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Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

A HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

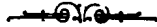
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
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G. K. GOKHALE.

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.

ISSUES OF THE TIME.

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 Pherozshah 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 Arbroath, October 21-1907). The Charter Act of 1853 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.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

ON the 9th of May, 1866, was born Gopal Krishna Gokhale at the little village of Katluk in the Chiplun Taluka of the Ratnagiri District. If there is any truth in the doctrine of the transmission of family qualities, something will certainly be found in the Gokhales of long ago as well as of the near past to prove hereditary influences on the subject of this Essay. The Venushaver Gokhales of Maharashtra have every reason to wear with pride the appellation of "Raste" (the True) given to one of their ancestors by Prince Shahu for his straight conduct and rigid scrupulousness in money matters; and tradition records, honesty of purpose, uprightness in all dealings as a peculiar characteristic of all the leading figures of this line, many members of which held, from time to time, fairly responsible posts in the Civil Administration under the Peshwas. Balaji Mahadeo Gokhale, a direct ancestor of Gopal Rao, was known for a spirit of adventure which permeates the whole history of Maharashtra. Unable to find subsistence for bodily needs or field enough for his restless activity in his own village, he migrated to a new part of the country, where he soon founded a village of his own; and to this day the Khoti of this village called Tahmanmala, resides in the Gokhale family. About Gopal Rao's grandfather Shivdas pant not much is known beyond the fact that his marriage with a second wife after the death of the first, somewhat estranged him from his two sons, Anantaji and Krishna Rao, by his first wife. The orphans, denied

the love of even the one living parent, turned more to each other and in their mutual regard found some consolation in their bereavement. This was the ground for Gopal Rao's life-long attachment to and deep reverence and filial concern for his uncle.

The paternal branch of Gokhale's ancestors manifested immense vigour and strength of character as their predominant features. Men of action and indomitable will, they had all a strong sense of self-respect and utter disregard for worldly gains when honour was at stake. Wide liberality,—generosity sometimes even out of proportion to their limited means left them in straitened circumstances. These family characteristics nowhere came out so clearly as in the case of Gokale's father—Krishnarao. In his boyhood he was known for his wild ways, was a terror to his village and earned the undesirable epithet of "Vaghoba" (Tiger). Then was just the beginning of the British Administration in India; and the school arrangements in his own village being most unsatisfactory, Krishnarao was removed to Kolhapur to be educated. A strange coincidence may be mentioned here by the way. In the same class with Gokhale's father was studying Ranade—the man to whom Gokhale's fame, name and every thing that holds him high in the estimation of India owe so much. Between these two, however, there was nothing in common. Poverty obliged Krishnarao early to resign his studies and seek a petty position in the village of Kagal, into the duties of which he plunged himself with all his characteristic vigour and zeal. His high spirit could ill brook the insulting manner of a petty-minded superior; and on one occasion, when conscious of no dereliction of duty, he had to suffer undeserved reproaches, he

would have sprung at the throat of his aggressor but for the soothing interference of some men then present. This display of spirit on his part, however, improved matters for him, as the little tyrant dared not bully his young clerk again.

On the maternal side of Gokhale's ancestry not much seems to be known. His father Krishnarao, married Valubai, the only daughter amongst the four children of Bhaskarpant Oka—the Khot of the village of Kottak in the Chiplun Taluka of Ratnagiri. On her arrival in her husband's family, the bride was rechristened as Satyabhama, by which name posterity knows the mother of Gokhale. Simplicity of mind, tenderness of heart, devotion to her husband and to the Deity sum up the character of this woman. Illiteracy—the usual fate of the Indian woman of that day—was no bar to her developing virtues eminently befitting her sex; and though superstition diverted her charity into channels not altogether agreeable to the enlightened mind, her god-fearing nature kept the horror of sin prominently before her mind's eye. She must have a clean conscience; and even the shadow of a sinful action must not be allowed to approach the threshold of her inner self. In this connection the mother's influence is manifest on the whole life of Gokhale, even under the most trying circumstances. Her tenderness of heart and devotion to her husband are illustrated by a little anecdote of her lovingly treasuring an old garment (dhoti) of her deceased husband as a memento which she would not part with at any cost. The incident, trifling in itself, has deep significance when considered from the point of view of a Hindu wife. Conduct of this sort could not have been lost on an impressionable mind like that of Gokhale. To the last he reverentially cherished the

memory of his departed parents and did his best to venerate and to serve the elders of his blood as well as his intellectual and spiritual *Gurus*. (Thus while he inherited from his paternal stock a fund of masculine virtues such as resoluteness, strength and honesty of purpose and a spirit of independence, the maternal constitution supplied those feminine virtues of charity, fear of sin, largeness of heart, tenderness and devotion, without which the work of a public man must, of necessity, fail to touch the hearts of the people. From the head through the heart must the appeal be made. In Gokhale was seen this happy balance as the off-spring of a commingling of two different types of virtue.)

The early childhood of Gokhale was spent in the rural surroundings, partly of his mother's home, and partly of Kagal, where his father was employed. Nursed in the lap of nature, he developed a fairly robust constitution which stood him in very good stead later on when he plunged himself in unwearied industry, in order to equip himself for the great work of the motherland to which his life was dedicated. His vernacular education was probably finished in the village school of Kagal. Here he had proved himself a diligent student, at the same time manifesting evident signs of softness of nature and deep rooted fear of sin which he owed to his mother. The master of the class had, on one occasion, set an example in arithmetic to the class to be worked at home and Gopalrao happened to be the only boy with the correct answer. The first place was accordingly awarded to him when he burst out weeping saying, "This place is not legitimately mine; it belongs to another. Please, Sir, I got the example worked by another boy at home; therefore, I have no right to

the reward." The master as well as the pupils were surprised at tenderness of his conscience; for, thought they, if the boy actually takes the trouble to find another elderly friend to help him to the solution, why should he not score a victory over the rest who took no such pains? But such was the nice sense of right so early seen in Gokhale that he refused to enjoy that which he did not consider his own. "Over-sentimental!" will the matter-of-fact cynic exclaim; but the moral man will give his verdict that conduct like this was justly scrupulous so that life might not be flecked with sin. This perfect whiteness of character and sensitiveness of conscience Gokhale retained throughout his life; and in his deep rooted fear of sin is to be found an explanation for some superficially incongruous and puzzling incidents of his later life.

In company with his elder brother Govindrao, Gopalrao migrated to Kolhapur for secondary education when he was still under ten. Very little is known about this period of his life even from the best of his contemporaries. He had half completed his course in this school when his father, the sole bread winner of the family, passed away in the year 1879. The widow was left in poor circumstances with four daughters and two sons to care for. At this juncture, Krishnarao's loving brother Anantjipant—himself possessed of only slender resources, very kindly stepped in to help, secured a small post at Rs. 15 per month for Govindrao at Kagal, removed the destitute family to a village in the Konkan, where he did his best to maintain them, and left Gopalrao to prosecute his studies at Kolhapur. Govindrao, only 18 at that time, cheerfully sacrificed himself for the sake of his younger brother the education of

whom he prized above every thing else. Out of the Rs. 15 that he earned every month, he kept only 7 for himself and sent the rest to Gopalrao, who had to spend a greater part of this meagre sum on food in a boarding-house. Conscious of the sacrifice that his poorly paid brother was making on his account, the young lad had, on many occasions, to deny himself even the ordinary comforts of life. A touching anecdote of this trying period of his life is preserved. The inmates of the hostelry were divided into two batches—the first being allowed curds and condiments, for which they paid an extra eight annas per month, and the second batch contenting itself without this superfluity, and therefore paying Rs. 4 altogether every month. On one occasion, young Gopalrao quite inadvertantly happened to ask for curds, but met with a rebuff from the cook that as he was paying only rupees four, he should not have the impudence to ask for curds. At once the proud spirit of the boy was roused and he had himself enrolled in the first list. The order given impulsively laid him under the necessity of finding ways and means to meet this additional eight annas. He could not, in all conscience, write to his brother for it; he could not himself earn it; but he soon hit on something. Members of the first batch, if they absented themselves from any meal, were not to be charged for it; and Gokhale managed to go without food on some occasions in order to make ends meet. Once a fairly well-to-do friend of his invited him to accompany him to a theatrical performance and Gokhale taking it only as an invitation agreed. Next day the friend who could very well have stood the charges presented him with a bill of two annas as Gopalrao's fee for the ticket. Though taken aback, he paid it, and made up the deficit by saving

oil through reading by the light of street lamps. The privations that nipping poverty inflicted upon him steeled him to greater vigour in his class work. This penance to propitiate the goddess of knowledge brought its reward in later life in the stores of learning that he had accumulated through the ever-renewed freshness and vigour of his mind; but the tale of sacrifices undergone by the struggling youth is sufficiently heart-rending. When the boarding expenses increased to a sum beyond his means, he found himself reduced to the distressing shift of cooking for himself, which naturally meant so much time lost from home study.

One little anecdote of this early part of his life throws a great light on his character. His holidays were invariably spent in the midst of the lovely rural surroundings and the pleasant though frugally kept home of his mother Satyabhama and her young daughters. The extreme tenderness of his heart could but make him sigh for home and say with impatience:

‘Fly fast the hours, and dawn the expected morn.’

On one such occasion, Gopalrao's elder brother, Govindrao, had also joined him for a short holiday. The brothers were one day in company with other village boys playing a village game of running after and catching the opponents within a quadrangular space bounded by some lines within which alone they had the liberty of moving about. It so happened that the two brothers were put on opposite sides and chance brought Govindrao to be challenged by Gopalrao in the former's trying to score a run. When the elder brother found that it was no easy work for him to outstrip the younger, he began to use his authority as senior to escape; whereupon Gopalrao firmly but very meekly answered: "Rather ask me not to take

any part in this game, for that will be a far smaller sacrifice to me than what you ask; for as long as I belong to a party, I must, to the utmost of my powers, uphold its interests, irrespective of any other consideration." A brave fight for the principle and yet a tactful way of avoiding giving any offence! Later on, it was a feature of his career that while he never budged an inch from his cherished principles, with his sweetness and diplomacy he succeeded in making the fewest number of personal enemies except perhaps only in the camp of the utterly irreconcilables.

In December 1881, he passed the Matriculation Examination, not without the usual trepidation felt by a dutiful and over-sensitive lad on the eve of the announcement of the examination result; and in his case, this anxious state was strained even to breaking point by an inadvertent delay in communicating the good news to him. In January 1882 he joined the Rajaram College of Kolhapur, from the High School of which place he had passed his University Entrance Examination. This year bears a significant mark in the annals of the modern thought of the Maharashtra. An able band of workers devoted to the cause of the regeneration of their land according to the new light of the West, illumining their thought, had launched into the noble work of driving darkness, ignorance and superstition from the land and spreading individual and social consciousness through the channels of school and press education. Ranade, G. H. Deshmukh, Krishna Shastri Chiplunkar were at the head of the general movement for resuscitation. Agarkar, Tilak, V. S. Chiplunkar and M. V. Joshi, inspired by the great luminaries at their head, opened the well known New English School of Poona and enlisted into this homely service young,

quick-minded graduates of that time, although Government service had not yet lost its comforts and attractions. The '*Kesari*' and '*Maratha*' were at the same time started to fling the seeds of the new thought broadcast; but the "Barve case" against the *Kesari* dragged her into troubles of a law court which nothing short of an intensely sympathetic response in money from the whole of Maharashtra could have successfully met. The stir created for the first time in the new life of the Deccan could not but reach even the cloistered nest of the Rajaram College and the student community bravely responded to the need of what was by them deemed to be the cause of truth and justice (since the indicted articles in the *Kesari* had been written in the interests of the reigning dynasty of Kolhapur). Subscriptions were freely raised and a theatrical performance of a rendering of Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors" in Marathi was arranged, its proceeds to go to the fund raised for the vindication of the *Kesari*. Young Gopalrao, though not much touched by the patriotic current underlying the movement, joined the theatrical performance, taking the part of a 'nun,' which he is said to have played creditably. His inability through poverty to contribute to this fund by any direct payment in money and his personal feeling for the accused—Messrs. Agarkar and Tilak—were probably responsible for his joining the performance, though it is not clear if the desire of a little display in juvenile histrionics may not also have been behind the young man.

Gokhale's College life was mostly uneventful. He was completely absorbed in his work and cared very little for world outside. Ambition to shine in every part of college activity and to excel his fellow students in most of the attractive things of college

life, such as sports, recitations, etc., held him fast to pursuits for which he had not enough talent. For instance, he would have liked to outstrip every body at cricket, tennis, chess, cards and almost every other conceivable pastime in their midst. His zeal for these things sometimes led him into excess, but more serious calls from the side of studies sobered him and made him realise that every thing is not given to every man. In one direction, however, he came to have an almost unchallenged superiority. He had a wonderfully retentive memory. Nearly the whole of Scott's "Rokeby," one of the text books in English for the Previous Class for that year, he had by heart. His remarkable feats of memory, dazzling every one that made his acquaintance often afforded the mischievous boys in the college occasion to raise a laugh against the simple-minded young man. Some one in a seemingly harmless way would come and say to him, "Gopalrao, Scott is very fond of the word "Brake." Could you, please, say where he uses it?" and Gopalrao found no difficulty whatever in hurling the required lines at his questioner. Instantly, another companion would turn up and challenge him as to whether he would quote where the word "Guerdon" was used; and Gokhale would have the answer pat. These tricks were sometimes carried to an excess, and it raises almost a smile of incredulity to see the future lynx-eyed politician of India so simple or so dense as not to see the fun and mirth he was occasioning among his fellow students. Some one would ask him to quote all lines which began with the word 'but' or 'there' or had an extra word put in between 'there' and 'there' and so on; and with a credulity even beyond a child's he would think to astound them with his remarkable memorising powers. If a more mischievously inclined fellow twitted him

by underrating his faculty of memory, little Gopy^{al} would even lose his temper and ask "show me another who can do better than myself." The gibes and squibs that his fellow students frequently aimed at him on account of his simple and unsophisticated mind several times resulted in petty fights not unaccompanied by even fisticuffs on both sides.

On passing his Previous Examination in December 1882, from the Rajaram College, he migrated to the Deccan College of Poona in January of the following year, since there were no arrangements in his *alma mater* for classes higher than the first year. Two or three Rajaramites also kept him company. The first term of that year passed quietly and young Gokhale found his best delight in carefully studying and memorising, as was his wont, a considerable part of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. This fountain of Political Philosophy so early imbibed, was his life long reservoir both for thought and language, and it is by no means a slight task to remember its beautiful passages—a pursuit congenial to Gokhale and therefore coming to him with the utmost ease. An illustration of his tenderness of heart—often a companion of unsophisticated minds—occurs during his stay in the Deccan College in connection with a little incident otherwise hardly worth mentioning. The Superintendent of the Postal Circle of Poona had a test letter addressed in the Deccan College to a Gokhale with initials different from Gopalrao's, and an old service-worn postman was charged to hand the letter to the addressee. The old man left it with a student of the College to be given to the proper person. It was soon found that the person answering to the initials was no inmate of the College-hostel and the letter was,

somehow, lost through neglect. The Post Office inquired of the Superintendent of the boarding house what had become of the letter. A resident-student who had previously served in the Post Office was shrewd enough to see that if the fact of the postman's having left the letter in strange hands were reported, the old man would be sure to lose his position; therefore all the students and the hostel Superintendent, taking pity on the delinquent, prevailed on Gopalrao to intimate to the Postal authorities that the letter had been given to him but that on his discovery that the initials did not correspond to his he had put it back in a postal box. This was evidently a lie. He had neither seen the letter actually nor consigned it to a letter-box; but just to save the poor man, he was obliged to do an unseemly act. The virtue of compassion proved strong enough to silence even his sensitive conscience. Let the reader judge of the incident as he best pleases.

The Rajaram College then added the first B. A. class to their existing course and Gokhale with some old companions marched back to his old institution in the second term of 1883. Here once again he had fuller opportunities of displaying his feats of memory; and no day for a college debate was missed without his quoting elaborately from Burke's Reflections. These performances, so difficult of attainment by a majority of young men, brought upon him the envious reproaches of most of his fellow-students who tried to comfort themselves by deriding him as a crammer. If Gokhale had sacrificed the development of his mind to brilliant achievements in memorising, possibly the censure would not have been ill-placed; but a study of a great book followed by a grasp of the language almost word by word is an accomplish-

ment of which a young undergraduate has every reason to be proud, for it is difficult to understand how a hold over the vocabulary and the idiom of a foreign language is possible without freely calling to mind the best expressions of some of the best writers of it.

When he had passed his first B. A. in December 1883, he thought it best to turn to the Elphinstone College of Bombay for his Final B. A. with Mathematics as his optional subject. The fame of Professor Hawthornthwaite, both as a teacher and as a sympathetic guide, had spread far and wide; and young Gokhale could not have given a more fitting close to his collegiate studies than by receiving instructions from a man of that Professor's distinction. It is a pleasure to note that by his usual diligence and greater interest in his work Gokhale won a scholarship of Rs. 20, was very much liked by his Professor and secured a comfortable second class—an honour that he had failed to score in any of his earlier examinations. Thus by the end of 1884, when he had hardly completed his eighteenth year, he was a graduate of the Bombay University—an achievement now rendered impossible by the present age-limit of 16 for appearing at the Entrance Examination.

As a student Gokhale was of a middling capacity, neither too bright nor too dull. An unbounded diligence was even then a characteristic of his: but he used it more to cultivate his memory than any other solid part of the mind. If his ambition had taken the direction of standing first in the examinations instead of beating every body in performances of memory, it is possible that he might have shown very much better results. One thing, however, is certain about his early career—namely, he had not the slightest aspiration to dedicate himself to the

service of his motherland. No contemporary of his, no incident of this part of his life bears testimony to the fact that he was ever moved by the strong currents that had newly set in, in Maharashtra for the regeneration of the land. On the contrary, it is easier to prove that the poignant sense of grinding poverty that had made his education primarily an up-hill task made it incumbent on him to do something to give a little relief to his elder brother whose heavy sacrifices he had never once forgotten. To this may also be added his natural desire to make a name for himself and achieve distinction in some line.

With a mind simple even to credulity if not imbecility, a heart tender, affectionate and compassionate, a soul filled with the fear of God—a temper not above irritability and a nature sufficiently impulsive, Gokhale could not expect much plain-sailing in the life he eventually chose: nor were his mental powers, beyond the embellishment of memory, such as to exact homage from his contemporaries. Very much, therefore, was yet wanting to fit him for the rôle he came to play. One thing, however, worked constantly in the back ground of his character and that was a sense of ambition and determination. With these, rightly directed, little in the world would be difficult of achievement.

After graduation, he wavered for a while in his decision how to employ himself best in life. His proficiency in mathematics induced him to think of joining the College of Science in Poona with a view to entering on a lucrative business as an engineer. His advantage in years, being then only eighteen, suggested the idea to some friends that they should recommend him to proceed to England to compete for the Indian Civil Service. And then, there was the

ever inviting law course—the refuge of every student who has nothing definite for his future plans. Gokhale was at a loss to decide what to do. He could not afford long to be without a position; still, under the first impulse, he actually went and joined the Engineering College of Poona, and then he heard that the First Year law course in jurisprudence had been started in the Deccan College. This nearly determined his ways. He would take a post as Assistant Master in the New English School in Poona and at the same time keep his law terms in the Deccan College. The commencing salary offered to a fresh graduate in that school was only Rs. 35, though Government service afforded prospects of a good rise both in the Revenue as well as Judicial lines. Gokhale, however, chose to take up the former not so much with a patriotic view as to find opportunity for pursuing his studies in law. The decision, taken with little ulterior aim, was fraught with those wonderful consequences which every Indian knows to have existed in the life-work of Gokhale. Says the Honourable Mr. Paranjape: “Just think of Gokhale as an Engineer, as a Lawyer, or even as an Indian Civil Servant! Well was it for the country that such a fate—it would have been nothing less than a dire fate—was not to be Gokhale’s, and that he was destined to become the expert engineer under whose loving and watchful eyes the edifice of India’s political progress was to be pushed forward, the eloquent pleader who was to plead the cause of India before the public in India, England and South Africa, in the Supreme Legislative Council and in private before Cabinet Ministers like Morley or Botha, or the devoted “Servant of India” rather than an Indian Civil Servant.”/

CHAPTER II.

APPRENTICESHIP.

FROM a junior school-master to an engineer of the destinies of India is a long step; and we have to see in the course of this chapter what a wearisome apprenticeship his was before he reached the great goal. At the start Gokhale was appointed to teach English to the 4th and 5th standards of the school; and it is interesting to record that in the beginning he did not find the task altogether a bed of roses. He became conscious that he was not a successful teacher, but diligence was ever at his side and he went straight at his work with all his might. The present day graduate school-master may well wonder at the pains he took over the lessons he had to teach; for, we are told, he actually wrote out every day all that he had to speak in the class by way of explanation and then committed it to memory so as to be able to express himself without a halting, faltering delivery. Of course, the little text-books in English on which he had to give his comments and explanations were also remembered word for word; and his teaching of "Gray's Elegy" without a book in his hand is, to this day, remembered by many. That same year he decided to give his best attention to the mastery of the English language; and, following Macaulay's advice he assiduously studied Milton and Burke, acknowledged by all to be the two best writers of English language. Milton's Paradise Lost engrossed him and he soon mastered its contents. With Burke's Reflections he was already familiar; and refreshing his memory of it once more, he passed

on to his speeches on American Taxation and Conciliation, large portions of which he learnt by heart, and then the speeches in connection with the Trial of Warren Hastings captivated him no less. Bright's speeches soon came in for their share of his attention. In all this work, such was the sedulous care he gave to his tasks that he would not allow himself to trip over a single word in the course of reciting what he had memorised. At this time he occupied a small house near Vishnu's Temple in the Sadashiv Peth of Poona, and a neighbour who held the book to see if Gokhale faltered anywhere had a pleasant wager with the young aspirant that for every trip he should pay him one anna for his labour. For hours the neighbour would hold the book in his hand, in vain hoping for even an anna to fall to his lot: Next he would undertake to commit to memory so many pages every day, failing which he would submit himself to a fine; and then the midnight oil or the early hours of dawn would witness the accomplishment of his achievement. Often he would be seen spending his mornings in lonely walks by the Parvati Hill of Poona, pouring over Bright or Burke and fulfilling the day's contract with his neighbour or with the monitor within him. Why did Gokhale subject himself to this severe penance? In the first place, the marvellous gifts of memory inherited from nature promised him no particular difficulty in doing the self-assigned task; besides, how could he master the language otherwise and have a copious vocabulary of pure English at his command? It is true that he had at this time no vision that all his labours in this field were to be eminently useful to him in measuring swords with great master-minds like Lord Curzon. It is true that he had just then no such conception of the destiny awaiting him as the Younger Pitt saw for

himself as regards the lead he was to take in the Parliamentary government of that day. In the case of the latter, says Macaulay, "Through his whole boyhood, the House of Commons was never out of his thoughts, or out of the thoughts of his instructors. Reciting at his father's knee, reading Thucydides and Cicero into English, analysing the great Attic speeches on the Embassy and on the Crown, he was constantly in training for the conflicts of the House of Commons." 'I want to speak in the House of Commons like Papa' is what he is said to have exclaimed when a mere child in knickers; and that Papa himself, the Great Chatham without any consciousness of the mighty rôle he was to play had, we are told by Lecky, prepared himself in the art of speaking by committing to memory all the sermons of Isaac Barrow—a famous divine of the 17th century, then held to be a model of style,—and had perused Bailey's Dictionary several times in order to have that indispensable flow of words and appropriate expressions for the ideas mainly to be uttered *ex tempore*. I am not sure if every great speaker has not had a training of this sort given to him. What appears remarkable in the case of Gokhale is that without having any such clear idea of developing into a public speaker merely to have the requisite facility of words that a teacher or a graduate should have, he went the length of doing things that stood him in very good stead later on. Well was it for him that some years of his early apprenticeship were devoted to a work, proficiency in which afterwards earned him the praises of some of the best English speakers in India and England. By this he trained his ear to that delicacy and beauty of language for which he retained a fastidious love all his life; and in the

beginning of his public career, it is said, his utterances were characterised more by a musical ring and chastity of language than by any lofty sentiment or solid reason./

His pecuniary position being none too easy, he, in company with Mr. Deshpande, was reduced to opening a class for coaching students desirous of appearing at the Public Service Certificate Examination; and the level of intelligence of the candidates seeking admission to this examination being much below the average, a tutorial class was a great boon to them. Gokhale's share of profits from this business came to about 35 to 40 rupees per month; and when once it mounted upto 43 rupees, the heart of the needy young man was exceedingly glad. The year 1885 was approaching its end, and Gopalrao appeared for and passed his first examination in Law. His fellow student and cherished companion, Mr. Patvardhan, who also passed this examination along with him, had means enough to proceed to Bombay to pursue his studies in Law for the 2nd LL.B. Examination. Gokhale's straitened circumstances would not allow that. He retained his assistant-mastership at the New English School in Poona and every week-end ran up to Bombay to keep his Law terms by putting in an appearance on Friday and Saturday. Mr. Kelkar, another member of the school staff, also joined him in the same pursuit. These two years taken up with the study of Law, the teaching work in the school and an unwearied attention to the best of English literature left him no leisure to think of his future. † The atmosphere around him was beginning to be charged with currents of new thought. There was the educational work started on the principle of self-abnegation in which he too found him

self engaged, though as yet quite innocent of the ideal underlying it; there were the *Kesari* and the *Maratha* periodically blowing their trumpet-call to awaken the slumbering masses to rise to the new life that the ægis of the British rule had created for them; and there was the Arya Bhushana Press and the Chitrashala—unmistakable signs of a second Renaissance in Maharashtra. Could it be that “the winds of heavens blew, the ocean rolled,” and Gokhale ‘felt them not’? There was again the intimacy that the young man was enjoying with the pivots of the whole movement—the famous fraternity of Messrs. Tilak and Agarkar. It is not possible that even the densest and the most hard-headed of creatures could go altogether uninfluenced by such an inspiring example of self-sacrifice; and the fervour of Mr. Tilak was simply irresistible. It is a fact that Gokhale grew more and more attached to both, and that the first influence, or rather the glamour, of Mr. Tilak held the simple young man almost captivated; but when a free and frequent intercourse of several years gradually lifted the mask that veiled the real man, the mountebank that had so long played upon his boyish imagination stood out in his true colours. In proportion as the personality of Mr. Tilak receded from Gokhale’s mind’s eye, Agarkar’s loomed larger and larger. The real worth of the latter could well stand the test of time and circumstances, and in his earnestness and straightforwardness Gokhale soon discovered something to admire, revere and love. While his Law Examination still loomed before him, he found many opportunities for long talks ‘with this object of his growing admiration; and ‘the ideal of life,’ ‘the present position of the country,’ ‘the ways to ameliorate its condition,’ and kindred themes

several times formed interesting topics of conversation. The sense of devotion and unassuming self-sacrifice, and spotless purity of intention of Mr. Agarkar were a powerful influence on young Gokhale; but the idea of 'self' could not be easily conquered. He must earn money and acquire fame. To obtain a share of the latter he had already started writing for the '*Maratha*,' of whose columns he made a free use throughout the year 1886; and this paper can boast, among other pieces of a somewhat remarkable juvenile composition of his on "General War in Europe"—a theme of especial interest in the light of present events. His friends in the Deccan Education Society would have been only too glad to have a young man of such promise as a permanent colleague of theirs; and several times they ventured to question him on his aims and ambition. That was a very simple thing for the young Gokhale to answer. He would become a lawyer, earn money and try to discharge his undischARGEABLE debt to his brother who, at all costs, under personal hardship and even severe privations, had maintained him at school and at college ever since the death of their father in 1879. Already as a school-master with only 35 rupees per month, Gokhale had found it possible to send him about 20 rupees every month, keeping back for all his wants a pittance of only fifteen. His poverty appeared to be an insuperable bar to enrolment as a permanent member of the Society; yet, Mr. Agarkar kept plying him with all sorts of questions about the goal of life; and his personal example, more than even his philosophy, began to work a remarkable change in him in the direction of self-abnegation. Mr. Tilak also joined others in their entreaties and Gokhale felt not a little elated by the importance that was being attached to his

association with that highly respected band of workers for the motherland. It is frankly confessed that for his part he felt as yet no such lofty ideal as service of his country or even in the cause of education as the fitting pursuit of a young man. To see anything beyond his own 'Self' and those who had an immediate claim on him was not yet given to him. What then gradually determined him to cast in his lot with the Deccan Education Society was, firstly the influence of the example of Mr. Agarkar preeminently and of others to a lesser degree, and secondly the idea of being *one* of the band so much thought of in the land. But his brother's consent must be first gained. If he was not prepared to let Gokhale embrace poverty and self-sacrifice in place of riches and power, there must be an end to all talk of such things. The best of influences were brought to bear on Mr. Govindrao in Kolhapur, and after a considerable struggle he was obliged to swallow the bitter pill, as it then appeared, of giving up all the worldly gain that was likely to accrue from Gokhale's rising to be a great lawyer or a big official. The die was cast! And almost with a sigh of regret the yet young Gopalrao told Mr. Patvardhan, his fellow-student in law, "You will roll in riches and drive in carriages, while I shall go in life a poor pedestrian!" Service and poverty are the indispensable concomitants of the ancient Indian ideal of the Reformer. The Deccan Education Society in Poona and the D. A. V. College in Lahore and the Gurukul of Haridwar are the best modern illustrations of it. Gokhale and the Hon. Mr. Paranjape in the West, Lala Hansraj and Lala Munshiram in the North, along with their noble band of illustrious associates are the guides to the realisation of this ancient ideal.

Whether that is the best way of doing service to the country, it does not fall within the scope of the present work to discuss; but this much is certain that the badge of poverty or even pecuniary disinterestedness casts a halo of sanctity on the great work of service to one's country, and assuredly it is something that every man in the street can comprehend and appreciate, though the measure, the degree or the direction of the service may be subject to dispute.

The determination to relinquish all consideration of wealth and worldly prosperity and to be, so to say, wedded to poverty all his life was to Gokhale something like the Hindu second-birth when the precepts to be followed in life are given to a young boy. Taking leave of money once for all, he began to grow quite indifferent to its influences and spend his meagre resources almost with a reckless non-chalance; and, strange to say, the more averse to money he became, the more it began to flow in. The first two years of his work as a school-master he had devoted solely to the study of the English language and literature. Now he began to try his hand at Arithmetic and the strong fascination which the subject exercised over him resulted in his actually producing an inimitable little book on it which he published in the beginning of 1888, after obtaining Mr. Tilak's warm approval of it. The book soon attracted the attention of every school-master, commanded a great sale and ran into several editions bringing the author a fair sum of money. Latterly Messrs Macmillan & Co. have taken up the copy right with an understanding to pay an annual royalty to him. To remove any impression to the contrar

it is necessary to record here that this book was entirely his work and no body had shared with him in the labour it involved.

One fairly important point relating to his personal life needs to be mentioned at this stage. In 1879, his uncle Antajipant had pressed hard that young Gopalrao should be married. Krishna-rao, the father of Gokhale, who was then living, warded it off on the plea that the boy was yet young and altogether engaged in his studies. But when after the decease of his father Gopalrao's family passed into the direct guardianship of Antajipant, the young lad could not resist the pressing wishes of the uncle, reverence for whom would not allow him even so much as to indulge in a smile in his presence. He was then too young to understand the influence of 'sex,' and may have, not unnaturally, entertained a sort of aversion to marriage. The best thing for his happiness would have been to let him alone till the want of a partner was, of its own accord, roused in him. Getting him a very handsome and a most companionable wife would have been perhaps the next best thing, if the idea of his future happiness had been consulted by his parents. But as the very best-intentioned of them are not always the most judicious-minded or as downright perverseness of fate would have it, Gopalrao found himself wedded to an incurably *anæmic* wife. Consorting with her was out of the question for him; and though probably he did his best to treat her very kindly, yet living as wife and husband was not possible. This fact, distressed his brother Govindrao and his wife, who both had found in their own marriage a fountain of felicity which

they were grieved to find completely denied to young Gopalrao. Soon after he had taken service in the New English School, they broached the subject of a second marriage to him since his first wife was past any cure. Gopalrao would at first hear of no such thing; but when an unanimous opinion regarding her incurable state was obtained from all the available doctors and the consent of the renounced bride was obtained, he allowed himself to be married a second time within the life-time of his first wife. Antajipant maintains that though Gokhale had no conjugal relations with the poor girl, he still continued to take an interest in her welfare all the time that she lived and did his duty by taking his part in the ceremonies attending her obsequies. Young Gokhale was quite unconscious of the gravity of the step he was taking in contracting a second marriage. This clearly shows that as yet he had given no thought to the great social questions of the age with which the life of every leading spirit of the times comes to be almost indissolubly connected. With Gokhale, this matter of his remarriage proved an insuperable bar to all activity in the direction of social reform. It may be that this hydra-headed monster would have baffled his genius; it may be that his absorption in political reform would have left him no time to think of any thing else. But the devoted disciple of the myriad-minded Ranade having greedily imbibed all that that splendid enlightener of Maharashtra could give and having considered for instance, a fight against the evil of intemperance in the country to be not beneath him, such a disciple might well have turned his hand profitably to the cure of other social evils as well, had not the consciousness of his own sin against Society been always present. (The Hon. Mr. Paranjape's words in this

connection are worth quoting :—“ Some social reformers are wroth with Gokhale for his not taking a lead in social reform propoganda ; but he thought that the political work that he was doing was enough and more than enough to occupy all his energies. Maybe, he also thought an unfortunate circumstance in his private life might be raked up against him without his being able to give the true explanation and that he wished to save the social reform cause from any reflection that would be made against it if he became one of the leaders.” On reference to the Hon. Mr. Paranjape I find it said that the pressure of the mother or the uncle made Gokhale marry a second wife within the life-time of the first. Whether it was a blind sense of filial devotion, or the promptings of sex instincts or a sublime unconsciousness of sinning against Society may well be left to the reader to determine. I should be inclined to think that the step taken was the result of the combined influence of all three.

By the end of 1886 it was decided to develop the New English School into a College and from the January of 1887 the Previous class of what is now widely known as the Fergusson College of Poona was started. Gokhale's successful efforts in mastering the English language entitled him to teach a part of that subject to the Previous Class ; and, as if the gods had intended to give him no respite in work, he was confronted with the teaching of Southey's Life of Nelson, then held to be sufficiently stiff owing to its copious vocabulary of nautical terms and the strangeness of its theme to many inland students who had hardly had even a glimpse of the sea and much less that of a vessel, above all, of a warship. Gokhale, however, went straight at his work without demur.

The spirit of doing things in a thorough fashion now beginning to take hold of him prompted him to take several trips to Bombay, solely with a view to study the build of a fighting vessel as an object lesson. The 'fore' and 'aft,' the 'starboard' and the 'larboard,' the broadside, the masts, the rigging, the tack, etc., to be well understood had necessarily to be seen; and Gokhale soon proved quite equal to it. There was Prof. Kelkar also doing English there, whose incomparable erudition and method of teaching are still held by his students in pleasant memory; his knowledge of this subject, of course, left Gokhale far behind and the latter had absolutely no notion of vieing with him. All that he cared for was that he should spare no pains to make his lectures lucid and impressive to his students. Prof. Kelkar's superiority over him seems to have been complete; for, we are told, that his few touches in word-painting produced a far greater impression than a speech of many minutes by Gokhale to elucidate a point. Hon. Mr. Paranjape thinks that his methodical teaching though "not calculated to give one the love of literature as such if it was not already there, was more useful to the average examinee than Mr. Kelkar's." He is said to have particularly excelled in his thorough explanation of historical allusions; and as a personal testimony to his powers of teaching I can say that his lectures on Burke's French Revolution in the year 1901 was nothing short of an intellectual treat fit for an assembly of gods and not for the pigmies that we were around him. Every thought of that famous political philosopher brought forth from his silver tongue a stream of illustrations chosen from the every day life of a citizen, so that the dullest boy received well a clear impression of the tenor of the book. To the more ambitious set of students were

thrown occasional hints on higher studies in politics with all the bibliography needed for that purpose. To have heard Gokhale lecturing on Burke's Reflections was, to have drunk at the fountain-head of constitutionalism and moderation in politics.

The centre of all the regenerating forces of the modern Maharashtra was at this time the Great Mahadeo Govind Ranade—a star of the first magnitude who owed his position in the social, political and industrial horizon of New India more to the native faculties of his mind and his untiring industry in self-cultivation than to any extraneous advantage. His place in the cause of uplifting his country is unique and his influences for good work on all those who were brought into intimate touch with him were unbounded. How to use the latent forces of this ancient land for receiving and assimilating the best of Western thought, how to rouse a conscious desire in the people to obtain a dignified place in the midst of the forward modern nations, what stages to mark for its growth when the soul of the nation should have been awakened and how finally to control the movement lest the new light prove too strong for its newly purged eyes,—these and a number of kindred questions bearing on the elevation of the motherland in *all* aspects,—social, political, industrial, intellectual and spiritual, ceaselessly occupied the indefatigable brain of this gifted being. If he himself could clearly think out the lines on which progress could be marked he felt no less the need for sincere and capable workers in this wide field; for, if the links of an ever-lengthening chain were not well-joined, the enthusiasm would be in danger of evaporating. There was young Gopalrao of only twenty-one years of age, whose voracious appetite for work and whose high-

strung fervour were already noticed by his close associates. He was never found idling at any hour of the day; a gossip or a nap was not in his line. Even the small, well-earned school interval of a half or a whole hour intended for a meal or a little rest, he turned to some account; and if nothing in the shape of intellectual work was at hand, he was engaged arranging books in the library. His reverence for his elders was also a great asset in his favour; and Mr. Agarkar and others who were noticing in him some promise of future greatness thought that contact between him and Ranade might bear very useful fruit. Gokhale's ignorance of the public activities and the public men of this time might be gathered from the following little incident. The New English School was once holding a function in the Hirabag at Poona to which all the distinguished citizens were invited. Gokhale was to perform the duty at the gate of admitting people holding invitation tickets. In course of time Mr. Ranade came up; and Gokhale not knowing who he was challenged him for the ticket of admission. As luck would have it, Mr. Ranade had not taken care to arm himself with this passport and Gokhale was wondering whether he should admit him when Mr. Aba Saheb Sathe delivered him from this awkward position by taking Ranade by the arm and ushering him in with all due honour. This was the first time that the future disciple had so much as a casual sight of the face of his future Guru.

On the recommendation of Mr. Agarkar and through the kind offices of Aba Saheb Sathe—their mutual friend—Gokhale was admitted to an interview with Mr. Ranade, having been referred to him as very good material for carrying out the great work so dear

to his heart. This interview had its desired effect. To make a literal translation of Prof. Patvardhan's expression, "it was, as it were, the meeting of the Sun and the lotus in the morning." The best of the great luminary was to be seen in the fragrance cast by the lotus; and the humble flower could have no budding, no life without the constant radiance of the Shining One. Gokhale's mind was like a ploughed and manured soil anxiously awaiting a fertilizing shower; and Ranade's was like the atmosphere of Western India in the rainy season, full of clouds ready to pour down for the advantage of a thirsty soil, or like the exulting and abounding river Sindhu making her waves a blessing to the land through which it flows. If there was at this time any mind in Maharashtra more receptive than the rest to the teachings of this great Guru it was Gokhale's. His unsophisticated nature and reverence bordering on humility, his burning desire for achievement and his tremendous capacity for work greatly assisted by a good physical frame, made him the very best material for moulding into anything that the master spirit of the age might direct. There they were—the disciple apt to absorb all that the master could give and the master never stinting his lessons. For fourteen years from that day in 1887 to the day of the decease of Mr. Ranade in 1901, Gokhale imbibed from him a love for all that his strenuous public life stood for. For five years from 1888-93 while Ranade was in Poona—the pupil had the advantage of personal contact with his guide; but afterwards he kept himself in touch with him by correspondence and frequent visits to Bombay.

A peep into this first period of his apprenticeship will not be without use to every young aspirant of

to-day. Ranade believed in work—solid work in quantity, simply appalling to the easy-chair reader—a type too common among the Indian educated classes. His own whole life had been one continuous, unbroken record of industry. “They, indeed, need rest who work,” he used to say in his unostentatious way, thereby perhaps implying that what he was ceaselessly at, could not be called ‘work,’ although through absorption in work he almost invariably let his afternoon cup of tea go cold. To serve an apprenticeship under him who never spared himself was to bid a final good-bye to even a very small measure of ease and pleasant idleness welcome at times to every human being. If to pen a small newspaper or magazine article he thought it his duty first to obtain thorough view of the subject by referring to all the material available on it, how could he let his disciple, whom he was preparing for a great all round work in life, go without pouring over moth-eaten, time-worn, dry-as-dust tomes on the different questions engaging his attention in relation to the political life of the country? Prominent in his political programme was his teaching to raise the position of the people of the country under the ægis of the British Empire. The representatives of the British Sovereign and the British Parliament entrusted with the work of conducting the administration of this country were to be given the *view of the people* in matters of government; and Ranade believed that to meet the great minds of the bureaucracy of India successfully, the self-appointed representatives of the people must diligently apply themselves to the questions which they meant to agitate. Land-Revenue, finance and the general administration of the country were the most important questions in which there was ample scope for reform; and if the young novice was

to be of any use he must study all these questions at their very fountain,—namely, the Government Blue Books, Green Books and Red Books issued from time to time. Cumbrous statistics, masses of evidence, voluminous correspondence, {various statements and comments proceeding from diverse sources had to be grasped, and for a faithful comparison or contrast of the situation, a close study of foreign conditions was equally indispensable. Under instructions from Mr. Ranade, the disciple set to his work with intense application. Many were the dreary hours spent in hunting up these materials; many were the nights when sleep was denied to the young man, because work had a stronger claim. Even fever was not admitted as an excuse. “Fever would go away by the taking of some medicine,” would say the exacting master, “but a Wednesday (when they usually met for their work) lost could not be reclaimed.” Gokhale was often asked to write articles for their organs and memorials and petitions to the Government. The first of its kind, anxiously written by the novice and tremblingly put into the hands of the master, was, on a careful perusal, received with a quiet expression, “it will do;” and even this gladdened the heart of the aspirant, for he had received the encouraging assurance that he was no idler or do-nothing in the great vine-yard. Ranade never showered any praise on Gokhale in his presence, nor did he chide him if he could not approve of his production. What he did not like he recast without any fuss. But by degrees his confidence in the young man grew; and he was entrusted with the work of drafting weighty memorials to the Government, one of which he had to finish at one almost continuous sitting of 22 hours. There is no royal road to success. The temple of fame stands on a high eminence, and many are the weary, distress-

ing steps to be taken in the up-hill journey to obtain a niche in that sanctified place. Thus was Gokhale under the directions of his master, occupied in “exhausting thought and hiving wisdom with each studious year.”

The four years from 1887-1891 form a very trying period in the history of the Great Deccan Education Society. Mr. Agarkar in his inseparable companionship with Mr. Tilak, during their period of simple imprisonment in 1882-1883, consequent on the libel case against the Kesari, referred to above, had come to form a proper estimate of his co-adjutor, who had till then not been sufficiently pushed in his views on all questions. Living day and night together in one room with no work to do—according to the requirements of a sentence of simple imprisonment,—the two had ample opportunities to discourse on all possible themes; and Mr. Agarkar soon found out that between him and the one he held almost as a part and parcel of all his activities, there was an almost impassable gulf in thought which could not be bridged by any compromise that did not involve the violation of his dearest principles. This rift in the lute was bound in time to spoil their harmony; and the self-less and constitution-loving Agarkar was obliged to break openly with Mr. Tilak by discontinuing his connection with the Kesari and starting a new weekly called ‘Sudharak,’ the first number appearing on the Desara Day of the year 1888. The differences of opinion between these two original leaders of the Deccan Education Society permeated the rank and file; and both the school and the college began to suffer from visible marks of deterioration in work as well as discipline. Other incidents of this time happening quite outside the proper educational

work caused a further widening of the breach. For instance, in 1888 the nomination of Gokhale to the Secretaryship of the Sarvajanic Sabha opposed by Mr. Tilak gave rise to disputes in that Society, and these disputes bred bitterness even in the school and college arena. Similarly the publishing of an English Sanskrit Dictionary by Mr. L. R. Vaidya at the Arya-Bhushana Press and of another publication of exactly the same nature by Mr. Apte at the Arya-Vaibhava giving rise to a natural business jealousy between the proprietors of the two different printing firms was unnecessarily made an occasion for aggravating the differences between the two sections.

Mr. Tilak's orthodoxy in all matters of social reform made itself bitterly perceptible in his wild attacks through the columns of the *Kesari* against the Age Consent Bill and against the *Sharada Sadan Society*, which latter professed to have been started for the promotion of female education in Poona—movements which had the greatest sympathy and support from Messrs. Ranade, Agarkar and others of their following. [These and a number of other incidents with which the New Maharashtra was then throbbing formed every day fresh themes for disputes among the members of the teaching staff; and the successful working] of the Education Society became increasingly difficult. At this very critical juncture, Mr. Tilak followed by Mr. Namjoshi retired from the Society, possibly with a belief that their absence would produce a dead-lock. It was true that both of them were valuable assets to the association; but Corporations based on pious motives and built on noble pursuits generally do not die for want of men, and no particular worker is absolutely indispensable if the institution itself is appreciated by the general public. New men of nearly equal grit are always there to fill

the gap. Mr. Tilak had a reputation as a successful lecturer in Mathematics, and Gokhale, who was already taking a part of the Courses in English and History and Economics, for which his intimacy with and apprenticeship under Ranade had created a very strong liking, now added mathematics. His proficiency in this subject in the last year of his college studies came to his aid; and what was wanting in original genius was quickly supplied by application, of which he always seemed to have inexhaustible stores. This he continued to do till Prof. Karve relieved him in 1893. In his continuous study of economics he found some knowledge of mathematics of very great use to him, particularly in the statistical branch of the former, and I think it is no exaggeration to say that his lucid and even fascinating exposition of figures both from his seat in the Imperial Legislative Council, and from the public platform was largely due to his having once taught mathematics. If he was what the hostile party in derision called him and what he was not ashamed of being called "a Professor to order," surely all the teaching work so conscientiously done by him was building him up for the great role he had to occupy in life. Nothing was lost to him; every new subject that he handled in the class was an additional gain to his intellectual powers and was sure to be turned to the best account. { Ranade's vigorous mind and jealous watchfulness over work of every kind passing under his eye made it impossible for his pupil to leave any thing half done. } The minutest attention, therefore, had to be paid to every subject he did in the class, despite the fact that his activities in the outside world were increasing almost by leaps and bounds. The best evidence on this point is offered by some of his students of that day that, though in

pure literary exposition he never quite came up to Professor Kelkar, clear marks of his progress every year were perceptible in his fluency and chastity of expression and copiousness of information coupled with critical estimate of things before him—the necessary outcome of his sedulous wooing of the muses and of his deep introspection. History and economics afforded him a peculiar pleasure, since their study was indispensable for the public activity for which his *Guru* was preparing him. Let it, however, be clearly understood that Gokhale's studies in these various subjects were not with a view to doing any original research work, for which somehow he did not entertain very promising hopes in the present state of India; but all his serious thoughts coming to rest in the uplifting of the country, these studies were to be used as mere instruments to give him the ability to handle questions of administration.

That he must go out frequently into the world and study human nature at first hand and not merely through the medium of books was an absolutely necessary complement to his peaceful pursuits in the study, if a practical politician was to be made out of him. Without giving him a peep into that great future awaiting him, circumstances forced him into a contact with the outside world, in his case of not altogether a very agreeable kind; but it goes without saying that it was a great schooling to him. Mr. Namjoshi, a veteran of the Deccan Education Society and attached to Mr. Tilak—was an able organiser, and the extremely arduous work of collecting funds for the Society from Government, other public institutions and private men had been left to his tact and judgment. So long as the old building in the city continued to serve the purpose

of the school and some college classes as well, there was perhaps not much need to trouble the public: but now that the Fergusson College had been recognised as a First-Grade Institution, its crying need was a commodious building outside the city, for which funds were imperatively needed. The mantle of Mr. Namjoshi accordingly fell on the shoulders of Gokhale who, though comparatively young in years, had, by his industry, ability and ready zeal for 'service,' come to be prized almost equally with the most senior men in that fraternity. His fluency and persuasiveness of tongue, his freedom from active participation in the various disputes in the camp of the Society itself and in matters of social Reform which had come to exercise the minds of the people of Maharashtra were points largely in his favour in the undertaking of this work. Besides, his share in public activity under the lead of Ranade had brought him into prominence with the people and the leaders of the Bombay Presidency and Berar. All these advantages no other member of the Society had in an equal degree with Gokhale. There was no shrinking from duty in his case. The term-time was usually spent at Poona in the midst of college activities; and the vacations were profitably utilised in travelling up and down Maharashtra to tap all available sources for the much-needed funds. Scant courtesy, false promises, humiliating rebuffs or flat refusals were alike without power to cause him any depression. His cheerful perseverance and buoyancy of temper were the best aids in collecting nearly a quarter of a lakh of rupees in the course of two or three years from 1893 onwards. Bearing in mind the single idea of service to his Society, he did not realise how much good he received by rubbing shoulders with the hard-headed men of the world

and taking up the gauntlet thrown by many oppositionists. This sort of experience was essential to the making of a responsible leader out of a College Professor. Here was an excellent nursery-ground for the diplomacy that smoothed his work as a leader.

When breaking his connection with the 'Kesari,' Mr. Agarkar had started an Anglo-Marathi weekly called "Sudharak," as mentioned above. Gokhale's personal attachment to its founder, and ambition to acquire facility in writing English were responsible for his undertaking to supply the main part of its contributions in English. The training in questions of revenue, financial and general administration that he was at this time receiving under the paternal care of Ranade served him admirably in expressing himself on the various current themes. Writing frequently and subjecting his copious reading to keen mental analysis gave dignity and self-restraint to his style; and an amiable moderation—his peculiar characteristic in political life—was even painfully cultivated. Ranade had early recognised the fact that the only way to make one's views felt by the Government and the outside world was through arguments based on reason and statistics and, as far as possible, free from the taint of rousing passions. In Gokhale's early compositions some pungency and acidity of language is largely noticeable; and the article headed as "Shame, Shame, my Lord, Shame!" is an example of the same. Though this had quite an interesting effect on a perfectly judicious-minded man of the Lord Reay's type, in as much as, for instance, he, from that day, added his name to the list of subscribers to the 'Sudharak,' still in many quarters such outpourings would have a rather damaging influence. Gokhale's pen and thought

were being forged in the smithy that Ranade and his co-workers of Poona had set up; and critics were able to perceive a remarkable change for the better in his writings on the Mohda Bill, two years later. The point does not need to be laboured that a favourable environment for work is a great help to an aspiring young man. Poona had come to be an important centre of progressive thought. The Sarvajanic Sabha was a thoroughly constitutional body, using for its methods of work the recognised and accredited means of submitting petitions and memorials to the Government, representing the people's point of view on the various questions of administration, of holding meetings of protest, if occasions required it, and of creating and aiding public opinion on all points touching the interests of the governed. In addition to its formal sittings held at stated intervals, the Sabha-hall was every evening a place for animated discourses of an informal character on all possible subjects likely to engage the attention of a thinking man; but social and political topics generally engrossed attention. Ranade, of course, was the central luminary who shed his light freely on all around him. The history and the political philosophy of the West were read and discussed and their possible bearing on the present conditions of India was thoughtfully sifted. The fact of a set of circumstances peculiar to India and vastly different from that of European countries including Ireland, which, however, in many ways bore a resemblance to the conditions in India, was prominently upheld by Ranade in the propagation of his views. Economic questions and the possibilities of reviving our industries on modern scientific lines were freely discussed; and perhaps no other subject occasioned a severer heart-burning than the present hopeless

poverty of India, with no cheering prospects in the future unless the *policy* were changed. Young Gokhale had his modest share in these debates, but profitted more by silent thinking. The Secretaryship of the Sabha had been conferred on him in 1888 when he was hardly 22, though not without opposition from Mr. Tilak, perhaps on the flimsy pretext of his immature years. The editorship of the Quarterly Magazine of this Sabha was also entrusted to him, and a pecuniary return of Rs. 40 per month was offered to him. The last he politely refused, though to his slender means it would have been a welcome addition. Was not the inspiring example of Mr. Agarkar there before him? Should he lag behind? This clear proof of his disinterestedness in money matters and working for the public without monetary gain had its reward. Public esteem was evinced in several congratulatory letters he received and in a remarkable visit he had from one, Mr. Damodar Janardhan Gokhale, whose words to him on this occasion have been preserved: "Gopalrao, I am happy to see that even at this tender age you can show this sacrifice in the service of your motherland. May God help you!" This was, indeed, a very great encouragement to him. †

The first public speech made by Gokhale was in the year 1888 in connection with a very curious episode that may be reviewed even at this rather late date without disadvantage to outlying parts like Sind, where the vigilant eye of the Bombay Government cannot always reach. Mr. Crawford, the Commissioner of the Central Division of the Presidency, had scandalised the Government by freely taking bribes for all appointments in his gift. Lord Reay—the benignant ruler of Bombay—could not connive at the

matter. In his shrewd and discerning way he determined that a Commission should be appointed to enquire into the question and at the same time made a politic announcement that all such subordinate officials as gave evidence on this matter, as a result of their personal experience, would not be held incriminated as co-sharers in the guilt, but freely pardoned from all the consequences otherwise inevitable in a confession of this sort. The Commission soon determined that though bribes had been freely taken, Mr. Crawford could not be held legally responsible, as intermediaries had always been employed for the business and the offending official had remained in the back-ground. Therefore, though technically his case was not subject to the law, the Government of Bombay decided to ask him to retire from service. This action on the part of the Government, so joyously received by the aggrieved people, was commented upon by both the papers in England and the Anglo-Indian Press in India. If Mr. Crawford, the arch corrupter of official life, was dismissed, what about the whole army of lower officials who had soiled themselves by being parties to the transaction? Is it possible that they who had entered Government service by such corrupt means would desist from spreading corruption in the administration, at least by reimbursing themselves with what they had been out of pocket? This clamour was vehemently raised in many quarters. Even the 'Home' authorities did not desist from placing this view before the Government of Bombay. On the other hand, the prestige of the Government was to be upheld; a great personage of the type of Lord Reay had given his word that persons involved in this dirty business would not be touched. Matters were in this indeterminate position when a great public meeting was held in Poona with

a view to upholding Lord Reay's action and to request the Home Government not to press the point further. It was on this occasion that the ablest speech delivered came from nearly the youngest of the agitators, namely, Gokhale. The 'Times of India' and the 'Bombay Gazette' reviewed and applauded it the most. Curiously enough, the speech was never actually delivered. Gokhale, by some accident, turned up ten minutes late and his speech was taken as read. The reporters were permitted a copy of it and they discovered that the cogency and the strength of arguments embodied in it placed it above every body else's utterances. "A speech to be delivered well must be first written out," was a dictum of Ranade; and Gokhale presumably stuck to this happy principle all his life.]

Next year, i. e., in 1889, he appeared on the National Congress platform; and, though the speech then delivered was comparatively unimportant, it perhaps afforded him even greater satisfaction than Pitt could have expected from his assured position in the House when he delivered his first speech there at 21. At the next year's Congress meeting held in Calcutta he was able to draw the attention of several leaders— notably that of the then President, Sir Pherozshah Mehta, whose loss India has now to mourn in common with that of Gokhale. Sir Pherozasha's attachment to this budding figure grew stronger with the increasing strength of Gokhale's views; and it is a notable fact that India looked up to these two products of the Bombay Presidency as her stalwart champions whom Providence had favoured with that attractive delivery denied to their less fortunate co-workers in the field of patriotism. The subject entrusted to Gokhale for support on the occasion of the sittings of the

National Congress of 1890 was the Resolution on the Reduction of the Salt Duty—a theme on which he never ceased talking later on from his seat in the Imperial Legislative Council till he had succeeded in getting the tax so reduced as to bring the commodity within the reach of the very poorest people of India. A low rate of duty inflicting no restraint on consumption ought to have been the policy of Government consistently. In fact that view had always been upheld by the Government of India and the first ‘cruel’ departure from it took place only in January 1888 by a mere executive order of the Government. The masses who were hit the hardest by this enhanced imposition suffered silently without protest and the facts and figures quoted by Gokhale on that occasion showed that a fall in the consumption of this first necessary of life was already perceptible. A quotation from the Corn Law poet of England was felicitously asserted by the speaker, illuminative of the condition of the masses in India as being altogether devoid of sun-shine, ‘hardly cheered by a single ray of hope, or relieved by a single day of rest’ :—

“Landless, joyless, helpless, hopeless,
Gaspings still for bread and breath,
To their graves by trouble hunted
India’s helots toil till death.”

