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С. Ю. Ковалев

*Reprinted from the Fergusson College Magazine*

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# GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

BY

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## PREFACE.



The present sketch of the life and work of the late Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale is reprinted *verbatim* from the July number of the Fergusson College Magazine for which it was originally written. The College magazine reaches the hands of only a few outside the student world and it was suggested to me that a reprint in this form will make it available to the large Indian public that is interested in Gokhale. A complete biography of Gokhale is one of the needs of the Indian political world and we are glad that it is being arranged for; but, until it appears, sketches like the present may perhaps be found not altogether without their use.

FERGUSSON COLLEGE, }  
Poona, 6th July 1915. }

R. P. PARANJPYE.

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## Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

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SINCE the 20th of February, everywhere in india is heard the same cry, "The Sun of Indian public life is set!" From all corners of the country messages of condolence have been pouring in on Mr. Gokhale's family and the Servants of India Society. Even from England and South Africa, the same messages of condolence come; His Majesty the King-Emperor, the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy and all the biggest people in the land offer their heart-felt sympathy. Such a wide-spread demonstration of grief is hardly ever seen except in the case of royalty. If this is the depth of feeling at his loss in parts of India and the Empire, where he was only rarely seen in person, one can guess what persons like the life-members of the Deccan Education Society and the Servants of India Society, among whom he lived and who were intimately associated with him in his various activities, must be feeling. To them, though his humble valets, he was indisputably the hero, thus contradicting the well-known saying. His word to them was law, his advice most welcome, and his smallest wish a peremptory order. It is hardly possible to put on paper what we feel; the words that we can use have been used before, but they bear to us a far deeper meaning than to the outside world.



**Secret of Gokhale's Influence.**

What is the secret of Gokhale's influence—we drop the prefix “Mister” as an impertinent addition to a historic name—of which this remarkable manifestation of grief at his death was only the visible sign? In his life he was but too often attacked with a rancour hardly equalled in public controversy even in India. The attack did not always proceed from one side in politics, though from his Indian opponents came the more biting words. But these attacks ceased automatically on his death and in this case the sudden change is due to something deeper than the common courtesy which enjoins “*de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*” His opponents correctly gauged the public feeling when they saw that one word against Gokhale at this time was likely to come back with ten-fold vigour against themselves. Indians are really ascetic at heart; they appreciate real sacrifice, steadfast devotion to an ideal and untiring industry to attain that ideal. This admiration of Indians for sacrifice as such has but too often brought popularity to a mountebank or raised an idiot to the position of a saint. When, therefore, the object of a whole life-time was transparently the advance of his country and the advocacy of his country's interests in all directions, what wonder that Indians felt for Gokhale a reverence, which is very rarely the lot of a

political leader even in more advanced countries ?

### Early Life.

\*Gopal Krishna Gokhale was born in Chiplun Taluka in Ratnagiri District in 1866. His parents—as is generally the case with most Dakshinis who have attained fame under British rule in India—were poor, though respectable. His father held a small post in Kagal, a State under Kolhapur, and died when young Gopal was about twelve years of age. His early years were passed mostly in Kagal and Kolhapur and his education was carried on under pecuniary difficulties and at considerable sacrifice at the hands of his elder brother Govindrao. Gopalrao passed his Matriculation examination from the Rajaram High School in 1881, his Previous from the Rajaram College in 1882, his First B.A. from the Rajaram and Deccan Colleges in 1883 and his B. A. from the Elphiustone College in 1884. His University career was not very brilliant, though he got a comfortable second class in first and second B. A. examinations. He is said to have been a quiet student, though anxious to win applause by excelling in every thing.

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\* It is not proposed to give a detailed personal account of Gokhale's career in this place. A fairly detailed life has appeared in the spring number of the *Manoranjan* from the pen of Prof. W. B. Patvardhan ; an authoritative biography is being arranged for and will be probably entrusted to the Hon. Mr. V. S. Shrinivasa Shastri, his successor in the headship of the Servants of India Society.

He appears to have dazzled everybody by his feats of memory and this faculty, which seems to have been originally strong in him, was afterwards sedulously cultivated. When after his graduation, he became a teacher in the New English School, he often gave the passages for dictation to his class from memory from the newspaper articles he might have casually read in the morning. Perhaps his fine ear for English style might have been due to this wonderful memory of his. He could recall almost any fact he had heard mentioned even once before and this was a great asset to him in his public life, for he could hardly be tripped by his opponents in his facts and figures. Several of us have heard him remarking on the gradual weakening of his memory during the last three or four years of his life and the consequent decline that he himself felt coming over his mental powers. Though we did not actually observe any visible effects of this decline on the quality of his work, the feeling that he had about it himself weighed considerably on his sensitive nature.

### **Feeling His Way.**

Gokhale chose his life's work immediately after his graduation, at an age when he was not out of his teens. At this age English undergraduates think only of their sports and union debates, but brilliant young Indian students finish their university education sooner,

have family and other worries thrust upon them at an early age and begin to think seriously of public questions and public work, when they should be really digesting what they have learnt and are learning. Perhaps, Indian intellect matures sooner, but this early maturity is but too often paid for by early exhaustion, many times by early physical break-down, and frequently by early death. This premature death of our graduates was a few years ago a very much discussed question and had given rise to a remarkable controversy between Sir R. G. Bhandarkar and the late Mr. Justice Ranade. Probably it is not so acute now, as the lives of graduates are becoming longer than they were twenty years ago, but even now there are not many graduates who are hale and hearty in their retirement. Even in speaking of Gokhale, though he cannot be said to have died very early as was the case with too many of his contemporaries, he was only in his middle age and, judged by European standards, he ought to have had at least twenty years more of vigorous life. We should like the leaders of our society to consider this question seriously and try to change our social customs in such a way that our young men will not have family cares or even public cares till they are at least twenty-five. A few more years of comparative freedom from worry in early life will add many more years to the total life of Indians, and the total amount of

work turned out by them will be ever so much greater.

However that may be, Gokhale had to choose his life's work at eighteen. The prospects before a young graduate were, in those days, much brighter than now. If he entered Government revenue service he would rise to a mamlatdarship in a short time, or, if an LL. B., he could, with fair certainty, expect to get at least a Subordinate Judgeship almost as a matter of course, without having to exert any influence with the powers that be. Gokhale was thinking of his future and had attended the Engineering College for a few days with the idea of becoming an engineer; then he worked for a short time at the elementary books on jurisprudence in which every law student had to pass an examination in those days before appearing for the LL. B.; he was advised by some to take the audacious—for those days—step of going to England to compete for the I. C. S., even if he had to borrow money for the purpose. Just think of Gokhale as an engineer, as a lawyer, or even as an Indian Civil Servant! Well was it for the country that such a fate—it would have been nothing less than a dire fate—was not to be Gokhale's and that he was destined to become the expert engineer under whose loving and watchful eyes the edifice of India's political progress was to be pushed forward, the eloquent pleader who was to plead the cause of India before the

public in India, England and South Africa, in the Supreme Legislative Council and in private before cabinet ministers like Morley or Botha, or the devoted "Servant of India" rather than an Indian Civil Servant.

**Joins the Deccan Education Society.**

**Teaching work in the Fergusson College.**

But fate was propitious in this case and gave a proper turn to Gokhale's thoughts. He had not till then shown much active sympathy with public movements even as a student, though it is recorded that he had once acted a part in a dramatic performance, the proceeds of which were to go towards the expenses of Messrs. Tilak and Agarkar in the libel suit of 1881. Perhaps it might, for aught that we know to the contrary, have been a flash in the pan. But a few years before his graduation, a movement had been started in Poona, which at that time appealed to the minds of the people and which with all its vicissitudes remains even now perhaps the biggest work achieved by the people of Poona and the Maharashtra after the lapse of thirty-five years. This was the foundation of the New English School in Poona in 1880. English education had not then spread even half so much as it now has, and there were some enthusiastic young men in Poona who believed in the spread of Western education—and secular Western education. Messrs. Tilak and Agarkar in their college days conceived

this idea. They got the late Mr. Vishnushastri Chiplunkar to give it his countenance, for Chiplunkar was well-known as a vigorous Marathi writer and wielded great influence with the Deccani public. Chiplunkar died soon after the starting of the school; but, in spite of this and the unfortunate libel case, in which Messrs. Tilak and Agarkar were involved soon afterwards and were sentenced to a hundred days' imprisonment, the school prospered beyond all expectations; other young men of great abilities joined them, among others Messrs. Namjoshi, Apte, Kelkar and Gole. The school was in its fifth year of existence and its success was such that the workers decided to take the far bigger step of opening an Arts College and giving their work a permanent form and starting the Deccan Education Society. They were looking out for energetic young men to join them in their work. It is not known how Gokhale was first introduced to them, but soon after passing his B. A. examination, we find him accepting the post of a teacher in the school in the beginning of 1885. Ere long he decided to throw in his lot with the gentlemen named above and thus turned away once for all from all ideas of wealth and the position inseparable from it—ideas which are but natural to a young man who had to educate himself under great difficulties and which are always thrust upon his notice by his poor relations, who are looking forward

to a life of ease and comfort after years of difficulty. The people who joined the institution were capable of earning a lot of money but had to content themselves for life with the meagre allowance of seventy-five rupees a month in the best of times and occasionally even less if circumstances were less favourable. Every life-member had to bind himself to serve the Society for twenty years and Gokhale was a life-member from January 1885 to December 1904 though for the last two years of this period he was on furlough. As said above, he originally taught in the school but was soon given work in the College. The College had only the Previous Class for the first three years and the first B. A. class also for the next five years. It got permission to open the B. A. class in 1892 and since then has become a full Arts College, sending up students for both the Arts and Science degrees. Although his optional subject at the B. A. was Mathematics, he used to teach a part of English for the first five years in the College, the other part being taken up by Mr. Kelkar. Mathematics was, in the beginning, entrusted to Mr. Tilak. By 1890, however, acute dissensions arose among the life-members and some of them severed their connection with the Society. Mr. Tilak resigned in this year and Gokhale had to step into the breach and he taught the mathematics of the first two years



in 1891. At the end of this year, permission was obtained for opening the B. A. class and Mr. Karve who was a college friend of Gokhale was appointed professor of Mathematics and Gokhale returned to English and other cognate subjects. Thus during his whole term he taught at various times Mathematics, English, History and Political Economy. He was occasionally taunted with this versatility and he himself once told the writer that somebody called him a "Professor to order". But Gokhale did not resent the taunt, for he realised better than anybody else that he did not deserve to be called a professor in the true sense of the word. He himself never made use of the appellation. To be a real professor in a subject required a life-long study, and this, he thought, was not possible to an Indian in the present state of the country.

### Teacher of Mathematics.

The present writer has never seen Gokhale teach mathematics and cannot, therefore, express any opinion about the efficiency of his teaching. It appears, however, that by 1891 he had got out of much of his interest in the subject. Of course, everybody has heard of his masterly book on Arithmetic which has been for the last twenty years *facile princeps* in the field and has been bringing him quite a decent income since its publication. The explanation of the

principles and the collection of exercises therein are very useful to the student and the teacher alike and shows the clearness of his grasp and his high qualities as a teacher. His study of mathematics gave his mind a habit of exactness which we occasionally miss in public men. He found his mathematics useful in another direction. During the last thirty years a school of economic writers has arisen which makes use of mathematical ideas in the discussion of economic principles. • Though some economists differ fundamentally from this attitude as they think that the data of economics are not such as would be amenable to exact mathematical reasoning, the mathematical school has been gradually gaining ground. Several of the leading economists of the day have had a complete mathematical training and their books are always coloured more or less with a mathematical tinge. Several mathematical ideas, *e. g.*, that of a function, can be almost bodily transplanted into any other science. The great branch of economics that is called statistics is fast growing bigger than the parent stem itself, and discussions in statistics are mainly mathematical—not purely arithmetical as might be supposed. Gokhale with his mathematical training was enabled to appreciate fully these ideas and occasionally to use in his speeches a forcible mathematical analogy which put his point quite neatly.

### Teacher of English.

Gokhale as a teacher of English was a much greater success. I have myself studied under him Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*, De Quincey's *Opium-Eater* and partly also Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. His teaching of English suffered from a comparison with that of his colleague, Prof. Kelkar. The latter was a true connoisseur of poetry and light literature and entered into the spirit of any novel or poem certainly better than Gokhale; he is said to have taught some very difficult books in an inimitable manner, especially those for which students had no extraneous help in the shape of copious annotations; but several times he hurried over easier books and I remember that in my Previous year he used to read about four or five hundred lines of *Lady of the Lake* in a single hour; this was often too much for the average student who did not come to the class sufficiently prepared beforehand. Gokhale, on the other hand, was methodical in the extreme. He never slurred even over the easiest passages; took great pains in explaining all the allusions and especially the historical references; but his teaching was not calculated to give one the love of literature as such if it was not already there. Perhaps, one may say that his teaching was more useful to the average examinee than

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\*His teaching of Matthew Arnold's poems is still remembered with pride by his pupils.

