

GOKHALEANA

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Notes about some personalities and Institutions

Aiyar, Sir, P. S. Sivasami :—B.A.B.L. ; (7th Feb. 1864. On 5.11.1946.) Enrolled as Vakil Madras High Court (1885) Assistant Professor, Law College, Madras (1893-1899); Member, Madras Legislative Council (1904-1907); High School at Tirukattupalli founded; Gave evidence before the Decentralisation Commission (1907); Advocate General 1912-1917; Member Executive Council (1915); K.C.S.I. conferred; Vice-Chancellor Madras University (1918); Vice-chancellor, Benares University (1919); President, Second All India Liberal Federation, Calcutta (1919); Elected Member, Indian Legislative Assembly (1921-23); Nominated Member, Indian Legislative Assembly (1924-26); All India Liberal Federation, President Akola (1926); Gave away his life's earning to the National Girls High School Mylapore and to the Tirukattupalli Boys High School in Tanjore District, founded by him; a great scholar, a philanthropist, a patriot and possessor of many estimable qualities of a rare combination.

Agarkar, Gopal Ganesh;—M.A., (1859-1895); joined the Deccan Education Society with B.G. Tilak; became the Editor of the Kesari (1887); professor of History and philosophy, Fergusson College (1884); became its principal (1892); Started the SUDHARAK, an Anglo Marathi weekly to promote social reform (1888); died of overwork and Asthma (1895); translated HAMLET into Marathi; was called the Patron saint of the Fergusson College.

Deccan Education Society;—The founded in 1880 in Pune by the English educated Maharastrains like Vishnu Krishna Chiplunker Bal (Gangadhar Tilak, and Nam Joshi with the object of making college education cheap. Those who joined the Society took a vow to serve the society for twenty years on a nominal salary.

Foreward

This issue of Gokhaleana contains the speech of another great Liberal of this city, the late Sir P.S. Sivaswamy Aiyar, made by him at the condolence meeting held in Madras soon after the passing away of Gokhale on the 19th of February 1915.

Though short, it is a well chiselled gem of a speech in lucid and dignified prose, highlighting Gokhale's lofty ideas and ideals, intellectual abilities, integrity and his complete self renunciation in the service of the country.

This Issue also contains some anecdotes and incidents in the life of Gokhale, as narrated by Gokhale's colleagues like Sir. Raghunath. P. Paranjpye, Professor, K.A. Kanitkar and Professor P.M. Limaye, and students like Dadsehib, Deshpande, N.C. Kelkar, G.N. Abhyankar and V.R. Alur, extracted from the History of the Deccan Education Society.

GOKHALE

Sir P.S. SIVASWAMI AIYAR

WE ARE CALLED together to-day to pay our mournful tribute of respect and appreciation to the memory of a great Indian patriot who has been a prominent figure in the public life of this century in India. Seldom has the death of any public man been followed by such a universal manifestation of sorrow in this country. Hindus and Mahomedans, Europeans and Indians, officials and non-officials, high and low, all have joined in bewailing the loss of Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale. H. E. the Viceroy at Delhi and his Honour Sir James Meston at Lucknow, have both given eloquent expressions to their high admiration and esteem for Mr. Gokhale's character, abilities and services. The meetings held all over the country testify to the commanding hold he held over the hearts of his countrymen. Distinguished as were Mr. Gokhale's abilities, there have been abler men than he; eloquent as Mr. Gokhale was, he has been surpassed by others in mere oratory; men of as pure character and men of equally ascetic simplicity of life there have been in India. But what distinguished Mr. Gokhale above others was the combination of abilities of a high order with a lofty character and the highest ideals, of a life of self-renunciation with strenuous and incessant work for the advancement of his country. By his strenuousness and many-sided endeavours, Mr. Gokhale crammed into his 31 years of active life, an immense amount of solid achievement, which has earned for him the undying gratitude of his countrymen. His mastery of finance, his gifts of lucid and telling presentation even of such dry subjects as finance, his skill and readiness in debate, his moderation and his fearless and trenchant criticisms of any measure or policy of which he disapproved have won unstinted praise from the highest officials. The expansion of the Legislative Councils and all the other Minto-Morley constitutional reforms are in no small measure due to the able, earnest and persistent advocacy of Mr. Gokhale. Education was a subject of absorbing interest to him, and he laboured hard to make the Government take a definite step forward in the direction of free and compulsory

