The authorities were afraid of the great strength that would accrue to the popular cause, if the forthcoming Provincial Conference were allowed to hold its sittings undisturbed at that town. But, like most unwise people that seek to avert one evil, they only raised up a much greater evil. The local Police assaulted the delegates marching in a peaceful and orderly procession and applied their *lathis* freely on the persons even of respectable men. Babu Surendra Nath Banerji was arrested by order of the District Magistrate, who first insulted him and then fined him for resenting the insult, and finally fined him again for taking part in a procession for which a license had not been previously obtained. This pitiful manifestation of personal spite would have sufficed to rouse the worst passions of the people against the government. But Mr. Emerson capped his career of folly by dispersing the Provincial Conference the day after the next on some sorry pretext. Failure to redress these crying grievances took away from the administration of Sir B. Fuller the last chance it had of being reconciled to the people, who would appear to have sworn not to give it any rest. Ghurkas and punitive police were let loose on the towns, and bullying speeches, minatory circulars, schoolboy prosecutions, and the enrolment of honoured citizens as special constables kept up the seething turmoil, the

progress of which was scarcely arrested by the decisions of the High Court and the interposition of Mr. John Morley. Anything like real relief was felt only on the withdrawal of Sir B. Fuller, whose disgrace was but thinly covered by the compliments and euphemisms of official convention. Mr. Gokhale had intended to devote his time in England principally to interviewing important members of Parliament on both sides and pleading with them for reforms in the administration of India. These events in Bengal compelled him to vary his programme by addressing some public meetings to expose the misdeeds of Sir B. Fuller and urge his recall. Mr. Morley granted him many audiences, and it is probable that his testimony and advice were helpful in persuading the Secretary of State to cancel the prohibition laid on public meetings, processions and the singing of national songs, and to order the restoration of expelled schoolboys. To the Congress at Calcutta in December he made a hopeful and encouraging report of what he had seen and heard in England of resurgent Liberalism.

Congress itself was barely saved from a wreck by the reverence-compelling presence of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. The state of East Bengal had greatly added to the strength of the new party of politicians in India. But for a timely move on the part of Babu Surendra Nath Banerji, they would have installed Mr. Tilak as President of the

year's Congress. They were able to get a resolution accepted by that body approving of the boycott movement adopted in Bengal. In speaking to this resolution an Extremist leader expounded it as applicable to all India and inclusive of every form of boycott,—boycott of the British Government, of the Universities and schools connected with it, and of all association, direct and indirect, with governmental functions, as well as of British goods. This made it necessary that Mr. Gokhale should interpose in the debate and make it clear that the approval of Congress extended only to the boycott in Bengal of British goods, and that whoever proceeded further than that acted on his account. But the unqualified expression "boycott movement," was destined to give trouble again.

Quite as much as their doctrines the methods of the new party caused grave concern. A minority must be noisy to be heard; and strong convictions in matters held to be vital destroy all sense of courtesy to opponents. Time flies; and those that hold the keys of political heaven cannot be blamed if they are rough on the sluggish crowds that block the way to the door. At the Calcutta Congress, secession was more than once threatened. Respectable speakers on the Moderate side were hooted down. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was grossly insulted. The venerable old President was not obeyed with grace, and on one occasion his decision was questioned by the malcontents. Worse

than all, when once to quell a prolonged uproar Babu Surendra Nath raised his well-known voice, and not succeeding, asked "Is it come to this?," a chorus of voices returned an unhesitating answer in the affirmative. Young patriots elsewhere in the country were not slow to use this newly-discovered power of theirs, and at Madras, Allahabad, and Poona, the proceedings of public meetings could not go on unless regulated in accordance with the tastes of small but determined groups. But these weapons were to receive their finish at Nagpur and fulfil their highest destiny at Surat.

