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# Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

A HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

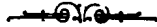
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G. K. GOKHALE.

To,  
THE STUDENT  
COMMUNITY  
OF INDIA.

## PREFACE.

This book is a prize-essay which was written in the latter half of 1915—the year of the death of the great patriot. The prize was offered by a Bombay merchant from whom subsequently Mr. R. K. Mody a great philanthropist and a public-spirited merchant and citizen of Bombay took over all the interest in the publication. Doctor Mackichan (the then Principal of Wilson College, Bombay), the late Sir N. G. Chandavarkar and the late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee formed the Jury that unanimously determined the award of the prize in favour of this essay. The few suggestions made by the jury for improving the work were duly carried out and the entire printing of the book was finished within a couple of years. Circumstances over which neither the writer nor the donor (Mr. R. K. Mody) had any control, however, prevented the publication of this essay for over a decade.

Doubtless, the usefulness of a book of this nature is considerably decreased if many years intervene between the date of the hero's death and the appearance of the publication; but in the present case it may be reasonably hoped that as the cause that Gokhale advocated is still being fought out and the issues are as live as they were 15 years ago, the reading public may welcome facts illustrating his *part* as well as his *method* in the great fight for the uplift of this country. In the present atmosphere of tension, it may, moreover, do us good to

hold in proper perspective the virtue of *constitutionalism* that this 'exponent of the moderate school,' fearlessly stood for. That there are no 'short cuts' to the achievement of self-government of a stable nature was the ceaseless gospel of the public life of the man who in regard to his own political and intellectual equipment could legitimately adopt Burke's lofty sentiments as his own "I was not, like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled and rocked and dandled into a legislator; *Nitor in adversum* (I strive against opposition) is the motto for a man like me.....I was not made for a minion or a tool.—At every step of my progress in life, for in every step was I traversed and opposed, and every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its interests both abroad and at home; otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me". "Deserve and desire" is then, not a poor legacy that Gokhale leaves for the many educated Indians of to-day.

His large-hearted statesmanship that endeavoured to build on durable foundations will, perhaps, be nowhere better illustrated than in his generous handling

of the claims of the Mohomedan Community in the matter of their share in governmental activities. If things could only be adjusted in the spirit of Gokhale's attitude, to this question India should have no 'minority' problem.

Altogether there is scarcely a problem of the present public life of India which might not be handled in cleaner manner and with better results, if Gokhale—the great fountain head of Indian public life—were freely resorted to.

My only qualification for undertaking this study was my intense, though distant, devotion to the *man* under whose leadership I longed to serve the country. That being not given to me the next best thing I could do was to offer this humble offering at the sacred shrine.

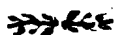
I am grateful to my colleague Prof. Bhide for kindly helping me to get at the biographical material in Marathi published in Magazine articles by the Late Prof. Patwardhan and other Marathi scholars.

Mr. R. K. Mody who bears the entire cost of the publication has, of course, the highest claim on the gratitude of the writer for this singular act of public-spiritedness.

Samaldas College  
 Bhavnagar  
 (Kathiawad).  
 July 25 1929.

T. K. SHAHANI.

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# INTRODUCTION.

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## ISSUES OF THE TIME.

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THE government of dependencies by a free state is perhaps one of the most important questions in modern history. Ancient and medieval despotism abounds in instances of conquest and colonisation where the government of dependent territories has offered no exceptional trials to statesmanship. The policy adopted at home was, with slight variations to suit different sets of circumstances, extended to the outlying parts; and the strong hand of the Pro-Consul or the Viceroy supported by the power of the sword usually summed up the merits of the administration. With the dawn of the 16th century Europe encountered a new phase of this question. While the strong centralised Governments of the Western half of Europe were bidding for the mastery of the high seas and encouraging settlement in the new world, purely for a pecuniary return, persecuted Protestantism at the same time found in those distant, unoccupied wild regions of America a safe asylum for freedom of worship. At the close of the Seven Years' War when England found herself in possession of an Empire—an achievement that might well dazzle the imagination of the most sober statesman—the conduct of the responsible administrators of England clearly showed that they had forgotten two very important points; (i) that they, the holders of that Great Empire, were a free people with political institutions based on ideas of popular government,