education. He succeeded in rousing a remarkable expression of public opinion in the country in favour of the Bill and though he failed to carry it through in the Legislative Council, he did not labour in vain. The great increase in expenditure on education in recent years is not a little due to the influence of Mr. Gokhale's fervent appeals. That the much-vexed and long-standing question of the Indian settlers in South Africa was solved in a tolerably satisfactory manner was the result, to a considerable extent, of the tact and statesmanship of Mr. Gokhale, as acknowledged by H.E. the Viceroy. Like his master, the late Mr. Ranade, Mr. Gokhale believed in the promotion of harmonious relations between the Hindus and Mussalmans, and his lecturing tour of 1907 in Northern India has done more than anything else to pave the way for a rapprochement between the two great communities.

Not the least remarkable of Mr. Gokhale's constructive efforts is the establishment of the Servants of India society in 1905. The loss of a man like Mr. Gokhale must be irreparable to the country at any time. But it is especially so at the present juncture, on the eve of the Report of the Public Services Commission, whose labours have been followed with intense interest, and which had so considerably put off the submission of its Report to enable Mr. Gokhale to take rest and get back to England to discuss the recommendations.

A life like his is full of lessons to all and to every public worker, every citizen. The pains that Mr. Gokhale took to master his subjects, his culture, his wide outlook, his sound judgement, his sweet reasonableness, and his spirit of compromise, his unwavering determination to do the right, and his tenacity of purpose, are all worthy of the highest imitation. It may not be given to all to possess Mr. Gokhale's abilities or constructive statesmanship, but it is open to everyone to work for the public good in the spirit which animated him and with the high ideals by which he was guided.

It is for the public to decide upon the form of the memorial that is to be raised in his honour. But I may be

permitted to express the hope that the feeling of the public may be in favour of a statue in a prominent place like the Presidency College grounds, where it may command the attention of every student and every visitor to Madras, and lead them to a study of his noble, selfless, and patriotic life. I hope no narrow utilitarian view will stand in the way of the adoption of such a memorial. I understand that proposals for an additional memorial will also be put forward. It is intended that it should be left entirely to the option of the subscribers to indicate to which of the objects their subscriptions should be devoted. The form of the memorial is, however, in the hands of the meeting.

—*The Great Liberal pp. 298. 300.*

GOKHALE AND SOCIAL REFORM.

One cannot but think that at bottom the difference between Agarkar and others was one of degree of emphasis. It is true none the less that until Gokhale's accession to the body of life-members in the middle of 1886, Agarkar stood alone as against the rest in his view on social reform. (History of the Fergusson College).

—(Part I. P.M. Limaye)

GOKHALE AN ASSET TO THE DECCAN EDUCATION SOCIETY.

Gokhale became a life-member in 1886. Though young in years Gokhale had come to occupy the foremost place among life-members by 1895. He became Secretary of the Society in 1892, and in that capacity undertook the responsibility of collecting funds for the New Building for the Fergusson College, the construction of which had begun early in 1899, on what was then called the Chaturshringi Plain. Gokhale was Secretary of the Sarvajanic Sabha—the most influential political association in Western India—and Editor of its Quarterly journal, as also joint Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. His position in public life was therefore a great asset to the subscription work he had undertaken. But even a greater service he rendered to the Society was to induce men of promise to become life-members.

—*Ibid. P. 132.*

GOKHALE : A KEEN CRICKETER.

Gokhale was a keen cricketer for some years.

—*Ibid*-152.

GOKHALE LAID THE LIBERAL TRADITIONS OF THE D.E. SOCIETY

After a service of 18 years in the New English School and the Fergusson College, Gokhale went on furlough preparatory to retirement in January 1902. His service to the Society were simply invaluable. He was mainly responsible for laying the foundation of the distinctively liberal political traditions of the Deccan Education Society, just as Agarkar was responsible for its traditions of Social reform. To the public of other Indian provinces he was the living embodiment of the ideals for which the Fergusson College stood. Of his work in the Society itself Principal Paranjpye spoke in the following words in the College report for 1902-03. "Recognized as an authority in his various subjects, knowing how to obtain the esteem, regard and love of his pupils and colleagues and possessing an unbounded influence with all the sections in the community, his place in the College is sure to be missed for a very long time indeed. The present College Buildings are the result of his untiring efforts, and in fact the position occupied by the College as a unique institution in the country, is mainly due to him".