“We are appealing to the sense of justice of the Government of India. We are appealing to their statesmanship, to their righteousness, and I will even go further and say to their mercy.” In the spirit clearly revealed by this fervent expression Gokhale had proceeded to look at all questions in Indian administration. The short speech delivered

on this occasion, taking hardly ten minutes of the public time, had been prepared when he was not yet twenty-four; but the dignity and the purity of the language make it perfectly readable even at this distance of time. A small glimmering of the trouble he took to prepare his case well is also fairly indicated by this utterance.

It was not possible that Gokhale should be put all at once in the fore front of India's representatives of those days but his influence was coming to be more and more felt. At the next meeting of the Congress, held in Nagpur, his speech was still more applauded for its wealth of figures lucidly arrayed, and for its weighty arguments, popularly represented. One little incident touching his private life was noticed by the volunteers working in the Congress Camp of Nagpur. Gokhale in his earlier days had been ordered by a native physician the use of a medicine mixed with butter, melted in sunshine, as a cure for some ailment he was then suffering from. The continued use of this kind of clarified butter created in him a lasting repugnance for the thing and whenever a dish cooked in ghee or bread with an application of ghee was brought to him he had simply to leave it in disgust. Either he must have fresh butter separately served him or go altogether without this substance. This aversion, it is said, lasted throughout his life. To some of his friends and advisers such rooted dislikes in taste appeared as illustrative of the obstinacy and doggedness of his general temperament.

In the Congress, held at Allahabad in 1892 Gokhale had the distinction of moving a proposition expressing regret at the inadequate effect given by the Government of India to the recommendations of the

Public Service Commission with regard to the employment of Indians in the public service. This question engaged his keenest attention throughout his career and his first public utterance on it is as luminous and weighty as it could possibly be. If full effect had been given to the rules of 1879, about 125 posts i.e. one-sixth of the 750 posts usually held by members of what was then called the Covenanted Service would have, in the long run, been held by Statutory Civilians recruited out of the deserving Indians. The Commission seemed to have recommended a smaller number, perhaps 108, to be incorporated into the Provincial Service which the Commission had proposed to create. That Service practically was to be exclusively for the natives of this country, while the Imperial Service was intended for those who passed the examination in London. The Commission had proposed to reserve 108 posts for Indians by Parliamentary legislation, but the Government of India wanted instead to place about 93 or 94 out of the posts reserved in the schedule on a separate list for Competent natives, if available. Gokhale pointed out that this way of looking at the question involved a vital principle, because thereby the Government, instead of organising a particular regular service for us, wanted us to prove our efficiency for every appointment before it could be given to us. The grievances of reduction in the number and in the quality of the appointments were next enlarged upon by the speaker on this occasion. Copious references were made to the declarations of Parliament from 1833 onward that as far as admission to the Public Service of India was concerned, no obstacles would be placed in the path of natives on the score of race, creed or colour. Lord Lytton in the eighties, however, seemed to show a disposition to regret the promises given us in the past, from which time a.

policy of retrogression had been pursued by Government. The virtuous indignation of the rising patriot clearly rang through an expression or two of the following type:—“Whether you consider the Jury Notification in Bengal, or the curtailment of Educational Grants, or the treatment accorded to Municipalities, you cannot help feeling that Government is treating us with increasing jealousy and distrust every day. And unless this regime of distrust is soon changed, unless the policy of Government is inspired by more sympathetic feelings, darker days cannot but be in store for this poor country.” For the reason for this change Gokhale referred his audience to the eloquent expression of Sir Phirozshah Mehta that, “It was all very well for the rulers to talk of raising the subject to the level of the ruler, but when the subject began to press close, uncomfortably close, the temptation to kick back a little was irresistible.”

Questions like the position of the Reformed and Enlarged Legislative Councils as enacted by the Act of 1892, simultaneous Civil Service Examinations, Home charges, etc, etc, were now freely handled by him from the public platform, and it was evident to every one around him that he was making gigantic strides in his grasp of public questions and in his powers of public speaking. Here was the first man noticeable in the history of the land who looked upon the study of his country's interest, quite as his *profession*, through the medium of professorial work. The keynote to all his industry was the moral fervour and the deep enthusiasm running in his veins. Respect for elders and a hero-worship for all the deserving great marked him from early days, and it was not a whit abated by the growing consciousness of his own

importance/ In this connection one little incident, obtained from Mr. Wacha's Reminiscences of him, might be mentioned with advantage. Says Mr. Wacha :—"I had marked his great enthusiasm while taking an active part as a youth of 27 in the magnificent demonstration which Poona had organised for Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji, then M. P. for Central Finsbury, on the eve of his departure to Lahore to preside at the Congress which was to be held in that city for the first time. Full of youthful vigour and high ambition, he was only too eager to participate in doing honour to one whom he was to see for the first time in his life, and who was the acknowledged veteran leader of the entire political party of India. So eager and enthusiastic was he that I well remember how he wished to be a kind of personal Aide-de-camp to the renowned President. There was no room in the carriage which drove me and Mr. Dadabhoy and other Congressmen to Hirabag, when the reception had been organized by the enthusiastic citizens of Poona. At last we gratified his desire by putting him on the coach-box. I have a vivid recollection of the glee and brightness of his countenance as he joyously took his seat there. It was the glee of satisfaction that at last he had been able to satisfy his ardent youthful desire to serve Mr. Dadabhoy."

The simple-minded Gokhale of every day life stands in strange contrast to the lynx-eyed servant of his country that he was growing to be. Many pleasant anecdotes of this almost incredible simplicity of his nature are narrated by his friends of earlier as well as later days. One such may be set down here for the interest of the reader. On one occasion of a 'Haldi-Kunku' festival celebrated in the house of his friend Prof. Gole, of the Fergusson College, when the

ladies whom the celebrations chiefly concerned had finished their part, the male friends of the host sat to entertain themselves by preparing a tin of ice-cream with their own hands. Gokhale joined them just when they were half way through the process, and with almost a childish curiosity asked them what they were at. He was quietly told that ice-cream was being made, whereupon he broke upon them impatiently 'let me see, let me see, what is it? How does it taste?' and so on. His friends, aware of this simple-naturedness of his, found a good opportunity to have some fun out of him, and one of them filled a handful of salted ice-water from the bucket and poured it into his, and straightway Gokhale transferred it to his mouth to find it that it was all bitter salt. He was sorely disappointed, but the friends soon comforted him with the belief that this saltish ice-water would, of its own accord, turn into a nice sweet dish. It was only later on in the evening that he was disabused of this impression. This almost stupid ignorance of common things in life clung to him all through, and many were the pleasantries practised on him by his friends who never spared him whenever they had any opportunity for a joke.

{ His extreme tenderness of heart and filial affection for his mother had well-nigh prostrated him when that dear parent of his passed away in 1893. For long he was inconsolable and when the work to which he was, so to say, wedded cured him of this grief, he considered it his sacred duty to cherish her memory as a treasure never to be lost. It was observed by many that he would not cross the house he was occupying where his mother breathed her last without performing his best obeisance. | His first-born, a boy had passed away within fifteen

days of his birth; and when in September 1893 his first daughter Kashibai saw the light of the world, he became very anxious about her health. The nursing of the child was personally supervised by him; and even a slight attack of fever she had when only one year old made him so nervous that, though deeply absorbed in his blue-books, he came down every fifteen minutes to feel her pulse and give all possible directions about her diet, sleep, etc. In Gokhale's entire environment, 'work' was his most jealous mistress; but that did not make him indifferent to the calls of domestic life, though uxoriousness was never a weakness of his. Perhaps his conception of the ideal woman for a man of restless public activity was pitched much too high; perhaps he had not much of the romantic in him. In any case we do not find him a too much adoring votary at the shrine of love; and yet Mr. Wacha says he found him among other things "a most loving husband," and adds, "we were both home-loving persons." Whatever was the pitch of his affections and I sincerely hope we shall have a fuller peep into it one day, one fact is certain, that he had an extremely live sense of duty to those who had made great sacrifices for him. To the loving care of his brother's wife even more than to the natural affections of his brother he had owed his education. Often under the stress of adverse circumstances, Govindrao thought that maintaining Gopalrao at the College was too much for his poor resources; but it was the wife that readily came forward to supply the needful even to the extent of parting with a few ornaments, the wearing of which was so indispensable from their social point of view. To requite this sacrifice was the first object Gokhale had in life. Though receiving only

40 rupees per month with an annuity of 400 rupees as a bonus from the Society, he had added something to this slender income by the annual payments he received on account of his work on arithmetic. All told, perhaps, his savings would have amounted to a fair sum for an average man of that side but that was prevented by his over-zeal in helping friends in any pecuniary embarrassment and by a sort of profuseness in his hospitality to guests that visited him. Like Burke or Goldsmith's Village-Preacher he was a man 'passing rich with forty pounds a year,' and it may well be said of him even from his early days that 'to relieve the wretched was his pride.' Still whatever small savings could possibly be made, were for 'Aba's' wife to recover her ornaments and have others as well. Till that was done he never could feel at rest.]

The administration of Lord Harris, coming close on that of Lord Reay, produced a contrast which could not but be keenly felt. As long as the former was still in Bombay, public opinion did not feel itself free to give a verdict on his rule, an unfortunate want of moral courage with Indian publicists, of which they have not yet been able to cure themselves; but after he was gone, expression was freely given to the feelings entertained by the people on this subject. Gokhale had an occasion to address a public body, in the Hirabag of Poona, on the subject of this contrast between the work of the two rulers whose minds were so differently constituted. Whereas Lord Reay's personal sympathy brought him to identify himself with the people and looking at things from their point of view by freely entering into their feelings, Lord Harris contented himself with working through the official mind and

seeing with the official eye. The great unpopularity of the latter with the people of this Presidency was chiefly due to the generally unsympathetic character of his rule, notably in dealing with four important questions of the day—the Mahoda Bill, the Distribution of Seats in the Bombay Legislative Council, the Provincial Service Rules, and the Hindu-Mahomedan disturbances. On the first three Gokhale had already expressed himself with the utmost sobriety through the weekly columns of the 'Sudharak;' but the last grievously pained him, since Maharashtra had been for ages known for its freedom from all intercommunal animosity of a religious character. Hindu temples had stood side by side with Mahomedan mosques and the tombs of Pirs and Fakirs were often found bordering on the abodes of Hindu anchorites or places consecrated with the buried ashes of Hindu saints. People had all along lived in amity and it was a matter of pride to see that one of the wildest passions of mankind and most capable of stirring people to any unrestrained action had produced the least disturbance in this land of toleration. Suddenly, the Mohurrum processions in the streets of Poona, in which the Hindu population also joined as spectators, were made occasions for civil disturbances of a serious character. One section of Hindu orthodoxy headed by Mr. Tilak welcomed this state of things and used it for organising separate Hindu festivals, known as Ganapati Puja in the month of Bhadrapada. Their idea was that Hindus must have no share, even that of mere spectators, in any Mahomedan celebration, because a coalition of the two communities was repugnant to their thought. Gokhale, however, entertained very different views on this important question. Aiming at bringing about a friendly understanding between these two integral parts of the country, he

rejoiced in every circumstance that brought them to meet on common ground. He, therefore, deprecated all attempts at inculcating into the minds of the masses ideas of separating from one another in this antagonistic spirit. His statesman-like mind regretted every endeavour at widening an already wide gulf and adding to the internal strife of an already strife-ridden land. Whether the Government officials of narrow vision or the stiff necked orthodox Hindu leaders or the bigoted Mahomedans be guilty of inflaming passions on both sides, Gokhale in his own characteristically moderate way was ever ready to pour oil on the troubled waters. This remained his life-long principle.

The orthodox party under the leadership of Mr. Tilak grew more and more estranged from the liberal thinkers of the school of Ranade. The occasion of the Ganapati festival was adroitly used by them to denounce the views of the latter before the conservative old-type Hindus that formed their best audience in the street mob of Poona. They played on the imagination of the ignorant and the superstitious, depicting the horrors of contamination with the Moslem that the liberal minded 'moderates' were said to recommend; and no wonder if they were able to gain a following among the mob to whom larger ideas of unity for political purposes were as yet incomprehensible. Gopalrao, in company with his great master and other associates could only mourn over this perversion of things and hope in time to communicate proper light to the people. For the present, of course, the determined hostility of Mr. Tilak made the young patriot's work increasingly difficult. In 1893 and 1894, as one of the Secretaries of the Bombay Provincial Conference, Gokhale

had received his first lessons in the great work of organising affairs and institutions. Though it was often a very tiring and thankless task, he did not feel much depressed by it. The buoyancy of his temper and his optimism about things in general were remarkable even at this time. On his shoulders, therefore, fell the arduous duties of one of the Secretaries of the National Congress held in Poona in 1895. Ranade and his compatriots had determined to make that Congress-session such a brilliant success that it would be well-nigh impossible for any future sittings to surpass their organisation. With that end in view the work had been started even from the beginning of the year 1895. Subscriptions had to be collected to meet the expense of raising the Congress-pandal and of making arrangements for the boarding and lodging of delegates from all parts of India. Here was work enough to try the mettle of any man; and Gokhale went at it with the dauntless spirit of a mediæval knight, "*sans peur*" and faithful to the cause he had espoused. Wherever he went to collect money or enlist men to work with him as volunteers he found that the mischief created by Mr. Tilak's misrepresentations had created considerable lukewarmness, if not actual hostility to the cause of the Congress. The columns of the Kesari had been freely used for this purpose and the writers engaged to do this nefarious work had evidently taken leave of their conscience. Every conceivable and inconceivable opportunity was seized to lower the prestige of the workers. The old bogey of Social Reform was, at first, set up again. That Social Reform propaganda stood, according to them, as a movement quite distinct from and having no bearing on the political mission of the National Congress should be manifested by not allowing the All-India Social Con-

ference to hold its sittings in the Congress pandal. Every body could see that a separate arrangement for their deliberations would involve an unnecessarily heavy extra charge of money and trouble. Ranade, however, referred the matter to the different Provincial Bodies for opinion; and though more than half of them saw no objection to the use of the Congress pandal by the Social Conference, he cut the ground under the feet of oppositionists by ordering a separate hall to be set up for the deliberations of the other body. The constitution of the Reception Committee next engaged the malignity of the obstructionists. At their bidding the fee for admission into the Reception Committee was made ridiculously small; but when they found that even by this subterfuge they were unable to "swamp" the Committee with their men, they spread reports that they would use physical force to make the affair a fiasco. Gokhale, by nature sensitive even to a fault, was all the time on edge. The paper "Rastra Sabha Samachar," issued for the purpose of spreading correct views about their work, necessitated by the false damaging reports of the "Kesari," was all his work. Several times he had to request his colleague Mr. Watcha (now Sir D. E. Watcha) to come over to Poona to effect a compromise, if possible, with the other side when they were making things hot for him. How Gokhale felt the strain of it had best be narrated in the words of Mr. Watcha himself:—"When the Congress was to be held at Poona during the Christmas of 1895, Mr. Gokhale being one of the Secretaries, I had now and again to visit that place in my capacity as the General Secretary of the Congress, to consider and settle such matters on which there appeared to be some difference of opinion. There were, however, personal

differences ; this made Mr. Gokhale very unhappy, and I was constantly being approached to settle them. He was, as already said, very sensitive. And those from whom he differed used to tease and worry him and try his patience and temper to an abnormal degree. And in order to hold him up to ridicule they once spread the rumour just a week or so before the opening of the Congress that some clique or other who had taken unkindly to him as the Secretary of the Congress were going to burn down the pandal. There may or may not have been any such design. It was impossible for me to investigate into the truth of the rumour. Mr. Gokhale telegraphed me to go at once to Poona which I did. Immediately on reaching the station I repaired to the Congress pandal. My going seems to have been heralded beforehand. So there was a fair congregation of the workers assembled there. They surrounded me and ironically asked why I should have taken all the trouble to go there as the rumour was absolutely baseless. No body was going to harm the Congress marquee. Only, Mr. Gokhale was an alarmist and he acted on the impulse of the moment. It was afterwards explained to me that there was some kind of intention widely reported, but that it could not be put into execution for various reasons." Mr. Watcha thinks this to be an instance of Gokhale's acting on the spur of the moment without due consideration or reasoned patience. May it not be that anxiety for the welfare of a great cause is, in the words of Burke, "a heroic virtue" ? }

His organisation-work for the National Congress in 1895 was perhaps the best part of the training he received during this period of apprenticeship. It is doubtful if even the disappointments he received in his work of collecting funds for the Deccan Education

Society could have schooled him in the knowledge of mankind so well as this period of stress and tension. The ultra-sensitive, impatient and impulsive youth learnt a self-control, without which he could not have successfully held the great position of a leader in later life. Further comment on this is superfluous ; only let the reader judge how a College professor had all the greater need to supplement his book knowledge with plenty of rough contact with the outside world, a frequent rubbing of shoulders with all sorts of people. The work of gathering subscriptions for a large collegiate institution, organising Provincial Conferences and a Session of the National Congress, doing civic duties on the local Municipality and hard work in connection with plague duty,—these and a number of kindred pursuits, though of a comparatively minor character, were an excellent training-ground for solid practical work. In every great undertaking of his life we see manifest influences of this experience of mankind and a clear consciousness of the limits of human efforts and achievements.

Meantime, the Fergusson College began to give him acute, though temporary anxiety. In 1892 Prof. Apte, then Principal of the College, had passed away. Early in 1895, Prof. Kelkar, who had the reputation of a sound scholar of the English language and literature also passed away, and his death created a woeful gap in the ranks of this devoted body of workers. Hardly a month later Prof. Agarkar, the most selfless of this selfless ring, the most respected of all and the most cherished friend of Gokhale followed him into eternity. In him had been embodied the spirituality of the Society and to replace him was no easy task even for the patriotic and resourceful Maharashtra. To Gokhale his death was nothing short of a severe

personal blow. For a time he was inconsolable ; but, quickened by a pressing sense of duty, he soon rose to the occasion and underwent the heavy strain of taking up their work till the services of Mr. Bhate were secured by appointing him to the Chair of Logic and Moral Philosophy, formerly held by Prof. Agarkar, and Mr. Rajwade was called from his pecuniarily comfortable position in the D. J. Sind College to taste the immortality of this self-sacrificing circle. In addition to attending to this teaching side of the work at the College, Gokhale was the soul of all activity in relation to the erecting of the new buildings for the College which came to be occupied about the same time. From this it is clear that his College work alone was absorbing enough to eat up the energy of an average man. But Gokhale's work had no limits. The call of service to his country in that larger political world, for which he had been studiously amassing material from its very source ever since 1886, had received a response from him in his utterances, delivered in the Congress and from other public platforms, in his periodical writings in the Press and in his miscellaneous work, as the Secretary of the Sarvajanic Sabha. The apprenticeship was now over, and the labour of his masters, the influences of his environment, and the ceaseless application of this best of workers were soon to bear a fruit, of which every Indian has reason to be proud.



CHAPTER III.

TESTED.

THE increasingly unsatisfactory condition of Indian finances on the side of expenditure and a growing discontent about an adjustment of accounts between England and India, as unfair to the weaker partner, roused the Government of England into making a searching enquiry into the whole question. With this view a Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Welby and consisting of a number of experienced official and non-official gentlemen* as his co-workers, was formed in 1896. It held its sittings in London and the various public bodies of India were invited to offer their views through some representative members of theirs. Finances being the key to the whole situation of the Government of India, Gokhale had, from the very first, devoted all his energy to obtain a thorough grasp of all the intricate facts and abstruse principles underlying them. Mr. Ranade's contribution to his growth has been already sufficiently recorded. It needs to be further mentioned that the solid and unassuming Rao Bahadur Mr. G. V. Joshi, who had spent years of arduous labour over this and other problems of Indian Economics, came to the help of the young aspirant, perhaps no less than his acknowledged great master. The Deccan Sabha, under the guidance of the two painstaking workers, had come to look at Indian public problems

* Lord Welby; The Rt. Hon. L. Courtney; The Rt. Hon. W. L. Jackson; Sir William Wedderburn; Field Marshal Sir Donald Stewart; Sir Edward Hamilton; Sir Ralph Knox; Sir James Peile; Sir Andrew Scoble; Mr. Ryder; Mr. Buchanan; Mr. W. S. Caine; Mr. Dadabhoj Nowroji; Sir Robert Mowbray.

from the most scientific point of view, and the labours of all were now to bear fruit in the utterances of this, the aptest of their pupils. Gokhale, by his speeches from the Congress platform and elsewhere, was even at this time acquiring a fame for mastery of facts and lucid exposition of otherwise dull, dry and heavy figures. As the two great masters, Messrs. Ranade and Joshi, could not themselves find it convenient to go to England to place their views on the subject of Indian expenditure before the Welby Commission, this responsible and arduous work fell on the shoulders of this young man of only 31 years of age. Curiosity prompted me to enquire from his friends what public proof of capacity in this direction had been given by Gokhale to entitle him to this singular honour: and the Hon. Mr. Paranjape kindly writes in reply: "Gokhale was known as an earnest student in Poona long before he came to be known outside. Especially, Ranade knew what his calibre was and it was at his suggestion that Gokhale was sent." For over three months Gokhale was absorbed in refreshing his memory with all the details that would be required from him by the Commission. After his evidence-in-chief had been prepared, Mr. Ranade himself subjected him to an examination from the official view-point. This systematic training was given to the tyro, lest he should fail in cross-examination at the hands of the official veterans who formed a great part of the Commission. Mr. Ranade was satisfied with the preparations of Gokhale; and with his *Guru's* blessings and his friends' best wishes Gokhale embarked on the first great intellectual trial of his life. Mr. D. E. Wacha, the veteran economist and statistician of Bombay, was his companion in this work, and a very pleasant intimacy grew up between the two from this time

onward. Gokhale acquitted himself marvellously before the Commission, fearlessly attacking the Policy of the Government of England in making the Indian Budget a "dumping-ground" for accounts that should legitimately appear in the account of England. How the Government of India was helpless before the Secretary of State, how the India Council of London could, by its very constitution, have no potential influence over the Secretary of State in matters touching a collision of interests between England and India, how the Provinces in India were starved in points of domestic reform by a strangling subordination to the Supreme Government, and lastly how questions of Imperial conquests and the interests of the English official as well as commercial elements were given an undue prominence in determining the expenditure-side of the Indian Budget, leaving thus the internal reforms of the country like education and sanitation in a hopelessly stationary condition, all these were luminously brought out by him in cross-examination. The details of his evidence before this Commission are given under various heads in the Chapter on Finance; here it is enough to mention that in the cross-examination, to which he was subjected for fully two days, he established his reputation as a thorough master of the question, and it must be added, that he acquitted himself much better than some others with far greater experience and fame in this line. On account of his work before the Commission Gokhale attained celebrity in India, and one can easily understand the rejoicings of heart of the great *Guru* whose work was being displayed in the young disciple. Be it here gratefully acknowledged that Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Wedderburn, who had been early impressed with the work of the budding

patriot and who had been jointly responsible with Mr. Ranade for raising funds to cover the cost of Gokhale's first visit to England, did a great deal to bring him "out" in England. Says Mr. Wacha: "The spirit of appreciation uniformly displayed by Sir William Wedderburn was greatly encouraging and helpful. Sir William was delighted with him from the first and it is a matter of rejoicing that till the last day of his life their mutual regard and esteem was unabated. From an acquaintance and a friend Mr. Gokhale became his confidant in London and none was so greatly helpful to him in introducing him to the great ones of the India Office, progressives and reactionaries alike." !

A few months before his departure to England for this first *debut* on Indian Finance, Gokhale had been led by curiosity to turn from the Punjab to Sind to get a view of the River Sindhu in all its far-famed might; and though it is said that he was disappointed in his expectations of its size as he saw it in the winter months in its shrunken state, I have every reason to be glad, he came, as on the occasion of his visit to Hiranand Academy—the premier indigenous school in Sind—it gave us all a peculiar thrill of juvenile patriotism to see the noble and handsome countenance of the Gokhale of the "Arithmetic," of the History Examination at the University and of rising fame in service to the motherland. To this day the memory of that casual visit to Hyderabad and her first school has remained sacred with me, and it is no exaggeration to state that my respectful admiration for this great soul received its first impulse as early as the year 1896, when I had my first glimpse of him. Social life in England is vastly different from what our ways of living allow and we

were puzzled as to how this Brahmin, orthodox in dress and food, was likely to fare in England. Thanks to Mr. Wacha's reminiscences of him, we can now realise how he underwent this social ordeal. With an apology to the reader I shall quote pretty copiously from this writer in relation to this point:—"In the first place he was exceedingly shy. That shyness was greatly enhanced by reason of finding himself in strange company. To him it was wholly a new experience to live in an English house with English ladies and gentlemen, and Parsees. He was a Hindu, and though on board the Mail Steamer he had seen something of cosmopolitan life and mixed with passengers of different races and creeds, he could not have realised till he had come to live with us what was domestic life in an English suburb." (They were living together at Cambridge Lodge near the East Putney Station, along with Mr. Dadabhoy). At a waiting-room in Calais on their way from India Gokhale had collided against a door which injured his heart. This developed into something very serious, of which on account of his shyness and reverence he would not complain to Mr. Dadabhoy; but Mr. Wacha coming to know of it, took prompt steps to cure him of the malady which, if left to itself, would have assumed dangerous proportions and, as the Doctor said, resulted in immediate death. Mrs. Congrave, a highly polished lady residing in that house volunteered to work as Gokhale's nurse. No sister could have nursed better. And none could have kept Mr. Gokhale so cheerful and bright all through that serious illness. In a way it was a fortuitous circumstance that the friendship of Mrs. Congrave dispelled to a considerable extent his shyness. So that, when Gokhale next joined others at the breakfast or the dinner table, he was able to take part in conversa-

tion pretty freely. Still he was very scrupulous not to forget that he was a Hindu who could not touch an egg or even smell a fish. "His food consisted of bread, butter, vegetable soup and fruit. He would not touch even a spoonful of pudding, fearing it might be made of eggs. And many indeed were my chaffing utterances on the constituents of the sweets. It was quite a picture to see him throwing down his fork and spoon and looking grave and aghast while Mr. Dadabhoj would tell him not to mind me and my chaff. I was a confirmed chaffer. And every time he dropped his fork and spoon there was a hearty merriment among the rest of the company." The over-punctiliousness of his manners and courtesies is the next point very pleasantly touched upon by Mr. Wacha, as if some body had regularly coached him in this direction. For instance, the taking off of the tall silk hat on all proper occasions was rigidly observed by him. "These little incidents show how great was Mr. Gokhale's solicitude to do nought which was incorrect or prone to reproof. His extreme desire was to leave behind him among those with whom he mixed the impression that he acted as a courteous, polished citizen of London would act. But his feeling of reverence and respect for the Great Ones was undiminished. When we used to meet in the lobby, or in the library room, or on the terrace, or at dinner, or on the parliamentary premises, I used closely to mark that feeling from his outward expression." What he saw around him was enough to inspire him into vigorous activity for great work. "Three months of the very best society of London, parliamentarians and others in different places, encouraged Mr. Gokhale to fulfil his ardent ambition to distinguish himself in public life as Telang, Badruddin, Ranade and Pherozsha had done. It was

a noble ambition, and his first visit to London gave him all the stimulus that was wanted in this direction to realise it." It is said that on this occasion, visiting once the Science Laboratories in the University of Cambridge, he was so much awed by the immensity of what he saw before him that he even shed tears remarking that the day when India could have things like that was far-distant. The call of service to the the country had received its first response from him; whether he was conscious of it or not, it was only an earnest of the mighty work that was to follow. |

Towards the autumn of 1896 the city of Bombay had the first visitation of bubonic plague, which soon claimed thousands of human beings as its victims and created a panic which years of familiarity with it have not been sufficient to dispel. The infectious character of the disease was responsible for its spreading far and wide over all India, and Poona was among the first of the towns outside Bombay to feel its dire presence. The Government of Bombay found itself confronted with a problem that for a long time seemed to baffle the best of European medical science. The past history of the disease in other parts of the world was carefully studied and methods like the use of quarantines, segregation camps, disinfection of houses, compulsory inspection and forcible removal of the patient to the plague hospital were employed by the Government with the best of intentions, namely to root out the disease. To the customs and instincts of the Orientals these measures were thoroughly repugnant and the punctilious observation of them by the military charged with this execution created a greater panic than the disease itself. Discontent among the people aggravated their consternation and day by day the

Government found its difficulties to combat the disease increasing. Gokhale had just left India when the disease began to work perceptibly in Bombay. The horrors that came to be associated with it in the streets of Poona were duly reported to him in London by some of his friends from here. In one particular, almost harrowing accounts were given to him. The blood-curdling tales of the brutality of the British soldier employed to enforce plague regulations in Poona sometimes accompanied by his violation of the Indian woman's chastity pained the heart of Gokhale and he was ready to burst with indignation. No less than nine correspondents of his, all of very respectable and responsible position in life, pleaders, professors and journalists continued to fill his ears with these mournful stories; and when men in England curiously asked him about plague incidents in India, he could not help bursting out with what was uppermost in his mind. According to the information given to him, the Government of Bombay stood convicted of gross negligence in having entrusted a very delicate piece of work, requiring the utmost sympathy, to a class of people not much noted for either tact or mildness and perfectly unfamiliar with the customs and manners of the Indian population. His English audience was particularly touched by the stories of soldiers' brutally dishonouring Indian women. Relying upon the veracity of the statements he had received from India, he was induced to publish his version of the plague measures adopted by the Government of Bombay. This at once drew the attention of the Home Government, who wired to the Bombay Government for explanation. The latter framed a series of five questions in relation to the methods they had adopted and circulated those among 500 of the leading

citizens of Poona for information. The replies received from one and all of them failed to bear Gokhale out. Thereupon the Government of Bombay boldly upheld their policy as just and fair and the indictment of Gokhale as false, malicious and wicked. Here was a terribly awkward situation created for him. He had just had laurels showered on him from all quarters in consequence of the admirable way he acquitted himself in his evidence before the Welby Commission, and in his first flush of victory, the fair-faced, glittering silk-turbaned Poona Brahmin was already nearly a favourite in the London Society he was seeing. To mar all the good effect produced, the gods were so malicious as to throw on him an opprobrium for which he felt he was in no way responsible. On his way back to India he found some letters awaiting him at Aden; those were from some of his correspondents, who exhorted him not to reveal their names to the *Sarkar* in connection with the information he had received. Gokhale had previously determined that he would make use of no name but stand wholly responsible for the affair. As soon as the Mail Steamer touched Bombay, the Police Commissioner saw him and Gokhale assured him that he would hold his tongue till he had gathered evidence to corroborate the statements he had made in London. Immediately on his landing in Bombay he saw Mr. Ranade, who greeted him by asking what political feats he had performed in England during his stay there. Gokhale's heart was heavy with the imbroglio into which he had unwittingly fallen. Mr. Ranade as well as Gokhale took full notes of all that had passed; and when the latter failed to obtain enough evidence to support his statements, he found no other honourable alternative than to submit a copious, unconditional apology to the Government

of Bombay. In this decision he was strengthened by Mr. Ranade and such of his best friends for whose opinion he very much cared. What else could he in all honour have done? He had maligned the character of a whole class like the British Soldier in India, and he had done it on the strength of reports which he believed to be authentic. Now that that support was withdrawn and no evidence could be gathered, where was the point in obstinately sticking to something that was evidently not based on facts?

'This apology-incident of Gokhale created a great stir in the whole country. Persons of dignified position used to the ways of English public life which may reasonably be held as synonymous with honour and integrity applauded his action as thoroughly gentlemanly. Indian and English friends saturated with high class public morality showered congratulatory letters on him; and the Government came to look upon him as a perfectly fair and honourable opponent who was above anything mean and tricky. If he had erred, he had the moral strength to come out boldly and acknowledge his error. The reputation of those who had the misfortune to differ from him in political views was in safe keeping with him, and the best proof of straightforward action in all his public and private life was given by him on this occasion. If in his own estimate, in that of the Government and that of his best informed friends he felt himself raised by many degrees, there was, on the other hand, a perfect howl of criticism raised in Maharashtra and several other parts of India, that were pleased to interpret this conduct of Gokhale as cowardice and abject humiliation. The idea of some of these critics was that once he had said a thing, wrong or right, as a *man* he

should have stuck to it. There can be nothing more-insane than this view. Some of the apologists of Mr. Tilak give out that he (Mr. Tilak) was at that time-actually collecting authentic evidence in support of Gokhale's statements, but it could be of no use-since the latter had already tendered an unconditional apology. What can be more mischievous than this kind of talk? Did Mr. Tilak or any of his people give Gokhale to understand that he might well wait and that they were doing what was necessary in the matter of finding corroboration? How was Gokhale to know that one who had made his differences with him a personal matter was actually coming to his help? If Mr. Tilak had both the inclination and the ability to do service to one to belittle whom had all along been his particular care, why did he not communicate his intentions to Gokhale? Can it be said by any body that Gokhale would have taken this step in spite of every thing that could have helped him to hold his position? Whatever others may court, Gokhale at least was not ambitious of ridicule, not absolutely a candidate for disgrace.

There were others who thought that in the expression of his apology he had gone too far. The terms in which he had couched it were unbecoming to a dignified and self-respecting man. Gokhale's idea on this point was that having unwittingly caused great damage to the reputation of an important factor in the British Empire of India, not only in the eyes of the Indian and Englishman, but perhaps that of the whole world, nothing short of an unreserved expression of regret could make amends for what he had done. He, therefore, firmly believed in the righteous dignity of his conduct and was sorry to see that the standard of Indian public life was not

sufficiently high to appreciate this step of his. His sensitive nature smarted under the criticism that was every day hurled against him from various organs of the Indian press. I cannot describe this phase of a small but important incident of his life better than by taking a passage from the reminiscences of his friend, Mr. Wasudeo Govind Apte :—

“ I believe it was in September 1897, that one fine morning, while returning from my walk I paid a visit to Mr. Gokhale, as it was then my custom. The “ apology ” incident was then being hotly discussed in newspapers and Mr. Gokhale’s conduct was being severely criticised in the Indian Press. It was given only to a few to place themselves in imagination in Mr. Gokhale’s position and to think calmly and dispassionately over the question. Mr. Gokhale was always very sensitive to criticism. An adverse remark casually made was sufficient to upset his mind and to deprive him of sleep for the whole night. It looks rather strange that a public leader who had the taste of the life of a journalist, who, of necessity, becomes callous to criticism, could not realise to himself how the judgment of newspapers was bound to be hasty or biassed in several ways. Mr. Gokhale’s innocent mind, at this time, was deeply grieved at the misfortune of being unjustly made a victim of adverse and strong criticism and his feelings were clearly reflected in his face. While we were sipping tea, the first question he asked me about was what the newspapers were saying of him. Being in charge of the conduct of the *Dnyan Prakash*, an organ of the moderate party led by Mr. Gokhale himself, I was in close touch with newspapers all over India, and had carefully read their criticism about Mr. Gokhale. However, I knew the sensitive nature of Mr. Gokhale

and being conscious of the effect that would likely be left on his mind if I were to satisfy his curiosity, I tried to evade answering. But he was persistent in his demand and heckled me with questions after questions about the attitude towards him of this paper and of that paper till at last I was compelled to tell him the unvarnished truth. This was followed by another question, that about my own personal opinion as to how far the critics were justified in the adverse criticism. It was hard for me to answer. For I must confess that I was among those who honestly believed that though Mr. Gokhale was perfectly justified in tendering an apology to those who had been unwittingly wronged, the ampleness of the apology and the words in which it was clothed left much room for criticism. Being asked to give my own opinion unreservedly and looking to the intimate relation existing between us, I could not withhold from him the truth and rather indiscreetly added that his (Mr. Gokhale's) conduct had brought no little humiliation on the country to whose service he had consecrated his life. I was trembling in my shoes with the thought that my hasty and indiscreet remark would rouse him to fury and that I would get a strong rebuke for the expression of my opinion. But nothing of the sort actually happened. Instead of all that, my remarks only deepened his sorrow and depression and to my surprise he said in a low tone, "Wasudeorao, you can scarcely have an idea how sorry I feel to hear from you that my conduct on this occasion has brought no little humiliation on my country. I accept that to be your frank and honest opinion, and I take it for what it is worth. But I tell you, you will, I hope, live to see that a day will come when I shall cover my country with glory by way of compensation for

the wrong I am alleged to have done, and then critics of your type, who are now running me to death, will be converted into my admirers." { These are not exactly his words, but so far as I remember, they faithfully convey his meaning and truly represent the strength of his will-power. How prophetic were his words and how fully has the prophecy been fulfilled! I had made note of that day's conversation in my diary and as I glance over that page of my diary now, tears come into my eyes and my heart becomes oppressed with feelings of pride and grief. Mr. Gokhale's words mean a great deal. They convey a lesson which young India will do well to lay to their hearts. It is this that sincerity of purpose, resoluteness of the heart and an incessant and steady pursuit of one's aims never fails to carry their own conviction and to lead to an achievement which is simply wonderful.

That this incident gave him a severe schooling is an undeniable fact. Thenceforth he began to look into himself more watchfully and to be guided more by his convictions and with a growing disregard for what the world had to say. The quality of introspectiveness, so essential to a responsible public man, was born at this time and carefully nourished and matured in the next few years. His knowledge about larger Indian questions—a sealed book to the vast majority of the people of this country—had been sufficiently tested by the Welby Commission, and India could thereafter look up to him as a man equipped in matters of public administration and capable of successfully measuring swords with the best of the Indian bureaucracy. If this intellectual feat elevated him in the estimation of the Indian public, his moral feat in the "apology" incident raised

him both with the Government and his own self. To the former his views thereafter were bound to be peculiarly deserving of consideration as proceeding from a man who understood his business and his honour no less. To his own self this incident imparted the strength to stand alone against the world, if only he had the support of his own convictions. To form the latter a careful scrutiny into all the available facts and figures was the first necessity, and then the consideration of all possible interpretations of the question in hand. The sobriety, the moderation and considerateness that lent a charm to every thing he thereafter uttered were sedulously cultivated from this time onward; for, in that line of public conduct, Gokhale believed the salvation of his country to lie

For a time it appeared as if a blight had been cast upon his public life. In the words of the Hon. Mr. Paranjape it was a "sacrifice of position and prestige in the eyes of his countrymen and his risking a complete voluntary eclipse as a public man." But it is only an empty sack that can not stand upright. Over a man of Gokhale's development of mind and burning desire to serve his country, oblivion has no power; and the work being great and manifold and the workers few or listless, it was not possible that a devoted servant with zeal, brains and industry at his command could long remain in the background. The recrudescence of plague in Poona in the year 1898 brought Gokhale out at the head of a band of volunteers doing service to the plague-stricken people and looking after the sanitary and other arrangements for the townsmen who were naturally relieved to find their own men doing this arduous work. The Government of Bombay had at once come to realize

that the voluntary association of self-sacrificing workers from among the people themselves would help them largely in mitigating the discontent inevitable in enforcing plague regulations. Gokhale's services on this occasion were cordially recognised by Colonel Creagh, afterwards Sir N. O'moore Creagh, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, who was in charge of the plague operations of that year in Poona. Haffkin inoculation against plague had been introduced into India about the beginning of 1899, and though the application of it as a preventive against plague was perfectly voluntary, the Government thought it their duty to use every persuasion in making it popular. Statistics were issued from time to time to illustrate its beneficial results. An insignificantly small percentage of inoculated people, though living in plague-infected quarters, had been attacked, and had, as a rule, survived. The very highest officials, confident of the harmless character of this anti-plague inoculation, had submitted themselves to its operation. Lord Curzon himself had done it to set an example to the people. But a very curious cry against it arose at this time from the resourceful brain of Maharashtra that the after-effects of inoculation were ruinous to the human system, in as much as it was responsible for developing consumption, paralysis, ringworm, etc., etc. I remember to have heard Mr. Haffkin himself when he came over to Poona in 1901 to explain the innocuous character of his serum and the beneficial results it could give. Even in that hall the conservative part of the audience heckled him with all sorts of questions about its ultimate effects on the body, and Gokhale, who occupied the Chair on that occasion, did his best to support Mr. Haffkin and convince the people that they would do well to resort to inoculation

whenever the epidemic made an appearance in the place. In 1899 the Government appointed a Commission, on which Gokhale was asked to work as a member, to enquire into the working of this preventive invented by a remarkable genius of the age in the science of medicine. Quite a number of places in Maharashtra were visited and evidence collected. The report of this Commission quieted the fears of the public to a great extent, though Gokhale was careful to emphasise in this report that greater care should be taken in the operation, that the work must be done by trained experts and that the dose of the serum might be lessened. He was, however, unaware of another necessary precaution, namely, the *quality* of the serum; for, as actually happened once in a place in the Punjab, the operation is likely to prove fatal if fresh serum is not used for the purpose of inoculation. This local and municipal service of Gokhale brought him nearer to the hearts of the people in the streets who could best appreciate his disregard of his own life in ministering to their wants. Pecuniary disinterestedness and this readiness to risk one's life without any possible return are phenomena easily understood by every body, and Gokhale had not to wait long before the memory of the 'apology' obloquy, as it appeared to some, was completely lost, despite the venom and malignity of the opposing vermin.

In the beginning of 1899, the Municipalities of the Central Division of the Bombay Presidency had to send a representative to the Bombay Legislative Council and Gokhale thoroughly well-known in those parts offered himself as a candidate and was elected, although Mr. Tilak's party ran a candidate against him and tried their best to beat him. Here was just

the atmosphere in which to do some very useful work for this Presidency. By an arrangement of division of work between the Supreme Government of India and the Provincial Governments, all the internal administration of the country is left to the latter, subject only to supervision and control by the former. Among the Provinces, again, the position of the three Presidencies is quite enviable. Gokhale had early recognised and had also given free expression before the Welby Commission to the unsatisfactory financial position of the Provinces, as explained in detail in a later chapter of this book; therefore, though the extremely subordinate position of the Provincial Government in the matter of finance would not offer much scope for the exercise of his genius, yet it would be enough work to place the popular view-point before the Local Government in just those questions of administration where the people felt themselves to be hard hit. The crude 'Budget' discussions of those days afforded a peculiar opportunity to the popular representatives to cover the whole field of administration in the course of their speeches, and observations on Police, Forests, Justice, Education, Excise, Income-Tax, Land-Revenue and a myriad other subjects could be placed before the Government to digest in the course of a day's sitting. The Executive Body must formerly have possessed remarkable powers of digestion, one would think!

Gokhale entered the Bombay Legislative Council at a very very trying time in the history of this Presidency. Two successive famines of a very severe character, coupled with the ravages of plague, had produced a depression in the land, unprecedented in the history of the British Raj. Famine Relief works had been organised by the Government in the

various parts of the Presidency and the work of remission or suspension of revenue, as the case might be, was engaging the attention of the Government, perhaps as much as was consistent with a fair stability in the financial position of the Government. The annual budget dealing with a prospective account of the revenues and the expenditure of the Province could not, under these distressing circumstances, be framed and submitted without fairly copious allusions to the hand of Providence to which the calamities might be conveniently traced ✓

Famine Relief works had been started every where, whereby a large amount of comfort was bestowed by the Government on hundreds of thousands of helpless human beings, though owing to the excessive rigidity of the system of relief adopted, over-zeal of the several subordinate officials in the wrong direction and such other causes, the actual administration of relief was not exactly what the people would have appreciated or what the Government themselves could have wished. Gokhale thought that 'excessive concentration of labour on large relief works, excessive vigour in adhering to the provisions of the Famine Code, excessive tasking and excessive fining had in several places, largely interfered with the effectiveness of the relief which the Government intended the relief works to afford.' Gratuitous relief had been given in this Presidency on too restricted a scale. Even the Central Provinces which, like Bombay, had already suffered from famine, only two years previously, had showed better results. On this subject of the famine-policy of the Government and the measures relative to it, Gokhale never gave any rest to the Government. The conscientious discharge of his duty to those in the lowest

scale of the population was noticed first in his thorough acquaintance with the actual conditions prevalent in famine-stricken areas and then in a fearless criticism of what he believed to be a failing in the policy.

The land-revenue question was, for Gokhale, a matter of all-absorbing interest and momentous consequences; and one to which he applied himself most vigorously. Minutest search was made by him into its past history and its present position. He may be said to have literally fought his way into it; and well he might have, for the importance of the subject quite needed a knight's service. Orders of a very general character had been issued by the Government to their Revenue Collectors not to exercise rigid stringency in the matter of realising Government dues from the cultivators in seasons of drought and famine. Gokhale thought that in this matter the State had shown far less liberality than the stricken people had a right to expect, and in some cases unjustifiably harsh methods had been resorted to, mainly by over-zealous subordinates. Even the Central Provinces, a comparatively backward part of the country, had shown greater leniency than Bombay. The various Famine Commissions had determined that where the whole country side had been stricken by drought, 'capacity to pay independently of the crop must be disregarded, so far as individuals are concerned'.....Where the calamity is wide spread, the only possible course is to work from aggregate to detail.' Such being the policy indicated by impartial experts appointed by the Government to enquire into the situation, where lay the difficulty of the latter to put it in force? Though meeting the annual expenditure out of the annual revenue was a sound maxim of finance in ordinary times, Gokhale urged that there

was no harm if, in the face of the extra ordinary difficulties created by a general famine, the Government in the interval met its charges by raising short-term loans, with interest chargeable on all suspended revenues which must be realized from all the well-to-do who would find it impossible to escape payments when better times came.

His interest, however, was not limited to the question of a mere temporary suspension of revenue. Suspension ought to be converted into remission of revenue wherever realization of the demand entailed distress. District averages of the ten years between 1890 and 1900 led him to conclude that it was a myth pure and simple, to say that good years balanced bad years in the Deccan and left a fair average for all years all through. The condition of the agriculturists all over the Central Division of the Presidency had deteriorated remarkably on account of famine and plague; and the fact was clear from a general reduction in the number of plough cattle and ploughs. But still no corresponding relief in the matter of Government revenue had been given to the cultivator. If the past was beyond recall, such of the land revenue as had not yet been realised could be remitted at once. "For, said he, "in the present situation of our peasantry, it is necessary to give many of them a fresh start in life without placing this millstone of arrears round their necks. I am confident that such liberal treatment of the peasantry will return tenfold to the State in the increased prosperity and contentment of these people." Words inspired by sympathy and optimism that never failed him! But the practicability of the recommendation and the claim for its being a panacea for all evils with the peasantry are both doubtful. On

the one hand, it is a big order to ask a Government to forego something without which its existence and work suffer, and on the other, it is not certain that the peasant would have a millennium, if only his past arrears to the Government were struck off.

In the sixties of the last century Viceroy's like Lord Canning and Lord Lawrence, and Secretaries of State like Sir Charles Wood and Sir Stafford Northcote had thought it most desirable in the best interests of the State, as well as the people of India, to settle the State demand of land revenue permanently where, for instance, eighty per cent of the arable land had been brought under the plough and when there was no prospect of canal irrigation increasing the produce by more than 20 %. By later statesmen this view was rejected, as it was thought that such a permanent settlement of Government demand in land revenue involved too large a sacrifice of prospective revenue. Therefore in Lord Ripon's time a compromise was arrived at; and the policy suggested for adoption by the Government of India in 1883 virtually intended to make the settlement dependent upon the course of prices every thirty years, not more than half the increase in prices to be taken by Government (as laid down by Sir Bartle Frere and Colonel Anderson) leaving the other half to the agriculturist to compensate him for the higher cost of production and the higher expense of living necessitated by a general rise in prices. The Bombay Government had resisted the adoption of this policy on the plea that the Survey Department had not completed its work and that the second revision settlements had not been gone through. Gokhale on the occasion of his first speech on the Budget in the Bombay Legislative Council drew the attention of the

Government to the fact that the Survey Department, having finished its work, was no more, and that the second Revisions had also been completed everywhere. Therefore, with a due caution in calculating the rise of prices, the Government should raise their next assessment by only one-half of that rise, leaving the benefit of the other half to the cultivator.

The Government of Bombay in their last official reply (1901) to Mr. R. C. Dutt's contention that the Bombay cultivator was assessed most severely, had illustrated the moderation and reasonableness of their demand by a set of phenomena, two of which had been given greater prominence:—(i) 'the average selling value of land is now about twenty-five times the assessment, and (ii) that money-rents are from twice to seven times the assessments. Gokhale took exception to these statements. Controverting the very data on which the Government had built their case, he tried to show that the direct connection between net produce and Government assessment, as is prevalent in the sister Rayatwari Presidency of Madras, would be more welcome to the Bombay agriculturist.' The spirit of innate conservatism, however, would not allow even the illustrious government of Bombay to depart from its time-honoured system of assessment based on the productive capacity of the soil and the consequent valuation of land.

The evil of agricultural indebtedness in India was, day by day, assuming more and more dangerous dimensions and the Government of Lord Curzon took it up as one of the "twelve questions" engaging their most serious attention. Among the causes assigned by Government to this hopeless sinking of the Ryot, the greatest importance was attached to the fatal gift

of full proprietary rights, including an unrestricted power of alienation to the holder of the land. The Punjab Government prided itself on excellent results shown by settlers in the Chenab Colonies, enjoying only "rights of occupancy, which cannot be alienated without the permission of the Chief Revenue Authority of the Province," and confidently believed that this making of the Happy Valley, where the grasping, greedy usurer had no place in the economy of moral life, was the result of freeing the peasant 'from the onerous obligations of a free allodial proprietor' (Joshi's Writings, p.439). The Government of Bombay, prompted by a similar wish, endeavoured to create in the Presidency Proper, as it had done in Sind (by Act III of 1899), out of its assessed waste land and forfeitures, a 'rural paradise' for its distressed peasantry, under a system of short-lease, non-proprietary occupancy, i.e., with restricted powers of alienating the land. The Honourable Mr. Monteath of the Bombay Government, while introducing the Bill, had tersely remarked, "the greater the value (of the property of the agriculturist), the greater will be the amount of (his) indebtedness.....The bulk of the people would have been better off, if the full economic rent had been exacted. It is owing to the lightness of assessment with fixity of tenure and power of transfer that many have been brought down from the position of occupants to that of rack-rented tenants, often almost to that of serfs." Mr. W. P. Symonds, the then Survey and Settlement Commissioner, had also emphatically urged that the only way of freeing the land of the peasant and getting him out of debt was to restrict his powers of alienating it.

The Government thus held that the only or the principal cause of the ryots' indebtedness was his

improvidence or extravagance which again arose out of the high value of the land; and if the latter were controlled, the peasant would be reduced to sobriety. In maintaining this view the Bombay Government was ignoring the findings of no fewer than three Commissions previously appointed by the Government to enquire into this crying matter; and to clip the wings of this indebtedness in 1901 they introduced a Bill in the Legislative Council providing for the grant of all waste and forfeited lands on the short-term lease and restricted tenures. This Bill caused great agitation among the thinking part of the Presidency as well as the peasant classes that were to be adversely affected by it. With a view to influencing the Government not to proceed with the Bill, petitions and memorials poured in from the various political bodies of the Presidency like the Bombay Presidency Association, the Deccan Sabha and the Sarvajanic Sabha; and resolutions, passed in a number of public meetings held all over the Presidency and largely attended by the rural classes were duly submitted to the Government for their favourable consideration. The agitation against the proposed measure had been constitutionally organised by Sir (then Mr.) Perozsha Mehta, who relentlessly opposed the Bill in and out of the Council. Gokhale's contribution to the popular cause was particularly noteworthy, as the speeches he delivered at the various stages of the Bill were characterised by weighty arguments and by a peculiarly persuasive eloquence which was acknowledged by the members of the Government.

There was no denying the fact that the condition of a large part of the Bombay peasantry was far from enviable; but to enable them to enjoy a reasonable competency required a thorough

overhauling of the situation. The Bill proposed by the Government, far from doing any good to any portion of the cultivating classes was, on the contrary, likely to do harm to every body, except perhaps the Government itself. In the first place, the time chosen by the Government for putting a measure of this kind in effect was exceedingly inopportune and impolitic. A succession of severe seasons had left a vast majority of holders of occupancy tenures without the means to pay the Government assessment; and from every quarter applications for suspension and remission of revenue had poured into the Government. If only the Government refused to comply with this almost universal cry for 'grace,' the land-holders must either go to the money-lender and raise a loan on any terms that the '*Saukar*' was pleased to inflict, or *forfeit* his land to the Government in default of payment, according to the Bombay Land Revenue Code (1879). Some time before the introduction of the new Land Revenue Bill the Government had earned the gratitude of the peasantry by the announcement that they would grant suspensions and remissions in a fairly prompt way; and while this process of giving relief was being carried out, the ryot saw with consternation that the necessity which made him apply for suspension or remission might bring upon him the calamity of, firstly, a forfeiture of his holding and then the regranting of it to him on an inferior restricted tenure, i.e. without the power of free alienation which, according to the Government, was at the root of all the mischief of the indebtedness of the ryot. The mover of the Bill, the Hon. Mr. Monteath, had contended that the Bill was intended to bring relief to those who were only nominal occupants of their holdings, i.e. whose lands were in the hands of the

Sowkar and who were practically his serfs. Gokhale showed that such a measure could not bring any relief to them; for, by the Land Revenue Code, any body interested in the holding, including the mortgagee i.e. the *Sowkar*, could pay the assessment and prevent its forfeiture. 'Even supposing that a *Sowkar* here and a *Sowkar* there were caught napping,' still the personal liability of the ryots for their old debts remained in full form and therefore the moment the harvest was gathered and the crops brought home, the *Sowkar* could seize them and thus he would be able to exploit their labour as much as ever. This could only be prevented by closing the Civil Courts against them and by declaring all their contracts invalid. That injustice being not within the contemplation of the Government, the proposed Bill could bring no relief to the ryot. The agriculturist, in whose favour the Bill was supposed to be framed, had been the very first to take fright at it. The conversion of *upari* tenants (non-proprietary under the Maratha Government) into occupancy holders by the Survey Act of 1865 had been estimated by the Government as "adding to the wealth of the agricultural community nearly £ 35,000,000;" and if, by the proposed measure the occupancy holder was once again brought back to the level of the non-proprietary, the act would be equivalent to withdrawing a portion of the wealth that had been claimed to have been added to it in 1865 and that had since been enjoyed by the Survey occupants. Relying on the uncontroverted data that the free power of alienation was recognised by every peasant as a valuable right which gave a greater economic value to his holdings, Gokhale emphasised the conclusion that rather than part with such a right (a likely consequence of his applying for suspension or remission),

the peasant would prefer to fall into the hands of the money-lender. The Bill would thus do absolutely no good, and must, on the other hand, do a good deal of harm to the agricultural community.

How the only party, namely, the Government was likely to profit by it was shown by Gokhale in a manner that nearly took the breath out of the Honourable Mover. Nationalization of land for a most trifling amount was to be the gain to the Government, if the proposed measure was to be given full effect. The Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act Commission of 1891 had discussed the idea that the Government might buy up all lands instead of letting the *Sowkars* secure them, and then re-grant them to the agriculturists as tenants of State without, of course, the power of alienation. The impracticability of the measure had been then noticed to consist in the prohibitive cost of it, since the average price of land had been estimated at twenty-five times the assessment; but by this Bill the Government would be in possession of all land forfeited to the State on account of non-payment of revenue for *only one year*, enabling it thus to be the virtual proprietor of land for 1/25th the market value of it. Now it must be frankly owned that whatever be the defects of the bill, the Government had been inspired by the best of motives for the amelioration of the condition of the peasantry and that the idea of the nationalisation of land was as far from their intentions as any thing conceivable. The arguments of Gokhale on this latter point are merely an illustration of what merciless logic can do in the hands of a master of rhetoric. This much, however, cannot be denied that, on this occasion, some side-lights thrown on the land-revenue policy by some of the most responsible

members of the Government gave considerable reason for alarm that 'the Bill constituted an emphatic assertion of the theory of State-Landlordism,' positively repudiated by the Government of India everywhere.