(ii) that the then most important English Colonies in America had independence as the main root from which they had sprung. It is true that the vicious theory of Colonial policy—then common to all Europe—regarding the colonies as existing entirely for the industrial and commercial benefit of the mother-country—was responsible for producing an unhappy relation between England and her American Empire. In its obstinate fight for the highly valued privilege of having Colonial markets for their manufactures, the business instinct of England lost sight of the fact that to the Colonists—the offsprings of “the revolutionary power latent in the Protestant doctrine”—the lapse of a century and a half had given time “for the spirit of independence to grow ineradicably into the national character.” (Morley’s *Burke*, p. 130). The unhappy result, indeed, taught a lesson to England. The plan of enriching herself at the cost of the Colonies was abandoned; “but the bad habit of meddling with the internal government of the colonies did not at once terminate when we relinquished the idea of making any profit by it.” (Mill’s *Representative Government*; Chap. XVIII). Interference, not for their own advantage, but in the interest of a section or a faction, cost England a rebellion in Canada; and the statesmanlike policy of Lord Durham in 1840 determined a new era in the Colonial relations of free states like England. The fullest measure of internal self-government to her colonies of European race is now a fixed principle of the policy of Great Britain professed in theory and faithfully adhered to in practice. Each is governed by its own Legislature and executive, constituted on highly democratic principles. The veto of the Crown and of Parliament, though nominally reserved, is only

exercised (and that very rarely) on questions which concern the empire, and not solely the particular colony. The principle of colonial autonomy is carried by the colonies to such an extent that it is not bound down by the 'free-trade' shibboleth of the mother-country. The giving of so much independence to the vital parts of the Empire was disapproved of by many as being responsible for the loosest kind of federation between Great Britain and her Colonies; but the enormous sacrifices voluntarily made by these children for the parent country in the present war amply testify to the truth of the statement that the promptings of love and gratitude of a free friend are of far greater service than exactions forced out of dependent slaves.

England's rule of the great dependency of India is by far the best illustration of a free state governing people of an alien race, of different religions, languages, and traditions, unfamiliar to and, in a measure, supposed to be unfitted for representative government in the sense in which the West has solved their political problem. The newness, the vastness and the complexity of the problem created, for a long time, a scepticism concerning the good results likely to accrue from an undertaking of this kind. Was it conducive to the general progress of mankind? And Lord Morley gives an emphatic reply, "It is impossible to conceive a powerful and enlightened people engaging in any nobler task than that of disinterestedly seeking to impart to a less fortunate and more backward race the acquisitions of their own long effort and experience, in all the moral and intellectual agencies for ameliorating human destiny." While the best theory of political philosophy unhesitatingly condemns such a thing as government of

one people by another, a vigorous despotism by the dominating country is held to be in itself the best mode of government for training the people in what is specifically wanting to render them capable of a higher civilization. ( Mill's Rep. Government ). It is rather difficult to strike a balance between the advantages and disadvantages of sovereign relations with politically 'inferior' peoples; and if a reference be made to England's relations with India by way of illustration, one may be constrained to record on the side of disadvantages (a) moral depravity on the part of the conquerors in their first dealings with the conquered, rendered hideous by the helplessness of the native and unbridled on account of the improbability of any public opinion existing in the sovereign country itself, (b) indifference to good government of the conquered country as a natural result of the temporary character of the sojourn of the officials, (c) an indispensable military occupation, and lastly, (d) the corrupting effects upon the average representatives of the dominant nation of traditions of conquest, and a never forgotten superiority of race. From this gloomy picture one may turn with relief and gladness to the numerous and weighty advantages too patent to need a detailed narration. The "iniquitous rapacity of the Company in its earlier days" was nothing in comparison to the horrors of the wastage caused by constant warfare on the dissolution of the Moghul Empire. Order, peace and law are an inestimable boon to every country; their worth in India is perhaps incomprehensible to the foreigner or the present Indian generation. Steam and electricity have continued to bridge places far removed from one another and the facility of communication has brought English opinion to bear on Indian politics, the salient effects of which none can have the hardihood to deny.

Meanwhile, 'the infiltration of European enlightenment' has proceeded rapidly in India to the manifest advantage of the Indian. The acknowledgment of these and other innumerable advantages was publicly made by the Grand old Man of India in his first Presidential Address from the National Congress platform in 1886: "Were it not for these blessings of British Rule, I could not have come here, as I have done, without the least hesitation and without the least fear that my children might be robbed and killed in my absence; nor could you have come from every corner of the land, having performed, within a few days, journeys which in former days would have occupied as many months. It is to British rule that we owe the education we possess; the people of England were sincere in the declaration made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer it for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God."

In undertaking the government of India Great Britain has committed itself to a tremendous experiment in racial regeneration, upon the outcome of which the fate of Europe in Asia chiefly turns. The eyes of the world are on it, because the issues involved are of the utmost importance. If ever the British work in India becomes a failure—to prevent which the best English statesmanship will, dauntlessly, be brought into full play,—a great disturbance will be caused in the relations between Europe and Asia. What is called the moral relation between Europe and Asia may be considerably decreased or even altogether lost, if this great experiment fails. Fears of failure are however, quite visionary. The

