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GREAT MEN OF INDIA SERIES.

GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

(A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY)

BY

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AND

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WITH A FOREWORD BY

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FOREWORD.

Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull resided in Poona for many years and had opportunities of knowing Gokhale and appreciating the merits that won him his rare influence and fame. To this knowledge they add a real understanding of Indian life and character. Moreover, they realise, as those will who are engaged in the work of education, how greatly boys and girls will benefit by learning, what manner of man he was, how he acquired the qualifications necessary for his task, and how he devoted them faithfully and ungrudgingly to its performance. This little volume, the result of their joint authorship, had a simple attractive style and is full of matter carefully selected and not unduly compressed. It seems well-adapted for use in schools, and one can confidently recommend it to education authorities in India.

It is a generation now, all but two years, since Gokhale passed away. He was so young at death that several of his contemporaries are alive, who watched the whole of his public life — how he swam into their ken, attained full lustre rapidly, and while still in the meridian of his glory, was extinguished with a suddenness which seemed wanton. Yet his work had been done. He felt so. In his last days he said now and then that, if he lived much longer, he would only be repeating himself. It was not merely that he was weary — weary in body and soul. All things seemed to have come to a pause. The Great War had

just begun. No one could have guessed how entirely it would change the world. Government, Legislative Council, National Congress, who could have predicted in 1915 that all these would undergo a transformation ? To get a true perspective. one has only to read his political will and testament and compare it for a moment with the demands even of the moderate politicians of India at the recent Round Table Conference. The great questions that agitated Gokhale have receded from our horizon. Who talks now of simultaneous examinations or of the Indian proportion in the higher services ? Indentured Labour is now of the past. Even Compulsory Education is no longer in debate. It is a question only of ways and means. Military Expenditure and Army Control are still unsolved problems. But, thanks to Gokhale and his labours, they must yield soon, seeing that India is about to become a Self-governing Federation and Dominion Status is her assured destiny.

V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI.

AUTHORS' FOREWORD.

The chief aim of this little biography is to set forth the significance of Gokhale's public work, and to give some account of his views on the larger questions with which he had to deal. To this end we have often quoted from his public speeches (*Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, Third Edition, G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, 1920). In their knowledge, breadth of outlook, and admirable temper, these Speeches are in themselves a liberal political education for young Indians. For much of the purely biographical matter the authors desire to express their obligation to Principal Shahani's thoughtful and suggestive *Historical Biography*. To those, who desire a full treatment of the problems to which Gokhale devoted his life, Principal Shahani's work may be cordially recommended.

For permission to use the quotations from Mr Gokhale's Speeches. we are much indebted to the kindness of Messrs. Natesan.

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A TRIBUTE TO GOKHALE.

Heroic Heart ! lost hope of all our days !
Need'st thou the homage of our love or praise ?
Lo ! let the mournful millions round thy pyre
Kindle their souls with consecrated fire
Caught from the brave torch fallen from thy hand,
To succour and to serve our suffering land,
And in a daily worship taught by thee
Upbuild the temple of her Unity.

SAROJINI NAIDU.

GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

IN the little village of Katluk, situated in the Ratnagiri District, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the Indian patriot, was born. The date of his birth was May 9th, 1866, but we are not told that, as in the case of the princes of the Golden Age, any special conjunction of the planets or commotion amongst the stars marked the arrival of the infant Gokhale in a world to which he was to render such great service. For his father was not a king, nor his mother a queen. The little Gopal was just the son of a poor but proud Maratha Brahman, for the Venushaver Gokhales were able to add to an honourable name that of *Raste* (True). This distinction had been conferred upon one of their ancestors by Prince

Shahu as the reward of integrity. Indeed, all the men of the Gokhale family had good reason to be proud of their unblemished record of uprightness and honesty. Thus the new comer, if he did not inherit either gold or land, held as his birthright that which was to set him high in the estimation not only of his own country, but of the whole civilised world.

His father, Krishnarao Gokhale, although he was not rich, was of such a generous disposition that he gave away nearly everything he possessed. This liberality reduced his own family to a poverty against which the young Gopal had early to struggle. In childhood the lack of means was hardly noticed. In an Indian village the needs of a Hindu boy are few and secure, as he felt himself in the close circle of his family life, money or the lack of it never troubled him. We may picture him playing with his boy companions, or squatting cross-legged on the mud floor of his father's house, listening to some exploit of a past and glorious Gokhale, or perhaps to a softly

chanted verse of an old Maratha song, such as Jnanesvar's poem of the Just :—

"They bathe in wisdom : then their hunger stay
With Perfectness ; lo, all in green array,
The leaves of Peace are they.
Buds of Attainment these ; columns they are
In Valour's hall : . . . . . "

Or again it might be that, sitting there in the dim light cast by the single oil lamp, he pondered in his own mind some boyish problem, far removed from those great problems that he was, not some day to grapple with for the welfare of India.

His father, who in his youth had earned the name of '*Vaghoba*' (tiger) and had as a boy been the talk and terror of his village, may have felt a prick of discontent that any son of his should seem so gentle. For Gopal, then and afterwards, was always gentle. But that did not mean he was not strong. Whatever the elder Gokhale thought, it was never that his little son was every bit as brave and upright as the best of the Gokhales.

From his mother, Satyabhama, Gopal seems to have inherited his tenderness of heart and fixity of purpose. She was, like most Hindu women of that time, quite uneducated, so far as knowledge of books was concerned. She most certainly could neither read nor write, but her virtues were all that were most desirable in a wife and mother. Her children loved her dearly, and never deserted her. And so, Gopal spent the first years of his life in the simple surroundings of his mother's home, or in the village of Kagal, where his Father held a small appointment. At the age of ten, or a little earlier, he was sent with his elder brother Govindrao to Kolhapur. Here his father had been at school before him, and had sat in class with a boy called Ranade, the very Ranade who later on became the friend of Gopal himself, as he was the friend of every man who needed one in India. At Kolhapur, Gopal worked steadily, but he had only half completed his course when a great blow fell upon him. His father, the resolute, sturdy bread-winner

of the family, died, leaving his wife and children practically unprovided for. It was then that the true nobility which distinguished the Gokhale family, came out. Krishnarao's brother Ananjipant, though poor himself, at once came forward to help his dead brother's widow and children. Securing a small post for Govindrao at Kagal, the pay of which was Rs. 15 a month, he took the rest of the family to the Konkan, and did his best to support them. Govindrao, who seems to have had a particularly unselfish nature, gave up all ambitious hopes for himself, and although only eighteen devoted himself to building up a career for his younger brother. Out of his small salary, he contrived to send Rs. 8 a month to Gopal, who from this tiny sum, had to meet the cost of his food in a boarding house. To those who have only thought of Gopal Krishna Gokhale as a leader amongst men, it may seem surprising and yet touching to learn how he once had to deny himself almost the necessities of life. Sometimes he even had to go without food, but whatever

his privations were, he never failed to meet his obligations, or slipped aside from the path of truth and honour. This is clearly demonstrated by a little story told of him while he was still at the village school of Kagal. The master of the class had set an example in arithmetic for the boys to work at home. Gopal alone brought the correct answer. He was placed first, but instead of displaying a joyful triumph to the surprise of every one, he burst into tears saying, "The first place does not really belong to me. The answer I brought was worked by another boy at home. Indeed I have no right to the reward." The master as well as the boys were amazed to find Gopal so sensitive to honour. It did not seem either strange or wrong that he had accepted help in the working of the example. But in the younger Gokhale, the tender conscience of his mother and the frank courageous spirit of his father were working like a charm for good, and so he could not accept a reward which he felt he had not fairly won. About this simple but

brave-hearted boy there are many such stories told, and we learn from them something of what he was to become when self-discipline and self-control had strengthened the soft outlines of his boyish mind.

In 1881, two years after his father's death, Gopal passed the Matriculation Examination, and a year later moved on from the High School at Kolhapur to the Rajaram College in the same place. This year, 1882, seems to have been a significant one in the history of Maharashtra. An able and energetic band of men, foremost among them Mahadev Govind Ranade, seemed resolved to lift India from the apathy into which she had sunk, and to revive in her the great traditions of the past. Other men, whose names have since become honoured as the builders of a finer, freer India, Agarkar, Tilak, V. S. Chiplunkar and M. V. Joshi, opened in Poona the New English School. To this institution, unique in its way, they attracted some of the more enterprising and intelligent graduates, who had not already been appointed to Government

service. At about the same time, the two vernacular papers, the *Kesari*, and the *Maratha* sounded through their columns the new challenge of progress. The difficulties in which the former paper shortly afterwards found itself, only served to intensify sympathy with its opinions in Maharashtra.

We are told that at this time Gokhale was more interested in his studies than in the politics of India. It may well be that he heard and understood the challenge which his courageous countrymen were answering with a willing offer of service. But if he did he showed no signs that he was moved by it. A nearer, if humbler, voice called to him, that of duty to the brother who had helped him so generously out of such small means. His main ambition was to qualify himself as quickly as possible for some post from the salary of which he could pay for his own barest needs, devoting the rest towards discharging the debt to Govindrao. For this we must admire him, for it would have been easy enough for him to have turned his back

upon his responsibilities and ranged himself with the young patriots, rather than drudge on to reward the faith of his family. But if one may take "the family" as the most important element in the State, then Gokhale, the great statesman of the future, already realised the very first lesson of patriotism. And would not an ideal State be like a united family, to which each son owed allegiance and affection ?

So Gokhale let the other young men try their hand at making history while he plodded along at his English.

When later the whole of India was thrilled and amazed at his mastery over that language, it was often remembered by Gokhale's fellow students, how nothing could distract him from his English studies. Afterwards, one of the greatest services, he was able to render to his country, was that of making her rights and her needs, as he saw them, clear to English people. He was the great spokesman of India, and of the utmost value as an ambassador in her cause. It will be seen later, how he spoke with

consummate ease on her most vital problems; how he could argue with the subtlety of a clever lawyer, or command attention by a frank and manly statement, in which he sought to prove her right to move with other nations in the march of progress. His plea for India's children, his claims that they too, equally with the children of a happier race, should have the benefits of education, made upon the minds of his audience a profound and lasting impression. Was this forceful orator, asking — nay demanding— from the West for India the best the West had to give, the tranquil, simple boy working out his destiny over his books at the Rajaram College, Kolhapur? At that time his first need was to take a degree. To do this he was obliged to leave the Rajaram College, where there were no higher classes than the First Year So he went to the Deccan College, Poona, and although he did nothing very noteworthy there, he was all the time shaping his mind on the same lines that afterwards distinguished it.

Soon aferwards the Rajaram College instituted a B. A. Class, and Gokhale, who had an affection for his old College, went back there, where he graduated in his first B. A. in 1883. He then went to Elphinstone College, Bombay, for his final B. A., taking mathematics as an optional subject. At Elphinstone College he was lucky enough to come under the teaching of Professor Hawthornthwaite. Under this distinguished man he made rapid progress, gaining a scholarship of Rs. 20 a month, a vast sum to a needy student. For he was then, and for a long time afterwards, very poor. For himself he did not mind, but he longed to repay his brother. And so, when in 1884 he took his B. A. with a second class, his next step was to look for a post. At first he could not make up his mind what to do. He had a leaning towards mathematics, and thought that if he went to the College of Science, Poona, he might train as an engineer. Then friends said to him, "You are only eighteen, why not go to England and compete for the Indian Civil Service?" To England! where

his model of all that was great and wise, Burke, had lived and written ! But if he went to England, what of the debt to his brother ? How would he be able to leave his mother, the poor widow whose earthly hopes were centred upon him? The law as a profession seemed a wise choice. Lawyers sometimes made a great deal of money ; on the other hand they often had to wait a long time for anyone to employ them. One thing was certain, he could not afford to remain idle for long. He went back to his first idea, and joined the College of Science and Engineering at Poona. But no sooner had he done this than he heard that the First Year Law course could be taken at the Deccan College. Then he would be a lawyer ! A bright idea struck him, that if he obtained a small post as an Assistant Master at the New English School, Poona, he could also keep his law terms at the Deccan College. "Charity begins at home," runs an English proverb, and so Gokhale thought. Whatever the patriotic glamour that hung over the New English School

may have meant to others, to Gokhale a post there meant Rs. 35 a month. He had to eat, and he must repay his brother; so to the New English School he went, with such simple but such honest ideals, that fate took them and shaped them into the finest creed that has ever made a simple boy into one of the noblest Servants of India.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAKING OF A PATRIOT.