Mr. Gokhale could not watch this new spirit without putting forth his hand to stay its progress. He traced the unlovely symptoms of violence and rowdiness to the distemper which disposed the mind to dwell continually on one set of facts. He felt that he ought, so far as in him lay, to correct the false notions and distorted views that had been caused by the unvaried contemplation of recent wrongs, and to start the first currents of a larger and juster conception of the condition and needs of the country. With this object he spent nearly the whole of February 1907 in the United Provinces and the Punjab, delivering public lectures in important centres, Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar. Four subjects principally engaged his attention during this tour, the political situation, Swadeshi, the Hindu-Muhammadan

problem, and the duties of students. It is needless to summarise the opinions of a person who never uses too many words. But one must essay here the difficult task of sketching the groundwork of Mr. Gokhale's programme. His highest ambition for India, in his own words, is that Indians should rise to the full height of their stature and be in their country what other people are in theirs. This ambition can be substantially realised, he holds, within the British Empire. British rule is not a mere evil to be endured. It is a discipline through which kind Providence is preparing us united national life. If only we willingly profited by the discipline, nothing better could be wished. No stable future can be built on the foundation of racial hatred. Justice and love ought to form the basis,—justice that will ungrudgingly recognise all claims that history has brought into existence, and love that knows no barriers of race or religion and embraces even those that appear to be adversaries from time to time. The ethic appears superhuman, but cannot dishearten a people accustomed to style themselves the dispensers of spirituality to the world. Faith, hope, and charity are to be our guiding stars. Difficulties and disappointments are bound to be serious and frequent; but what are they before perseverance and courage? It is true, only too true, that our people lack the necessary virtues, and that is why Mr. Gokhale is never tired of saying that

the work before the patriot is one of moral regeneration, of building up the strength and character of the nation. Schooling is a weary, tearful process to the individual. When a whole nation, hampered by hoary traditions and learned lumber, is trying to acquire a new abc, the sufferings are awful, the penalties sometimes staggering. Peace and order are indispensable conditions of our mastering the first lessons of the new polity. Heavy, then, is the responsibility incurred by those who would lightly disturb these conditions, terrible the nemesis that we should have to face if we listened to the seductive voices of impatience and revenge. Whether in the industrial, commercial, educational, or political line, our progress is obstructed by vested interests allied with organisation, skill, and enormous resources; whoever adds to these arrayed forces those of hatred and rancorous enmity ensures the failure of the struggle at the very start and with it immeasurable misery and suffering to his own people. Sufferings and struggles, it is superfluous to say, will never find Mr. Gokhale unprepared. In fact he values privileges in proportion to the sacrifices with which they have been bought, and has more than once wished that the privileges the Indian people enjoy had been "hallowed by sacrifice and sanctified by suffering." Constitutional agitation for colonial autonomy involves bitter contests with the bureaucracy in India and beyond a certain point may be with the British people



at home also. But history has demonstrated the great possibilities of earnest and persistent agitation conducted without recourse to violence or crime. No man feels more keenly than Mr. Gokhale the wrongs and humiliations of his country; but his faith is clear and strong, and he cannot forget that, though no single formula can sum up a long and varied history, England has, on the whole, befriended the freedom of the people, and that the British elector, dazed though he now be by visions of imperial glory, has a heart that at bottom feels for the oppressed, and will not desert altogether the generous old standard of liberty and justice.

One gratifying circumstance of this tour was the cordial welcome which the Muhammadan community extended to Mr. Gokhale. At Aligarh and elsewhere too they recognised in him a true patriot of the time, who showed in his own person that it was quite possible for one to be an Indian first and only then a Hindu or Muhammadan. Never before had there been such striking a proof that, with mutual sympathy and forbearance, it is possible for the two communities, notwithstanding deep religious differences, to live a common social life and act together for common purposes. The general reception at every place visited exceeded all expectations. Enormous crowds rendering movement very slow, processions of great magnitude and splendour, horses unyoked and

replaced by enthusiastic young men, elephants, arches and street ornamentations, gay garlands and bouquets innumerable, music of every description, and resounding shouts of *Vande Mataram*,—these must have soon become oppressive to a man of simple tastes and ascetic habits. Then there were the inevitable addresses and replies, the visits to places of interest and public institutions, functions and ceremonies of every degree of formality, dinners and garden parties, conversaziones, entertainments, and interviews, public and private. Mr. Gokhale doubtless realised what a burden fame is sometimes, and how little is the time into which great men have to compress all their serious work. But harsh and ungracious is the criticism that would lose sight of the genuine love that found such spontaneous expression. Few scenes are more touching or more creditable to humanity than that of a people honouring their benefactors in the fulness of gratitude. To the thoughtful observer who followed Mr. Gokhale's tour, the interest must have been far more than personal: the ovations that greeted him appeared to indicate clearly that the popular standard of public life had risen in a marked degree, and that the country in general had begun to look eagerly for a higher type of patriotism and a purer example of self-sacrifice.