resources of a free civilized people are almost unlimited; and whereas under native despotism, a good despot was a rare and transitory accident, good government can be a continuous and unbroken record in the hands of a civilized state which is perfectly sure of its tenure and whose genius and experience have fitted it to meet satisfactorily any unexpected situation. Government conducted thoroughly in the interests of the governed is, according to Mill, the ideal form of rule of a backward race by a free people, and though he thinks that the ideal is never fully realised, yet if even an attempt is not made, the rulers "are selfish usurpers, on a par in criminality with any of those whose ambition and rapacity have sported from age to age with the destiny of masses of mankind," (Mill's Rep. Govt.). The most inveterate enemy of British rule cannot accuse it of having disregarded the interests of the country so far as good government is concerned. A brief but necessary word in connection with it has been already said in the preceding paragraph; and here it may be added that for a long time the vision of England could go no further than giving the people of India a benevolent despotism—an administration sound and efficient indeed, but so severely foreign as hardly to touch the heart of the nation. The very moral and political fabric of the free English people in whose hands the gods were pleased to leave the destiny of India would not allow this state of things to last one minute longer than was absolutely necessary. It was impossible that the system of English education in India should leave conditions unchanged for any considerable time. With the growth of the educated classes new voices were heard, new aspirations were breathed; and a completely changed set of circumstances was presented to the British Rulers of India.

At this stage it is best to remind the reader of some of the great boons enjoyed by the governed population of a free state which makes no hesitation in extending them even to its politically backward charge. Besides affording the fullest opportunities to every body to imbibe the soul-stirring thought of its great luminaries in all departments of learning, it submits itself to a criticism of its measures embodied in freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The government of free England, far from growing suspicious, cowardly or restive under public criticism, courts the expression of popular views on every measure excepting on very rare occasions of the utmost gravity when a too free opinion is supposed to militate against public safety; and the same rights are ungrudgingly held out to the conquered countries like India where the government feels itself all the more strengthened when the popular view clears the mists from the political vision of the foreign administrators. To the people themselves it is an excellent education in handling weighty questions of state and a laudable medium for appreciating the Government. Its worth ought to be considerably enhanced when it is borne in mind that in countries other than completely free states of the type of England, *e. g.*, in Austria and Russia, this liberty of expression is surrounded with so many safe-guards and subject to so many annoyances and obstacles as hardly to count as a boon. In analysing the issues of the Times, this fact should not be forgotten.

Of all countries England shows the most brilliant and solid record of success in the direction of 'manly, moral and well regulated liberty.' What the right of private judgment helped other Protestant and Tuetonic nations to accomplish only with difficulty in relation to the founding

of free political institutions, had in England, largely on account of the insular position of the country produced sure, steady progress. The spirit that had wrung the Magna Charta from a tyrannous and dissolute sovereign, that had inspired Hamden to resist an illegal imposition, that had given a death-blow to the Divine Right of Kings and had in its place ushered in the rule of the representatives of the people by 'making Parliament the Government-making organ,' was just the spirit that achieved American Independence. While the colonists had been nourished on the milk of liberty from their infancy and had retained all possible associations with it, a leaven to this fermentable mass of matter was easily supplied by England herself in whom this ancient spirit of freedom and of revolt against all sense of oppression has been the distinguishing mark of the people as a whole. That the battle for being 'just' to America was fought on the floor of the House of Commons was, at least, partially true. The trumpet call of Burke, himself only a voice in the wilderness so far as the then Government of England was concerned, was not lost in the wild regions or budding hamlets of the new World. Lord Morley, as Secretary of State for India, several times complained of the "impatient Idealist" in England who ceaselessly stung him with a view to goading him into greater activity in doing justice to India. "The impatient idealist—you know him. I know him. I like him; I have been one myself." He says, "you admit that so and so is right; why don't you do it—why don't you do it now?"....." Ah! gentlemen, how many of the most tragic miscarriages in human history have been due to the impatience of the idealist;" (Speech at Arbroath, October 21, 1907). Words of warning, indeed, and true statesmanship.



should always govern the idealist as a steadying influence and a sobering check; but who can deny the great service of the go-ahead thinker? But for this continuous hammering, the innate conservatism of man would find it hard to leave the beaten track. One of the most gratifying and certain results of contact with a great free state like England is to have the services of devoted and disinterested workers who have a genuine hatred for all meanness and injustice and who consider it their sacred duty to inspire backward races with a love for well regulated liberty. Perhaps on the face of it, it is impossible that it should be otherwise. To cast open condemnation or even a veiled slight on their work as mere theorism and 'moonshine' is to open oneself to the charge of having no breadth of vision and loving to live in a most unhappy ignorance of things which it is the deepest interest of the statesman to know. Be it said to the credit of that 'inviolable island of the sage and free' that in spite of unmerited sneers, ridicule and abuse ceaselessly hurled upon them by the omniscient bureaucrat of the Indian government and in the face of the chilling indifference of the House and of their own constituents, a stream of "Indian members" of Parliament has been keeping its regular course not only to fertilise England with a conscience and an aim as regards India, but also to supply the newly moistened political atmosphere of this country with vapours easily absorbed into the Indian air to pour down in blissful showers to the thirsty soil ploughed by English education and manured by English right of free expression of opinion. Burke, Macaulay, Mill, Bright, Fawcett, Gladstone, Morley himself and a number of other lesser luminaries showed an unflagging zeal in the interests of India. The view-point may change from

time to time with a change in Indian conditions ; but behind the work of all the disinterested English workers for India burns the passionate desire to be 'just' to the great Indian dependency. Their influence on the thinking part of this country has been, to say the least, tremendous; and grateful rejuvenated India will cherish their memory in some of the most illustrious pages of her present and future history.