Gokhale was never a mere critic. Whenever he recognised the necessity of applying a thorough remedy to the disease, he was not without some constructive programme to offer. In relation to this agrarian problem in Bombay, too, he was ready with some suggestions of that nature. If Government really wanted to make an experiment which had reasonable chances of success, they could select at first a small area, take over in that area the debts of the ryots from the *Sowcars* to themselves by effecting a settlement of some sort, start agricultural banks to provide for the ordinary needs of the agriculturists who would thus be taken out of the hands of the *Sowcars* and then they could declare their lands inalienable without their sanction. This would be facing the question in the only manner in which it ought to be faced.....'What the ryot needs is money, or what is nearly the same thing, cheap money. And if you do not reduce what he pays at present to the *Sowcar* or do not advance anything from the coffers of Government to help him, how can you give any relief to the ryot? It is, I submit, not possible to improve the position of the agriculturist by a mere manipulation of the legislative machine.' What Gokhale here urged was the unceasing cry of his great master Mr. Ranade who had been favourably impressed by the sound statesmanship of those countries in converting the debt-ridden miserable serfs of Austria, Prussia, Sweden and some other European countries into free, prosperous allodial peasants by

the magic touch of emancipation from all burdens of the past. The subsequent history of this freed peasantry, however, pointed out the drawback of cheap but 'facile' credit organised for them by State Banks, and an improvement on it was achieved by the formation of the famous Credit Co-operative Banks of Germany, a fuller reference to which will be made in the next chapter. Relief from past indebtedness and organisation of credit on the lines of mutual help would be only a half-measure which does not offer the peasant an assurance of competence. The peasant, like every other person in the world, must have his living, his subsistence assured to him; and this is not possible if he has not what is called an "economic holding." A heavy pressure of population on the soil for want of other occupations, and the equal division of ancestral holdings among the sons and afterwards the grandsons actually reduced the 'holding' to an average of two to five acres which, except in the most bountiful regions of Gujarat, can give hardly a few months' subsistence to a family in the year. If the peasant has no economic holding, 'there is no chance for him to develop or improve his property: and he can only accept his poverty as due to some unknown cause, and grumble indefinitely at the weather or the *Sowcar* or the Government. There is no point in preventing him from alienating his land, little use in trying to put his credit straight, and little advantage to be expected from making him advances or granting him remissions of revenue. It is only one who has an 'economic holding' that should be given all this protection and care. What Sweeden and Austria have recently done in this direction may, with advantage, be tried in the Bombay Presidency as well; and the holding so constituted becomes inalienable.

unseizable and indivisible' (Keating's Rural Economy in the Deccan, pp. 52-55). This is striking the evil at the root: all else is mere tinkering of the business which can do no lasting good.

The Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill was passed in spite of a vigorous protest from the non-official ranks in the Legislative Council. Sir (then Mr.) Pherozsha Mehta had set down an amendment that the consideration on the Bill be deferred for a small period, say six months, to enable the country to look into it minutely and express an opinion thereon. Almost every non-official member had determined and had thought it best to express his intention to the Government that if the amendment were not accepted by the Government and the passage of the Bill were indecently hastened, they would no more participate in the discussion. When, after a fairly heated debate, the amendment being put to vote was declared as lost, Sir Pherozsha, the Honourable Sir Bhalchandra Krishna, the Hon. Mr. Parekh and the Hon. Mr. Khare dramatically withdrew from the Council Hall. Gokhale then said :—"Your Excellency, May I offer a word of personal explanation? In the remarks which I made this afternoon I did not like to say anything as to the course I would take if the amendment were lost. I think it my duty, my Lord, now to say that I must follow the course which has been taken by some of my honourable colleagues. I take this course with the greatest reluctance and regret. I mean no disrespect to Your Excellency or Your colleagues personally. It is only an overwhelming sense of duty which urges me to take this step because I am not prepared to accept even the remote responsibility of associating myself with this measure which my further presence here would imply." | The Hon. Mr. Gokhale then

withdrew. Here is an instance of his characteristic suavity of manners in public life so contrasted with his impatience and tartness in private conversation. The Bill, of course, passed into law; but it was practically still-born, as no effect has been given to it, at least, in the Presidency proper. Perhaps people have shown no inclination to take up land on restricted tenure, or perhaps the latter-day official himself has seen no such merit in it as raised the enthusiasm of its promoters. In Sind, however, where a large culturable waste is still awaiting the operation of the plough and where there is a great thirst for land, the restricted tenure principle is being enforced, particularly in the case of small and perhaps 'uneconomic' holdings.

Another measure of importance that came before the Bombay Legislative Council during Gokhale's time, there was a Bill to amend the District Municipal Act, well-known as Bill No. II of 1899—A Bill for the better management of Municipal Affairs in Mofussil Towns and Cities of the Bombay Presidency. Originally in charge of Sir Evans James of the Bombay Government it passed on his retirement from the Indian Civil Service into the hands of his successor, Sir Charles Ollivant, who had to see it go through both the Select Committee and the Legislative Body. The Bill as finally passed by the Council was in force for a number of years till only very recently a few alterations were made by the District Municipal Amendment Act of 1914. It was of a most comprehensive character and determined the Constitution of the Municipalities, their conduct of business, their rules and by-laws, their Property and Funds, their Obligatory and Discretionary Functions, their Taxation and Recovery of Municipal Claims, their Powers and

ways to deal with offences against Municipal work, their Accounts, the control over them from the side of the Government and Special Provisions for City Municipalities. For several years Gokhale had worked as a Municipal Councillor on the Municipality of the City of Poona and had there acquired direct and personal experience in the working of Local self-Government—an almost indispensable training for the larger work of deliberation over the affairs pertaining to the whole country. His wide acquaintance with the real state of affairs made him a very useful member on the Select Committee appointed to thresh the Bill out and his creditable work there was noticed in words of appreciation from the Hon. Mover:—

“The Council could not have been better served than by the intimate practical experience which Messrs. Chunilal and Gokhale brought to bear on the subject.....” The part that he took in the proceedings on the Bill in the Council itself is sufficiently illuminative of the industry, thoughtfulness and breadth of vision that characterised him even in this experimental stage of his activities. Of the right principles of Local Self-government as intended by British and Anglo-Indian Statesmen he had gathered an intimate knowledge and nothing would induce him to depart from those on any occasion. The object of Municipal Institution was not merely to get local work efficiently done, but also to develop civic spirit and raise the level of general intelligence among the people. The District Officers must, therefore, help the Municipal Corporations with their co-operation from outside and not regard the work of municipalities with indifference till matters assumed a serious aspect, and then suddenly come down upon them with the bludgeon-clauses in their hand. Or, again, these officers some times interfered so constantly that they appeared

more like dictators than like sympathetic guides such as they ought always to strive to be. To stimulate public-spirited citizens to devote themselves to civic work ought to be the proper duty of sympathetic officials: moreover, since the work of administration increases day by day, it is in the interest of the local government official to be freed from municipal responsibilities if honorary workers from among the citizens themselves have been given opportunities and facilities for it. At one point in the course of this debate Gokhale grew anxiously serious. He proposed an amendment to delete the words "or by sections of the inhabitants" in matters of elections to the Municipal boards. † This sectional representation as was the object of the Bill, Gokhale deprecated in strong terms: "we value local self-government not only for the fact that local work thereby is better done, but also for the fact that it teaches men of different castes and creeds, who have long been kept more or less apart, to work together for a common purpose. There are, in all conscience, causes for differences enough among the different sections in this land, and I submit, my Lord, that the Legislature should not, in the best interests of the country, without the very strongest reasons, give any statutory recognition to these differences. There is nothing in the nature of the local self-Government which implies any conflict between the interests of one section and another." | 'The introduction of anything of a disintegrating character,' as Sir Pherozsha would put it, was vehemently opposed by Gokhale throughout his whole public life; and here was his first open utterance on this point from a responsible place.

Among the minor questions engaging his attention during this short period of two years, the working of the Excise System came in for a fair amount of

consideration at his hands. As a staunch advocate of the cause of Temperance he had no sympathy with the Abkari Policy of the Government. He confessed that at one time he also was a believer in the theory propounded in ordinary text-books of Political Economy, that the proper way to deal with intoxicants was to levy a high duty, and thereby seek to restrict consumption. It was a delusion that if the price of the intoxicants was raised beyond the capacity of poor consumers, large numbers of them would be ultimately weaned from a most injurious habit. He was, therefore, obliged to come to the painful conclusion that if the Government only raised the price of intoxicants, and did nothing to reduce the facilities for obtaining them, they would not succeed in reducing consumption; only they would take more out of the pockets of the consumers, which, in many cases, would add the misery of starvation to the misery of vice. Of course, a policy of total prohibition in these matters was the most effective way of dealing with the problem, in spite of the fancied interests of what were called moderate consumers. But failing that, the next best policy was not to make the intoxicants dearer, but to make them scarcer.

When the Government proposed to restrict the cultivation of hemp by granting a special license for the same to the cultivator, Gokhale objected to the Bill on the ground that since the sale and manufacture of the drug were already under the Abkari system, this further interference with the cultivator had no point so far as the Government Revenues went. But it was fruitful in another type of mischief. Any thing which tended to multiply the points of contact between the cultivators and the lower subordinates of the Revenue, the Abkari and other

departments deserved to be seriously deprecated. If the cultivation of hemp came to be prohibited, except under license, innocent cultivators might be exposed to the risk of having false charges brought against them by over-zealous or blackmailing subordinates of those departments in connection with the spontaneous growth of wild hemp plants. *The Times of India*, commenting on this Bill, had thus remarked:—
 “If it is a desirable object of legislation to multiply the points of contact between the administration and the people, this is a most admirable Bill. Unless a substantial benefit is to be gained, the less the Collector and his subordinates are called on to intervene between the cultivator and the free pursuit of his calling, the better. Every additional license, every additional compulsory resort to authority for permission to do this thing or that adds to the cultivators’ worries—adds to the opportunities that the revenue subordinate enjoys for worrying him and getting money out of him. A license looks a harmless thing as it would be if it were a sheet of paper and nothing more. But in India there is often more in it than is written on the face of it, and it costs more than is supposed to be paid for it.”

Altogether Gokhale had more than justified his existence in the Bombay Legislative Council. His honest and painstaking enquiries into all questions on which he spoke were a matter of common repute. Without a thorough acquisition of facts he knew he would be running the danger of being caught in a trap or a pit-fall. His previous study and ceaseless thought on all questions of public interests, forged in the school of Mr. Ranade, facilitated his work on the Council; and in point of knowledge of things he was already beginning to tower over the heads

of many of his compatriots on the Council. His personal experience of local affairs, both in the city and the country around, sharpened and invigorated by a perpetual contact with Western thought and sobered by the best lessons in constitutionalism had made him a very acceptable member on the Select Committees appointed to consider the various Bills submitted to the Legislature. To the Government he gave no rest, such was the advantage he took of the right of interpellation given to members in the Legislative Council. No subject of administration could escape his argus-eyed vigilance. The famine policy and measures, land revenue assessments, suspensions, remissions and recovery of arrears in different parts of the Presidency, the sufferings of the poorer people of Matheran or the highhandedness of a Mamlatdar in making the forcible use of a bullock-cart belonging to a villager, Police appointments and tortures inflicted by the Police to obtain confession from the accused and a number of other subjects involving laborious research on the part of the Government were from time to time offered to the rulers by this undaunted champion of the interests of his country, in a perfectly sober and amiable manner. When, again, he differed from the Government he had the pleasant knack of making even his difference of opinion with the Government as palatable as possible. Not that he budged an inch from his ground, but he retained all along a full consciousness of the limitations imposed on the work of a non-official member and of the tactics and resourcefulness necessary to make the cause of the country prosper with the Government.

On his return from England the 'apology incident' had harassed him with daily criticism in the Indian Press and Gokhale had, for some time, felt himself so

much depressed and sceptical about his work in India, for which his personal contact with the vigorous political life of the West had seemed to arm him all the more, that it is said he at one time actually expressed a desire to go over to England to work there on behalf of his country, whether in Parliament or outside it. His great master, Mr. Ranade, then gave a fresh and proper turn to his mind. {" Was the work in India finished that other places should be sought for one's activities? Who was to do the clearing of the heaps of rubbish with which ages of corruption, tyranny and misery had thickly encrusted this ancient land? and who was to dig the foundation, build the basis and rear the walls of the new structure that the land was to present to the world? Work in Parliament was only an apex, a superstructure, an ornamental part which had better be left to others or much rather deferred. Let your whole-hearted vigour be spent in building the new political structure here at home. Where, otherwise, are the workers for this weary work?" By some such words was the disciple moved; and he cheerfully bowed to the decision of the *Guru*, whose thoughts and utterances nectar-like he greedily imbibed even though his own intellect had vastly developed and his own vision had much widened. Work in the College he continued to do with that relentless sense of duty which had always been his own; and his lectures in the latter part of his connection with the Fergusson College were nothing short of weighty statements on all political, historical and economic questions. By one writer they have been compared to *Yadnyas* (sacrificial conversations) which were the crowning-point in the ancient *Yagya!* ceremonies, since in those were given the most authoritative pronouncements on the most subtle points of religion, emanating

from the greatest theological luminaries of the age. It is, indeed, a pity he did not leave behind him some solid book on Politics or Economics with special bearing on Indian questions; and although his speeches do form quite a treasure of thought on the various questions likely to engage our attention for a long time to come, one connected book from his pen would have perhaps lent a more bidding interest to his political thought. His absorption in the actual politics of our country and the ceaseless call on his time and abilities that the great work entailed could have possibly left him no leisure for the peaceful study and research necessary for any literary pursuit of a notable character. The Honourable Mr. Paranjape's remarks in this connection throw considerable light on the point:—"Every teacher worth the name is sure to have occasionally felt the ambition of distinguishing himself in his special subject and leaving behind him some work of a permanent original value. Gokhale sometimes felt that if he could have devoted himself to it entirely, he might have been able to do some original work in economics. He said that he had some new ideas on the subject of bi-metallism which, he told me, if properly developed, might have got rid of several of the difficulties that surround this thorny question. But other more pressing duties always got precedence over his time and energy, and these nebulous ideas form only an addition to the great realm of the Might-have-been. It must not be supposed that he was carried against his mature judgment into neglecting the field of pure research. He deliberately thought that in the present state of our country a capable man had no right to be a specialist when workers altogether were so few. A broadening of interests is more necessary to our leaders than the intensification of

one single interest. When the number of workers becomes large, then will come the time for specialisation. Whether this opinion is right or wrong, it must still be counted in him as but one more instance of sacrifice for his country's good, and many persons will even regard it as one of the noblest he ever made."

In the beginning of 1901, just about two years before he resigned his work in the Fergusson College, I had occasion to visit him in the small bungalow he was occupying in the College premises. I was a little struck with the furniture and the fittings of the place, as they argued a far more substantial position in the world than Rs. 75 per month would warrant. A verandah crowded with a number of chairs including a pair of rocking chairs, with matting running over the whole length of it and a big adjoining-room, adorned with a billiard-table, were the part of the building open to my gaze as a visitor. On inquiry afterwards I learnt the place intended for the Principal of the College had been given to him for use, as Mr. Gole—the then principal—preferred to stay in the city; and the bungalow had to be furnished at the cost of the Society in harmony with the dignity of the Principal. The billiard table had been hired by Gokhale, since his passion for the game made him undergo many sacrifices for it; and we are told that even when he was not actually at it he conjured up many an imaginary position for a 'cannon' or 'in off' with his eyes rivetted to the ground or fixed on the stars which latter afforded even greater opportunities for this fantastic indulgence in shots. It seems his old hankering to distinguish himself in many games had not yet taken leave of him, though public questions and public service had made a jealous absorption of all his

time and energy. I was myself keen on cricket and therefore allowed myself to be regaled with stories of Gokhale's attachment for cricket and longed to see him at the wicket wherein, however, I was sorely disappointed. It is well-known that he retained his fondness for cards, chess and other in-door games all his life, and Mr. Paranjape remarks that he remembers having been engaged with Gokhale at cards for no less than twelve hours in the course of one day. At the time I visited him I was too young to talk to him on any question of public interest; still, he was curious enough to ask several little things about the condition of Sind, its administration etc., and I am not sure if he did not regret that our Province lay so far out of the usual currents of the political life of the Presidency that it could hardly be considered as a vital part. That is sad, indeed; but it is the more reason why Sind-people should push more to make the existence of their Province felt in the life of Bombay proper than for others to help them to it. On the whole I have a very pleasant memory of that short visit and I distinctly felt that Gokhale was of genial, good-humoured and sociable temper and never noticed an iota of the roughness and brusqueness that I afterwards heard him charged with. The latter probably developed with his growing cares and jealousy of his time and the increasing officiousness or inquisitiveness of the people to see this Great One of India.

Just at the time of which I am writing Gokhale's great master, Mr. Ranade—the first light of the Deccan, nay of India,—passed away! One can well imagine what gloom his death must have caused in the whole of this land. For upwards of thirty years he had laboured for us in all fields of public activity.

with matchless devotion and steadfastness and with a faith that continued undimmed amidst the severest discouragements. It is not the purpose of this essay to give an estimate of the men of Gokhale's time, as the subject-matter being too near us in point of time has yet to be cleared up and at least another thirty years from now will pass before the work of these men could be viewed in proper perspective. But/about Mr. Ranade's position there can be no two opinions; and as he stands so inextricably connected with all that Gokhale had upto then done and also largely with what he had to do in the remaining period of his life, a few words, partly in the language of this reverent disciple will, surely, be found needful even here. "Nature had bestowed on him intellectual gifts of the highest order; and to them had been applied a patient and prodigious industry, a severe discipline and those great moral qualities which alone would have entitled their possessor to great honour among his fellow-men. He was altogether free from race or class prejudices and ready to recognize the good points of other communities and co-operate with them for common ends. In fact, it was one of the dearest dreams of his life to have a common platform on which members of different communities might stand together for national purposes, and regard themselves as Indians first, and Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, Christians, etc., afterwards. There was nothing sectional or narrow about his ideals. The principles for which he laboured all his life were greater equality for all, and a recognition of the essential dignity of man as man. "Work and sacrifice for the Motherland" was the unceasing message of his life illustrated in every-day thought, word and action. His patriotism was of a pure, fervent and profound character and his one aspiration through life, was

robust op should be roused from the lethargy of
 cen. grieveso that she might become a great and living
 nationresponsive to truth and justice, and self-
 respect, responsive to all the claims of our higher
 nature, animated by lofty ideals, and undertaking
 great national tasks. And he had come to recog-
 nize that the present contact between India and
 England was a providential arrangement in order
 that this aspiration might be realised. His conviction
 on this point never wavered, whatever happened.
 Even in his attachment to the cause of social and
 religious reform, patriotism was the strongest current;
 for he believed that without this reform there was no
 hope for us as a nation. When he spoke against
 idolatry in India, it was mainly because it gave rise
 to low and grovelling superstitions, which impeded
 the progress of the nation towards a higher stage of
 moral and religious life. A careful student of the
 history and institutions of other people, he studied
 them mainly to derive lessons from them for the
 guidance of his own countrymen. A most profound
 thinker, he was always seeking to look beneath
 the surface, and trace results and growths to their
 hidden causes. His comprehensive mind ranged over
 the entire field of national work: and behind a due
 coordination between different activities lay his
 emphasis on the necessity for the individual man to
 be renovated in spirit, so that his springs of action
 might be purer, his ideals nobler, and his practical
 life courageous and devoted to worthy ends.
 Ceaseless toil on the part of every worker in the field
 he preached but better exemplified in his own
 remorseless devotion to work. Apathy, he always
 said, was our greatest curse in these days. Wrong
 opinions he could stand; misdirected activity he
 could stand; but apathy filled him with deep sadness.

that he found harder to overcome. Less and less he approached almost all work with a religious sense of responsibility. In work he lived and rose and had his being. He read incessantly, he thought incessantly, he observed incessantly, and he incessantly endeavoured to apply the results of his reading, his thinking and his observation to a solution of the practical problems by which he found his countrymen surrounded. In his optimism he was never shaken. The coldest reception given by the Government to the memorials submitted through his industry was by him interpreted as something quite cheering. Thus when Gokhale himself in his early days would despondently complain:—"What is the good of taking all this trouble and submitting these memorials, if Government don't care to say anything more than that they have noted the contents of our letter?" Mr. Ranade's reply was characteristic:—"You don't realise our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to Government, in reality they are addressed to the people, so that they may learn how to think in these matters. This work must be done for many years without expecting any other result, because politics of this kind is altogether new in this land. Besides, if Government note the contents of what we say, even that is something." This robust spirit of faith in his work he, by his powerful magnetic influence was able to communicate to the little band of workers immediately around him and to diffuse through them throughout the land. If anywhere in the camp of the social or political reformers apathy was shown, Ranade would say, "not that the work is hollow, but the faith in these men is shallow"..... There is something in the race which is unequal to the strain of sustained exertion." And his was this

robust optimism in spite of many personal wrongs and grievances he encountered even at the hands of Government which he made light of, though he recognised that they might severely try the faith of the people.

To Gokhale had been given the privilege of knowing him most intimately. He had been his light, his life—his all. With extraordinary quickness Ranade had very early discerned in the young man material of a high order for his work and had severely tried his patience and industry. He had been like the central sun from whom this rising luminary was deriving his light and warmth and round whom he moved as an immediate object of favour. This personal contact with him had developed in Gokhale more than filial attachment for this intellectual and moral prodigy and his word was law and his approbation the highest earthly reward. The light that had till now guided him being extinguished, a sudden darkness came upon him. The following words from Gokhale's letter to Mr. Paranjape on this occasion will give in outline and no more, the large grief which these enfold:—"What his death means to me is more than I can tell you. I feel as though a sudden darkness has fallen upon my life and the best part of the satisfaction of doing public work is, for the present, at any rate, gone. Of course, I recognise that it is my duty, as it is that of so many others, to struggle on, faintly it may be, but even in faith and hope—trying in our own feeble manner to uphold the banner, unfurled by him, cherishing with love and reverence the ideals to which he gave his matchless life. But it is a dreary task and I do not know if men like myself will be enabled to accomplish even a small portion of it. However, the attempt must be made,

and then happily the responsibility of us, human beings, ends." Well might he have said with the poet who sang the Song of Hope and Love in Death:—

- " I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.
 " Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks:
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.
 " Nor blame I Death, because he have
 The use of virtue out of earth:
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, other where.
 " For this alone I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart,
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak."
 (Tennyson's In Memmoriam, LXXXI.)

But Gokhale continued to hear the words of his master even from the other side of Death:—"Was the work in India finished, etc..... where are the men to take up the work of political regeneration of the country with the highest religious fervour, to be in one word, political *Sannyasis*?" The work was so arduous and the field so vast that an amateurish way of handling it would but touch the skin of reform; therefore a bold step had to be taken if any substantial results were to be achieved. Only a few months before the death of Mr. Ranade, a blight had fallen on the domestic hearth of Gokhale in the death of his second wife: but though hardly thirty-four years of age, he submitted himself to the

voluntary penance of going without another marriage—penance incurred for what he had come to realise as a social sin in marrying a second wife within the lifetime of the first. His two daughters were growing under the kind care of some relatives; and he might withdraw from any further personal tie to dedicate himself entirely to his motherland. Sir (then Mr.) Pherozsha Mehta had resigned his seat on the Imperial Legislative Council owing to ill-health; and in April 1902, by his influence, the non-official members of the Bombay Legislative Council unanimously elected Gokhale to the vacated seat. This tribute to Gokhale's abilities, in a comparatively short period of public life was not yielded without his having given ample proofs of a thorough grasp of All-India questions. His colleagues on the Bombay Council knew him to be fully equipped in the best part of the work of the Supreme Council, namely, Finance; and several tributes of appreciation in this respect had been ungrudgingly bestowed upon him. To Gokhale this increased honour meant an increased responsibility; and as his pledged period of service with the Deccan Education Society was now approaching completion, he took the earliest opportunity to be freed therefrom to plunge himself, with singleness of devotion, in the work of the motherland. When on the 9th of July, 1901, speaking at the Ranade Memorial Meeting, held in Bombay, Gokhale had resignedly said: "We can humbly trust that he who gave Mr. Ranade to this Nation, may give another like him in the fullness of time." Little did he think that that sacred mantle was going to fall upon his own shoulders. In September 1902 he retired from the Fergusson College.

CHAPTER IV.

ALL FOR THE MOTHERLAND.

“PUBLIC life in this country has few rewards and many trials and discouragements. The prospect of work to be done is vast, and no one can say what is on the other side—how all this work may end. But one thing is clear. Those who feel in the matter, as I do, must devote themselves to the work in a spirit of hope and faith and seek only the satisfaction which comes of all disinterested exertions.” With these words expressive of a strange mixture of fear and hope, uttered in his farewell address to the students of the Fergusson College, Gokhale embarked to weather the storms of the sea of public life which had begun to exert upon him an irresistible fascination. It was purely from a sense of duty to the best interests of his country that he sought this position of greater freedom, but also of greater responsibility. Through the voice of poverty, taken long ago, he had accustomed himself to pecuniary want; but his indifference in that direction had not left him utterly helpless and dependent upon others. The monthly salary of 75 rupees from the College had been supplemented by an annual bonus of about Rs. 400 a year, from the Deccan Education Society and royalty from Messrs. Macmillan and Co. for the copy-right of his book on Arithmetic and Examination fees from the Bombay University, where he was an Examiner in English or History at the various examinations. In addition to this a small saving was probably made by him out of the travelling and boarding allowances accorded to members of Legislative Councils, and I am credibly

informed that the hospitality of the persistent friends in Calcutta went a long way to help him to effect some savings from his slender means for his daughters and other dependent relatives. On his retiring from the College he was entitled only to a paltry pension of Rs. 30; and political work absorbing all his attention, he had to sacrifice the income accruing from service as an examiner of the University. November 1904 was the last time that he examined candidates for the M.A. degree in History in company with Mr. F. W. Bain, of the Deccan College.

Sir (then Mr.) Perozshah Mehta, during his period of service on the Imperial Legislative Council, had given an altogether new tone to the debates held there. The Act of 1892 had entitled each of the Local Legislatures to send up a representative of their non-official members to the Supreme Council and the choice of Bombay had rightly fallen on the ablest, the most courageous and the most skilful of its debaters. In the course of only a couple of years' work there he had left an indelible impression on the bureaucracy. The Budget discussion of 1895 had brought out in clear relief the masterly services of this stalwart champion of constitutionalism. The debates in the Council had shown him to be a match for the ablest of his European opponents, even in their special departments. He had established a reputation for grasp of principles and mastery of details. The best exponents of Government views—Sir Charles Elliot, the military member, Sir Antony MacDonnell and Sir James Westland had taken great pains to controvert him, thereby only showing how strong was the case of their opponent. When he spoke in his vigorous manner of the defects of the

Civil Service, Sir James Westland nearly lost his temper, complained bitterly that the speaker was introducing a new spirit into the discussions in the Legislative Council and went the length of accusing him of uttering a calumny. On this occasion even the "*Statesman*" of Calcutta acknowledged his powers admitted him to have been a match for his opponents on their own ground. The vigour of his intellect and the beauty of his incomparable eloquence with its fused reason and passion had given him a predominant position in Indian Circles, and the 'lion' of Bombay came to receive the homage of all non-official India. Unfortunately his health undermined by indulgences for which he had, perhaps, himself to thank, made it impossible for him to undergo sustained exertion, intellectual as well as physical; and this splendid and brilliant orb capable of any quality of glory preferred to shine in spasmodic meteoric lights, and posterity will, perhaps, best remember him for his dignified and elevated tone in public measures, for his sturdy strokes in debate, his matchless eloquence on themes sufficiently inspiring, his constitutionalism and his magnetic personality diffusing electric currents, even though he was silent. Never for a moment, even in his retirement from popular gaze, could the influence of this 'uncrowned king' of men be ignored; and his genius shone best in times of greatest need and always loved to produce a dramatic effect. To the elder Pitt of England, he may, by a little stretch of imagination, be brought in comparison.

No wonder, then, if Gokhale mounted up to the vacated place in the Supreme Council with an oppressive sense of responsibility; and his friends in the Bombay Council who had unanimously conferred on

him this signal honour were on the tip-toe of expectation to see how he was going to acquit himself. The times were a little out of joint. Lord Curzon's vigorous measures were creating a stir and an awakening in the country and the 'currency' policy of the Government of India finally enforced from 1899 had, after the passage of two severe famines, begun to produce a perceptible effect. The budget of 1902 had been submitted to the Supreme Legislative Council and the public with extreme satisfaction in that, whereas the former Governments of India had nothing but a never-ending dreary tale of deficits, Lord Curzon's administration could, with pride, show a magnificent surplus; and while member after member rose up to shower compliments on the Government and the Finance Member for this plethora of savings, Gokhale was the first to strike a disconcerting note in the very first sentence of his first utterance in this Council:—"Your Excellency, I cannot conscientiously join in the congratulations which have been offered to the Hon'ble Finance Member on the huge surplus which the revised estimates show for last year. A surplus of seven crores of rupees is perfectly unprecedented in the history of Indian finance, and coming, as it does, on the top of a series of similar surpluses realized when the country has been admittedly passing through very trying times, it illustrates to my mind, in a painfully clear manner, the utter absence of a due correspondence between the condition of the people and the condition of the finances of the country." Whence came these surpluses! For a detailed account of Gokhale's service in connection with Indian Finance, the reader is referred to a subsequent chapter of this book. Here it is enough to record that he was almost the first member in the Council to expose these surpluses as the 'cur-

rency' surpluses, which in the improved condition of the Indian' Currency had no reason to exist any more. The extraordinary and strangling taxation which had been laid upon the country from year to year, on account of the uncertain conditions of the Currency, was no more needed. The rejoicing in a surplus was, then, unbecoming; for these very surpluses constituted only a double wrong to the community. They were a wrong in the first instance, that they existed at all, that Government should have taken so much more from the people than was needed in times of serious depression and suffering; and they were also a wrong, because they lent themselves to easy misinterpretation, and among other things, rendered possible the phenomenal optimism of the Secretary of State for India, who seemed to imagine that all was for the best in this best of lands. If, however, the Government thought it a sin to reduce its high level of taxation, thereby giving relief to the poor taxpayer, the only commendable and honourable alternative before it was to spend these surpluses on the crying needs of domestic reforms like sanitation, education, etc., etc., and not utilising them for additions to the army expenditure or reduction in the ordinary National Debt which had certainly assumed no such huge proportions as to disturb the equanimity of a financier. This was, in the main, the burden of Gokhale's utterances on the Indian Budget, the lucid and charming exposition of his points therein rendering them an annual treat even to the average reader. It was in connection with one of these speeches that Sir Henry Cotton in his latest book on 'Home and Indian Memories,' thinks it can compare favourably, both in delivery and matter, with the best speeches of the ablest English leader in the House of Commons.

Always constructive and fully aware that no great good was likely to come out of excessive demands, he, from time to time, continued to place before the Government suggestions for measures of moderate reforms which were generally accepted by them. The right of moving resolutions and amendments on the budget had not yet been accorded to the Legislative body; and therefore the whole ground of administration, including all possible expressions of a wish for reform in any direction had to be covered by a non-official member in the course of his speech on the Budget. Gokhale's words came to be carefully weighed by all the members of Lord Curzon's Government, and the Finance Member with all his talents and experience did not find it altogether plain-sailing when he came to meet Gokhale's criticisms and proposals for improvement. An unfortunate vein of cynicism running through most of the speeches delivered by Lord Curzon as the President on all these occasions enhances the worth of Gokhale's utterances, since it clearly shows how the head of the Government smarted under the gentle lash of an 'amateur' in finance and general administration. As the Military policy of the Government came in for a large share of attack from Gokhale, Lord Kitchner—the Member in charge of this Department—found himself often at great pains to give a satisfactory answer in defence of the military system of India; and it is no wonder if he could not meet the situation on the spur of the moment, everybody not being gifted with the readiness necessary for debate. Therefore, it is said, on one occasion, he privately asked Gokhale the points on which he wished to touch so far as military expenditure was concerned, "and out of consideration for the great soldier who was no debater, Gokhale did not em-

phasise certain points as much as he would have liked to." It was a great encouragement to Gokhale and to the public to find several of his suggestions adopted by the Government almost the very following year. Thus the salt-tax, which was believed to be the greatest hardship upon the poorest of India who had to go without a sufficient quantity of salt necessary for their health, was reduced from Rs. 2-8-0 per maund gradually to only one Rupee per maund; and it is, by no means, an exaggeration to say that Gokhale's passionate appeal for this reduction did much to effect this reform. He believed in retrenchment of expenditure, India being a country too poor to afford this costly scale of administration, and therefore unceasingly urged the Government to employ more and more of the indigenous material. Slightly increased doles on Education, Sanitation, Police and other matters of internal reform were hailed by him with the utmost delight and gratitude, for he had untiringly battered at the Government to attend to these wants as a national Government should. Lastly, some improvements in the manner of submitting figures in the annual budget were effected at his suggestion; and, his services in this direction were ungrudgingly acknowledged by the Finance Minister.

It was the good fortune of Gokhale to have come to the Supreme Council at a time when the powerful grasp of Lord Curzon held the helm of affairs in India. This Olympian Jove of the Indian bureaucracy, sincerely believing that the salvation of India lay only with the efficient rule of his lieutenants of the Indian services had, by a remorseless industry and vigilance, exemplified in his own personal attachment to work, come to infuse a vivifying spirit among the members of the heaven-born service who like jaded

horses had run a little slack and limp. To overhaul the Indian machinery of Government was the central resolve of the indefatigable Viceroy. Immediately on taking his place in Government House he announced his determination to carry out a series of reforms in the administration, and the country was stirred to great activity at the sight of a number of commissions going about collecting evidence on different questions. The Famine Commission had much to suggest regarding ways and means to combat Famines in the land and prospects of larger irrigational undertakings were discernible; the land revenue policy attacked by Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt had set the different provinces of India to searching enquiries into their methods of work and Lord Curzon's minute on the questions of policy said to have been entirely his own composition stands as a landmark, though it did not quite satisfy the demands of the agitators. The defects of the Police administration in India had set a commission going and attempts were soon made to purify the system so far as the vision of the 'efficiency-ridden' Viceroy could go. The North-West Frontier portion of India was detached from the Local Government of the Punjab and constituted as a separate Province under a Chief Commissioner, directly attached to the Governor-General. These and a number of other small administrative measures pertaining only to the Executive were vigorously carried out and India began to look with astonishment at the inexhaustible mine of energy at the centre of the Government. Nothing was considered too mean and insignificant for the touch of his talents.

While the Executive work of this Government could only be viewed, favourably or unfavourably as the case may be, by the Press or from the public plat-

form, the Legislative measures had to pass through the Legislative Body of the Supreme Government, where the non-official members had, at least, a free opportunity to communicate their views directly to the heads of the Government. One of the first legislative measures exercising the public mind and vigorously opposed by most of the non-official members of the Council was the official Secrets Bill introduced on the 4th December 1903 when its mover, the honourable Mr. A. T. Arundale, asked that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. In 1889 the Indian Official Secret Act had been passed by the Government of India as a mere copy of an Act passed by Parliament about that time, or "as a mere Indian edition of the English law already in force in India," as Gokhale would have put it. The real object of the English Act had been made clear in the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor (Baron Halsbury) who said that the measure was intended against those who facilitated the military operations of other countries by giving copies of official documents. The Bill of 1899, as passed by the Legislative Council of the Governor-General, had raised no discussion, as the sittings of the Council had been held at Simla; Lord Lansdowne, the presiding head had, however, given as an illustration of its necessity the garbled publication of a civil confidential document in an Indian newspaper, and he had emphasised that those who published official documents without authority would come within its scope whether the persons by whom those documents had been divulged were discovered or not, and whether the documents themselves were published in their entirety or reproduced in a garbled and truncated form. This last was held by the Government of Lord

Curzon to illustrate the meaning of the Act XV of 1889 to extend to civil affairs as well. But the legal advisers of the Government of India had ever since then differed as to whether the Act did or did not cover civil official secrets. The amending Act of the Government of Lord Curzon, therefore, took the opportunity of removing the doubt.

The Bill in its original draft was unbearable. The whole Indian as well as Anglo-Indian Press had attacked it most vehemently and the '*Englishman*' of Calcutta had described it as calculated to Russianize the Indian Administration and had thought it inconceivable that such an enactment could be placed on the Statute Book even in India. In the Select Committee, to which Gokhale had also been appointed, it underwent many salient changes; but even as it was, the non-official members of the Select Committee—the Hon. Mr. Bose and the Hon. Nawab Sayad Muhammad had put in a minute of dissent which took the shape of two or three amendments that Gokhale proposed for the consideration of the Council. The attitude of the Government having been previously determined, it was seen that there was no possible chance of their success. Gokhale thought that unless the Bill was further amended, it must tend unduly to curtail the liberty of the Press, not so much perhaps by what Government might actually do, as by the *fear* of what they might do. Knowing the peculiar relation in which the average type of magistrate stood to the Executive Government it was not too much to presume that with all the prestige, power and resources of the Government behind the prosecution a conviction would, in a majority of cases, be a certainty. Even if no prosecution were actually

instituted by the Government under the proposed legislation, the mere fact that the Government was armed with the power to prosecute, could not fail to affect prejudicially the liberty of the Press in this country, where it ought to be the peculiar interest of Government to be thoroughly acquainted with popular views which only a vigilant Press could advance.

The only time the Council divided during the debate on this Bill was when Gokhale put his very moderate amendment to delete the words "or any other matters of State" from the clause under civil affairs; but the motion was negatived by 16 to 7. All other amendments were disposed of in a much more simple manner. When the Government makes up its mind to have a particular measure put on their Statute-Book in the form they please, the Honourable member in charge of the Bill is, as a rule, ready with the expression, "I am afraid I cannot accept the Honourable member's amendment." On this occasion, too, the Government presented an uncompromising and freezing front. What the actual occasion for introducing the Bill had been was beyond the comprehension of the Hon. Dr. Asutosh Mukhopadhyaya and other non-official members who looked quite taken by surprise. Some time before the introduction of this Bill a confidential circular had been issued by the Public Works Department, most likely without the knowledge of the Government, to all the centres of Railways to employ, as far as possible, Europeans and Eurasians in their service for all posts above the salary of thirty rupees per month. Somehow this circular had leaked out and had been the subject of very severe criticism in the Indian Press. Gokhale

expressed his apprehension that the Government perhaps wanted to prevent the publication of papers of the nature above referred to. In thus using this circular only as an illustration he was far from attributing the introduction of the Bill to it, though Lord Curzon was pleased to interpret his expression in that way. What then was the objective aimed at? According to the ruling and responsible head, the Government of India desired to amend the Act for two reasons; firstly, because in practice they had found it to be absolutely useless in the naval and military cases which it was supposed to cover, and secondly, because they had been informed by their legal advisers that it could not be put into operation in any civil cases, should such need arise, owing to the extremely imperfect way in which it had been framed; and therefore it did not appear to be good statesmanship to leave a measure, which, owing to such causes as these, had become a dead letter, on the Statute Book, any more than it is good horticulture to leave a dead bough on a tree. Admirable horticulture if the newly planted bough diffuses poison in the atmosphere even to the extinction of life! 'Closing an obvious safety-valve and driving popular discontent inwards' could hardly be consistent with the professions of his Lordship that it was his constant aspiration to carry the public with him, as far as possible, in all important acts of his administration.

The chronic indebtedness of the Indian agriculturist had long been a subject of anxiety with the Government. It was not possible that the principal source of Governmental revenues, namely, the Land Revenue, could be in a satisfactory condition, if the material for that taxation was degenerating. The conscience of the Government of India and of all

Local Governments had, for long, been disturbed on this point. After various crude attempts at reform, the Government of Lord Curzon introduced in the Council a Bill for the formation of Credit Co-operative Societies, based mainly on the principle of the Raiffeisenism that had shown wonderful results in Central Europe. Gokhale, who had during all his apprenticeship and during his period of service on the Bombay Legislature given most careful thought to the question of agricultural indebtedness, had his fears about the successful working of the co-operative rural Societies. He very much desired that the peasant should first be freed of the load of former indebtedness. A preliminary liquidation of their existing debts he considered as a *sine qua non* of the whole movement. Next, the principle of unlimited liability, while it would greatly strengthen the position of the societies in the money-market, might scare the Indian raiyat. In Germany this principle was a time-honoured tradition and had worked admirably, while in Italy and other countries it had to be acclimatized with immense toil. Each member to be liable in all his property for his society's debts was such a new idea to India that Gokhale feared it would deter people from joining such associations. Lastly, the idea of leaving these rural associations to shift for themselves in the matter of borrowing from outsiders might reduce them to the risk of falling into the clutches of the money-lender just as the individual Raiyats were. If a federation of these units into District Unions and the linking of the latter into a Provincial Central Bank were effected, the village Co-operative bank was likely to feel easy on the score of finances. Gokhale had the greatest sympathy with the idea in general and warmly urged the Government to begin with the experiment in some

selected areas, taking care to finance the societies at their start with no niggardly hand.

His foresight in determining the conditions of the success of the movement from its financial side was admirable. For some time after the passing of this Act no great progress was perceptible and from everywhere the cry arose, 'where is the money to come from?' From 1908 onward, however, the Government have been up and doing. With District Banks opened in many important towns and a Registrar assigned to each Province, the movement has been immensely popularised. Co-operative Presidency Banks—the apex of the structure and the Central Bureaus for financing purposes—have not yet risen all over India. Bombay has set an admirable example in organising machinery of this kind, and it is much to the credit of the enterprising and sympathetic genius of the Hon. Mr. Lallubhai Samaldas, C. I. E., that the Bombay Presidency Bank for Credit Co-operative Societies is doing excellent work. Gokhale's analysis of the points essential to the success of the Scheme is now bearing ample fruit. His faint opposition to the principle of unlimited liability in course of time disappeared; and the Hon. Mr. Lallubhai Samaldas informs me that Gokhale, realising the importance of this principle, soon became a warm advocate of it.

Lord Curzon, from his very start as the head of the Government of India, had set his heart on Educational Reforms in India. A conference of official experts, held at Simla in the very first year of his administration, had been followed by the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the working of the Indian Universities; and on the report submitted

by them was framed the famous Indian Universities' Bill of 1903. The utmost expedition used by the Government in this matter and the fears roused by the report and the stern though vague language of the head of the Government, in his various Convocation addresses, had alarmed the public into reflection. The Governmental advocacy of reform, both in the collegiate-work and the governing bodies of the Universities, was vehemently attacked by the Indian public, both from the platform and the Press. In the Council itself, strenuous opposition against the Bill was led by Gokhale almost single-handed; and the way he did it at all stages of the Bill bears ample testimony to his remarkable debating skill and intellectual resourcefulness. His uncompromising attitude to this measure of reform several times provoked Lord Curzon to indulge in biting sarcasm which recoiled on him on account of the cool-headed, astute debater's genial and good-humoured repartee. To effect an easy passage of the Bill the Imperial Legislative Council had been strengthened in the Government ranks by the nomination of several additional members from among the official experts. The Indian public, however, was relieved to find that if a towering personality was at that time riding roughshod over the young educated India, their representative—a product of the same University system which was being victimised—had stood up and proved himself by no means a mean match for the intellectual giant at the head of the Government. Certain it is that during this first period of his *Political Sanyasinism* the public came to look upon Gokhale as their best champion in the Council; and however muffled their cry might be, the views of their accredited non-official representative could never be lost on the Government and the people of England. The unpopularity of

the of Lord Curzon growing with the growand culminating in his impolitic mearstition of Bengal, in his unsavoury and utterances regarding the Indian char blight he cast on the aspirations of the le classes by explaining away their cher. Charta had been largely responsible for biale so largely before the public eye. He wan to meet Lord Curzon with his own weapwing phrases' were Lord Curzon's *forte*, had quite an armoury of polished lang-quence at his command; if industry of a was his pride, the peoples' repre-entl chapter and verse always ready: if offic and sternness of purpose character-ised: eroy, resoluteness, independence of spist optimism in face of a di-ces sheartening oppre always behind this rare advocate of l in the first part of this crowded period of last twelve years, the reactionary and policy of Lord Cuart on brought Gokhale's into great re' of is undoubted. Rough Gokhale's comes try the mettle of man: the must, then, inevitably fall. But it is not to strong man of will and capacity that the unity of establishing his claim is accorded. with that innate and acquired power pass away ed, because of the want of fitting occasions. g them into full play. Few have Gokhale's fortune to be 'born' when the highways are n and the waters are out. A coward, a hesitant, imbecile alone will shrink from the helm when storm rides high, or will fret with Hamlet:—

'The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right.'

and Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab were deputed for this work ; but it was not before the summer of 1905 was in full swing that they found it convenient to embark for England. In the mean time, he had enough to do at home. Ranade Memorial fund meetings were held in various parts of the Bombay Presidency and even Madras paid its tribute to him, perpetuating his memory by founding a solid library in his name. The Bombay Presidency public had decided to dedicate an Economic Research Institute to his memory, firstly because of his deep attachment to Indian Economic regeneration and secondly because of the crying need for such an institute ; and Poona was selected as the best place for it. At all the meetings held to raise funds for this purpose Gokhale's presence was insisted upon both by workers and donors, as everybody rightly believed that the everlasting influence of Mr. Ranade could be best understood when Gokhale's presence illumined the gathering. Great was the labour in collecting the required funds. But as if the gods intended to give him no respite, the powers and persuasion of this indefatigable beggar in the cause of his country were to be put to further proof. The well-known weekly *India*, published in England for the purpose of interpreting India to the English people was, at this time, unfortunately languishing for want of funds. An increased number of members on its list of subscribers alone could prolong its life ; and Gokhale went from place to place enlisting subscribers from India for *India*. The result of his endeavours was on all accounts fairly satisfactory.

On the 12th June 1905 was laid the foundation-stone of the buildings of the Servants of India Society by Mr. Shivram Hari Sathe, a great friend of

Gokhale and formerly his colleague in the Secretaryship of the Sarvajanic Sabha. This Society may fairly be called one of the best monuments of Gokhale's service to the motherland. Years ago Mr. Ranade had stirred him with a trumpet call, "where are the workers to clear the rubbish and lay the foundation for modern India?" Gokhale, in his own person, had whole-heartedly responded to the call and had also formed the idea of organising a band of workers who could, like him, consecrate their lives by service at this best of altars. According to Mr. Pranjape's statement, this idea seems to have caught hold of his mind even as early as 1897; and since then he gave it the best of his thought. The history of the world had supplied him with one remarkable instance of the 16th century when a band of enthusiastic workers took a vow of service to the Catholic Church and utter self-abnegation. At a time when the Roman Catholic religion in its conflict with Protestantism was losing its grip over the European conscience, nothing perhaps did so much to save the tottering Church as the great organisation of the Society of Jesus. It was the most powerful missionary organisation the world had ever seen. With a rapidity little short of marvellous, the Society spread not only throughout Europe but to China and the Indies, and became one of the chief powers in the counsels of the Church. According to a traditional story, its founder, Ignatius Loyola of Spain, had his great vision lasting for eight days in which the plan of his Society was revealed to him and the method which he worked out in his *Spiritual Exercises*, his true mission being the extirpation of Protestantism and the expulsion of half-hearted men. As preachers and directors of consciences, his followers were to work for the propagation of the faith, and above all by means of the education of the

young. With that view Jesuit Seminaries sprang up in all parts of the world where a footing was allowed them. The servants were to take the vows of poverty and chastity, and obedience to the General whom they set over themselves, in all things which concerned the observance of their Rule. The power granted to the General was unprecedented in its extent. The right of command belonged to him entirely. He was to decide for each his vocation and define his work. This institution was, from its very beginning, the expression of blind obedience to authority, and the discipline that the disciples had to undergo to be fit for this was of the most exacting type. Its purpose was not merely to produce Christian humility and the spirit of self-denial in the individual; but it was also to make each member a ready instrument for the purposes of the Society in its warfare with the world, for a perpetual warfare had to be waged for a triumph of the Church over hostile forces, and success could only be obtained by faithful obedience to orders. The novice had, therefore, to lose his personality to find it again only in the Society. He himself was but raw material for the Society to mould as it would. All his faculties were to be developed, but the initiative was never left to him./

There is no doubt that Gokhale worked his Servants of India Society on this model. One essential condition of successful work for the renovation of the country was that a sufficient number of our countrymen must come forward to devote themselves to the cause of the motherland in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. "Public life must be spiritualised. Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at

every opportunity of sacrifice for the land, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of Providence which nothing can shake—equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country." } In these glowing and fervent expressions he summed up the idea he had of the patriotism wanted from his band of workers. The martyr in the cause of the Church and religion sees a halo of sanctity surrounding him and he gladly makes a sacrifice of all his worldly prospects in the hope of the reward of eternal salvation in the Kingdom of God. Could not service to the motherland be looked upon with that same spirit of pure passion and sacrifice? This is what he wanted to infuse among his workers. The vow of poverty was imposed upon them, and the place of theological chastity was to be supplied by the purity of private morals as best illustrated in faithful conjugal relations. Utmost obedience to the orders of the General—the first member of the Society—Gokhale himself, was enjoined on all; and it was with the view of maintaining Jesuitical discipline that he had to work as an autocrat. Self-government within the British Empire was the ideal placed before the workers, since "the British connection, as ordained in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good"—the foremost principle in Gokhale's politics must be frankly accepted by all members. The national interests of the Indian people are to be promoted by members by all constitutional means, working principally towards (1) Creating among the people, by example and by precept, a deep and passionate love of the motherland, seeking its highest fulfilment in service and sacrifice; (2) organising the

work of political education and agitation basing it on a careful study of public questions, and strengthening generally the public life of the country; (3) promoting relations of cordial good-will and co-operation among the different communities; (4) assisting educational movements, specially those for the education of women, the education of backward classes and industrial and scientific education; (5) helping forward the industrial development of the country; and (6) the elevation of the depressed classes. The head-quarters of the Society being at Poona, members are expected to meet there for some time every year. Admission is open to anybody of good general education, active habits and moral enthusiasm. For some years the novice gets initiated into the various public questions of the day in which he is helped by advanced members and an excellent library attached to the Society. Usually the period of novitiate is five years, which may in some cases be shortened. In its ten years of existence the Society has numbered 25 members who have made their work felt in the direction of famine relief organisation, Credit Co-operative movement, elevation and education of depressed classes and spread of primary education. Besides they have always proved able lieutenants in all political and industrial Conferences and Congresses held from time to time. It is superfluous to comment further on the good work done, and very much more likely to be done by this Society. The Hon. Mr. Shrinivas Shastri of Madras is at present working as the President. How it is supported is purely a matter of conjecture. Gokhale, it seems, was readily entrusted with funds by friends who had their deep faith in his idea; and for the rest, it is a part of each member's duty to collect funds for the Society.

India has great hopes centred on this cherished institution of Gokhale's. From this home are to issue, in course of time, numbers of compassionating souls believing in the great future awaiting this land. They shall have received the best education needed for a public man. If only the ideal of its founder is reverentially held from generation to generation, this soil should produce in abundance men able to reach the inert masses who have eventually to come into line with the national activities. The lasting results of their work, it will be the business of posterity, to record; for it must take ages before their goal is achieved. Theirs is principally a quiet, imperceptible process of work, and nothing of a dazzling nature need be expected of them. But the present generation of at least the middle class of people must feel their existence; for, however noble the ideal be, if the actual work turned out by the members is taken no notice of by the intelligent section, it will come to lack—a very important support—namely, the sympathy of the discerning public. So long as Gokhale's powerful personality was there in their midst, the Indian public had an unbounded confidence in the future of this Society: and now that he is no more, I venture to think that unless the place of the missing personality is filled by another of the type of a selfless soul like Mr. Gandhi, or unless quite a number of the present members catch the public eye with their apostolic fervour and high ability, a perfectly deplorable 'indifference' to it may creep in. The Society of Jesus produced a number of noble examples of the type of St. Xavier; the Servants of India Society must produce battalions of at least second-rate or third-rate reproductions of Gokhale, if the standard of that great man himself is unreachable. Men of high calibre are needed to be enrolled on its

lists—men, far more than money ; and though Gokhale memorial funds mounting up to lakhs of rupees may all be devoted towards strengthening the pecuniary side of this great Order, it is still the want of workers which will be felt. At this shrine every province ought to make an offering, of some of its well-to-do educated men with vigour as well as talents behind them ; moreover, the fountain-head from where they come to drink copious draughts of sober patriotism must itself be surrounded with a halo of sanctity, for in order that a spirited young man should be expected to merge his personality in that of the Society, the teacher or the *Guru* ought to be thoroughly deserving of receiving his homage.

{ The Partition of Bengal, highly provocative both as an administrative measure and for the manner in which it was carried out, had set the whole of Bengal in angry flames. The regime of Lord Curzon had already caused enough bitterness in the country when this measure, interpreted by the Bengalees as aimed at causing a disintegration in their nation, was made an especial reason for rousing their passions. A community highly emotional and far advanced in independence of thought on account of their early contact with the West rose in resentment that soon found expression in wild utterances and wilder deeds. It looked as if they had lost their faith in the justice and moral purpose of the British rule, and many reckless thinkers started to preach the dangerous gospels of leaving the British Government severely alone and finding out a salvation for the race quite independent of the rulers. The cry of nationality found a tremendous echo, and it looked as if the proverbially 'inert' masses were also with the movement. Popular meetings of protest, petitions, memo-

rials and other methods of quiet constitutional agitation—so powerfully believed in by the school of Messers. Ranade, Pherozsha and the moderates of Bengal—were looked upon not only with discredit but with an amount of maddening scorn. The perfectly legitimate and laudable desire for 'Swadeshism' was converted by them into an advocacy for a 'boycott' of not only all foreign goods, but all institutions savouring of foreign methods or machinery. Thus the Government Schools and Colleges and the Government Law Courts came to be avoided or at any rate openly preached as objects to be shunned. A wild spirit of hostility, in short, was running in Bengal as the result of the wrong that the community had received from the reactionary measures of Lord Curzon. To crown all the policy of Sir J. B. Fuller and Mr. Emerson, high officials responsible for the good Government, of the newly created province of Eastern Bengal added fury to the flame; and everybody outside Bengal began to ask in consternation what was going to happen next.

At this time Gokhale was in England as a deputy of the National Congress, sent with a view to place before the judicious-minded English people the grievances of India and the recent injustice it had received at the hands of an unsympathetic Viceroy. This was his second visit to England; and the friends he had made on the first occasion came readily forward to help him in his work of reaching the English middle class. Sir Henry Cotton, who had presided at the Congress Meeting of 1904, and Sir William Wedderburn, the best friend that Gokhale had in England, and a number of other well-wishers of India organised meetings for him where he could

place the Indian case before the English public. Altogether he stayed there for only fifty days during which he delivered no less than forty-five speeches. Sometimes he had to speak twice or even thrice in the course of the same day, of course, at different places. His preparedness for this trying occasion was simply remarkable. He knew that he had to address an intensely practical class of people—every one of whom was a politician in a sense; and therefore he had to take leave of all sentimentalism in his eloquence, and to confront his audience with the stern logic of facts and figures. India's connection with England was more than a century old. How had she profitted by it beyond getting peace, security and order in the land? Was that the only promise of the English nation when direct responsibility for the administration of the country was taken by them in 1858? In point of material wealth, in point of education, in point of holding appointments in the service of their own country, both in the Civil and the Military, very little regard or even bare justice had been shown to the interest of the people. The moral purpose of the British Empire was, most certainly, to bring the conquered territories into line with the civilization of the conquerors; how could they, in all conscience, affirm that England had lifted up even a little finger in that direction? The extremely moderate and sweet tone of Gokhale's speeches, replete with facts and arguments, did much to set many people in England thinking over Indian questions; but the strenuous work that this process of rousing the English conscience involved, was beginning to tell upon the over-worked devotee of his motherland. He had just finished his mission in England when a fresh call for service was made from home,—something to which there could be no demurring.