SO far it is hardly possible to trace in Gokhale's career any sign of the great talents which he afterwards displayed, though there are hints that his steadfast and conscientious character was already being formed. But great men do not always display their greatness in their early years; there is often a passive period of quiet growth, destined to bear fruit later on. So it was with Gokhale.

At the new English School, he devoted himself to his duties of teaching English with that quiet thoroughness and sense of duty with which he approached every task in life. It has often been said that Indian students trust too much to mere memory, yet both in training himself and in teaching others Gokhale used his retentive memory to the utmost. In his early studies he had memorized many pages of Scott's poetry. He now returned to the study of his favourite Burke,

and learned many passages by heart. Though he had as yet no idea of ever becoming a public speaker or a statesman, there could have been no better literary preparation for such a career. Burke, in spite of his party feeling, was a deep thinker as well as a great orator, and to be familiar with Burke is an education in itself. To John Bright's speeches Gokhale devoted the same close study. How close it was is shown us by an interesting anecdote. He was living at this time near the temple of Vishnu in Sadashiv Peth; a friend and neighbour would hold the text of Burke or Bright, while Gokhale would repeat by heart long passages under the penalty of one anna for every slip he made. But the cost of this exercise did not amount to one anna per hour. At other times he would wander, slowly and alone, round Parbati's temple-crowned hill, reading as he walked, or softly reciting passages to himself. Such a training in language was to prove invaluable later on; in choice of words, in accuracy of expression, and in the balance

of his sentences, Gokhale's speeches were models of presentation.

So conscientious was he in his work of teaching that he actually wrote out and committed to memory all that he had to tell his class by way of comment and explanation on the text of the day. Whether such an heroic method is really wise may be doubted, but it gives us a vivid picture of his thoroughness.

To add a few honest rupees to his slender income he started a tutorial and coaching class for students, the fees for which we may be sure he well earned.

But it was not only to English that he gave his hours. His methodical mind had a natural affinity with mathematics, and he put together an excellent little book on Arithmetic. As soon as it was published (in 1888) its merits caused it to be used in many schools, and the sales brought a welcome addition to his humble income.

Lord Dufferin had only recently arrived as Viceroy when there took place an event which was to prove momentous both for the

political future of India and for the career of Gokhale himself. For it was in December 1885, that the National Congress, representing the advanced political opinion of India, met for the first time in Bombay. It became clear, in the course of time, that the aim of Congress was a constitution of a western type, with representative government and an executive responsible to it. Lord Dufferin himself, like Lord Morley later on, disclaimed any idea of a parliamentary system for India. But he was a man of broad views, and said that he wished to give "a wider share in the public administration of affairs to such Indian gentlemen as by their influence, their acquirements, and the confidence they inspire in their fellow countrymen, are marked out as fitted to assist with their counsels the responsible rulers of the country". Lord Dufferin's views bore fruit in the Indian Councils Act of 1892, which not only increased the number of unofficial members in the Imperial Councils, but introduced the principle of election. Once introduced, this principle

was almost bound to lead more and more towards parliamentary government.

The new forces in India which were revealed by the first meeting of the Congress were active in Maharashtra. The *Kesari* and the *Maratha* were giving vigorous expression to the new spirit, and it was not long before Gokhale was brought into contact with the leading figures of Agarkar and Tilak. He was young and inexperienced, and though the influence which each of these remarkable men exercised upon him was strong, it was exactly opposite in character and result. He was at first carried away by the vigour of Tilak's personality, but the enthusiasm of his first impression steadily declined. A brilliant but violent nature such as that of Tilak could not for long dominate the instinctively wise and balanced mind of Gokhale. But in Agarkar he found more and more those qualities which he could always admire and which were really akin to his own—devotion to something greater than party ends with no thought of wealth or power for oneself.

To Agarkar more than to any other single man it was due that, at the parting of the ways, Gokhale chose the path of poverty and service, and stepped aside from that of mere worldly success, on which he would probably have gone far. He had already passed his first examination in Law, and he had every hope of some day rising to eminence in his profession. Nor was he his own master to make a free choice. For five years his brother Govindrao had stinted himself to provide him with a school and college education, and as soon as Gopalrao had found employment he had begun to make remittances from his small salary to repay this generosity. That the brother for whom he had made such sacrifices should now abandon all hope of a professional career was an idea that Govindrao found it difficult to approve. But he was persuaded to accept his disappointment, and when Gopalrao joined the Deccan Education Society,* the decisive

* The object of this society is to increase the facilities for higher education and bring it within reach of the poor in the Deccan. In its schools and

step was taken. Nobody could foresee at the time that the path of poverty and service was to lead him to a renown more permanent than that of the most successful barrister or the most famous Judge of the High Court.

Not long after he had joined the Deccan Education Society, the New English School gave birth to the Fergusson College, and it fell to Gokhale to explain Southey's *Life of Nelson* to the previous class. To Gokhale as well as to most of his students, ships and the sea were an unknown world. But he threw himself into the task with his usual thoroughness. More than once he visited Bombay to examine ships with his own eyes, in order to understand the technical terms which Southey uses, and to be able to explain them to his pupils. But of course it was in his lectures on Burke's *Reflections on the*

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colleges, the teaching work is done by able and distinguished graduates who pledge themselves in a spirit of self-sacrifice to serve for twenty years. During this period they receive a comparatively small salary, and at its end they get a tiny pension Rs 30 a month. It is only recently these sums have been increased to meet the high cost of living.

French Revolution that he was seen at his best. To Burke he owed much of his own political philosophy, and no one was better fitted to expound to the young the wisdom of that master mind.

It was about this time that he was introduced to the great man and great patriot whom he was soon to look upon as his *Guru*, Mahadev Govind Ranade. Ranade was his senior by twenty-four years and was qualified in every way both to teach and to inspire. After a brilliant college career, he had taken his L.L.B. with Honours in the very year in which Gokhale was born. But the legal career which led him to a Judgeship of the High Court was only one of his achievements. All his life he was a student, and his knowledge of three literatures, Sanskrit, Marathi, and English, was both wide and accurate. His unfinished sketch of Maratha History is a classic of its kind, while his *Essays on Indian Economics* contained some bold thinking, and are not without their value to-day.

Ranade had helped to bring to birth the

Indian National Congress. He attended nearly every meeting, and in the Subjects Committee his voice carried more weight than any other. His political ideal for India as expressed in his own words, was "A Federated India distributed according to nationalities and subjected to a common bond of connection with the Imperial Power of the Queen-Empress of India."

But it was perhaps in the Social Reform movement that Ranade's greatest work was done. Without him the ideas which lay behind that movement would for long have remained mere ideas, with little or no attempt to translate them into action. As Secretary of the Indian Social Conference he delivered, year after year, a series of addresses in which he advocated social reforms and tried to inspire his countrymen with his own enthusiasm. His simplicity and nobility of nature had won for him the title of *Rishi* among his friends. In a public tribute which Gokhale paid to his Master on the anniversary of his death, he laid stress on this saintly disposition :—"It is no exaggeration to say

that younger men who came in personal contact with him felt as in a holy presence, not only uttering nothing base but afraid even of thinking unworthy thoughts while in his company."

For such a *guru* Gokhale was an ideal disciple. His reverence for the Master, his natural intelligence, his readiness not only to learn but to devote all his energies to the work in hand — these qualities combined with the moral harmony between the nature of the two men to produce a great result. As long as Ranade remained in Poona, the association of the two was close and continuous, and when he removed to Bombay, Gokhale still kept in touch with him not only by letter but also by repeated visits.

The kind of training that he received from Ranade was somewhat similar to that which he had given himself [illegible] he was [illegible] Southey's *Life of Nelson*. It was, of course, equally thorough, but much wider in its scope, and it demanded the continual exercise of insight and judgment. In the mere mass of facts to be assimilated

it was formidable. Ranade knew that the best minds of the British Services were very well informed; the Indian Patriot, therefore, must have an equally sound basis of exact knowledge. So the complex subject of Land-revenue and the puzzling problems of Indian currency and finance—on which experts have so often proved wrong — had to be carefully and laboriously studied. All the authorities had to be consulted and compared, all the statistics had to be examined and selected. And it was not only Indian conditions that must be studied; to be used with its full effect, a knowledge of India, however complete, must be accompanied by a knowledge of other countries, so that some comparison could be made, or some moral drawn. It was a strenuous but invaluable training. Even an attack of fever was not accepted by the Master as an excuse for postponing the weekly hour of combined work, and it is on record that on one occasion the *chela* had to toil, with scarce a break, for some twenty hours on a memorial to Government. Yet we are told that the simple words "It will do" were

all the reward that the disciple expected or received. In the mouth of a Ranade, of course, such words meant much, and if he was chary of praise, he was chary of blame also. If he was not fully satisfied, he would make the necessary additions or alterations himself.

CHAPTER III.

LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD.

FULLY to understand the aims and activities of Gokhale, we must take a brief survey of the British connection with India and of the Indian situation at the time when he entered public life. As Gokhale himself has said, "The problems of the present and future can be successfully solved, only when they are taken in relation to the past. 'Forget those things that are behind' is no doubt a wise injunction, and yet it is sometimes necessary to recall such things in order to understand the better those things that are ahead."

The English had first come to India purely as traders. There was at first no great demand for English goods, and the Portuguese, who considered that they alone had the right to trade with India, treated the English as enemies, and did all they could to hinder them. But the English seamen proved themselves more than a match for the Portuguese

and the English proved that they were, on the whole, honest men whose word could be trusted. So they gradually established themselves as merchants, and for many years the English Company tried to have as little as possible to do with politics, and had no intention of building up any military power. In the days when the Mogul Government still kept some kind of order, this policy was quite sound. But when the Mogul Empire began to break up and was unable to maintain peace and order, the Company had to consider how to protect itself. This was all the more necessary when the French Company came on the scene. England was often at war with France, and so the English and the French Companies in South India were often at war too.

In the course of defeating the rival Company, the English traders grew into a minor political and military Power. India, now that the Mogul Empire had collapsed, was in a state of anarchy, and the Company was just like one of the "Country Powers," each of which was struggling for a stronger

position. Once the Company had started to acquire a dominion, it was compelled, by the nature of things we call "destiny," to continue on the same path, till it was either destroyed or made itself the Paramount Power in India. The steps which it had to take from time to time to strengthen or protect itself by extending its territory were often disapproved by the governing body in the Company of England. But whether these steps were individually right or wrong – and some of them can hardly be defended now – they were, on the whole, inevitable, and could lead only to one result.

The fact that the Company overcame its difficulties and its enemies, and made itself the Paramount Power in India, was due chiefly to two things. First, against its French rival, it had British sea-power (which was usually the stronger) behind it. Secondly, in its moments of greatest danger, it nearly always had on the spot some man of genius or of uncommon ability – a Clive, a Warren Hastings, or a Wellesley. When it first acquired large political power and extensive

dominion, it was, of course, quite inexperienced in the art of Government. It was still mainly a body of traders, whose aim had been to make money. It is no wonder that when it had gained power without responsibility it gave way to temptation, and copied the corruption of the former Rulers of Bengal. But the English tradition of administration is a high one and the misrule of Bengal could not last long. Warren Hastings himself was by no means the criminal that Burke tried to make him appear. But Burke's indignation at misgovernment may be taken as the first sign that the conscience of the English nation could, and would, concern itself with India. To quote from Gokhale himself, "Owing to India's peculiar development, the establishment of British rule, so far from being resented, was actually regarded with feelings of satisfaction, if not enthusiasm, by the people over the greater part of the country. It is true that England never conquered India in the sense in which the word "conquer" is ordinarily used. She did not come to the country as

an invader, nor did she fight her battles, when she had to fight them, with armies composed of her own people. The establishment and consolidation of her rule, which undoubtedly is one of the most wonderful phenomena of modern times, was entirely the result of her superior power of organization, her superior patriotism, and her superior capacity for government, applied to the conditions that prevailed in India during the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. And, strange as it may seem to many, the new rule was accepted by the mass of the people as bringing them welcome relief from a more or less chronic state of disorder."* And indeed, in the first half of the 19th century, the Company was served by a number of able and magnanimous men, who were among the best friends that India ever had — such men as Elphinstone, Munro, Tod, Sleeman, and Henry Lawrence.