Mr. Kelkar's. Personally, I came into contact with him from my first year. As the first scholar in the class, he used to take special pains with me and examined several of my composition exercises in my presence in the Joshi Hall where he was to be found every morning doing the work of the Sarva-Janik Sabha. I particularly remember once taking to him a summary of Bagehot's essay on the Waverly Novels in his Literary Studies. When I told him of my intention to take up the B. Sc. course after the Previous Examination, he tried to dissuade me from it by kindly remarking that I should not waste myself on Science as I wrote good essays. Another incident of those days that I recall now is this. Soon after joining the College in 1892 I went to see him once on Prof. Karve's advice and he felt interested in Latin which was my second language. He made me give him a list of the Latin books which would help him to learn the language and apparently ordered the lot immediately from his book-seller. But the idea appears to have evaporated very soon, for, many years after, I saw a set of these identical books in his house lying altogether unused. This was always one of his characteristics. When he felt interested in anything he took to it with all his might for a few days, but very often the interest died away soon. Thus, at one time, he was so much engrossed in the game of billiards that he spent hours and

no book. After the death of Mr. Ranade he had an idea of writing his life, taking Morley's Burke as his model. But though he never entirely gave up the idea, still it became more and more remote and now an adequate biography of Ranade remains only a *liber valde desideratus* and, even if accomplished by any other hand, can never come up to what it would have been in Gokhale's.

### As a Speaker.

Though as a teacher of English he could not be placed in the first rank, his knowledge of English literature was very extensive. For his class-teaching he had to study various periods of English literature in detail and had in consequence to read a great many books that are now-a-days not much read, though talked and written about a great deal. He could introduce a telling quotation in his speeches and his general conversation was that of a highly cultured mind familiar with the best writing and thinking. His fluency in speech used to produce a great impression on his classes, as it later on did on the general public. It is said that in his youth he used to be very nervous and halting in his speech. But he determined to get over this defect immediately he took to the teacher's profession and for this purpose he learnt many famous speeches by heart as an exercise. He had always a special liking for a good speech well delivered and as an effective speaker

he himself soon attained the first place in India. In his speaking, he had not the bombastic style often affected by the Bengali orator or the readiness in repartee required of a debater. His speeches are, however, a model in their way and the close logical reasoning of his speeches assisted by a melodious voice did the work which many formal orations never did. Perhaps one may say that Gokhale's speeches always reminded one of the school-master in him; while most of the other orators in India never let you forget the fact that they were lawyers. His audience never felt that they were being driven against their will when listening to his speech. They felt they were being led and often ran away with the idea that he was doing nothing but what they themselves could do equally well, so simple his reasoning was. Few speeches can bear being read in cold print, but Gokhale's speeches can bear this supreme test remarkably well.

#### As a teacher of History.

As regards his history teaching, he was very much more at home. But in this case the subject interested him rather as an image of the present day affairs than as a pure subject of study for its own sake. He was always looking to the bearings of past affairs over the present and thus many a time digressed from the matter in hand to talk about present day

politics. Thus, in a course of lecture on English history, he turned aside for a week to give us a resume of the history of Ireland since the Union. The course of Irish history he always regarded as somewhat similar to that of India and he never lost an opportunity of impressing on the minds of the pupils the long course of steady work and disinterested sacrifice, which the Irish leaders have shown during a whole century. National greatness, he felt, could not be achieved in any other way. He used to take in regularly the *Dublin Freeman* and the tri-weekly edition of the *London Times* even in his early days, to keep himself well-posted in English political matters. As regards his teaching proper, he read almost all the available literature on any point before he entered the class and for the whole hour the flow of his words never stopped. He never dictated any notes in history as is but too common with the teachers of history in these days. He expected the students to read the text and considered that his proper duty was to amplify it and sometimes to put it in proper perspective in his lectures. With all his good points as a teacher of history, I do not think that he would, under any circumstances, have made an original historian, who delights in old musty records. His mind was more akin to that of a Seeley than that of a Freeman. He did not much care for the history of India, as he thought that more

Lessons can be learnt from the history of Europe, both ancient and modern, which presents a well-marked evolution of the democratic idea than from any detailed account of the numerous dynasties of rulers that ruled in India—for this, he thought, was very nearly what the history of India practically amounted to.

### Gokhale as an Economist.

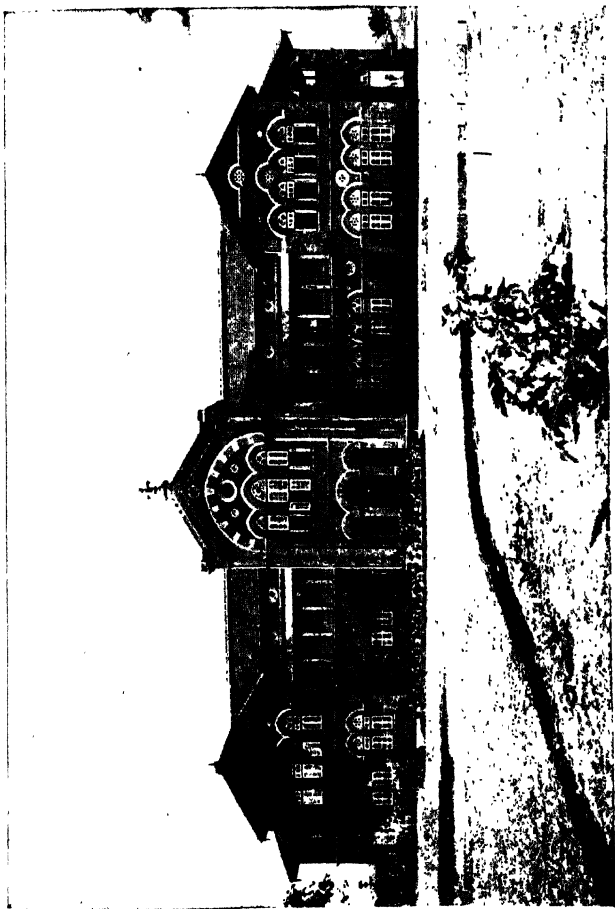
Of all the subjects that Gokhale taught in the college, political economy was the one, which he liked best and taught like a master. He was familiar with all the literature of the subject, which is mostly in English and consequently did not place him in much difficulty on account of his ignorance of French and German. Every teacher worth the name is sure to have occasionally felt the ambition of distinguishing himself in his special subject and leaving behind him some work of a permanent original value. Gokhale sometimes felt that if he could have devoted himself to it entirely, he might have been able to do some original work in economics. He said that he had some new ideas on the subject of bimetallism, which, he told me, if properly developed, might have got rid of several of the difficulties that surround this thorny question. But other more pressing duties always got precedence over his time and energy, and these nebulous ideas form only an



addition to the great realm of the Might-have-been. It must not be supposed that he was carried against his mature judgment into neglecting the field of pure research. He deliberately thought that in the present state of our country, a capable man had no right to be a specialist when workers altogether were so few. A broadening of interests is more necessary to our leaders than the intensification of one single interest. When the number of workers becomes large, then will come the time for specialisation. Whether this opinion is right or wrong, it must still be counted in him as but one more instance of sacrifice for his country's good, and many persons will even regard it as one of the noblest he ever made.

#### **Work of College Organisation.**

Besides the purely teaching work, that he had to do in the College, he did much extraneous work for it. After the resignation of Messrs. Tilak and Namjoshi and the death of Principal Apte, he filled the position of the representative of the Deccan Education Society in the eyes of the outside public. The society had undertaken to erect suitable buildings for the College and some contributions had been already promised. The foundation-stone of the new College building was laid in 1892 and on Gokhale fell the task of collecting the necessary funds. He used to lecture only for four or five days of



The Fergusson College, Poona.



the week and spent the week-ends in Bombay or even further afield in his collection-work. As a result of his exertions, when the College building and the hostel were opened in 1895, they were entirely free from any encumbrance. In this subscription campaign he went to various centres in the presidency and formed many friendships. Although he rarely went out into the district in his later life, these friends of his kept him well-informed of the public opinion in various parts and he could thus feel the pulse of the whole country. • This subscription work is the most laborious that can be imagined ; but the experience he gained at this time enabled him to score such a magnificent success, when he appealed for funds for the South African struggle. He was also the Secretary of the Deccan Education Society for many years and was thus largely responsible for its correspondence with Government and also for the smooth working of the double system of Government by the Board of life-members and the Council of the Society. When, from several causes, the constitution of the Society had to be slightly altered, it was Gokhale who was the trusted representative of his colleagues in these delicate and difficult negotiations. On ceremonial as well as informal occasions, he was the " public orator " of the Society, as he was of the whole country after he left the Society.

### Intercourse with Students.

Gokhale was quite accessible to his students, though they always stood a little in awe of him. He spoke freely to them and encouraged them to tell him of the difficulties that were felt by the student world. Even in the dark days of rampant extremism, there was a perceptible number of young men, who remained true to the principles of moderation mainly by the influence that emanated from Gokhale, and were not hypnotised by the meretricious allurements of high-sounding phrases. With several of the more promising students, he came more intimately into contact and gave them special personal help in their studies. I have referred to my own case before in another connection. He was also always on the look-out for promising young men to join the Society as life-members and several of us have received the first impulse towards life-membership of the Society from him. Needless to say, there was no improper influencing on his part beyond a frank discussion of all problems of the country, and the duty of spirited young men to do some public work without regard to self-interest was impressed upon them. No attempt was made to hustle them into taking the step of joining the Society and thus only once more verifying the adage "Marry in haste and repent at leisure" in a slightly different sense.

## WORK IN THE BOMBAY UNIVERSITY.

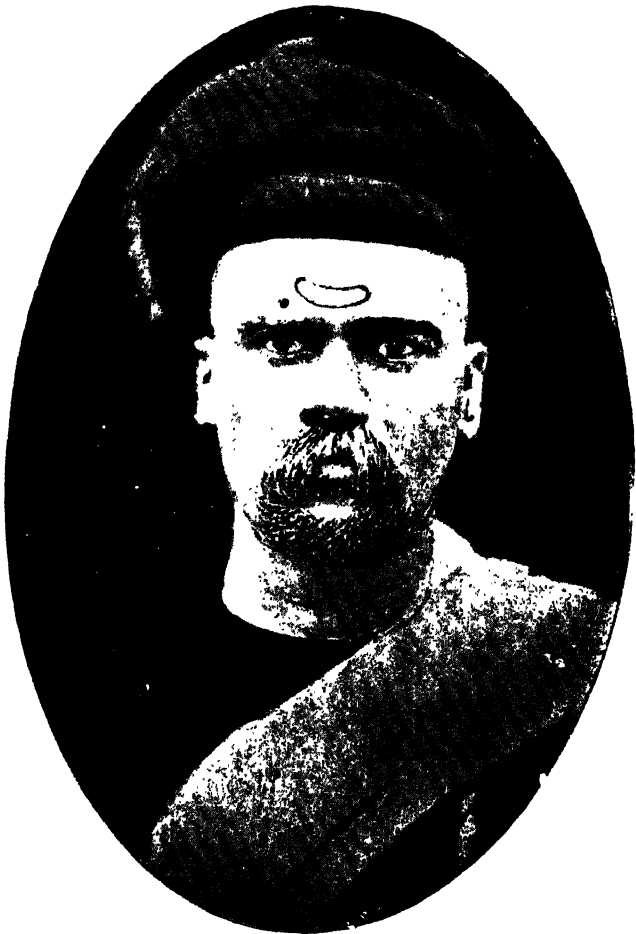
### Work in the Bombay University.