The sittings of the Indian National Congress for the year 1905 had been fixed to take place at Benares; and the Reception Committee of that place insisted on having Gokhale as the President for that occasion, although he was so heavily engaged in his mission in England. Gokhale, however, accepted the invitation at a considerable personal inconvenience and on board the steamer that was bringing him back to India he had to undergo an operation on his throat, as he had got nearly choked by continuous talking for the time he had stayed in England. Although for the preparation of his Presidential Address he had only some scanty leisure in the course of his journey from England to India, his utterances were of that weighty, argumentative and eloquent character that would do credit to any Indian leader of the times. India was passing through a stormy period and passions had risen so high that the utmost statesmanship of responsible leader was taxed to steer the boat of public activity. To remain unflinchingly true to his life-long and deeply cherished principle of working out the salvation of the country under the ægis of the British Empire and at the same time of expressing the demands of the country in political, industrial and racial equality in the most unequivocal language and of recording an emphatic condemnation of Lord Curzon's conception of duty and efficiency without sympathy,—these two different lines of thought had to be adroitly blended. The greatest difficulty of a true Congress Leader is often in the subjects-committee, where resolutions to be moved by particular gentlemen have to be so worded as not to violate the fundamentals of constitutional agitation. Gokhale's tactfulness helped him to navigate the rough waters; and the speech he delivered from the Presidential Chair is an ample proof

of his ability to meet difficult situations. Lord Curzon's Administration had, necessarily, to be the first point to touch; and never did a more discerning artist undertake the work of word-painting. "Gentlemen, how true it is that to everything there is an end! Thus even the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon has come to a close! For seven long years, all eyes had constantly to turn to one masterful figure in the land—now in admiration, now in astonishment, more often in anger and in pain, till at last it has become difficult to realise that a change has really come." A comparison of his rule to Aurangzeb's was the next happy touch, "the same attempt at a rule excessively centralised and intensely personal, the same strenuous purpose, the same overpowering consciousness of duty, the same marvellous capacity for work, the same sense of loneliness, the same persistence in a policy of distrust and repression, resulting in bitter exasperation all round." (His wonderful intellectual gifts, his brilliant powers of expression, his phenomenal energy, his boundless enthusiasm for work—these will ever be a theme of just and unstinted praise. But the gods are jealous, and amidst such lavish endowments, they withheld from him a sympathetic imagination, without which no man can ever understand an alien people;—and it is a sad truth that to the end of his administration Lord Curzon did not really understand the people of India. To him India was a country where the Englishman was to monopolise for all time all power and talk all the while of duty. The Indians' only business was to be governed and it was a sacrilege on his part to have any other aspiration....Had Lord Curzon been less self-centred, had he had more humility in his nature, he might perhaps have discovered his mistake before it was too late."...Increased efficiency

in the administration was bound to result from his seven years' devoted labours; but his claim that he had championed the special interests of the masses, as against their natural leaders and spokesmen, the educated classes of the community, could not be established in the face of his heartless employment of the huge currency surpluses for the Army and the 'departments.' The Partition of Bengal—the greatest grievance of the time—was next visited with strongest condemnation as there was no doubt that the Province had been dismembered to destroy the growing solidarity of the Bengalee race; to check their national aspirations and to weaken their power of co-operating for national ends, to lessen the influence of their educated classes with their countrymen and to reduce the political importance of Calcutta. "After this let no apologist of the late Viceroy pretend that the object of the partition was administrative convenience and not political repression." The "Swadeshi" movement was next touched upon and a careful and studied warning was given to the country to dissociate it from "boycotting" every thing English, as such a plan was against our creed and purpose; for the growth of the former, however, the best ways and means must be found and in the meantime everybody could take a vow of voluntary inconvenience incurred by the use of home-made goods. Our aims and aspirations were on that occasion emphasised by Gokhale to lie in the immediate redress of grievances in four directions (*i*) to have a real popular representation on the Legislative Councils; along with a larger share in the administration and control of our affairs; (*ii*) a steady substitution of the Indian for the European agency in the public service of the country; (*iii*) a more equitable readjustment of financial arrange-

ments, and (iv) a vigorous fight for the adoption of measures calculated to improve the condition of the masses of the people. The goal of Indian political aspiration was self-government within the Empire. The date of that achievement may be very distant; but that has not to dishearten any one in a fight for the present demands. India's end and aim had been nowhere so nobly planned—as in the following poetic utterances of Mr. Ranade:—"The true end of our work is to rennovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty and developing to the full all his powers. Till so renovated, purified and perfected, we can never hope to be what our ancestors once were—a chosen people, to whom great tasks were allotted and by whom great deeds were performed. Where this feeling animates the worker, it is a matter of comparative indifference in what particular direction it asserts itself and in what particular method it proceeds to work. With a liberated manhood, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly by all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the world, and be the master of the situation and of her destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the Promised Land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression and sorrow, will then be myths of the past, and the gods will then again descend to the earth and associate with men as they did in times which we now call mythical."

Lord Minto began his Government of India under onerous and trying conditions. The difficulties had been, by no means, of his making. He had succeeded to them and fairness and justice required that he should be given a free and ample opportunity to set things right. Gokhale, therefore, exhorted his countrymen not to add to his difficulties by any unconstitutional measures of agitation into which their passions might otherwise drive them. His direct appeal to the New Government from his place in the Supreme Council, on the occasion of the annual Budget for the year 1906, produced a decided effect on the mind of the new Viceroy. Among the things requiring the immediate attention of the Government in point of administration, Gokhale brought to the forefront such crying needs as a substantial reduction in the Land Revenue assessment, a whole-hearted promotion of the Credit Co-operative movement including a scheme for relieving the peasantry of the millstone of old debts hanging on their necks, further irrigational works, scientific improvement of agriculture, a vigorous extension of primary education among the masses, early betterment of hygienic and sanitary conditions in towns and villages, and a number of kindred themes pertaining to the welfare of the masses. On this occasion, he made bold to bring the question of the agitation then prevailing in the country before the Government of Lord Minto. A new generation had arisen, thoroughly saturated with Western ideas as an inevitable result of the education they had been receiving and perfectly unconscious of the great service that the British Government had done India in restoring order and giving law and security to the country, both internal and external. The generations that had known and felt the importance of that great

boon had, in their utmost gratitude for the same, made no further demand from the rulers; but their offspring born under conditions so perfectly changed, conditions in which law and order had become a matter of ordinary, every-day life, could not rest content with admiration for a thing the reverse of which they had never known. They, therefore, necessarily wanted a Government in the interests of their country which, unfortunately, recent events had not justified. Their faith in the justice of the British rule had come to be shaken and British statesmanship required to conciliate them and prevent a further widening of the gulf by associating the educated classes more and more with the Government of their country. The victory of Japan over Russia had filled the whole of Asia with a new impulse to which India could not fail to give a response. The "New spirit" gathering strength in India every day or every hour must be brought to work in line with the Government; and any methods of repressing it would only aggravate the mischief. "What the country needs at this moment above every thing 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." Lord Minto received the suggestions of Gokhale in a most sympathetic manner—befitting the head of a government which is surrounded on all sides by intricate machinery—the head who is minded to learn something beyond the 'infallible' official

expression ; and if no reason was given to raise the popular expectation very high, there was, at least, the satisfaction that no sting was conveyed to those who had *bona fide* interests in the welfare of their country, much as the bureaucracy might try to belittle them. Lord Minto's reference to Gokhale's speech on this occasion was quite characteristic of that open-minded statesman :—" I have listened to all he (Mr. Gokhale) has said with the respect due to one who very eloquently represents the advanced views of a section of the Indian people—views, which though we may perhaps often disagree with, are the result of the study of the Indian political life of to-day and of a patriotic desire to share in the administration of public affairs—views which I shall be always ready to listen to and discuss."

The Partition of Bengal had, in itself, been a parent of deep discontent and popular upheaval ; but the repressive policy of Sir J. B. ~~Am~~ Lyde Fuller's administration of the newly created Province of the Eastern Bengal and Assam outdid every conceivable hardship borne by the governed under a civilized rule. A marked contrast to his was manifested by the administration of Sir Andrew Fraser in the Old Province of Bengal, who—whatever criticism might be directed against some of his measures—had proved himself to be a patient and cool-headed officer. More had been done by six months of Sir B. Fuller's government to discredit the character of British rule in India than by all the denunciations of the worst critics, Indian and European, of that rule, during a hundred years. Measure after measure was taken by him against popular liberties and the leaders of the people, men of high position in India, had been studiously insulted by him. He had declared a fierce crusade

against the school-boys of the place. To root out what was called the "disaffection" of the people, he must, first, extinguish all the future hope of his province! Seven hundred boys had been expelled from the schools on account of their simply singing the national song ("Bande mataram") or being present at "Swadeshi" meetings. Not wishing to stop there, he had, in several cases, directed criminal proceedings against these tender lads, many of whom were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment or were heavily fined. Next, the military and punitive police was quartered on the people of Barisal and other places, which was only removed on the humane interference of the Viceroy. The "*Weekly Chronicle*" of Assam was maltreated, and public meetings of every character were dispersed. People were not allowed to meet even on private grounds. Then came the prohibition of street processions and the singing of the beautiful national song. Nowhere had it been alleged that the meetings had resulted in any breach of the peace by those who took part in them. The high-handedness of the police was, perhaps, the only element of disorder. On the 14th of April 1906 took place the tragic event of the cowardly, brutal and entirely unprovoked assault by the police on the delegates assembled from different parts of Bengal to hold their annual Provincial Conference at Barisal, as had been fixed at their last sittings held in Mymensing. The unlawful arrest of India's great leader Babu Surendra Nath Banerjee, the heartless brutality of Mr. Emerson, the District Magistrate of Barisal in dealing with him, the dismissal of the complaints of the delegates about police assault as frivolous, though no enquiry was held, and gravest of all—the dispersal by force of a constitutional gathering like the Provincial Conference—all these have formed by themselves a trying

episode in the life of Bengal which nobody can contemplate even at this distant date without heart-felt regret that the official class sometimes loses its head. Bengal was deeply agitated; and every hour the danger of the position was increasing—on one side the official perverseness to put down every imaginary or real suffering by vigorous repression, and, on the other, the popular anger developing the creed of hostility against the rulers and preaching the gospel of abstaining from every thing foreign.

Exactly on the tragic day when Barisal and therefore all Bengal were having their patience tried to the utmost, Gokhale had left the shores of Bombay once again for England, this time to represent India's needs before the Home Government, with a view to a speedy cure of the disease that was afflicting the body politic of his motherland. At Marseilles he got the first news of the disturbances in Bengal, and by the time he reached London, he found a full account of the events in the papers there. According to a telegram in the *Daily News*, 142 public meetings of protest had been already held in the different provinces, and more were being held every day. In some of those meetings public passions had risen so high as to find a parallel for the arrest and persecution of Babu Surendra Nath on Easter Day, in the mock judicial trial of Jesus Christ and the Crucifix. Gokhale found himself confronted with demands from people in England to give them his own view of the situation in Eastern Bengal. The last four months before his departure from India he had spent entirely in Calcutta and some other parts of Bengal, and there had found extensive opportunities to study the discontent that the Partition of Bengal had occasioned and the maladministration of Sir B. Fuller had intensified.

The incidents connected with the memorable 14th of April 1906 had, in his opinion, subjected Indians in Bengal to an outrage unparalleled in the annals of British rule in India ; and he would go further and say that unless the wrong that had been done was promptly set right, it would be difficult for his countrymen to maintain the same relations with the authorities that they had maintained so long. He, therefore, thought that we had a right to demand and that it was the duty of the Government to grant a searching and independent enquiry into the whole affair. If the enquiry showed that the facts were substantially as they had been reported in the papers, we would be entitled to ask, not only that the officials who were immediately responsible for the outrage should be properly punished, but also that Sir. B. Fuller, who had done more than any man in recent years to bring British rule into evil repute with the people, should be removed from his present office ; for it was impossible, after what had happened, for the people of Eastern Bengal and Assam to have any thing to do with their present ruler. The Government might send him anywhere else, but Bengal was clearly not the Province for him. The agitation to which Gokhale lent the best of his thought as a moderate, had its desirable effect ; and the Government of Lord Minto finding it impossible to let Sir B. Fuller have his way were obliged to accept his resignation.

The moderation and reasonableness of Gokhale's thought and speech even on occasions permitting a legitimate rousing of popular feeling stands out in admirable relief. Mr. Ranade's lessons that the utmost care should be taken to safely pilot the roused masses was never for once even lost sight of. On his occasion he impressed upon all the necessity of

keeping their heads and of stating what they had to state with a due sense of restraint. Care must be taken not to make any wholesale charges against the British Government in India on the strength of the discreditable proceedings in Eastern Bengal—only one out of the seven Provinces, while other Provincial Governments had done nothing to be bracketted with the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam. He further thought it fair to mention that, in his opinion, the Viceroy of India could not be in sympathy with his Lieutenant in the matter. And so, indeed, it soon proved to be. People who expressed their disappointment that the accession of Lord Morley to the office of the Secretary of State for India had so far produced no change for the better in Indian administration were reminded that he had been at the India Office for only five months and till he had had time enough to grasp problems affecting a vast country, so far off, and so dissimilar to his own and one that he had never visited, no one could reasonably expect him to override officials on the spot in India and their representatives—the members of the India Council—on the strength of his sympathies alone. With a sincere faith in Lord Morley's mission Gokhale only wished everybody to let him have fair play and abstain from any hasty pronouncement of opinion on his administration. "We must, of course, be firm, and we must be watchful, and I, for one, am expectant." True enough, the expectations were quite realised and no thoughtful Indian can now reproach Lord Morley with what he, in his wisdom, thought fit to allow us at a critical juncture of our history.

Gokhale's mission in England on this occasion had been mainly confined to rousing the official

mind to a sense of responsibility towards India; and the points he urged on them had been briefly touched upon by him in his Presidential Address from the Congress platform. His intimate relations with Sir William Wedderburn helped him to gain interviews with Lord Morley himself, and it is said he succeeded in impressing upon the minds of several oligarchs of the British Government the need of revising the system of administration in India in consonance with the "new spirit" in the country. But important changes are not effected in a day and without a thorough sifting. References and despatches and minutes of a voluminous character had to be worked through, before the scheme known as the Minto-Morley Reforms came to be enforced; and Gokhale found it necessary to see Lord Morley once more before the Reform scheme was matured. As a responsible leader of Indian thought, therefore, he could not afford to stay away all the time in England, when his house in India was not altogether in order, and when new currents of an undesirable character were threatening to create a schism among the leaders themselves. The Congress for the year 1906 had been fixed for Calcutta, as there the political pulse was beating high; and the Grand Old Man of India—Mr. Dada-bhoy Nowroji—was for the third time elected President. Old age and strenuous work for his motherland had severely affected his health: and but for the stormy times ahead requiring the soothing tactics of a venerated soul, he should not have been troubled. As it was, the new cult was beginning to undermine all the noble instincts of respect and admiration for the accredited leaders of moderate thought who had pinned their faith to the British Raj, and who had believed the destinies

of India to be indissolubly linked with the British Empire, but who at the same time unequivocally held the goal of self-government for India within the Empire as their ideal. Mr. Dadabhoy's physical condition was unequal to the strain inevitable in the meetings of the subjects-committee; and practically all that work fell on Gokhale's shoulders. The Old man's voice was too feeble to be heard in that vast assembly and Gokhale had, therefore, to read his speech. The subjects-committee had determined to carry Resolutions on Home Rule or 'Swarajya' and 'boycott' of English goods; but when one speaker under the latter Resolution advocated 'boycotting' every thing English including schools, Law courts, etc. Gokhale unable to restrain himself, rose and objected to a preaching of this dangerous gospel from the Congress platform. It was evident that the split in the Camp was coming. The Calcutta Congress of 1906, though terminating its sittings in an atmosphere of calm, gave ample room for uneasiness to sensitive souls of the type of Gokhale who would give everything to see an united front for the demands of the country. *

After all, the extremist was in our midst. The constitutional method of getting 'Swaraj,' bit by bit, from our governors was in bad odour with him. "We must work out our own salvation, independent of the Government," was his foolish and wild cry. As yet, his programme of activity was confined only to 'boycott' with its necessary accompaniment of furiously hating the Englishman and everything English. The younger generation in schools and colleges responded to this dangerous propaganda even more promptly; and though their numbers were miserably small, the stir they made in the country,

in a very short time, was already alarming. What was wanting in numerical strength was more than made up by the intensity and the rapidity with which they were spreading this new thought. An open contempt for our rulers and for everything they were doing for the country was corroding the minds of the impulsive youth and the mob. So long as the differences were confined to a reasonable discussion of questions among the leaders themselves, there was every hope that the moderates would effect a compromise; but when the cry was taken up with a juvenile impulse and a mob-fury, the moderate found it difficult to obtain a hearing. Gokhale at once saw the signs of the times and with a stentorian voice tried to produce a counter effect by calling the young and the old to hold to the old gospel never to lose faith in the British sense of justice and at the same time to move onward with a persistent demand for the redress of our grievances.

The beginning of the year 1907 saw him touring in several parts of India—specially Northern India, with a view to addressing students and other popular bodies on a recognition of true ideas of the salvation of the mother country. It was by no means an easy affair to root out the mischief created by the Extremist: (Even the Herculean powers of Gokhale were tasked to the utmost to carry conviction to those of little faith whose weak wills had been captured by the glamour of a millenium.) In Gokhale's creed there was no royal road to success. The actual conditions of India needed to be sternly faced. On the one hand was a strong bureaucracy working itself to death for the good administration of the Country, though according to

its own ideas, and, on the other, the vast mass of the people of the country lying inert and apathetic, divided and sub-divided, plunged in abject poverty and ignorance, and wedded to usages and institutions which could promote no vigorous, sustained or combined action for purposes of progress. Between these two stood the educated class, steadily growing in numbers and in knowledge of the needs of the situation. On this class of India rested all the responsibility of the situation. Though self Government within the Empire was unequivocally our goal, the immediate means and methods for obtaining it must be based on a frank recognition of constitutional agitation, without which chaos and anarchy must produce their horrors in the land. The question that must be driven home to every thoughtful man was whether the lawful means of making the Government conscious of our wants had failed. Gokhale thought that not even a thousandth part of the possibilities of real constitutional agitation had yet been exhausted; and the peculiarly unfavourable conditions of the country itself could point to no other way for progress. It was only by successive steps, each perhaps a small one in itself, and not by any sudden or violent outburst that the goal was likely to be reached. Conflicting interests had to be reconciled; the advance was on unfamiliar lines and no useful purpose would be served by ignoring obvious limitations. Then, again, is our own house in order? The Hindu must learn to coalesce with the Mahomedan and every other minority; the individual must develop a stronger and higher type of character; and an intense feeling of nationality must be solidly cultivated by the whole country. These are some of the preliminary conditions we have to fulfil before we can demand

from our British rulers our cherished object. Nation-building is nowhere an easy task; but in India it is beset with difficulties of a very formidable character which would tax to the uttermost all our patience, all our resources, and all our devotion. Failures must not discourage us, for out of them will come the strength which in the end will accomplish great tasks.

While Gokhale was busy touring through the greater part of Northern India, addressing large bodies on the necessity of restrained action and speech and the recognition of our true position in politics as well as economics, Bombay was convulsed by the movement of a caucus formed by Mr. Harrison, Accountant-General of Bombay, and others to prevent Sir P. M. Mehta from being elected by the Justices of the Peace to the Municipal Corporation. A representation against the fairness and validity of the election was sent by certain members of the Legislative Council to the Government of Bombay, but the Government sent them a curt reply refusing to interfere. Public surprise and indignation were great and found expression at a large meeting held at Madhavbag on the 7th of April 1907. The honour of taking the chair was given to Gokhale, though he was not a citizen of Bombay. On this occasion he dwelt upon some large questions of policy, though the matter concerned only a Municipal election. Was it right that the enormous power which English officials necessarily wielded in this country under the present system of administration, should be employed to interfere with the freedom of popular elections, and to reduce still further the small measure of local self-government which had so far been conceded to the people; and whether the

Government, instead of putting down such abuse of official position and influence, was to countenance it publicly? The Municipal and Local Boards' Administration formed the initial rungs of the ladder of self-government, as Lord Minto had recently put it; and these must be carefully held before we could expect to find ourselves on higher rungs. How was that possible if these mean practices of official cliques were added to other difficulties? When Mr. Harrison was about to start on this campaign, he might well have remembered that since members of the Indian Civil Service had a monopoly of all administrative power in the country there was no reason why they should grudge to Indians possessing ability and character not less high than their own, these small fields that alone had so far been thrown open to them. Sir Pherozsha's position in the Bombay Corporation was without a parallel in India, but a close parallel to it could be seen in the mighty influence exercised by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham, and was not dissimilar to the position occupied by Lord Palmerston for many years in Whig England, and later by Gladstone in the Counsels of the Liberal Party. For the Government of Bombay to say that the officials interfered only in their private capacity, was something unintelligible to the public; and for them to say that they knew nothing of the combinations formed by the officials, was, Nelson-like, to put the glass to the blind eye; for the intense excitement caused by the activity of the caucus, the extraordinary and unparalleled unanimity with which Indian papers of all shades of opinion were writing day after day and week after week, should have impressed on the Government the necessity of pulling up its officers promptly before harm had been irrevocably done.

In the following month of May, a great part of the Punjab was agitated by the introduction of the Punjab Colonization Act passed by the Government of India without consulting the wishes of the people but afterwards withdrawn in deference to the popular demand. In the meantime a great commotion took place, and Rawalpindi, Lahore and some other towns were scenes of anarchy in which the aggrieved stalwart peasant figured most prominently. In their nervousness the Local Government, tracing all unrest to the teachings of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh, made the Government of India deport these two gentlemen under an obsolete Regulation of the year 1818. The indignation of the people at the injustice done to men against whom nothing was proved was such that for a while it appeared as if the Punjab] was about to revolt. It was rightly felt that to deport men without a trial was a blot upon the fair name of British Justice. The Regulation of 1818 was passed at a time when England had not established herself on Indian soil. It was a measure to suit the exigencies of those times. To revive it under conditions vastly different was to violate every cannon of civilised jurisprudence. If the men were guilty, why were they not put on their trial? "Reasons of State" may be a convenient refuge, but they will not alter public opinion on the subject. The Indian public was simply shocked when this incident was closely followed by an ordinance of the Government of India restricting the right of public meeting. The duration of a government ordinance being only six months, the Government of India took an opportunity even during their stay in Simla to call a meeting of the Legislative Council to pass the Seditious Meetings' Act as a tentative measure for three years. The non-official members found it inconvenient to attend:

but Gokhale, in company with Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, made a firm stand against the passage of this Bill. If there was sedition in the land, the surest way to prevent it was to take away the matter of it, as Bacon would put it. "For if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire." (Bacon's Essays). Gokhale, therefore, urged the Government rather to adopt a policy of winning confidence of the people that had been rudely shaken by the measures of the last Government. The proposed measure while adding to the powers of vexation with which the Police was already too well armed, was likely to drive discontent deeper into the soil by placing an unreasonable check on the safety-valve of public opinion, "for he that turneth the humours back, and maketh the wound bleed inwards, endangereth malign ulcers and pernicious imposthumations" (Bacon). The Hon. Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh took no less pains to make the Government realize the mischief of the measure, but the Home Member thinking that cheap notoriety was the food of the seditionist comforted himself with a belief that reducing his occasions for addressing raw and impulsive youths was the only way of reducing him. Later events, however, proved the legitimacy of the contentions of the non-official opponents of the measure.

In the course of his speech delivered on the occasion of the Budget discussion for the year 1907, Gokhale had earnestly besought the Government of Lord Minto to recognize the necessity of effecting an early change in the policy of British administration in India with a view to win back the lost confidence

of the Indian middle classes. Their growing estrangement could only be prevented from sowing further mischief by the prompt granting of substantial concessions to popular clamour. The times had changed. The Englishman who imagined that India could be governed much longer on the same lines as in the past, and the Indian who thought that he must seek a destiny for his country outside this Empire, of which now, for better, for worse, we are a part - both alike showed an inadequate appreciation of the realities of the present situation. The Civil Service of the Country must be made to recognize the virtue and importance of the Peoples' association in the rule. Official conservatism and bureaucratic reluctance to part with power must be brought to realize the changed conditions. The attitude of the public mind towards the Government 'opinion,' as Burke called it, being of greater importance than laws or executive power in maintaining order - had undergone a steady, and of late years even a rapid change. It was the imperative duty of the Government to seek to regain its former influence. Lord Minto, in his presidential remarks on that occasion, cordially agreed with Gokhale in thinking that something must be done to recover the lost ground, and hoped that measures of a fairly comprehensive character would soon be announced. The importance of the charges contemplated and the inevitable slowness of despatch under the existing machinery delayed the publication of the scheme; and next year Gokhale was again obliged to urge upon the Government the necessity of using expedition in a matter which the whole country was awaiting with breathless anxiety. In the meantime the situation had grown from bad to worse and the Government had been obliged to put down all disorder with an iron hand. But, said

Gokhale, what the situation really required was not the policeman's baton or the soldier's bayonet, but the statesman's insight, wisdom and courage. The people must be enabled to feel that *their* interests were, if not the only consideration, at any rate, the main consideration which weighed with the Government, and this could only be brought about by a radical change in the spirit of the administration. "And, my Lord, let not the words 'too late' be written on every one of them (the reforms). For while the Government stands considering, hesitating, receding, debating within itself, 'to grant or not to grant, that is the question'—opportunities rush past it which can never be recalled. And the moving finger writes and having writ, moves on!"

The Reform Despatch in its tentative form had been published and submitted to the Local Governments for opinion; and Lord Minto therefore could not appreciate the remarks of Gokhale that the Government had been at any time receding. According to him they had advanced but not receded, they had shown no hesitation and want of appreciation of the ambitions of the people of India; and he had every hope that when the Council next assembled, measures going far to meet the aspirations of those who had the welfare of the Indian people at heart would be ready for legislation. It was, once again, Gokhale's great endeavour to get the Reforms so shaped as to be acceptable to the 'moderate' Indian. The public had offered very scathing criticism on the proposed changes as first announced; and Gokhale thought it incumbent on him to travel to England and personally explain to Lord Morley the desired improvements. His interviews with the Secretary of State, the details of which are a sealed book to the public, are generally

known to have produced a very agreeable effect; and Lord Morley himself acknowledged that Gokhale had a clear-cut plan to give, against which nothing could be objected in point of the sobriety of its demands. Sir William Wedderburn refers to these interviews and gives a glowing tribute to Gokhale's wonderful power of producing an impression in England. "In no case did he fail to produce a profound and favourable impression by the accuracy of his information and the cogency of his arguments. At personal interviews he was equally successful. To the credit of British Statesmen of all parties, it must be recorded that they have all been willing to give a hearing to Mr. Gokhale, and it is no secret that, as Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley accorded to him prolonged interviews, at which he set forth fully the needs and aspirations of the Indian people. The information thus imparted influenced to a small degree the concessions granted in the Morley-Minto reforms." (From the *Daily News*).

The sittings of the National Congress at Surat in 1907 had ended in a fiasco on account of the organised disorder created by the extremists. In the Subjects-Committee and in every constitutional body they had been defeated in their object of carrying resolutions urging extremism in Indian politics; therefore, to produce a dead lock in the proceedings of the Congress they had recourse to rowdyism in the very Congress pandal. The President, Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, made the utmost efforts to make himself heard; but at every attempt to speak he found himself confronted with wild clapping and mob-cries raised by the followers of Mr. Tilak. In order to bring about an understanding among the delegates, Gokhale moved from tent to tent; and though many

times insulted by worthless tyros who were incapable of anything but a slavish following of the dangerous gospel held out by the extremist leaders, he patiently put up with every kind of indignity. In his heart of hearts he was grievously saddened to see this poison spread in the political atmosphere of India, and resolved further to set it right at any personal sacrifice. The extremist school had drawn into its camp able men like Messrs. Bipin Chandra Pal and Arvindo Ghosh; and the irresistible logic of the one and the sublime mysticism of the other were, unfortunately, enlisted in a cause bound to set back the hands of the clock of political progress. Along with profiting from the great intellectual and spiritual powers of the best exponents of this camp, the younger generation found their mind diseased by the influence of lessons in the direction of martyrdom for the salvation of the country. The open air meeting gave place to secret nocturnal gatherings of an informal character, and anarchism soon made itself felt in the land in the shape of the dastardly bomb. If the Government very rightly spared no pains to root out this evil by measures of repression, Gokhale tried his best to convert the misguided youths of the country to the path of moderation. It was an undoubted fact that the hesitating moderate who had absolutely no sympathy with political crime but who was about to lose faith in the British sense of justice at once rallied round the Government as soon as the Reforms were announced. On one point, however, Gokhale's utmost powers of moderation were called forth. The Hindu-Mahomedan tension, already growing at an alarming pace, reached the utmost limit when the Hindus found their Mahomedan brethren favoured a little more than themselves under the Reforms Scheme. Gokhale had made it perfectly clear in

his political creed that the interests of the minorities must be safe-guarded to the utmost; and though he now found that Lord Morley had given his Mahomedan friends even more than what Lord Minto had at first proposed or than what he himself had thought legitimate, he refused to have any quarrel with what they had actually received. He was never weary of reminding his Hindu brothers that the present political position of the country did not allow them to wrangle among themselves: Hindus and Mahomedans together even were too few to obtain from the Government all that they wished for the amelioration of the country. This tone of moderation was very much appreciated by the enlightened Mahomedans who, to accord them full justice recognised in Gokhale a leader of all India regardless of any particular creed or caste and therefore a majority of them unswervingly supported him in his work on the Supreme Council and outside.

The pith and substance of the Reform were the enlarged Legislative Councils all over India; and with the Indian element fairly well represented on the Supreme Council Gokhale now felt himself in his element. The honour of 'leading' them was ungrudgingly accorded to his supreme ability, judicious mind, tactful statesmanship and tireless industry. Discussions on the 'budget' came to be more substantial. Under the old order when the Budget was submitted to the members their essays included every possible comment on every conceivable department of administration and were delivered in the course of one day; and all that the Government profited by these written monuments of eloquence was to introduce some changes next year, if they were minded so to do. The Act of 1909 allowed

members to give notice to move resolutions on the various items of the Budget mainly upon questions of expenditure and financial arrangements with the provinces, though nothing barred them from proposing any alteration in taxation or the raising of a new loan. Gokhale's undoubted experience in Indian Finance was, under the new procedure, used by him to the utmost in moving resolutions of a very reasonable character, though to make the Government agree to them was often found very difficult. He never wantonly pressed for a division: he knew that the Government majority in the Council made impossible for a non-official to carry his measure if the Government were not with him. So great was his sense of responsibility under the improved position that he would not even wish for a majority with him, if the result was likely to affect the 'prestige' of the Government which, in his eye was to be jealously guarded by non-officials as well as officials in the present position of Indian politics. With one thing, however, he waged relentless war; and that was the undesirable growth of expenditure for the administration of a poor country like India. He moved several resolutions bearing on this subject wholly or in parts, an account of which is reserved for the chapter on 'Finance.'

By the new arrangements of things, members were at liberty to move resolutions on general points of administration as well; and Gokhale took the earliest opportunity to place before the Government the need of recognising the principle of the introduction of free and compulsory primary education into the country. Early in the year 1910 he moved a resolution on the subject asking the Government to have the whole question threshed out

by the appointment of a Commission for this purpose. At the same time he suggested that the vital importance of education both to the people and the Government necessitated the creation of a separate portfolio for education instead of allowing it to rub shoulders with police, jails, law courts, explosives and a number of other heterogeneous affairs—all grouped under the argus-eyed Home Minister. His first suggestion was not adopted by the Government, though Gokhale had reason to be satisfied with an assurance that early attention would be paid to it in a departmental manner. The Education Department, indeed, was very soon created. Next year about the same time Gokhale took the bold step of asking leave to move a *bill* in favour of recognising the principle of free and compulsory primary education to be introduced gradually and tentatively into the land. The Council offered abundant expressions of sympathy and it was thought best by every one, including the members of the Government that the bill be taken into consideration at some future date, and the country and the Local Governments be in the interval asked to express themselves on the advisability or otherwise of recognising this principle. Gokhale's Education Bill was only of a permissive character, i. e. the local bodies wanting to have the principle of compulsion applied to them must first satisfy certain conditions, e. g. that they had already a good percentage of school-going children in attendance at school and also that they were able to bear a part of the financial burden. Even with these conditions in their favour, it was reserved to the Local Government to grant them permission to enforce compulsion on all; and the Local Government was at liberty to withhold it, if in their view the situation was not as good as it had

been represented to them. In the present condition of India the Bill, if passed, would for a long time be applicable only to cities of an advanced type, because the minimum percentage of attendance at school required by the Bill could only be shown by them. Altogether the Bill was hedged with so many safeguards and attenuating conditions that no body could attribute to it any revolutionary taint. The reception it obtained in the country was of a mixed character. The official opinion was in some cases hostile and in many non-committal; very few received it enthusiastically. The non-official bodies, on the whole, gave it a warmer welcome; but they too were nervous over the question of finding a part of the funds which was a necessary part of Gokhale's scheme. The Hon. mover himself did much to gain it a favourable reception. This year he toured through many parts of India, mainly with a view to directly explaining what his bill meant and what enormous limitations he had voluntarily put upon the proposed measure. His magnetic presence did 'hypnotise' many local bodies, as Sir Harcourt Butler said; but when in March 1912 he moved for leave to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, the Government found themselves unable to proceed with the measure, not because they had any quarrel with the Principle of spreading education far and wide, but because they believed that the object was not likely to be served by the means proposed by the mover. The member in charge, of the Education, Folio had to frankly recognise the financial inability of the Government to cope with what the Bill required the State to do; and however harmlessly tentative it might appear on paper, the Government must be prepared to find money enough, as soon as they had accepted the Principle. Gokhale was somewhat

disappointed at the opposition given to the Bill even by some of the non-official members who, he thought were ranged on his side and whose support he cherished the most and expected chiefly to give moral strength to non-official demands of a very moderate nature. 'On the stepping-stone of its dead self,' will the Bill rise again and again, was the hope with which he concluded his utterances on this Bill in the Supreme Legislative Council. His whole soul seemed to be in this work; and though defeated, he had the highest satisfaction that he had done his best to indicate the lines of work which future generations must some day follow successfully. A detailed account of the rationale of the Bill and the points of opposition against it have all been put in a separate Chapter on 'Gokhale's Fight for Education.'

The miserable lot of the Indian settlers in South Africa had become a sore-point both with the people and the Government of India; and the dignified and constitutional resistance that that small band of settlers was offering against all the indignities they were subjected to in that part of the British Empire had cast a halo of immortal glory round their leader—the great passive resister, Mr. Gandhi. The Asiatic Registration Act followed by the Immigration Act had subjected the ex-indentured and independently settled Indian population in the land to an endless catalogue of hardships, while the lot of the indentured cooly was inconceivably bad. The Indian population of various creeds and castes formed themselves into a solid body insisting that they would much prefer suffering imprisonment to a tame submission to the unjust Acts against the Asiatics passed by the Union Government. Mr. Gandhi and his brave band of passive resisters had a clear-cut

scheme of the rights they insisted on having; and the South African Government was soon faced with the difficulty of finding room in their jails for so many breakers of their unjust law. Tales of heroic suffering the passive resisters had to endure in the prison-houses were soon spread throughout India and the greater part of the British Empire; and protest meetings held in all parts of this country without any distinction of caste or colour passed resolutions of sympathy with the aggrieved and of request to the Viceroy to bring the Union Government to their senses or cut off their supply of Indian indentured labour and subject them to various other disabilities in India. "The continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa," formed the text of resolution moved by Gokhale in 1911, in the Supreme Legislative Council; and both officials as well as non-officials were agreed on seeing justice done to the Indians in South Africa. It was formally moved by this Leader of Indian Opinion that indentured Labour from India be no more sent to South Africa; and the Government of Lord Hardinge promised to give it their best consideration. The evil in no way abating, he had once again to move a similar proposition in the following year, and urge the Indian Government to use despatch. Not content with working from a distance, Gokhale saw the Secretary of State for India in person on this point and arranged with the Colonial Office to interview the Union Government in order to effect a compromise, if possible, and to see the situation for himself. It seems at first the Home Government would not accede to his request, but the moderateness of Gokhale and the reasonableness of the Union Government enabled them to send him as a guest who was to be given facilities for his mission. Mr. Gandhi and

his followers were overjoyed to find the leader of Indian thought in their midst, and the reception given to him by the Indian populace was quite princely. At every railway station that he touched during his journey through South Africa, the platform and the railway buildings were tastefully decorated with colours and buntings; and the local officials in a majority of cases, strangely enough, did not lag behind the Indians in this demonstration. For Gokhale's convenience the Union Government placed a first class railway car at his disposal for the long journey from Pretoria to Cape Town with a free choice to determine his points of halt on the way. They were even prepared to take him as a State guest which, however, Mr. Gandhi would not allow, because Gokhale was rather to be the guest of the Indian people. The suavity of Gokhale's manners, the moderation and sweetness of his speech and the vast reputation behind him,—all contributed to obtain for him from the Union officials a reception which, under ordinary conditions, it will be well-nigh impossible for an Indian to obtain. The whole change was aptly put by Mr. Gandhi as "Gokhale atmosphere." At various important centres on the way like Durban and Johannesburg banquets of a mixed nature were organised and the mayors of these different towns were requested to take the chair. Gokhale, as the principal guest on these occasions, made fitting reply to the toast proposed to his health. In the course of these utterances, which were duly recorded in all the Union papers, he displayed his personality; and it appeared impossible to refute him in his advocacy of the cause of Indian subjects of His Britannic Majesty. The Mayors and with them the enlightened European audience were soon converted to his views, and every body began to wonder why better treatment

should not be accorded to the Indian in South Africa. To quote the words of Mr. Paranjape, "People in South Africa were wonder-struck at the personality of Gokhale and naturally came to consider whether they were not wrong in treating the inhabitants of a country which could produce a man equal to their best in brains but only wearing a turban instead of a hat, like helots and slaves." The impression that he had thus created in the country had, so to say, already reached the Union Government itself; and it seems that they had made up their mind to give him what he wanted for the Indians even before he had seen them. The maximum and the minimum that the passive resisters demanded had been duly placed in his hands by Mr. Gandhi; this he at first submitted, and then, by the way, spoke of the severe hardship of the £3 poll-tax levied on all Asiatic Males as well as Females. General Smutts and General Botha were so much in a giving vein that they agreed to find some means to mitigate even this evil. Their Parliament was soon to assemble and they had every hope that Gokhale's representation would bear solid fruit. For a while things appeared to have a rosy hue and the end of our Indian brothers' woes seemed to be within sight. But no sooner had Gokhale turned his back on south Africa and gone to India, than all this tacit understanding broke down. The Union Government could do nothing; and this time the passive resisters added to their already long list of grievances the insult given to their national representative. And as the cause was given a national turn by Mr. Gandhi, no hesitation was made in appealing to the Indentured Coolies as well to join the movement. As a result of this, the Colonial mines and farms were deserted; riots broke out in various parts of Pretoria, Natal and Orange Free States;

and to crown all, the Asiatic Marriage Law passed a ban of mistressship on all Asiatic women who had been duly tied to their husbands in wedlock, a new imposition created by law was complied with. The whole agitation now burst into a conflagration; and as the 'woman' to protect her inviolable rights joined the passive resisters, a new phase was given to the movement. Gokhale, who had been greatly pained at finding the Union Government unable to keep their promise, had even when in England kept himself in close touch with Mr. Gandhi about the new aspect of the situation; and his heart bled to hear that thousands of Indians had vowed to go any length only to see the engagement given to their leader kept; and towards the end of 1913 when the 'Woman' was also dragged in, he was in India; and though in an utterly broken state of health, he considered it his sacred duty to have meetings organised, and funds raised in all parts of India to help the passive resisters in their noble work. Never before did India see such an united expression of indignation proceeding from all classes of people in the country. The agitation was not confined to the male folk alone; Indian womanhood had been insulted; and meetings of protest were held by women as well, and funds were freely subscribed by them to cheer Mrs. Gandhi and her sisters engaged in their righteous fight. The Punjab had just witnessed phenomenal failures in its indigenous Banking concern; and when Gokhale informed Lala Lajpat Rai that the share to be borne by the Punjab public had been fixed at £2,000, he was told that not even Rs. 2,000 could be subscribed on account of the recent misery in the land. Gokhale, though completely broken down in health—so much so that the slightest exertion was a heavy strain on him, had to undergo

the tedious journey to Lahore to appeal to the people personally for funds. The electric currents did their work; and Punjab responded far more generously than even the most sanguine expectations of Gokhale himself had anticipated. Thanks to the statesmanship of the ruling Viceroy—Lord Hardinge—who piloted us in this most trying situation, his tactful dealings with the Union Government were largely responsible for the removal of the sore-points of the situation. A commission of enquiry was appointed by the Union Government to which Sir Benjamin Robertson was attached by the Government of India; and very soon after their report some remedial legislation was carried through the South African assembly, which has saved situation. This so far satisfactory ending of an event that had given rise to much heart-burning and strong passions among the Indians brings Mr. Gandhi back to India, his mission in South Africa having been finished. For India and for the immediate purposes of this memoir it is noteworthy that this great conflict brought two mighty souls like Gokhale and Mr. Gandhi together; and the first was never tired of paying the utmost homage to the will-power and spiritual force of the friend who has survived him, while the other lives to do the greatest honour to the departed soul by perpetuating his memory by strengthening the Servants of India Society. His campaign to collect funds for the same is just now engaging the attention of India.

While Gokhale was still in South Africa, a Commission had been appointed by the Home Government to consider the question of the public services in India and to see how far Indians could be given further opportunities of occupying places of trust and responsibility in their country. Gokhale was

number of members on this Commission in Company
 form a solid body of Indians. To make up for the
 itself, he had literally to pour out his blood.
 There is no doubt that few could have been found
 in India more competent than Gokhale to obtain
 justice for his countrymen. From very early times
 he had devoted his careful attention to the study of
 this question in all its aspects. In 1892 he had moved
 a resolution from the Congress platform expressing
 deep regret at the resolution of the Government of
 India on the Report of the Aitchison Public Service
 Commission held in 1887; and in 1894 again he spoke
 from the same platform supporting the resolution in
 favour of simultaneous Civil Service Examinations;
 times out of number he has broken state of health; he
 statistics of his country, asked and obtained
 illustrating the meagre position of Indians
 in the various departments of the Civil Administration
 of this country; and on the strength of those
 figures he was able to rouse the conscience of
 England to the injustice done to the educated and
 able Indian middle classes. On the 17th of March
 1911 the Hon. Mr. Subba Rao moved a Resolution in
 the Supreme Legislative Council, 'That this Council
 recommends that a mixed Commission consisting of
 officials and non-officials be appointed to consider
 the claims of Indians to higher and more extensive
 employment in the public Service connected with the
 Civil Administration of the country.' Gokhale paid
 a tribute of praise to the honourable mover who had
 evidently given his best thought to this vexed
 question and in supporting the resolution put
 the whole case for the Indians in his peculiarly
 charming fashion.

On this occasion he offered four tests by which it could be judged whether the Government of India was continuously progressive. The first, namely, the measures adopted by it for the moral and material improvement of the mass of the people, had only recently engaged their best attention, inasmuch as education, sanitation, and industrial development and agriculture had now been given the forefront in their schemes. The second test to be applied was what steps the Government had taken to give us a larger share in the administration of our local affairs—on Municipalities and Local Boards. In this connection, too, there was a hopeful outlook created by the result of the Decentralization Commissions' labours, as it was expected that an advance would soon be made in the direction of Local Self-Government. The third test was the extent of popular representation to the Councils and the powers given them in helping the Government to shape policies; and here, again, an important advance had been already made and for some time, therefore, the question might rest there. But the fourth test, namely, how far Indians were admitted into the ranks of the public service, presented a gloomy situation which the Government should take early steps to improve. A continuously progressive government, as the Government of India has to be, cannot afford to rest on whatever it has done in the past in any one of these directions; but upon their achievements in the direction of employing Indian agency in the public Service of India, even the Government cannot look with any complacency. In 1833 the British Nation of its own accord gave us a noble pledge that there should be no distinction of race in making appointments to the public service in this country. In 1854, again, while abolishing the old Haileybury

system and introducing competitive methods for recruiting men for the Indian Civil Service equal chances were supposed to be given to all, irrespective of colour, creed or race. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 was the next landmark, quickly followed by the appointment of a Committee by the Secretary of State in 1861 to see what justice could be done to indigenous employment. Throughout this time, it was the English conscience more than any demand from India that was working for us. When the Act of 1870 was passed there was some public opinion here, and a few Indians—notably Mr. Dadabhoi Nawroji—had been agitating in England for the admission of Indians to high office; but even then the main part of the work had been done by the English friends of Indian aspirations. At the next landmark, namely, the time of the appointment of the Public Service Commission of 1886, the position had much altered. By that time a large educated class had come into existence, and they keenly felt their exclusion from the higher ranks of the Public Service. The findings of the Commission, particularly the undesirable separation of services into the Imperial and the Provincial were in a great measure criticised; but the action of the Government of India in cutting down the number of appointments recommended by the Commission was bitterly resented by the thinking part of India. Gokhale based his opposition to the system prevailing ever after that on three grounds:—

- (i) The artificial division between the Imperial and the Provincial services, particularly in the Educational and Public Works Departments.
- (ii) the smallness of Indians employed in higher places of trust and responsibility.
- (iii) the system of nomination, pure and simple, driving competition out of all consideration with the Government.

Against the last, his

objection was based on the fact that here in India the individuals belonged to different societies and the official lacked the initial knowledge of the people, on which account nomination was bound to lead to abuses, haphazard favouritism and selection. As regards the monopoly of Europeans in several departments like the Survey and the Railway, the best champion of that system and a strong advocate of Indian exclusion—Colonel De Pree, then the head of the Survey Department, had published his report, in which the following instructive note appeared and which Gokhale thought best to place before the Council, specially for the edification of the honourable Sir T. Wynne of the Railway Board, who looked askance at all suggestions for the wide employment of Indians in the higher places of Railway administration:—

“ I may here remark incidentally that my numerous late inspections show me that the tendency of the European Surveyors is to stand and look on, while the Natives are made to do the drawing and hand-printing, as if they thought themselves quite above that sort of thing. This is a mistake and cannot be permitted for the future. Besides, it is suicidal for the Europeans to admit that Natives can do any one thing better than themselves. They should claim to be superior *in every thing*, and only allow Natives to take a secondary or subordinate part. In my old parties, I never permitted a Native to touch a theodolite or an original computation, on the principle that the triangulation or scientific work was the prerogative of the highly paid European, and this reservation of the scientific work was the only way by which I could keep a distinction, so as to justify the different figures respectively drawn by the two classes—the

European in office time and the Native who ran him so close in all the office duties as well as in field duties. Yet I see that natives commonly do the computation work, and the Europeans some other inferior duties."

The strong reason why Gokhale and everybody else from the non-official ranks urged for a Commission to enquire into this question was the fact that nearly 25 years had elapsed since the findings of the last Commission; therefore quite reasonably a fresh review of the situation might be attempted. The reply from the Government at this time was not very encouraging. All that the honourable Mr. Earle could say was that the Government of India would refer to Local Governments in order to see how far it was practicable to work up the recommendations of the last Public Service Commission; but this simple thing, he thought, in no way called for the appointment of a commission. The last Public Service Commission had been appointed only when, after two years of discussion, it was found impossible to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the questions involved. According to the Government there was no such necessity now as it was only to be ascertained from local Governments how many more posts could be listed up to the maximum of one-sixth. What was then considered by the honourable member as 'merely a waste of time and labour' was, however, soon recognised to be a necessity; and on the Royal Commission so appointed Gokhale was offered a place. At this time he was a member of the Supreme Legislative Council as well, on which account he was entitled to some remuneration to cover travelling and boarding expenses incurred in attendance on the Council. Gokhale, without resigning his seat on the

Council in view of his new activity, had to forego his emoluments and content himself with what was allowed to every member of the Public Service Commission, which was, however, deemed sufficient for his purposes. The Commission began to hear evidence in Madras in the beginning of 1913 and from there visited most of the important centres of Government. After considering the questions of the Civil and Provincial services during that winter campaign in India they returned to England in the summer. The officials examined by them had only one continuous cry of Indian incapacity and Gokhale suffered severe mental strain in cross-examining witnesses filled with deep-seated prejudices. Six hours every working day they had to hear evidence in public and at home they had to study the written statements submitted previously to be ready to examine the witnesses in public. From September 1913 to April 1914 they again worked in India to gather evidence on other Services; and the public were kept in a lively condition by the escape of several interesting and odd things. They then retired to England to consider the first draft of their Report. Gokhale's whole soul was in the affair. Day and night he had to think out how to bring over Lord Islington—the Chairman of the Commission, and several impartial members to his way of looking at the matter. His already over-worked system had combated with an enormous amount of public work of a very anxious character; and the South African affair was drawing his heart's best blood. For this fresh duty he practically worked through all the twenty-four hours of the day. Even his dinner and recreation hour was given to some discussion or other in relation to this great question. He was always a light-sleeper; and the anxiety and the mental strain deprived him even of

the little sleep he was accustomed to enjoy. Often in the dead of night he was heard pacing up and down his room, with half articulate utterances, showing his deeply absorbed state of mind. Great men of the world with heavy public responsibility on their head need the power of detachment from work, if their health is to be preserved. Of Gladstone, for instance, it is said that he could for some time of the day completely cut himself off from *work* and plunge heartily in recreation that fitted him for work again. Gokhale's all was laid on this solemn duty that had fallen to him. Thanks to his relations with the Tatas, he had all the comforts of a home; and every possible means was employed by his host and hostess to contribute to his health and nourishment. But the doctors believed that by no human artifices could his life be prolonged for more than three years, if he did not immediately leave his work on the Commission and retire to his home in India. The importunate entreaties of all his best friends, including Sir William Wedderburn—than whom few could influence him more—all proved in vain, and he was determined, to stake his all on seeing the work through. The old complaint of heart-weakness began to tell; and it was at length decided that the final draft of the report might be deferred to the summer of 1915, to enable Gokhale to spend his winter in the milder climate of India.

In the fall of the summer of 1914 Gokhale was on the Continent, touring for his health in company with His Highness the Gaikwad of Baroda. His intimate relations with this enlightened and munificent Ruler, are, to the outside world, only a matter of conjecture; but the occasional expression heard here and there makes me believe that very

much light could be thrown by the Ruler of Baroda on the working of the mind of the great Patriot Saint, if only His Highness were communicative enough. Together they roamed through some part of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and were at a way-side place on the border of the Austrian Dominions, when the present great war of Europe was declared and they had to take an early opportunity to hurry away from the danger zone. By September the party arrived safely in India.

Gokhale's fast decaying health made it absolutely incumbent upon him to taboo all work and keep clear of all vexation. But that, unfortunately, was not to be. If there was any one national object dearer to his heart than another, it was the wish to see all-India united in a common cause for political rights. The National Congress—the only representative institution of the middle classes of all India had, to all appearances, been wrecked by the Surat fiasco of the year 1907. The leaders of the moderate camp, Sir Pherozsha Mehta, Dr. Rash Bihari Ghosh, The Hon. Mr. Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Hon. Mr. Wacha, Gokhale and a number of others—all put their heads together and drafted a constitution for the Congress, the very first Article of which stated the objects of the Indian National Congress in unequivocal terms as the attainment of self-government within the Empire on Colonial lines to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country. Every delegate was to sign this creed. To prevent irresponsible people elected by

any kind of public meeting from coming in as delegates by merely paying the price of delegates' tickets, Article XX of the constitution clearly stated that the right of electing delegates to the Congress shall be vested exclusively in regularly constituted bodies like (i) the British Committee of the Congress, and (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated to the Congress. This served as a healthy check on interested men getting a majority under the lax procedure of former times. The result, so far, had been quite satisfactory. Political thinkers of a wild creed advocating a 'royal road' to achievement could no more get into the Congress Camp. In 1914, Mr. B. G. Tilak, on his release from imprisonment had, by his utterances on our duty to support the British Government in this great crisis of the war, given rise to hopes that his views had undergone a change for the better and that he was evidently rallying to the moderate camp. This opportunity was taken by Mrs. Annie Besant and Mr. Subba Rao to see if a compromise could be effected and he and his followers be admitted into the Congress activity. With this view they visited Mr. Tilak in Poona. Mr. Tilak's demand was a modification of Article XX, one of the two amendments of which had been drafted by Gokhale himself, it being his earnest desire that the breach should be healed, if possible. Arrangements were being made to recognise a local society for electing delegates, when Mr. Tilak in a later meeting with Mr. Subba Rao made a statement which created a serious difficulty. He said that though the aim of both the " Moderates " and the " Nationalists " was the same, there was a difference in the methods of the two schools, and that if the " Nationalist " party were enabled to rejoin the Congress, they would seek

to obtain "recognition of their methods by educating public opinion and working for and securing a majority in the Congress if possible." This very naturally alarmed some of the Congress leaders, among them Gokhale, as it opened up an indefinite vista of conflicts, in which the Congress instead of working to obtain its objects, was to spend its time in fighting over methods, until some methods *not those of the Congress at present*, should be substituted for these by a majority vote. (Quoted from Mrs. Besant's 'Congress Re-Union,' as it appeared in *New India* of February 1, 1915). Gokhale was, therefore, obliged to ask first for a detailed account of these 'methods' before an amendment in Article XX could actually be effected. Of course, he himself was too ill to be present at the Madras Congress of 1914, but he sent a note to this effect proposing to defer the consideration of admitting delegates in a manner other than what the constitution had provided. On this, Mr. Tilak had recourse to his old tactics; and as Mr. Paranjape would put it, "tried to evade the vital question of his methods by introducing a lot of extraneous questions about this communication and to throw a great amount of dirt at his opponents in this way." This worried Gokhale greatly and brought on the end much sooner than the doctors expected.

On Friday, the 12th February, 1915, the day when Mr. Gandhi was given a reception in Poona and entertained to a fruit party at the Servants of India Society, Gokhale had a serious fainting fit. The heart trouble had been always there since 1897, when he had collided against a cabin-door in a restaurant in Calais. On that day after a few hours of anxious suspense he seemed to recover and the doctors thought he might be restored to a certain

measure of health for some months more. On the following Wednesday he sat up to write a memorandum for three hours without break and on the next day dictated letters as usual. Towards the afternoon his condition grew very serious; and his personal assistant and medical attendant, Dr. Dev, sent for Drs. Shikhare and Gokhale to have a consultation. On Thursday night his condition was found to be alarming, owing to the extremely weak state of the heart and the dyspepsia that accompanied it. The night was passed in a restless condition, though a few minutes' rest towards the early morning refreshed him a little. During the earlier part of Friday he looked a little better, but towards the evening a decided change for the worse came on; and Gokhale, probably feeling that the end was coming, sent for his personal servants, one by one, and gave them his last good wishes. This was about six o'clock in the evening. Then he sent for his sister and the children, one by one. To each he said a few parting words in his same old tone and manner. Then, when the last leave-taking was over, he asked twice whether they were all gone, for he did not want them to remain by his side till the very end. As soon as he was assured that they had left he began to breathe hard, as though he had till then controlled this awful symptom by an effort of will. Dr. Dev and Mr. H. N. Apte, both of the Servants of India Society, were at his side. To them with a faint smile on his features he said in Marathi:—"This side of life has been good to me. It is time I should go and see the other." He had no regrets, no sighs, no sobs. He would have been better pleased if he had been spared to complete his labours on the Public Service Commission. One member of the Society, Mr. Patvardhan, was called the last of all; and Gokhale asking him to sit near said to

him, "Wamanrao, I have often spoken harshly to you. You must excuse me." His face underwent no change, and to the last his gaze was clear and his mind unclouded. The utmost composure and serenity were visible on his features. Those who were privileged to look on him and hear his last speech were truly blessed; for they saw how a patriot can die. To quote Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, "And of him surely, in another age and in another land were the prophetic words uttered—" Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Blessed are they that live and die in the love and service of their motherland!

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark:
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;
 For tho' from out our bourn of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar.

—*Tennyson.*



CHAPTER V.

INDIAN FINANCE.

INTRODUCTORY.