Under the Crown, India made great material progress. In roads, railways, bridges, posts and telegraphs, and public works of

* East and West in India 1911.

various kinds (including irrigation) India obtained the outfit of a modern progressive country. It has been calculated that the wealth of the country was multiplied at least ten times during the century, while the population was, roughly speaking, doubled. And by the year 1887, when Gokhale had not long taken his degree, five universities had heen established. The three oldest dated from 1857.

On the surface, India seemed to be doing well, but the condition of things was not quite as flourishing as it seemed.

Population, foreign trade, and the total wealth of the country had vastly increased; merchants, bankers, and money-lenders had flourished and multiplied. But the raiyats in their millions were still, on the whole, miserably poor, and, when the monsoon failed, were liable to famine and disease.

In the speech entitled "England's Duty to India," which he delivered to the National Liberal Club in London, Gokhale tried to show that the poverty of the raiyat was due to the foreign government. As a critic of

that government, Gokhale was almost bound to make out the strongest case he could against it, but whether impartial historians in the future will agree with him on this point is very doubtful. One fact is plain—that the peace and security which the British Raj had established had resulted in over-population for a country which is mainly agricultural. The Indian peasant, like poor people in most parts of the world (but unlike the peasants of some parts of Western Europe) generally has a larger family than he can decently support even in a good season. In bad seasons, therefore, even if Government by famine relief keeps great numbers alive, the poverty of the peasant will be extreme. Between 1800 and 1900 about 200 millions had been added to the population of India, and the "fragmentation" or sub-division of lands had gone too far. Experts tell us that 15 acres are the least on which a man can support himself and his family, though an ideal holding would be about 40 acres. Yet half of the holdings in India are under 5 acres. Even if the raiyat did not run into

debt for marriage ceremonies, how can he be well off on 5 acres? In the old Mogul days, when oppression became too severe, the raiyat could often move off to other lands; but to-day practically all the land in India worth cultivating has been occupied. So we see that the poverty of the raiyat offers a very difficult problem.

But the raiyat was not only poor; he was usually quite illiterate, and therefore usually at the mercy of the money-lender. He was bound by old-world customs and superstitions, some of which stood in the way of any progress, and could yield only to the enlightenment of education.

When the British Government made a beginning of education in India, they started at the top with college education hoping that knowledge would "filter down" to the masses. To provide direct education for half a million scattered and often remote villages seemed to be impossible. So college education flourished, while primary education was neglected. The population of Bengal, for instance, is about equal to that of the United

Kingdom, which can hardly be called a backward country. Yet the percentage of University students in Bengal is nearly ten times as high as that of England. But the percentage of the total population of India which was being educated was still miserably small, as Gokhale was never tired of pointing out. When Lord Curzon arrived in India in 1899, only one out of every five villages had a school, only one out of every four boys was receiving any regular education, and of girls only one out of every forty. In spite of Government protests that free and compulsory primary education would cost too much, Gokhale was right in holding that Government ought to have done more for the education of the masses. We know now that the self-governing India which Gokhale looked forward to as his ideal, is to be an India in which the people will elect their rulers, and Gokhale's plea for education is one that he would have made even more strongly to-day. Higher education, as we have seen, was pushed on vigorously. Colleges and universities multiplied, and

thousands of young Indians were introduced, through English literature, to English ideas of liberty and progress. India was now for the first time under one government; rail, post, and telegraph made communication between the most distant parts of the huge country swift and easy; last, but not least, English had become the common medium of educated Indians.

The Mutiny had ended the old-fashioned system of government which the Company had inherited from Mogul days, and when British India was transferred to the Crown, the Indian Councils Act of 1861 marked the beginning of a new era. The beginning was humble enough, but it was the first step which led to the Councils Act of 1892, the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, and (since Gokhale's day) the Montagu - Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. But for Indian politicians the pace of advance was always too slow; still slower, in their eyes, was the fulfilment of the pledge to open to Indians the higher posts of the Services.

By the Charter Act of 1853 the Indian

Civil Service, as it existed almost up to the present day, was thrown open to competition by examination. For some seventy years, picked men from Oxford and Cambridge for the privilege of an Indian career, have made their Service one that in efficiency and honesty has never been surpassed. The same Charter Act declared, with reference to India, that "No native of the said territories shall, by reason only of religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company." A similar declaration was made in Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, and was supported by the recommendations of more than one Royal Commission. Yet only a small per centage of the higher posts in India was held by Indians when Gokhale began his public career. Gokhale, who was a man of great moral courage, and cared nothing for mere popularity, ventured to tell his countrymen that the British officers were "A body of picked men; man for man they are better than ourselves; they have a higher standard of

duty, higher notions of patriotism and of loyalty to each other, higher notions of organized work and of discipline." Yet, quite reasonably, he pressed for the wider employment of Indians in the higher posts.

As long ago as 1850 Elphinstone had said, "The administration of all the departments of a great country by a small band of foreign visitors in a state of isolation produced by a difference in religion, ideas, and manners, which cuts them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things." But the very loyalty and efficiency of the British Services had made them, according to their critics, into a caste of "White Brahmans;" it seemed to them to be their natural destiny to administer India, for the good not only of the Services, but of India herself. Educated Indians were determined to win for themselves a position of greater influence and equality in their own country, and in the struggle for this ideal no one played an abler or a wiser part than Gokhale. It was able, because he had both

knowledge and intelligence: it was wise, because, he seldom — if ever — expressed his views in a violent form. He knew quite well that, with an English audience, violence or exaggeration would not be as effective as moderation.

If it was from Burke that he had learned the main principles of his political philosophy, it was under the guidance of Ranade that he acquired the detailed knowledge which he displayed, and the method which he used in his speeches. In those speeches there was much that in spirit was akin to Burke, but in their manner there was little resemblance. Gokhale was not a great orator in the sense in which Babu Surendranath Banerjea justly earned that title. But he was a master of clear and effective exposition. His own instinct and his training under Ranade combined to forbid any attempt to imitate the splendid rhetoric of a Burke or the passionate eloquence of a Banerjea. He appealed first and foremost to reason and to the intellect. The ideals to which he devoted himself gave him, of course, his inspiration, but in his

handling of the many problems which came before him he was never content with mere emotion. His aim was to be lucid, practical, and business-like. Hence the large use which he made of statistics in his speeches in the Imperial Legislative Council. To be successful, a speaker has to adapt his method to his audience, and Gokhale, in the Legislative Council, knew that the logic of facts, skilfully presented, would be more effective than mere flights of eloquence. Not that his speeches were dry-as-dust essays, or devoid of human interest. Far from it. Behind the most careful argument from statistics could be felt the emotion of the patriot. But it was an emotion that was disciplined and directed. Now and then, when the occasion seemed to call for it, his ordinary tone would be heightened to a grave and dignified eloquence. But even then the eloquence was all the more telling because of its restraint of form. It has been said that an "animated moderation" has been a marked quality of the English character, but Gokhale proved that it was not confined to English public life.

Even in his Congress speeches, where he was addressing an audience more likely to be swayed by emotion, he displayed the same qualities in almost the same degree. For both by temperament and training he was far removed from the mere demagogue.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST YEARS OF PUBLIC LIFE.

GOKHALE'S training in History and Economics under Ranade bore fruit at the Fergusson College also. He had a natural bent towards these studies, and he now took some part in teaching them at the College.

Meanwhile a momentous breach had been developing between the leaders of the Deccan Education Society. The difference in temperament between Agarkar and Tilak was bound, sooner or later, to lead to serious difference of opinion on some vital matter. Up to a point such aims as they had in common had permitted them to work in harmony, but they had come to the cross roads which led to the parting of the ways. It was inevitable not only that Moderates and Extremists, but that the Social Reformers and the Orthodox should part company. The result was that Agarkar severed his connection with the *Kesari*, and started in 1888

an Anglo-Marathi Weekly called *Sudharak* (Reformer). Gokhale had previously been a contributor to the *Maratha*. For about four years he now helped to edit the newspaper. As editor he was offered a small monthly salary, but, poor as he was, he preferred to serve without any such reward, and the greater part of the English portion of the paper came from his pen. The breach with Tilak had further consequences. While the *Sudharak* was being founded, Gokhale was nominated as Honorary Secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha, which, like the Deccan Sabha, was a Poona Association "for promoting under British rule the political interests of the Indian people." Tilak opposed the nomination, but Gokhale was destined to be Secretary for seven years, and to serve also as Honorary Editor of the Quarterly Journal, which dealt mainly with questions of Finance and Administration.

Tilak's enmity was not confined to the Moderate Party. As a champion of Orthodoxy, he published in the *Kesari* bitter criticisms of Ranade and his band of Social

Reformers. That the Deccan Education Society should be unaffected by these differences was impossible. The resignation of Tilak, who had proved himself an able teacher of mathematics, and of his supporter Namjoshi, who had been chief business organizer, and what we may call the Appeal Secretary, of the Society, was for the moment a heavy blow. It was Gokhale who came forward to fill both these gaps. He was not, of course, a profound mathematician, but his knowledge, as far as it went, was sound. On this foundation his remarkable power of concentration soon enabled him to build up what was wanted, and for about five years he taught mathematics. As successor to Namjoshi he had just the qualities that were needed—patience, tact, and persuasiveness. And so it came about that he spent much of his vacations in touring the country to collect funds. These were more than ever needed; the Fergusson College could not grow to its full stature till it had housed itself in a building worthy of its aims, and away from the cramping conditions of the city. So far,

Gokhale's life had been mainly devoted to books and studies, and he had moved within a comparatively narrow circle. His work in the collection of funds now brought him into contact with a large number of prominent people throughout the Presidency, and gave him the valuable experience of having to deal with many different types of men.

The time was now drawing near when he was to make his voice heard on matters of wider public interest and on the political questions of the day. His first public speech of importance, though not actually delivered, (for he arrived a few minutes too late in the programme) at once made its mark when it was published. The occasion was a public meeting held at Poona to support Lord Reay in his refusal to take further steps than Government had already done in the matter of the Crawford scandal.

It was in the following year, 1889, that he delivered his first speech in the National Congress. True to type, he made no attempt to attract attention to himself, and was quite content with the comparatively

small matter that had fallen to his lot. But his influence was bound to grow, and in the Congress of 1890 at Calcutta he made his mark in a speech on the Resolution on the reduction of the Salt Duty. It was a matter on which he always felt deeply, for his sympathy with the toiling millions was genuine and profound. We have only to glance through his speeches in the Legislative Council to realize his permanent anxiety in the matter of the Salt Duty. We are told that on this occasion the President of the Congress, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, who was about twenty years older than Gokhale, was much impressed by the character and promise of the younger man.

It was in the Congress of 1892 at Allahabad that Gokhale had the first chance of giving full public expresson to his views on the employment of Indians in the highest grades of the Services. As we have already seen, he had a strong case, and he made the most of it. His warning that "Unless this regime of distrust is soon changed, darker days cannot but be in store for this poor

country," was to some extent fulfilled. To-day, if Indianisation promises to go even further than Gokhale had even dared to hope for in his own life-time, it is largely due to the efforts which he never ceased to make towards that end.

In another matter, even more important to the growth of a future Indian nation, he played a wise and statesmanlike part. This was the problem of Hindu-Mohamedan rivalry. Communal strife, such as we know only too well to-day, had not been a feature of Western India, where Hinduism and Islam had hitherto got on very well side by side. But certain disturbances during the Mohurrum at Poona gave an opportunity to the orthodox Hindus to start a rival celebration called the Ganapati Festival in September. The prospect of the existing differences between Moslem and Hindu being intensified, was one that filled Gokhale with dismay. He knew perfectly well that among the masses of India religious passions could be only too easily excited, and he felt that no Indian deserved the name of statesman if he did

not aim at closing rather than widening the breach. Only on the basis of a common citizenship, in which a man was an Indian before he was a Hindu or a Mussalman could an Indian nation eventually be built up. Though Gokhale's ideal has not yet been realized, it still remains the only sure foundation for any *Swaraj* worthy of the name.