How now about the land itself that Providence favoured in linking with the freest and the greatest nation of the world? Its remote past is admitted so universally to be glorious and resplendant that it needs no emphasis in this little work. One fact, however, it is most necessary to record. Whatever gloom and blight were cast upon the land by a quick succession of dynastic feuds and baronial wars or by the North-western stream of invasions and the consequent plunder and carnage, local life and social organisation were very little disturbed. It is true that corruption in Government, whether central or provincial, did vitiate the morals of this ancient people nearly as well as to effect the misery it brought in its train; but the original instincts of the superior castes, however, dimmed by disuse or abuse were not completely deadened. The marvellous rapidity with which English education was received by the higher castes under the new conditions sufficiently illustrates the fact that the original germ had not been killed. The Brahmin caste—the ancient custodian of all learning in the land—was the first to enter the field of new learning; and all over India the best results in quantity as well as quality proceeded from this class. Even the other castes have not been very slow to take advantage of the changed times. Facts and figures speak for

themselves, and the only inference needed to be drawn is that this land of ancient civilisation has in it, despite the auguries of the political prophet or the much-vaunted shibboleths of the beaurocrat, great instincts for quick adaptation to new things. What the educated community of India has been able to achieve in assimilating Western learning has forced even from the most unsympathetically inclined no specious lip applause. This is not written in a spirit of hollow satisfaction. No body is content with what is achieved so far; and great are the strides to be taken before we can lift up our heads by the side of other advanced nations. But the impulse has been given and a fairly full advantage is being taken.

The spread of Western education in India has prepared a people ready to appreciate the fight on behalf of India, on the floor of the Commons or in the Columns of the British Press. The growth of Indian trade has brought into being a rich, shrewd, enterprising and powerful class of Indian merchants and manufacturers whom contact with the West has fitted to understand the larger interests of their country through the channels of their personal interests. Peace, law and order have given land and the landholder an enviable position in the economy of the country; and it is needless to say that the proverbial stolid peasant—the silly gull in the hands of the sharp moneylender is almost a phenomenon of the past. The educated, mercantile, landed and moneyed aristocracy form the solid middle class of India—the thinking and the articulate part of the country. It is these who have to shape the future of the country and on them fall the cheering utterances of the past and present advocates in England of all that is noble, free and just. Between the

Government and the silent voiceless masses they form a natural and indispensable link. The district Officer may indeed like to represent himself, as "the Father of the people;" but the Indian masses cannot but look upon his interference with suspicion and even distrust. The aristocracy mentioned above can alone best interpret the intentions of the Government to this mass and the needs and hardships of the mass to the Government. India's prosperity or adversity is in the keeping of this small but all-pervading minority. It is not too much to say that they alone, and not the Government, may make or mar it. The new thought reaches them alone; and for ages, perhaps for ever, may only remotely touch the masses who by nature best like to be left alone, but who, if ever, are to be uplifted by the disinterested members of the middle class of their own country.

Blindly to take things on trust and passively to submit to all traditional thought mark a very poor condition of intellectual and moral thralldom. Obedience to any principle or practice based on a thorough spirit of enquiry as to its soundness or its utility marks a dignified and noble character. The one means baseness and stagnation, while the other embodies progress and renovation in a society's evolutionary march. There is a certain stage in the life of an individual as well as a nation when implicit obedience in thought must end and when there ought to come a fair share of a spirit of free enquiry into the why and wherefore of things without which no real progress is possible. Knowledge dispels darkness; and with the acquired light are made deep and searching enquiries into surrounding conditions, intellectual, social, religious and political. First a