—*Ibid* p. 196.

GOKHALE ELATED AT THE FULFILLMENT OF HIS VOW

I well remember the words of thankfulness uttered by Gokhale that he was the first life-member of the Society to retire after completing the period of his pledge, all others before him having died in their early thirties while in harness.

—*Ibid* part II R.P. Paranjpye p. 12.

GOKHALE SHED TEARS AT AGARKAR'S DEATH

The late lamented Mr. Agarkar was our Principal. He was on his death-bed when we joined. We went to see him. His last words to us were that he would not live to see us graduates. We bowed reverentially and left his presence. He soon afterwards departed. Mr. Gokhale came to address the whole college, gathered together in the big hall. I believe he was going to give a discourse on Agarkar. But as soon as he ascended the platform and tried to speak, he burst into tears. What could be more eloquent than this outburst? The whole class shed tears with him and Gokhale abruptly left the hall without any address.

—*Ibid. Part II, G. N. Abhyonkar p. 199.*

During his career as a Professor Gokhale held a prominent position both on account of his industry and his other activities. He would never come to the class without preparation and his lectures proved very valuable as he used to be appointed an examiner by the University. Professor Gokhale taught us History and Economics,

—*Ibid. Part II, K. A. Kanitkar, p. 159.*

PUBLIC LIFE MUST START BY DUSTING BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

It was a remark of the late Hon Mr. Gokhale when he was questioned by some of us as to the how we should begin our public life, which induced me to arrange and number the books of the defunct native General Library of Dharwar, the Samskrit Library of the Pathashala, and my own private Library. The advice, I remember, was given by him in his inaugural address to the Bombay Graduates association in 1904 or 1905, to Mr. Devadhar and others. He told them to begin public work by doing the humble work of taking the dust from the books of the Royal Asiatic Society.

—*Ibid. V. B. Alur, p. II. p. 161.*

Gokhale, Gopal Krishna ;— B. A. ; (1866–1915); joined the Deccan Education Society as a life member ; and taught History, Politics, Economics, English and Mathematics, Secretary Sarvajanik Sangha Poona. Witness before the Welby Commission when he was 31 years of age on the financial administration of the Government of India in London ; Founded the Servants of India Society 1905 ; President, Pune Municipality and President Indian National Congress, Benares 1905 ; Member ; Viceroy's Legislative Council, Introduced Bill for Free and Compulsory Education ; Worked for the Minto Morley reform of 1909. Member Public Service Commission 1913. A great parliamentarian and statesman and a true liberal.

Paranjpye Raghunath Purushottam:—M.A., (Cantab.) D.Sc., (Calcutta) (1877-1966) Studied in the Fergusson College under Gokhale. Went to Cambridge and was the First Indian to be declared Senior Wrangler in Mathematics, the Blue ribbon of the Cambridge University ; Chose the path of his master by joining the Deccan Education Society and as Principal of the Fergusson College ; Minister for Education Bombay Government 1921–1922. Passed the Bombay Elementary Education Act ; Member India Council London (1927–32) ; Vice-Chancellor Lucknow University (1932–38) ; High Commissioner for India in Australia 1944–47 ; Hon. Vice Chancellor, Pune University. Author, *84 years, not out*.

Ranade, Mahadev Govind (1842–1901) :—M.A. LL.B., Father of Indian School of Economics ; Editor INDU PRAKASH (1881) rose from the position of Police Magistrate to that of a High Court Judge (1893–1901) ; One of the founders of the Indian National Congress and the Indian Social Conference. A maker of Modern India and a *Maharishi*. Author of the *Rise of the Maharatta Power*.

Sarvajanic Sabha;—Founded in 1835 contemporaneous with the Madras Mahajan Sabha to make representations to the Government on the greivances of the public after making a careful study of the each greivance, and also educate the public on all public questions.

Tilak, Bal Gangadhar;—B.A., LLB., (1856-1920); Joined the Deccan Education Society (1861); professor of Mathematics and Sanskrit Fergusson College; resigned owing to difference of opinion; Editor of THE KESARI a Marathi Weekly (1887); charged for organising Shivaji and Ganapathi festival: made people conscious of their rights; charged for sedition and deported to Mandalay in Burma (1904-1913); wrote the Gita Rahasya; the Arctic home of the Vedas and the Orion; was called LOKMANYA, the darling of the people.