The opposition of the Reactionaries, with Tilak as their clever and forceful mouthpiece, to the liberal ideas of the Moderates and the Reformer's caused Gokhale much anxiety. When the National Congress was held in Poona in 1895, it fell to his lot, as one of the secretaries, to make many of the practical arrangements and to collect subscriptions. But the malicious criticisms of the *Kesari* had done their work; much suspicion, and even dislike, of Ranade and the Liberals had been stirred up, and Gokhale found his task very difficult. All kinds of obstacles were put in his way by his opponents, who even threatened to have recourse to violence. Mr. (afterwards Sir Dinsha) Wacha has told us how severely Gokhale's sensitive and

conscientious spirit suffered under the strain:—"Those from whom he differed used to tease and worry him and try his patience and temper to an abnormal degree." But the self-control and patience which he had to exercise were a valuable training for the future statesman.

All the while, in addition to his teaching work, he had given much time and labour to the development of the Fergusson College. The death in 1895, of Professor Kelkar, who had made his mark as a lecturer on English Literature, left a gap which was hard to fill. A few weeks later Professor Agarkar also passed away. His example and inspiration had been the deciding factor in Gokhale's great decision ten years before; since then the two had been united by a close friendship founded on the same ideals. To Gokhale the blow was a heavy one, but, with his usual disregard of self, he took upon his own shoulders much of the work in both departments—English and Philosophy—until the vacancies could be filled.

Of his private life, during this period

of training, there is little beyond the main facts that we need record. His thoughts and energies were so devoted to the larger aims which he had made his own, that his private personality might have passed unnoticed. The anecdotes related of him are slight and almost trivial, but they reflect his wise and simple nature.

We have seen how anxious he had been to repay his brother Govindaro and his wife; for that good woman had even sacrificed some of her ornaments to provide money for his education. To repay his brother and afford his sister-in-law the means of replacing her ornaments were duties which made the first call on his slender income.

Like most Hindus of his time, he had been married while still a boy, not long after the death of his father. In the matter of this marriage he was obeying the wishes of his uncle, who, upon his father's death, had become the guardian of the family. Unfortunately, the bride chosen for him proved to be an invalid, and the marriage remained a marriage only in name. His

brother and sister-in-law suggested a second marriage, and the first wife gave her consent. Under the circumstances, the bulk of Hindu opinion would hold, and apparently did hold, that such a marriage was quite justified. It is surprising, therefore, that Gokhale's chief biographer speaks of it as a "sin against society," committed when the boy was "quite unconscious of the gravity of the step he was taking." It is difficult to believe that, because he had made a second marriage, Gokhale was for the rest of his life debarred from playing any part in the campaign for Social Reform. His political and educational work employed his energies to the full.

That his home life after his real marriage should have been happy and peaceful was what we should expect from his character and training. That he was not only a good husband but a good father we know from the testimony of his friends. Yet he was soon to suffer bereavement, for his first-born, a son, died in his early infancy. The care which he devoted to the upbringing of his daughter Kashibai, who was born in

1893, was for that reason all the more devoted.

That year brought another, though an inevitable, bereavement; for it was in 1893 that he lost his mother. To his affectionate and sensitive nature the death of the revered and beloved mother was an even heavier blow than it is to the majority of men. His grief was deep and prolonged, and as in the case of the death of his dear friend, two years later, it was only the call of duty that could rouse him into action. Yet as long as he lived he would never cross the threshold of the house in which she had passed away, without making an obeisance to her memory.

CHAPTER V.

A SEVERE TEST.

IT was not long before Gokhale was afforded a chance of expressing his views, and those of most Indian patriots, before an English audience. Indian critics had complained of the steadily increasing expenditure by the Government of India; they also alleged that on various occasions (most of them of a military nature) India had had to pay more than her fair share. To examine and report upon these questions a Royal Commission, known as the Welby Commission (for Lord Welby was its Chairman) was appointed in 1896. Among the more distinguished members were that fine soldier Field Marshal Sir Donald Stewart and Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji, the famous Parsi, who was the first Indian to sit in the House of Commons. In common with a number of other public bodies, the Deccan Sabha had been invited to send its representative to express its views. Ranade, whose name would

have carried most weight, was unable to leave India. Rao Bahadur G. V. Joshi, who, though less well known to the outer world, had made a long and careful study of Indian Finance, was also unable to make the trip. And so it was through Ranade's recommendation that Gokhale was sent. Before he sailed, he was cross-examined by his old *Guru* on the evidence which he was to submit. That evidence, which can still be read in detail at the end of his published speeches, was a bold and able document. Some of it, of course, is only of historical interest to-day, and it touches on so many points that it is possible to mention only a few here.

Under the old East India Company, he said, the Revenues of India were better protected, as the Company was a "buffer" between Indian and Imperial interests. Some of the military operations for which India had had to pay were undertaken more for Imperial than for Indian ends, for the Secretary of State was an autocrat, for whom Imperial politics came first. History will probably admit the justice of Gokhale's contention on

this point, and when we reflect that the India Office itself is now a charge on British Revenues, we realize that Gokhale's protest bore ample fruit. The Government of India itself, he continued, had not much interest in economy, since the Budgets had not to be passed; he suggested as a remedy that the Budget should be voted on in the Legislative Council, though the official majority might be retained. Here again, though History is more likely to call the Government of India cautious than extravagant, Gokhale's remedy is now in force. Not only has the Legislative Assembly (since the Act of 1919) the right of "supply," but it has now a majority of elected members.

We have already dealt with his view, that owing to foreign government and the "drain" it caused, the Indian people, or at least the masses, were growing poorer. Few impartial economists would agree that the result of the employment of foreign capital in India was to impoverish the country. Much of the prosperity of the Argentine Republic, for instance, is due to

its railways, which were constructed mainly with the help of foreign capital. The money paid as interest on the loan, of course, leaves the country, but the railways help to create many times more wealth than the total of these charges. That Indian capital should be more employed in Indian industry and enterprise is an ideal with which no fair Englishman would disagree. The difficulty has always been to coax that capital away from money-lending, which is both easier and more profitable. Still, taken as a whole, Gokhale's evidence strikes one to-day as the pronouncement of a sincere and intelligent patriot, and the future was to vindicate many of his claims.

Of his life and experiences in England during this visit some interesting glimpses have been given us by Sir Dinsha (then Mr.) Wacha, who accompanied him. Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Wedderburn, who had helped to raise the necessary funds for Gokhale's trip, played a further useful part in introducing him to men of influence in Indian affairs. To one of his shy nature

it was something of an ordeal to plunge into the different manners and customs of the West. We are told that he carried his politeness almost to excess, and was most careful to observe the smallest rules of etiquette. But in matters of food he observed the rules of an orthodox Hindu. In an English boarding-house, such as that in which he and Mr. Wacha had joined Mr. Dadabhoy, a Hindu diet is not easily obtained. We are told how he refused to touch any pudding, lest it should be made of eggs, and how a hint made in joke by Mr. Wacha, that a dish might contain an egg, would cause him to put down his spoon and fork in dismay. An accident with which he had met at Calais, when he collided with a door, though it resulted in permanent injury to his heart, had in one way some compensation. A cultured and sympathetic English lady who was staying in the same house, nursed him through what was really a serious illness, and under her influence he lost a great deal of his shyness in general company. We may look upon these first three months in

London as one of the decisive periods of his life. They encouraged him, says Sir Dinsha, "To fulfil his ardent wish to distinguish himself in public life, as Telang, Badruddin, Ranade and Pherozesha had done."

But now, at the outset of his public career, he was to be faced by an ordeal which was to test his moral strength to the utmost. In 1896, with the first touch of cool weather after the monsoon, bubonic plague made its appearance in Bombay. It had ravaged Cutch for about ten years from 1812, and it had caused many deaths in Rajputana in 1836. But people had forgotten all about it, and the outbreak in Bombay (which was traced to an outbreak in Hong-Kong three years before) gave rise to a general panic. But the methods adopted by Government to check it — especially the disinfection of houses and the removal of the sick to plague hospital — aroused hostility and alarm. Exaggerated (if not imaginary) accounts of the brutality of British soldiers in enforcing these regulations in

Poona, were forwarded to Gokhale by excited friends. To Gokhale, the soul of truthfulness itself, it never occurred to doubt the accuracy of these charges. He repeated them before English audience. The Home Government wired to Bombay for an immediate report. The Government of Bombay drew up five questions to which they asked for replies from 500 of the leading citizens of Poona. But not one of the 500 could or would supply any evidence to prove Gokhale's complaints. As soon as he returned to India, Gokhale himself set to work to make enquiries, but with much the same result. As an honourable man and a fair-minded critic, he had no other course open to him than to offer an unqualified apology to the Government of Bombay. In taking this step he had the support not only of Ranade but of all those who valued the decencies of public life. His enemies, of course, and all those who were blinded by party feeling, accused him of cringing before Government, and of having humiliated his country by the terms of his apology.

Mr. Vasudev Apte. the editor at the time of the *Dnyan Prakash*, has told us how deeply Gokhale's sensitive spirit was hurt by these charges. Apte himself had admitted to him that in his opinion the apology went too far. "You will, I hope," replied Gokhale, "live to see the day when I shall cover my country with glory by way of compensation for the wrong I am alleged to have done." We all know how amply this hope was fulfilled. He had the support of his own sensitive conscience in enduring the criticism which he had aroused, for, at bottom, he knew that he had done the right thing. And he never lacked moral courage. He learned, from this unhappy incident, not only that he could rely on his own moral strength, but that every question which he took up must be probed to the bottom and examined from every side.

He was determined, in spite of this set-back, to continue on his career to public service. And opportunity soon came. In 1898 plague broke out again in Poona. Gokhale at once organised a band of

volunteers, and his services were warmly recognised by the authorities. It was not long before inoculation was introduced. To convince the masses that it was harmless, Lord Curzon himself had submitted to it. But the report had been spread abroad that its after-effects were the cause of various diseases. In helping to dispel these suspicions among the public, Gokhale played a valuable part, and if inoculation to-day has lost its terrors for Western India, it is largely owing to his efforts.

That the unpopularity which he had incurred by his apology had now yielded to admiration for his public services, was soon made clear, for in 1899 he was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council by the Municipalities of the Central Division, in preference to the candidate of the Tilak party. Not only in the Bombay Council but later on in the Imperial Legislative Council, for which his Bombay experience was a valuable preparation, he was to prove himself a keen and well-informed critic of those

measures with which he did not agree. The position of an unofficial member at this time, which gave the right of criticism without responsibility, was unsatisfactory; the temptation to indulge in criticism and disagreement for its own sake was strong; even Gokhale found it sometimes difficult to escape it; but his criticism always had fact and reason behind it, and was usually constructive. If he approved of a Government measure, he never hesitated to say so. Often his agreement was expressed in generous terms.

In the Bombay Council the most important problems of the moment were those of famine relief and of the indebtedness of the peasants. There had been two famines in successive years, and the depression had been increased by plague. Government had instructed their Collectors to be lenient in realizing revenue, but Gokhale was of opinion that the leniency shown was insufficient. He urged that revenue should be not only suspended but remitted, and that the deficit could be made good by short-term loans.

In the hope of doing something to remedy the indebtedness of the cultivator, the Government of Bombay introduced in 1901 a Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill, by which waste and forfeited lands were to be granted on short leases and restricted tenures. The Hon. Mr. Monteith, introducing the Bill, asserted that owing to lightness of assessment, combined with fixity of tenure and power of transfer, many of the occupants had been reduced almost to the level of serfs. To free the peasant from debt, therefore, it was necessary to restrict his right to alienate the land. The Bill aroused wide opposition throughout the Presidency, and Gokhale used all his powers of argument against it. He was of opinion that agricultural indebtedness had increased under British rule. This, he held, was due to two causes, first an "unfortunate settlement," and second the facilities given by the Government to the money-lending classes for the recovery of debts. He tried to show that the Bill would not bring any real relief and asserted that the peasant would prefer

to fall into the clutches of the money-lender rather than surrender his right of alienation. In spite of the protests of some of the unofficial members, who urged that consideration of the Bill should be deferred, it was duly passed. But its practical results were small.