In the budget speech of 1907, Mr. Gokhale objected strongly to the accumulation of the Gold Standard Fund for the purpose of converting rupees into sove-

reigns on the introduction of gold currency in India, an object which there was some reason for suspecting that government entertained. He took a high-minded view of the opium question, contending that the loss of revenue should be borne, not by the British exchequer, as many influential politicians suggested, but by the Indian treasury which profited by the traffic in that drug. At the end, he pleaded for reforms in the administration, in language that subsequent events have rendered almost prophetic: "My Lord, it is of importance that there should be no unnecessary delay in this matter. The public mind is in a state of great tension, and unless the concessions are promptly announced and steps taken to give immediate effect to them, they will, I fear, lose half their efficacy and all their grace. The situation is an anxious—almost critical one, and unless the highest statesmanship inspires the counsels of the Government, difficulties threaten to arise of which no man can foresee the end." The Viceroy responded with a promise of reforms which, he said, were being formulated, but could not be announced.

The reforms were not announced till late in the year, and when they were announced, they confirmed the prognostications of those who held that Mr. Morley was but an ordinary Imperialist, the more dangerous for the fine phrases and generous sentiments in which he indulged as a literary habit. The difficulties, how-

ever, that Mr. Gokhale had foreseen were but too quick in coming. The anti-Mehta Caucus in Bombay, betraying the temper of the bureaucracy and illustrating in a striking manner the miserable shifts to which a Government is driven in defending the vagaries of wrongheaded officials, was a mild sensation in comparison with what was to follow elsewhere in India. Babu Bipin Chunder Pal burst into full fame in Madras as a preacher of the new political creed. For several days on the sands of the beach he spoke words hot with emotion and subtly logical, which were wafted by the soft evening breeze to tens of thousands of listeners, invading their whole souls and setting them aflame with the fever of a wild consuming desire. Oratory had never dreamed of such triumphs in India; the power of the spoken word had never been demonstrated on such a scale. The immediate effect was to deepen and strengthen the discontent already in existence, and to embitter a hundredfold the controversies that divided the two political schools. The Punjab troubles, culminating in the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, the riot at Cocanada arising out of the unheroic conduct of a pugilistic medical officer, the unprecedented outbreak of Muhammadan fanaticism and lawlessness in Bengal, the mere existence of which would have been a disgrace to any administration, but which certain officials of Government, there was good reason for believing, incited and encouraged

with impunity, the highly provocative and in parts un-Morley-like Budget speech of Mr. Morley, the scenes of rowdyism which completely paralysed the preparations for the National Congress at Nagpur, the failure of the All-India Congress Committee to cope with the situation, the Seditious Meetings Act, passed at Simla, against which the Viceroy was led by the inevitable logic of facts to make out an unwitting case, the unutterable shame of last December at Surat, the Tinnevely riots, the bomb disclosures in Bengal, these events, the fell brood of the monster Unrest, form a combination of calamities of which truly no man can foresee the end.

Death poured into Mr. Gokhale's cup a drop of private grief. In the middle of last year his brother, who had cared for him as a father, fell a victim to diabetes, leaving him to take care of a large family besides his own, which consists of two daughters. His activities, however, have been unceasing. In fact he could not give himself the much-needed and long-planned rest of one month at Mahabaleshwar. On his way to Poona from the Budget Meeting of 1907 he presided over the public meeting in Bombay which protested against the anti-Mehta Caucus. His Secretaryship of Congress involved many trips to Bombay and one to Surat before the December session. The persecution of his friend and associate Lala Lajpat Rai drew a letter in his defence to the *Times of*