Prometheus and then the whole host of enquirers and sceptics. A renaissance will always bring in its train a Wycliffe, a John Huss and a Martin Luther, and it is the religious and social fabric that must first stand the vigorous onslaught of the new enquiry. Almost contemporaneous with the great upheaval caused by the Reformation in Europe, India also witnessed in the teachings of Ramdas and Tukaram in the Maharashtra, of Nanak in the Punjab and of Chaitanya in Bengal and Kabir in the North a wave of protest against the tyranny of the Brahminic cult. This protestant movement cradled in the hills of the Deccan and the fertile plains of the Punjab developed into two strong national forces; and the Maratha in the South and the Sikh in the North were the only two legacies of the national spirit left in the land at the fall of the Moghul power. As the fresh wave of Western thought spread over the land from the second decade of the 19th century, Indian renaissance found in Bengal a favourable home. The first half of that century forms a distinct epoch when the dry bones began to stir and men's minds were greatly influenced in the first dawn of English education under the auspices of David Hare, Captain D. L. Richardson and Derozio. The children of this early renaissance—Uma Nath Roy, Joy Kissan Mookerjee, Ram Tonu Lahiri, Krishna Mohun Banerjee and Devendranath Tagore—were all Brahmans, most of whom through the revolutionary gospel of the Christian missionaries of that time had renounced caste and freed themselves from what they supposed to be its pernicious influences. Raja Ram Mohan Roy left his great work of incipient Brahmoism to be given a definite shape and moulding by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore—'the teacher and the spiritual father of Keshub Chandra Sen.' What the Brahmo Samaj or

Theistic Church of India was doing by way of protest against the ancient religious and social tyranny in Bengal and other parts of India where the new creed was easily assimilated by the people, the Arya Samaj was doing in the Punjab with even greater vigour and effect. Whatever be the minor differences of tenets in these new movements of religious and social reform, they join hands in striking a stout blow at the caste and ceremonial tyranny into which the ancient sublime Hinduism had unfortunately degenerated. Modern India, most undoubtedly, needed a precursor of this sort. "Do not blindly acquiesce in any thing," was the rule of the new cult. The right of private judgment and a sense of searching enquiry into every thing were openly avowed and sedulously preached. This was as much a heresy against the ancient hierocracy in India as was European Protestantism in the eye of the Papist priest of the 15th and 16th centuries. The combined influence of the Christian missionary and Western learning working on a soil already rich in Protestant thought did much to train people to independent thought in social and religious life. From social and religious awakening there was but one step more to political consciousness for the acute-minded, keen-witted middle class of this ancient race. What slow and steady development India has made in this direction under the influence of the free state of England is the purpose of the remaining part of this chapter to show.

So long ago as 1840 Macaulay in the course of a speech delivered in the House of Commons spoke about the future Government of India in terms with which we are all familiar:—"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good go-

vernment we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government ; that having become instructed in European knowledge they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be title to glory all our own." What Macaulay foresaw in 'dim prophetic vision' affords a refreshing contrast to the bold justification of the omission of the elective principle from the India Bill of 1890 by Lord Salisbury on the ground that "the principle of election or government by representation was not an Eastern idea, and that it did not fit Eastern traditions or Eastern minds." Sir Pheroze Shah Mehta, in his presidential address at the Congress of 1890, sufficiently refuted this by referring to the conclusive evidence of every enlightened English writer of Indian conditions regarding the "East being the parent of Municipalities" and "Local Self-government in the widest acceptation of the term being as old as the East itself." "No matter what may be the religion of the people who inhabit what we call the East, there is not a portion of the country from West to East, from North to South, which is not swarming with municipalities, and not only so, but like to our municipalities of old, they are all bound together in a species of net-work so that you have ready-made to your hand the frame-work of a great system of representation" (Mr. Chisolm Ansty). To this unequivocal evidence may be added the actual work of representation going on daily in all the social assemb-

clashes of all the different castes and sub-castes scattered over the whole country. It is true that representation for political transactions was no part of the polity of the country, because there were no opportunities and facilities for the same; but the idea of exercising the right of electing leaders on the one hand and of voicing the wishes of the constituents on the other had permeated the land perhaps ever since civilised society came into being in India. I have in a previous paragraph touched on the wonderful power of assimilating Western ideas and education shown by the middle class of this country; and on such a fertile soil where the seed of representative methods had already been sown broadcast, Western methods of government could not take very long to grow. "How many a weary step is to be taken before they can form themselves into a mass which has a true, political personality" is, indeed, a very healthy warning of Burke; and the better mind of India is truly grateful to Lord Morley for reminding us of the profound wisdom underlying that expression. Nobody believes that the politically homogeneous organisation called a nation is built in a day or by a strong utterance here or there. Long and arduous is the struggle to achieve that noble end; and the history of England itself, with all the innumerable facilities that the country had, is a great lesson of the slow and steady march necessary for the aspirants in this field. A wish for a wholesale transplantation of Western free institutions into the Indian atmosphere may look chimerical and a piece of "grossest fallacy in all politics;" but on the other hand, a dogged obstinacy in clinging to the belief that 'east is east,' incapable of adaptation to what its *brain-power* thinks to be best in the West is a piteous and vain struggle against what time and circumstances