NOTHING in the Government of a country can give so remarkable an insight into things as a thorough grasp of its finance; and yet, perhaps nothing in the whole range of administration is so elusive of grasp and so taxes the utmost energy of man. Finances are the key to the whole situation. Economists in their treatment of governmental rights and obligations to the governed generally dilate on the Revenue side of their finances, e. g., discussions on the various taxes and other items of income and their equity; but on the whole very scant justice is done to the equally important question as to how the funds realised are disposed of. The expenditure side of a Government ought to receive as much vigilance and thoughtful criticism as the taxation imposed by them. It is true that Government can have for its maintenance no resources other than what the country itself supplies; but to ensure a sound financial condition, there ought to exist a considerable degree of confidence between the taxing body and the paying millions. The inert masses may not be quick enough to perceive the very early symptoms of wasteful expenditure introduced by the State; but their slowness to detect mischief or peaceful sloth ought, on no occasion, to be taken advantage of; for when the consciousness comes, as some day it must come, a tussle ensues between the governors

and the governed, which years of good administration may hardly terminate, and confidence once disturbed takes a long time to be restored. There is another point of danger as well. When once a Government starts spending more than it ought to, it finds great difficulty in effecting economies and keeping itself within proper bounds. For Gladstone always kept saying "that all excess in the public expenditure beyond the legitimate wants of the country is not only a pecuniary waste but a great political, and above all, a moral evil. It is a characteristic of the mischiefs that arise from financial prodigality that they creep onwards with a noiseless and a stealthy step; that they commonly remain unseen and unfelt, until they have reached a magnitude absolutely overwhelming" (Morely's life of Gladstone, Vol. II, p. 41). Chaos under the pre-revolution monarchy of France was largely due to this neglect of proportion in public expenditure and revenue, and the Revolution was most certainly precipitated by the accumulating financial difficulties of the French Government. In more recent times, the very foundations of the Austrian Empire were threatened by the mischief arising from public extravagance. Gokhale's great work in connection with Indian finances detailed in this Chapter will give the reader a fair idea of the importance of this subject in the administration of a country.

ECONOMIC POVERTY OF INDIA.

"Whereas the capacity of the country to bear increased burdens is growing perceptibly less, our expenditure, under the existing conditions of administration, is rising higher and higher, necessitating a heavy incidence of taxation, exhausting all our fiscal reserves, and what is still more alarming, thrusting

on our hands expanding responsibilities.”—(Evidence, Welby Commission, p. 57). In this one sentence of Gokhale, may be summed up his stand-point. A quarter of a century before this utterance, Mr. Fawcett, the redoubtable champion of the cause of India before the English bar, had stoutly maintained that India was an extremely poor country, the inelasticity of whose revenue was a deplorable financial feature indirectly acknowledged even by the official custodians of the Indian people. The cry raised against increased taxation in India was not a mere alarmist affair: the facts spoke for themselves. Where was the taxable material? Was the question urged by those who realised the seriousness of the situation? The Land Revenue, the most important item in the revenue of India, yielded in the gross about £21,000,000, and its net amount was about £18,000,000. At least one-fifth of this was permanently settled. (Bengal); and a considerable part of the remainder was subject to revision only after thirty years, or, in other words, let at a fixed rent for that period. Again in some of these revisional areas it was believed by eminent authorities, e.g., Sir George Campbell in connection with Madras, that the assessment was already too high. This part of the Indian revenue, therefore, was, certainly inelastic. The next important item of revenue in Salt yielded £6,000,000—which in the opinion of all competent authorities could only increase with the increase of population as the duty was already “the highest that has ever been imposed upon a prime necessity of life” varying between 500 and 2,500 p. c. upon the cost of the article. Revenue from opium was said to be precarious, more likely to decrease than increase. The remaining items in the shape of excise, customs, stamps and tributes were also in a large measure incapable of increase except

perhaps with the growth of civilisation, or improved administration in the case of the first three. There was, thus, a fairly strong view on the subject of the inelasticity of Indian revenue combated, of course, by the other side represented by the brothers Strachey, who maintained in 1881 in their book on Indian Finance and Public Works of India, p. 36, that "There is every sign that this (the increase in revenue) will continue." The Stracheys had, perhaps, fair ground in taking this buoyant attitude; for, writing nearly twenty years after the views recorded above, they based their opinion on the happy results of the policy of Provincial Decentralisation which was largely theirs and which had ushered in an era of better management—so that, given a watchful interested administration, the revenues could keep on increasing merely in proportion to the growth of population and general civilisation brought about by the growing contact of India with the outer world, and without any necessary resort to fresh taxation. Fawcett and others of his class were, on their part, certainly right in thinking that the country could not bear any fresh imposition: but what a more careful management of things and the silent upward march of times might do, had not made itself felt at least upto 1872-3. The following remark of Sir George Chesney in the Indian Polity which appeared in 1896 neatly sums up the question of taxable material in India:—"Just as from the English Budget may be inferred some of the primary characteristics of the English as a people largely given to strong drink, great consumers, and great producers of various commodities themselves, comprising also a very large wealthy class, so the Indian Budget is unmistakably concerned with the circumstances of a frugal people of simple habits, of whom very few are otherwise than poor and almost all are engaged in

agriculture. The assessed taxes—the unfailing and almost boundless resource of the English financier—yields only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions from 220 millions of people, indicating the almost entire absence of a middle class. The stamp duties tell the same tale, while generally the increase in the different branches of the revenue indicate a gradual and steady, but moderate advance from year to year in the general prosperity of the country.”

There can be no more complete proof of the fact that the country is miserably poor, depending, as does, principally on agriculture; and when Gokhale was asked by the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Indian finance (1897) how he was prepared to prove that the capacity of the country to bear increased burdens was growing perceptibly less, he referred to the famines as being the great evidence on the point. “the people now go down at the first touch of the famine.” To the Chairman’s contention that the increase in the produce of taxation without an increase in the impost was a sufficient index to the growing prosperity of the country, Gokhale rejoined by referring (i) to the repeated acknowledgment of the Government themselves that the country can not bear increased taxation, (ii) to the dead level in the income-tax returns in spite of the normal growth of population. At that time, however, failing to make a very strong case for the increased poverty of the people, he had to content himself with a moderate statement, “still we feel that the capacity of the country is growing relatively less.” At the very first opportunity he had to speak his mind to the Government, Gokhale in his Budget-speech of 1902 emphasised the fact of distressing poverty in the land. If the Government referred us to the increase of customs as an index to

he growing prosperity of the country, his reply was that the imports of sugar and cotton fabrics had nothing to do with the masses in question. If the growth under Land Revenue, Excise, and Stamps was another point of contention for the increased prosperity, the simple answer was that increase in the first was a 'forced compulsory growth,' since in that one-sided arrangement the people had either to pay the increased demand or part with the land—their only resource for subsistence; a growth in the second indicated only an increased drunkenness in the land, the deleterious effect of which being such that the craving for liquors is satisfied at all costs, while an increase in revenue under Stamps meant only an increase in litigation showing people to have become more quarrelsome rather than richer. The income-tax and the salt-tax were the only right indication of the position of the country, the first for the upper and the middle classes and the second for the masses; and both these had shown no increase, the latter 'not even keeping pace with the normal growth of population.'

On this important question whether the economic condition of the people had improved or was improving, Gokhale was serious even to sadness. Lord Curzon in the Budget discussion of 1901 had put the average annual income at Rs. 27 to Rs. 30 per head of the population and had expressed the opinion that the 'movement is, for the present, distinctly in a forward and not a retrograde direction.' Gokhale thought that the necessarily conjectural character of many of the data for this conclusion rendered the result useless for any comparison with a previous period, the real income at any period being quite different from the nominal income in money on account of changes in the scale of prices, standard of living, etc. He therefore submitted evidence of another kind which he

thought pointed unmistakably to the fact that "the mass of our people are not only not progressing, but are actually receding in the matter of material prosperity." By a reference to the census returns he showed that the population of British India was showing a perceptible decrease in the normal rate of progress,—that the vital statistics, again, showed a steady upward tendency in the mortality, pointing 'to a steadily increasing number of the people being underfed.' The consumption of salt shed further light on this question. With an increase in the Salt-duty, dating from the year 1886-87, people had been obliged to cut down the modicum of salt so essential for their health. Again, a summary of agricultural history since 1884-85 gave a disquieting tale of severe agricultural depression all over India, the recurrence of famines from 1897-1902 alone having caused losses to the agricultural community of something like 300 crores of rupees. Here was a substantial case made out in support of the view that the material condition of the mass of the people of India was steadily deteriorating, the phenomenon being "the saddest in the whole range of the economic history of the world." That a peasantry inferior to none in industry, frugality and patient suffering should, at the end of half a century of an uninterrupted peaceful rule, find itself in a worse plight than it had ever been in, was a painful fact demanding the earnest and immediate attention of Government, which could be best focussed by having a formal investigation made where the non-official student of the subject should also be invited to co-operate with the official representatives.

The official conscience, however, slumbering in serene confidence concerning the future, refused to

be disturbed by this tocsin of general economic distress. The period of transition generally entails much misery on the people of a country; and India can be no exception to it. The process of transition is, in a measure, reaching its completion; and the India of 1915 stands as an integral part of the world economy. Easy communication between the different parts of the country and between India and the outside world has been sufficiently established, and prices governing the world have come to govern India. If the world progresses, India must. Whatever may have been the truth about the cry, ten or twelve years ago, that the material condition of the country was on a downward course, surely the same cannot be said in face of present conditions of almost a permanent character. Accidents like famines or wars may interfere with the gradual prosperous outlook, but in this respect, again, India cannot suffer more than other countries. In one point alone the country looks helpless and that was pithily expressed by Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson when he said that "the Indian Budget was a gamble in rains," signifying thereby that much of the prospective income rested upon favourable monsoons. It is certainly not too much to say that, though there is still ample room for improvement in the condition of the agriculturist, things do not, on the whole, wear that gloomy aspect which the well-meaning publicists of some time ago harped upon in a sort of melancholy song. For a fuller development of this view the reader is referred to the findings of that mine of upto-date information on Indian Economics—the result of the indefatigable labours of Mr. Datta and his colleagues—appointed on the Commission to enquire into the Rise of Prices.

II.—THE GROWTH OF EXPENDITURE.

“ If there is one thing more certain than another in finance, it is that expenditure, and especially so when there is a tendency to extravagance, is in no small degree regulated by the amount of money which there is to spend.”—(Fawcett's Speeches, p. 59).

“ *Magnum parsimonia est vectigal* ” ought to be applied in every Budget ; parsimony in one direction may avoid taxation in another.....Economy in the means is the natural corollary of equity in the objects of expenditure”—(Nicholson's Principles of Political Economy, Vol. III, p. 386).

The last five years of the British East India Company's rule witnessed for the first time in their history an activity in public works, mainly designed for the purpose of facilitating communication between different parts of India and administrative improvement and internal progress in the shape of fiscal reform, reorganisation of the police and justice with larger employment of natives. Over two crores a year were spent on canals, roads, and buildings ; and railway companies were asked to start work. With all that, the expenditure was under 30 crores of rupees and no new taxation was thought necessary. The expenditure in connection with the Great Mutiny added a burden of 47 crores to the Indian National Debt ; and with the transference of Indian Government directly to the British Crown there took place an unprecedented increase of about 9 crores in the annual expenditure of India, the civil charges going up from 11.7 crores to 15.8 crores, the Army from 12.7 to 14.9 crores and interest from 2.9 to 5.5 crores. A new impulse was given to the Government and the country. A closer contact between India and England

and the working of English influences on India produced a healthy improvement in the tone of the Indian administration and necessitated a more civilized and modern out-look of India. "Thousands of Englishmen, not only of the military but of almost every class, poured into India. Ten thousand things were demanded which India had not got, but which it was felt must be provided."—(Strachey's Finances and Public Works of India). Roads, bridges, railroads, telegraphs, irrigation canals, barracks, decent buildings and the whole paraphernalia of a great civilised administration, according to modern notions, had to be provided. Public opinion in England inspired by the sense of responsibility of the nation towards India, and the peculiar interests of the influential commercial classes of England produced an irresistible pressure on the Indian Government to effect measures of reform, though the changes involved an expenditure of millions. The need for improvement was undoubtedly great; and the Indian Government spent some £150,000,000, on public works in about 20 years from the date of the expropriation of the Company.

Writing in 1881 on the matters of Finance and Public works of India, the brothers Strachey say: "It might have been better, in regard to some of the reforms which have been carried out, if the work of improvement had been more gradual. But the fault has been on the right side. That mistakes should have been made in dealing with a country as large and as populous as the whole of civilized Europe was inevitable and no doubt money has sometimes been needlessly or wastefully expended. Nevertheless, the work has been excellently done, and with this further merit, that there has been little talk about

it.”—(Page 6). While these sturdy exponents of official view were, in this modest manner, taking the credit of things to themselves, Fawcett had already started on a career of trenchant criticism on the growth of expenditure in India. His love of fair play, hearty contempt for meanness, and the spirit of true Radicalism in his doctrines of economy and retrenchment in public expenditure made it impossible for any wasteful or unjust charge on Indian revenues to escape his disinterested and searching attack. His first public utterance upon this subject was in July 1867 in connection with a very curious matter. It had been decided to give a ball at the India Office to the Sultan of Turkey on July 16. Fawcett asked whether the expenses of this ball were to be charged to India. Sir Strafford Northcote replied in the affirmative and explained, in justification of the course adopted that the ball was a return for assistance given by the Sultan towards telegraphic communication with India. Fawcett was not satisfied, for, he thought, that England, no less than India, was interested in the telegraphic communication, “why, then, should the toiling Indian peasant pay for it?” “The Sultan’s ball,” says his biographer, Leslie Stephen, “was long a sore point with him.” On another occasion he vehemently condemned the idea of making India pay for the expenses in connection with a journey of the Duke of Edinburgh to India and his distributing presents among some friends. The instinct to espouse the cause of the friendless and the weak grew, in his case, into a passion when, day by day, instances of wasteful expenditure and of the utter helplessness of the paying party came to light. His two speeches on the Indian Budget, 1872 and 1873, and his three essays on Indian Finance, contributed to the Nineteenth Century in the course of the year

1879, teem with indignant expressions on the growing expenditure of a very poor country with no corresponding resources in the shape of increased revenue. "The Governor of Bombay has two palaces in Bombay, and a country house at Poona, which was lately erected at a cost of £1,55,000, £20,000 being spent in furnishing it. India has to pay £26,000 per annum for his personal establishment, £1,700 a year for his band, £1,200 a year for his state barge..... This kind of personal extravagance is, however, only a small part of the evil."—(Speeches, p. 98). Numerous extravagant and unremunerative undertakings forced upon India by the pressure of the English commercial interests had caused great financial embarrassment to the country, e. g., the Godavari Navigation, the Orissa Irrigation Works, the Madras Irrigation Works and the heavy losses entailed by the Railway guarantee system, the responsibility being traced to no one. By the most laborious research of this champion of the weak, whom the officials were pleased to call 'the spokesman of financial panics,' these facts had been disintombed from the darkness in which they were buried. His research and his methods of criticism were of great use to the Indian publicists of the last quarter of the last century, who were, so to say, trained in his school of thought. The root-point, according to him, was, "Our government is far too expensive for so poor a country."—(p. 38). With this prelude in criticism on Indian Public Expenditure we can pass on to an analysis of Gokhale's views on this matter.

The Welby Commission had been appointed principally to investigate into and report upon the condition of public expenditure in India; and Gokhale in his evidence fittingly took the growth of expendi-

ture on the Indian army as the first point for consideration. In 1861, a few years after the abolition of the E. I. Company, the English and Indian armies had been amalgamated in direct opposition to the strongly-expressed remonstrances of Lord Canning, who was then Viceroy, and of almost every Indian Statesman of authority and experience. The Council of the Secretary of State had also unanimously objected to it, but they were informed that although they could, of course, exercise their right of protest, it would be time wasted, for the amalgamation of the two armies had been made a cabinet question under the Government of Lord Palmerston, and was an accomplished fact. In consequence of this arrangement a heavy annual loss of not less than a million pounds was inflicted on India. It was stated before the Indian Finance Committee in 1872 by Sir Thomas Pears, then Military Secretary at the India Office, that India was at that time annually paying no less than £1,600,000 to officers in the form of pensions and furlough allowances, and he showed that about one-fourth of the entire number of officers of the Indian Army, who were wholly maintained by India were not in India, but in England. The correspondence between the Government of Lord Mayo and the Secretary of State in reference to the military expenditure of India brings out with remarkable distinctness the all-important fact that the Secretary of State in all questions of Indian military expenditure is bound hand and foot by the Horse Guards and the War Office. No heed was paid to Sir Henry Durand's able minute that the reductions in military expenditure might be effected without, in the slightest degree, diminishing the efficiency of the Indian army. "This increase of military expenditure, which, from its nature, has been beyond the power of the Government

of India to control, is the most unsatisfactory part of the financial history of the last few years. No subject was more anxiously considered by Lord Lytton. He was convinced that the military charges were excessive, while at the same time the Army in India was, in some respects, far from being as efficient an instrument as could be desired."—(Stracheys' Finance etc.). In 1879 the Government of India appointed a commission with Sir Ashley Eden as the Chairman to enquire into these subjects. On all the important military questions, its conclusions were unanimous and it declared its belief that great improvements could be effected and at the same time the military expenditure in India could be reduced by £1,250,000 a year. Nothing can afford a better testimony of the unfairness of the situation than the following frank confession of the brothers Strachey, "The Government of India has never concealed its opinion that in apportioning the charges which have to be shared between the two countries and when the interests of both English and Indian taxpayers have been at stake, India has sometimes received a scant measure of justice."—(p. 50).

Among the points of evidence submitted before the Commission by Gokhale in connection with the growth of expenditure in the army, emphasis was laid (i) on the high percentage of expenditure on the Indian army in comparison to that in other countries, e.g., 35 p. c. (India); 19 p. c. (United Kingdom); 19 p. c. (France); 13 p. c. (Italy); 16 p. c. (Japan); 21 p. c. (Russia); (ii) the nervousness of the Government in keeping a proportion of 1 British Soldier to 2 Native Soldiers in the composition of the Indian army when "Our increasing appreciation of British rule and growing attachment to Her Majesty's throne"

does not justify a needless burden of $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores necessitated by an excess of 11,000 British troops over the accepted standard; (iii) the augmentation of 30,000 troops in excess of the military needs of the country as laid down by the Army Commission of 1879, who even contemplated the 'contingency of operations beyond the frontier' against both Russia and Afghanistan put together; (iv) the Indian army being practically on a war footing with no peace establishment proper, involving an annual expenditure of about 25 crores of rupees for altogether 252,719 men, when most of the civilised countries of the world employed soldiers on a short service system of three to five years and those thus trained were thrown on the reserve list and fresh men recruited, trained and again thrown on the reserves. England adopted the short service system in 1871-2; but the advantages of the system were in no way extended to India. The officering of the Native Army had been needlessly increased with a steady and gradual contraction of the field for employment of Native officers, in whose place a costly European agency had been put in, thereby imposing a great burden on the finances. Sir George Chesney in his *Indian Polity* had recorded a very bitter and emphatic protest against this ousting of the Indian element. Even Russia utilises the ability of the native races in Central Asia by opening to them honourable military careers.

The heaviness of Indian military expenditure occasioned much heart-burning to Indian publicists of note; and it required no great insight into things to see that this preparedness of the forces in India was a part of the larger imperial scheme for territorial expansion in Asia. The forward frontier policy

and the two Afgan Wars of the eighties of the last century along with the annexation of the Upper Burma were more the concerns of the British Empire than of the Government of India. In any case an apportionment of some of the military charges between England and India should have been acceded to. The Financial Secretary of the India Office expressed this view before the Commission in these words:—

“That India is utilised as a reserve for England in a much truer sense than England is for India; that England not merely claims the services of British regiments for the time stationed in India, but that she frequently uses the Native regiments towards the cost of which she has in no way contributed; that it may, therefore, be reasonably urged that England ought to assist in the maintenance in India of so large a force upon which England does not hesitate to draw.” The Hon. Rai Shri Ram Bahadur, quoting the above on the occasion of the Budget discussion (March 1902), added “It will simply be an act of justice if the British Exchequer will contribute a fair share towards the cost of the maintenance of these troops.” When Gokhale entered the Supreme Council he made it a point not to let a single occasion for Budget discussion pass without scathing criticism on the military Policy of the Government of India and the enormous expenditure it involved. It is true that one of the first canons of public finance is “Defence is prior to opulence;” but it is also a fundamental principle of public expenditure that the system ought always to be viewed as a whole and an adjudication made on conflicting claims, and “he is the best master of finance who best understands the relations of the parts to the whole” (Nicholson’s Principles of Economics). A point is certain to be reached where the statesman must decide whether other public

objects have not greater claims. From 1885 to 1898, the country had seen an enormous increase of taxation like 120 crores over and above the level of 1882-85; and "nearly 80 crores out of this additional 120 crores, i.e., fully two-thirds, was swallowed up by the Army services." Such apportionment of expenditure which paid scant attention to other objects of the well being of the people made Gokhale regret that 'Indian finance is virtually at the mercy of military considerations.' If no suggestion for a reduction of superfluous strength of the Army would meet with any support from the Indian Government, for Lord Curzon had emphatically declared that 'there would be a rise in the Military Estimates and that he was not in the least disturbed by the argument that all this Military Expenditure is a waste,' the cost of the excess portion should, as a mere matter of justice, be borne by the Imperial Government. Gakhale's fight on this question was mainly based on the idea that India, freed a little from this absorbing expenditure, might see some more money employed on its internal progress! If financially it was draining the resources of the country, politically it was still more fraught with evil consequences. "No pouring out of money like water on mere *standing battalions* can ever give India the military strength and preparedness which other civilised countries possess, while the whole population is disarmed and the process of de-martialization continues apace.....India is about the only country in the civilised world where the people are debarred from the privileges of *citizen soldiery* and from all voluntary participation in the responsibilities of national defence.....let them select particular areas and sections of the community for their experiment. What I am anxious to see is the adoption of some plan, whereby, while a position of greater self-respect

is assigned to us in the work of national defence, the establishments necessary during peace and war times may be separated and thus our finances may be freed from the intolerable pressure of an excessive and ever-growing military expenditure."

The Government of Lord Mayo in 1871 had put a limit to the military expenditure of India in the following lines:—" We cannot think that it is right to compel the people of this country to contribute one farthing more to military expenditure than the safety and defence of the country absolutely demand ;" and the Army Commission of 1879 had defined the functions of the Indian Army to be (i) preventing and repelling attacks or threatened aggressions from foreign enemies beyond our border ; (ii) making successful armed disturbance or rebellion, whether in British India or in Feudatory States, impossible ; and (iii) watching and over-awing the armies of feudatory Native States. Although a departure from a strict observance of this view of the Indian army had been noticed on several occasions in the following quarter of the century, it was reserved only for Lord Curzon and his Government to declare explicitly and unequivocally that the position and responsibilities of the Indian Army were enlarged. Thus at the close of the Budget debate (1903) he explained how the Foreign Department in India was becoming the Asiatic Branch of the Foreign Office in England. " The geographical position of India will more and more push her into the fore-front of international politics. She will more and more become the strategical frontier of the British Empire.....These circumstances required that our forces shall be in a high state of efficiency, our defences secure, and our schemes of policy carefully worked out and defined."

This varnished expression was followed up next year by the blunt question of the military member, the Honourable Sir Edmund Ellis:—“Are we to be content to hide ourselves behind our mountain barriers under the foolish impression that we should be safe whilst the absorption of Asiatic Kingdoms is steadily in progress?” and the brutally frank reply, “It is, I think, undoubted that the Indian army in the future must be a main factor in the maintenance of the balance of power in Asia; it is impossible to regard it any longer as a local militia for purely local defence and maintenance of order.” Lord Curzon on that occasion made the position clearer by emphasizing that the glacis beyond the Himalayan Walls, though not intended to be occupied by the Indian Government was still to be guarded from occupation by the foes of England. For this vigilance and action in emergency India's resources were to be unhesitatingly used; and for this Imperial purpose a vast scheme of Reorganisation of the army, involving a cost of altogether 15 crores of rupees was put in the Budget, the share of expenditure for the year 1905 being 3 crores and 66 lakhs. The scheme had received the sanction of the Home Government, although the expert military opinion was not quite unanimous in regard to it. The Indian Government had announced their intention of meeting the whole charge from current revenues extending the spending operation over a number of years. Gokhale protested. His contention was that the charge being heavy and non-recurrent ought to be met out of loans, just as England and other European countries were doing. The surplus revenue which was, in itself, a great wrong to the country since it implied a higher level of taxation than that required for the ordinary needs of Government should only be used for objects of recurring ex-

penditure in connection with the internal progress of the country. Besides, the need for reorganisation in the army being Imperial more than Indian, England ought to find money for it, if not wholly, at least in part. The reply of the Finance Member, the Hon. Mr. Baker in regard to the latter objection is characteristic. In spite of the set of principles drawn up by the Welby Commission to guide the apportionment of such charges and in spite of their acceptance by the Home Government "the position of India as a subordinate member of the Empire was not altered in any way, and she was not, and never can be, in any way, emancipated from the final control of the Supreme Government." Referring to the suggestion to meet the non-recurring initial charges by a loan, he replied: "The borrowing power of the Government of India is not inexhaustible. On the contrary it is strictly limited, and if we apply part of our credit for unproductive purposes, however necessary, such as the improvement of the Army, so much the less remains for financing productive works, on which the development of the country so largely depends. We should be most reluctant to curtail the grants for capital expenditure on these important and profitable works, and we shall not do so unless political or military considerations of an urgent character impel us to do so." At the earliest opportunity, however, Gokhale contended that he had made a clear distinction between the productive and unproductive debt of India, the latter being, after all, the only real debt which the Government had been reducing by the amount of current revenues spent as capital. If in that unproductive debt an addition were made on account of the non-recurring and extraordinary charges in regard to the Army Reorganisation Scheme, this debt would still stand lower than where

it was eight years ago, i.e., before the era of "currency surpluses" began. That the 'surpluses' should have been for some time used for reducing the national debt, which, however, had not brought much hardship on the country and then applied to meet Army Reorganisation charges of an unusual character was, in his eye, a wilful disregard on the part of Government for "other interests" of the country which had been starved so long. The Finance Minister was, of course, not convinced of the utility of having recourse to loans for such an 'unproductive expenditure' as public defence unless he should find it impossible to finance it without undue difficulty 'out of revenue.' Such a necessity, according to him, had not, so far, arisen. Gokhale, however, was never tired of maintaining his battle against increased military expenditure on every occasion, armed, as he latterly was, by the fact of the Anglo-Russian Convention, which should have dispelled even all imaginary fears of a Russian aggression—the fundamental reason for the heavy military charges to the Indian tax-payer.

In the foregoing analysis of Gokhale's criticism on Indian Army Expenditure, the reader will have at once noticed two or three things that stand out more prominently than the rest. To cover the same ground over and over again, year after year, should ordinarily tire the patience of even the very well-disposed audience, and turn the head of the softly sensitive official; but it is the undoubted merit of the artist to give a fresh and spirited turn to the same point on different occasions. In Gokhale's hands the theme never palled in interest; for new material and new weapons were always supplied by his resourceful armoury. It is true that in matters of military expenditure there can be no finality and military experts

would naturally wish to raise the pitch of the efficiency of an army as high as they can conceive; therefore, Gokhale's remarks on many points may have been treated with scant courtesy. His main position, however, remains unassailed. To have the maximum of combatant strength with the minimum of cost by organising a system of Reserves and to make public defence a national movement are facts nowhere controverted in Council meetings, perhaps because they are incontrovertible. Then, again, the justice of England's bearing a part of this huge cost rendered inevitable because of Imperial purposes was certainly recognised by every Finance Member, though latterly with some reservations on the ground of England's guarding the coasts of India with her navy almost free of charge. The present war has raised issues of a far more Titanic character than could possibly swim into the ken of Gokhale or any the most far-sighted statesman of the day, and therefore military expenditure may, for the time being, be at flood; but it is precisely this world-shaking phenomenon of war that brings home to every thoughtful person the necessity of introducing citizen-soldiership even in India. The mirage of universal brotherhood and peaceful politics is to-day as distant as it ever was at any epoch in the world's history; and what the progress of science has made costly in the matter of war-materials ought to be made up by minimising the number of standing battalions, introducing a short service system and encouraging the idea of national militarism.

With the enlarged and more popular constitution of the Supreme Legislative Council, Gokhale found ample opportunities to urge reduction of expenditure, particularly in the various Civil Departments of the

Government of India. Encouraged by the tone of the Budget Debate in the year 1910 and the sympathy of the Finance Member for retrenchment, he moved a resolution on the 25th January 1911 for "the Government to order a public enquiry by a mixed body of officials and non-officials into the causes which had led to the great increase in public expenditure, so that means might be devised for the greater enforcement of economy, where necessary and practicable." On this occasion he took an extended survey of Indian finance from 1875 onward. The real revenue of the country per year was shown to be capable of growing at the rate of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; therefore any increase of expenditure for normal purposes, i.e., barring that incurred for special objects, must keep well within this average rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per year. To show the actual condition of things he took up the 33 years between 1875 and 1908 for his consideration and divided them into four periods. During the first nine years, from 1875 to 1884, the expenditure rose by an annual increase of about two-thirds per cent per year, against an annual growth of revenue of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. This fact of the revenue being considerably in excess of expenditure enabled Lord Ripon's Administration to remit taxation. In the second period of ten years, from 1885 to 1894, two or three very disturbing factors were visible. It was a period of great military activity on the North-West Frontier, synchronising with a steady fall in Exchange and a steady diminution of Opium revenue. The annexation of Upper Burma in 1886 and the granting of Exchange Compensation Allowance to all European officials towards the end of this period added to the financial difficulties. All this necessitated continuous additions to the taxation of the country. The special expenditure in connection with special mili-

tary charges was, however, met out of special taxation for this purpose; and except for that, in these 10 years there was an average increase in expenditure of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum against a normal growth of revenue from the old sources of a little under $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent a year. In the third period of seven years from 1894 to 1901, the only disturbing factor was that of famines. Ease in Exchange, felt particularly during the last three years of this period, was largely responsible for an extraordinary expansion of revenue. These expanding resources naturally led to increased expenditure which in Lord Curzon's hands received a peculiar stimulation, $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per year being the normal growth in expenditure, even though the disturbing causes had disappeared. The last period of seven years from 1901 to 1908 had been described in the Council year before as a period of 'Efficiency with a big E.' There was a hot pursuit of efficiency in every direction, leading to increased establishments, creation of new appointments, and increases in the scales of pay and promotion and pensions of the European Services of the country. A perfectly astonishing increase of 5 per cent per year in expenditure was witnessed in this period, the expansion of revenue being about 2 per cent per year. A growth of 18 crores of rupees in expenditure in those seven years might be contrasted with $2\frac{1}{2}$ crores in the first nine years, six crores in the next 10 years and 6 again in the following seven years. Granting that out of this 18 crores about 3 crores had been spent as additional expenditure on Police Education and grants to Local Bodies, still the major part of the increase remained to be explained. On the Budget discussion of the year 1906-07 Gokhale had already complained of the evil of an uncontrolled growth of expenditure in all directions in the name of increased

efficiency still unchecked: and Sir Edward Baker, the then Finance Minister, had acknowledged that not a single day passed when he had not been called upon officially to assent to an increase of pay of some appointment or groups of appointments, to the reorganisation of some Department, or to an augmentation of their numbers. 'He could not, in the least, recognise the necessity for imparting an additional stimulus to this process.'

Such then being the permanent character of this increase in expenditure Gokhale referred the Government to their policy of having every situation reviewed at convenient intervals. In the matter of Indian Finance, Fawcett's Committee of 1872 had been followed by a Finance Committee appointed in 1886-87 by Lord Dufferin, who even then thought that the expenditure had grown 'too large.' Then came the Welby Commission in 1897. For 14 years after that no enquiry having been made, it was best that a commission should now be appointed to hold a public, not a departmental enquiry, at the centre of the Government. The definite proposals before them should be:—(i) to chain and control the 'spirit of expenditure' as Gladstone would put it, and to instal in its place, the spirit of economy; and never to allow the normal rate of growth of expenditure to go beyond the normal rate of growth of revenue; (ii) to reduce the military expenditure by bringing the troops to the number at which they stood in 1885; (iii) to bring about a mere extended employment of the indigenous Indian agency in the public service, and, except in the highest appointments with which special dignity is associated, to pay the Indian at a lower rate than the Englishman who holds the same office; and (iv) there should be an independent

audit in this country, the Auditor-General to be made absolutely independent of the Government of India. The Auditor-General's Report should be submitted to the Secretary of State for India, but should at the same time be made public, being laid before Parliament every year and also published in India. Then our criticism of the financial administration will be really well-informed and effective.

For four reasons Gokhale was obliged to urge for an enquiry:—(i) The phenomenal increase in expenditure demanding an investigation on its own account. (ii) The present serious juncture in the history of our finance, Opium revenue being on the point of extinction; (iii) the country being on the eve of a large measure of financial decentralisation to Provincial Governments; and (iv) the expansion of educational effort in all directions must need funds beyond the present level; and just as Lord Dufferin's Government, wanting funds for the prosecution of wars on the Frontier, had to clip expenditure in other lines by having an enquiry made into the whole situation, so might the Government of Lord Hardinge see where retrenchment can be made in order to provide for a far more laudable object like the spreading of education in the country.

This was the most business-like way of placing his case before the Government; and when a Resolution is moved with all the support that facts, figures and arguments could give, necessarily the Government is at considerable pains to dismiss it. On this occasion both the Honourable Mr. Meston and the Honourable Mr. Burnyate—one representing the Civil and the other the Military—did their best to plead that the Government had pursued a right course of

conduct in expenditure; while it was reserved for the Finance Minister—the Honourable Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson to pour oil over the troubled waters by recognising the need for caution in the future. “ Sudden retrenchment hardly ever results in permanent economy; and the difficulties attending it are particularly great in India. What we require is to keep economy constantly in sight, to guard zealously against the unnecessary spending of a single rupee; and to place a curb upon all tendencies to increase public expenditure which is proposed with a view merely to theoretical efficiency or administrative symmetry.” Further than this the Government could not go. No public enquiry was needed in this connection. As regards the more extended use of indigenous agency in the public service, the Finance Member thought it quite permissible for him to say from the economic standpoint, that it ‘seemed to be for consideration whether we might not make greater use than at present of the undoubted abilities of the educated Indian.’ It is noteworthy to see how Gokhale was making himself felt by the Government on most of the points urged by him. To illustrate it I again quote from the speech of Sir G. F. Wilson:— “ Last year I extended to the Honourable Member my sympathy. This year I am able to go a step further. I am in agreement with him as to the object he has in view, but I disagree as to the method by which he proposes to arrive at the result we both wish to attain. Next year I may even find salvation and whole-heartedly agree with him from first to last.”

After such a friendly reply from the responsible head Gokhale could not but withdraw his resolutions; but he distinctly said he was doing it only for one year waiting to see in the meantime what would be

achieved by way of actual retrenchment. The Honourable the Finance Minister, be it said to his credit, went to this difficult task with an undaunted heart and unslackened vigour and was soon able to effect some economies and present a stern front against all laxity in expenditure. The following year, therefore, Gokhale contented himself by moving resolutions on specific objects of expenditure for a specific sum of money to be retrenched for the year budgetted. Mint, Railway administration, New Delhi, Police, Gold Currency and a number of other items came in for attack; but the results were by no means satisfactory, as the Government believed that the very minimum figure had been budgetted. The work of the non-official member under the present arrangement of things in the Council ends in his vigorously and thoughtfully pointing out the defect. Further than that he cannot go; and none knew the limitations imposed upon the peoples' representatives better than this their lynx-eyed leader.

III.—CURRENCY SURPLUSES.

In an earlier paragraph of this chapter reference has been made to the growing rate of expenditure to satisfy the pressing demand for the improved administration and internal progress of the country. Disinterested critics had already expressed their alarm at the growth of expenditure out of proportion to the proper sources of revenue, when a fresh cause for increase in expenditure was given to the Government of India in a manner quite beyond their power of control. From the earliest times the standard of value used in India had been the silver rupee and the Government revenues were always realised in

that metal; whereas the monetary engagements of the Government of India with their capitalist—creditors in England and payments in the shape of pensions, furloughs, etc., to retired Civil and Military servants were all to be observed in gold—the standard of value prevalent in England. Now it is obvious that any country which receives its revenue in one metal and undertakes large payments in another, enters into a very speculative undertaking. If the value of the metal in which the revenue is received becomes depreciated in comparison with the value of the metal in which payments have to be made, the real amount of these payments is proportionately increased. It is manifestly very undesirable that in her fiscal system a country should be deranged by such risks of loss and gain as those to which reference has been made, and therefore the greatest care ought to be taken to prevent a country pledging itself to make unduly large payments in a metal different from that in which her revenue is received, unless by some arrangement a perfect certainty is ensured for a fixed ratio of exchange between the two metals. In the case of India all went smooth as long as the Indian rupee stood equivalent to 2s. or an English sovereign equal to ten *sicca* rupees. From the year 1873 onwards the depreciation of silver in terms of gold grew apace in the world's market. This was due partly to physical conditions and partly to a change in the fiscal policy of some of the Western countries. The out-put of gold decreased with the gradual exhaustion of the gold mines of Australia and California; and the discovery of "bonanza" silver mines in the West greatly increased the production of silver with the result that the world's annual out-put of this metal was increased by one-half. Then Germany adopted the gold standard,

demonetized her silver money, and cast upon the market the silver thalers which she no longer wanted. In a very few years' time, i.e., even by 1876, silver had lost a fourth of its value compared with gold. Writing in 1879, Fawcett calculated that silver had fallen from 60*d.* an ounce to about 52*d.* an ounce, making thereby twelve rupees and not ten as equivalent to a pound sterling. The annual payment of India in the shape of "Home Charges," indicated above already, stood at so much as £17,000,000, which according to the old equivalent of ten rupees to the sovereign would have meant 170,000,000 rupees; but by the growing price of sovereign coming in the neighbourhood of twelve rupees, the payment mounted up to 204,000,000 rupees, necessitating, so to say, an extra payment of 34,000,000 rupees without any equivalent gain to India in the shape of service or materials. What had alarmed the Indian Government and outside critics in regard to this currency disturbance so early as 1879, came to assume huge dimensions before an adequate solution of the difficulty was actually applied.

Loss by exchange was the first eye-opener to those responsible for Indian finances; and retrenchment in expenditure consequently became the avowed policy of the budgets of 1878 and 1879. That, however, proved to be only a poor palliative; for a small saving effected in some departments was far outweighed by the increased payment to England on account of the ever-growing depreciation of silver. To meet the situation, they continued to have recourse to increased taxation and to leave the state of the currency to its natural work. However hard, unpopular and impolitic the measures of increased taxation might be in a poor country

already groaning under a heavy load, this is how the two ends were made to meet, and yet, the end was nowhere in view. If the Government budgetted for a deficit of say 15,950,000 rupees in 1893 and if the exchange in the course of that very year fell only by one penny, the deficit might be nearly doubled and would require fresh taxation of the same magnitude. Writing on this subject in 1888, Sir John Strachey used the following language. "Even if India were a country like Great Britain, where the public revenues, in case of necessity, can almost at any moment be largely increased, she would find, while her standard of value differed from that of England, and while the gold value of silver continued to fall, no relief from pouring into the bottomless pit of her treasury constantly increasing supplies of silver." The gravity of the situation was thoroughly recognised by every Indian official and both Sir John Strachey and Sir David Barbour, the best exponents of Indian views, advocated a policy of an artificial arrangement by which the ratio between the two standards could be fixed.

An artificial arrangement to fix the ratio was as repugnant to the *laissez faire* mind of Fawcett, however, as to the whole class of classical economists who looked upon gold and silver as impossible of subjection to a fixed ratio as the respective values of oxen and sheep or of wheat and oats. "The value of things is regulated solely by the law of demand and supply, and is wholly beyond the scope of legislative control. The precious metals, they (the classical school) assert are no exception to the rule," (Gide, Principles of Pol. Ec., p.254). The classical view of this let-alone policy is sufficiently exploded by the fact that unlike the immeasurably wide

market for commodities like wheat, oats, or sheep and oxen which can certainly baffle the watchfulness of any government or legislation, money or the metals making money can remain in the hands of a few governments who by their right of coinage can keep a fixed ratio between any different currencies, bearing a reasonable correspondence to market conditions. Fawcett, however, rejoiced that a reference by the India Office to a departmental committee resulted in "the wise decision that so far as the currency is concerned, things must be left alone." (p. 136, Fawcett's Essays on Indian Finance). Apart from his instincts of free-trade in currency, his opposition to any tampering with the *status quo* was grounded on a fear of the mischief which would result from altering the currency of a people perfectly stationary in their habits and bitterly averse to any change. A large majority of the people being cultivators had their small savings invested in silver ornaments, the number of *tolas* of which they held equivalent to as many rupees, according to the system of free coinage of silver, that then prevailed in India too. If, according to the proposed change which would give an artificial monopoly value to the rupee by closing the Indian mints to all free coinage of silver, the cultivator found his ornaments worth only the number of *tolas* of silver they contained and not as many rupees, for the equivalence in value between the rupee and the *tola* of silver would disappear by the proposed change, he would have every reason to believe himself defrauded to the extent of the difference. "There would naturally arise the deepest distrust of the Government, and the harm that would be done would be indefinitely more serious than any mischief which can possibly result from the loss by exchange." (Fawcett, Ind. Fin., p. 135). This was the ground of

opposition maintained by our Grand Old Man in his letters to the "Times of India" in 1893, when the change was actually effected; and a faint echo of the complaint as to how the poorer classes had been hit hard by the new currency policy emanated from Gokhale as well, as soon as he had an opportunity to make himself heard.

If, then, Fawcett opposed the idea of any artificial adjustment of the two standards of value, what alternative had he to suggest for removing this fiscal disturbance that was gradually eating up India? The obligations of India to England, known as the Home Charges, he courageously and stoutly maintained, ought to be reduced to a minimum, so that the Indian difficulty of finding gold at a heavy cost may be, as far as possible, obviated. India had to raise a fresh loan almost every year in England for her productive works in India, and the interest thereon had to be paid in gold. A major part of the "Home Charges" is always this factor: therefore, Fawcett contended that Government loans should, in future, be raised, as far as possible, in India itself. Whether the country was rich enough to respond to the Government loans was a point that, perhaps, did not give him much anxiety; and yet the poverty of the country is indeed a stern fact that prevents the success of Indian Rupee Loans. Even very recently the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" lamented on the poverty of the people being responsible for their inability to respond to the call of the Government to the people to subscribe to the present rupee war loan.

The simplest answer to the position maintained by Fawcett is the experience of nearly forty years since he wrote. Neither has the English

capital for Indian use been less sought, nor have administrative charges shown any decrease. In the interests of India, perhaps both these elements must continue for a long time to come; but if a gradual change towards making India supply her wants both in capital and in administrative and military requirements be ushered in, it would, no doubt, be a great achievement in Indian Statesmanship. Whatever be the prospects of that distant future, the Home charges to-day are a vital factor in Indian Finances and constitute a distressing subject so long as the fluctuating ratio between gold and silver causes a harassing uncertainty.

So greatly did the value of silver in relation to gold depreciate that the rupee which was worth 2s. upto 1873 came down to only 1s. 3d. in 1892; therefore, to meet the Home Charges of £16,532,000 in 1892-93, a payment of as many as 264,780,000 rupees was wanted, which at the rate of exchange prevailing in 1873-74 would have been no more than 177,520,000 rupees, thus involving an additional payment by India of more than 87,000,000 rupees from the revenues of the year. "In other words taxation to that amount, equivalent, at the rate of 1s. 4d. per rupee to £58,000,000 had to be levied in India over and above what would have been necessary if these changes in the relative value of gold and silver had not taken place."—(Strachey's India, p. 215). What was still more harrowing was that any amount of anticipation might be upset by causes absolutely beyond control. In 1892 the Government of India submitted proposals to the Secretary of State to stop the free coinage of silver in India with a view to the introduction of a gold standard. The Committee of Lord Hurschell appointed to report

on this question expressed a fear that the value of the rupee might before long be no more than one shilling and that the deficit might thus be increased by as much as 100,000,000 rupees. No reduction in expenditure, no fresh taxation could meet the appalling situation. The Committee, therefore, concluded that it had become necessary to establish a common standard of value between India and England; that the Indian standard should be gold; that the Indian mints should be closed to the public for the coinage of silver, but should be used by the Government for the coinage of rupees, if required by the public in exchange for gold, *at a ratio fixed at 1s. 4d. per rupee*; and that gold should be received at the Government Treasuries in the same ratio in satisfaction of public dues.

This stability in the Exchange value of the rupee at 1s. 4d. by giving a monopoly value to the rupee eased the financial position of the Government of India so much that, as stated above, far from narrating every year a melancholy tale of deficit it began to show surpluses which, to the superficial observer, might indicate great prosperity in the country. It was reserved for Gokhale to tear the veil that masked the surpluses, and reveal to the uninitiated public eye (i) that the Indian taxation had been pitched at a high standard in order to meet the deficits caused by something then altogether beyond the control of the Government of India; (ii) that the same pitch of taxation had been allowed by the Indian Government to continue even though the occasion for it, was gone; (iii) therefore, the difference caused in the decreased payments of Home Charges was so much gain to the Government of India. The necessary corollary to it was that the

occasion for the increased taxation being gone, no Government in justice to the tax-payer ought to have more than it wanted for its legitimate expenditure; but if the Government were loth to lower this scale of taxation, the next best thing for it would be to spend all the surpluses on reforms urgently needed for the amelioration of the condition of the masses. Such being the bare skeleton of his view in regard to the much vaunted surpluses of the Government of India, an analysis of his utterances on this theme may well be given for the benefit of the reader. In his very first speech on the occasion of the Budget discussion (1902), he struck a note, quite distinct from the usual congratulatory expression that proceeded from all other members. Taking a short review of the increased burdens in taxation to the tune of an average of 12.30 crores a year during the past 16 years, necessitated mainly by the falling gold-value of silver, and to a small degree by Frontier Wars, and failing opium revenue, he believed that such continuous piling up of tax on tax and such ceaseless adding to the burdens of a suffering people was probably without precedent in the annals of finance. The Currency Legislation of 1893 having brought the rupee payment of Home charges to the point of relief to the finances of India, a surplus of seven crores of rupees was shown in the Budget of 1902, following close on surpluses of all the years after 1897, although the country had been suffering from famine, plague, war and its consequences. "These surpluses constitute a double wrong to the community. They are a wrong in the first instance that they exist at all that Government should take so much more from the people than is needed in times of serious depression and suffering; and they are also a wrong, because they lend themselves to easy

misinterpretation and, among other things, render possible the phenomenal optimism of the Secretary of State for India, who seems to imagine that all is for the best in this best of lands." It was not the faculty of the recuperation of the people that was responsible for the surpluses although the Government attributed a part of their financial prosperity to it; but these were mainly, almost entirely, currency surpluses, since a rise of 3*d.* in the exchange value of the rupee—from 13*d.* to 16*d.* means a saving of between four and five crores to the Government of India on their Home charges alone. If the Government had a right to demand additional revenues from the people in times of financial embarrassment they were also under an obligation to remit taxation in years of assured surpluses; for surpluses, after all, meant so much more taken from the people than was necessary for the purposes of the administration. The scheme of taxation should be so fixed and adjusted as to meet, but no more than meet, public requirements under normal conditions. "My Lord, an equilibrium between the ordinary revenue and the ordinary expenditure is, of course, a necessity in a solvent nation's finance. Under favourable conditions, even extraordinary charges might be met out of revenue. And further, to assure the position, a moderate surplus may be provided for. But any thing beyond this is opposed to all the received canons of good Finance." In this position, Gokhale is supported by every great authority on theoretical or practical public finance. Sir George Chesney had criticized the Indian surpluses as 'more money taken from the people than was right, necessary or advisable, or in other words the weight, of public taxation had been fixed and maintained at an unjustifiable high level.' "A good system of

Expenditure, should as far as possible, be self-regulating: it should expand (and contract) with public requirements . . . in practice, the normal expenditure should be met from normal revenue"—(Nicholson's Principles of Economics, Vol. III, p. 390.) Gladstone mainly acted on this principle; and Major Barring (now Lord Cromer) had put it in his financial statement for 1892-3:—"It is, of course, desirable to estimate for a moderate surplus. But to keep on taxes in order to secure too large a surplus is unjustifiable." Even the Finance Member, Sir Edward Law, had come to recognise the justice of Gokhale's criticism, and while announcing a small remission of taxation in 1903, he said, "In view of the present satisfactory situation, it is the opinion of the Government of India that it is neither desirable nor good financial policy to continue levying taxation at present rates, yielding such large recurring surpluses as have been realised during the last five years."

As a result of Gokhale's ceaseless hammering at the door of the Government for reduction in taxation, the salt-duty was gradually lowered from 2 rupees 8 annas per maund to 2 rupees in 1903, to 1 rupee 8 annas in 1905, and finally to one rupee in 1906. In the whole range of Indian taxation there was probably nothing that gave Gokhale so much pain as the imposition of duty on this prime necessity of life, as essential as air and water; and nothing perhaps gave him more sincere pleasure than to see a gradual reduction of taxation on an article, the consumption of which was so necessary for the health of the people, and was bound to increase, according to him, *pari passu* with the reduction in taxation. He would have rejoiced to see a total abolition of this duty: but that was not to be, the

underlying principle being that the masses should also be made to pay their contribution to the finances of the country. An article of universal consumption had to be found out and the salt-tax was thus hit upon as a legitimate and important branch of public revenue. The Duke of Argyle, as the Secretary of State had, however, added that, "Government ought to see that such taxes are not so heavy as to bear unjustly on the poor by amounting to a very large percentage upon their necessary expenditure. The best test whether an indirect tax is open to this objection is to be found in its effect upon consumption." In an earlier part of this chapter it has been shown how Gokhale was convinced that the increased duty on salt had resulted in a decrease of its consumption; and now that a new era had opened, he had every reason to feel happy at the result of his criticism. The Government announced several measures of relief like (i) the abolition of famine cesses (ii) Post office facility; (iii) Police Reform; (iv) Local board improvement; (v) agricultural research; (vi) grants for sanitary improvement, and primary education; (vii) a more equitable and justifiable arrangement of financial decentralization which will be separately treated a little later. What Gokhale was unable to make the Government realise was the injustice of undertaking productive works like Railways out of these surpluses. Speaking on the Budget (1906), he drew the attention of the Government to the fact that nearly the whole of the surplus of 35 crores of rupees during the last eight years had been spent on railways in addition to the large amounts specially borrowed for the purpose. Railways constructed on commercial principles out of borrowed money he did not much mind, though he thought that the claims of irrigation to a larger

share of this borrowed capital ought to have been recognised. But said he, "I have the strongest possible objection to our surpluses being devoted to Railway construction when they are urgently needed for many other objects vitally affecting the interests of the masses." When the Finance Member contended that a surplus in the shape of a windfall, or the contrivance of which was not assured could not be more advantageously used than in the construction of remunerative public works, Gokhale held that "the course adopted by the Government would be right if there was no need of nonrecurring expenditure in other directions, more intimately connected with the well-being of the mass of the people." His protest against surpluses employed in heavy military expenditure of a nonrecurring character, and the reduction of the ordinary national debt went also almost unheeded, though he was never tired of bringing home to the Government other more useful ways of employing these surpluses.

IV.—GOLD RESERVE FUND.

Before passing on to another important work of Gokhale in regard to Finance, a word may be said about his views on the effect of the currency legislation of 1893 on the people of India. Mention has already been made of how Fawcett thought that the silver hoardings of the poorer classes would fall in value on the closing of mints to free coinage of rupees. Taking his stand on that ground, he maintained that the stolid agricultural classes forming a very large part of population of the country would suddenly find their savings reduced in value by

more than one-third, for the monopoly rupee was to be appreciated at least to that much extent. To make the point very clear to the lay reader, the matter may be put as under:—Suppose silver to be sold in the market at the rate of 10 annas per tola: this tola of silver either in bullion or in the shape of a silver ornament, could, before 1893, have been easily converted into a rupee; for, the system of free coinage then prevailing left it open to any one to bring his bullion to the mint and have it converted into rupees. After the currency legislation of 1893 the holder of any number of *tolas* of silver could no more look upon it as so many rupees but merely what the market value of the silver bullion would fetch him. That this hardship was likely to occur was taken full note of by Sir David Barbour before he submitted his proposal for a change in the Indian Currency System. “A further question which I had to consider was the position of the poorer classes who had hoarded silver in the form of ornaments. In times of famines or distress persons who were in want of money sometimes sold their silver and I disliked the idea of doing anything that might weaken their position.” This class was, again, balanced by the very poorest class that did not usually possess silver; and the general result held by the then Finance Member was that, “if their silver exchanged for fewer rupees when the mints were closed, those rupees would possess a greater purchasing power and so would any rupees they might have hoarded.” The idea that coined rupees had been actually hoarded by poor classes had a peculiar hold over the imagination of Mr. O'Connor of the Finance Department and several others; and it seems Gokhale himself believed it to have been a factor in preventing the heavy fall in prices

which should have been the result of an artificially appreciated rupee. "Really speaking, the artificial appreciation of the rupee by the currency legislation of the Government should have brought about, after things had time to adjust themselves on the new basis, a general fall in prices in this country. In the first few years after the closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver, this tendency was counteracted by a succession of famines and scarcities, and probably in a smaller measure by hoarded rupees having come into circulation. Latterly, the general rise, which has taken place in the gold prices of commodities, all over the world, has no doubt helped to raise prices in India." A student of economics can easily appreciate the fears entertained by Gokhale in relation to the fall of prices in consequence of 'dear' money which was certain to take place on account of the restriction imposed on coining silver. Money being appreciated or 'dear' makes prices 'low' which, again, means that the agricultural classes do not realize for their products as much money as under former conditions they should have had; and if they had to make 'money' payments to creditors, as in a majority of cases they always have to, they necessarily parted with more of their produce than before to meet their former engagements. An appreciated or scarce currency brings about a fall in prices which again tells most heavily on the debtor class; and, on the other hand, a depreciated, cheap and abundant currency results in a rise of prices—a phenomenon quite agreeable to the debtor class. What Gokhale then apprehended from the working of the Currency legislation of 1893 was that the poorer classes would be doubly hit by the change:—(i) the depreciated value of their silver ornaments which they many times

used in paying assessment to the Government would be tantamount to a considerable increase of assessment ; (ii) the value of their debts would be, for no fault of theirs, increased by nearly 40 p. c. ; for, that was to be the difference between the actual and the artificial value of the rupee. Gokhale's criticism, though perfectly just in theory, did not stand the test of actualities. Famine and war and circulation of hoarded rupees did not bring about the fall of prices, though fears in that direction were quite legitimate. Soon after the exchange value of the rupee had been brought to the required level of 1s. 4d., the Government of India began the coining of rupees in rather too great profusion, though it would be difficult to prove that it was not in response to the requirements of trade. This abundant coinage of nearly 20 crores per year from 1904-8, coupled with the rise of gold prices all over the world brought about, in India too, the influences of high prices in the midst of which we now find ourselves ; and the Commission of enquiry into the question of the phenomenal rise of prices which he and the Honourable Mr. Chitnavis so much insisted on, has recently given us the idea from their findings that this rise is quite beneficial for India as a whole, considering the fact that it is an agricultural and a debtor country.

The profits from the coinage of the monopoly rupee, called the Gold Standard Reserve, invited Gokhale's criticism on two or three occasions. These profits are set quite apart from the ordinary revenue, their function being mostly ornamental in times of smooth or favourable rate of exchange for India. The reader understands that India, except under positively adverse monsoons, exports more than she imports ; and as long as that lasts and the Home Charges

do not exceed this excess of Indian exports over Indian imports, India need be under no anxiety to send money out; for, on the contrary, balance in some shape—perhaps gold sovereigns, will find its way to India. But if the monsoons fail and the Indian exports fall off, engagements outside will have to be kept and the rupee may have, again, to fall below its normal exchange value of *1s. 4d.*; and though the Government of India is under no legal binding to give gold sovereigns for fifteen rupees each, *i.e.*, to exchange *1s. 4d.* for an Indian rupee, yet the moral binding is still there and the Government has never quite refused to give gold. Since the currency legislation of 1898, only the year 1907-8 showed the difficulty of an unfavourable exchange and to meet it the Government of India had to fall back upon their Gold Reserve Fund, *i.e.*, the profits made out of the coinage of the rupee. Experts differed as to the limits of this fund ranging between eight and 30 millions sterling; and it was Gokhale's contention in 1905 and more vigorously in 1906 that the Fund had already passed the limit of 10 millions settled by Lord Curzon and that from the future profits from the coinage nearly 2 millions (according to the coinage then undertaken) might be employed "to provide money for loans to agriculturists in a comprehensive scheme for the relief of agricultural indebtedness." The shock given to the stability of exchange by the adversity of only two seasons gave strength to the contention of the pessimistic school that the Gold Reserve Fund should be added to till it had mounted up even to 40 millions sterling. A change in the use of the Fund was advocated and to some extent effected by putting a substantial part of it out at interests in the London Market in short-term securities and deposits. Mr. J. M. Keynes in his "Indian

Currency and Finance" says: "I think it a sufficient concession if the £40,000,000 be given as the proper limit of the Gold Standard Reserve and the sterling branch of the Paper Currency Reserve (*i.e.*, excluding the cash balances);" of this, he thinks, it should be normal in good times to hold, say, £11,000,000 in sterling securities and the rest in Gold either in London or India but preferably in London, and that also a larger amount of the Currency Reserve than at present should be invested in sterling securities and about one-third of it in bills of exchange or on loan at short notice either in India or London."