Gokhale was connected in one way or other with most educational institutions in Poona. We shall only briefly refer to his connection with the Bombay University. He got elected as a fellow of the University under the pre-Curzon regime in 1895 by the graduates and continued a fellow upto his death, being a nominated fellow after the passing of Curzon's University Bill. For one year he was a member of the Syndicate and as his proposers refused to canvass for him and thus deliberately insult the discriminating capacity of the members of the Senate, he was beaten on the next occasion. In his latter days, he did not find much time to attend the Senate meetings regularly, but when he did attend, he always took part in the debates with great effect. The last occasion, on which he spoke in the Senate, was when the question of history as a compulsory subject for the B. A. course was on the anvil, and he gave a masterly exposition of the importance of history as a subject of general study especially for Indians. He also referred in severe terms to the attempt made to obtain a majority by whips. His remarks made such a great impression that several fellows, who voted finally against history, expressed the opinion that if votes had been taken immediately after the conclusion of his speech, he would surely have won the day for history. He was also for

many years an examiner in the University both in English and History. The syllabuses in history as finally drafted for the new courses were, to a great extent, according to his suggestions ; the inclusion of political science in the B. A. course and of Indian economics in the B. A. and M. A. courses was specially his idea. The part he took in the discussions on the University Bill of 1903 and the Validating Bill a year or two afterwards will be mentioned hereafter in connection with his work on the Imperial Council.

**Journalism : Association with Agarkar.**

Before coming to his political work in the proper sense of the word, we may say a few words about his work in journalism and social reform. When the New English School was first founded, the founders also started the *Kesari*, *Maratta* and the Arya-Bhushan Press, and these two papers were an integral part of their activities. Later on about the middle eighties, it was thought proper to dissociate the conduct of a newspaper from educational activities, and the *Kesari* and the *Maratta* were handed over to Messrs. Agarkar and Tilak personally and an entirely separate arrangement was made for the Arya-Bhushan Press, Mr. Kelkar having the largest proprietary interest therein. For some years Mr. Agarkar was the main editor of the *Kesari*; but later on Mr. Tilak became its leading spirit. Some of the reprinted



Principal G. G. Agarkar.





articles from the *Kesari* in कॆसरीतील निवडक निबंध were in fact from the pen of Mr. Agarkar. But about 1888 the two could not pull on together. In the beginning, the differences between them were only on the question of social reform; but these continually increased and Mr. Agarkar severed his connection with the *Kesari* altogether. But the fine reforming zeal of Mr. Agarkar required an organ and about 1889 he started an Anglo-Marathi paper called the *Sudharak*. Mr. Agarkar may be called the chief manager of the concern and Gokhale was his partner. Gokhale was generally responsible for the English columns, which usually treated of political questions, while Mr. Agarkar took the larger Marathi side in his own hands, as it treated of the questions of social reform, and he was perhaps the most forcible writer in the language that has ever lived. Occasionally they changed these roles and Gokhale, if he put his mind into it, could also write and speak Marathi very well indeed. Gokhale once told me that he was the author of an imaginary story in Marathi on Shivaji's wanderings to Jagannath and other holy places after he extricated himself by a stratagem from the clutches of Aurangzeb. But generally, he confined himself to political questions and to English as the medium of his expression. The *Sudharak* prospered very well, considering that it was avowedly and even obtrusively intended

to point out the shortcomings of the people themselves and did not stoop to praising the faults and prejudices of the people and laying the blame for our misfortunes on the shoulders of our rulers—which is a sure means of attaining popularity and pecuniary success in journalism. The first year the accounts of the *Sudhark* just balanced and the share of Gokhale was only half the money obtained by selling as waste paper the old newspapers received in exchange. The second year the editors got about one hundred rupees each. The profits were somewhat better later on, but in three or four years Gokhale found his other work so heavy that he had to sever his connection with the paper. Gokhale was also the editor of the *Quarterly Journal of the Sarvajanic Sabha* from its inception and wrote many articles on current political questions, generally under the inspiration of the late Mr. Ranade. In his later years he had not much to do with journalism, though he was a voracious reader of newspapers and took a platonic interest in the profession. Occasionally he contributed an article to one of the English reviews, but he was generally too busy to do much in this direction.

#### **Social Reform.**

Gokhale never took much prominent part in the social reform movement, though his sympathies were strongly on the side of the reformers. Of course, he helped in making the *Sudha-*

## SOCIAL REFORM.

*rak* in its infancy the great success that it was, but the main credit for it is due to the character and pen of Mr. Agarkar. The only question bearing on social reform, on which he spoke in public, was the question of the depressed classes. On this he felt and spoke very strongly. In fact our crying out against the racial disabilities of Indians in South Africa and our fight for equality of rights with our rulers were entirely vain and selfish, if we of the higher castes refused the same equality of opportunity to our own fellow-countrymen of the untouchable and depressed classes in our own country as we claim for ourselves. Though he never took a prominent part in matters of social reform, he still always acted according to his convictions. When more than twenty years ago, there was a storm in the tea-cup of Poona orthodoxy on account of some Brahmins taking tea at the Panch Howd Mission, he never heeded the excommunication of the orthodox priests and was one of the few who went to urge on Mr. Ranade the grave consequences of the *Prayaschitta*, that he was being pressed to undergo by some of his backsliding friends, to the cause of social reform. His sympathy was always to be had when any energetic spirit wanted to take a decided step against popular custom. Some social reformers are wroth with Gokhale at his not taking a lead in social reform propaganda ; but he thought that the

political work that he was doing was enough and more to occupy all his energies. May be, he also thought that an unfortunate circumstance in his private life might be raked up against him without his being able to give the true explanation and that he wished to save the social reform cause from any reflection that would be made against it if he became one of its leaders.

**Political Work: Gokhale and Tilak.**

It is not proposed, in a place like this, to discuss in great detail the political work of Gokhale. What we shall attempt to do is to give a succinct list of the problems that Gokhale tackled and some of the special occasions on which he became prominently identified with those problems. A detailed account of his political work is bound to expand into the internal political history of India for the last twenty years. Before, however, entering on this part of our subject, it is necessary to refer briefly to his relations with Mr. Tilak as the history of these relations cannot be completely passed over in silence in any study—however short—of Gokhale. We labour under a certain disadvantage in giving this account as one of the two protagonists is still with us and our account is likely to be misinterpreted. It is not intended here to cast any aspersions on the living while paying our tribute to the dead; but just as in any account of Gladstone, Disraeli is bound to play a con-

spicuous part, so in any appreciation of Gokhale Mr. Tilak must necessarily largely figure.

**Tilak leaves the Deccan Education Society.**

Gokhale himself used to relate that he joined the Deccan Education Society as an ardent admirer of Mr. Tilak rather than of Mr. Agarkar, with whom he later on formed such intimate personal relations, and that he was one of the young students gathered to welcome them both on their release from jail in the early eighties. But on coming to know him closer as a co-worker in the Society, Gokhale soon found that their temperaments were radically different. Even the best friends of Mr. Tilak will admit that he cannot work with an equal, though he has a kind of magnetic attraction for those, that are content for ever to play the second fiddle to him. Perhaps an honest difference of opinion on the proper method of bringing about social reform alienated the two College friends - Tilak and Agarkar - and Gokhale had, by that time, come to admire Agarkar's earnestness and straightforwardness and was generally found on Agarkar's side in any disputed questions. Agarkar could not brook any pettifogging motives of "policy" and when he saw an abuse, he was for doing instant battle with it. So he gave up his connection with the *Kesari* and started the *Sudharak* with Gokhale's help, as has been related before.

Amenities of public controversy were not known in those days—I am afraid that they have not been learnt even yet—and Agarkar and his friends were castigated in unmeasured terms in the columns of the *Kesari*, a compliment which was repaid with interest by the *Sudharak*, though the tone and the language of the latter, if forcible, were always distinguished by a grace peculiarly Agarkar's. Mr. Tilak in his whole life has never learnt the simple fact that two persons can differ on one point, while agreeing and co-operating on several others. The difference of opinion on the proper method of bringing about reform in our social customs and perhaps the comparative importance of social and political work led to purely personal differences and joint work in the Society soon became impossible. In 1890, Mr. Tilak resigned his life-membership and the public can form some idea of the rights and wrongs of the question from the one fact that while Mr. Tilak carried only two of his colleagues—Messrs. Namjoshi and Patankar—with him, all the rest—Messrs. Agarkar, Apte, Gokhale, Gole, Kelkar Dharap and Bhanu—stayed on and all the members of the Council including among others Messrs. Selby, Oxenham, Bhandarkar and Ranade continued to help the work by their advice. All the characters in the drama, except Messrs. Tilak, Patankar and Bhanu, have been gathered to their fathers. The split for some time

## TILAK'S METHODS.

handicapped the proper working of the Society, as people who did not know the facts thought that Mr. Tilak was the hero, while Agarkar and later on Gokhale were the villains of the piece. The paths of the seceders and the faithful continued to diverge more and more. Agarkar, who was no politician, restricted himself to social reform during the five years of life that remained to him, Apte was a pure scholar and educationist and soon disappeared from the field by death, and thus Gokhale came naturally to be the leader of the life-members that remained faithful. Who can fathom the inner motives of men? But it is at least a possible explanation of the growing estrangement between Mr. Tilak and Gokhale that the institutions, which the former had left and which perhaps he expected would be crippled by his secession, continued to flourish like the green bay tree mainly under the guiding hand of Gokhale. This feeling might have been quite unconscious, but nobody likes to feel that his place can be filled up and that he is not indispensable.

### Tilak's Methods.

As said before, Mr. Tilak saw soon after Gokhale's admission to the Society that here was a man likely to be his formidable rival and Gokhale told me that almost the first instance in which they were opposed publicly to each other was in 1888, when Gokhale's nomination for the



Secretaryship of the Sarvajanic Sabha was opposed by Mr. Tilak. The estrangement continued to grow, and Mr. Tilak, after leaving the Society, began to lean more and more on the support of the orthodox and the popular party; while Gokhale, under the inspiration of Ranade, kept on the path of true progress without too much thought of popular praise or blame. Their appeal was in fact more to reason and mature judgment, while Mr. Tilak appealed more to sentiment. At the Poona Congress of 1895, when Gokhale was a Secretary of the Reception Committee the ridiculous controversy started by Mr. Tilak about letting the Social Conference have the use of the Congress *Mandap* assumed disproportionate dimensions and Mr. Tilak triumphed momentarily. I do not know what he now thinks in his heart of hearts of the part that he played in the matter, though he can, like the skilful advocate that he is, still put a fair complexion on it, if necessary. But nobody in any other centre in India has thought fit to fight a similar battle before or since. The capture of the Sarvajanic Sabha; the foundation of the Deccan Sabha; Gokhale's evidence before the Welby Commission, in which he innocently described the Sarvajanic Sabha as an "association of similar character" to the Deccan Sabha—words which Mr. Tilak chose to consider as a reflection on himself and which consequently proved gall and wormwood to him;

the Poona murders and Gokhale's apology ; inoculation against plague Mr. Tilak's candidature for the Presidentship of the Calcutta Congress ; the Surat episode and the resulting Congress constitution drafted with the object of averting further repetitions of it; the debacle of the proposed Nagpur Congress ; the cry of the four resolutions on Swaraj, Swadeshi, boycott and national education ; the Bengal partition agitations and the anarchist movement ; and, finally, after Mr. Tilak's return from jail, the compromise controversy which at last killed Gokhale, such would be the headings of some of the chapters in a peculiarly interesting book—if it ever comes to be written on the rivalry between Mr. Tilak and Gokhale. In a place like this we do not propose to discuss these points from the controversial point of view, but a mere mention of them and a recollection of the attitude of the two men on each of them would do better than any formal description of set purpose to realise the difference between their political aspirations and methods of work.

#### **Gokhale's Method.**

Mainly on account of the methods of propagandism which were followed by Mr. Tilak and which Gokhale and his followers have never cared to follow, Gokhale has never been a popular hero in Maharashtra. Of course he had always his band of faithful followers who remained

attached to him through thick and thin and whose attachment was a source of great comfort to him. By nervous temperament Gokhale was not fitted to be a popular idol. He hated shams of every kind and that is why he spoke equally strongly on the defects of Lord Curzon's administration or on the outrageous treatment of Indians in South Africa and the Indians' attitude to the depressed classes in their own country. He realised that nine-tenths of the work that has to be done before India can take her right place in the British Empire and the world, must be done in India and by Indians themselves and that when this major part of the work is accomplished the few difficulties necessarily inherent in a foreign bureaucratic government will not take long to get over. Such an acute sense of one's own shortcomings is inconsistent with a readiness to shout with the biggest crowd. He often used to say that while the highest level, reached by an Indian may be the same as that reached by a European, the average level of Indians is deplorably below that of Europeans and that the great task before us is to try and raise this average level. When this average level is raised, the towering personalities of whom we now see but very few will increase considerably in number. Hence Gokhale's admirers were mainly the *elite* in the land who could be approached by an appeal to their judgment and perhaps the appreciation of him was more





**The Late Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade.**

wide-spread outside our presidency than in our own as the general vision is more likely to be obscured on a nearer view by the action of merely local obstacles. Gokhale was thus essentially a man of India rather than a man of Poona or even of Bombay, though we are all proud to call him our own. The value of his work will continue to be realised more and more as days pass by when the lesser lights that now loom so large in the public eye are forgotten and other similar lights take their place.