On the Bill "For the Better Management of Municipal Affairs in Mofussil Towns and Cities," Gokhale rendered valuable service. The mover of the Bill, Sir Charles Ollivant, paid a tribute to the work which he had done on the Select Committee. Gokhale had for some years been a member of the Poona City Municipal Council, and the development of Local Self-Government was one of his favourite ideals. In his speech on the Bill he quoted John Stuart Mill's saying that the object of Municipal Institutions is not merely to get local work efficiently done but also to develop civic spirit and raise the level of general intelligence among the people. "A higher public life," he continued, has only just begun in the land, and it behoved those who represented

the Power that has introduced this life into this country to give whatever guidance might be needed with great tact and in a spirit of sympathy, encouraging those who need encouragement and steadying the footsteps of the weak." When the Bill had been read a second time and was being considered in detail, he moved an amendment to do away with sectional representation. Local Self-Government, he urged, should teach men of different castes and creeds to work together for a common purpose.

As a Temperance Reformer he found himself opposed to the Abkari policy of the Government. He held that merely to make intoxicating liquors dearer would not lessen their consumption, and that, if prohibition was impossible, the best plan was to reduce the facilities by reducing the production and sale. On this point, however, it may be said that prohibition in America has given rise to more evils than it has prevented, and that in England since the War high prices have diminished consumption.

Two heavy bereavements fell upon him

about this time. In 1899 he lost the wife with whom he had made his second marriage, and in January 1901 his revered master, Ranade, passed away. The loss of the great *Guru*, whom he had come to regard as a second father, was a paralyzing shock. In a letter to Dr. Paranjpye he expressed something of what it meant:—I feel as though a sudden darkness had 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 recognize that it is my duty to struggle on, faintly it may be, but even in faith and hope — trying to uphold the banner unfurled by him, cherishing with love and reverence the ideals to which he gave his matchless life." The eloquent and moving tributes which Gokhale paid in public to his beloved Master will be found among his printed speeches.

For a time he felt that he was alone in life; to work for what seemed the highest good of his country could be his only consolation. Though he was still a comparatively young man, he put away any

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greater freedom but not necessarily of less responsibility. 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."

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE IMPERIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WITH Gokhale's election to the Imperial Legislative Council a fresh chapter of his life begins. At that time Lord Curzon had been Viceroy for about three years. Among the many great Governor-Generals of India none has ever surpassed him in vigour of mind or in power of work. In spite of continuous ill-health and pain, his energy and his capacity to master vast quantities of detail were prodigious. It was his aim to tune the great and complicated machine of Government up to his own pitch of efficiency. He was at the same time a man of deep religious conviction, and was determined to uphold and enforce righteousness and justice in administration. When two troopers of a famous British regiment had brutally beaten an Indian cook, and the culprits had been left undiscovered, Lord Curzon asked the Commander-in-Chief

to take action. The leave of all officers of the regiment was stopped, and other punishments were meted out. It is one of the tragedies of history that a Viceroy with so high a sense of duty and such noble aims, should have ended by antagonising most educated Indians. In the spring of 1903, after a large remission of taxation had been announced, the Indian Press was almost unanimous in praying for an extension of Lord Curzon's rule. But the Universities Act and the Partition of Bengal, though each of them aimed merely at increased efficiency, were fatal to his popularity. And there were other reasons. In an oft-quoted passage in his Benares Presidential Address, Gokhale, after paying a tribute to Lord Curzon's remarkable gifts, said that his failing was "A lack of sympathetic imagination, without which no man can ever understand an alien people . . . Lord Curzon came to India with certain fixed ideas. To him India was a country where the Englishman was to monopolize for all time all power, and talk all the while of duty. The Indian's

only business was to be governed, and it was a sacrilege on his part to have any other aspiration." Lord Curzon's biographer,* though in rather different words, tells us much the same thing. Political concessions "could only hinder Great Britain in the discharge of the task committed to her hands" In Lord Curzon's own words, "More places on this or that Council for a few active or eloquent men will not benefit the *raiyat*." "Lord Ripon's ideal," said *New India*, "was to secure, by slow degrees, autonomy for the Indian *people*. Lord Curzon's is to secure it for the Indian *Government*." Lord Curzon was by no means blind to the growing strength of public opinion among educated Indians, but he held that it was for him to judge when and how far that opinion was in the true interests of the country.

Such was the great pro-consul with whom Gokhale was often to cross swords, and who was soon to recognize in the ex-professor

* *The Life of Lord Curzon*, by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Ronaldshay, Vol. II p. 420.

the ablest Indian he had met. On the day when Gokhale made his speech on the Universities Bill, Lord Curzon was presiding. The Viceroy had not intended to speak, but Gokhale's speech appeared to him to be so able that he decided to make a reply. Gokhale was to prove an unsparing critic of some of his measures, but the Viceroy, though he may have lacked imagination, did not lack chivalry. He, not only secured for his critic the decoration of C. I. E., but wrote a private letter of congratulation.

Before 1909, when the reformed Councils came into being, members could not move resolutions; such criticisms and suggestions as they had to offer had to be included in their Budget Speeches. By his Budget Speech of 1903 Gokhale at once made his mark, and the eight Budget Speeches he delivered under the old regime are not only models of their kind, both in matter and form, but give us an illuminating survey, year by year, of the administration of the country.

Throughout his period of service on the

Council he steadily upheld the aims and ideals that he had formed under Ranade. The wider employment of Indians in the higher posts of the Services, the reduction of military expenditure, the reduction or even abolition of the Salt Tax, more money for irrigation and for technical education, and, last but not least, free and compulsory primary education — these are the recurring themes of his speeches. He also insisted, again and again, that the surpluses as shown in the Financial Statement were a symptom not of prosperity but of high taxation. His style and method as a speaker, we have already dealt with.

To appreciate the care with which Gokhale prepared his Budget Speeches, and the detailed knowledge which they displayed, they must be read as a whole. Some of the matters which he dealt with were highly technical. But a few extracts may be quoted, as expressions of his point-of-view on some of the outstanding questions.

(1) INDIA AND THE EMPIRE:—

"Your Lordship spoke the other day in words

of striking eloquence of the need there is of Indians . . . feeling for the Empire that new composite patriotism which the situation demands. Now that is an aspiration which is dear to the heart of many of us also. But the fusion of interest between the two races will have to be much greater, and the people of India allowed a more definite and more intelligible place in the Empire, before that aspiration is realized. Let Englishmen exercise a certain amount of imagination and put themselves mentally in our place, and they will be able to better appreciate our feelings in the matter." (1902)

(2) THE PARAMOUNT POWER:— "My Lord, the people of India have all along accepted with willing allegiance the condition so justly insisted upon by Your Lordship, namely, the unchallenged supremacy of the Paramount Power, and the faith expressed in the purpose and conscience of England is our main ground of hope for the future." (1903)

(3) THE NEW CENTURY :— "Speaking roughly, the first half of the nineteenth century may be said to have been for British rule a period of conquest and annexation and consolidation in this land. The second half has been devoted mainly to bringing up the administrative machine to a high state of efficiency, and evolving generally the appliances of civilised government according to western standards. And I venture to hope that the commencement of the New Century will be signalised by a great and comprehensive movement for the industrial and educational advancement of the people." (1903)

(4) EDUCATION :—"It is obvious that an ignorant and illiterate nation can never make any solid progress, and must fall back in the race of life. What we therefore want and want most urgently — is first of all a widespread diffusion of elementary education — an effective and comprehensive system of primary schools for the masses and the longer this work is delayed, the more insuperable will be our difficulties in

gaining for ourselves a recognized place among the nations of the world" (1903)

(5) IRRIGATION AND SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE:— "Unless promising and carefully selected Indians are sent abroad to be trained, and take the places of the imported experts in due course, such expert knowledge will never become a part and parcel of the possession of the community." (1906)

(6) THE INDIAN ARMY:— "The abolition of the Madras Command under the new scheme involves the disestablishment of the Presidency as a recruiting ground, and amounts to a denial to the people of Southern India of all opportunity of service even in the ranks. Recruitment is being 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 Army is approximating more and more completely to a mere mercenary force." (1906)

(7) EMPLOYMENT OF INDIANS:— (*a*) "The question of the wider employment of Indians in the higher branches of the

Public Services of their own country is one which is intimately bound up not only with the cause of economic administration, but also with the political elevation of the people of India. There is no other country in the world where young men of ability and education find themselves so completely shut out from all hope of ever participating in the higher responsibilities of office." (1903)

(*b*) "When all positions of power and of official trust and responsibility are the virtual monopoly of a class, those who are outside that class are constantly weighed down with a sense of their own inferior position, and the tallest of them have no option but to bend in order that the exigencies of the situation may be satisfied. Such a state of things, as a temporary arrangement, may be accepted as inevitable. As a permanent arrangement, it is impossible." (1905)

(8) ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM:— "What one regrets most in the present system of administration is that it favours so largely a policy of mere drift. The actual

work of administration is principally in the hands of the members of the Civil Service, who, taken as a body, are able and conscientious men; but none of them individually can command that prestige which is so essential for inaugurating any large scheme of policy . . . The administrators, on the other hand, who come out direct from England, command, no doubt, the necessary prestige, but their term of office being limited to five years, they have not the opportunity, even if they had the will, to deal in an effective and thorough-going manner with the deeper problems of the administration. The result is that there is an inveterate tendency to keep things merely going, as though everyone said to himself, "This will last my Time."

With the aims of much of Lord Curzon's legislation Gokhale was, of course, in sympathy, even if he did not agree with the particular method of reform. For we must remember that, except on certain political questions, Lord Curzon was not a reactionary but a reformer. No Viceroy was ever more

devoted to the interests of the *raiyat*, and he was quite as anxious as Gokhale to do something to remedy agricultural indebtedness. Thus, in 1904, Gokhale was able to give his "cordial and unequivocal support" to the Co-operative Credit Societies Bill. The seed planted by Lord Curzon and watered, so to speak, by Gokhale's approval, has borne ample fruit since then. The creation of an Imperial Agricultural Department, the founding of the now famous Agricultural Institute at Pusa, the institution of agricultural schools and colleges, and steps taken to improve cotton cultivation and cattle breeding — all these reforms were along lines of progress which Gokhale had often urged.

But to some of the measures of Lord Curzon's Government Gokhale offered strenuous opposition. Among them was the Bill to amend the Indian Official Secrets Act, which *the Englishman* itself had described as calculated to russianise the Indian Administration. Gokhale argued that it was a mistake to place civil matters on a level

with Naval and Military matters. "The responsibility of the Government to the people in this country is merely moral; it is not legal, as in the West . . . The criticism of the Indian Press is the only outward check operating continuously upon the conduct of a bureaucracy possessing absolute and uncontrolled power."

When Lord Curzon turned his attention to educational reform, he decided not only to do something for elementary education but to wrestle with the problem of the Universities. "We examine our boys," he said, "from childhood to adolescene, and we put a pass before them as the *Summum Bonum* of life." Statistics showed that of the thousands of youths who sat for Matriculation, only one in seventeen took a degree. "Some might argue," he concluded, "that the tests which admit of so many failures are too hard. I am disposed to ask whether the preceding stages are not too easy." Hence the Universities Act of 1904. While reorganizing the governing bodies of the Universities, it laid down that every college

should be under the control of a governing body, that hostels should be provided for all students who did not reside with their parents or guardians, and that the whole of the college income should be spent on educational purposes. The Act gave Government more control over higher education, and it was mainly on the grounds that the effect of the Bill would be to turn the Universities into a department of the State, that Gokhale attacked it. He held that the Bill was reactionary, that it cast a slur upon educated Indians, and that it would encourage "The narrow, bigoted and inexpansive rule of experts." But for us to-day the most important passage in Gokhale's speeches on the Bill is that in favour of Western education. "In the present circumstances of India," he said, "*all* western education is valuable and useful , . . To my mind the greatest work of western education in the present state of India is not so much the encouragement of learning as the liberation of the Indian mind from the thraldom of old-world ideas, and the assimilation of all that is

highest and best in the life and thought and character of the West . . . I think Englishmen should have more faith in the influence of their history and their literature."

Gokhale's labours in the Legislative Council were far from being his only activity. At the Dharwar Social Conference in April 1903 he spoke out strongly on the duty of elevating the Depressed Classes :— "I think all fair-minded persons will have to admit that it is absolutely monstrous that a class of human beings, with bodies similar to our own, with brains that can think and with hearts that can feel, should be perpetually condemned to a life of utter wretchedness, servitude, and mental and moral degradation . . . We may touch a cat, we may touch a dog, we may touch any other animal, but the touch of these human beings is pollution . . . How can we possibly realize our natural aspirations, how can our country ever hope to take her place among the nations of the world, if we allow large numbers of our countrymen to remain sunk in ignorance, barbarism, and dagradition ?"