V.—MACHINERY OF CONTROL.

A Government national in spirit, even though foreign in *personnel*, minds the interests of the people above every other consideration. This is done in the phrase of Lord Curzon through an 'intelligent *anticipation*' of the wishes of the governed when they have no voice in the administration of their own country. A solemn responsibility rests upon the governors to use the money realised in the shape of taxation in the best and the most economical manner; for, an absence of control from the taxpayer either in the shaping of the revenue or of the expenditure renders that Government all the more morally responsible as the custodian of a sacred trust. How far the Government of India can stand this test and how far Gokhale was able to awaken the conscience of England in this respect may be briefly reviewed in a few following pages.

The East India Company, being a body of stockholders who had always an eye to the dividends they were able to declare, retained a jealous care of the

finances of India particularly in relation to such charges as might be imperative on account of a direct interest of the mother country. They were also a fairly influential body of people in the Parliament of England and could stoutly protest against all unreasonableness on the part of their country in making India pay for the benefit of England. Thus Fawcett, speaking in the House of Commons on the occasion of Indian Budget of 1872, remarked "In the days of the East India Company, India was, to a certain extent, protected by the self-interests of proprietors. At any rate, they could see with jealous watchfulness that India was not unfairly charged for any thing England ought to pay." Next year again he complained that there was no reasonable chance of obtaining fair treatment since the Government of India had been transferred from the East India Company, to the Crown. In support of this statement he referred to the evidence obtained by the Finance Committee of 1871-2, where "a host of witnesses had testified to the well-known fact that as the East India Company was one of the most powerful corporations, and as it possessed great parliamentary influence, it was able to offer effectual resistance if the British Government ventured to make any unjust demands upon the revenues of India." That direct personal interest of the Company in the finances of India, that most potent of all motives for an exercise of watchfulness being gone, he thought that "whereas the administration of the finances of India was formerly distinguished by the most remarkable frugality, it is now characterised by the most reckless extravagance," instances of which have been given in the earlier part of this chapter. Gokhale repeated the same view before the Welby Commission and in explanation

particularly referred to the evidence of Sir Charles Trevelyan, before the Fawcett Committee, where he says that "it often happened that extra charges were attempted to be put upon India, and the representatives of the Company fought with the representatives on the other side, and generally they carried their point." Another important point safeguarding the interests of India in the days of the Company's rule was the enquiry which Parliament used to make into Indian affairs every twenty years which had ceased with the establishment of the direct administration of the Crown.

The changes effected by the India Act of 1858 vested the direct administration of India in the hands of the Governor-General and his Council controlled and guided by the Secretary of State for India assisted by an India Council practically of his own nomination. As a member of the British Cabinet, the Secretary of State with no special knowledge or experience of Indian affairs to aid the discharge of his duties has on the contrary a great distraction in as much as he has "naturally an eye to Imperial politics rather than to Indian interests, and is peculiarly liable to be swayed by the varying currents of English public opinion and other English influences." He has a direct responsibility only to the Cabinet which is again responsible to the Parliament which in a measure bears the same relations to the English Nation. The India Council is no check on him, though, by law, he is bound to obtain the sanction of the Council in all matters involving expenditure; he can, quite independent of the Council, launch the Indian Government into schemes eventually involving large expenditure. The Act empowers

him to send a despatch as confidential without the knowledge or cognisance of the Council, like orders issued under Secret Department, which may ultimately mean expenditure, though for the formal sanction of that expenditure, the Council will have to be consulted. When challenged by the Welby Commission to give any concrete instance of it, Gokhale referred to the embassy sent to Kabul by the Government of India "in consequence of instructions which Lord Lytton received direct from the Secretary of State," though the expenditure in relation to it may have been afterwards discussed in Council. The practically autocratic financial power of the Secretary of State is further brought out into prominence by the weakening of the check of his Council on him by the amending India Acts of 1868 and 1876 which affected the independence of the members by reducing their tenure of office to ten years subject to a reappointment on the choice of the Secretary of State. There was also, by the way, a disadvantage in having the Council recruited mostly out of the retired executive officials of the Government of India who, though quite capable administrators in their way, had yet been 'moulded in one groove with their opinions already formed on the subjects likely to come before them, and who therefore did not make impartial judges of things going on in India. In connection with this, Gokhale emphasised the fact that the real Government of India was in India as it ought to be; and the Secretary of State's Council being only for guidance and control should in its composition pay more attention to impartiality than efficiency, because the merely 'efficient' sticking to one old opinion will be incapable of seeing the other side.

The India Council had been originally brought in being to secure to India a protection, similar to that which she derived from the East India Company, the absence of a provision of that sort being, according to J. S. Mill, an incalculable injury inflicted on India. It was supposed that a Council composed mostly of a body of gentlemen who were perhaps most closely bound up with the interests of India through having spent a great portion of their lives there, would prove a most powerful and efficient protection for India whenever her interests required it. These anticipations were, however, not realised. Lord Lawrence in his evidence before the Fawcett Committee had acknowledged that India failed to obtain justice in her pecuniary relations with England, because the Secretary of State could offer no effectual resistance, being overborne by political pressure at home. On being asked if the Council did not come to his aid, he hinted that a Council acting thus would be dismissed by the Government. To this might be added Fawcett's eloquent utterance in the Commons (1873), "All that I can say is, that if any Government were to attempt to do such a thing, and if they were not instantaneously displaced from power by a vote of this House, all sense of the duty which we owe as a nation to the great dependency we have taken upon ourselves to rule, would be so utterly dead, that the continuance of our Empire in the East, could bring nothing but disgrace on ourselves, and misfortune upon the Indian people." Noble words indeed; but the impotence of the Council stands an undoubted fact! They may protest, nobody denies them their right to dissent; but they may go on protesting and the English Cabinet may go on disregarding it and having its own way. The interests of the extension of British dominion in the

East resulting in the Afghan and Burmese Wars, the extension of the North and North-Western Frontier and the utilisation of Indian troops for Imperial purposes, the extravagant privileges conceded to Staff Corps Officers in 1866, the reorganisation of the Public Works Department in 1885, the grant of the Exchange Compensation Allowances of a very arbitrary character, the interests of British Commerce and of British commercial and moneyed classes, the wasteful nature of many Railway contracts, etc., etc., were some of the instances of unjust charges cited by Gokhale before the Welby Commission.

If in England there was no proper vigilance exercised over Indian Finances, how did it fare in India itself? Though the British Parliament is the ultimate sovereign in respect of all revenue that is raised and the ultimate authority for all expenditure that is incurred by the Government of India, yet it does not and cannot exercise control over Indian Finances as systematically as it does in the case of the finances of the United Kingdom. Apart from its legal powers to formally sanction the Indian annual Budget and all expenditure in relation to any expedition beyond the Indian Frontier (except to prevent or repel actual invasion), its powers of control have been delegated to the Secretary of State and his Council; and it has been described above how on occasions of conflict with interests of England they are piteously helpless. Under section 39 of the Charter Act of 1833, the Governor-General in Council was empowered with general financial powers of the country in the following words: "The superintendence, direction and control of the whole Civil and Military Government of all the said territories and revenues in India shall be and are hereby vested in a Governor-

General and Counsellors to be styled 'the Governor-General in Council.' No change was made in this position by the transference of the rule of India from the Company to the Crown; and Indian public expenditure incurred in England was made on the authority of the Secretary of State in Council, while that incurred in India was the work of the Government of India according to rules approved by the Secretary of State in Council. The Governor-General in Council has delegated a large part of his spending powers to the Provincial Governments under conditions imposed by him which will be described a little later on. Thus there are three distinct spending authorities in respect of the same revenues realised by the sole authority of the Government of India. The Indian revenue consists of two parts:—(i) that which has a legislative sanction, like taxes on salt, income, and stamps, customs, excise, provincial rates, opium, etc. (ii) that which has not, e. g., the land revenue and tributes and contributions from the Native States. The Legislative Body that gave their sanction, by a sort of "constitutional convention," to about 60 p. c. of the total revenues of India was, until very recently, largely a body nominated by the Government and, the Indian taxpayer had no voice indirectly or remotely in the determination of those revenues. As regards public expenditure, too, this Body had no control over the Executive, both in practice and in theory until the Morley-Minto Reform of 1908 gave to the enlarged Legislature some scope to exercise control over the Expenditure in a manner to be described presently.

In his evidence before the Welby Commission Gokhale had submitted that in all ordinary matters of Indian expenditure (where English interests were

in no way encountered) the Governor-General had always his own way, though the Constitution had provided the Secretary of State in Council with powers of control which were generally not used; whereas in an earlier part of his evidence he had called him "an autocrat in the matter of finance." When pushed hard in cross-examination as to how he was to reconcile the two different positions, he qualified his former statement by saying that the constitution gave him a power which in practice he did not use. It might have been more to the point had he emphasised that where English interests were touched, the Secretary of State did play, or was by the Cabinet made to play, the part of an Autocrat. As regards the position of the Indian Government in India itself Gokhale complained that there was no conceivable check on them in connection with expenditure, the Finance Member excepted, every other member of the Council, including the Viceroy, since 1885 having a direct interest in the increase of expenditure. Summing up the situation he said, "Neither in England nor in India is there the salutary check of public opinion on the financial administration. Parliament is ill-informed and even indifferent. And the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils are simply powerless to control expenditure, since the Budgets have not to be passed, and no resolutions in reference to them can be moved." Therefore, the remedies he suggested were (i) that the Indian Budget should be passed item by item in the Viceregal Legislative Council, the Government by all means retaining their standing majority to prevent any adverse vote being carried against them, "the moral effect of recording, and, so to say, focussing by means of divisions non-official disapproval of certain items of expenditure" being quite enough for

our purposes. (ii) The appointment of a Standing Committee of control appointed in the House of Commons with absolutely no power of initiating expenditure but simply of exercising general control over the administration of Indian expenditure, being in a measure a court of appeal for the representatives of the Indian tax-payers; (iii) the Council of the Secretary of State to be recruited more from persons unconnected with the Indian Executive, the representative members of the Indian Legislative Councils having a voice in the appointments; (iv) "an express and absolute statutory provision giving us a complete guarantee against misappropriation of our revenues for purposes unconnected with our interests," e. g., 'frontier wars, etc.' (v) Six representatives of the elected members of the six Provincial Legislative Councils of India to have seats in the British Parliament to give non-official information on Indian questions; (vi) as far as possible, "the Indian Viceroy should be selected from among men who have earned a distinct position for themselves for their grasp of intricate problems of finance, and such a man then should be his own Finance Minister, instead of the Viceroy being his own Foreign Minister, as at present. Chairman: "What you mean is such a member as the late Mr. Fawcett was? Gokhale: "Oh yes, the late Mr. Fawcett would have done very well."

Only the first of these suggestions gradually received the approbation of the Indian and Home Authorities; but a very strenuous fight had to be fought in the years 1907-8 by Gokhale himself before the present budgetary rules were sanctioned in the Council Act of 1909. "Money is the vital principle of the body politic. Constitutionalism is the idea, budgets are the means, by which that

idea is realised."—(H. C. Adam's Finance, p.p. 115-6.) This control usually exercised through the Budget is now partially, at least, vested in the Legislature. Whereas formerly the Budget for the year was not in any way altered on account of the debate held upon it on a particular day, but that the effect, if any, "was only posthumous," i.e., improving the statement for the following year, the Council has, under the present system, the opportunity of moving any resolution relating to (1) any alteration in taxation, (2) any new loan or (3) any additional grant to Local Governments. Division of votes may be sought by members moving the resolutions. At the second stage, discussion on the various groups of financial heads is allowed and resolutions can be moved and voted upon here also. Then the final cast to the Budget is given by the Government and it is submitted for only a general discussion. No resolution could be moved or vote taken on the Budget as a whole, the constitutional objection against this last point being the permanence of the Executive in India as distinguished from the Ministries in countries with representative Governments, where an adverse vote on the Budget is invariably accompanied by a change of the Cabinet or party in power. The constitutional importance of the present change in the Budget discussions, so largely the work of Gokhale, cannot be belittled, as the Government have recognised the necessity of taking the members into confidence with regard to the determination of public expenditure. If some important heads of revenue like the land revenue and of expenditure like the Army estimates are excluded at present from discussion, it may be hoped that the principle having been recognised, a gradual extension in application may not be very distant. Much of the future success depends upon the conduct and ability of the

members themselves ; and " a further development of constitutional rights is likely to be retarded and endangered if resolutions of an impossible or unpracticable character are moved."—(Iyengar's Indian Constitution, p. 216). The reality of the Budget Discussions marks the first important step taken in the direction of India's fiscal and financial autonomy. If only we had several Gokhales in the land, there is no reason why the consumation should not be brought about at an early date.

FINANCIAL DECENTRALISATION.

If proper control over the machinery of Indian finance and rigid economy in expenditure were the crying needs of the Indian administration, no less importance was attached by Gokhale to the question of the financial independence of the Provinces or Local Governments. With the commencement of the rule of the British East Indian Company, the three Presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta made financial arrangements quite independently of one another ; but by the India Act of 1833, the finance as well as all other administrative work of the two Presidencies of Madras and Bombay was centralised in the Government of Bengal, the words of the 39th clause of that Act being very comprehensive: ' The Superintendence, direction, and control of the whole Civil and Military Government of all the said territories and revenues in India shall be vested in the said Governor-General in Council.' The Governors of the two Presidencies were thus precluded by Statute from creating any new office, granting any gratuity or allowance, or incurring any small expenditure without the previous sanction of the Governor-General. No regular financial arrangement marks

this period; and the Mutiny of 1857 rendered the situation exceedingly intricate. As soon as the Government of India started the work of setting its financial house in order, it was felt necessary to entrust to Local Governments a large share in the management of finances. In September 1860 Lieut.-General Dicknes, then Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Public Works, had drawn the attention of the Government to the feelings of aversion with which the local Governors regarded their insignificance and Imperial Government interference, giving at best a cold and languid support to the Supreme Government in financial vigilance and reform and often exhibiting a passive resistance and even countenancing "evasions of regulations intended to be conducive to economy." He put the whole situation very tersely, "The Supreme Government is always suspicious and dissatisfied; the Local Government always sulky and discontented." Mr. Laing, the Financial Member of Government of India in 1861, thought it "of the first importance to break through the habit of keeping every thing in dependence on Calcutta, and to teach people not to look to the Government for things which they can do far better for themselves." According to Sir Henry Maine the workings of this system of financial control—'of barren uniformity and pedantic centralisation' as Mr. Laing would call it—was in great danger of going to pieces, 'unless the strain be lightened somewhere.' The revenues of the whole of India, at this time, went into one common fund; and to disburse them among the different provinces in a fair manner was not practicable. General Strachey thought that this distribution 'degenerated into something like a scramble, in which the most violent had the advantage, with very little attention to reason.' The Local Governments

had no interest in avoiding waste, as economy was of no advantage to them, and they were not sure if any part of increment would be theirs. They had just the bare interests of the most passive agents of the Supreme Government. In addition to this lukewarmness in matters of public finance, there was the great demoralising effect of inharmonious relations produced between the Supreme Government and local Governments in consequence of 'constant differences of opinion about petty details of expenditure. Lord Mayo's Government first tackled this question in 1871 by making over to the local Governments a certain income within which they were required to regulate their expenditure and the services transferred to them were gaols, police, education, registration, medical services, printing, roads, and civil buildings, the power of allotment being left absolutely to them. The principle adopted for the distribution of money among the Provinces was the then actual expenditure under the heads transferred. The idea of starting from the "*status quo* of each province" was preferred to "the theoretical conception of supposed equity." The results of the arrangement were very satisfactory, the only criticism being that 'although an excellent beginning, it did not go far enough.' In 1877, Lord Lytton extended the system to all the remaining services like land revenue, general administration, law, justice, excepting the few administered directly by the Central Government, in the management of which the Local Governments could manifestly exercise no influence. To make them genuinely interested in the work of collecting revenues, those from stamps, excise, law and justice, and some other items, were surrendered under certain conditions to the Local Governments in addition to the lump sum allotted to them by the arrangements effect-

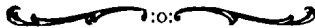
ed under Lord Mayo. These settlements were subjected to revision every five years. In 1882, at the very first revision, a fresh readjustment was made. Opium, salt and custom remained wholly imperial; forests, excise and stamps were equally divided, while the remaining were entirely provincialised.

One of the most important items of evidence submitted by Gokhale before the Welby Commission was the unsatisfactory position of Provincial Finances. Taking his stand on the fact that nearly the whole internal administration of the country was in the hands of the Provincial Governments and that their expenditure devoted to objects intimately connected with the well-being of the people, the larger it was the better for them, he urged that their financial position should be strengthened. He condemned the system of "Provincial Contracts" that had been in existence since 1882, because "at each successive revision the Government of India, while keeping to itself all the growth of revenue which had accrued to it as its share of the normal expansion, had, in addition, resumed a large portion of the share of growth that had accrued to the Provincial Governments, compelling them thereby to cut down their expenditure in the first year or two of each new contract." At the end of the quinquennial period if the provincial Governments showed any balance by way of saving, it was bound to go against them at the time of the next settlement; therefore a dissipation of their balances was the common rule, the first years of the contract again showing a good deal of stinginess in carrying on works of improvement. Gokhale placed before the Commission his proposals for the improvement of the condition of Provincial finances which then were not only causing great slackness in internal improvement but great demoralisation in administration, a

sore feeling among those in charge of Provincial Governments, and a sort of heartlessness on the part of the Imperial Government in increasing their expenditure which would be narrowed down if they could not see their way to encroach upon the Provincial share of the quinquennial growth. When asked by the Chairman, in connection with the last objection against the then arrangement, whether the Imperial Government would have recourse to extra taxation for the extra expenditure, Gokhale's reply was quite characteristic: "I have faith in the Government's fear to face the unpopularity of increased taxation, and they will reduce their expenditure, I think." With the object of effecting a check on the growth of Imperial Expenditure and of giving greater freedom and certainty to the resources of the Provincial Governments he proposed that (i) The Imperial Government should have the whole 100 p. c. of its own revenues, i.e. accruing from the departments directly managed by it; the excess of its expenditure over this revenue should be the first charge on the Provincial revenues, which are always in excess of their expenditure, though the rule fixed for a guidance of the two should be 50 p. c. of the Provincial revenues to be handed over to the Imperial. (ii) In case of any further requirement of the Imperial Government necessitated by something unforeseen a case should be made by the same, submitted to the Secretary of State, by whose final decision alone the Provincial Revenues may be further encroached upon for that particular occasion by the Imperial Government. The second part of his scheme was supposed to be a safeguard against extravagance on the part of the Imperial Government. The merit of Gokhale's proposal was the giving the Provinces a dignified position in the financial arrangement by allowing them no more to

be suppliants at the door of Imperial Government, but rather feeders of the Imperial Government, their 'aged parent.' The scheme, if adopted, would have meant a great achievement of Provincial autonomy in finance and therefore in administration; but all that has been effected by way of improvement since Gokhale's first public utterances on this point is the giving of a permanent character to the grant made by the Imperial Government to the Provinces. Under the existing arrangement, then, the Government of India receives the whole of the revenue under the heads of Opium, Salt, Customs, Tributes from Native States, Post Office, Telegraph, Railways, Mint and Military Receipts, and it is responsible for the expenditure on the corresponding heads as well as for the Home Charges and the bulk of the expenditure under the head 'Interest on Debt.' Revenue and expenditure under other heads, e.g. Land Revenue, Stamps and Assessed Taxes are divided between the Imperial and Provincial generally in equal proportion, while Forests are wholly Provincial. In the annual Financial Statement of the Government of India, the Imperial Revenue and Expenditure is shown distinctly apart from the Provincial; this is certainly a great improvement in the manner of keeping accounts largely fought for by Gokhale, as it gives a clue to the exact position of the Provinces in the financial arrangement. But the Provincial Government are far from satisfied with their present position. Land revenue, excise and assessed taxes altogether forming nearly two-thirds of the Provincial revenue are divided in a certain proportion between the Imperial and the Provincial Governments; and therefore the control or administration in relation to them is also divided, which makes it difficult for the Provincial Governments to adjust the revenue according to their fluctuat-

ing needs. To help the provincial Governments to meet the growing demands on their purse necessitated by modern requirements, the Government of India grants them 'doles' earmarked for specific purposes; but the arrangement is not appreciated by the Provincial Governments who sigh for some power in the direction of levying taxation for themselves. Gokhale's ideal scheme of providing for the Imperial Revenues from assignments made by the Provinces, though entertained by small number of publicists and administrators stands even to-day as far from realisation as in 1897 when he first moved it. Only very recently the idea of "financial settlements resting on a federal basis" was formally repudiated by Sir Harold Stuart; and though the Royal Commission on Decentralisation in India would also give the Provincial Governments, as regards finance, more distinct sources of revenue and greater powers over their budget, a definite recognition of Provincial independence in finance, such as is now enjoyed by the constituent parts of the federal Governments in the West cannot be said to be within sight by any the most sanguine Indian politician, for that cuts at the very root of the Centralised Government of India. The day when the principle that the Government of India is only the recipient of a fixed constitution from each of the Local Governments is recognised, is the day that heralds the ideal of John Bright—the autonomy of Local Governments in India. The last utterances of Lord Hardinge in the Imperial Council in relation to Provincial autonomy has created a fresh stir in the speculative world of Indian and Anglo-Indian politicians. We wait to see what fruit it may bear.



CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC VIEWS.

“AN Imperial power naturally expects to derive some benefits for itself from its Imperialism” (p. 41, Lord Chroum’s Ancient and Modern Imperialism). While the Romans exacted heavy tributes from their dependencies and regarded the provinces solely from the point of view of the revenue which could be obtained from them, the British in India, for some years, by means of an enormously lucrative trade, made India indirectly pay a fairly heavy tribute, “In 1622, goods bought in India for £356,000 sold for £1,915,000 in England.” The character of this trade cannot be better described than by quoting the following passage from Morley’s Burke, p. 211:—“The nature even of the more legitimate and acknowledged commercial transactions was as ruinous for the natives as it is possible to conceive. Readers of the history of the Company are familiar with the name of the Investment. What was this? Simply a portion of the revenues of Bengal set aside every year, for the purchase of goods to be exported to England. This, it is sufficiently clear, was not commerce at all, but only an exaction of tribute by a double, instead of by a single, process. The English first took money, then they changed the money for goods. This was in effect just as if they had extorted the goods in the first instance, except that in this case there would have been no delusion in the minds of people at home as to the existence of a commerce, in which the

natives were believed to be thriving. As it is stated in the ninth report of the Select Committee,—one of the most luminous and exhaustive of English State Papers “the whole exported produce of the country (so far as the Company is concerned) is not exchanged in the course of barter, but is taken away without any return or payment whatsoever; in a commercial light, therefore, England becomes annually bankrupt to Bengal to the amount nearly of its own dealing; or rather, the country has suffered what is tantamount to an annual plunder of its manufactures and its produce to the value of £1,200,000.” Besides the produce of the Investment, every ship that sailed carried away the goods in which private individuals transmitted their private gains, procured with eyeless justice than the Investment itself from the natives, and without a shadow or a pretence of a return. As Burke finely said, “The cries of India were given to seas and winds to be blown about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean.” The East India Company, besides making at times large loans to the British Government were able to pay an annual tribute of £400,000 to the Treasury. This system was, both politically and economically, thoroughly unsound; and ‘from 1773 onwards, England has regarded trade with India, and not tribute from India as the financial asset which counterbalances the burden of governing the country’ (Chromer, p. 45).

India's trade relations with England under the period of the E. I. Company's Administration were one continuous tale of woe. Deliberate steps were taken by the Company to destroy the industries of the people and to make room for Western manufactures. This policy England had extended to America

and Ireland also. America got rid of it by shaking off England's dominions altogether. Ireland struggled to do the same, but did not succeed, India suffered the worst. The object aimed at by the East India Company was to reduce India to the level of a nearly agricultural country producing raw materials only, without factories to manufacture the same. By the time that the first stage of the industrial destruction of India had been completed, England found it profitable for her to throw away the crutches of Protection she had been using for more than two hundred years and which had brought her to great prosperity. The policy of free trade, *i.e.*, the having no export or import duties except merely for the purposes of revenue, greatly to the advantage of England, was forced on us too; and weak and tottering as we had been left, it exposed us to the merciless competition of the whole world. Results of a most disastrous character followed. As Gokhale put it, "The introduction of free trade into this country was followed by the rapid destruction of such small industries as had existed in the country, and the people were steadily pressed back more and more on the one resource of agriculture." It is true that the principle which lies at the root of all sound administration was forced upon the rulers of India by the convulsion of 1857, and England decided that 'administration and commercial exploitation should not be entrusted to the same hands;' but though the politically ruling caste was separate from the commercial ruling caste, India remained in much the same position in relation to her economic position. The capital, enterprise and skill of Great Britain had held India in a firm grip and this industrial domination in the words of Ranade, "has an insidious influence which paralyses the springs of all the varied acti-

vities, which together make up the life of a nation. Gokhale, on one occasion, exposed the mischief of his industrial domination of a foreign people as being less visible when compared with the disadvantages of a political domination which lie very much on the surface. We see a foreign race monopolising all power and authority and keeping the people in a state of subjection:" and we constantly feel we are living under a foreign domination, because human feelings matter more to humanity than human interests. On the other hand, the industrial domination of one people by another may come in an attractive garb. Finished articles that administer to our daily wants are given to us and, unconscious that it is in that shape that this industrial domination comes, we welcome it and fall a victim to its temptations and its attractiveness. The political domination may have dwarfed or deteriorated the manhood of the nation: but it brought in its strain many advantages, the balance being on the whole on the side of the latter. Coming to the industrial field, we find very little on the credit side and nearly all the entries on the debit side.

WHAT WAS THE PART OF INDIA?

Was India without her industrial part before the English came into this country? Gokhale's view on this point is characteristically moderate. It is true, he says, that there is very little direct or statistical evidence on this subject; but every traveller who came to this country went into raptures over India's riches in every place, though here and there we also find mention of the poverty of the mass of the people. Compared with other countries, however, India could not have been worse, and very probably she was better off than most other countries and Gokhale thought that this description might very well apply

to her right upto the end of Mohamedan rule. So many invasions as the country had witnessed must have been undertaken for some advantage to the invaders; and it is certain that India's reputed wealth must have been accumulated in some hands. The mass of the people, industrious and thrifty with a fertile soil, must have enjoyed on the whole a considerable degree of rude agricultural prosperity. To compare the India of 200 years ago with modern industrial West of machinery and steam is not proper; but compared to the West denuded of its modern advantages, India was certainly not poorer and was very probably richer than most Western countries. The attention of the Western Nations themselves was drawn to India because of the excellence of our productions—the fine muslins and many other things.

• Like Ranade and other Indian members of his school of thought Gokhale had taken his lessons in Economics from the national school of Economists headed by the great German thinker Fredrich List. According to him, when a country like India, industrially backward, with antiquated methods of manufacture, dependent largely on manual labour, comes into the vortex of universal competition with countries which use steam and machinery and the latest researches of science in their production, the first effect is to sweep off local industries, and the country is thrust back on agriculture and rendered almost entirely agricultural for some time. But when this necessary stage of the destruction of hand-made industries is reached, there comes in the duty of the State. The State should step forward, and by a judicious system of protection, it should foster such industries as are capable of being fostered, so that the country may once again enter on its indus-

trial path with the aid of the latest appliances and ultimately stand successfully the competition of the whole world. And until the new industries can stand on their own legs, it becomes the duty of the State to guard them by a protective wall.³ This is what America, France, Germany, and every rich nation of the West did even after the industrial superiority of England had been acknowledged by all; and half a century's work in this direction has shown excellent results for the countries that have adopted this policy. The result of England's policy in India has, however, been to facilitate more and more the imports of foreign commodities, until there is no country on the face of the earth to-day which is so dependent on foreign produces as India is. The most striking part of this arrangement which, in our days, has considerably excited the Tariff Reformers has been the result that India, originally intended to be almost the best market for English-made manufactures has come to be the dumping-ground for all foreigners—America, Germany, Japan and Austria. The Tariff Reformers, therefore, advocate a protective policy by forming a sort of *zollverein* of Great Britain, Greater Britain and India with a view to keep the foreigner out as much as possible; but by some prominent members of this party—Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon and even Mr. Balfour—it was made abundantly clear that while they would like to have Tariff Reform as England's policy, they would insist on keeping India in bondage, so far as her fiscal policy was concerned. Mr. M. De. P. Webb, of the Karachi Chambers of Commerce, has, in his book "India and the Empire," tried to show that it would be to the best interests of India to be a supplier of raw materials to the rest of the Empire as any dignified position of self-reliance in the

direction of having her own manufactures is denied her by her geographical and climatic conditions. That India can rest content with boluses and nostrums of these advocotes of Preferential Policy is impossible; and the nascent *Swadeshism* is refutation enough of their views.

The reactionary policy of Lord Curzon and the repressive measures adopted by the next Government created a strong wave of discontent in the country; and the idea of a Swadeshi movement prevalent only among an infinitesimally small number of advanced thinkers of India received a tremendous impulse, so that the movement came to be hailed with much enthusiasm all over India. In 1765, immediately on the passing of the Stamp Act, America had recourse to what were then called "non-importation and non-exportation" agreements with a view to rousing the conscience of the English merchants by directly affecting their interests. This weapon of passive resistance had proved sufficiently efficacious and upto the last the strong merchant class of England stood ranged on the side of the Colonists. Ireland, in despair of seeing her grievances redressed at the hands of England, had recourse to that odious movement called the "Boycott" of every thing English. A section of Indian agitators mainly in Bengal, finding that all their protests from the Press and on the platform, all their memorials to the Viceroy, to the Secretary of State and to Parliament had proved unavailing to turn the Government from their purpose of partitioning Bengal, and that no protection of any kind was forthcoming from any quarter, had in their extremity resolved to have recourse to this 'boycott' movement. They did this with a two-fold object—first as a demonstration of

their deep resentment at the treatment they were receiving, and secondly, to attract the attention of the people in England to their grievances, so that those who were in a position to call the Government of India to account might understand what was taking place in India. As a Political weapon used for a definite political purpose, Gokhale had no objection to their resorting to the 'boycott' of goods; and he even thought from his personal experience that their action had proved immensely effective in drawing the attention of the English people to the state of things in our country. He was careful to point out the risks involved in its failure and the success dependent entirely upon an extraordinary upheaval of popular feeling behind it. On an extreme occasion with all classes acting with one impulse, a boycotting demonstration might be perfectly legitimate; but as the term had, in its origin, unsavoury associations and as it conveyed to the mind before every thing else a vindictive desire to injure another to entertain such a desire as a normal feature of our relations with England was, of course, out of the question. Moreover, the cause of Swadeshism would be ill served, if only English goods were boycotted and other foreign goods were freely admitted.

Gokhale was an upholder of true Swadeshism—the service of the mother land. His whole life was one continuous chapter of self-denial in the cause of his country. Himself capable of undergoing any sacrifice, he did not hesitate to preach a little self-denial on the part of the people, if the economic 'Swadeshism' of India was at all to attain substantial growth. To ensure a ready consumption of such articles as were produced in the country and to furnish a perpetual stimulus to production by keeping

the demand for indigenous things largely in excess of supply ought to be a *sine qua non* to the success of Swadeshism. That was only possible if the people were inspired by a lasting love for their country-made things. What other countries had achieved by means of stringent orders from their Governments, India was expected to do by voluntary methods which presupposed a strong consciousness of love for the country on the part of the people. That is, certainly, a great thing to expect but the difficulties in the way of Swadeshism do not end there. The question of production is a question of capital, enterprize and skill, and in all these factors Gokhale reminded the people of their very great deficiency. Whoever can help in any one of these fields is, therefore, a worker in the Swadeshi cause and should be welcomed as such. Whoever tries to spread in the country a correct knowledge of the industrial conditions of the world and points out how we may ourselves advance, is a promoter of the Swadeshi cause. Whoever again contributes capital to be applied to the industrial development of the country must be regarded as a valued supporter of the Swadeshi movement. Then those who organise funds for sending Indian students to foreign countries to acquire industrial or scientific education or those who proceed to foreign countries for such education and try to start new industries on their return, or those who promote technical, industrial and scientific education in the country itself—all these are noble workers in the Swadeshi field. Thorough co-operation of every one is needed for its success; but if, in the name of Swadeshi, any fresh divisions are seen in the country, no greater perversion of its true spirit can be imagined.

In Gokhale the idealist was always tempered by the practical. India, unaided by the Government and in the face of competition against far advanced Westerners, had just made a start in its industrial activity; and the cotton manufactures of Bombay began to show results in every way highly gratifying. With cheap labour and cotton at her own door India enjoys exceptional advantages for the manufacture of cotton goods. Still she produces from her mills only about one-third of what she needs and imports the remaining two-thirds from outside. The capital invested in her own Cotton Industry is at present only a few crores of rupees and it ought to be nearly quadrupled if the home produce is to satisfy the home demand. To be able to reach this goal, in addition to capital, a better quality of cotton, a larger requisition of industrial skill and scientific development to produce finer fabrics will all be essentially needed; and for an attainment of this kind we must have the co-operation of all agencies in the country including the Government. Patriotic wishes apart, it has come to be realised from stern facts that coarser cloth is all that Indian Weaving Mills can produce under existing conditions. The best of authorities being agreed on this point, all India severely felt the injustice of hampering this industry in the interests of Lancashire by Government imposing in 1894 a Cotton Excise-duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ p. c. There were at that time four reasons for causing a feeling of deep and universal indignation throughout the country. First, the Indian mill industry was at that time in a state of continued depression. The second was that the industry had been hit hard by the currency legislation of the Government. The third was, that the duties were imposed only because Lancashire dictated that these duties should be so imposed, and the Government of India

made no secret that they were not a willing party to the transaction. Fourthly, Lancashire did this not because there was any real competition between Lancashire and India, but because Lancashire, already uneasy at the strides the mill industry had made in this country, wanted to handicap it in its further progress. When in 1911, the Honourable Mr. Dadabhai moved a resolution in the Supreme Council for the abolition of this iniquitous excise-duty, Gokhale gave him his support. His point of view in doing so is worthy of note. The Indian cotton industry, though in a condition of depression at that particular time, had undoubtedly, gone through a spell of extraordinary prosperity, some of the concerns being reported to have made profits of about 30 and 40 and even 50 p. c. in a single year. Except in such abnormal times as the present, he thought it was absolutely clear that the duties fell, not on the producer, but on the consumer, and the consumers of the rougher counts were the poorest of the poor. Therefore, the bulk of the duties being drawn from the pockets of the poorest people, it was a most objectionable tax and should be done away with. "The question—who pays—has latterly come to the front in connection with the tariff Reform controversy in England and one reads many bewildering statements made from time to time. I, however, think, Sir, that the position which ordinary political economists occupy in this matter is a sound one, namely, that in normal circumstances, a duty ultimately falls upon the consumer, whereas in abnormal circumstances, it may occasionally fall on the producer. Sir, if it was the case that these excise-duties fell on the producers and not on the consumers, I would not stand up here to support their abolition to-day."

| In Gokhale's public activity there is nothing that occupies a larger space than his untiring fight against racial inequality. If he cried against it on the administrative side, he was no less conscious of its baneful effect in the industrial and commercial India. It is true India has been able to obtain the use of English capital perhaps on as favourable terms as any the best Government of Europe and on slightly better terms than most of the Asiatic countries ; but the whole host of skilful bankers, brokers, merchants, manufactures, and other business-men from England, France, Germany and even Greece have done much to 'bleed' the country, as the late Lord Salisbury rather strongly put it. We are as yet comparatively weak, and it may be a long time before buffetings in the commercial world fit us up as business-men to be able to hold our own against business nations of the West ; and the British Government of India, committed as it is to the economic policy adopted by England, perhaps, can give us no such start as the German economist List would recommend for countries like India. What then should be the economic principles that we Indians in our present position advocate ? Gokhale's answer to this question is quite characteristic of the man. By conviction he was not an upholder of Free Trade in all countries and at all times. Like other noble ideals, for instance, the brotherhood of man, Free Trade for all countries, may be all right in theory, but it will be a long, long day before we shall have it in practice everywhere. | And till that time comes, every country must take care of its economic interests in its own way. Most countries have adopted Protection as their economic policy. It is, however, necessary, to remember that there are two kinds of protection, the right kind and the wrong kind. The right kind of protection is that under which

the growing industries of a country receive the necessary stimulus and encouragement and support that they require, but under which care is taken that no influential combinations, prejudicial to the interests of the general community, come into existence. Under the wrong kind of protection, on the other hand, powerful influences and combinations and interests receive assistance to the prejudice of the general community, the general tax-payers of the community. Now Gokhale believed that the right kind of protection, if available, would do good to India. An absolutely necessary prelude to our getting that kind of protection, he thought, was that the Government of this country should be conducted in accordance with the wishes and opinions of the people, not merely as imagined by the Government of India, but as ascertained by means of constitutional machinery existing for the purpose. In fact, he thought that only if the position of India were to be like the self-governing colonies of the British Empire it would be possible to impose protective tariffs and thus save our nascent industries. In our present situation, we, the tax-payers, far from having any potent voice, may be said to be dependent on the Government of India and, more than the Government of India, on the Secretary of State for India in Council. Therefore, until we grow so strong in our influence and our position in the Supreme Council that the Government would think it necessary to accept and act on our views, Gokhale believed that, on the whole, a policy of Free Trade, reasonably applied, was the safest policy for this country; "otherwise influential interests, influential combinations, influential parties in England, who can have ready access to the Secretary of State, to whom we have no such access, will not fail to take the fullest

advantage of the situation; and this huge engine of protection, which is a vast power, will be employed, not in the interests of the people of India, but in the interests of those parties. That being so, I do not think we should go in for the advocacy of protection, as such, in the present state of the country, and I for one will not be a party to such advocacy." Later on, on the same day, he said even more emphatically that 'this free trade policy for India, in its present condition is the least harmful and the safest, and till we are stronger I should not like to see it change.'

This leaves no doubt that Gokhale despaired of our fiscal independence without self-government. I have said elsewhere that the fundamental note of the latter is the responsibility of the executive to the representative body, i.e., to the tax-payer, even to the extent of being cashiered in case of misconduct. This may sound strong language; but self-government means nothing short of that. Humanly speaking, we are a long way off from that goal. But is a fair share of fiscal autonomy necessarily dependent upon what is called 'self-Government'? England is put on her defence to show that she does not govern India in the interests of Lancashire and English multi-millionaires. Why should she, then, not cease to bind India with her trade policy? Why should the Secretary of State be the dictator and the referee in matters of growing and aspiring Indian industrial and commercial undertakings? The present law makes it impossible for the Government of India to indulge in any monetary transaction of importance without a reference to the Secretary of State and, in cases of fresh loans, to the Parliament. If the Indian budget is rendered more and more an Indian concern so that in course of time it is made quite in-

dependent of the Secretary of State or the British Parliament, the pernicious influences of powerful bodies over the Secretary of State that Gokhale was afraid of, would not at all come into play. A persistent fight for an annual budget, all our own, with freedom to regulate our trade policy without any interference from England ought, therefore, to engage our immediate attention and enlist all our energy. Then the question of questions arises, will England give it? I think the charge of selfishness which she will be open to, in case of persistent refusal, will be sufficiently disconcerting for her; and the more the Indian members justify their position in the present Budget Discussions in the Reformed Councils, the more difficult will they make it for the British democracy to withhold from India the undoubted right of the tax-payer to have a potent voice in the raising and the disposal of his funds. Financial and fiscal questions are twin daughters of a nation's policy: one must go hand in hand with the other; and let real independence in these two be sought for even before we call for administrative responsibility to the popular representatives. The latter may wait; but with the former is indissolubly connected the immediate material prosperity of India.

The stock argument advanced against India's claim to a policy of Protection is the mischief likely to result therefrom in the case of the agricultural population. It is said that India's financial salvation lies in her keeping the level of her exports far above the level of imports so as to be able to pay for the cost of her administration and the use of English capital by this difference between the values of her exports and imports. Now, generally, no country buys commodities of another except with

a view to be able to pay for those commodities in the shape of her own articles to be bought in return. This exchange of goods between different countries, though measured in terms of money, is actually nothing short of a system of barter effected through the medium of "bills of exchange." For instance, the English manufacturer buying raw cotton or wheat from India and anxious to pay for it will naturally be on the look out for an Englishman who has sold his manufactured goods to India, so that no cash be, as far as possible, actually exported out of England to meet the trade requirements between England and India. Now if India adopted a Protective Policy so far as her industries went, it is expected that in course of time she would decrease her demand of English-made goods with a result that fewer 'bills of exchange' would be offered for sale in London; their price in consequence would tend to rise; and fewer English importers will, as a necessary result, be able to buy Indian wheat and cotton with advantage. Therefore, it is argued that the agriculturist population of India will not find market enough in the outside world for the disposal of their produce. In addition to this loss, they may be expected to pay a little higher for the use of commodities manufactured at home as an inevitable consequence of new industries. This is what is understood as a two-fold burden imposed on the agricultural classes by Customs duties on imported manufactures.

Now as regards the fears about the shrinking of the world-wide market for Indian raw produce, let there be no hesitation in acknowledging the fact that in certain commodities like jute and rice India holds a sort of monopoly. Such is our ensured

position there that even a small export duty on these two commodities is entertained by Government without uneasiness. If then we are so strong in this respect as not to be afraid of being undersold by competitors, we might safely expect that these Indian commodities will be bought whether or not we buy in return. For the supply of wheat and cotton too the world's market is certainly limited; and the industrial Europe has not to wait and seriously consider the course of the bills of exchange available for India, when there is an imperative call for food for either the human system or the cotton mills. For a long time at least, till fresh fields have been grown for good or raw cotton supply, India need have no fears of a slump for her agricultural products; and by the time Europe is in a position to ostracise Indian raw goods because of the latter's caring to keep her house in order, India will have enough of her own cotton mills to consume a considerable part of her raw cotton. The exports of wheat form no very appreciable figure in the total exports of the country, and it is extremely doubtful what countries of the world will be left to allow "free trading" England an unhampered passage for "bills of exchange." On this point Gokhale took his views entirely from Mr. Ranade, who never wavered in his disbelief that a gradual development of Indian industries would, at any time, disturb our financial relations with the world. A thoughtful working out of the scheme by Government is quite within the bounds of practical statesmanship, though I must repeat that a necessary prelude to it is a fiscal autonomy for the Government of India. Lancashire and the Secretary of the State must allow us to start on lines of economic independence; and with the confidence we have in the

personnel of the Government of India assisted by an army of experts, we need not fear that we shall come to grief ; for, after all, it is only a slow pioneering in the direction of Swadeshism that we advocate; but the policy must be clearly formulated. With that there must be no more dallying or shilly-shallying.

Said Lord Morely in his Indian Budget Speech for 1906, in relation to the above topic, "The strength of India, the prosperity and comfort of India, her trade and commerce, hang on exports. If the market for her foodstuffs and raw materials, her grain, timber tea and coffee, her supplies of oils, is not ample in volume and favourable in its circumstances, *how is she to bear the weight of her expenditure?*" In other words, India must keep exports above her imports so as to be able to pay for the administration, capital, etc., she is receiving. Apart from the fact that her present level of exports is not dependent on Free Trade Policy as the Free traders love to think, the question that vitally affects us and which Gokhale did his best to place before the Government and the public is, "Need we have this scale of expenditure? Can we not lower it without affecting the much-vaunted efficiency of the Indian Administration?" To this question of a poor country like India bearing an expenditure which even in a very prosperous country would not pass unchallenged, Gokhale had shown very early consideration, patient industry and a most fair-minded attitude. From the time of his first public utterance before the Welby Commission down to 1912, I find him reverting to it at every possible opportunity.



CHAPTER VII.

A FIGHT FOR EDUCATION.

ON the importance of the question of education in India, its all absorbing interest and the far-reaching consequences involved there can be no two opinions to-day. The welfare of every country is held to be in almost exact proportion to the progress and soundness of its system of educational work. Although different nations have looked at this great achievement from different points of view, all have been in agreement as to the end, that the country, as a whole, can hold its own only when its entire population consists of people capable of understanding their interests and as far as possible, free from the baneful effects of darkness, ignorance and superstition. Widespread activity in educating the masses of different nations is a comparatively recent movement with hardly sixty years of life behind it, though the English settlers in America had all along done their utmost to develop the faculties of the people by liberating the school-master.*

* Macaulay in the course of a speech delivered in the House of Commons on April 18, 1847, said "one of the earliest laws enacted by the Puritan Colonists was that every township, as soon as the Lord had increased it to the number of fifty houses, should appoint one to teach all children to write and read, and that every township of a hundred houses should set up a grammar school. Nor have the descendants of those who made this law ever ceased to hold that the public authorities were bound to provide the means of public

Laissez Faire England for a long time resisted the idea of making education other than a piece of private, voluntary, philanthropic work. Strenuous efforts extending over nearly a quarter of a century were needed to make the people recognise that it was the duty of the State to dispel the ignorance of the common people which was the principal cause of danger to the persons and property of the people as illustrated in the riots that had disturbed the country from time to time and therefore "Whoever had a right to hang had a right to educate." This slow conversion of the race to an observance of one of the first and noblest duties of the State is only an illustration of the conservative instinct of the Englishman even in matters vitally affecting his growth: but for this inherent dislike for every innovation, it would be inconceivable how such a beneficent movement should have failed to receive a ready response. "The problem of education might have seemed the very simplest. After the extension of the franchise to the workmen, everybody felt in a happy phrase of that time, that 'we must educate our masters.' Outside events were supposed to hold a lesson. The triumphant North in America was the land of the common school. The victory of Prussians over Austrians at Sadowa in 1886 was called the victory of the elementary school teacher."—(Morley's Life of Gladstone, Vol. 2, p. 229). By the Act of 1870,

education. Nor is this doctrine confined to new England. "Educate the people," was the legacy of Washington to the nation which he had saved. "Educate the people," was the unceasing exhortation of Jefferson; and I quote Jefferson with peculiar pleasure, because of all the eminent men that have ever lived, Adam Smith himself not excepted, Jefferson was the one who most abhorred every thing like meddling on the part of Government. Yet the chief business of his later years was to establish a good system of State education in Virginia."

education was recognised as State duty, the country to provide schools and to get the children into them. The question of National education touching the moral life and death of nations could not be deferred any longer. Two decades later, by the Act of 1892, the boon of free and compulsory education was extended to Ireland as well.

• The history of the progress of education in India was until very recently, none too cheering. Charles Grant, a member of the Court of Directors of the East Indian Company, laid before the Court in the year 1797 his *Observations on the state of Society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain*, in which he lamented the degeneracy and baseness to which the ancient civilized races of India had been reduced by nearly five centuries of a general corruption of manners and distressing growth of misery by their vices. (To lift up a country, "peculiarly calculated by its natural advantages to promote the happiness of its inhabitants," education was the only panacea suggested by him, and by 'education' he meant what has since been known as English education. Beyond a forcible expression of this aspiration and a fairly careful debate on it in the Court of Directors, apparently nothing was done; but the idea slowly gathered strength.) For another quarter of a century after this first utterance on the subject of Western education in India, the British Government did its little duty by the people by encouraging the indigenous learning of the country which had fallen into a miserable state of decay even a hundred years earlier than the disruption of the Mongal Empire on the representations of the first Lord Minto in 1811 and under Parliamentary pressure an annual grant of not less than one lakh of Rupees was to

be set apart for educational purposes in India ; but it was not till 1823 that a Committee of Public Instruction was formed with a view to direct that expenditure on the revival of Arabic and Sanskrit Learning according to the interpretation given to the despatch of 1813. Meanwhile, the Christian missionary movement in India, and " a spontaneous demand for liberal education on the part of some more advanced thinking members of the Hindu community in Calcutta" contrived to agitate for an encouragement of Western education which by the Indians of those days, was felt to be " a large part of the secret of the superior efficiency of nations from the West." The idea of introducing Western liberal thought and culture in India was for a long time combated by a strong section of narrow-minded administrators on the plea of its being a powerful awakener and coalescer of the otherwise hopelessly discordant and heterogeneous peoples of this country in the disunion of which, they believed, was the safety of their own rule. Imaginary fears of this sort have, from time to time, found expression even in some responsible quarters ; and it is much to be regretted that, on every occasion for a furtherance of this policy, these birds of evil presage have grated on our ears with their melancholy song.' On the other hand, pages of the history of British Government in India are seen copiously illumined by the sympathetic utterances of Great Statesmen of large and liberal views like those of the Marquis of Hastings in 1818, " It would be treason against British sentiments to imagine that it ever could be the principle of this Government to perpetuate ignorance in order to secure paltry and dishonest advantages over the blindness of the multitude." Lord Curzon expressed the utility of giving education in the following vigorous language :—" What is the

greatest danger in India? What is the source of suspicion, superstition, outbreaks of crime—yes, also of much of the agrarian discontent and suffering among the masses? It is ignorance. And what is the only antidote to ignorance? Knowledge. In proportion as we teach the masses, so we shall make their lot happier, so they will become more useful members of the body-politic.”)

The three great cities of India—Calcutta, Madras and Bombay—having already under different conditions received an impulse in the direction of educational activity, it was reserved for Macaulay in 1835 to give a finishing touch to the question that State aid was thenceforward to be confined to “The promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India,” (Resolution of Lord William Bentick’s Government, dated 7th March 1835). Twenty years’ experience of a miserably slow march upward and a strong movement for the education of the common people in England resulted in the famous Sir Charles Wood’s Despatch of 1854—popularly known as the Magna Charta of Education in India—which established the principle of extending education among the masses as an important State duty. An analysis of this Despatch will leave absolutely no doubt of the sincerity of the purpose with which the Court of Directors were inspired to tackle one of the most difficult and costly undertakings in a country like India.” It is one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon the natives of India those vast and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge, and which India may, under Providence, derive from her connection with England. A little further on it declares emphatically “that the education which we desire to see

extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe; in short, of European knowledge." The comprehensiveness of this Despatch may be judged from its outlining a complete and systematic organisation of education in India from the University to the elementary school. "It is nothing short of a complete system of national education which it sketches. The Despatch of 1854 is thus the climax in the history of Indian education; what goes before leads to it; what follows flows from it."—(H. R. James's *Education and Statesmanship in India*, p. 38). Quite a quarter of a century later Lord Ripon's Government appointed an Education Commission in 1882 to take stock of the present and report on future requirements. The recommendations of this Commission, as will be found from the references to them in the course of this chapter, proved too much for the retrogressive Government of Lord Dufferein, who believed that the State had already done enough for education which, for the rest, might fall upon the generosity of the people of this country. Until the vigorous hand of Lord Curzon assumed command of the helm of the Government of India, we find educational growth left mainly in the hands of private agencies in many cases supported by the State grant-in-aid-funds. The interval was therefore necessarily characterised by sloth and stagnation all the more lamentable in face of the phenomenal progress witnessed in other countries of the world, making thereby the go-ahead grow restless and exclaim indignantly with the poet:—

" Ah dismal—souled !

The winds of Heaven blew, the Ocean rolled,
And ye felt them not ?"

GOKHALE'S EARLY WORK.

“When the history of education in India comes to be written the name of the Honourable mover (Gokhale) will be writ large” was the appreciative expression of the Government in connection with the strenuous labours of Gokhale on education. Himself a great educationist working with the utmost sacrifice on a mere subsistence allowance with the sole object of imparting higher education to the young men of Poona, he had enjoyed rare opportunities of watching the progress of education, both in quality and quantity. But while to the immediate work of training the young mind was given Gokhale's sympathy, love and a considerable part of daily routine, all his serious thoughts had their place in a comprehensive outlook for the regeneration of his country. The Educational policy of the Government of India along with the system of its working, therefore, began to engage his earnest attention ever since he took the vow of service to his motherland; and like every other measure of administration in India, the question of Education was viewed by him in proper perspective, shorn of all the gorgeous array in which the official statistics oftentimes clothed it for public exhibition. Here as elsewhere his two great masters, Messrs. Ranade and Joshi, smoothed his path by supplying him with the machinery of figures unearthed from tomes repellent for their bulk and dry-as-dust subject-matter. The apt pupil went straight to his work with the most docile of spirits, most patient industry, great intelligence and splendid imagination. So early as 1896, at the Tenth Annual General meeting of the Bombay Graduates' Association he delivered an address, the large part of which was simply an

earnest of his latter-day activity in the cause of free and compulsory primary education in India. Armed with facts which he had evidently been at great pains to gather he showed his audience how miserably slowly India had progressed in the direction of every kind of education, in spite of the delusive boast of the then Government that their work in regard to public education had been wonderful and their liberality 'marked and powerful.' It might be true, he said, that if for comparison reference were made to the immediate past of this country, the percentage in progress would be found to be fairly appreciable: but "England's performance must be judged by the character of her rule and by the measure of her undertaking and promises, and if a comparison is to be instituted, it must be between her work in India and her own work elsewhere—in the United Kingdom and the Colonies." In these words and by an actual marshalling of facts to bring out the disappointing contrast between Indian and other parts of the British Empire, even in matters of Education, he took a new stand-point to bring home to the Government and the people of the country the distressing fact of our lagging far behind other parts of the British Empire. The address delivered by Gokhale on this occasion contained in embryo all his future work in this noble cause; and though the fervour and the glow of his latter-day utterances grew with the growth of deep convictions in the greatness of the achievement, even this speech was not without some purple patches of eloquence. For instance, contrasting the sympathetic and progressive character of the Ripon Resolution with the mortifyingly retrogressive aspect of Lord Dufferin's Despatch he exclaims, "And how characteristic is the difference in spirit between the Ripon Resolu-

tion and the Dufferin Resolution—how closely corresponding to the difference between a peace-loving Viceroy and one who allowed himself to fall under the influence of Jingoism between a Viceroy of beneficent domestic reforms and a Viceroy bent upon a spirited foreign policy.' Lord Harris had complained that the educated classes had got disaffected towards him because during his tenure of office as Governor of Bombay he had specially attempted to further the interests of the masses in the matter of primary education and other things. Gokhale, pointing to the true causes of his unpopularity, burst forth, "Gentlemen, is it possible, is it conceivable that Englishmen could be more enthusiastic, more keen on this subject of the spread of the primary education than ourselves? To them at best, it can only mean the discharge of a great present duty. But to us it means the future salvation of our country. Who can realise more keenly than ourselves that the fate of our country is bound up with the spread of education among the masses?"

The demand for his evidence before the Welby Commission of 1897 brought Gokhale for the first time before the official and the Indian public; and as this Royal Commission was appointed to scrutinise all items of expenditure in India, education had also to come in for consideration though for far less than its importance required. The sharp contrast between the increase of expenditure on Public Instruction in the United Kingdom and Ireland on the one hand and that in India on the other hand evoked from Gokhale the pathetic exclamation, 'One cannot help thinking that it is all the difference between children and step-children.' The dreariness of the situation was placed before

the examining body by the distressing fact that in India 'out of every 100 children of school-going age 88 are growing up in darkness and ignorance, and consequent moral helplessness.' On account of the fall in exchange, the rupee had depreciated in terms of the sovereign and European officials who had to make remittances home were hard put to it. To make up for their losses, Government in some cases too generously, allowed them an Exchange Compensation Allowance. Gokhale severely commented on this procedure adopted in face of a repeated pronouncement of the Government that they could not further the cause of education on the ground of their financial embarrassment, whereas 'a sum larger than the whole educational expenditure of Government was given away to its European officials with one stroke of the pen.'