### Sarvajanik Sabha.

Soon after he joined the Deccan Education Society, Gokhale became the Joint Secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha, his colleague being the late Mr. Shivram Hari Sathe for whom Gokhale always cherished feelings of deep affection, almost filial in its nature. When his name was suggested to the late Mr. Ranade as a possible secretary, he was asked by him to write as an exercise an article summarising some official report which he was then reading. Gokhale often used to tell how proud he felt when on his taking the article next to Mr. Ranade the latter said that "it would do". He remained Secretary of the Sabha till 1896. The Sabha in those days was the premier political association in the country and even now there is no political association which quite possesses the influence that it wielded in its best days. The Sabha thoughtfully considered every public question

as it arose and sent weighty memorials to Government placing before it the popular point of view. Of course the person at the back of it was Mr. Ranade who inspired most of its work; but Gokhale was the actual worker. This period is very important in Gokhale's life as the period of training, for in these days he acquired the habit of studying public questions in all their bearings and had the inestimable advantage of sitting at the feet of a man of such wide grasp and catholic interests as Mr. Ranade. He learnt that in public life mere rhetoric is not of much avail unless it is based on the solid foundation of facts and figures. The work that he did in those days can be seen in the—now rare—files of the journal of the Sabha that Gokhale edited while he was secretary. All the memorials of the Sabha were written by him and the trenchant and at the same time the moderate style of which he was the master made great impression, and the Government always gave them very serious consideration and lengthy replies. About 1896 Mr. Tilak thought he would like to capture the Sabha and become its leading spirit. The rules about the membership were a little lax and he took advantage of them to make a large number of new members and secure a majority for himself. Gokhale resigned his secretaryship as the majority gave him a colleague with whom it was impossible for him to work. The

## WELBY COMMISSION.

remaining history of the Sabha is soon told. In the famine year 1897 they appointed a paid lecturer who made some random statements which Government asked them either to explain or withdraw. The Sabha did neither and Government passed an order saying that its representation would be no more considered. Since then it has remained in a moribund condition and lives at least as a name as it has got possession of some funds which the original founders had collected. Under the advice of Mr. Ranade, Gokhale and his friends started another association with similar objects called the Deccan Sabha, but it has not yet attained the same weight as its predecessor.

### Welby Commission.

The first important work that Gokhale did and that brought him prominently before the public was his evidence before the Welby Commission. This Commission was appointed by the Conservative Government in 1896 to consider if India is saddled with burdens which ought properly to be borne by the Home Government and also to consider the system of finance in India and such matters as provincial contracts. &c. Gokhale went to England in April as the representative of the Deccan Sabha and gave evidence which was regarded as the most important on the Indian side of the question. His mastery of facts and figures was much appreciated and he stood his cross exam-



ination very ably indeed—a point in which many other witnesses of greater standing were often tripped. Needless to say that for his examination in chief he had received valuable suggestions from his *Guru*, Mr. Ranade, and also from the late Mr. Ganesh Venkatesh Joshi, then Headmaster of the Sholapur High School and a man who was well-known for his detailed knowledge of Indian finance and whose letters in the *Times of India* on the Land Revenue System under the pseudonym “J” produced great impression. The whole evidence was a great triumph for Gokhale, but the actual result of it was almost *nil* as the Report of the Commission was published more than two years after its sittings were concluded and public interest in it had almost evaporated. A few adjustments of expenditure between the Indian and Home Government were made, but one now hardly hears of this Commission except for Gokhale’s part in it.

#### **The Poona Murders and Gokhale’s Apology.**

But the very moment that Gokhale made this great score and might have looked to a well-merited popular recognition of it on his return to India he had to suffer the greatest set-back in his life—a set-back that would have extinguished the public career of most public men. While Gokhale was in England, plague broke out in Poona for the first time ; both Government and the people were entirely unfamiliar

with it. Some measures that Government took were deeply resented by the people, and in June two European officials were shot on their return from the Birthday dinner at the Government House. The news caused utmost excitement in England and wild measures were being advocated in the English press. Gokhale had been receiving from his friends in Poona weekly letters giving him the state of public feeling in the city and apparently also many bazar rumours about the plague measures and especially the conduct of the European soldiers who were engaged in the operations. A little more experience of public life in India would have taught him to place the proper value on such reports as evidence. But in the heat of the moment Gokhale thought that he must do something. He showed the letters to his friends in England and they advised him to address the English public on the matter. The agitation in England cooled down, but on his return to India he was asked to substantiate his statements. The friends on whose reports he relied did not come forward to do so and he was in a fix. Legal friends told him that European soldiers as a class had no means of legal redress against him for having made these damaging remarks against them. The only way left to him to make suitable retribution to them was to offer a proper apology and this he did without hesitation or reserve. He has been blamed on

no measured terms both for giving the apology and for the actual terms of it. But thoughtful people will agree that under the circumstances he was fully justified in both and that the step he took was the noblest action of his life, and years hence when the political questions of these days are forgotten or finally disposed of, this sacrifice of his position and prestige in the eyes of his countrymen and his risking a complete voluntary eclipse as a public man will be counted as his greatest title to the respect of posterity.

#### Plague Commission.

When it thus appeared that Gokhale's public career was at an end, he redoubled his efforts in the public cause and one of the first things that he did in 1898 was to organise a body of voluntary workers during the plague epidemic to help the victims of the disease. He worked with his volunteers from morning to evening and helped to alleviate a substantial amount of misery. His services were cordially acknowledged by Col. Creagh, afterwards Sir N. O'Moore Creagh, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, who was in charge of the plague operations of that year. A year later there was great public outcry on the recently discovered Haffkine's treatment of plague by inoculation. It was alleged that inoculation brought about many collateral diseases like paralysis, &c. Government could hardly neg-

lect to notice such an outcry and appointed a plague commission to consider in general the effects of that remedy. Gokhale was appointed as one of the members of this Commission which toured in different districts of the Presidency, especially in Dharwar and Belgaum. The general conclusions were entirely favourable to the remedy, though Gokhale added a minute stating that a little greater care had to be exercised in the operation, that the work must be done by trained experts and that the dose of the serum might be lessened. It would have been to the lasting good of the country if the conclusions of this Commission had been cordially accepted by the vocal leaders of the people and they had tried to persuade them to take advantage of inoculation. But they thought otherwise and continued writing pseudo-scientific diatribes against it, the effect of which is still seen in the comparative unwillingness of the people to get inoculated as a precaution against plague. This only shows how easy it is to do great harm and how miserable are some of the momentary gratifications of personal vanity if longer views of the public good are sacrificed to it.

**Bombay Legislative Council; Municipal Work.**

Gokhale stood as a candidate for membership of the Central Division on the Bombay Legislative Council and got elected in the beginning of 1899. Ever since then up to the moment of his

death he was either on the Bombay Council or the Imperial Legislative Council. On the former he was only for two years and during this short period so distinguished himself that in 1901 he was unanimously sent to the Imperial Council as a representative of the Bombay Presidency and since then has never been displaced. Only two measures of importance came up for discussion in his two years on the Bombay Council, one a bill to amend the District Municipal Act and the other a bill to amend the Land Revenue Code. Gokhale was on the Poona Municipality for several years and as he had a practical acquaintance with its work he took a prominent part in the discussion on the first bill. Later on in 1905 he was unanimously elected the President of the Poona City Municipality as the successor of the late Sardar Dorabji Pudumji. His term of two or three years as President was marked by vigorous administration. The work of the meetings was done most expeditiously—sometimes to the discomfiture of some of the members who were till then accustomed to the leisurely ways of discussion at random—according to recognised rules and at the same time quite thoroughly. He introduced the system of allowing members to ask questions at the meetings to the executive of the Municipality and also that of printing and circulating the minutes of the meetings to the members. After two years he resigned the Presidentship as his work in

other directions had much increased, but he exemplified in his own case the duty of every public man to acquaint himself at first hand with local self-government as a preparation for participating in *la haute politique*.

### Land Alienation Bill.

The other bill introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council while Gokhale was a member was one to amend the Land Revenue Code. It was considered by Government that the right of the improvident peasant to mortgage his land to the sowcar put in his hands a fatal weapon; that land was consequently passing out of the hands of the cultivator who was being reduced to the position of a mere yearly tenant. Government desired to restrict this power of the holder to mortgage his land and allow him to borrow only on the security of the year's crop, and, in particular, wished to bring this new kind of inalienable land tenure into being by giving out lands which had been forfeited and sold by Government owing to the inability of the holder to pay his assessment. The non-official members on the other hand, contended that this kind of tenure was mere robbery on the part of Government, and that the problem on the indebtedness of agriculturists was not to be tinkered with in this way, but should be dealt with comprehensively on its own merits. The Bill gave rise to a very heated controversy, and Mr (now Sir) Pheroze-

shah Mehta moved the adjournment of the Bill at the time of its second reading until various persons and associations had been consulted. Gokhale made a very eloquent speech in favour of the amendment which, it was said, would have been successful in its object, had his been the final word spoken on the amendment. But the debate was prolonged and Government refused to accept the amendment which was consequently rejected. All the elected members then dramatically marched out of the Council Hall as a protest against this want of consideration and refused to have anything more to do with the Bill. The Bill, of course, became law but practically it has not been much applied. People are apparently not willing to take up land under this restricted tenure and perhaps Government officials also may not have been as keen on the subject as the original proposers of the Bill.

#### **Imperial Legislative Council; Budget Speeches.**

Gokhale's career in the Bombay Council did not continue long. Mr. Pherozeshah wanted to resign his seat on the Imperial Council and Gokhale was unanimously elected in his place in 1901. Since then, he was to the last the most brilliant member of that Council and was popularly called the leader of the Indian opposition, though Gokhale himself did not consider that his duty was merely to oppose Government but that it was to put before Government





Bergassa - College,  
Poma.

12<sup>th</sup> April 1901

Hydeau Paranjpe,

Since I wrote to you  
last, my great master, Mr. Kanade  
has passed away! What his death  
means to me is more than I can tell  
you. I feel as though a sudden dark-  
ness has fallen upon my life &  
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, as ~~the~~ it is that  
of so many others, to struggle on,  
faintly it may be, but ever in faith  
& hope - trying in an own feeble  
manner to uphold the ~~same~~ ~~same~~ ~~same~~

As a result of this, I am thinking of the  
& tolerance in ideals to which he  
gave his intellect, life, but it is  
a dreamy state & I do not know if  
men like myself will be enabled  
to accomplish even a small portion  
of it. However the attempt must be  
made & there reposing the responsi-  
bility of our human beings, and.

Mr. Kingsland has  
resigned his seat in the viceregal  
Council & the Bombay Council have,  
at Mr. Khetkar's instance, unanimously  
elected me to fill the vacancy. I am  
sensible that my colleagues in the  
Council have conferred a great honour  
on me, and the responsibility is also  
great. I can only pray that I may  
be enabled to discharge the duties of my  
new position to the satisfaction of my  
friends & of the public.



the Indian point of view on every question. His annual budget speech was a treat to which everybody, both friend and opponent, looked forward, the one with delight and the other with fear. An answer had to be given to his arguments and it is not everybody who could do it at a moment's notice if at all. On one occasion, Lord Kitchener privately asked him the points on which he wished to touch so far as military expenditure was concerned, and, out of consideration for the great soldier who was no debater, Gokhale did not emphasise certain points as much as he would have liked to. His budget speeches always bore their fruit in the succeeding years' budgets. He was always on the side of retrenchment and did not want Government to take more from the taxpayers than was absolutely necessary. Thus, he always opposed the frantic expenditure on railways, wanted indigenous agency to be used more and more both an account of its cheapness and in justice to the rightful aspirations of the people of the country to take part in their own Government and advocated the use of any surpluses on the diffusion of education and the execution of sanitary reforms. In theory, he wanted protection for Indian industries—in fact, even such a great free trader as Mill himself advocated it in the case of infant industries—but Gokhale was acute enough to see that a policy of protection at present is likely to protect only those in-

dustries which are largely in the hands of Europeans, as these only can bring the necessary pressure to bear upon Government which is not yet fully responsive to popular opinion. Gokhale advocated the reduction of the salt-tax and the raising of the taxable limit in the case of the income-tax and his proposals have been accepted. He criticised the peculiar phenomenon of a budget with surpluses and the country suffering from famine and pointed out its true explanation that the currency policy with its gold standard has automatically increased taxation which was formerly assessed according to the free silver standard and is now kept nominally the same in terms of the token rupee but has really increased in amount as the token rupee no longer represents the value of the silver it contains. Again, he made several useful suggestions about the system of keeping accounts which was accepted by the Finance Minister. In short, Gokhale's mastery of Financial matters was such that under happier circumstances he might have been the most successful Chancellor of the Exchequer.