For some years he had not spoken in the Congress. But in 1904, when he and Mr. Wacha were Joint-Secretaries, he came forward once more to give fresh impetus to the old ideals. At this time too he was busy collecting subscriptions for a Poona memorial to Ranade. It eventually took the form of the Ranade Economic Institute, which was opened by Sir George Clarke (now Lord Sydenham) when he was Governor of Bombay.

On June 12, 1905 was laid the foundation stone of the home of the Servants of India Society. Of all the rich products of Gokhale's heart and brain, this will perhaps be the most valuable and the most lasting. The programme which it was founded to carry out was set forth in a declaration that revealed both the patriot and the thinker:—

"Its members frankly accept the British connection as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good. Self-government within the Empire for their country, and a higher life generally for their countrymen, is their goal. This goal, they

recognize, cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient effort, and sacrifices worthy of the cause. Much of the work must be directed towards building up in the country a higher type of character and capacity than is generally available at present, and the advance can only be slow." In drawing up the constitution of the Order, Gokhale was undoubtedly influenced by the example of the Jesuits—the most striking instance in history of the training and dedication of the individual to spiritual and distant ends. Every member of the Servants of India Society has to undergo a training of five years, and at the time of admission has to take seven vows, by which he becomes a kind of *Sannyasi*, devoted to the service of his country. As president of the Society, Gokhale was succeeded by the Rt. Hon. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri of Madras, on whom the mantle of the prophet fitly descended.

In the previous year Congress had passed a resolution that a political mission should be sent to England. Gokhale and Lala Lajpat Rai were now deputed for the purpose, and

in the summer of 1905 they sailed for England. On various public meetings there Gokhale could hardly fail to make an impression ; his command of facts, his lucidity, and his moderation, were qualities which always appeal to English audiences. In this campaign he received valuable help from Sir Henry Cotton and Sir William Wedderburn.

Meanwhile the partition of Bengal was taking place. From the point of view of administration and efficiency, the scheme was well-designed, but to Bengal sentiment was dearer than efficiency. The measure was denounced—not quite fairly—by Bengalis as an attack upon the growing national unity of the Province. And in Eastern Bengal the policy of Sir J. B. Fuller did not make matters easier.

While still in England, Gokhale was invited to be President of the Congress of 1905 at Benares. His English labours had made a serious demand upon his strength, but he considered that it was his duty to accept. His throat had suffered from the

number of speeches that he had delivered, and on board ship he had to undergo an operation. At Benares he delivered the Presidential Address from which we have already quoted his estimate of Lord Curzon, in which he compared his rule with that of Aurangzeb. The partition of Bengal was strongly condemned, but a prudent warning was delivered against unprofitable excesses in the *Swadeshi* Movement. Finally, the political and administrative reforms which he had so often urged, were once more defined and claimed.

CHAPTER VII.

GOKHALE AND THE MORLEY-MINTO REFORMS.

IN November 1905, Lord Minto arrived as Viceroy in succession to Lord Curzon. Almost at the same time, the Radical Party in England returned to power, and the philospher-statesman John (afterwards Lord) Morley came to the India Office. To the Indian Nationalists the prospects of concessions seemed to be bright. In the Legislative Council Gokhale's plea, in his Budget Speech of 1906, for the reforms he had consistently urged, made a strong impression on the new Viceroy. "What the country needs at this moment above everything else is a government national in spirit, even though it may be foreign in personal, 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."

While Bengal was in a state of indignant

ferment, Gokhale again sailed for England in April 1906. In England his speeches were marked by all the old qualities—knowledge, lucidity, and restraint—but his most fruitful efforts were his interviews with Lord Morely himself. To the impatient and unreasonable Gokhale's advice was, "Do not expect the impossible, but give Lord Morley a fair chance."

He returned to India for the Congress of that year at Calcutta. Dadabhoy Naoroji had been elected President for the third time. But he was old and frail, and it fell to Gokhale to read his speech. At this meeting the coming split between Moderates and Extremists was first made clear. The Resolution to boycott English goods developed into the preaching of something very like non-co-operation. To Gokhale the doctrine of hate was not only morally wrong, but politically short-sighted, and he threw the weight of his eloquence and influence into the opposite scale. But he felt that he must not confine his warnings to the Congress platform. Early in the next year therefore

he undertook a far-flung tour to counteract the teaching of the Extremists. Evolution, not revolution, was his watch-word. For him there was no shortcut to *Swaraj*. National unity must be built up by steady effort and self-sacrifice. Constitutional agitation was the only sane means of advance, because anarchy would poison the very fountain of public life. For Gokhale was an example of the golden mean between the idealist and the realist — the idealist who works for great moral and spiritual ends, the realist who has learnt from history and experience that they can be attained only by patient and steady effort, and that we must build, stone by stone, on the foundation that is at hand.

Unfortunately the Extremists started a campaign of violence, in which bomb outrages and assassinations were prominent features. Government was compelled to act. Legislation similar to the Coercion Acts of Ireland was passed in 1907.

In his Budget Speech of that year, Gokhale referred to the coming Reforms.

He hoped that they would be "substantial and conceived in a generous spirit." "The public mind is in a state of great tension, and unless the concessions are promptly announced, and steps taken to give immediate effect to them, they will, I fear, lose half their efficacy and all their grace."

In 1908, Lord Morely found himself compelled to sanction further "repressive" legislation against the Extremists, and Tilak, who had openly approved of assassination as a political weapon, was sentenced to imprisonment. Gokhale's Budget Speech of that year struck a note of mingled hope and warning. "Though those among us who have not made sufficient allowances for Lord Morley's difficulties, will in the end regret the harsh things they have said of him, he certainly for the time has lost the power of arresting the rapid decline of my countrymen's faith in England's mission in this country." And, referring to the proposed Reforms, he said, "Let not the words 'too late' be written on every one of them."

To make the views of the Moderate

party clear to Lord Morley, Gokhale decided to pay another visit to England. Sir William Wedderburn has left it on record that Gokhale produced a most favourable impression not only upon Lord Morley but upon other British statesmen, and that his interviews with the Secretary of State "Influenced in no small degree the concessions granted in the Morely-Minto Reforms."

Meanwhile the breach between Moderates and Extremists had come to a head during the session of the National Congress at Surat in 1907. The Extremists had been unable to carry their Resolutions in the Subjects Committee, and decided to make the proceedings of the Congress itself impossible by organized disturbance. The President, Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh, found that he could not make himself heard amid the clamour. Gokhale did his best to pour oil on the troubled waters. For the sake of the cause he had at heart, he endured without resentment the insults hurled at him by the ignorant, the inexperienced, and the misguided. But the breach between reason and

passion went too deep for even Gokhale to heal. The more responsible leaders of the Congress thereupon drew up a set of rules which would dissociate it from Extremist views. Self-government within the Empire was to be the basis of the Congress constitution, and it was on this understanding that the next meeting was held at Madras.

On November 2nd, 1908, the fiftieth anniversary of the assumption of the government of India by the Crown the King Emperor (Edward VII) addressed a Royal Message to the Princes and Peoples of India. After a brief review of the progress of India, he referred to the duty of repressing "with a stern arm guilty conspiracies that have no just cause and no serious aim." But such conspiracies would not be allowed to interrupt the work in hand. Steps were being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority. Further measures to the same end were being prepared. But the most important announcement was the following:— "From the first the principle

of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when . . . that principle may be prudently extended. Important classes among you, representing ideas that have been fostered and encouraged by British rule, claim equality of citizenship, and a greater share in legislation and government. The politic satisfaction of such a claim will strengthen, not impair, existing authority and power. Administration will be all the more efficient, if the officers who conduct it have greater opportunities of contact with those whom it affects and with those who influence and affect common opinion about it."

Lord Morley himself has told us that though the message found favour with Bombay and Madras, Bengal declared it to be disappointing. Extremist critics professed to find in it only "words meant to cheat men as if they were children." Reading it to-day, we must admit that even Lord Morley, an admitted master of literary style, could not escape from the vague and pompous manner which has nearly always marked

such proclamations. But the message did mean something, and Lord Morley was determined to prove its meaning. He told the British Parliament that the measures taken by the Government of India to repress crime had been taken with his full approval. But he had made up his mind that these measures must not delay reform. In December, 1908 he gave the House of Lords an outline of the reforms which he proposed, and in February, 1909, he moved the second reading of the Bill itself.

We have already noted that Lord Morley disclaimed any idea of aiming at Parliamentary Government in India. It is strange that so clear a thinker, who had practical experience of politics as well as a wide knowledge of history, should not have seen that his measures of reform led logically to parliamentary government.

Under the Indian Councils Act of 1909, all the Legislative Councils were enlarged — the Viceroy's from 16 members to 60, and those of the three Presidencies from 15 to 50. The principle of election was

introduced, and separate representation was granted to Mohammadans. Though the Viceroy's Council was to retain its official majority, the majority on the Provincial Councils was now to be unofficial. Members were now empowered to move and vote on resolutions not only on the budget but on any matter of public business. Two Indians had been appointed in 1907 as members of the Secretary of State's Council, and in 1910 Mr. (afterwards Lord) Sinha was made Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council.

Lord Morley claimed for his Reforms — as well he might — that they marked the "opening of a very important chapter in the History of Great Britain and India." Lord Curzon, of course, expressed his doubts of their utility. To the great mass of the people, he said, "Representative Government and popular institutions mean nothing whatever. The good government which appeals to them is the government which protects them from the rapacious money-lender and all the other sharks in human disguise which prey upon these unhappy people." And yet,

by the irony of history, Lord Curzon took part in shaping the much more drastic reforms embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, which in turn seemed to Lord Morley to be going too far and too fast.

To Gokhale the Morley-Minto Reforms brought an increased anxiety over the communal rivalry which they aroused, for it was the conviction of most Hindus that the Mohammadans had secured more than their fair share of the advantages. To Gokhale himself, with his all-India outlook, this meant nothing, and he did his best to persuade his fellow Hindus to take an equally broad-minded point of view. In his speech of 1911 on the Council Regulations, he said that when the Mohammadan community were agitating for special electorates, he supported their claim, and thereby incurred to some extent the displeasure of his Hindu brethren.

In the new Legislative Council he was, of course, the accepted leader of the Indian members. It was a position which he filled most admirably. His tact, his knowledge, and

his experience, won for him on the one hand the confidence of Indians of whatever caste or creed; on the other, he earned the respect of Government by his co-operation. He never practised opposition for its own sake, and was unyieldi n g only on matters of principle and conviction.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FIGHT FOR EDUCATION.

IN his Budget Speech of March 1909 — the last year of the old order — Gokhale had spoken warmly and gratefully of the Reforms, which had been announced in the previous December. He described them as "a large and generous scheme," and declared that their announcement had "at once acted like a charm." To the Viceroy and to Lord Morley he paid a handsome tribute :— "My Lord, among the many great men who have held office as Governor-General in this country, there are three names which the people cherish above all others — the names of Bentinck, Canning and Ripon. I venture to predict . . . that it is in the company of these Viceroys that Your Lordship's name will go down to posterity in India. Of Lord Morley I will say only this. It would have been a sad thing for humanity if his tenure of office, as Secretary of State for India, had produced nothing more than deportations

and Press Laws . . . However, his great liberalism has been amply and strikingly vindicated even in so difficult a position as that of a head of a vast bureaucracy . . . My Lord, I sincerely believe that Your Lordship and Lord Morley have, between you, saved India from drifting towards what cannot be described by any other name than chaos.

A few months later he had a less pleasant duty to perform. The Extremist campaign of violence was now at its height. So far, its outrages had been confined to India, but now there arrived the news that Sir William Curzon Wyllie and Dr. Lalkaka had been assassinated by an Indian student in London. In a speech delivered at Poona under the auspices of the Deccan Sabha, Gokhale expressed the mingled horror and indignation felt by all decent-minded people. The spread of the creed of violence among immature students, whom he regarded as the victims of poisonous propaganda, was a fact which caused him much anxious thought. We have seen how in 1907 he had toured

Northern India to preach the real meaning of patriotic work; in October 1914, in an address to the Students' Brotherhood, Bombay, he uttered his last warning against the extremist creed.