With a seat at first on the Legislature of his own Province of Bombay in 1900 and two years after that on the Imperial Legislative Council, Gokhale felt that his responsibilities as a representative of the articulate and the inarticulate parts of his country had increased even more than the meagrely limited opportunities for a free expression of views actually warranted. It is a trite maxim that it is not so much the office that gives dignity and importance to the man, as the *man* who elevates and ennobles the office. Was it possible for the Educationist-Patriot even for a moment to abate his burning desire to see the larger claims of education for all classes pressed with the Government; whose own interests, he urged, were vitally dependant on the rapid spread of light and a high level of intelligence among the masses? Allowing for the insurmountable limitations imposed on a private member for the achieve-

ment of a public measure very dear to his heart but for various reasons apathetically received by Government, it may be unhesitatingly said that Gokhale did yeoman service in the Council on the question of Education. Some brief references to his ceaseless vigilance in this cause will illustrate the point.

In the Bombay Legislative Council he had only one occasion to speak on Education, and then he drew the attention of the Government to the 'utterly inelastic' character of expenditure on education by the Local Boards who met their demands for the same out of a provision of one anna cess raised in proportion to the revisional assessment of revenue taking place generally after thirty years. This defect had been briefly touched upon by him in his evidence before the Welby Commission; and to produce more satisfactory results he exhorted the Bombay Government to make expenditure on primary education a certain proportion of the total provincial revenues. Lord Curzon had announced 'Education in India as one of the twelve great measures for reform receiving his utmost attention; and even before Gokhale had his first say in the Imperial Council the Simla Educational Conference of 1901 had been called and the Viceroy had briefly outlined the points of reform upon which the Government experts might deliberate. The country was anxiously looking forward to the result and the Indian and the Anglo-Indian Press was kept fairly busy speculating over what might possibly come of it. Meanwhile Gokhale's earnestness in the matter of Educational Progress was noticed by the country in some of his eloquent utterances, e.g., "My Lord, it is a melancholy fact that while with us nine children out of every ten are growing up in ignorance and darkness,

and four villages out of every five are without a school, our educational expenditure has been almost marking time for many years past; whereas in England, where every child of school-going age must attend a school, the Government expenditure on education has mounted from $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions to $11\frac{1}{4}$ millions sterling in the course of fifteen years, and Lord Rosebury is not yet satisfied!" (1902, Budget Speech). The Government of Lord Curzon had been the first to adopt, in the year 1902, the policy of making special grants to Education, and Gokhale, thanking the Government for the same, expressed a hope that these grants increasing with time might be made a part of the permanent expenditure of the State on Education, so that Education in course of time might become an Imperial Charge like the Army and the Railways. Once more he lamented the inelasticity of expenditure in primary education as it had been handed over to the Local Boards whose one-anna cess was incapable of augmentation till their next revision after a lapse of thirty years; and the figures invariably submitted by him to strengthen his argument told a sad tale. The Government of India Resolution of 1904 on Education admitted that what had been already done by the Government in the direction of primary education was very little in comparison with what remained to be done; and when in the budget of 1905 a grant of 35 lakhs of rupees was made to Provincial Governments for additional expenditure on Primary Education, Gokhale heartily thanked the Government for the boon, and the year following he urged them to make primary education free in all schools throughout the country since a sacrifice of only $30\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees—the total realisation of fees as then calculated—should not be considered a heavy strain on the Government. On the same occa-

sion he, for the first time, suggested that the next step might be the introduction of the principle of making primary education compulsory in the Presidency towns and perhaps in a few other leading places. In November 1906 the Government of India issued a circular letter to the Local Governments inviting their opinion on making primary education free; and in the Financial Statement of 1907-08, the Finance Member, Hon. Mr. Baker, made the following important pronouncement: "The budget includes no provision for making education free of charge in primary schools: but we are in communications with Local Governments on this important question, and we have received an assurance from the Secretary of State that, notwithstanding the absence of a budget grant, if a suitable scheme is submitted to and approved by him, he will authorize us to introduce it in the course of the year if the financial position then permits." This drew from Gokhale an outburst of joyful thanksgiving and a warm acknowledgement of the most sympathetic attitude of the Hon. Mr. Baker towards Gokhale's aspirations for universal free primary education throughout India, which the Home Member, Sir Arundel, had only a few months before considered "A large order" and which according to him was "the distant peak to be one day attained while the work of the present must be slow progress along the plain." This ludicrous contrast elicited from Gokhale a remark that the incident served only to emphasise the necessity of entrusting the Educational portfolio to such members as felt some enthusiasm for the subject. On this occasion of the Budget Discussion (March 1907) his views on the introduction of the principle of compulsory education seemed to be more matured, strengthened as he was by the successful experiments His

Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda had been making in his State. In 1908 March again in support of his view that the State should accept it as a sacred obligation resting on it to provide for the free and compulsory education of its children he adduced a fresh argument deserving the careful thought of the reader. "The expenditure on the Army, the Police and similar services may be necessary, but it is a necessary evil, and consistently with the maintenance of a proper standard of efficiency it must be kept down as far as possible. On the other hand, no State, especially in these days, can expend too much on an object like education."

WHERE LIES THE IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION?

Is universal primary education likely to usher in a millenium in India? Perhaps both the question and the answer may appear superfluous when the reader believes that every sane man appreciates the great good accruing from education. Yet voices of dissent and doubt were not wanting in and outside the Council when Gokhale moved his Education Bill. Thus, analysing the official opposition against his Bill he referred to a few Rip Van Winkles who appeared to be sublimely unconscious as to what was going on not only in the rest of the world, but in India itself. The irony of the situation was remarkable when an Inspector of Schools in Madras was found among the ranks of these cynics, "who do not understand the value of mass education done anywhere." Sir Gangadhar Rao Chitnavis thought that village economy would be disturbed by weaning children from the side of their parents in matters of

co-partnership in labour and even went the length of doubting the utility of rudimentary knowledge among the working classes who were likely to grow averse to manual labour on account of their association in early life with better classes of people and their acquiring "the vitiated taste for ease inseparable from school education." The Hon. Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan taking his stand on the "well-known saying that a 'little learning is a dangerous thing'" would do no such thing as encourage 'this acquisition of a little learning' among the agriculturists or artisans, for he "doubted very much if all these luminaries who would come out from these schools would condescend to look after their ancestral homely occupations or would rather be inclined to a cosy room and an electric punkah." The Hon. Nawab Abdul Majid in supporting the view of Sir G. Chitnavis about the labour difficulty, owing to the educated agriculturist's supposed aversion to his hereditary trade and profession and the consequent longing for some higher work, believed that a dangerous labour problem would ensue. "Socialistic ideas, which are absent from our country, are bound to come into existence. The people who are in affluent circumstances (perhaps like the speaker himself) will be looked upon with envious eyes. Their wealth will be considered to be illegal gains which will be considered as rather to be divided among all."

Expressions like those quoted above are enough of an apology for Gokhale and the untiring band of his compatriots in their availing themselves of every opportunity to bring home to the Indian world the advantages of spreading education among the masses. In his enthusiasm for the measure dear to

his heart he never lost sight of the imperfections in life that must still continue to be the lot of common man. Education was not the magician's wand at a touch of which all the ills of life would disappear at once. But with the diffusion of universal education the mass of our countrymen will have a better chance in life. With universal education there will be hope of better success for all efforts, official or non-official, for the amelioration of the people—their social progress, their moral improvement, their economic well-being. "The exactions of the money-lender, the abuses of official authority by petty men in power and the frauds of buyers of their goods will be largely decreased if the rural man knows only how to read and write. Ravages of plague and malaria will be considerably abated if the villager's literacy enables him to take advantage of leaflets and pamphlets issued by Government, from time to time, directing people to proper methods of sanitation, etc. Superstition—the insuperable obstacle in the way of all reform in India,—will undoubtedly disperse at the first appearance of the light of education, and a higher level of thought, of comfort and of health will ensue as His Majesty the King-Emperor of India was pleased to say. All the West looks upon general education as the foundation and necessary antecedent of increased economic activity in all branches of national production in agricultural, small industries, manufactures and commerce.* Even the inequality in the distribution of the proceeds of labour responsible for the discontent that the honourable

* "The rapid spread and utilization of improvements are immensely promoted by intellectual communication. Mere ability to read and write opens at once a whole new world. He who possesses it can learn from the experience of all mankind, no longer from that of his parents and masters only." (Taussig's *Principles of Economics*, Vol. I., p. 102).

Nawab Abdul Majid contemplated with horror could only be mitigated by education, for which, in the United States the utmost facilities are offered to every one with a view to giving him a reasonably fair start in life. General prosperity, social peace, and the development of all the powers of the nation are possible only through the channel of popular education of the masses; therefore education with them is one of the most important duties of the State. In this connection it is well worth quoting a few lines from Gokhale's speech of March 1911, p. 367, on the occasion of asking for leave to introduce his Elementary Educational Bill:—"My Lord, an American Legislator, addressing his countrymen more than half a century ago, once said that if he had the Archangel's trump, the blast of which could startle the living of all nations, he would sound it in their ears and say: 'Educate your children, educate all your children, educate every one of your children.' The deep wisdom and passionate humanity of this aspiration is now generally recognised, and in almost every civilised country, the State to-day accepts the education of the children as a primary duty resting upon it. Even if the advantages of an elementary education be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement. But elementary education for the mass of people means something more than a mere capacity to read and write. It means for them a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It means the greater moral and economic efficiency of the individual. It means higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally. He

who reckons these advantages lightly may as well doubt the value of light and fresh air in the economy of human health." When Gokhale urged that the test of a good Government was the extent to which education had been diffused among the people, Sir Harcourt Butler, on behalf of the Government, gave the Council the following very eloquent assurance of sympathy: "But the course of the Government of India is quite clear. It has laid down its policy in regard to education in unmistakable terms. A hundred years ago, exactly a century ago, in the year 1811, Lord Minto, who looks down upon us in this Council from that wall, penned his famous minute in which he said—for the first time in the course of British rule, it was then said—that the ignorance of the people was subversive to good Government and conducive to crime. Sir, the Greek hero caught in the mist prayed for light to see his enemies. Ignorance is our enemy; and our prayer is for light to expose and shatter that insidious foe."

On March 18th, 1910, Gokhale moved the following Resolution before the Council for its consideration:—

'That this Council recommends that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed Commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals.' In support of this Resolution, after emphasising the advantages of the education of the common people, referred to above, he enlarged on the meagre results shown by the Indian Government in connection with education as a melancholy contrast to the great progress achieved by other

countries that had adopted the system of free and compulsory education. In the Despatch of 1854, in the Government Resolution of 1892, based on the Report of the Education Commission of 1882, and again in the Resolution of 1902 of the Government of Lord Curzon, the duty of the State in diffusing education among the masses had been solemnly recognised and Gokhale lamented that the voluntary principle adopted by the Government had raised the percentage of school-going children from 1·2 to only 1·9 of the total population in the course of a whole quarter of a century, whereas the compulsory principle adopted by other civilized countries had brought the percentage to 21 in the United States of America, 20 to 17 in Canada, 15 in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Norway, Netherland, 14 in France, 13 in Denmark, 12 in Belgium, 11 in Japan, between 8 and 9 in Italy, Greece and Spain, between 4 and 5 in Portugal and Russia where it is not compulsory, and 5 p. c. even in Baroda, which had recently introduced the principle of compulsion. Looking at the question altogether from a practical point of view he thought that 4 years' schooling being quite good for our purposes, i. e., children between 6 and 10, i. e., 12 p. c. of the total male population should always be in attendance at school. According to the last quinquennial report 3 p. c. of the male population was already attending and costing a total expenditure of one crore and 36 lakhs. Now, quadrupling the present percentage of attendance would mean the quadrupling the expenditure which may come to about 5½ crores, i. e., about 4 crores more than what was being actually spent, the burden of which might be divided between the State and local bodies in the proportion of two-thirds and one-third, as was the case in Scotland. A synopsis of Gokhale's proposals on this occasion

were thus tabulated by Sir Harvey Adamson—the then Home Member of the Government of India under whom 'Education rubbed shoulders with Police, Jails, etc. :—

(1) The children to be dealt with are males of ages between six and ten.

(2) To educate them all is calculated to cost four times the present expenditure of 136 lakhs, or 544 lakhs.

(3) This expenditure should be worked up gradually in a period of 20 years, at the end of which there would be provision for educating the whole.

(4) Government and local bodies should bear the expenditure in the proportion of two to one.

(5) Local Boards and Municipalities should be empowered with the previous sanction of the local Government to make primary education compulsory.

(6) The ordinary rule should be that when 33 p. c. of children in a local area are already attending school, attendance should be made compulsory.

(7) These provisions should be applied at first to towns of over 100,000 population.

(8) In other areas efforts should be made by increasing the number of schools to work up to 33 p. c. of attendance, at which stage attendance might be made compulsory.

(9) Education should be a divided head with the object of giving the Imperial Government a greater

control over Local Government so as to ensure that the programme is carried out steadily.

(10) A statement of progress in Education should be appended annually to the Financial Statement.

(11) A separate Secretary should be appointed to the Home Department for the purpose of dealing with Education.

(12) The additional expenditure should be met in one or more of the following ways in order of merit :—

- (a) Retrenchment.
- (b) Normal expanse of revenue.
- (c) That portion of the Famine Relief Grant and the amount of $\frac{3}{4}$ millions under railways which are at present devoted to redemption of debt.
- (d) Increase of import duties from 5 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ p. c.
- (e) Export duty on jute and other commodities.
- (f) Increase of salt-tax.

(13) Primary Education should be made free when it has reached the stage at which it can be made compulsory.

(14) These provisions should not apply to female education which, however, should be accelerated.

Gokhale, in his Resolution, wanted the Government to appoint a commission to make enquiries and report on the introduction of free and compulsory education and by the way submitted his scheme for consideration ; but the Government thinking that the

Resolution contained items of a new and far-reaching nature that it had been sprung on them without notice, without their having an opportunity of examining it, could not accept the idea of appointing a commission. On a distinct promise that his suggestions would be carefully examined by the Government of India, he withdrew his resolution.

About the same time next year (1911) Gokhale asked for leave to introduce his Elementary Educational Bill. The main point of the mover was the gradual introduction of the principle of compulsion into the system of elementary education in the country; for, as pointed out by him on various occasions, no civilised country had made any substantial progress in this direction till the principle of compulsion had been adopted, and the slow progress in the diffusion of education in India itself stood as a reproach to the policy in vogue. In connection with the latter, nothing bears a more eloquent testimony than the words of Mr. Orange, the Director of Education in his last quinquennial report:—"But the rate of increase in the last 25 years or the last 5 years is more slow than when compared with the distance that has to be travelled before primary education can be universally diffused. If the number of boys at school continued to increase even at the rate of increase in population, even then several generations would still elapse before all the boys of school age were in school." When the Education Act of 1870 required England to adopt the method of compulsion, Mr. Gladstone, himself the greatest opponent of everything that admitted of coercion, had regretfully to recognise the necessity of introducing compulsion in the midst of their 'advanced civilisation and enormous wealth.' A Royal Commission appointed in England in 1866

to report on the working of this principle in England and Wales had borne ungrudging testimony to the great effect which compulsion had produced on school attendance. Short-sighted parents who were eager to take what advantage they could of the earnings of their children were thus directly under the influence of compulsion: and the apathetic parents yielding weakly to their children's wish not to go to school were keenly alive to the disgrace of being brought before a Magistrate, the fear of which supplied a stimulus sufficient to make them do their duty in this respect. The Ceylon Commission of 1905 appointed to deal with the question whether attendance should be made compulsory, expressed themselves thus that "where there is no compulsion, boys attend very irregularly and leave school very early. That compulsory attendance is desirable we have no doubt." Gokhale therefore submitted that a beginning should be made in India of following in the wake of other nations. "When England introduced compulsion in 1870, about 43 p. c. of her children of school-going age were at school, and ten years sufficed for her to bring all her children to school. When Japan took up compulsion, about 28 p. c. of her school-going population was at school, and Japan covered the whole field in about twenty years." Though Indian difficulties were greater and therefore Indian progress was bound to be slower, yet if a beginning were made to resolutely press forward to the goal, the difficulties would vanish and the journey would be accomplished with comparative ease. In some quarters fears had been expressed that 'compulsion' introduced by a foreign Government might render it unpopular. To that Gokhale's reply was that Ceylon was as much under a foreign Government; but still to meet this objection, his bill provided that the first

steps in the direction of compulsion should be taken by our Local Bodies and that also in carefully selected and advanced areas, its application, to begin with, being confined to boys only. The injudicious zeal of the Local Bodies could again be checked by the Provincial and Imperial Governments who might give their sanction only when thoroughly satisfied of the existence of the required conditions. The purely permissive character of the Bill was patent from the fact that it merely proposed to empower Municipalities and District Boards to introduce compulsion in the case of boys only when one-third of the boys of school-going age were already at school and when the Local Bodies were prepared to meet their share of the expenditure as might be determined, (by the Legislature).

The very idea of 'compulsion' came in for a deal of criticism; and fears were roused that the exaction of a low-paid agency would cause hardship and discontent. Sir Harcourt Butler, the Member in charge of Education, himself believed that there was a very common dread of official compulsion worked through the police or some other special agency and that the most beneficial measures might be distorted into oppression by local tyrants no less than by a subordinate agency. Gokhale believed that these fears were absurdly exaggerated; but if people were so weak as to succumb easily to such exactions, the only way in which they could be strengthened was by spreading education among them and by enabling them to take better care of themselves. The honourable Mr. Dadabhoy had his apprehension that the District officer who practically ran the whole show of the Local Self-Government would be armed with further powers in the administration of the District;

but on that score the honourable Mr. Basu gave him an assurance that the necessity of having to put their hands in their pockets for money in the shape of an education-cess would render the measure impossible, if the people themselves did not press for it. To the opinion of Sir Reginald Craddock, quoted in the Council, that 'the very first principle of human nature to like doing what it desires, and to dislike being made to do what it dislikes,' the honourable Mr. Basu had his effective reply that as Lord William Bentick, by compulsory legislation had prevented the burning, even voluntary, of about 700 'satis' annually, so the proposed legislation for introducing compulsion in education was eventually likely to save $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people from the ravages of plague, cholera and malaria largely brought on them by their dense ignorance; and the Honourable Mr. Madan Mohan Malaviya reminded the Council that 'to establish and maintain order and to repress crime, a certain amount of compulsion, of restraint, had to be exercised on the wills and actions of individuals. In promoting social welfare the system of vaccination, for instance, had been made compulsory by the provision of Vaccination Act: similarly the introduction of water-works and drainage had not obtained the consent of the general public and yet the people had to submit to them for the general good and had to pay taxes, had to undergo hardships, prosecution and so on. Any further comment on this 'bogie of compulsion' is superfluous, as without some measure of it the very idea of society falls to the ground. With compulsion to fall back upon, persuasion may, by all means, be given full play.

On the question whether India in its present position was prepared to accept the principle of the Bill the Council was divided. All Local Governments believed that we were not yet ripe for it. The

Bengal Government, for instance, saw no objection '*per se*' to the principle of compulsory elementary education, but urged that the conditions essential to its success had yet to be created; and the Madras Government said, 'It is an axiom that universal education of the masses is the goal to be aimed at, and all who have the interests of the country at heart are equally interested in bringing about this consumation, ' but they could not recommend the adoption of the Bill for some time to come. On the other hand, the Government of India, even, through their representative Sir Harcourt Butler the member for Education, were clearly not afraid of introducing the principle of compulsion in the matter of elementary education; for said the Member, "We are all of us working for the same object. I should rejoice as much as they (Mr. Gokhale and those who support this motion) to see a condition of things in which elementary vernacular education could be compulsory and free in India. The Government of India are deeply concerned to bring about such a condition of things." What then was meant by their saying that Indian conditions were not yet ready for it, what were the real difficulties in the way of the Government accepting the principle of compulsion and acting upon it? "If we pass this measure, we must mean it to be a real effective measure, not a sham. If we accept the principle of the Bill as practical, we must be prepared to put it into force and we must finance it, whether we pay two-thirds of the cost or some other proportion. We are practical legislators here.....either we must mean business and see the thing through or must drop the Bill....." This was the frank view of the situation taken by the Education Member; and on a further analysis of it he showed that it was the duty of the State to look to the progress in quality as well as in

quantity—a solid improvement in our elementary schools, concurrently with the quantitative expansion of it. The success of the school depending on the teacher, the paucity of the right stamp of teacher rendered the outlook rather gloomy. Several official members, including the Honourable Mr. Sharp, referred to this difficulty and therefore believed that we had better wait till we had the wherewithal. In reply to this Gokhale reminded them of the futility of similar objections raised in the Parliament on the eve of the Education Act of 1870 and thought that if we called upon a local body merely to build schools, and merely to have trained teachers without saying where they were to work, no body would take such a proposal seriously. The only way to make the thing effective was by giving the local bodies at the same time the power to compel attendance. The two things must go hand in hand and for a time we must be satisfied even with untrained teachers. The Bombay Government itself after vainly insisting on being equipped with trained staffs of teachers had, in their Resolution of 1911, to propose to place primary education on an indigenous aided basis in rural areas, giving grants to untrained teachers and allowing them to teach as well as they could, the curriculum, of course, being under the control of the Department; and Gokhale's whole contention was not to wait for trained teachers and for decent school-houses for the purpose of removing illiteracy from the land, but to begin at once and to effect improvements with the growth of funds.

Sir Harcourt Butler's interpretation of the Bill was that the Government were asked to introduce compulsion in the more advanced localities *at the cost of* the expansion of the voluntary system in the backward areas and therefore he argued that the Bill was calcu-

lated to damage the cause of elementary education. This same apprehension had roused the hostility of many who were quite sympathetically inclined to the cause of mass education. The honourable Mr. Mahomed Shaffi (of the Punjab), for instance, referred to 'the serious consequences likely to result from partial compulsion in urban areas upon the general advancement of the country as a whole, and he thought that the comparative advancement of one section of our people within limited areas and the relative backwardness of the rest of this vast Continent did not constitute a state of things conducive to the general welfare of the country as a whole. Gokhale, however, did his best to assure them that such a result was very far from the intentions of the Bill. "I do not want that the provincial Governments should reduce in any way the expenditure that they are already incurring on the primary education of backward areas. And I do not, for a moment, suggest that future grants for primary education in backward areas on a voluntary scale should be reduced. But what I want is that, if certain local bodies want to go in for compulsion and are prepared to find a part of the cost, the Imperial Government out of their own Exchequer, should come forward to the assistance of these bodies and provide the rest of their cost that would be required.....What I say, therefore, is that without touching the revenues of provincial Governments, if any local body wanted to go in for compulsion and raised the part of the cost, the Government of India should come forward and supplement that cost out of their own Exchequer. I do not see how this would constitute any disadvantage to the backward areas which in their turn would also be benefitted by the arrangement."

The Honorable Mr. Dadabhoj again expressed his fears that this great demand on the purse of the Government of India for the purposes of Universal Elementary Education might cause an undesirable diversion of funds from the support of higher education. Sir Ashutosh Mukerjee and his colleagues on the syndicate of the Calcutta University had objected to Gokhale's Bill on the score of developing the mass education at the expense of higher education, for they all thought the Government might find it difficult to look effectively to the needs of both sorts of education. The Honorable Mr. Mazharul Haque relieved Gokhale of the need of a reply to this display of unreasonable distrust and suspicion of the often-repeated declarations and the pledges of the Government of India by reminding them of the words of the Viceroy, uttered at the Convocation of Calcutta University only two days before the discussion of Gokhale's Bill:—"Impressed by the considerations which are so peculiar to the Calcutta University and remembering the stirring words which His Imperial Majesty addressed to the members of our Senate, the Government of India have decided to make a solid advance in the direction of Teaching and Residential Universities. . . ." I also hope, as I have already said, that teaching and residential Universities may be multiplied throughout India, for I believe, they will do great things for the improvement of higher education. . . ." And later on, again, in the course of the same speech His Excellency had been pleased to say:—"technical education, primary education, female education, all which, as the scheme mature and funds become available, we desire to carry through in consultation with Local Governments." There was, therefore, not the slightest doubt that the Government would go behind these solemn pledges of their own and starve higher education in favour of primary education.

The last word on the chances of the success of the scheme yet remains to be said. Whence is all the necessary money to come? The Honourable Mr. Jinnah uttered a sort of stentorian cry into the ear of the Finance Member, "Find money! Find money!! Find money!!!.....If you say you have not got enough money, discover and tap new sources of taxation." The supporters of the Bill would not believe that the Government, if it willed, could not lay hands on money enough to finance the scheme; while the Government frankly confessed their inability to take up the Bill, because of their want of money and their refusal, in the words of Honourable Mr. Sharp, "to lay the finance of this country on a veritable bed of Procrustes." The non-official circle was never tired of repeating that Education should be looked upon as no less a solemn duty of the State than provision for the security of the person and the property of every member of the State: and if Government were able to find money for the maintenance of a huge army, and an expansive machinery for the suppression of crime and establishing order and law in the land, where should be the difficulty in finding ways and means for rooting out ignorance, the parent of all poverty, misery and crime? The mover of the Bill offered his own constructive scheme to meet the cost of the whole. He had calculated that ten per cent of the male population, being between 6 and 10 years of age, should be required to attend and that would bring the figure of school-going children to $12\frac{1}{2}$ millions, out of which 4 millions were already at school. The remaining $8\frac{1}{2}$ were to cost altogether about $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores a year at the average rate of Rs. 5 per head as given by Mr. Orange, the Director-General of Education. The Local Bodies being required, in the first instance, to apply for the introduc-

tion of the principle of compulsion they must base their demand on their ability to finance the undertaking in part, and Gokhale wished one-third of the cost to be borne by them and the remaining two-thirds to be charged upon the Imperial Revenue. By this arrangement the Government of India had to find an additional maximum of three crores of rupees, which maximum was to be reached in a period of about ten years, which would mean a continuous increase of about 30 lakhs in our annual expenditure on primary education, or about 40 lakhs, if further vigorous efforts were made to spread the education on a voluntary basis among girls. Gokhale refused to believe that it would be too much for the Government to find this sum. On the first occasion of moving his Resolution in favour of introducing free and compulsory primary Education he had submitted to the Government a formal scheme for them to find funds for this object and he thought it necessary to repeat some of those points, for instance, (a) devoting its surplus revenues to Education instead of to the reduction of the Debt, construction of railways, increasing military expenditure, etc.; (b) in case no surplus revenue could be shown there was the custom-duty where an increase could be imposed without any hardship to the richer folk of India, who were the usual consumers of commodities imported; and, lastly, came the most pathetic declaration that if all other resources of the Government failed, even an increase in salt-duty might be allowed, for he would rather the people ate less salt than that their sons should grow up in ignorance and darkness.

Government were not prepared to take up these suggestions; and most of the local bodies and the large part of the public at large were not disposed to allow an Education cess to be imposed as a local tax.

Gokhale and his supporters were firm on this point, "if we are not prepared to make sacrifices for so great an object, if we expect the money to drop from somewhere, and remember, even if the Government raises it by additional taxation, after all, it is we who shall pay it,—we may as well cease talking about improving the lot of the mass of the people." The practice of the whole civilised world except Ireland, because of its peculiar circumstances, pointed out that a part of the burden must be borne by the local bodies. It is true that even the Bombay Corporation—perhaps the most advanced in many respects—while fully approving of the principle of the gradual introduction of free and compulsory primary education had desired to throw the whole cost of it on the Imperial Revenues; but that on the view of any individual or corporate body did not deter Gokhale from insisting that the people must show their appreciation of the want of education by contributing a good share of the funds necessary to its introduction.

Why did Gokhale's Bill fail? No very serious objection against the principle of free and compulsory education had been raised: in fact, the Government, through their accredited spokesman, had acknowledged that if mass education was to be any thing real and substantial, legislative force alone could give it the required momentum. If 'funds' were a grave obstacle from the Government point of view, Gokhale again and again repeated that the extremely modest character of the Bill need not have caused any grave anxiety to financiers who could manufacture a surplus even in years of heavy drought or of partial famine. The Bill was clogged with so many restrictions and safeguards as to alienate the sympathy of many enthusiastic friends of the cause

of mass education. On the one hand there was the *sine qua non* of 33 p. c. of the school-going population of an area already in attendance and the readiness of the Local Body to provide one-third of the cost, and, on the other, a thorough scrutiny on the part of both the Provincial Government and the Government of India into the fitness of the applicant-body for a share in a measure of this importance; for after all, the right to empower local bodies with a Compulsory Act rested entirely with the Provincial Government. What then should have been the objection to a tentative measure of this sort? Perhaps the Honourable Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu struck the right note when he said, "there is nothing older in the story of human progress than hostility to new ideas." Deep laid instincts of conservatism bind man down to the beaten track in every region of thought; and to allure him to brighter worlds of improved conditions is the sacred task of the gifted one. The path of reform is never rose-strewn; and many and arduous are the battles fought and strokes given before the impervious crust of conservatism can admit a ray of new light. To many, therefore, the very thought of new and bold departure from the dull tenor of their way came as a violent shock. Indeed, temperaments differ. Without finding fault with the judgment of most of the people who had any thing directly to do with this Bill and without attributing 'motives' to any, one may easily see that what to the ardent-minded man burning with a passionate desire to reach the goal in as short a time as possible may be clear for realisation, may to the too circumspect appear like rushing recklessly headlong." "*Chhetiagge toai*" (Deep Pits in front of haste) may the Honourable Mr. Mahomed Shaffi of the Punjab say to Gokhale; while the Honourable Mr. Jinnah of Bombay may impatiently tell the

Government:—"You are going at a jog-trot pace, and that jog-trot pace we object to!" But the Government on whom lies the ultimate responsibility of the situation is the most cautious of the cautious. Gokhale, indeed, tried to make the position soft and easy for them; but the reply from Sir Harcourt was characteristic, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." The most difficult body to move in all the matter of reform is, perhaps, the Government of India itself; and the Education Member liked to believe that 'the genius of this Bill was not a spontaneous demand by the people who were likely to be affected by it, but a vague desire for progress based upon a statistical comparison of India with other countries.' Even granting that this was the *rationale* of the cry for universal Education in India raised by Gokhale, where was the point in discountenancing it? The British Administration of India can only be modelled on the best of the civilised West and the 'transmarine analogies' submitted by Gokhale to illustrate the comparative slow progress we are making in India, far from vexing the Government should make them see with the Mover of the Bill, that the differences in the circumstances of India, made capital of by the conservative public and the Ultra-Conservative Government, only meant that we had a bigger problem than elsewhere, but that did not mean that it was beyond Indian Statesmanship to tackle it successfully.

The glorious fight was fought and lost! Work against odds and a consciousness of the failure awaiting all his noble efforts in this great cause argued his greater tenacity of purpose and a higher kind of moral courage. Cheerfully accepting the place that had been allotted to him in the onward

march of the country, where the call of duty was clear he had his deep faith that it was better even to labour and to fail than not to labour at all. "This Bill thrown out to-day, will come back again and again, till on the stepping-stones of its dead selves, a measure ultimately rises which will spread the light of knowledge throughout the land." Hardly a year had passed when the Government issued their famous Resolution on Education indicating lines of great progress and promise, to increase expenditure on education without formulating any clear policy in extension. Perhaps another Gokhale must spring up to get that done.

If opposition from Government to accept Gokhale's permissive Bill on the introduction of the principle of compulsion in spreading primary education among the masses was unintelligible to the Mover whose heart was set on it, his own relentless opposition to the University Bill of 1903 was perhaps equally incomprehensible to the Government of Lord Curzon who had felt no less keenly over this question of reform in the University Education than Gokhale on the question of spreading vernacular education among the masses. His opposition to University Reform recoiled on him when it came to be his turn to introduce a great measure to accelerate reform. It was a sad tale of the working of nemesis. Gokhale with undoubted sincerity believed and worked on that belief in 1903-04 that the way in which the Government of Lord Curzon proposed to carry reform into University Education was just the way to retard it; and the Government of 1912 unconsciously paid him back by denying point-blank that his measure on primary education was calculated to promote its cause. On both occasions the opposing parties were

fully alive to the necessity for reform and upward progress; but the ways and means suggested by the framers of the respective bills were the point of contention. The similarity between the two occasions ends there; for, whereas Gokhale's, being a bill proposed by a private member and discountenanced by Government, could have, by the very constitution of the Imperial Legislative Council, no chance of success, the University Reform Bill of 1903 was successfully carried by the Government through the Council, Lord Curzon being convinced that out of it was to be born "a new life for Higher Education in India."

This question of University-Reform, as introduced by the Administration of Lord Curzon, gave rise to almost ceaseless heart-burning then and for some time afterwards; and one is not sure if the embers have altogether died out even now. On account of the prominence it undoubtedly holds in educational matters of to-day and for its attracting the deep interest of Gokhale by whom practically was led the attack upon it in the Council, a little retrospective glance over University-Education may not be out of place to enable the reader to rightly understand the spirit of reform proposed by the then Government and Gokhale's ground for opposing it. The imparting of English Education dates from the year 1818 with the foundation of the Hindu College at Hooghli; and the impulse being given, Bengal first and then Madras and Bombay received Western Education with an avidity totally unexpected by the first promoters. In 1851 in Bengal alone, the total number of young men sharing in English Education was 4,341; and the scholarship examinations held from time to time showed that the standard attained by a good many was creditably high. Sir Fredrick Halli-

day had already seen in this phenomenal progress—"the germ of a university;" and the Council of Education (the name by which the Committee of Public Instruction had been called since 1842) had in 1845 called it "a matter of strict justice and necessity" to give a more distinctive recognition of academic attainment to the highly educated pupils. Naturally, a University was thought of, and degrees like those of European Universities: and the London University, established only in 1836, afforded a convenient model, for it was an examining and non-resident University."—(H. R. James on Education and Statesmanship in India, p. 40). In 1852 the attention of Parliament was drawn to this subject, evidence was taken and it was determined that Universities be established in India. The famous despatch of 1854 embodied a complete scheme of Indian Universities and in 1857 the Universities were incorporated by Acts dated January 24th for Calcutta, July 18th for Bombay and September 5th for Madras. At two later dates the Universities of Allahabad and Lahore were established with some small provision for teaching in addition to examining students. The increase in the numbers taking advantage of University Education was surprisingly great; and on the financial side, too, the Universities must be pronounced as a success. For a long time things appeared to wear a rosy hue and every body seemed to be satisfied with the work the Universities had been doing. One point, however, is at this stage worthy of remark that the contrast between the rapid extension of University education in Bengal and the slow progress in Bombay and Madras began to be much commented upon. Whether this quantitative extension of education had also carried with it a high standard of quality was a matter of great doubt. The despatch of 1854 had

indeed, suggested that "the standard required should be such as to command respect, without discouraging the efforts of deserving students." What was only broadly outlined by the Despatch was rendered ineffective by a very well-meaning recommendation of the Ripon Commission of 1882:—"That while it is desirable to affirm the principle that fees at the highest rate consistent with the undiminished spread of education should be levied in every college aided by the State, no aided college should be required to levy fees at the same rate as that charged in a neighbouring Government college." Now if these aided colleges had large endowment funds for their support, perhaps low fees would be a great boon to the poorer classes of people. As a matter of fact, however, a number of second-grade colleges in Bengal had developed out of schools or otherwise, relying only on fees and Government aid. To attract a large number of students, it was in their interest to lower the rate of fees; and such institutions could not be expected to engage a highly qualified and therefore a costly staff. This permission to charge low fees resulted in colleges founded by private enterprise being of a weak and inefficient type. Under such circumstances no useful education could be imparted; and the degrees of the Indian Universities, specially the Calcutta University did not "command respect." A rapid expansion in numbers was noticed with some alarm by Lord Landsdowne in 1889; and deterioration in quality—a disastrous sacrifice of the essential conditions of sound education—though faintly noted by some experts even before 1882, increased to the general dissatisfaction between 1890 and 1900, the system of imparting education specially in Bengal being pronounced by many writers as 'rotten.' "When University Reform

came in strong flood in the year 1901, it did not come too soon."—(James, p. 62.)

Lord Curzon, in his first speech as Chancellor of the Calcutta University in 1899, merely hinted that some measure of reform and not wholesale reconstruction was needed in the system of education which the Government, recognising its responsibility, did not shrink from undertaking. A year later, in February 1900, his views had undergone notable development. He condemned the laxity in the affiliation of schools and colleges to the Universities 'without due regard to the character of the teachers, the quality of the training, or the degree of discipline;' at the same time he emphasised the duty of the State to interfere when it was paying its full share for education out of public funds. In September 1901 he met an Educational Conference at Simla for strictly private deliberations to enable him to ascertain what he called "the trend of authoritative opinion." The Constitution of the Conference was severely criticised, for even his best apologists owned that what he really got was nothing but the trend of official opinion. The speech he delivered on this occasion was afterwards published. It covers a very extensive ground of reform in all branches of education: but the University question, which lay nearest to his heart, 'was the grand ingredient in the cauldron.' In the Government of Universities, in the Constitution and compositions of the Senates and Syndicates he saw great need for substantial reform. Already in his capacity as Chancellor, he had temporarily stopped the election of Fellows to the Calcutta University saying that 'its primary aims were the dissemination of knowledge and the training for life; and that its powers and resources were given

to it, not to satisfy the ambitions of individuals, or the designs of cliques, but to promote the intellectual service of the community at large:’ and the Conference was asked to consider whether or not the Senates were unwieldy, and filled, in the main, not by the test of educational interest, or influence of knowledge, but by that of personal or official distinction. The next important question was whether the academic standard was sufficiently high. The Conference was followed by a more public enquiry and a University Commission appointed on January 27, 1902, submitted a report in June, 1902; and upon its recommendations the Universities’ Bill was based. It is worthy of remark that the Government could not accept two of its findings:— (1) That the Syndicate of each University should fix a minimum fee rate; (2) That the so called second-grade Colleges should in process of time be eliminated. The report of the Commission and the comments of the Government upon it were published in October 1902 and were at once severely criticised by the public. A meeting of protest was held in the Calcutta Town Hall, and Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee had drawn a characteristic picture of the ‘old men,’ bent down with the weight of years, the representatives of the older school of thought and culture, the products of our pre-University system,’ who, ‘came tottering to place on record their protest against the recommendations of the Commission.’ The cry was raised, and embodied in Congress Resolutions, that Senates and Syndicates would be officialised, ‘and that the Universities would be practically converted into Government Departments’.....“ It was always manifest that the proposed cleansing of the system of controlling the Universities was the bitter pill which did most to create opposition” (quoted from Lovat Frasers’ *India under Curzon and After*, p. 191.)

On November 2, 1903, the University Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council. In the course of the debates which followed, the Viceroy himself summarised the principal features of the Bill in the following words:—"Its main principle is to raise the standard of education all round, and particularly of higher education. What we want to do is to apply better and less fallacious tests than at present exist, to stop the sacrifice of every thing in the colleges which constitute our University system to cramming, to bring about better teaching by a superior class of teachers, to provide for close inspection of colleges and institutions which are now left practically alone, to place the Government of Universities in competent, expert and enthusiastic hands, to reconstitute the senates, to define and regulate the powers of the syndicates, to give statutory recognition to the elected Fellows, who are now only appointed on sufferance,to show the way by which our Universities, which are now merely examining Boards, can ultimately be converted into teaching institutions; in fact, to convert higher education in India into a reality instead of a sham. These are the principles underlying the Bill."

I shall now proceed to show how Gokhale fought against the Bill in uncompromising fashion, sincerely believing that from achieving the pompous performance catalogued in the Viceroy's speech—far from ushering in a millenium of higher education as some of the official supporters of the Bill seemed to believe, it was a measure of a positively retrograde character sure to damage the cause of higher education and damp Indian aspirations to have self-Governing Universities.

Analysing the provisions of the Bill into three classes, those dealing with (1) the expansion of the functions of the Universities, (2) The constitution and control of the Universities, and (3) the control of the affiliated colleges. Gokhale began by expressing his sympathy with the last, provided it went unaccompanied by the constitutional changes proposed in the Bill, for the otherwise laudable object of seeing good work turned out by colleges was, in the hands of reconstituted senates and syndicates likely to operate "to the prejudice of indigenous enterprize in the field of higher Education," that the Universities actually needed a fresh law to arm them with powers of control over the affiliated colleges was not a fact, for under the existing law the University of Madras had framed Regulations for this purpose, which other Universities could as well have done for themselves. To the first part of the provisions, namely, the expansions of the functions of the Universities from a mere examining Board into a teaching Body Gokhale believed that even the framers of the Bill themselves attached only a theoretical value, as the conversion of the Universities into teaching bodies was essentially a question of funds, and as in the case of Allahabad, these enabling clauses may remain a dead letter for a long time to come. This aspiration, noble in itself but very remotely realisable, hardly needed a Bill so revolutionary in character. Its claim to importance, therefore, must be sought elsewhere and that is in the provisions dealing with the constitution and control of these Universities. In his minute of dissent appended to the report of the select committee, he had urged five principal objections to the constitutional portion of the Bill :—(1) In making a clean sweep of existing senates and in giving them no voice whatever

in the nomination of the first new senates, the Bill inflicted an unmerited indignity on men who had on the whole done good work in the past ; (2) The Bill failed to provide for election by Professors ; (3) The number of the new senates was fixed too low ; (4) the proportion of seats thrown open to election was too small, while that reserved for Government nomination was too large, the proportion being 20 : 80, and (5) the five years' limit to the duration of a fellowship aggravated the evil of an overwhelming number of seats being in the gift of Government. Gokhale believed that the effect of these provisions would be virtually to dissociate the Indian element from the Government of Universities and to put all directive and administrative power into the hands of European Professors within such limits as the Government allowed. How had the Indian Fellows deserved this virtual wholesale condemnation? Why had the Government chosen this more French than English spirit of dealing with the Universities? Was it really necessary to revolutionize their position so completely in the interests of the education alone? What ought, in the first place, to be the constitution of a University senate in India? The creation of an academic senate was, no doubt, a desirable end, and the Government of the Universities ought to be in the hands of those engaged in the work of teaching ; but the peculiar conditions of India with a large part of the teaching element on the senates being European Professors having only a temporary interest necessitated the inclusion into the senate of a fair share of the outside educated classes to represent the guardians of the children. The latter element was specially needed for the purpose of determining the broader outlines of educational policy in India. " And, my Lord, it is because the Bill proposes to

ignore this aspect of the question, and practically reverses the line of policy adopted by Government in this matter for the last half a century that I look upon the measure as a distinctly retrograde one." The highest purpose of the British rule in India was not merely to govern the country well, but also to associate slowly but steadily the people of this country with the work of administration; therefore if any measure had the contrary tendency, it deserved to be declared reactionary. By this Bill, the senates of the future were to be predominantly European with only a sprinkling of Indians just to keep up appearances; and Gokhale was filled with great sadness to think that after fifty years of University Education in this country, the Government should have introduced a measure which, instead of associating the Indian element more and more with the administration of the Universities, was to have the effect of dissociating it from the greater part of such share as it had already possessed. The passage of a Bill of such retrograde character and so likely to prove injurious to the cause of higher education in India he thought it his duty to resist to the utmost of his power. It was said that the passing of the Bill was to lead to an improvement in the quality of the instruction imparted in colleges. Gokhale refused to be under any such illusion. An improved machinery of control over colleges might be expected to bring about a steady and sure reform in the character and work of affiliated colleges; but, for an improvement in the colleges in any appreciable degree, there were the three great wants—better men, more money and improved material. If Government made its own colleges by manning them with the very best material available in England—men who knew how to combine sympathy with authority and who, for their learning

and character would continue to be looked up to by their pupils all their life—there would, in a few years, be a marked change in the tone of Government colleges in India ; and then the private colleges would find themselves driven to work up to the level of Government institutions. If the question of finding proper men and spending more money for the selection of those rested with the executive Government and the Bill under contemplation had nothing to do with it, the no less important point of admitting proper material to college education was also left equally unprovided for by the Bill. The education given in High Schools and the character of entrance examinations were not affected by the Bill. The three factors of men, money and material were to act and re-act on one another continuously for some time, before a better academic atmosphere could be produced, without which there could be no real elevation of the standard of University education.

With a first-hand knowledge of the satisfactory working of the Bombay University and as a protest against the Government of India proposing to deal in one Bill with five different Universities having different histories and growths, Gokhale moved an amendment that Bombay be excluded from the operation of the proposed measure. If the occasion for the Bill under contemplation was the drifting of the Calcutta University into a hopeless position, nothing could have prevented the Government from undertaking an amendment of the Calcutta University on such lines as they thought proper. Each case, wherever a need of reform was made out, should have been met on its merits ; and even the Legislative Councils of different Provinces could have dealt with the amending legislation in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. As it was,

he objected to the extensions of the Provisions of the Bill to the case of the Bombay University, the record of which was such as might well be regarded with a sense of satisfaction. There were only eleven Arts Colleges, three of which were private, two missionary institutions and one of indigenous growth—all fairly well equipped and endowed—none charged with having been started for private gain or with encouraging a spirit of low rivalry; and the Bombay Senate, far from having ever attempted to lower the standard of efficiency or discipline, had considerably raised the standard of English and the classical languages and made History and Political Economy compulsory subjects in the B. A. No expert advice offered at any time by the teaching part of the Senate had failed to obtain a hearing from the lay-section; and if now so many of the European Educationists of Bombay were supporting the proposed measures, the reason for it was not far to see. "By this Bill the Government of India go out of their way to make a present of a permanent monopoly of power to European educationists, and it is not to be expected that they should raise any objection to such a course."

Being defeated here also, Gokhale made one more endeavour to express his opposition to the Bill by supporting the amendment moved by the Hon. Sri Ram Bahadur to exclude Allahabad from the operation of the Bill since the Government of the United Provinces had expressed its disapproval of the Bill. The Syndicate of the Allahabad University had nearly unanimously condemned it; and the Graduates' Association, as representing the views of the general public, had recorded a clear expression of disapproval of the Bill. Was the Supreme Government morally justified in overriding the wishes of the Local Govern-

ment, backed as the latter was by the best and most enlightened public opinion on this subject? As the Supreme Government in this matter was merely a representative of authority and as that authority had been delegated for local purposes to the United Provinces Government, when that Government was opposed to a measure like this, was it right to thrust the changes upon those Provinces? Opposition on this point also proved fruitless.

Lastly, the ludicrousness of having one and the same bill for all the different Universities and the uncomfortable situation the Government had courted for itself were exposed by him rather piquantly:—"We are asked to pass this Bill for all the five Universities together, but we are practically told that, if each University had stood by itself, such a Bill would not have been introduced in its case. Thus the Honourable Mr. Raleigh has told us that, had the Bombay University stood alone, such legislation as the one proposed would not have been undertaken. He also says that the Calcutta University is as good as any other. Then Sir Arundale tells us that, if Madras alone had been affected by the Bill, it would not have been required; the Honourable Mr. Denzil Ibbetson protests that the Punjab University is not a whit behind any others; and lastly, Mr. Morrison says that the Allahabad University is really the best of all the Universities. I would really like to know then which University it is whose sins have brought down upon the heads of all the wrath of the gods."

When the University Act of 1904 was passed, it became necessary to provide for a transitional period before the new Constitution came into final operation: those transitory provisions had been inserted in

section 12 of the Act, under one of the sub-sections of which a provisional Syndicate was to be appointed to carry on the business of the University and to frame the necessary regulations in the interval before the permanent Syndicate was appointed later on. Clause (p) enacted that each Provisional Syndicate was to be appointed by the Senate "in such manner as the Chancellor directs." The manner or the method, every thing was left open, subject to the power of the Chancellors to give directions. The directions given by the different Chancellors varied in form. In some cases the Syndicate was to be elected by the Senate sitting together but voting by Faculties; in others by the members of the senate divided into groups according to their qualifications for the purpose of ensuring the proportional representation of the various schools but acting separately. The effect of these different forms was the same, viz., to continue the former practice of elections by Faculties. In accordance with these directions elections were held at all the Universities and, except in the case of Bombay, were held without protest or complaint. In Bombay applications had been made to the High Court for an injunction to restrain the Provisional Syndicate from acting in the affairs of the University on the ground that the action of the Chancellor had been *ultra vires*: Calcutta also seemed to take the clue; and there were signs that the controversy would extend to Madras, Allahabad and Lahore.

To prevent litigation becoming general and the progress of the work of the Universities being arrested, the Government of India, on the 3rd of February 1905, brought before the Supreme Legislative Council

a Bill to validate what the different Chancellors had done in regard to the constitution of the Senates and Provisional Syndicates.

Gokhale opposed the Bill, protesting that the course proposed to be adopted by the Government to set right the 'illegality' that had been committed was not dignified, when the only proper course for the Supreme Government on this occasion should have been to call upon the various Chancellors to withdraw the objectionable notifications and substitute others in their place more in accordance with the law. "In all civilised countries there is a well-understood and well-defined distinction between the Legislature and the Executive Government and the Legislature is regarded as higher than the Executive. In India unfortunately this distinction for the most part is of only a nominal character, for with the present constitution of the Councils the Executive Government can get what law they please passed by the Legislature without the slightest difficulty. I think the distinction becomes a farce if our Legislature is to be thus at the beck and call of the Executive Government, and if it is to be called upon to exercise its powers of legislation to remedy defects not in existing laws but in executive action taken under those laws." Gokhale has worked on the assumption that the Government had practically admitted that the notifications issued by the Chancellors had been illegal and *ultra vires*—a position that the Government in reply emphatically denied. All that Lord Curzon could say was that in Bombay the matter 'seemed' to be rather more open to doubt but to admit the illegality was far from being their position. When Gokhale directly challenged the Law member the Honorable Mr. Richards, who was res-

possible for the Bill, if he was prepared to pledge his own reputation as to the view that the notifications were legal, there came the evasive reply that the lawyer's duty could only be done in a law court and that the Supreme Council could not decide the question of legality or illegality. When Gokhale urged that the High Court of Bombay might be allowed to arrive at its own decision in connection with the suit pending before it and the Legislature might well wait till then, the Government replied that the decision of the Bombay Court could not determine questions in other Provinces, the litigation might be indefinitely prolonged and the prevailing state of suspense would not come to an end unless prompt action were taken by the Government. To uphold the reign of law, the best description of the British rule in India, however, Gokhale would not mind any small inconveniences that litigation might bring about. Government, on the other hand, preferred to solve the question by legislation, passing an Act to validate what had been done by the Chancellors.



CHAPTER VIII.

EXPONENT OF THE MODERATE SCHOOL.

‘EVERY age has its own manners, and its politics dependent upon them,’ and every country has its own problems in politics as well as in other spheres of its activity. “Circumstances give, in reality, to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or obnoxious to mankind.” In expressions of this sort, Burke sought to gain a deeper knowledge of the special fact or set of circumstances, and advised the abandoning of discussions on general principles to schools and metaphysicians. A strict adherence to this view, undoubtedly, suits the genius of a thoroughly practical politician; and though the fears of narrow Utopianism may dissolve, there will be the danger of an inevitable straitening of the range of one’s ideas. To balance between the two—a thorough recognition of the force of circumstances and an appreciation of the “profound principle of liberty”—is given to only a very few statesmen and those of the highest calibre, statesmen of the type of Gladstone.

The Government of a large dependency with conditions vastly dissimilar from the governing race is one of the most difficult undertaking: and according to Mill ‘there are in this age of the world few more important problems than how to organise this rule, so

as to make it a good instead of an evil to the subject people.' When the idea of ruling India "through a delegated body of a comparatively permanent character" like the East India Company was abandoned in 1858 and India was directly placed under the Crown and the Imperial Parliament, the machinery devised for its government was a body of executive officers in no way responsible to the governed and only very remotely answerable to the representative body of the British nation. This kind of rule of a body of Civil Servants or Bureaucracy has, perhaps, for its best illustrations the Government of Russia and India. Services are mainly recruited by a system of open competitive Examination annually held in England; and members of the Civil Service are eligible for all offices, except the very highest like those of the Viceroy, the Governors of the three Presidencies and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who are generally brought direct from England. The character of a government of this sort entirely depends on the qualifications, moral and intellectual, of the individual functionaries. To give the Indian bureaucracy its due, it must be frankly owned that "a large proportion of its members bring to their work a high level of ability, a keen sense of duty and a conscientious desire, within the limits of the restricted opportunities permitted by the predominance of other interests, to do what good they can to the people." On its good side, "efficiency" of administration is its most commendable point; and in our own days Lord Curzon—the best exponent and the best champion of this system—did much to overhaul this bureaucratic machinery of government in India partly by the reforms he introduced and partly by his noble example of untiring industry. The Englishman's monopoly of power in India, he thought, could be best

strengthened by filling the individual officer in the Service with a sense of duty similar to his own and by raising the standard of efficiency all round.

On the face of it, such a system of Government could not last long. English education was gradually doing its work in this land. Sir Frederick Halliday, a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, always took occasion to declare that the schools would promote one of the leading purposes of British rule, *which was to prepare the people for self-government* (quoted from Mr. Hodgson Pratt's letter to Gokhale). "In old times, when British rule was new and its higher standard and its more vigorous purposes excited general admiration, the Englishman's claim to a privileged position, even outside the sphere of Official duties, was allowed to pass unchallenged. That is now no longer possible, and those officials, who expect the Indians to approach them with bated breath and whispering humbleness.....not only make useful relations between the two sides impossible but do more harm to their own class than they imagine." In these words Gokhale struck a clear note about the past, the present and the future of the bureaucracy. The educated classes have received consciousness; and as nothing is infallible in the art and methods of government, the official is subjected to criticism which he smarts under and resents and even tries to stifle as much as he can. That system of government is, indeed, defective where too much power is put into the hands of the governing caste without a corresponding responsibility to any one, where a spirit of intolerance of criticism is developed among the rulers and where above all, the ruled have become conscious that the government as conducted by the ruling caste is not

all in their interests, in safeguarding which the ruled should also participate. The first point in Gokhale's political creed was a relentless war against the rigidity of this bureaucratic system in India in which the changed conditions of this land required an imperative change. From his seat in the Imperial Council and from the Indian as well as English platforms he lost no opportunity to show that the system had outworn the times and that British Statesmanship should readily come forward to introduce changes demanded by the new spirit in India. Addressing an English audience on November 15th, 1905, he thus analysed the disadvantages inseparable from the present system of government, viz. (i) there is no body in the Government who is permanently identified with the interests of the people; and the strong centralised character of the system allows no initiation of any large measure by any individual; (ii) the exclusion of the educated classes gives rise to a discontent, the volume of which must grow with the growth in their numbers and with their increasing natural lead in the country; this portentous discontent is bound to be a great set-off against the much-vaunted efficiency; (iii) The officials look at every question from the stand-point of their own power, the interests of the services being allowed to take precedence to the interests of the people.