#### **Universities Bill; Validation Bill.**

One of the Bills in the Viceregal Council in the discussions on which he played a very conspicuous part, was the Universities Bill and the subsequent Validation Bill. Lord Curzon had appointed a university commission on whose report this Bill was supposed to be founded

The Bill aimed at reducing the number of the fellows of the Senate and partially gave Government the whole control of the Universities. Gokhale opposed its provisions tooth and nail and did it with great effect as he was intimately acquainted with educational matters. The Bill aimed at efficiency in education even if it came into conflict with quantity. On this point Gokhale's words deserve very thoughtful consideration. "Let not Government imagine that, unless the education imparted by Colleges is the highest which is at the present day possible, it is likely to prove useless and even pernicious; and secondly, let not the achievements of our graduates in the intellectual field be accepted as the sole, or even the most important, test to determine the utility of this education. I think, my Lord—and this is a matter of deep conviction with me—that in the present circumstances of India, *all* Western education is valuable and useful. If it is the highest that under the circumstances is possible, so much the better. But even if it is not the highest, it must not on that account be rejected. I believe the life of a people—whether in the political or social or industrial or intellectual field—is an organic whole, and no striking progress in any particular field is to be looked for, unless there be room for the free movement of the energies of the people in all fields. 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 thralldom of old-world ideas, and the assimilation of all that is highest and best in the life and thought and character of the West. For this purpose not only the highest but all Western education is useful. I think Englishmen should have more faith in the influence of their history and their literature. And whenever they are inclined to feel annoyed at the utterances of a discontented B. A., let them realise that he is but an accident of the present period of transition in India, and that they should no more lose faith in the results of Western education on this account than should my countrymen question the ultimate aim of British rule in this land, because not every Englishman who comes out to India realises the true character of England's mission here." The Bill was, of course, passed almost as it was introduced. But his insistence on the fact that improvement in education is a question rather of increased grants than of legislation has borne good fruit. The Government has made large sums available for education and if there has been any improvement in quality—which several people still doubt—it is due to these grants rather than to the Universities Act. The Act was worked in a fair spirit in the beginning and the reconstituted Senates were nearly as good as they could be made. But the

fact remains that the power to alter the personnel of the Senate materially in the course of five years is there and is sure to have gradually its effect on its independence. Occasionally whispers have been heard of a fellow not being renominated as he voted against the Government view on crucial questions, and the attempt to get a Government majority by sending whips round to certain fellows has been mentioned before. The way to strengthen the independence of the Senate was in his opinion to increase the number of elected fellows under proper safeguards though it must be in fairness acknowledged that the system of election of fellows so far has led to some abuses. A year after the passing of this Universities Act some difficulties arose about the way in which it was being worked by Local Governments and a suit was even filed in the Bombay High Court about it. Government thereupon introduced a Universities Validation Bill in 1904 which Gokhale opposed with all his strength. He not only rubbed into the executive the irregularities that were patent in some of the notifications, especially in Bombay and Calcutta, but eloquently voiced the unanimous feeling in the country about the advisability of such validating measures. "My Lord," said Gokhale, "British rule in this country has hitherto been described—and on the whole, with good reason—as the reign of law. A few more measures, however,



like the present, and that discription will have to be abandoned, and another substituted for it, namely, reign of executive irresponsibility and validating legislation. My Lord, Government are paying too great a price for what is undoubtedly an attempt to save the prestige of its officers. But is prestige ever so saved?" Again "Public opinion in this country being as feeble as it is, the only two bodies that control the exercise of absolute power by the Executive are the Legislature which lays down the law, and the High Courts which see that the law is obeyed. If now the Government is to destroy the protection which the High Courts afford by means of validating legislation, and if the legislature is to be reduced to the position of a mere handmaiden of the Executive to be utilised for passing such legislation, what is there left to stand between the people and the irresponsible will of the Executive?"

**Retirement from the Deccan Education Society.**

At the end of 1904 Gokhale's connection with the Deccan Education Society as its life-member formally ceased. The last two years he was on furlough and practically his last lecture as a College professor was delivered in September 1902. On the 19th all the students assembled together to present him with a farewell address and Gokhale was very much moved on the occasion. His whole reply\* to the address is worthy of perusal. "In leaving

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\*Reproduced at the end.



Mr. Gokhale in 1932.



you, as I am doing," he concluded, "I feel I am leaving the best work of my life behind me. I trust I may meet some of you hereafter as co-workers in other fields, that we may also occasionally meet within the walls of this College. God bless this College and bless you all." Gokhale felt sincerely thankful that he was able to fulfil his pledge. His earlier associates, Agarkar, Apte and Kelkar died in the prime of their life with the twenty years uncompleted and some others had resigned. He and Mr. Gole were the first life-members to retire after fulfilling their pledge. After leaving the College he continued to help us by his advice in any times of difficulty. Many of the life-members were his *quondam* pupils and later his friends; they all held the same views as his on most public questions and the College indirectly was one of the institutions associated in the public mind with the Gokhale school of politics.

**Educational methods and Ideals of  
the D. E. Society.**

Before finally taking leave of this part of Gokhale's work, it must be said that he had no patience with a certain class of people mainly inspired by Mr. Tilak and his followers, who say that the Deccan Education Society in its later stages has not been true to the principles of its founders. Two points are particularly mentioned on which this backsliding is alleged. One is the question of receiving Government

grant-in-aid. It is not *prima facie* likely that Gokhale who was all his life calling for larger and larger expenditure on education from his seat in the Council should be all the time thinking that such grant-in-aid are an abomination. After all, the money given is only public money and if it can be had without submitting to unacceptable conditions, it will only help the further spread of education. Again, grants were received by the institutions of the Society in very early days before Mr. Tilak thought of seceding. The College grant was lost for a time for a very different reason, viz. that Lord Reay's Government wanted to hand over the Deccan College to the Society if they consented to have a European Principal, but the Society rightly did not accept this offer and hence Government took away the grant on the plea that it should not support two Colleges in the same place. The grant was restored by Lord Harris's Government in 1894. The blame that may be supposed to attach to the Society for such grants is shared equally by all its founders. Some of these after severing their connection with the Society tried their hands at encouraging independent institutions but their history is not very long. Another point made against the institutions of the Society is the want of religious education. Here again the blame is shared equally by the present apostle of national religious education in these

parts. It is impossible that a confirmed follower of Spencer like Mr. Agarkar should lend himself to any scheme of encouraging obscurantism. If report speaks true, Mr. Tilak also was not once the protagonist of Hinduism that he now is. It is said that on the occasion of an anniversary gathering of the Deccan College there was a lively passage-at-arms between the late Mr. Ranade and Mr. Tilak who enunciated very radical views on religious matters. Of course he may have changed his views now. But he surely does not expect that people who joined the institutions on the distinct understanding that they were for purely secular education in which alone the salvation of the country lies in their opinion, should change their views directly it pleases him to do so.

#### **President of the Benares Congress.**

By 1905 Gokhale had come to be recognised as the foremost publicist in India and he was naturally elected to the presidentship of the Indian National Congress, which is perhaps the highest honour that a non-official Indian can attain. The differences of opinion as to the ideals and aims of the Congress that came to a head two years later at Surat were already getting audible, but there was no overt objection to the selection of Gokhale as the President of the Congress session at Benares. Lord Curzon had just retired and the country was heaving a sigh of relief at the termination of

his vigorous but reactionary Government ; the country was looking forward to a substantial amount of progress under the strong liberal Government that had just come into power with Mr. ( now Lord ) John Morley as Secretary of State for India and Lord Minto as the new Viceroy. In his address Gokhale plainly enunciated the goal of the Congress as the attainment of a form of Government in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire. He recognised that progress in this direction is bound to be slow and all that he pleaded was that the goal should be kept in view and that the feeling of a proper sense of responsibility among the people should be encouraged and fostered by giving them a continually increasing share in the Government. He thus fully expressed the principles of the moderate party in Indian politics and, while discouraging impatience at slow progress and violently combating disloyalty to the British connection, he was always ready to attack the bureaucratic system of Government. An attitude like this is sure to please neither of the extreme wings ; and he had consequently to bear the violent attacks of the extremists on the one hand and the officials on the other. He laid down the programme for immediate work, a part of which, he lived to see successfully carried into effect mainly by his own initiative. The Benares session was perhaps the most suc-

cessful session of the Congress and the credit is mainly due to the personality of Gokhale in the chair.

### **Gokhale's Visit to England.**

#### **Morley-Minto Reforms.**

Soon after the Benares Congress Gokhale went to England to work privately in the cause of Indian reform. He had a number of interviews with the Secretary of State and other officials and put clearly but in moderate language the people's point of view before them. What passed at these interviews is of course unknown, but it is at least presumable that the Partition of Bengal must have formed one of the subjects of discussion. It is said—we do not know on what authority—that there was a reasonable prospect of the partition being reconsidered at that time, had not some of the impartial advocates of the Indian cause tried to rush Mr. Morley into their point of view with the result that he had to identify himself with the measure as a settled fact and that the measure could only be rescinded on the occasion of the visit of His Majesty to India nearly six years later and after Lord Morley had resigned the Indian Secretaryship. The future lines of Indian reform were also doubtless discussed at the time and the result was seen in the first despatch of the Secretary of state to the viceroy. Of course, the final decision took some time to reach but it can hardly be gainsaid that



Gokhale's presence in England was at least one of the prime causes of the recent reforms. The appointment of two Indians to the Secretary of State's Council and of one member each in the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and the provincial governors; the expansion of the Legislative Councils and the widely extended powers of budget discussion, moving resolutions on matters of public interest and asking supplementary questions; the tendency towards decentralisation—including the appointment of the Decentralisation Commission;—and above all, a perceptible though impalpable change in the attitude of the officials to the people, a change of which Lord Curzon and Lord Hardinge may be taken to represent the first and the last phases; these are some of the results of Gokhale's informal embassies to England on various occasions. It may here be mentioned now that he is gone from us that the honour of being the first Indian member of the Secretary of State's Council was offered to him, but he never swerved from the fixed resolve to keep his independent position from which he rightly thought he would be able to render even greater service than if he agreed to become one of the select. To the end he remained a tribune of the people, though never falling a victim to the self-conceit that is but too often their besetting sin and which has often caused their fall by taking them away from their moorings both in the ancient Roman and in more recent times.

**Free and Compulsory Education.**

A subject on which Gokhale worked very hard was his advocacy of free and compulsory education in India. For the real regeneration of the people this was in his opinion the master talisman and he harped on its necessity on every possible occasion. This was again a point on which he could get the British people to accept cordially his views and he told me that when in his public speeches in England he mentioned the fact that only one child out of four was at school and one village out of five was provided with a school, he never failed to carry his audience with him. He brought forward a bill in the Viceregal Council making it possible for any municipality, on the sanction of Government, to introduce compulsory education for boys in its area. The Bill was hedged with so many safeguards that it was quite an innocent measure in all conscience. But all the local governments with the partial exception of Madras reported against it and it failed to pass. Some ardent supporters in England even thought that it might have been better policy to have brought forward a more daring and whole-hearted measure if it was to fail in any case. The failure of his actual attempt at legislation need not, however, disappoint us, for everybody now agrees that the objections are mainly of ways and means and even the staunchest "sundried officials" feel that the introduction of free

and compulsory primary education in India is only a question of time. Thus Gokhale's strong advocacy has brought this idea perceptibly nearer. When, a few years hence, it becomes an accomplished fact, to Gokhale will be given the credit of giving the first momentum to the idea and he will go down to posterity as the educator of the people.