have established as settled facts. In its most heroic efforts for the gradual introduction of popular government, the conservative instinct of the English nation successfully armed itself against all wild and revolutionary schemes of government. The resistance of such a people against any visionary demand, proceeding from India, is perfectly intelligible; but a great blight is cast on all hopes and aspirations when responsible statesmen of the type of Lord Morley, departing from their cherished principle of meeting only the requirements of the time, postulate for posterity as well, and try to bind its conduct to maxims which, if literally carried out, are likely to do great mischief. Macaulay never dogmatically asserted that however far he stretched his imagination or mental vision and however long his corporal life extended, he could not see any form of government for India other than personal autocracy at most aided by free speech. This kind of political bigotry ill suits a statesman of large breadth and comprehensive vision. A language of impatience may be sometimes excusable when the voice of the best exponents of India betrays a tendency to Utopian schemes of government for their country; and finding the balance too much on one side, the responsible and cautious statesman may, in a measure, be said to be justified in weighing it equally on the other. But a careful analysis of the growth of Indian political aspirations clearly proves that the Educated Indian has been the most apt pupil of the conservative Englishman.

The Act of 1858, according to the interpretation put upon it at that time and according to the intentions of the Parliament, had provided the Government of India with the right of initiative, the India Council in London with the right of review, and the Secretary

of State, subject to the ultimate judgment of the Commons, with the right of veto. In the power-absorbing Despatch dated the 24th November 1870, the Duke of Argyll, the then Secretary of State for India, maintained that "the Government of India were merely Executive Officers of the Home Government, who hold the ultimate power of requiring the Governor-General to introduce a measure and of requiring also the official members of the Council to vote for it." The position thereafter drifted into this; the Government in India with no power: The Council in London with no power: the House of Commons with power, but refusing or neglecting to exercise it. The Government of India—"that great and solemn trust of an inscrutable Providence"—which the representatives of the British democracy had taken upon themselves when the old East India Company was deprived of it, had thus been bound hand and foot and delivered over into the hands of the Secretary of State. Affairs connected with the Financial Department were in a particularly scandalous condition. With the growth of Indian consciousness an enquiry into how the country was being governed was inevitable. That the British democracy could not feel itself deeply interested in our affairs is no matter for surprise: they were not in a position to judge rightly: they had no time to do so and they, therefore, never attempted it; but if we too did not think it worth our while to demand and agitate for some voice in our own affairs, it was surely not worth *their* while to trouble themselves at all about us. In the words of Mr. George Yule, if we were satisfied, for example, to have the Budget thrown at our heads like a snow-ball, and a muddy one it was, we deserved to have it in that way. Dissatisfaction with the way Indian revenue was spent made itself felt and a desire to focus the

Indian point of view was vaguely expressed in many quarters when an event happened in the days of Lord Ripon's Government which gave birth to what had existed only in an embryonic form.

Under the Government of Lord Ripon, Sir Ashley Eden proposed an amendment in the Criminal Law to give Indian Magistrates jurisdiction to try European offenders. This is the measure known as the Ilbert Bill, because it was introduced in the Legislative Council by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, who was then the Legal Member. In a public meeting held at the Town Hall of Calcutta the European community vehemently protested; and speakers and audience, frenzied with excitement, were lost to all sense of moderation and propriety. The Viceroy was personally insulted at the gates of the Government House. A gathering of tea-planters assembled and hooted him at a railway station as he was returning from Darjiling, and "Bill" Bresford, then an A.-D.-C., was with difficulty restrained from leaping from the railway carriage into their midst to avenge the insult to his Chief. The non-official European community almost to a man boycotted the entertainments at Government House. Matters reached such a pitch that a conspiracy was formed by a number of men in Calcutta, who bound themselves, in the event of Government adhering to the proposed legislation, to overpower the sentries at Government House, put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal Ghat, and deport him to England round the Cape. The result of this deadwall of antagonism confronting the Government was a sort of compromise which, according to Sir John Strachy, "was the virtual though not avowed abandonment of the measure proposed by the Government." That was the immediate result;

but 'the ultimate effect of this insane agitation' says Sir Henry Cotton, "was to give rise to a movement of the most far-reaching character and scope which few at that time were able to foresee.....' The Anglo-Indian agitation against Lord Ripon's Government, the protests which asserted that "the only people who have any rights to India are the British," the whole attitude of Englishmen in regard to Indian interests: these things have succeeded far more in advancing the cause of Indian unity than any action or legislation on the lines contemplated by that Viceroy could have accomplished. The people of India quickly profited by the example set to them by Englishmen; they learned their strength, the power of combination, the strength of number; and according to the author just quoted, 'there was quickly kindled in all the Provinces a national movement which is destined to develop and increase until it receives its fulfilment in the systematic regeneration of the whole country.' The extension of the election system by Lord Ripon giving the people some share in the administration of local affairs, and his clear and emphatic enunciation of the principle that 'it is not by the force of her armies or by the might of her soldiery that a great Empire is permanently maintained, but that it is by the righteousness of her laws and by her respect for the principles of justice' endeared him to the hearts of the people to whom a new life had been given. "The date of his departure is the Natal day of a New India." (Cotton's Home and Indian memories, p. 185).