*India*, besides other attempts that unfortunately eventuated in nothing. The disturbances in Mymensingh compelled a visit to Calcutta and many private conferences. He undertook the direction of a non-official campaign against the plague and faced many risks. Then he went to Simla to enter a passionate protest against the Seditious Meetings Bill and defend the Bengali nation; whom fate and man alike seem to be tormenting. This year there have been the usual Budget Speech and the evidence before the Decentralisation Commission; besides some work as President of the Poona Temperance Committee:

v. But the activity to which he himself would attach the greatest importance has yet to be mentioned. The Servants of India, organised on the 12th June, 1905, lived their first session together in the Society's Home from April till September 1907. Appendix G. contains its objects and rules as well as a concise statement of the conditions which led to its formation. Wedded to constitutional lines of work and excluding nothing that may advance the common good of the country, the Society may be said in one word to aim at building up the future Indian nation. A task of enormous magnitude; but one worthy of the highest endeavours of India's sons, towards which an organisation, well-devised and conducted and adequately supported by the country, may make a substantial contribution in the course of years. It will readily occur to the reader

that great resources are required both in money and men. No general appeal to the public has yet been made for pecuniary aid. The funds hitherto collected are considerable, the outlay on buildings and library alone aggregating one lakh; but they have all been raised from Mr. Gokhale's personal friends. These have met his calls with a trustfulness and generosity that fill one with equal hope and pride. The much-abused Indian patriot does part with his money cheerfully and in liberal measure when he is assured that the object for which he gives it is good and that the hands that take it are clean and know how to make every rupee go as far as it can be made to go. There is every reason to hope that before long Mr. Gokhale will be enabled by the public spirit of the Society's friends to place it on a sound financial basis. As regards men, considering the sacrifices and the discipline which members have to undergo, the number of applicants so far has been large enough to afford encouragement. The Society's highest usefulness will not be reached until its representatives are found all over the country, taking a due share in all movements that subserve national interests. But it is scarcely to be expected that the Society can achieve this large result by the direct agency of its members and assistants. Ways have therefore been devised for extending the area of its influence without undertaking or imposing heavy responsibilities. Thus public spiri-

ted men already doing practical service to the country may be enrolled as Associates on easy conditions and thus give their work at once wide usefulness and permanence. The superiority of organised over isolated effort is so obvious that this provision may be trusted to commend itself to all earnest workers. At the same time the Society offers to give an early training in public work to patriotic young men who are unable to incur the sacrifices entailed by membership, but who are in no hurry to earn directly their education is finished. Such young men may be admitted as 'Attaches' to the benefits of the discipline and studies of the Society's Home for a period of three years.

It is indeed difficult to think of a better fate to young Indians than that of residence for some years in the Home of the Servants of India Society. Situated away from the city, next to the Fergusson College with which it has many associations in common, it stands in the midst of a hilly scenery of which the bareness and austerity are suggestive of the plain living and high thinking within. Its entire atmosphere is pervaded by the influence of a personality in which sweetness and strength, purity and tenderness are blended harmoniously. Of the private virtues of Mr. Gokhale any description would be an impertinence. His public record is great. It is enough, perhaps, to mention that his Budget speeches, of rare educative value to the student of Indian affairs, have furnished



more than one hint to Government of the form in which its Financial Statement should be cast, and of the directions in which its surpluses may be spent. More, however, than any tangible result is the wholesome influence that he has exerted on Indian public life. Few men have proved so well as he that the most earnest advocacy of the people's cause is consistent with perfect fairness to members of the Government. Mr. Gokhale has delivered as hard blows as any other critic at the measures of Government; but he has seldom attacked their authors personally. Magnanimous by nature, he seldom wounds the feelings of his adversary even when he hits the hardest. Identified as he is with the moderate school of political thought, he is far from being a party man. Scorning all mere strife, his great anxiety is to unite all parties by the common tie of patriotism. Brought up in a school of severe self-examination, he is always on the guard against the insidious influences of the partisan spirit, and will not allow his love of his fellow-countrymen to be affected by irrelevant distinctions. Chaste in thought, word and deed, a master of lucid exposition, a speaker who inspires without inflaming, a citizen who is not afraid of strife but loves amity, a worker who can obey as well as command, a soldier of progress with invincible faith in his cause,—Mr. Gokhale is indeed a perfect Servant of India.