#### Visit to South Africa.

The wrongs of Indians in South Africa were becoming more and more acute. First welcomed as indentured labourers in Natal and other parts, they had become in the eyes of the white population very undesirable residents on account of their very virtues. Many of them settled there on the expiry of their indenture, and became prosperous small farmers. Others became small traders and by their industry and frugality could undersell the white business men. Colour prejudice which is very strong in the colonies also came in their way. Thus day by day greater and greater disabilities were laid upon them. Trading permits were occasionally refused, they could not use the ordinary public services like footpaths, trams or the higher classes on the railway, in several places they had to live in locations, transfer of property was hedged with many restrictions, and they had in some places to carry a pass with them like a ticket-of-leave prisoner with his thumb impression on it and even their marriages were

threatened with the brand of illegitimate unions as they were contracted under a non-monogamous form. Every Indian, however educated he may be, was called a "coolie" and in fact all ordinary rights of citizenship were refused to him. There was no provision for the education of his children, as Indian children were not admitted into schools for the white children. In fact in a part of the British Empire which had been brought to its present prosperity mainly by his labours he was treated worse than a foreigner and Indians could legitimately ask whether the British Empire was to mean for them anything at all. Solemn promises at the time of the Boer war were disregarded and the situation became ten times worse under the British regime than under the Boer domination. Strikes were frequent and in a campaign of passive resistance several prominent Indians—men and women—had to go to jail. The tales of their sufferings were brought to India and were adding to the discontent that was already raising its head there. Gokhale had for a long time taken deep interest in this question of the treatment of Indians in the colonies. Mr. M. K. Gandhi—than whom there has been no more disinterested Indian patriot in recent times—was a great admirer of Gokhale and he asked him to visit South Africa and to see the state of things for himself. In spite of the indifferent state of his health Gokhale in 1912 under-

took the mission and sailed for South Africa from England where he had gone on his political mission. His progress in South Africa was one continued personal triumph. He was received in every place by the local Mayor and presented with an address by the Indian community. But behind all this demonstration there was the strenuous work of seeing the actual state of things for himself and interviewing the members of the cabinet, in particular General Botha and Mr. Smuts. It is but fair to say that his mission was encouraged by the Indian Government and by the Colonial Office who had given directions that he was to be given all facilities for studying this question. People in South Africa were wonder-struck at the personality of Gokhale and naturally came to consider whether they were not wrong in treating the inhabitants of a country which could produce a man equal to their best in brains but only wearing a turban instead of a hat, like helots and slaves. Gokhale got promises of fair treatment for the Indians from the authorities and this visit showed that he could handle questions requiring delicate negotiations with tact and skill. The Indians of South Africa testified their regard for him by innumerable presentations of addresses and caskets which Gokhale regarded with a peculiar gratification as signs of recognition of his work by his countrymen. On his return from South Africa a little dispute arose as to the exact

nature of the pledges given to Gokhale and it appeared that trouble was brewing again. But a timely speech by Lord Hardinge and the appointment of a commission of inquiry to which Sir Benjamin Robertson was attached by the Government of India saved the situation and some remedial legislation in the South African Assembly closed the question of the crying wrongs of Indians there. This does not mean that the question is closed for ever. The political disabilities still remain and the question may be taken up later. There was, especially in some quarters in Bombay, a tendency to belittle and even decry Gokhale's work in this connection as it was contended that he gave up the rightful claim of Indians to complete equality in the Empire for a mess of pottage in the form of the removal of transitory disabilities. But in the first place he never gave up the ultimate ideal which in fact he has been proclaiming from the house-tops for so many years. Again the questions of immediate personal disabilities and the want of political rights stand on a separate footing; and while passive resistance and in acute cases even active resistance may be justified in the first case, the second is only a proper subject of agitation by constitutional means. It is nothing less than heartless cruelty to ask poor uneducated Indians in South Africa who are in jail or whose wedded wives are in danger of being in law called mistresses, to con-

tinue to suffer this treatment while their countrymen in Bombay, who are living quite comfortably in peace and safety and have plenty of opportunities to rise in the world, find time to organise a movement in the whole empire to demand equal rights for Indians in all its parts. The disease was immediate and insistent and palliatives were the need of the hour. What good is it if while you are studying the methods of a complete cure the patient dies from his pangs? It was a true statesmanlike view that Gokhale took of the matter and such it was cordially acknowledged to be in all except a few hypercritical circles. It is a pleasure to be able to say that at the Bankipore Congress the question came up for discussion and after a remarkable speech by Gokhale at least some of these critics cordially acknowledged the injustice they were doing him in belittling his work, and a resolution, setting the seal of its approval on Gokhale's work, was enthusiastically passed by the Congress. It falls to the lot of very few to act as an unofficial representative of his country and it is Gokhale's supreme merit that in such a situation he nobly acquitted himself.

#### **Public Service Commission.**

Just while he was in South Africa the Home Government decided to appoint a Commission to consider the question of public services in India and to see how far Indians can be given further opportunities of occupying places of

responsibility and trust in their own country Gokhale was appointed on this Commission as the representative of the Indian cause. All sides are well represented on this body but the Indian element is comparatively small. It began to hear evidence in Madras in the beginning of 1913 and after considering the question of the Civil and Provincial Services returned to England in the summer. It looked in the beginning as if the evidence submitted to it by the officials was to be one continuous cry of Indian incapacity and Gokhale told us that he never underwent such mental strain as during this period. Six hours they had to hear evidence in public and at home they had to study the written statements submitted previously to be ready to examine the witness about them in public. Gokhale had long studied this question of services in India in great detail and he was able by his cross-examination to get out many admissions on the part of the witnesses. He returned to India in September and joined the Commission again on its return to take evidence on the other services. The Commission finally returned to England in April 1914 and were discussing their final report there in the summer of last year. Gokhale's health was fast breaking down and his colleagues adjourned the deliberations to enable him to spend his winter in India. He intended to return to England about April of this year to help in preparing for the



final report but that was not to be. One of his last regrets was that he could not finish this work from which he expected a great deal for his country. Let us hope that his spirit will be present and preside over the deliberations of the commissioners and inspire them to deal liberally with the aspirations of his countrymen !

### Servants of India Society.

During the last ten years of his life and after his retirement from the Deccan Education Society he has been organising a society founded on similar principles but whose sphere of work is progress in all directions—political, industrial, social as well as educational. The idea appears to have been in his mind for a long time before the Servants of India Society† was

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† The following preamble to the rules of the Society is from the pen of Gokhale himself and deserves to be thoroughly digested by every worker in the country : -

For some time past, the conviction has been forcing itself on many earnest and thoughtful minds that a stage has been reached in the work of nation-building in India, when, for further progress the devoted labours of a specially trained agency, applying itself to the task in a true missionary spirit, are required. The work that has been accomplished so far has indeed been of the highest value. The growth during the last fifty years of a feeling of common nationality, based upon common traditions and ties, common hopes and aspirations, and even common disabilities, has been most striking. The fact that we are Indians first and Hindus, Mahomedans and Parsees or Christians afterwards, is being realised in a steadily increasing measure, and the idea of a united and renovated India, marching onwards to a place among the nations of the world, worthy of her great past, is no longer a mere idle dream of a few imaginative minds, but is the definitely accepted



**Mr. Shivram Hari Sathe.**

Who laid the foundation stone of the Servants of India Society's  
Buildings on 12th June 1905.



actually founded in 1905 and he had expressed it to me in England in 1897. He appears to have got a hint from the Jesuits and just as they have their Society of Jesus, so he wanted to create a band of workers who would think of their country alone. He began to think seriously of this after he was free from College work, and on June 12th, 1905, the foundation stone of the buildings of the Society was laid by the late Mr. Shivram Hari Sathe, who was a great friend of Gokhale and formerly his colleague in the secretaryship of the Sarvajanic Sabha. The Society is one of the rising hopes of India and its work is watched with great interest by people from all parts of the country.

creed of those who form the brain of the community—the educated classes of the country. A creditable beginning has already been made in matters of education and of local self-government; and all classes of the people are slowly but steadily coming under the influence of liberal ideas. The claims of public life are every day receiving wider recognition and attachment to the land of our birth is growing into a strong and deeply cherished passion of the heart. The annual meetings of Congresses and Conferences, the work of public bodies and associations, the writings in the columns of the Indian Press—all bear witness to the new life that is coursing in the veins of the people. The results achieved so far are undoubtedly most gratifying, but they only mean that the jungle has been cleared and the foundations laid. The great work of rearing the superstructure has yet to be taken in hand and the situation demands, on the part of workers, devotion and sacrifices proportionate to the magnitude of the task.

The Servants of India Society has been established to meet, in some measure, these requirements of the situation. Its members frankly accept the British connection as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good. Self-Government

Its constitution is to a certain extent autocratic. Gokhale was its first member and had undisputed control over all. After him the members have elected a body of three with a President and Secretary in place of the old first member. The admission of members depends on the first member and the Council. Candidates for admission must be men of good education but over and above this they must be energetic; of strong character and full of enthusiasm. Ordinarily a member is under training for five

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within the Empire or their country and a higher life generally for their countrymen is their goal. This goal, they recognise, 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. Moreover the path is beset with great difficulties; there will be constant temptations to turn back, bitter disappointments will repeatedly try the faith of those who have put their hand to the work. But the weary toil can have but one end, if only the workers grow not faint-hearted on the way. One essential condition of success in this work is that a sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualized. Love of country must so fill the heart that

It else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the land, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of Providence which nothing can shake—equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country.

The Servants of India Society will train men, prepared to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit



**The Hon. Mr. V. S. Shrinivas Sastri,**  
President of the Servants of India Society.



years. During the first two or three years he has to go through a regular course of studies including history, economics, sociology and other subjects having special reference to the work that he is intended to do. For there are as many branches as there are different kinds of activities. He is then deputed to one or other of the various centres to see actually the work that is being done. Occasionally this period of five years is reduced and the man may become a full member earlier. An allowance of Rs. 30 per month is given to him while under training

and will seek to promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people. Its members will direct their efforts principally towards (1) creating among the people, by example and by precept, a deep and passionate love of the motherland, seeking its highest fulfilment in service and sacrifice ; (2) organizing the work of political education and agitation, basing it on a careful study of public questions, and strengthening generally the public life of the country ; (3) promoting relations of cordial good-will and co-operation among the different communities ; (4) assisting educational movements, especially those for the education of women, the education of backward classes and Industrial and scientific education ; (5) helping forward the industrial development of the country ; and (6) the elevation of the depressed classes. The head-quarters of the Society will be at Poona, where it will maintain a Home for its members, and, attached to it, a Library for the study of subjects bearing on its work.



and Rs. 50 afterwards. Members\* are not allowed to earn anything privately and if they do earn anything in the course of their work or with the permission of the First Member, it goes to the coffers of the Society. There is a life insurance policy for the member and certain other allowances are made in the case of members with children to educate. At present the Society has five centres, namely the Home in Poona, and the branches in Bombay, C.P., U.P. and Madras. Most members spend about three months together in Poona. The Poona Home has fine quarters for members, a house for the first member and several other small buildings. Its speciality is the fine library for political work containing literature on various subjects

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\*The following are the pledges taken by a member on joining :

( a ) That the country will always be the first in his thoughts and he will give to her service the best that is in him.

( b ) That in serving the country he will seek no personal advantage for himself.

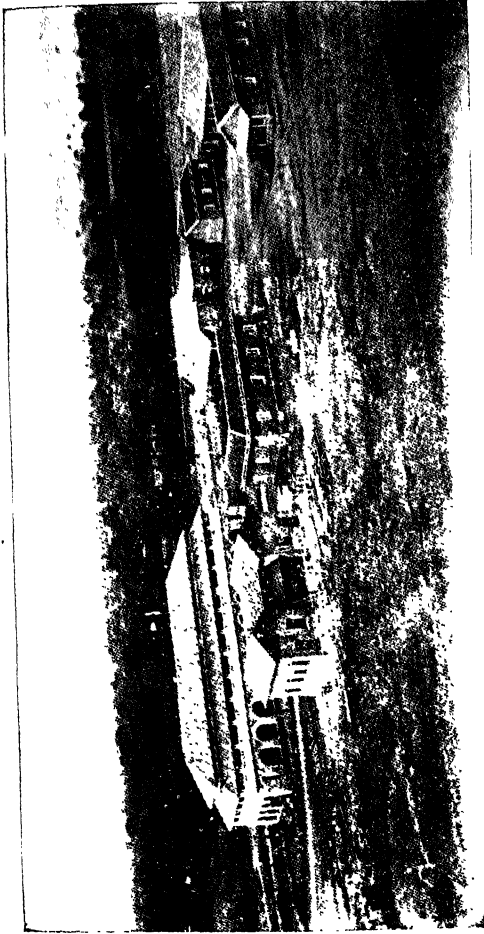
( c ) That he will regard all Indians as brothers and will work for the advancement of all, without distinction of caste or creed.