In his speech of November 1907 in the Legislative Council on the Seditious Meetings Bill he had defined the only meaning that "Loyalty to Government" could bear in India. "When Lord Curzon," said Gokhale, "told the world at the Delhi Durbar that the people of India were loyal to the British crown, he stated but the bare truth. Now when one speaks of loyalty in India in this connection, he speaks not of a sentiment similar to that of feudal Europe or Rajput India, but of a feeling of attachment to British rule, and of a desire for its stability based on enlightened self-interest — on an appreciation of what the rule has on the whole done for the people in the past, and of the conditions which it ensures for future progress." For British India such a statement undoubtedly holds good, but it does not quite do justice to the loyalty to the Crown

displayed by some of the Indian Princes — such as the late Sir Pratab Singh — which has sometimes been very like the old Rajput sentiment. Gokhale was of opinion that "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." Such is the liberal creed, but throughout history many administrators have held that it is impossible to conciliate Extremists, and that any conciliation to them will only produce fresh demands. Gokhale felt it his duty to oppose the Seditious Meetings Bill of 1910 and 1911, and expounded his point of view with his usual ability and moderation; but he admitted that "material was laid before the Select Committee, which satisfied many of us that in several parts of the country a section of the Press habitually went beyond all reasonable bounds and needed to be controlled." He asserted that in spite of recent outrages the situation was improving, and that before long the whole thing would pass away "like a hideous

nightmare." But nightmares, unfortunately, sometimes recur. In his speech on the Press Bill of 1910 he took much the same line. He admitted that the Extremist papers were "often ill-informed, prejudiced, even intolerably bitter, in comments on the Administration and its measures;" but he asserted that the race-arrogance displayed in a section of the Anglo-Indian Press had done much to turn many of his countrymen against British Rule.

Throughout his service on the new Council he gave the keenest attention and closest scrutiny to all questions of finance, on which he was an admitted authority. He maintained a steady opposition to the growth of expenditure; he urged that less should be spent on railways, and more on education and sanitation. The reduction of the Salt Tax from Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ per maund to Rs. 2 in 1903, to Rs. $1\frac{1}{2}$ in 1905, and Re. 1 in 1906 was largely due to his persistent plea. To appreciate the moderation and reasonableness of Gokhale's proposals, as well as of his replies to criticisms on his views, we

have only to read his speech on Increase in Public Expenditure.

We have seen that the ideal of free and compulsory primary education was one which he consistently held out as a goal to be aimed at. In 1910 he moved a resolution that a committee be appointed to frame definite proposals. In a masterly review of the subject, he compared the progress of India with that of various other countries. He pointed out that the enlightened and farseeing Ruler of Baroda, after an experiment of 15 years carried out in one of the talukas of his State, had extended the system to the whole State. In British India, on the other hand, even at the rate of the last five years, and if there were no increase in population, several generations would still elapse before all the boys of school age were in school. "I shall be prepared," he said, "if every other resource fails, to advocate an extra 8 annas on salt, because I think it a smaller evil that my countrymen should eat less salt than that their children should continue to grow up in ignorance and

darkness." Next year he went further, and asked leave to move a Bill. The Education Department had recently been created, and resolutions in favour of compulsory and free primary education had been passed not only by the National Congress but also by the Moslem League. But Gokhale did not ask for everything at once. He proposed to make a beginning with compulsion, leaving the fees to be abolished later. Even so, the Bill was merely permissive; local bodies wishing to apply compulsion were to satisfy certain conditions and obtain permission from the Local Government. It was clear that for some time to come the Bill could apply only to a few large and progressive cities. It would have made a very modest beginning, but it met with a disappointing reception. So Gokhale undertook an educational tour to explain the principle of his Bill to the country, and in March 1912 he moved for leave to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. In a long and careful speech he again reviewed the whole subject, and replied to the objections which had been raised. The

Member in charge of Education held that the Bill would eventually cost more than Government could afford; "Either we must mean business and see the thing through, or must drop the Bill." The popular dislike of compulsion, the disbelief of the villagers in education, the paucity of the right type of teacher, and even the maxim that "a little learning is a dangerous thing" — these were some of the other objections brought forward by official or non-official members. Some of the latter expressed a frank disbelief in mass education.

Government were in sympathy with Gokhale's ideals, but they were unable to take up the Bill if only because all the Local Governments had declared against it. But Gokhale was no impatient optimist; he had done what he could, and in words of sober but impressive eloquence he placed the whole problem in its true setting:— "I have always felt and have often said that we, of the present generation in India, can only hope to serve our country by our failures. The men and women who will be

privileged to serve her by their successes will come later . . . 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."

CHAPTER IX.

SOUTH AFRICA.

IT was not only for Indians in India that Gokhale strove to do his utmost. In February 1910, he moved a Resolution in the Legislative Council. "That the Council recommends that the Governor-General in Council should be empowered to prohibit the recruitment of indentured labour in British India for the Colony of Natal."

The origin of this system was the fact that native African labour was scanty and of poor quality. The Colonists adopted the plan of importing Indian labourers under a five year contract. When Gokhale took up the question, the Indian population in South Africa consisted of (1) Those who were under indenture, (2) Descendants of indentured Indians, and those who had completed their term of indenture but had not returned to India, and were trying to make a living as free Indians. (3) Traders who had come

at their own expense, originally to supply the needs of the indentured Indians.

In attacking the system of indenture, Gokhale had no difficulty in showing that the conditions were all against the imported labourers, who were helpless to improve their position. They were sent to a distant land, assigned to employers in the choice of whom they had no voice and of whose language and customs they were quite ignorant. There was evidence not only of ill-treatment but of other kinds of abuses, and the whole system really "bordered on the servile." "No single question of our time," he said, 'has evoked more bitter feeling throughout India."

The Government accepted the Resolution, and in 1911 the prohibition was made law as against Natal. Next year Gokhale went a step farther, and moved that the system of indentured labour should be abolished altogether. He spoke of the poverty and ignorance of the labourers and of the unscrupulous representations of professional recruiters; he said that the system was based on fraud and maintained by force,

and that it was a blot on civilisation. Apart from the abuses to which it gave rise, it was degrading to the people of India from a national point of view. These contentions he supported by convincing evidence.

It was not long before Gokhale's conclusions were justified and his efforts met with their reward. As a result of a special report, the Government of India decided in 1915 that contract labour should be abolished. Next year the Secretary of State authorised them to announce that the indentured system was at an end.

But the position of Indians settled in S. Africa was as bad as ever. At the 24th Session of the Indian National Congress, held at Lahore in 1909, Gokhale had already spoken on the Transvaal Question. He began, as usual, with a historical survey. The main object of the Boer War, he said, had been to secure better treatment for foreigners. Yet, after the War, when Crown Government was imposed, there was no improvement in the position of Indians in the Transvaal. Both Boer and Briton set

up a cry of an "influx" of Indians. But statistics showed that the cry was false. The Colonies, however, were determined to prevent Indians from entering, and in 1906 the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance was introduced into the Transvaal Legislative Council. It aimed at confining entry to previous residents and compelling all Indians to register themselves. The Ordinance was passed. The Indian community protested, and sent to England a deputation headed by Mr. Gandhi. As a result of his efforts, the Royal assent to the Ordinance was with-held. But, before long, Self-Government was granted to the Colony, and in 1907 the Transvaal Parliament at once proceeded to pass practically the same Ordinance under the title of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act. Under the leadership of Mr. Gandhi, the Indians adopted passive resistance. Mr. Gandhi was arrested and imprisoned. But a compromise — unfortunately not put into writing — was arrived at, and Mr. Gandhi was soon liberated. The Asiatic Law was to be repealed, while Indians were to

voluntarily register themselves, and the registration was to be free from humiliating conditions. The Indians, according to the agreement made, proceeded to register, and waited for General Smuts and the Boer Government to do their part — the repeal of the Act. But General Smuts broke faith, and declared that no such promise had been given. Many Indians burnt their registration certificates — their only security against molestation. A deputation headed by Mr. Gandhi again went to England. Lord Morley and his successor Lord Crewe gave them all the support they could in bringing pressure to bear on the four Colonies, which were soon to be formed into a Union. The negotiations failed. "Roughly," said Gokhale, who had been privileged to see the papers, "the case may be mentioned in one sentence. General Smuts declared to Lord Crewe that he was not prepared to admit even the theoretical equality of the Asiatics with the white people." So Mr. Gandhi returned to South Africa to continue the struggle.

Gokhale now decided that he ought to

visit that country and examine the conditions for himself. As a first step, he again went to England, where he discussed the matter with the Secretary of State. Negotiations with the Colonial Office and the Union Government resulted in his sailing for Africa after he had been promised all facilities for his enquiries. By the domiciled Indians he was given an enthusiastic reception. Wherever he went, he found some decoration or display to greet his arrival. The addresses of affection and gratitude which he received can be seen to-day in the Home of the Servants of India Society at Poona. The Union Government themselves were not behind-hand in their attentions, for they provided him with a first-class railway carriage for his long journey. They offered to consider him a State guest, but Mr. Gandhi, the already famous leader of the Indian Community, insisted that he should be the guest of the Indian people. For the difficult problem to be discussed with the Union Government, Gokhale was an ideal ambassador. His moderation, his courtesy, his

reasonableness, and his wide culture made a deep impression. That India could produce a man like Gokhale was a revelation to the Afrikanders. His speeches at the mixed banquets arranged in his honour helped to diffuse what Mr. Gandhi called the "Gokhale atmosphere." It seemed as if the matter in dispute had been lifted on to a higher plane of feeling and discussion.

In his statesmanlike farewell speech, delivered at Pretoria Town Hall in November 1912, he gave an able sketch of the whole problem and set forth the special grievances of the Indians. He told the audience that on the very morning of his speech he had had an interview with three Ministers — General Botha, General Smuts, and Mr. Fischer — which resulted in a full and frank interchange of views. He paid a tribute to the manner in which these Ministers had approached the question and to the desire they had shown to arrive at a just settlement. Passing on to the problem itself, he said that it was quite impracticable to repatriate 150,000 Indians; but as long as there existed among the

Colonists the fear of being swamped by an Indian influx, the proper frame of mind for settling the problem could not arise. The Colonists must be freed from that fear by the necessary assurances from the Indian side. On the other hand, the Indians felt that they were subjected to harsh Legislation specially directed against them, and that this Legislation was harshly administered. The Immigration Law was an instance. Then there was the question of trading licenses, and the question of the education of Indian children. These were the more important general grievances, though there were other specific disabilities which he could not deal with then. With regard to social disabilities, he was astonished at the strength of the colour prejudice in South Africa. The only hope of a remedy lay in an "Improvement in the general situation, and the gradual education of the heart." He recognized that even the strongest Government could not redress all Indian grievances at once, and would be hurled from power if it attempted to do so. But the face of the Government

must be "set all through in the right direction." Gokhale ended with an appeal to the "better mind" of the two communities. To the Europeans he said, "You owe it to your good name, you owe it to your civilisation, you owe it to the Empire of which you are a part, and whose flag stands for justice and freedom and opportunities for progress for all who live under its protection, that your administration should be such that you can justify it in the eyes of the civilized world." To the Indian community he said that their future was largely in their own hands. "India will no doubt be behind you. Such assistance as she can give shall freely come to you. Her passionate sympathy, her heart, her hopes will be with you. Nay, all that is best in this Empire, all that is best in the civilized world, will wish you success."

General Smuts and General Botha, the "Big Two" of South Africa, seemed to be as reasonable and accommodating as Gokhale himself, and when the latter returned to India, it looked as if the disabilities of his countrymen in Africa were at last to be

removed or at least lightened. But as soon as the magic of Gokhale's personality was removed, the situation steadily grew worse. The Anti-Asiatic party was strong, and the Union Government were unable to carry out the promises which they had made.