The First Indian National Congress met in Bombay in 1885. Every one but the most hair-brained alarmist will be struck with the tone of moderation running through its deliberations and demands.

Loyalty to the British Government was and, has ever been, prominent on its banner; but, though thoroughly constitutional and sober in its work of political reform, it has never ceased to agitate for that modicum of Indian share in the Indian Government which bare justice entitles India to. In its early years the Congress clamoured for an enlargement of the Legislative Councils of India with a recognition of some principle of election and a larger inclusion of the Indian element in the actual work of administration. The Act of 1892 and Lord Dufferin's Public Service Commission went a little way towards meeting their demands. Consciousness grew apace; and dissatisfaction—the parent of all progress—changed the Indian political air. Lord Curzon's remorseless industry overhauled the Indian machinery of Government; and while oversensitive as regards "efficiency" in Government, he woefully lacked a sympathetic imagination to enter into the aspirations of the people. Searching enquiries were made into all his measures, many of which were undoubtedly inspired by the best of motives, but which failed to elicit due appreciation from the Indian public. His cynical attack on the Indian character and some undignified outspoken expressions about the educated India rankled deep in the bosom of the thinking part of the country. Into this atmosphere of great tension fell the tidings of the glorious victories of Japan over a great European power and the whole East began to throb with a new life. "The new era in Asia really began on the day when China told Italy to keep clear of Samsun Bay; but for history it will always date from the memorable night when the Japanese torpedo-boats were slipped from their leash, and dashed amid the Russian battleships beneath the shadow of the Golden Hill. The unfurling of the flag of the Rising

Sun over Port Arthur meant far more than a Japanese victory. It was hailed as an omen and a portent by all Asia. It was an emblem of the turn of the tide that had carried the white races to the shores of the Pacific." (Lovat Fraser's *Europe's Relations with Asia* in "India and the Durbar," p. 337). Lord Curzon's administrative measure of the Partition of Bengal was made an acute personal grievance by the whole Bengalee Nation; and the bitterness and the heart-burning it evoked were hardly appeased even with the generous Royal rectification of the blunder. The New India born in 1885 came in a quarter of a century to think and act like a mature man, spirited indeed but sufficiently sedate with a grave sense of responsibility; disregarding the utterly condemnable and insignificant froth of anarchism, the mighty movement of nationalism progresses with a circumspection and practicability essentially 'English' in all aspects.

What then are the issues of the age in which Gokhale worked, to which perhaps he did more than any other single individual to give form and point? Self-government on Colonial lines is a much too complex expression—highly palatable to a part of the great Indian middle class, considerable in numbers, buoyant in temperament and optimistic in views, but the expression is in bad odour with the too conservative section of Indians and with the whole of official bureaucratic India. There need be no quarrel over the expression and I think we may even be content to do without these words. One may even frankly confess that the whole idea involved in "Self-Government" is perhaps distant of realisation. The most go-ahead Indian Idealist even only considers it as a goal. But a goal is not the immediate issue.

What the age actually contended for in the period when Gokhale was actively engaged was distinctly preparatory ground for fiscal and financial liberty for India. Must the Indian Budget be thrown on the tax-payer like a snow-ball, and perhaps a very muddy one? The Hon. Mr. Surendranath Banerjee struck a clear note on this point, so early as in 1895 in the course of his Congress Presidential address delivered at Poona. "I venture to submit that if there is one class of questions more than another in respect of which the representatives of the people should exercise any control, it is financial questions." Our political teachers of England have taught us in the history of their country the importance of a full and absolute control by the people over the finances of their own country. In the case of India this right is all the more essential. Several unseemly financial dealings of the Home Government in relation to Indian money have been, from time to time, exposed; and the charge that the miserably poor Indian peasant is taxed partially in the interests of England is frequently levelled against one of the richest and the most fair-minded nations of the world. The economic autonomy of India is a kindred point over which a long battle has been raging; and the new Indian manufacturer very reasonably complains of the chilling indifference of his own Government, and, far worse than that, of instances of gross injustice at the hands of the Imperial Government. Mr. Lovat Fraser—a no very warm advocate of Indian aspirations has thus shrewdly diagnosed the disease of suffering India:—"The British people is about to have its sincerity of purpose in India challenged as it has never yet been. Great Britain has never made up its mind about its aim in India, but it will have to do so soon. Neither the Royal visit nor any other