( d ) That he will be content with such provision for himself and his family, if he has any, as the Society may be able to make. He will devote no part of his energies to earning money for himself.

( e ) That he will lead a pure personal life.

( f ) That he will engage in no personal quarrel with any one

( g ) That he will always keep in view the aims of the Society and watch over its interests with the utmost zeal, doing all he can to advance its work. He will never do anything which is inconsistent with the objects of the Society.



**The Servants of India Society's Buildings.**

( View from the adjoining hill. )



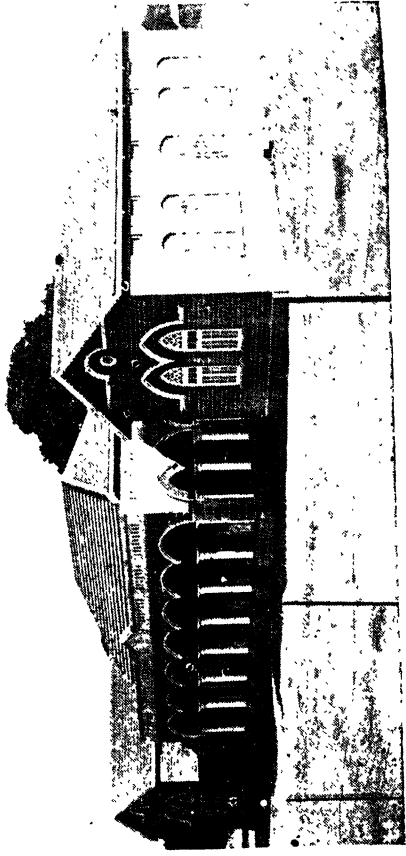
and also an invaluable collection of blue books and other official publications on India almost from the very beginning. The funds of the Society form a topic about which hardly anything is known. Gokhale appears to have collected some funds from various persons and several friends are contributing large sums every year. No accounts are published and the money is given simply out of confidence that it will be properly used by Gokhale and his colleagues. One of the tasks of the members is to collect funds for the Society to enable it to continue its work. There is a wide-spread feeling that the most suitable memorial to Gokhale would be a fund to help the society.

There are at present about twenty members of the Society. The public work turned out by them is already considerable. Some members went one year to the United Provinces to help in organising famine relief and another year to Ahmednagar and the adjoining districts for a similar purpose. The organisation of co-operative credit societies is another very important work that several members are doing. A very promising movement for the redemption of debt among the depressed classes in Bombay has also been started. Only a few days ago some of the members went to Hardwar on the occasion of the Kumbha Mela to help the pilgrims there who might require help. All this social and economic work is done in full co-operation

with officials. Another part of the work done is purely political. One or two news-papers are being conducted under the auspices of the Society, one member is on the Madras Legislative Council and considerably helped in organising the Madras Congresses of 1908 and 1914. Thus the aim of the Society in helping onward the progress of the country in all directions is being gradually taken in hand. Further the Society will produce a band of workers ready to put their hand to every kind of work that may turn up, which requires selfless men devoted to the cause of their country. Our only hope is that members will in future keep the example of the founder steadily before their eyes and follow the lines of moderation and all-sided reform chalked out by him and not let any personal bickerings or petty differences of opinion to spoil so great a hope for the regeneration of the country—a warning especially needed as most Indian movements of great initial promise have foundered on this rock.

#### **Ranade Economic Institute.**

In the vicinity of the Fergusson College and the Servants of India Society is seen another institution with which Gokhale's name is equally associated and that is the Ranade Economic Institute. After the death of Mr. Ranade in 1901 there were many movements in all parts of India to commemorate his name, Bombay erected a statue and Madras

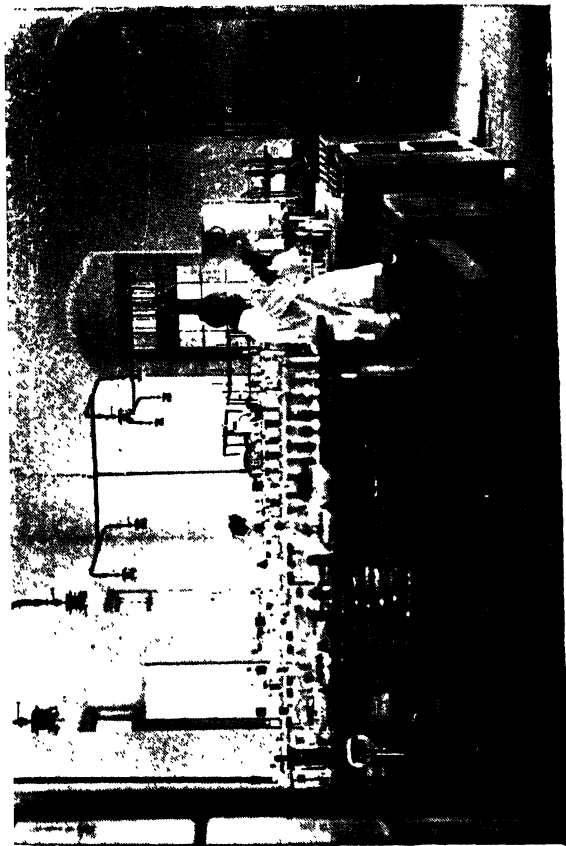


**Ranade Industrial & Economic Institute, Poona.**  
**( Outer View. )**









**Ranade Industrial & Economic Institute, Poona.**  
( Inner View. )

built a hall for a library in his memory and the latter was opened by his great disciple who made on the occasion a great speech on the work of Ranade. In Poona, where Ranade lived for a long time and to which place he really belonged, Gokhale himself vigorously took up the question of a memorial and began to collect funds for starting an institution in Ranade's name. He collected about a lakh of rupees and had hopes of getting help from Government and Municipalities for the institute. The idea underlying it was two-fold; on the one hand to form a centre for the study of questions in Indian economics by getting together a good library of standard works and all current literature on the subject, and on the other to have a laboratory in which the preliminary scientific research work, which is essential before industries can be actually floated on a large scale, can be done. Some work in both these directions is being done there, but perhaps it might have been better if he had confined himself to only the first of these objects considering the funds he had at his disposal. Gokhale himself was no scientist and possibly did not adequately recognise the vastness of the resources required for a research institute. Of course the history of science tells us that several very important discoveries have been made with very meagre appliances, but in those cases there was the compensating presence of genius behind;

and while one can, humanly speaking, provide beforehand all the material appliances required, genius is at best only a happy accident. You might run such an institution a hundred years without coming across a genius, but even moderate ability may do some kind of spade work if it is provided with all the necessary tools. It is, therefore, perhaps true that the programme sketched out is too ambitious, but let us hope for the best and trust that Gokhale's optimism was right and that the institute which he so lovingly erected in memory of his master will ere long do some substantial service to the country both in the economic and the industrial field. The institute was opened in 1910 by the Governor of Bombay and there are in it at present one or two graduates in science doing some pioneer work in industrial research as e. g. the chemical constitution of likely cement-producing materials or some tannin extracts and so on. The scientific director of the institute is Prof. Kanitkar of the Fergusson College and he is helped by other scientific experts in some of the Poona Colleges.

#### **Congress Compromise.**

The last question on which Gokhale was engaged, was that of the so-called congress compromise, worry over which certainly hastened his death. After the Surat episode of 1907, most of the congress delegates met in a conven-

tion and formulated a regular constitution under which all congress meetings have been held since then. The delegates had to sign a so-called creed which enunciated colonial self-government under the British rule as the goal of the Congress and had to be elected not by any kind of public meeting—which occasionally degenerates into simply paying the price of the delegates' tickets—but by regularly constituted bodies called the Provincial, District and Taluka Congress Committees. Such a rigid rule had to be enforced, as the promoters had before them examples in which laxity of regulations for the membership of a public body led to interested persons obtaining a majority, by hook or by crook, and wrecking the whole body in consequence. These regulations were, of course, unpalatable to the extremist side in Indian politics. They had not the strength to put their own ideas into operation by means of an independent body ; but they wanted to capture the already existing institution of the Congress. They did not like to come into it by the way which is open to everybody, viz. of joining an already existing congress committee or of starting others in centres where they did not exist and getting them affiliated in the proper manner to the parent body. They thought that there was too much humiliation in such a course. They, therefore, started the bewitching cry of compromise as if there was anything to com-

promise at all. But this cry takes in for a time many persons who are not thoroughly acquainted with the underlying motive. Since 1908 this cry has been occasionally heard; but it became very loud last year when Mr. Tilak had just returned from his six years' imprisonment. A speech by him on the war and the proper Indian attitude towards it gave great hopes of his having changed his point of view, of a sincere desire on his part to work with the moderate party in politics and of his having shed some of the very extreme views with which he was generally associated in public opinion. Before the Madras Congress of 1914, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Subba Rao came to Poona to talk the matter over with him and apparently they were soon convinced, that, while wishing to lie low for a time, he had not at all changed in essentials. Gokhale who was for a time also willing to compromise was again completely convinced of Mr. Tilak's underlying motives, viz. of getting a majority on his side and making Congress work along what he called his methods as opposed to those of the moderates. Those methods may be shortly defined as a policy of continuous opposition to Government of more or less intensity according to circumstances, while those of the moderates may be defined as co-operation with Government with opposition where necessary. Gokhale who was too ill to be present at the congress session

## LAST ILLNESS.

sent a private note explaining his views. Mr. Tilak, as is usual with him when engaged in any controversy, tried to evade the vital question of his methods by introducing a lot of extraneous questions about this communication and to throw a great amount of dirt at his opponents in this way. Gokhale who is always scrupulously fair in any controversy was greatly worried and his health which was failing for a long time gave way and the compromise controversy, so far as he was concerned, was forever closed on February 19th 11 p. m.

### Last Illness.

In early life Gokhale had fairly robust health and in those days he used to be keen on games like cricket and tennis, though he never attained much proficiency in them. He could get through an enormous amount of intellectual work and could occasionally do with very little sleep. At a pinch he would keep up all night and have his paper or lecture ready by the morning. In doing subscription work for the Deccan Education Society, he had to tax his physical frame very heavily. The political work began to accumulate and his usual physical exercise was often neglected. The effects of this neglect soon made themselves felt. Again while going to England in 1897, he had an accident which apparently left a permanent impression on his heart. He began to suffer from that scourge of

modern educated Indians—diabetes. He tried various treatments; but the disease never entirely disappeared. Regular habits were never fully acquired by him. It was usual with him to defer his correspondence till the last moment and then practically to run a race with time for the latest moment to catch the mail. With his strong will-power, he, of course, could achieve all the work he did; but it could not last. Further, he was very thin-skinned—a serious defect in a public man, who is always the centre of acute controversy—and any uncharitable or false remark, even from sources of which he knew the utter worthlessness used to worry him a great deal. His friends often advised him to give up worrying over trivial matters; but he could not get rid of his life-long characteristic, and perhaps it may even be said that but for his intense nature he might not have been able to achieve his work, that we have to take our great men as we find them and that we should not complain that they are not something else. He used to get spasmodic fits of realisation of the necessity of taking better care of his health and occasionally there were weeks when he was regularly found on the tennis court or taking a long walk on the hills. But the fits soon passed. His diabetes sometimes grew worse and he was so keen about everything that he would not take any treatment unless he was fully satisfied about it and for this purpose studied

the literature on the disease. His medical advisers found him no easy patient, for they had always to run the gauntlet of a searching cross-examination at his hands. He began to suffer from insomnia and in England last year he was very seriously ill. But under the ministrations of kind friends, he recovered sufficiently well to be able to return to India and to hope that he would be able to complete his work on the Royal Commission at least. But the Congress compromise controversy supervened with all its bitterness, his heart troubles increased and on Friday the 12th February, on the day when Mr. Gandhi was given a reception in Poona and latter was treated to a fruit party at the Servants of India Society, Gokhale had a serious fainting fit. He recovered; but his medical advisers got seriously afraid, though hoping against hope that he would pull through this critical time as he had done so often before. His current work was going on almost as usual. On the night of Wednesday, he completed at very great pressure an important note that he was writing and dictated letters as usual on Thursday. On Friday morning he had a slight relapse, but he realised that morning that his end was near. He took leave of all his friends, his sisters and his two daughters, gave the necessary directions about his papers and other private affairs and said to his attendants at about nine at night "I have been seeing the fun on



this side so long, now let me go and see it on the other." He passed away serenely at 11-10 p m. on Friday the 19th, his last thoughts being apparently centred in the Society that he had founded and which he cherished with more than the affection of a parent to his child.