Meanwhile, on his return from South Africa in December 1912, Gokhale addressed a large public meeting in the Town Hall of Bombay. He gave his audience one of his masterly reviews of the whole matter, and effectively answered certain criticisms which had been made by the ill-informed. He had been blamed for not demanding an "open-door" in South Africa. He said that even Mr. Gandhi, as a paractical man, was prepared to agree that there should be no unrestricted immigration of Indians into South Africa. But the Immigration Restriction Act should be perfectly general in its application to all nationalities, and should not cast any reflection on the Indian community. "Mr. Gandhi is fighting for that equality with which our hopes for the future are bound up." Gokhale went on to say

(and from a man of his views and temper this was a noteworthy pronouncement) that, in the circumstances of the Transvaal Passive Resistance, such as that organized by Mr. Gandhi, was not only legitimate but was a duty resting on all self-respecting persons. To Mr. Gandhi himself he paid a striking tribute. In all his life, he said, he had known only two other men — Dadabhoy Naoroji and his master Ranade — who had affected him in the same spiritual manner. He concluded his speech with a reference to a still wider problem. "The root of our present trouble in the Colonies really lies in the fact that our status is not what it should be in our own country. Men who have no satisfactory status in their own land cannot expect to have a satisfactory status elsewhere. Our struggle for equal treatment with Englishmen in the Empire must therefore be mainly carried on in India herself."

A year later, the South African Indian problem became acute and caused Gokhale the greatest anxiety. Driven to despair by

hardships and sufferings the Indian community organised a big campaign of passive resistance, in which thousands of men and women took a solemn oath to die rather than submit. The Viceroy of India, a brave and chivalrous nobleman named Lord Hardinge, was deeply moved by their wrongs and, breaking through official restraint, gave them moral support in a public speech. Negotiations followed, but nearly broke down more than once. For weeks Gokhale received long messages from Mr. Gandhi by cable and replied in long messages. He had at the same time to prepare bulletins for the Indian Press and maintain close touch with Lord Hardinge, who reposed great confidence in his judgment. The strain of this extremely difficult and delicate duty deprived him even of the slight sleep which he ordinarily had, and greatly aggravated the heart pain from which he suffered. In the middle of 1914, a settlement was concluded between Mr. Gandhi and General Smuts, by which the more pressing grievances of the Indians were redressed. Mr. Gandhi, who had borne a

terrible burden for years and wrecked his health, now left South Africa for good. How he met Gokhale in London on his way home will be told later.

CHAPTER X.

A FINAL EFFORT.

WHILE Gokhale was in South Africa, a Royal Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Lord Islington to consider the question of the Indian Service, and the extent to which more Indians could be appointed to the higher posts. To understand how the matter stood at this time, we must go back a few years.

The Aitchison Committee had been appointed in 1886, and its recommendations were carried out in 1891. The Civil Service was to consist of three branches:— (1) The Imperial Indian Civil Service, which was to take the place of the old Covenanted Service, and was still to be filled by open competition in England, for which Indians of course were eligible. (2) The Provincial Service, which was to comprise certain posts formerly belonging to the Covenanted Service, as well as the higher posts in the old Uncovenanted Service. The Service was to

be recruited by the Local Government of each Province by means of nomination, competitive examination, or promotion from the Subordinate Service, (3) The Subordinate Service, which was to consist of the lower posts of the old Uncovenanted branch The Provincial and the Subordinate Services were recruited, with a very few exceptions, from Indians, but the Imperial Service was practically an English service; the proportion of Indians, though slowly increasing, was very small. Distinctions similar to those of the Civil Service were introduced into the more specialized services of the Police, Forests, Public Works, and Education.

We have seen that Gokhale, in common with most educated Indians, was dissatisfied with the slow Progress of Indianisation in the higher posts and that he lost no opportunity of pressing upon Government the claims of his fellow-countrymen. Together with two other Indians, Gokhale was appointed a member of the Islington Commission. Early in 1913 the Commission started work by hearing evidence at Madras,

after which it moved on to other centres. Many officials spoke of the comparative inefficiency of Indians, and in cross-examining them on behalf of his countrymen, Gokhale used up much of his nervous energy. For his health, never robust, was now beginning to fail under the strain of the unremitting labour of many years.

At the commencement of the hot weather the Commission returned to England. From September 1913 to April 1914, they were once more in India, collecting evidence and examining witnesses. They then went back to England to draw up the first draft of their Report. Gokhale's biographer tells us of the intense and prolonged toil to which he subjected himself on this matter on which he felt so deeply, not only in wrestling with large masses of evidence, but in his efforts to press his views upon the Chairman and other members. "He practically worked through the twenty-four hours of the day." Through the kindness and hospitality of the Tatas — ever ready to help good causes — everything was done that could make his

task easier, but the protracted strain led to a severe attack of insomnia. Many a night he could be heard pacing up and down his room and half speaking to himself. For an over-worked brain these were symptoms of danger and the doctors warned him that his life would be cut short if he did not rest and return to India. For a while he persisted in struggling on, but there is a point beyond which even a machine cannot be driven, and Gokhale had to admit the limitations of human endurance. To spend a winter in the damp and chilly gloom of England was now out of the question for him. Accordingly, arrangements were made that he should winter in the genial sunshine of his own country, and that the final draft of the Report should be postponed to some date in 1915.

But the labours of the Commission were caught up and whirled away by the great current of world-history. In August 1914, the Great War broke out, and lesser matters had to take their chance. The Report was not published until 1917, but in that year

Mr. Montagu made his momentous declaration of policy, which caused the Report to be already out of date.

The subsequent history of the question may be briefly noted. As a result of the Government of India Act of 1919, a considerable number of the British members of the All-India Services retired on a proportionate pension. In 1923 the Secretary of State appointed another Commission, under the Chairmanship of Lord Lee of Fareham, to deal with the superior Civil Services. This Commission took as its starting-point and principle the Act of 1919. As a result of its recommendations, the transferred departments of the Provincial Government will be wholly — or almost wholly — manned by Indians, while in the higher posts of the Civil Service the proportion of Indians will be equal to that of Englishmen by 1939.

The war and its consequences, so complex and far-reaching, have given a great impetus to Gokhale's ideals. But if Gokhale had not tilled the soil with long and intensive labour beforehand, the seed planted by

the Great War might have fallen on less fertile ground.

When the World War broke out, Gokhale was travelling in Central Europe, in company with H. H. Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda. At the actual moment of the outbreak they were on Austrian territory, and had to make their way across the border without delay.

Amid the minor inconveniences of War time Gokhale returned to London *via* Paris, and in London he soon found himself in the company of Mr. Gandhi, who had arrived from South Africa a day or two after the declaration of War. In the second volume of his interesting autobiography entitled "The Story of My Experiences with Truth," Mr. Gandhi has given us some characteristic details of their intercourse at this time. The Mahatma's health was then far from satisfactory, but he was still carrying on what he calls his dietetic experiments. He was determined, for the time being, to observe a strictly vegetarian diet, though his doctor was urging him to resume milk. But from milk, from religious reasons, he had resolved

to abstain. Gokhale tried to persuade him to follow the doctor's advice, but in vain. With some regret, Gokhale finally said, "I do not approve of your decision. I do not see any religion in it. But I won't press you any more" The incident in itself is perhaps a trivial one, but it throws a light on the difference in the outlook of these two remarkable men.

Shortly afterwards, Gokhale left London to escape the fogs of autumn, and in September he was back in India. When Mr. Gandhi himself followed, after an exile of ten years, Gokhale organised a reception for him in Bombay. "I had approached India," says Mr. Gandhi, "in the ardent hope of merging myself in him and thereby feeling free. But fate had willed it otherwise."

When he returned to India, Gokhale's health was so poor, and his strength so undermined, that he ought to have been spared all worry, and should have taken a complete rest. But worry was just what it seemed impossible to avoid. In 1914 "Lokamanya"

Tilak had been released from his imprisonment, and had given it as his opinion that the British Government ought to be supported in the crisis of the World War. It seemed as if he were drawing nearer to the Moderate party. Negotiations to bring the Nationalists into the Congress-fold were set on foot. Tilak had declared that the only difference between Moderates and Nationalists was one of method. But it soon appeared that the Nationalist party would aim at obtaining "recognition of their methods by educating public opinion and working for and securing a majority in the Congress." To Gokhale the prospect was very disquieting, and it was not made any more pleasant by the language and the tone of his opponents. His biographer tells us that his end was hastened by these trials and anxieties.

Mr. Gandhi has related how, at Gokhale's request, he went to Poona, where Gokhale and the members of the Servants of India Society overwhelmed him with affection. It was Gokhale's ardent wish that Mr. Gandhi should join the Society, and Mr. Gandhi

himself would have liked to do so. But the members felt that there was so great a difference between his ideals and methods of work and theirs, that such a step might be a mistake. "They are hesitating to take any risk," said Gokhale, "lest their high regard for you should be jeopardized. But whether you are formally admitted as a member or not, I am going to look upon you as one." The practical result was that the Society agreed to support Mr. Gandhi's Ashram in Gujarat, "where" he says, "being a Gujarati, I thought I was best fitted to serve the country."

When this arrangement, which was so satisfactory to Mr. Gandhi, had been concluded, he prepared to leave Poona. Before he left, he gave Gokhale a promise that he would spend a year travelling round India to gain experience and collect impressions, and that he would express no opinion on public questions till he had completed his period of probation. On the eve of his departure, February 12th, 1915, Gokhale had arranged for a fruit party of selected

friends to be held at the Home of the Society. The party was assembled only a few yards from Gokhale's room, but he himself was so ill that he was only just able to walk the few necessary steps. "His affection for me," says Mr. Gandhi, "got the better of him and he insisted on coming." But the effort was too much for his failing heart: he fainted, and had to be carried back to his room. It was not the first time that he had had a fainting fit, but this attack was serious. To the doctors it was plain that he could not live many months longer. On the 17th, however, he sat up and wrote for three hours, and on the 18th, he resumed the dictation of his letters. But he had again over-taxed his strength. As the day wore on, he grew worse, and the doctors held a consultation. His condition was now critical, for the heart was very feeble. On the 19th, he seemed to rally somewhat, but towards evening there was once more a relapse. Feeling that the end was not far off, he sent for those whom he had known and loved — his servants, his sister and his

children — and with quiet simplicity bade them all farewell. When all but Dr. Dev and Mr. H. N. Apte had left the room, he said to them in Marathi, "This side of life has been good to me It is time that I should go and see the other." For him this life was but an incident in the annals of the soul, and if the doctrine of *karma* be well-founded, we may be sure that "the other side" also has been good to him. One touching little incident remains to be told. He called for Mr. Patwardhan, one of the members of the Society, and bidding him be seated nearby, said, "Wamanrao, I have often spoken harshly to you. You must forgive me." And so, with no fears, and no regrets, his serene spirit passed to the "other side."

Even amid the shocks of the Great War, the news of Gokhale's death came to all Indians who loved their country with the sensation of a personal bereavement. Mr. Gandhi was staying at Shantiniketan when the telegram arrived. "Shantiniketan," he

writes, "was immersed in grief. All the members came over to me to express their condolences. A special meeting was called in the Ashram temple to mourn the national loss." ' And in a later chapter he tells us how sorely, as he was about to launch on the stormy sea of Indian political life, he felt the loss of the sure pilot, in whose keeping he had felt secure.

From all quarters of the Empire, from the King-Emperor himself, from Viceroys, Governors, and Princes, messages of condolence flashed over the cables. In Poona itself, where the remains of the great patriot were cremated, all parties forgot their differences in the shadow of the country's loss. Public meetings, both in India and in England, paid their tributes of sorrow and respect.

What India and the Empire had lost was put into fitting words by Mr. Montagu :— "We have lost the outstanding figure in the great transition stage of Modern India . . . But at this moment the dominant feeling among all who were brought into contact with

him is, I think, the value of a life and personality such as his—a record of single minded devotion to an unselfish ideal, and of ceaseless labour in its service over an almost unlimited field of activity. This stands above and apart from all controversy . . . His mind possessed the qualities ascribed to statesmanship without ever losing the fire of its enthusiasms or its warm human interests. We feel that his loss touches deeply not only India but the Empire and the whole world of men whose thoughts move in harmony, whether they know it or not, with the spirit of the brotherhood of the Servants of India."

To those who have read our sketch of Gokhale's life and labours, every chapter will have afforded some illustration of the rare combination of qualities with which he enriched Indian public life, and to which Mr. Montagu paid his tribute. His patriotism burned with a steady and clear flame, but it was a flame which illuminated, without heating, every question which he touched. For his temper and mind were those of the

wise man, enlightened by history, and guided by the method of scientific thought. Had he lived for another ten years, India in the troubulous post-war period would assuredly have known less of turmoil and divided aims. But the legacy of his deeds and words still lives for all those who would follow his steps.

THE END.

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