adventitious expedient can deflect the new and fundamental tendencies now at work. The coming issue in India, upon which the continued acceptance of British rule depends, will be found in the demand, already rising, for fiscal and financial liberty. If the demand is conceded, and in whatever form, it must inevitably involve some abatement of the control from England, which is essentially financial. The impending agitation will test to the utmost the professed unselfishness of British motives in holding India, and will be fraught with destinies as great as those which lay concealed in the Declaratory Act when it was passed by the Rockingham Ministry." (India and the Durbar, p. p. 340-1). No more eloquent analysis of the present situation is possible. Loyal and moderate India has fought, is fighting, and will have to fight a strenuous battle for this financial and fiscal autonomy, to obtain a free voice and independence in raising and spending its revenues and to regulate its industrial and commercial policy. No Indian leader, no disinterested English advocate of India, no impartial Anglo-Indian has failed to record an emphatic protest against any swerving from this point of pure and simple justice. From his first appearance on the political stage to his very last days, Gokhale kept fighting for, and considerably succeeded in obtaining, conditions which may bring the achievement of this goal within the region of practical politics.

Another issue of the time ranking side by side with fiscal and financial independence is the question of racial differences which, according to Lord Morley, lies at "the root of the unrest, discontent and sedition." 'The root of the matter is racial and not political'.....'It is a dislike not of political domination, but of our racial domination.....and my object



is to do something to teach all in India, from the youngest Competitionwalla who arrives there that in the eyes of the Government of India the Indian is perfectly worthy—we do not say it is so in words alone, we have now shown it in act—by giving a share in the Council of the paramount power.” (Speech at Arboath, October 21-1907). The Charter Act of 1833 had laid down that: “No native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty, resident therein, shall by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them be excluded from any office under the said Company”; and the noble words of Queen Victoria’s Proclamation of 1858 ringing in the ears of every Indian thus affirmed the same principle. “So far as may be our subjects of whatever race or creed be freely admitted to all offices the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, their ability and their integrity duly to discharge.” How the solemn import of pledges and public promises was disregarded and explained away by reactionary rulers of the type of Lord Lytton or Lord Curzon is well known to every Indian. The Hon. Mr. Surendranath Bannerjee once complained that the Government seemed to be of opinion that the racial distinction implied moral distinction, although the Committee appointed with Lord Macaulay at its head, on the eve of the creation of the system of the Open Competitive Examinations for appointments to the Indian Civil Service (1854) had clearly determined the intellectual test offered by the Examination to be the best moral test which could be devised. In this matter of racial inequality which directly appeals to every educated Indian as vitally affecting his interests, the utterances of every one of them are intensely bitter. What little our rulers have done to satisfy

the Indian demand for just equality is a severe indictment against the policy so long pursued. All eyes are now centred on what the last Public Service Commission has to say in this respect. Gokhale had early enlisted himself in this cause and like a brave soldier died in harness, his last service to the motherland being his fight against heavy odds on the Commission. One utterance of his in this connection, made in the course of his Presidential Address in 1905 may be given as illustrative of his keenness with regard to the situation:—"Our whole future, it is needless to say, is bound up with this question of the relative position of the two races in this country. The domination of one race over another, especially when there is no great disparity between their intellectual endowments or their general civilisation—inflicts great injury on the subject race in a thousand insidious ways. On the moral side, the present situation is steadily destroying our capacity for initiative and dwarfing us as men of action. On the material side, it has resulted in a fearful impoverishment of the people.....India's best interests—material and moral—no less than the honour of England, demand that the policy of equality for the two races promised by the Sovereign and by Parliament should be faithfully and courageously carried out." Lord Morley has been the first English Statesman of this time who has courageously upheld that the words '*so far as may be*' used in the Queen's Proclamation have been somewhat misinterpreted in the past, that the ministers who advised Queen Victoria in the framing of one of the most memorable documents in all their history could not have "meant those words to be construed in a narrow, literal, restricted, or pettifogging sense." His promise for 'a definite and deliberate move to

be made with a view to giving competent and able natives the same access to the higher posts in the administration that are given to our own countrymen, was faithfully redeemed by his including Indians of eminent ability on the Imperial and some of the Provincial Executive Councils. Very much yet remains to be achieved in this direction : but the issue is perfectly clear. The Indian, to justify his existence, has to show that he fully deserves to rank with the best English intellects. The few opportunities given us upto now have not falsified the expectations : on the strength of these good results and on the vigorous and sympathetic work of Indians in higher places of trust and responsibility under the British Government or in the Indian States depends our case for further share in the administration ; and without having the *personnel* of the Indian administration largely recruited out of the Indian element and without devising ways and means for making the Executive responsible to the Legislative Body, all talk about 'self-Government' is visionary and unintelligible.

The key-note to the life-work of Gokhale was his intensely practical way of looking at the political development of the motherland ; and whatever, in the direction of representative government or racial equality or the lifting up of the masses afforded a reasonable ground for fight, received the most concentrated application of his great powers aided by remorseless industry and sublime moral fervour.