#### Private Life and Opinion.

Gokhale lived so much in and for the public that not much can be said about his private life. He was always reticent about it and wished that it should not be much talked about. He has left behind him two daughters, elder of whom is a student in the B. A. class of the Fergusson College and the younger is at home, being always weakly. He has left besides a large number of nephews and nieces, the children of his brother and sisters, whom he never failed to care for and whom he has left some small provision behind. His manners were occasionally brusque and for the moment sometimes had a repelling effect. This was generally due to his absorption in some line of thought which his visitors interrupted. But he was always very ready to make up for such occasional lapses from perfect sweetness of manner, which were of course soon forgotten by everybody as it was transparently clear that he did not mean anything by it. Sometimes he even formally apologised to his servants and dependents for any temporary harshness. In pecuniary

matters he had of course to be careful on account of the sacrifice that he had made from the very beginning of his career; but he was generous in giving according to his means. He was careful in his dress and habits and did not assume the don't-care attitude which we occasionally find among great men on these points. He could enjoy a joke even sometimes at his own expense and as mentioned before liked all kinds of indoor games. He made a mark in any social circle, though he could not devote much time to the claims of "Society". He kept his religious opinions entirely to himself and did not often talk about them. In the early days he was somewhat of an agnostic; but later on apparently changed to a slight extent, though he never dogmatically accepted any religious formula. Some years ago he was approaching the theosophical position; but I am credibly informed that he never formally joined the Theosophical Society. His nature was deeply spiritual and the object of his reverence was his country; from this and other points of view he had a high admiration for Japan and things Japanese. He spoke several times about visiting Japan and seeing for himself on the spot how Japan achieved such great progress during one generation, but unfortunately he did not live to fulfil his desire.

#### **General Remarks.**

The sense of irreparable loss that was felt at his death all over the country is still fresh in

our memory. In the actual state of the country in the midst of the greatest war the world has ever seen, he would have been of invaluable help in piloting with care the bark of our country's political progress. But his death showed even by the universality of the grief that our beloved land is beginning to feel itself alive and able to think as one organism. But these regrets are vain now. This is not the place to pass a final judgment, even were it possible, on Gokhale's life and work. Suffice it to say that at present there is none who can completely fill his place or can take up the work that he has left unfinished. There have been greater orators, greater pure educationists, or greater organisers. But there have been very few who combined in them selves all the varied roles that he played. On the death of Mr. Ranade people said the same thing; but Gokhale filled his place almost more than adequately in most of his activities and attained a position in the eyes of the public that Ranade himself never came to occupy. Perhaps Mr. Ranade was hampered by his official position and want of sufficient leisure for public work. Certain it is that there appears on India's political horizon no adequate successor to the Ranade-Gokhale line of publicists. We fervently hope we are mistaken in our view.

#### Honours and Titles

To take a general review of Gokhale's life it can be described to be as successful a career as

is possible under the circumstances of our country. There is no need to speculate what would have happened if India had been a self-governing country and been free to choose its rulers. But taking the conditions as they are, he did nearly as much work as it was possible for him to do. On the other hand, the whole country showed its appreciation of his selfless and devoted work and if there were a few carping critics, their words are but as the spots on the sun. Public recognition of his work was a source of genuine satisfaction to him. On the other hand, the rulers of the land also recognised the important role he played in the public life of the country. Honours and titles, which did not carry with them opportunities for public work, did not appeal to him. But the Government of Lord Curzon, whom he was always opposing in the Council, recommended his name to His Majesty for the C. I. E. and Lord Curzon in a personal letter to Gokhale wrote, "The honour is offered to you in recognition of abilities which are freely bestowed upon the service of your countrymen and of which I would ask no more than that they should continue to be so employed. I only wish that India produced more such public men". In June 1914, Lord Crewe wrote to him to say that the Viceroy had recommended his name for a K. C. I. E. and that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to approve and hoped that the proposed honour

would be agreeable to him. Gokhale wrote to Lord Crewe's Private Secretary in these terms :—"I am, I need hardly say, deeply grateful both to His Excellency the Viceroy and to Lord Crewe for recommending me to the high honour of a K. C. I. E., and shall always treasure this most generous appreciation on their part as among the best rewards of my public life. I hope I may venture also humbly to express my fervent and loyal gratitude to His Majesty the King-Emperor for his graciously signifying his approval of the recommendation. Lord Crewe had added greatly to his kindness by informing me beforehand of the proposed bestowal of the high honour on me, for it gives me an opportunity to lay respectfully before His Lordship a brief expression of my feeling in the matter. That feeling is that unless my wish is likely to be misunderstood, I would much prefer, deeply as I appreciate the proposed honour, to continue under my present simple designation. May I hope that Lord Crewe will understand this wish, which I may state, is based largely, though not entirely, on personal grounds? And if it would not be in any way improper or wanting in due respect or loyal obedience to His Majesty, may I ask that his Lordship will be pleased to submit this humble request to His Majesty for his gracious consideration?" The incident is equally creditable to both sides. We may say

that we infinitely preferred to continue to know our friend and master under the simple designation of *Mr.* Gopalrao Gokhale than under the high sounding *Sir* Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Over and above the risk of being misunderstood if he had accepted that title, he rightly felt that services rendered to the people should receive recognition in the form of their love and reverence alone, that when these are obtained titles are merely empty forms and that when they are absent titles are an added vexation. Gokhale's whole public career has been marked by a consistent sacrifice of self and he rightly chose his course of conduct on this as on other occasions. People who move heaven and earth to get handle to their names will perhaps say that he was needlessly quixotic in refusing an honour that came unsought, but his countrymen in future will remember his name as one of the makers of modern India when they will have long forgotten these persons with long handles to their names.

#### Conclusion.

There are those that ask : What is there to show of actual achievement in Gokhale's work? The preceding pages are an attempt to give a brief answer to this question. But even if it be thought that the actual measure of results achieved is small, still such a personality in itself is by far the greatest achievement to his credit.

He himself in any occasional fit of depression used to console himself with Clough's powerful lines ;—

Say not the struggle not availeth,  
The labour and the wounds are vain,  
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
And as things have been, they remain

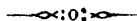
... ..

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front the Sun climbs slow, how slowly !  
But westward, look, the land is bright.

The immediate future will show that bright days are indeed coming for the country he loved so well, and it will be conceded on all hands that his own share in working for their advent has not been small.

R. P. Paranjpye.

## Farewell to the Fergusson College.



( On the eve of his retirement from the Fergusson College, the students presented Mr. Gokhale with a farewell address, on Friday, the 19th September 1902 to which he replied as follows:—)

Mr. Principal, Brother-Professors and students of the College,—It is not possible for me to rise without deep emotion to reply to the address which has just been read, and to return thanks for the great, the overwhelming kindness with which you have treated me to-day. All parting in life is sad, but where the heart's deepest feelings are involved the severance of old ties, and the necessity of saying good-bye, is about as trying an ordeal as any that a man can be called upon to go through. For eighteen years now, I have tried, according to the humble measure of my capacity, to give the best that was in me to this Society. Through good report, and through evil report, through sun—shine and through storm, it has been my endeavour to work for this institution with a single aim to its welfare, till at last it has become impossible for me to think of myself as apart from this College. And now, when the time for my withdrawing myself from all active work in this institution has come, my heart is naturally stirred by conflicting emotions, in which a feeling of intense thankfulness is mingled with a feeling of deep sadness. I feel thankful, profoundly thankful, that it has pleased Providence to give it to me to discharge the solemn and onerous obligations of a vow taken so many years ago, under the influence of youthful enthusiasm, and that no matter what happens to me in the future, I shall always be able to look back with pleasure and pride, on this part of my career, and say to myself "Thank God, I was permitted to fulfil my pledge". But, gentlemen, side by side with this feeling of thankfulness, there is a feeling of deep regret, that my active work for this great institution is now at an end. You can easily understand what a wrench it must be to me to thus tear myself away from an institution to which my best work



hitherto has been given, and which always has been first in my thoughts and affections, no matter in how many fields it was my lot to work. Some of you here may, perhaps, be tempted to ask, as other friends have already asked,—why do you retire from the College, if you feel the parting so keenly? My answer to this question is, that my decision has not been arrived at without a long and anxious examination of the whole position. In the first place, my health is not now what it once was. During the last term, it was a matter of anxiety to me from week to week, and almost from day to day, how I should be able to finish my work without breaking down in the middle of the term. Even then, as many of you are aware, I was not able to perform my duties in the College with that strict regularity, with which my colleagues were performing theirs, and one cannot help feeling that it is a very unsatisfactory position to be in, though never a word of complaint was heard from my colleagues. And I felt I had no right to put such a strain on their indulgence. You know the golden rule that when you sit down to a repast, it is always well to rise a little hungry or when you go a friend's house, you should rather leave before your time than overstay his hospitality even by a day. I know my colleagues do not think that the illustrations apply. All the same, having worked for eighteen years more or less under high pressure, I thought it was best for me to retire and leave the field to other workers. This, however, is not my sole reason for withdrawing from the College and some of you are apt to think that it is not a very conclusive one either, and I will frankly tell you that another reason has influenced me in making up my mind, quite as much as this one. Years ago I remember to have read the story of a man, who lived by the side of the sea, who had a nice cottage and fields that yielded him their abundance, and who was surrounded by a loving family. The world thought that he was very happy. But to him the sea had a strange fascination. When it lay gently heaving like an infant asleep, it appealed to him; when it raged

## FAREWELL TO THE FERGUSSON COLLEGE.

like an angry and roaring lion, it still appealed to him ; till at last he could withstand the fatal fascination no longer. And so having disposed of everything and put his all into a boat, he launched it on the bosom of the sea. Twice was he beaten back by the waves—a warning he would not heed. He made a third attempt, when the pitiless sea overwhelmed him. To a certain extent this seems to me to be my position to-day. Here I am with a settled position in this College, and having for my colleagues men, with whom it is a pleasure and a privilege to work and whose generosity in overlooking my many faults and magnifying any little services I may have rendered, has often touched me deeply. And yet I am giving up all this to embark on the stormy and uncertain sea of public life. But I hear within me a voice which urges me to take this course, and I can only ask you to believe me when I say that it is purely from a sense of duty to the best interests of our country, that I am seeking this position of 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—how all this work may end. But one thing is clear. Those who feel in the matter as I do, must devote themselves to the work in a spirit of hope and faith and seek only the satisfaction which comes of all disinterested exertions. This is not the place where I may speak of my future hopes or lines of work. But one thing I know, and it is this :—Whether I am permitted to press onwards and prove of some little use to the public in another capacity, or whether I have to return a weather-beaten, tempest-tost, ship-wrecked mariner, my thoughts, as you have said in your address, will constantly be with this institution ; and on the other hand, I shall always be sure of a warm and hospitable welcome within these walls, whenever I choose to come here. And, now, before concluding, I wish to say one thing to the students of this College. I hope and trust that they will always be proud of

this institution. I am about to leave you and so I can speak on this subject now with less reserve. I have been nearly all over India, and I have naturally felt special interest in the educational institutions of different places. Nowhere throughout the country is there an institution like this College of ours. There are other institutions better equipped, and also with older traditions; but the self-sacrifice of men like my friends Mr. Paranjpye and Mr. Rajwade surrounds this College with a halo of glory all its own. The principal moral interest of this institution is in the fact that it represents an idea and embodies an ideal. The idea is that Indians of the present day can bind themselves together, and putting aside all thoughts of worldly interests, work for a secular purpose with the zeal and enthusiasm which we generally find in the sphere of religion alone. The ideal is the ideal of self-help, that we may learn slowly but steadily to rely less and less upon others, however willing, to bear our burdens, and more and more upon ourselves. I trust that you, the students of this College, will keep this character of the institution steadily before your eyes—that your devotion to it, your enthusiasm for it, will be commensurate with the nobility and importance of its work, that even when you feel disposed to criticise it, you will speak of it with that loving solicitude with which you mention a parent's fault, and that you will always do what lies in your power to further its interests and enlarge the sphere of its usefulness and influence. And now nothing remains for me but to say "Good-bye". I know I have given but feeble utterance to the thoughts that are at this moment uppermost in my mind, but nothing that I can say will express them adequately. I wish you well—individually and collectively. In leaving you, as I am doing, I feel I am leaving the best work of my life behind me. I trust I may meet some of you hereafter as co-workers in other fields, that we may also occasionally meet within the walls of this College. God bless this College and bless you all!