How then will you have the system reformed? With very little of the mere idealist, very little of the influence of general, abstract principles, but always allowing the practical to govern his lofty aspirations, which fact gave his utterances great weight with the intensely matter-of-fact-English politician, he would constantly remind his English audience that the

efficiency is not the whole duty, nor even the main duty, which England has professed to undertake in India. "You have pledged your word before God and man to so govern India as to enable the Indian people to govern themselves according to the higher standards of the West. If your policy is not directed to this end, I shall consider you have failed." Even as regards efficiency the bureaucracy had already reached its standard; and now the higher efficiency could only proceed from self-government. Although he never lost sight of this remote ideal, about which however the practical Englishman or the Indian moderate rarely actually troubles himself much, Gokhale, when it came to offering a constructive programme for improving the machinery, was always guided by the exigencies of the time only and restrained by the adverse conditions so peculiar to India. The purely official regime must be controlled. The merely theoretical check of the Parliament had been rarely exercised: and the complex character of the Indian Government made a check by the English democracy very difficult of operation. The party system of Government in England insured to the Secretary of State uniformly solid support of his own party; and the practice of treating Indian questions on non-party lines generally enabled the Parliamentary administrators of the Indian Government to carry Indian questions unchallenged or at most touched with skin-deep criticism. This total absence of check every Liberal must admit to be a very serious evil; the more so when the power of the Indian bureaucracy could succeed even in casting a spell upon life-long stalwart champions of progressive principles. Gokhale, therefore, urged that the people of India simply wanted an opportunity to exercise some control over the Government. Everybody recognised that demo-

cratic institutions could not be all at once transplanted to India and, in fact, the country's immediate demand was astonishingly moderate. A reform of our Legislative Councils with a view to giving a large place to the representatives of the people and to making the discussion on the Annual Indian Budget a reality, the appointments of Indians to the Secretary of State's Council and the Executive Councils in India, and a steady substitution of the Indian for the European agency in the public service of the country, these were about the most crying needs of the country. Both the sympathetic Lords Minto and Morley, had recognised the necessity of meeting the changed conditions in India and Gokhale in several personal interviews with these responsible heads urged the Indian point of view. The result was the epoch-making Minto-Morley Reforms of 1908. Lord Morley had recognised that bureaucracy as it was stood self-condemned—the officials themselves had acknowledged that there was "estrangement—perhaps, refrigeration—between officers and people," that it oppressed him to think how few opportunities, either in India or England, the governing bodies had of hearing the views of the Indian people; therefore, by admitting the influence of the "new spirit" in India, which was purely of their own making, the people of England would ensure 'a strong and effective administration along with free speech and free institutions, and one all the better and all the more effective because of free speech and free institutions.' Let there be no quarrelling now about what the future of the Indian Government is to be: 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' Let Lord Morley enjoy his convictions that Parliamentary Government is never intended for or suited to India. The leader of the

Indian Moderate thought had not taken his stand on any abstract right or future arrangements: it was enough that a substantial measure of Reform was made to let the Indian element in, so far as both the Legislature and the Executive were concerned. When in the year 1766 the Rockingham Ministry repealed the Stamp Act but at the same time passed the Declaratory Act emphasising the 'right' of the British Parliament to tax the Americans, the practical genius of the Colonists thought it imprudent to raise any quarrel with that abstract right, so long as the evil of taxation was not at hand. They calmly said they would see to it when it actually came. We might well profit by that sort of conduct. Our pressing needs required a modicum of reform; the English practical genius has given us that much, but has at the same time expressed the view that democratic institutions are not suited to our conditions. Very good: We believe in a silent steady realisation of free institutions wishing our Constitution only to "broaden down from precedent to precedent." When the day for a still broader basis of our Government dawns after, of course, we have shown that we have deserved it,—English Statesmanship will not be able to withhold it from us; but if the expression 'self-government for India, jars on officials' ears or disturbs the equanimity of the mind of a political philosopher, we shall not be so perverse as to quarrel over a word. The substance is all we want: in what phraseology it should be clothed we leave to the vast resourceful armoury of our political masters beyond the seas to find.

The administration of a civilised State is so serious a task as to demand all the powers of Bureaucracy and Self-Government combined. In the

words of Professor Ashley, " a completely centralised bureaucracy—that is, a self-recruiting body of officials working from a single centre, and responsible only to itself—cannot carry on infinitely the administration of a large country; it tends to ignore the varieties of local conditions, to become stereotyped in its ideals and methods, and overburdened; and sooner or later a break-down becomes inevitable. And where the people have been discouraged from taking an interest in the task of Government, where they have not been habituated to the management of public affairs, the collapse, when the bureaucracy fails, is so much the greater, since there is nothing which can be substituted for the broken-down official organisation." Therefore in all progressive States attempts have been made at decentralisation and development of self-Government in two ways:—(a) By entrusting Local Bodies with the conduct of local matters, (b) by inviting the unofficial citizens to participate in the management of some matters of administration belonging to the sphere of the Central Government. Gokhale's views in connection with the latter and his fight to secure what had been embodied in the India Council Act of 1909 have been duly recorded above. In the no less important field of 'decentralisation' too his labours were great and persistent and his views thoroughly representative of the Moderate School of Indian politics.

Lord Morley, when at the head of the India office, had found himself confronted by a number of evils existing in the Indian machinery of Government, a conspicuous position among which was held by the great mischief of over-centralisation of rule in India. Mr. Bright had all along held that the centralised Government of India was beyond the power of any man to work. Sir Henry Maine, a man of genius but

quite unlike Mr. Bright in temperament and training, had expressed nearly the same view. The result was the appointment of a Royal Commission to report on the possibilities of and the ways and means for effecting Decentralisation of rule in India. Gokhale's statement before this Commission is worthy of careful analysis. The key-note of his position is the substitution of popular control over the local official in place of the distant official check. As it is, the District Officer has, in a majority of cases, no initiative or opportunity for prompt action; references to his 'official' superiors are an absolute part of the system. But if this check is to disappear, it is surely not intended 'to see "petty despotisms" pure and simple, set up in place of the present Provincial Governments.' On this point he was so emphatic as to say that if it were merely a question of shifting the seat of final authority from Calcutta or Simla to Bombay and nothing else, he would prefer existing arrangements to any such decentralisation. Hoping, however, that the Commission was prepared to take a comprehensive view of the question he submitted that Provincial Decentralisation would be a tangible boon to the people under the following conditions:—(i) Each province to be under a Governor fresh appointed from England, assisted by an Executive Council of three or four; (ii) the Provincial Budgets to be submitted for full discussion to the Provincial Legislative Councils enlarged and made more representative. (iii) Permission to members of the Legislature to move resolutions on matters of general administrative interests. The Financial position of the Provinces should, then, be one of certainty and freedom, with, of course, no power of imposing taxes or raising loans independently; but in all matters of revisional settlements the local Legislative Councils should be invited to have

their say. In matters of expenditure he would allow no relaxation in the present control of the Government of India in relation to the creation of new appointments, and also to the scales of pay and pension; but, having that, he would give Local Governments full powers to expend their revenues as they deemed best. In matters of Administration, the control of Military and Naval Defence, Foreign affairs, Currency, Customs, Post, Telegraphs, Railways, general Taxation, general Legislation and the like should always be directly in the hands of the Government of India, and the rest of the internal administration of the country should be entrusted to the Provincial Governments. Reserving large questions of policy to itself, the Government of India must not interfere in matters of detail in the exercise of functions delegated to the Provincial Governments.

In any scheme of Decentralisation of Government, the District ought to count most. The old idea that the District Magistrate and the Collector was the father of the people no longer prevails. That idea of the paternal authority of the representative of the Government is dissolved through the spread of education, the influence of new ideas and the steadily growing power of the vernacular press. To revert to the benevolent autocracy of the Collector of old times is impossible. The only remedy lies in carrying a substantial measure of decentralisation down to the villages and in building up local self-Government from there. For this purpose Gokhale had a constructive scheme which ought to succeed in spite of its difficulties or even possible initial failures. The same idea was strongly upheld by Mr. R. C. Dutt and a number of other Indian leaders: and just now Mrs. Besant—one of the most disinterested champions in

the work of uplifting India is moving heaven and earth to rouse people to work the scheme of Self-Government from below. The Village Panchayats must first be created; in all villages of 500 people and more a Panchayat should be constituted by Statute, to consist of five or seven members, while villages below 500 should either be joined to larger adjoining villages or grouped into unions. The village headman, the Police Patel, the village Munsiff and the Village Conciliator, and two or three other persons *chosen* by such of the villagers as pay a minimum land-revenue of say, rupees ten,—should constitute the Panchyat. Its powers and functions should be:—(i) the disposal of simple money claims not exceeding rupees fifty in value, (ii) trial of trivial offences such as petty thefts, simple assault, simple hurt, abuse, nuisance, etc., (iii) execution and supervision of village works, (iv) management of village forests, (v) distribution of sanctioned allotments of Tagavi in the vilage, (vi) carrying out measures of famine and plague relief, (vii) control of village water-supply and sanitation, (viii) supervision of school attendance, (ix) management of cattle-ponds. For their funds they shall have the assignments of the Taluka Board revenue, the costs of civil litigation realised and fines and penalties levied locally. To set them going the Government might appoint an officer as in the case of Village Credit Co-operative Societies.

The Taluka Local Boards ought to form the next rung of the ladder of Local Self-government. The official domination must disappear from here and the Boards should now be made wholly elected Bodies. The Mamlatdar may attend their meetings sometimes, but Government interference should come in

only when the Boards have disregarded the advice and warning given them. Their financial position should be strengthened by giving them the entire proceeds of the one-anna cess, after deducting the Educational share and the medical and veterinary grants. The District Boards which, under the present arrangements, eat up a great part of this cess ought to receive either a share of the Excise Revenue as they did before or a special contribution from the provincial Exchequer to cover their loss. At present the village Panchayat has no recognition, and the Taluka and the District Boards are the two units, one smaller and the other larger. Instead of that, Gokhale held that the Village and the Taluka should form the smaller and the larger units, particularly because the area of the Indian district is so large that the sense of unity of local interests, which is very strong in villages and is fairly strong in talukas, and without which successful local Self-Government is not possible, becomes much too diluted when we reach the district. The Taluka Boards should frame their own budgets within the limits of their resources without any outside interference.

The municipalities should consist wholly of elected members, the Government retaining in its hands the power to enforce action, if its advice and warning are disregarded, by a temporary suspension of them and the appointment in their place of small bodies of nominated members. Unless an undivided responsibility is thus thrown on these municipalities, risking even initial failure for its sake, these institutions will neither become efficient instruments of local administration nor will they fulfil the higher purpose of serving as seminaries for the education of the people in the art of self-

government. In this connection Gokhale was never tired of reminding the Government of the view of Mill and the tenour of the Resolution of the Government of Lord Ripon that the object of Municipal institutions was not merely to get local work efficiently done, but also to develop civil spirit and raise the level of general intelligence among the people.

In the formation of District Boards, it is enough if three-fourths of its members are elected and one-fourth nominated by Government. The Executive Engineer, the Civil Surgeon and the Educational Inspector may be advantageously included among the latter and the Collector may be useful as the President, unless non-official gentlemen of position are prepared to take up this office. Each Taluka Board and Municipality in the District should elect one member, the Municipality of the District town having the right to return two. In addition to this there may be created a special constituency for the whole district with a fairly high franchise electing five or six members, the electors being graduates of, say, five years standing, Government pensioners receiving a pension of Rs. 75 a month and above, landholders paying an assessment of Rs 200 and above, and traders, merchants and others paying income-tax on at least Rs. 2,000 a year. At least one-tenth of the income from the Excise Revenue should be handed over to these bodies to enable them to discharge their duties in a satisfactory manner.

The most important part of Gokhale's views on the Decentralisation of Administration was the formation of an Advisory District Council to advise the Collector in most of the questions of Administration. In place of official checks exercised from a distance,

some control on the spot on behalf of those who are affected by the administration, is absolutely necessary. This Council should consist of two-thirds elected by the non-official members of the District Boards constituted as outlined above and one-third nominated by the Collector. It should be then obligatory on the Collector to consult this body in all important matters and then the powers delegated to him by the Provincial Government may be safely enlarged and reference to higher officials may be dispensed with. It is necessary to add that except for confidential matters, this Council should have a right to be consulted on all questions, some of which the Collector may decide as he deems best, even against the opinion of the District Council and others, in which case reference of the Collector's decision and of the Council's opinion to the Central Government is necessary. The suggestion of a District Council was made in that most liberal spirit that characterised all Gokhale's political thought: "the cry of the people everywhere is that the car of Administration should not merely roll over their bodies but that they themselves should be permitted to pull at the ropes... We want an *interest* in the Administration around us. The educated classes are only *critics* of the Administration to-day because the Government does not realise the wisdom of enlisting their co-operation... The educated classes are the brain of the country, and what they think to-day, the rest of the people will think to-morrow. The problem of bringing the Administration into closer relations with the people is essentially a problem of associating the educated classes with the actual work of the Administration. With village Panchayats at the bottom, District Councils in the centre and reformed Legislative Councils at the top, this problem will have been fairly faced, so far as the exigencies of the present are concerned."

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

II. No rights exist without corresponding duties; and, if Gokhale advocated the cause of the educated classes for recognition on the part of Government in the matter of conceding them a share in the affairs of their own country, he battled perhaps equally hard with his followers to make them conscious of their duties and responsibilities. By fully discharging their duty, in the first instance, to *themselves*, they would be paving the way for their usefulness in the intellectual emancipation of their country. Products of Western education as they were, they needed to stand on a par with the Westerner in the earnestness of life that the latter feels. The acquisition of a mere University degree or some academic honours need not render the young man perfectly complacent concerning his work in life. England has produced and is, day by day, producing a number of great men—politicians, statesmen, poets, philosophers, scientists and artists; but what strikes one the most is the fact that the average men and women there lead more earnest lives, recognize their responsibilities better than we do, and endeavour to be more serviceable to society than is the case here. If our education has opened to us a vista of 'rights' which we are determined to win, it has cast no less great responsibilities on us, for it is only by taking the fullest advantage of our improved conditions that we can set a high example to those who come after us and add to the moral energy of the nation. To make the bureaucratic citadel of power unassailable, Lord Curzon pitched the standard of this average efficiency nearly as high as his own; to make the educated Indian worthy of the greatness before him Gokhale

exhorted him to qualify himself for his work by raising his moral and intellectual stature as high at least as that of the average English official in India. "The meaning of this discipline we shall altogether miss, if we do not take the fullest advantage of the beneficent agencies which have been introduced into the country by the present rulers."

The reactionary policy of Lord Curzon, delighting in flouting public opinion and even in riding roughshod over the sentiments of the people culminating in the partition of Bengal, had driven not only the Bengalee race but many parts of India into a general state of sullen discontent and even some sporadic outbursts of hostility against the British rule in India. The small period of four or five years between the end of 1905 and the end of 1909—the period of the administration of the right-minded Lord Minto was thick sown with difficulties of internal administration which were certainly not of his planting. (The quiet stream of the Indian's political life came to be vitiated with a sense of despair, a lamentable schism appeared in the National Congress, faith in the English sense of justice was being gradually lost and in many quarters was heard a voice of scepticism as regards the legitimate ways of making our grievances heard.) A new gospel seemed to be preached in the land and two fatal aspects of it began to seize the imagination of the young and the weak-headed. One was the insidious preaching of 'boycotting' every thing English—from the foreign goods down to the English Magistrate and law; and the other, still more dastardly, was the anarchical propaganda, and the bomb came to be almost a common phenomenon. (At such a juncture all the mental and moral resources of the leader of the people were bound to be taxed to the

utmost to wean these deluded followers from such fatal principles and bring them back to constitutionalism and loyalty to the British rule. For three years, from the end of 1905 to the end of 1908 Gokhale travelled up and down the whole of India, preaching moderation and wise counsel to the educated and middle class and voyaging to England now and again to place before the English democracy the true version of Indian grievances, viz., that if the causes of all the mischief in India—the repressive and reactionary measures of Lord Curzon—were withdrawn and a legitimate recognition of the aspirations of the educated classes were accorded, all discontent would die out, the insignificant terrorist being bereft of all further material to subsist on. (This was the most trying period of Gokhale's political activity ; and the sobriety of view from which he never departed in his life but which he prominently upheld in face of the brewing storms, is, to my mind, largely responsible for the singular position he holds in the political regeneration of our country.) That Gokhale was no mere demagogue, that he was filled with a sense of keenest responsibility as a political leader of the country is patent from the fact that he sought no cheap popularity by fashioning his doctrines according to the varying hour.) If constitutional methods of agitation were in bad odour with an increasing section of malcontents, Gokhale stoutly maintained that memorials, petitions, representations, and all kinds of peaceful demonstrations of disapproval of certain governmental measures were the only legitimate methods of making our grievances known to our rulers. If sullen retirement from every thing English resulting in the hatching of dark designs was gaining popularity, Gokhale resisted that attitude by proclaiming that our interests were indissolubly

linked with the British Government. The goal may be self-government within the Empire, but the means by which that goal was to be reached involved two essential conditions—one, that the methods adopted were such as they were entitled to employ, and secondly, that the changes desired must be obtained only through the action of constituted authorities by bringing to bear on them the pressure of public opinion. In our methods of work, physical force must have absolutely no room. Rebellion, aiding or abetting a foreign invasion, and resort to crime must be altogether eschewed. Save these three things, all else was constitutional. Prayers and appeals to the Government and the British democracy lay at one end. Passive resistance, including even its extreme form of non-payment of taxes till redress was obtained—lay at the other end. He had such a firm faith in the British sense of justice that he was quite sure the last method would not be needed. What he deprecated the most was the idea of having nothing to do with the authorities. That the Government should be left severely alone and that the goal should be independently attained were, to him, inadmissible and absurd thoughts.

The various constitutional political organisations of the country—the Bombay Presidency Association, the Bengal Association, the Deccan Sabha, etc., had, in course of time, crystalised all their political activity in the demonstrations of the central organ—the Indian National Congress. Gokhale was perfectly sure that that kind of work was a great success. The Congress had enabled people to think and feel nationally, had defined their needs, taught them the value of organisation and accustomed them to the duties and burdens of public life; and already the

catalogue of its tangible successes was great. If, however, there were still room for greater work, achievement would be rendered easy only by our greater earnestness and devotion to public life. It is not through any sudden or violent cataclysm but only by successive steps, each, perhaps, a small one in itself, that our goal is likely to be reached. Conflicting interests are to be reconciled; and lines unfamiliar to us are to be followed. To ignore the limitations imposed upon us by our very Indian conditions is to betray an ignorance of the fundamental points in the building of a nation. Our work is to build up the strength of our own people. That work, roughly speaking, is threefold. First, the promotion of a closer union among the different sections of the Indian community between the Hindus and Mahomedans and among the different sections of the Hindus themselves; secondly, the development of a stronger and higher type of character, firm of purpose and disciplined in action; and thirdly, the cultivation of an intense feeling of nationality throughout the country, rising superior to caste and creed and rejoicing in all sacrifice for the motherland, accompanied by a spread of political education among the masses.†

The Hindu-Mahomedan problem in modern India has been thus expounded by Lord Morley:—"The difference between Mahomedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith or dogma. It is a difference in life, in traditions, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief, that constitute a community.....In talking of Hindus and Mahomedans, we are dealing with, and are brought face to face with vast historic issues. We are dealing with the very mightiest force that through all the

centuries and ages have moulded the fortunes of great States and the destinies of countless millions of mankind. Thoughts of that kind are what gives to Indian politics and to Indian work extraordinary fascination, though at the same time they impose the weight of an extraordinary burden." Coming to a solution of this problem, Lord Morley thought that whatever might be the case with Mahomedans and Hindus, there was one body of men who were bound to keep a fair mind, and that was the Government. Now, the most obtuse-headed man in any of these two communities cannot deny that Gokhale on this point kept no less fair a mind than the Government themselves. He admitted freely that the problem was a most difficult one but certainly not insoluble. The situation simply called for the exercise of great tact and forbearance; and he was quite hopeful that, before long, all that was high-minded and patriotic among the Mahomedans would be ranged on the side of their country without thought of any thing else. Under the Morley-Minto Scheme of Reforms, the aim of the Government as well as that of the Mahomedan community was that there should be "adequate, real, and genuine Mahomedan representation." Gokhale was in perfect sympathy with this principle and was at great pains to confess frankly that under the working of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 there were only general electorates giving a great preponderance of Hindu members in Councils through out the country. This was certainly a sore point with the Mahomedan community; and though the Government tried to make amends for it by nominating some of them to the Councils, the community justly objected to this arrangement that it was unfair to them that they should come in only by nomination. At our present stage, special electorates cannot be avoided; and in

principle there is nothing objectionable to them. The minorities, of which the Mahomedan community in India is by far the most important, must be safeguarded in their representation on the Indian Councils. Gokhale, however, believed that Lord Morley, and not the Government of Lord Minto, was responsible for giving a sort of over-representation to the Mahomedan community; but when the Honourable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya brought in a resolution in the Supreme Council on the 24th January 1911 'to remove all legitimate complaints on the score of inequality in the treatment of the various sections of His Majesty's subjects,' Gokhale used all his persuasive eloquence to impress the honourable mover with the fact that the Government cannot take away from the Mahomedan community to-day what they gave them only yesterday and that in the larger interests of the country the Hindus should make the best of the situation. Some of his words on this occasion every Indian politician will do well to remember for a long time to come:—"My Lord, after all we have got to take a large view of this matter. What does it really matter how many Hindus and how many Mahomedans sit in this Council? The more important question is how many of us work and in what spirit we work here? The numbers would matter on some future occasion when probably questions will have to be carried here by the weight of numbers; to-day we certainly do not propose to carry our points by the weight of numbers. As a matter of fact, whether we are many or few, it is only to the moral influence that we exercise on the Government that we have to look at the present stage. Why, my Lord, even if I could defeat the Government to-day I would not do it. I would not do it for this reason: the prestige of the Government is an important asset at the present stage

of the country and I would not lightly disturb it. Therefore the question about the numerical representation of Hindus and Mahomedans may be left over for some time." †

Helping to support the prestige of the Government at the present stage of the country is the key-note of the Indian moderate school of politics. Any attempt to discredit or bring it into contempt is the signal for the moderate to rally to the Government and employ all his best powers in its defence. For good or for evil our lot is cast in with the British people and the British Government; therefore it is not possible for us either to acquiesce in or give any encouragement to the dissemination of the perverse thought of disaffection against the Government. An irresponsible section of the Indian Press was spreading this mischief in the country; and to prevent it, the very first measure brought before the Reformed Council was the Press Act of 1910 which required every new Press to place a deposit-security of a certain sum of money ranging between a minimum of Rs. 500 and a maximum of Rs. 2,000 according to the discretion of the District officer; this deposit was liable to forfeiture if the Executive believed the Press to be guilty of vitiating the atmosphere with inflammatory matter, with an option of appeal before the High Court of the Province. The defaulting Press could again start its business by placing a fresh deposit-security with the Government. In the case of already existing Presses no deposit would be taken, but for any undersirable publication against which the principle of the Act was aimed, the District Officer could call upon the proprietor to fulfil the conditions applicable to new presses under the Press Act. A very wide latitude was to be given to the discretionary powers of the

Executive officer on the spot and it is fair to say that these powers have been very discreetly used. There is no denying the fact that the Government had reason to feel oppressed by the dangerous matter that in some few parts of the country was sedulously spread abroad, and that perhaps it was necessary to arm the Executive with a measure of preventive power since the ordinary law of the land was not sufficiently effective for the purpose of crushing the evil tendency that was gradually manifesting itself. Gokhale was obliged to recognise the need for a repressive measure of this kind because of the alarming signs of the time. "My Lord, in ordinary times I should have deemed it my duty to resist such proposals to the utmost of my power. The risks involved in them are grave and obvious. But in view of the situation that exists in several parts of the country to-day, I have reluctantly come, after a careful and anxious consideration, to the conclusion that I should not be justified in opposing the principle of this Bill. It is not merely the assassinations that have taken place, or the conspiracies that have come to light, or the political dacoities that are being committed, that fill me with anxiety. The air in many places is still thick with ideas that are undoubtedly antagonistic to the unquestioned continuance of British rule, with which our hopes of a peaceful evolution are bound up; and this is a feature of the situation quite as serious as any thing else. Several causes have contributed to produce this result, of which the writings in a section of the Press have been one. And to the extent to which a remedy can be applied to these writings by such executive action as is contemplated in the Bill, I am not prepared to say that the remedy should not be applied." Law and order are pre-eminently dear to every believer in constitutionalism and the gradual

political evolution of a people; and at its alter may be permitted even the sacrifice of 'the profound principle of liberty' so deeply imbedded in a free Press. Force of circumstances may sometimes necessitate a strengthening of the hands of Government: and in the interests of 'progress' itself, a little check to a too free and irresponsible expression is far from being a hardship, the only desirable course. No sane critic can accuse Burke of any inconsistency when he advocated, on the one hand, the cause of liberty in his "Thoughts on the Present Discontents" and condemned, on the other, all wild measures of the French Revolution perpetrated in the name of liberty. His passionate enthusiasm for Order is not a jot less strong in the first than in the second. "The liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with Order" (Burke's speech on Arrival at Bristol, 1774). The Court tried to regulate liberty too severely. It found in him an inflexible opponent. Demagogues tried to remove the regulations of liberty. They encountered in him the bitterest and most unceasing of all remonstrants. Therefore, says Morley, let us not think that "he was a revolutionist in 1770 and a reactionist in 1790." Gokhale, the staunchest advocate of Indian rights and aspirations and the constant opponent of the Indian bureaucracy, had profitably mastered the political philosophy of Burke summed up in the following small extract from his "Appeal from the New to the old Whigs":—"As any one of the great members of this constitution happens to be endangered, he that is a friend to all of them chooses and presses the topics necessary for the support of the part attacked.....He ought not to apprehend that his raising fences about popular privileges this day will infer that he ought on the next to concur with thoes

who pull down the throne ; because on the next he defends the throne, it ought not to be supposed that he has abandoned the rights of the people."

Ranging on the side of law and order is an attitude quite different from being a party to the adoption of coercion and repression as ordinary weapons. Extraordinary times do justify extraordinary measures just as the administering of physic is necessitated by the derangement of the human system. But what is to be thought of the man who receives and the Doctor who prescribes medicine as one's regular and habitual diet? An able physician will effect a correct diagnosis of the disease and cutting it at its root will eradicate the whole mischief. The cause of the malady must be hunted out and met accordingly, so that there may be no chance for the disease to return. The analogy of the human system works in this instance even more powerfully in the case of bodies politic. When discontent has sunk deep into the minds of the only articulate part of a country, true statesmanship is required to fathom the cause of it and remove it if possible, instead of tinkering with repressive measures which may only result in driving sedition inward. To quote again from Burke, "When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed and supported, that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of Government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, and not their crime. But with the governing part of the State, it is far otherwise. They certainly may act ill by design, as well as by mistake." (Present Discontents). Politicians may say what they please, but it is no hard thing for the meanest person to know whether he be well or ill governed;

therefore, when discontent takes a general turn, it is no wisdom to think and act upto the belief that it is "the wicked industry of some puny libellers, joined to the intrigues of a few disappointed politicians" that has been able to produce an unnatural ferment in the Nation. When after the Fenian movement in Ireland, British Statesmanship began to see that mere repression must no longer be relied upon as a cure for Irish discontent, Gladstone was deeply impressed with the conviction that the hour was appropriate to do something to remove the causes of the discontent that made Ireland restless. 'The impatient and silly nurse tries to stop the child's crying by beating it: a more careful and intelligent person makes a prompt investigation, and finds that a pin is sticking into the little sufferer. The English Government had for a long time been the stupid nurse to the crying child. They had tried threatening words and quick blows. The cry of complaint still was heard. It ocured at last to some men of responsible authority to seek out the cause and quietly try to remove it. While many public instructors lost themselves in vain shriekings over the wickedness of Fenianism and the incurable perversity of the Irish people, one statesman was already convinced that the very shock of the Fenian agitation would arouse public attention to the recognition of substantial grievence, and to the admission that the business of statesmanship was to seek out the remedy and provide redress.'"—(Justin Macarthy's History of Our Own Times).

India has during the last ten years passed through a phase of discontent in political life as the result of a poignant consciousness of racial inequality aggravated by the unsympathetic and even reactionary policy and measures of Lord Curzon. When on the

top of these measures the Partition of Bengal was carried through, a bitter and stormy agitation sprang up, into which the general agitation for reform was soon completely merged. As Gokhale put it, by a sort of sympathetic process the bitterness of the Bengal agitation gradually came to communicate itself to the reform movement all over the country. It is true that the more reckless among the agitators began to preach dangerous doctrines; but whatever little influence they were able to exert was entirely due to the alienation of the public mind from the Government which the Government had it in their power to set right. The high-handed administration of Sir Bamfylde Fuller in Eastern Bengal and agrarian troubles in the Punjab had resulted in public demonstrations which the Government viewed with alarm. The illegal arrest of the great constitutionalist and accredited leader of Bengal,—Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee, and the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab, followed by an Ordinance of the Government of India restricting the traditional right of free public meetings shocked the feelings of every sober-minded thinking member of the Indian people and afforded fresh material to the "irreconcilable ones" to inflame the moderate into extremism: When Government wanted to legalise their ordinance of May 1907 for three years, Gokhale had the courage to warn them that measures of repression would only further alienate the people and to that extent would strengthen the influence of the extremist. The power to influence the people with the new gospel was mainly derived from the sense of helplessness and despair which had come to prevail widely in the country, both as regarded prospects of reform in the administration and as regarded the removal of particular grievances. The remedy for such a state of things was clearly not

more repression but a course of wise and steady conciliation on the part of the Government. Lord Minto had recognised the mischief of the Punjab Colonisation Act and by vetoing it had calmed the troubled waters in the Punjab. Gokhale pressed the Government to carry the work of conciliation further by calling back the deported prisoners and subjecting them to a fair trial if the Government had any thing against them, by restoring to the people their right of free meeting and by modifying the partition in Bengal in a manner acceptable to the Bengalees. The causes of acute discontent in these two Provinces would then disappear and the old stream of the reform-movement would be separated from the bitter tributaries that had recently mingled with it. The Government could then deal with the question of reform on its own merits, and if it was handled in a spirit of broad-minded statesmanship, a solution might be arrived at which would give general satisfaction. Such was Gokhale's view about the wrong and mischief of repressive measures which the Government, in their short-sightedness, converted into almost a regular policy of the State by afterwards placing this opprobrious Act for the Prevention of Seditious meetings permanently on the Statute-Book of the Indian Legislature. Had there been an active and widespread movement of resistance to authority afoot in the country, had breaches of the public peace been frequent, had incitements to violence been the order of the day, Gokhale could have understood the Executive wanting to arm themselves with vast powers of coercion. But, as it was, there was nothing in the circumstances of the land which constituted even a distant approach to such a situation. After-events have amply borne out the truth of his contention. The India Council Act and the creation of the Bengal

Presidency agreeably to the wishes of the Bengalees, considerably abated the force of discontent in the land. That there shall be a permanent reconciliation, and satisfaction with the present state of things nobody desires; but one thing that has been made quite clear is that the extremist, who advocated a policy of "boycotting" every thing English and leaving the Government severely alone does not count for any thing now and will have hereafter no place in Indian politics. Gokhale's faith in British statesmanship and methods of constitutional agitation is thoroughly vindicated by the improvement in our position. The disaffected anarchist is not a phenomenon peculiar to India alone: the best of representative Governments of the West feel his occasional sting; but he is such a miserably negligible figure and has such a tremendous volume of public opinion in India against him that he need not cause any disturbance to the Indian Government or the British democracy. All sober India recognises that there is no royal road to progress, in whatever direction it may be, whether social, religious, or political; and the path of constitutional advance, though slow and arduous is the only sure road to better times; and whenever the Indian atmosphere thickens with discontent as the result of our naturally growing aspirations, Government on its part ought never to forget the words of Gokhale:—"There is only one way in which the wings of disaffection can be clipped and that is by the Government pursuing a policy of steady and courageous conciliation."

BRITISH EMPIRE.

Are the interests of the conquerors of a country quite distinct from those of the conquered people? If ever such a doctrine is upheld, the fate of that rule is sealed. In the identity of their interests lies the prosperity of the country and the results are a matter of pride and glory to the ruling race. Gokhale preached at the top of his voice the doctrine that both sides stand to lose a great deal, if their harmonious co-operation is ever disturbed; and working in a spirit of mutual understanding and appreciation, they may realise for this country an honoured position among the nations of the earth and for England the glory of having helped India to such a position. His faith in the purpose and conscience of England as the main ground of hope for the future of this country was oftentimes expressed with a greater glow of enthusiasm than his faith in the conscience and purpose of India and the almost illimitable capacities of it. He was never tired of giving eloquent utterance to the enduring thought of his great master Ranade that the future of India could be realised under no other conditions than the unchallenged supremacy of the Paramount Power and under no other controlling authority than that of the British Crown.

The true spirit of Imperialism ought to succeed in moulding a world-wide Empire which shall be not an enslaver of the world, but a helper, a teacher, an upholder, a guide into a nobler civilisation; while a narrower Imperialism might regard the world as though it was made for one race only and looks upon subject races as if they were intended to be mere footstools of that race. Gokhale constantly placed

before his English hearers as well as the Indian Government this contrast between the two views. English Imperialism, he firmly believed, was that nobler one which would enable all who were included in the Empire to share equally in its blessings and honours. Cynically-disposed irresponsible Anglo-Indian journalism might well please itself by trumpeting that "when all is said, we took India by the sword and we must hold her by the sword;" but that is only "the spirit of the tyrant." Gokhale preferred to think as Mrs. Besant put it on one occasion, "the genius of Empire is to make every nation that you conquer feel that you bring them into the Imperial Family, and that they and you from that time forward are brothers, and not conquered and conquerors. We lost America simply because we denied brotherhood, and tried to win by threat what we could not win by justice. That great lesson was given to the British Nation when the British Empire began to dawn, and it will be well if we learn that lesson now, and do not lose other parts of our Empire." The revolt of Canada was another lesson offered and England profited by it at least so far as it referred to her interference in her Colonies. In the happy expression of John Stuart Mill, "England was like an ill-brought up elder brother, who persists in tyrannising over the younger ones from mere habit till one of them, by a spirited resistance, though with unequal strength, gives him notice to desist. We were wise enough not to require a second warning."

Lord Cromer in his excellent little book on "Ancient and Modern Imperialism" says that if, at any period, either during the Republic or the Empire of Rome, the question of *Quo Vadis* had been propounded to a Roman Imperialist, he would have

been at no pains to say that he wished, above all things, to maintain his hold over the provinces, either because they were profitable, or because he feared the consequences which might result to the Empire from their abandonment. The French, the Russian, the German or the Italian modern Imperialist would reply that his intention was to civilise his alien subjects, but in no way to relax his hold over them. The leading Imperialist of the world—the Englishman—would, however, be puzzled to give any definite answer, “for, he is in truth always striving to attain two ideals, which are apt to be mutually destructive—the ideal of good government, which connotes the continuance of his own supremacy, and the ideal of self-government, which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position.” The empire must rest on one of the two bases—an extensive military occupation or the principle of nationality; and Lord Cromer thinks that the Englishman cannot in all cases make up his mind which of the two bases he prefers. The contact of the politically lifeless India with the most practical, energetic and free of Western nations has heavily charged this country with ideas from Western political institutions; and Gokhale, I believe, thought with Sir Henry Maine that the British Nation in dealing with India “cannot evade the duty of rebuilding upon its own principles that which it unwittingly destroys.” ‘The most salient and generally accepted of those principles is unquestionably self-government;’ and the method of applying that principle, Gokhale contended, was gradually to extend it in local, provincial and supreme governments.

The opponents of our aspirations might indeed try to make us believe in the impossibility of the achievement of self-government for India as if we were advocating Self-Government for a United Europe. Thinkers of this type unfortunately forget that differences of race, religion and language—powerful factors in the formation of nations of a bygone day shrink into insignificance before the mighty factor of common interest. The different countries of Europe stand at variance chiefly because of economic interests which to-day are almost synonymous with national interests. The North and the South of the United States endured a great Civil War on account of a conflict of economic interests: and it is possible that the East and West may have some day an acute tussle if not actually a war. Is India economically divided into any geographical parts or religions, racial or linguistic communities? The whole country feels as one man when that powerful factor comes in. Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsees, Christians and all—Bengalees, Shikhs, Rajputs, Marathas and the various Provinces all over the country stand united in their cry for fiscal and financial autonomy. Is that a small force to weld the whole country into a homogeneous whole? In the eloquent words of Babu Surendra Nath:—"Besides, no allowance is made by our critics for that powerful under-current of thought—perhaps undefinable—which may be called a purely Indian sentiment which, whatever the superficial differences be, melts all India together in one common mould of thought." Happily, with greater self-consciousness as the result of modern thought, that purely Indian sentiment is gathering strength day by day.

But when all this is said, the physical and social obstacles against the fulfilment of our ideal no sensible man will deny. That, however, need not cause any despair. Gokhale, always filled with a deep sense of moral fervour in questions touching the future of India, never failed to drive home every one around him that the problem was not insoluble but that the increased difficulties against us only required increased earnestness, capacity and self-sacrifice on the part of every true son of the soil. With the rulers he ungrudgingly sympathised concerning the stiffness of the task of the regeneration of India they had so nobly imposed upon themselves; and his constant exhortation to them was, "trust the people." In this connection nothing embittered his feelings more than the military policy of the Indian Government. "No pouring out of money like water on mere *standing battalions* can ever give India the military strength and preparedness which other civilised countries possess, while the whole population is disarmed and the process of de-martialization continues apace.....; at the present moment India is about the only country in the civilised world where the people are debarred from the privileges of *citizen soldiery* and from all voluntary participation in the responsibilities of national defence." Always practical, he never wanted the Government to rush into the thing all at once: caution in this matter might be very well exercised, and only particular areas and particular sections of the community might be experimented upon. As it is, the whole system of Indian defence is founded on a policy of distrust: even the recruitment is confined more and more to frontier or trans-frontier men, to the people of non-Indian or extra-Indian areas, with the result that the whole Army is approximating more and more completely to a mere mercenary force. The

increasing rigour of the Arms Act and the gradual exclusion of Indians from places of trust in the army were additional sore-points to the Indians in matters of national defence. Then there was the injustice of racial inequality in the distribution of civil appointments, of which question Gokhale had made a special study and which occupied a large space in his public life, and analysis of which will have to be deferred to some time after the publication of the Report of the Public Service Commission. We believe in the British sense of justice and fairmindedness, and we are thoroughly grateful to the British ideal of lifting us up in the scale of nations by teaching us to be able to stand on our own legs: but it is quite time that British statesmanship makes a large move in the direction of rooting out the evil of racial inequality, lest the charge of selfishness be not too strongly urged against Britain in its present relations with India.

This much about the Indian in India governed by Imperial England: but what about his position in that vast British Empire, the citizenship of which ought to be no mean asset to the proudest of mankind? Has the Indian any place there? This brings us to the question of the Indian in South Africa—a matter than which nothing has, in very recent times, given more signal proof of the rising spirit of nationality in India. Firm believer in the prosperity of the British Empire, as Gokhale was, he could not shut his eyes to any mean practices that might threaten to dim its lustre. Again, a staunch advocate of the rights of British citizenship for every part of the Empire including India, he could not remain insensible to the humiliations and sufferings of the Indians.

whom economic causes had drawn to the various colonies of the Empire. As this question crystallised itself in the South African world, Gokhale's activities came also to be centred there; and his views on a point that has caused the utmost heart-burning in the India of to-day form an illustrious chapter in his political creed.

Lord Cromer is inclined to find the origin of the sense of white superiority in the *reappearance* of slavery in the 15th century, which established in men's minds a connection between darkness of skin and race inferiority. But the theory of the slave taint is obviously inapplicable to the latest recrudescence of the colour question, for this concerns peoples who have not been enslaved by Europe. South Africa, Canada, the United States and Australia have all within recent years manifested an aversion to the people of Asia, which is going to provide one of the difficult problems of the century. This determination on their part has *at first sight* little to excuse it on grounds of humanity and justice and is much at variance with the traditional tolerance and catholicism of the English name. The underlying cause for this aversion is evidently a sense of economic and even racial danger. Numerically few in themselves, with large lands needing development, their crying need was labour. South Africa, particularly Natal, has a climate in which the Indian thrives very well. It is here that the colour question, as it affects India, really arises in its most acute form. It is nearly fifty years since Natal, finding that her multitudes of Kaffirs would not make efficient labourers, embarked on a policy of importing indentured labour from India. The coolies were indentured for five years, with the option of re-engag-

ing for two years more, or of returning to India, or of settling in Natal on payment of a special poll-tax of £3 a year. Now indentured labour, if not actual slavery, is in practice, in a large number of cases not far removed from it. "To take from this country helpless men and women to a distant land, to assign them there to employers in the choice of whom they have no voice and of whose language, customs, social usages and special civilization they are entirely ignorant, and to make them work there under a law which they do not understand and which treats their simplest and most natural attempts to escape ill-treatment as criminal offences—such a system, by whatever name it may be called, must really border on the servile." Authentic cases recorded prove that for the most inhuman treatment meted out to these wretched creatures there is no redress beyond a paltry fine imposed upon the employers. For instance, a man put upon his defence for cutting off a lobe of his coolie's ear is reported to have raised the curious and outrageous plea that as the law allowed him to cut off the ear of his sheep, why should he not be allowed to cut off the ear of his coolie, who was no better than a sheep? And the Magistrate let the criminal off with the option of a fine of £20. The rate of suicide among the indentured is double of what it is among the ex-indentured and from ten to twelve times what it is among those classes from whom the indentured are drawn. Gokhale therefore, strongly held that the system of indentured labour should be done away with altogether, both on its own account and on account of its being the parent of much other mischief in the Colonies, since the ranks of the ex-indentured were likely to swell by this continued influx of indentured labour into South Africa. The total number of the indentured in 1910

was 40,000, while the ex-indentured were numbered at 65,000. There is no doubt that these ex-indentured Indians had deserved well of the Colony. It is to their labour that the present prosperity of Natal is largely due. Sir Leige Hulett, ex-Prime Minister of Natal had said as recently as in July 1908 that, 'the condition of the colony before the importation of Indian labour was one of gloom; it was one that then and there threatened to extinguish the vitality of the country, and it was only by the Government assisting the importation of labour that the country began at once to revive.' Mr. J. R. Saunders, a Member of the Natal Commission on Indian immigration of 1884, said: "...We must remember that a certain number of Indians have been born and brought up in the Colony, and it is the only country they know and the only home they have." The early policy of including ex-indentured Indians to remain in the Colony was gradually given up, and during the last fifteen or twenty years one of the principal concerns of the colonists in Natal has been to get rid of the free Indian element there. The most serious of the expedients devised, so far as the ex-indentured community is concerned, is the imposition by an Act of 1896 of an annual license of £3 per every male above the age of 16 and every female above the age of 13, in addition to the £1 poll-tax which every body has to pay in Natal. Gokhale, in condemning this outrageous impost, lamented over the enormous suffering it had caused—the breaking up of families, the driving of men to crime and of women to a life of shame. These persons whose experience of indenture has been none too kind and who are therefore unwilling to indenture themselves again have no possible alternative but to stay in Africa under any conditions, since a return to India can have no

cheering prospects for them, because they have lost caste in India by reason of their going to Africa. This iniquitous impost the National Government ought to be urged to withdraw. The third part of the Indian community—the small trading people whose number is about 15,000 has also been feeling the weight of harsh and unjust treatment for the last twenty years. Gokhale summed it all up thus:—"The whole policy of Natal to-day towards the Indian population is an utterly selfish and heartless policy, and the only way in which any relief can be obtained is by the Government of India adopting a stern attitude towards the Colony in return."

This cry of "the continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa," which formed the text that inspired Gokhale's speech in 1910 when he moved a resolution in favour of prohibiting indentured labour for Natal, had been raised by eminent authorities like Lord George Hamilton and Lord Curzon as well. Said the former on October 31, 1902, "I do not like to make use of threats, but after consultation with the Indian Government, if I find there is a disposition to get this labour and not to treat the people fairly, it will be a matter for serious consideration whether or not we should put some legal obstacles in their way." Lord Curzon, in connection with the supply of indentured labour had said in the Supreme Council on March 29, 1905:—"It has seemed to us to be our duty to lose no opportunity of pleading the cause of those whose natural protectors we are, and we make no concessions whatever until we obtain a *full quid pro quo* in return." Again, Lord Morley's salutary dictum was thus:—"The Indian Asiatic is a man with very vivid susceptibilities of all kinds, and with living

traditions of a civilisation of his own; and we are bound to treat him with the same kind of respect and kindness and sympathy that we should expect to be treated with ourselves."

The gravity of this situation was painfully noted by Gokhale in these words: "My Lord, behind all the grievances of which I have spoken to-day, three questions of vital importance emerge to view. First, what is the status of us Indians in this Empire? Secondly, what is the extent of the responsibility which lies on the Imperial Government to ensure to us just and humane and gradually even equal treatment in this Empire? And thirdly, how far are the self-governing members of this Empire bound by its cardinal principles. Are they to participate in its privileges only and not to bear their share of its disadvantages? It was absolutely no exaggeration when he said that no single question of our time has evoked more bitter feelings throughout India—feelings in the presence of which the best friends of British rule have had to remain silent—than the continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa. The year before last, to help the South African Indians in their heroic attempt at passive resistance against this £3 poll-tax, a curious hit of Colonial legislature in connection with Indian marriages and several other disabilities, all India was vehemently agitated; and Gokhale called upon the Indian people to help their Indian brethren with money and the Indian people gloriously responded. He asked for meetings of protest and there was not a single town that did not vehemently record its protest against what the colonists were doing with Indians. The women came out and held meetings, a thing they had never done before, for, in this, Indian marriage was

struck at, and the wife was turned into a mistress, and that roused the Indian women, and they came out to speak, and to give and to agitate. As Mrs. Besant puts it, "so dangerous did that become, so universal the protest, that the Viceroy, like a statesman, put himself at the head of the agitation and so prevented it from becoming a riot."

To sum up, Gokhale's public life (and he had no other) is a comprehensive record of the modern moderate school of politics in India, largely shaped and influenced by him in its formation, and vigorously upheld by him in the face of disconcerting conditions created by either the apathetic, easy-going majority of Indians or by the wild anarchic extremist or the obstinately unsympathetic bureaucrat of India or the sullenly hostile Greater Britain. On this creed and in the spirit of its maker young India has to work out her salvation.



CHAPTER IX.

CHARACTERISTICS.

○F no Indian public man of our times is it so hard to speak in a concise and summary fashion as of Gokhale. For the last fifteen years he was so closely associated with the public affairs of this country that his record is virtually an outline of Indian political history during those years. His activities spread themselves over many fields, a narration of which has been given above. His individuality was exceedingly strong. All that he said or did bore its impress. Though the impulsiveness of his early years had been schooled, still his imperiousness of nature continued, all along; and his best friends bear out that he was a Sir Oracle that would fret if any opposition to his views was carried far. This passion of ruling over the judgments of others grew with the growth of his mind, and was the result of deep convictions born out of ceaseless study and thought. But he was also prudent and cautious, and in his tactics astute enough to make his position acceptable both with the party he led and the Government he helped by his opposition. Above all, it was the persistent heat and vehemence of his character, the sustained passion which he threw into the pursuit of the object on which he was for the moment bent, and his self-less devotion to the cause of the motherland that won him the place he holds in the history of our country.

Three conditions exerted a profound influence over him first, the Gokhale blood of Maharashtra carrying resoluteness of character, strength of will and perfect straightforwardness in his veins, second, the connection with the Deccan Education Society—the cradle of service and self-sacrifice in India, and lastly, his apprenticeship to public life under Mr. Ranade. Of all these enough has been recorded above. The last force proved the most powerful for Gokhale as the Servant of India. Mr. Ranade was an eminently cautious man, alive to the necessity of watching the signs of the times, of studying and interpreting the changeful phases of the political life of a country. He was, moreover, a master of detail, slow to propound a plan until he had seen how its theoretic outlines were to be supported by appropriate devices for carrying it into practice. These qualities and habits of the master greatly affected his disciple. They became part of the texture of Gokhale's political character. The relationship reminds one of that between Gladstone and his master Sir Robert Peel. To this influence of a living guide was added the political philosophy of Burke which had occupied the life-long earnest attention of Gokhale. The contrast, then, between his caution and respect for facts on the one hand, and his reforming fervour on the other is easily explained by his very education. Two tendencies were always at work in him. One was the speculative desire to probe every thing to the bottom, to try it by the light of general principles and logic, and when it failed to stand this test, to reject it. The other was the sense of the complexity of existing social and political arrangements, and of the risk involved in disturbing any one factor without due regard for the harmony of the whole. Every statesman feels both these

sides to every concrete question of reform ; and of all English Statesmen no one has more earnestly dwelt on the necessity for the latter side than Burke whose lessons, again, Gokhale had greedily imbibed. Therefore, our hero, while passionate and impulsive on the emotional side of his nature, was cautious and conservative on the intellectual and practical. He was always careful to approach the diseased organ with that awe and reverence with which, to use Burke's expression, a young physician approaches to the cure of the disorders of his aged parent. This is clearly noticeable in his cry for what finally developed into the Minto-Morley Reforms, his ranging himself on the side of order and law and strengthening the hands of the Government when dangerous political propaganda of 'extremism' was claiming many adherents, and, above all, in his settling the burning question of the demands of Indians in South Africa. In his handling of the last question, particularly, Gokhale's statesmanship shines forth : for, while the general cry was for perfect equality of the Indian with the rest in the British Empire, he chose to concentrate himself on and was able to obtain the redress of the immediate wrongs of the Indians. "The disease was immediate and insistent, and palliatives were the need of the hour. What is the good if, while you are studying the methods of complete cure, the patient dies from his pangs?"—(R. P. Paranjape).

What entitled Gokhale to the leadership of the country's people ? "I was not," said Burke in a passage of lofty dignity, "like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled and rocked and dandled into a legislator ; *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me. I possessed not one of the qualities nor cultivated one

of the arts that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts, by imposing on the understandings of men. At every step of my progress in life, for in every step was I traversed and opposed, and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again 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 laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home; otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me." How well this passage suits the life of Gokhale! To rise from a school master to be the first man in the country by sheer force of industry, talents and character, shorn of all adventitious circumstances like wealth and connections is a great achievement anywhere in the world, but far more so in the peculiar conditions of India. Wedded to poverty ever since he began life, from 1897 he eschewed all personal objects in his life's work. They counted with him for very little. He really did what so large a majority of public men only feign to do. He forgot that he had any interests to be promoted other than those of his country for which he held himself a trustee. This intense soul-passion to serve his country as an ardent devotee worships at the shrine of his saint or as a lover in Romance dedicates himself to the service of his lady has not many parallels in the history of the world. And the power added to this from a deep study of questions, from great talents and from a spirit of moderation and consciousness of limitations imposed for some practical, solid end must lift a man above his compeers and exact homage from the greatest of them. Early in his political life Lord Beacons-

field said one night to Mr. Bright, as they took their umbrellas in the cloak-room of the House of Commons: "After all what is it that brings you and me here? Fame: This is the true arena. I might have occupied a literary throne; but I have renounced it for this career." How very differently from this Gokhale's mind was constituted is sufficiently expressed in his whole career.

✓The leadership of the permanent Opposition to His Majesty's Government of India which Gokhale occupied according to the popular and Government estimate, was altogether of a peculiar character. There was no question of defeating the Government on any measure and occupying the ministerial bench as is done in England and other Parliamentary countries; and such was the discerning care of Gokhale with regard to the present situation that he did not even covet a position whereby the present Government should in any way be discredited. Their "prestige" was everything to this soul of moderation. Therefore all that was wanted was that he should interpret the peoples' needs to the Government on the one hand and make the masses understand the peculiar difficulties of the Government on the other. ✓ The insertion of the thin end of the wedge in the matter of the Government recognising the voice of the people in a constitutional manner was a great achievement: and for the rest, at least the middle class should be educated for political life. This two-fold activity was fully borne in mind by the leader of the 'moderates.' This leadership, as he held it, was the most trying as well as the most honourable post. With one hand he led the non-official members in the Supreme Council for twelve years, and kept the other on Indian movements, at the same time thinking not

only of India but of the whole British Empire. To lead the 'opposition' a man must have, over and above the qualities which make a good debater, an unusual combination of talents. He must be both bold and cautious, combative and cool. He must make, on his own responsibility and on the spur of the moment, decisions which commit his party, and he must consider how far his colleagues will approve of or acquiesce in his action. He must put enough force and fire into his speeches to rouse his own ranks and make the Government feel the situation, yet he must have regard for the timorous spirits among his own supporters, going no further than he feels they will follow. Under the fire of debate, perhaps while composing the speech he has to make in reply, he must consider not merely the audience before him but also the effect his words will have when they appear the next day in cold print. Being responsible to the country for everything, he must keep a close watch upon every Bill that the Government or a private member moves and determine how much opposition or support must be given to each.

Pre-eminently a Parliamentarian, Gokhale had a full mastery of parliamentary strategy in that larger sense which covers familiarity with forms and usages, care and judgment in introducing measures, the power of grasping a situation and knowing how to deal with it, the art of guiding a debate and choosing the right moment for reserve or for openness, for a dignified retreat, for a watchful defence, for a measured attack and all kindred tactics. His study of History and of Constitutions had already fitted him for it; and his extraordinarily retentive memory was always present to supply him with precedents. The Imperial Council was, as it were, his home; and the ground of debate

was to him 'as a steed that knows his rider.' Many were the chivalrous and arduous fights he had with the members of the Indian Government; and his facility and perfect self-command led a stranger to believe that he enjoyed combat for its own sake, not so much from any inborn pugnacity,—for he was not disputatious in ordinary conversation, as because it called out his fighting force and stimulated his whole nature. "I am never nervous in reply," said Gladstone on one occasion, "though I am sometimes nervous in opening a debate." Gokhale's career in the Council abundantly displays his powers both in opening as well as in replying. Armed with the right to move resolutions on matters of general administration, Gokhale missed no opportunity to bring measures of urgency before the notice of the Government; and officials as well as non-officials were agreed in according him the highest praise in handling measures of great delicacy. A wonderful lucidity of exposition and marshalling of dry facts, a skilful arrangement of arguments couched in temperate and choice language and a seasonable touch of lofty sentiment and moral fervour even in the perfectly business-like arena of the Council made his speeches on the Resolutions he moved a perfect 'intellectual treat.' His three speeches in relation to Free and Primary Education, his many utterances on Finances and one remarkable speech on the growth of expenditure left his position as an opener of debate unrivalled. But what delights the reader still more is his power of reply. Much practice at the bar is commonly believed to contribute to the development of such powers: but how and where a college professor matured them is almost an enigma; and yet every body must recognize the superiority of Gokhale in his pleasant rejoinders against any body from Lord Curzon down to the

Honourable Mr. Gates, the Hon. Mr. Madge or the Hon. Lt. Umar Hayat Khan. His cool-headedness enabled him to take advantage of every loop-hole in his opponents' position; and yet his admirable restraint and decorum in debate and his genial temperament never let him fall into any biting and acrimonious retort. The proceedings of the Legislative Council team with illustrations of what is stated above. When the Hon. Mr. (now Sir) Harcourt Butler declined to take Gokhale's analogies of the West or of Baroda in matters of educational development, the Honourable mover was obliged to reply, "Western countries will not do, because they are governed democratically! Baroda will not do, because it is governed autocratically! I suppose the honourable member will not be satisfied unless I produce the analogy of a country governed bureaucratically, and as there is no other country governed as India is, he is safe in insisting on such an analogy, and I must give it up." When Gokhale moved a resolution in favour of reducing the Civil and Military Expenditure of India, the Honourable Mr. Madge (a Civilian) opposed him; and in reply Gokhale treated him to the following rejoinder:—"Mr. Madge has told the Council that, in his opinion, not a single European soldier in this country can be reduced. This emphatic observation was preceded by the statement that laymen ought not to be dogmatical in these matters. If only the Hon. Member had remembered his counsel, we should have been spared a proposition so extreme as that which came from him." The Honourable Mr. Jenkins in introducing the Prevention of Seditious meetings Bill in August 1910 tried to hit the non-official members by ridiculing their oratorical outburst, whereupon Gokhale at the earliest opportunity took him to task by saying, "I do not think any

officer of Government has any reason to be bored to death or any thing else if he wants to discharge his duties properly here, because we have also to discharge our duties here, and I do not think anything is gained by introducing such a tone into the debates in this Council." The Honourable Malik Umar Hayat Khan's religiously punctilious support of all Government measures evoked the following mild but eloquent remonstrance from Gokhale:—"The Hon. Member's faith in everything that the Government does is most touching; he stands by the Government even where the Honourable Sir Edward Baker (the Finance Minister) criticises it." Debate in connection with the University Bill under the Government of Lord Curzon was the first occasion for bringing into prominence these powers of retort on the spur of the moment; and every further occasion enhancing their worth, the non-official members ungrudgingly left Gokhale to move resolutions with the comfortable certainty that from him no argument of the opponents would escape without a satisfactory drubbing. This faculty in the leader of our moderates was no small asset in his leadership: and in Gokhale as a man it is all the more remarkable because of his otherwise incredibly simple nature.

The Council is no place for a display of oratory; and outbursts of eloquence would look rather out of the way in that eminently practical assemblage of administrators and politicians gathered to shape policies. Gokhale's great public work being transacted in that hall, that high eloquence which is able to rouse passions could not be his. Well did Sir Henry Cotton say in this connection:—"Mr. Gokhale was not an orator in the sense