been arranged, as I supposed, that I should meet some representatives of the young Nationalist party which form the staff of *Bande Mataram*, a daily paper written in English and maintaining Extremist views, but trying rather carefully to keep within the law. In that respect it differed from the farthing paper, *Sandhya* ("Evening"), written in Bengali of the roughest popular dialect, and deliberately going all lengths in virulence and abuse. That had been the policy of its founder and editor, Pundit Upadhya Brahmabandhab, who had died a few months before while under trial for sedition. One of the Brahmo Samaj by training, he had travelled much in Europe, had lectured in Cambridge, tried to become a Roman Catholic but failed (so rare a failure!) and on returning to Calcutta had startled the reformers of the Congress party by a light-hearted violence that must have ended in gaol, had not death anticipated imprisonment by release. In the same way *Bande Mataram* differed from the vernacular weekly *Yugantar* ("New Age" or "New Dispensation"), a revolutionary paper of a more gloomy and solemn type than the *Sandhya*, but about equally open to charges of sedition, to meet which it kept a staff of "prison editors" always ready for the next prosecution. The first of them to go to gaol was the youth Bupendra Nath Datta, a brother of the Swami Vivekananda, who followed Ramakrishna. In the early summer of 1908 it was prosecuted for the fifth time,

its printer was fined about £67, and sent to hard labour for twenty-three months, and after Lord Minto's new Press Act of June, 1908, it stopped regular circulation.

Mr. Arabindo Ghose was almost certainly not connected with the *Yugantar*, but nobody seriously denied his connection with the English-written *Bande Mataram*, though that paper also had a staff of volunteers for prison.* When I reached the house in a large square where the meeting was to have been held, I found it dark and apparently empty. A Hindu servant let me in, and after a time Mr. Arabindo Ghose himself appeared alone. He had not expected me, because the letter about my coming had been stopped, no doubt by the postal spies, as he said nearly all his letters were. He had no special reason to complain of that, nor did he complain; for the letters from one of the most respected public men in England to a member of the Viceroy's Council had recently been opened in Bombay, and English people who were friendly with Indians in Calcutta told me even their letters from home were tampered with in the same way.

He was a youngish man, I should think still under thirty. Intent dark eyes looked from his thin, clear-cut face with a gravity that seemed immovable, but the figure and bearing were those of

* For Bepin Chandra Pal's action during a prosecution of the *Bande Mataram*, see Introduction, p. 23.

an English graduate. His parents had been half-anglicized, and had never fully taught him his own language, so that he could not write Bengali correctly, or make a speech in the only tongue, as he said, that really went to the heart of the people. He had brought himself up amid poverty in Manchester, St. Paul's School in London, and at Cambridge. Though he passed the Indian Civil Service examinations within the first two or three, he failed to pass the riding test, and was rejected. Having served the Gaekwar of Baroda for a time in the education of that progressive State, he came to Calcutta, and was now the leader of the Nationalists, or young Extremists who regarded even Mr. Tilak as touched with the cautious moderation of the past. One of his brothers, a poet of some standing in English, was Professor of English Literature at the Presidency College in Calcutta University, and I found him there teaching the grammar and occasional beauties of Tennyson's "Princess," with extreme distaste for that sugary stuff. Another brother was supposed to belong to a different branch of the Extremists.

Arabindo's purpose, as he explained it to me, was the Irish policy of Sinn Fein—a universal Swadeshi, not limited to goods but including every phase of life. His Nationalists would let the Government go its way and take no notice of it at all. They hoped nothing from reforms; all the talk about Legislative

Councils and Indian members and the separation of Judicial and Executive functions was meaningless to them. They did not spend a thought upon it. In fact, the worse the Government was, the more repressive it became, and the less it inclined to reform, so much the better for the Nationalist cause. He regarded the Partition of Bengal as the greatest blessing that had ever happened to India. No other measure could have stirred national feeling so deeply or roused it so suddenly from the lethargy of previous years.

"Since 1830," he said, "each generation had reduced us more and more to the condition of sheep and fatted calves."

He lamented the long peace, leading to degeneracy and effeminate ways. Under it the ordinary people had sought only after prosperity and material comfort, while the thoughtful men spent their time in æsthetic circles, admiring Shelley and Swinburne, or imitating them. The more English a man was, the more he counted himself successful, and the life-blood of nationality had run thin. But all this torpor and smug contentment had been rudely interrupted by the disguised blessings of Lord Curzon's errors. Indignation had again created patriotism when apparently it was dead, and the new party's whole policy was aimed at carrying forward the work that Lord Curzon had so successfully begun for the revival of national character and spirit. For this purpose of

building up a race worthy of a great name they proposed to work on the three lines of a national education, independent of Government but including the methods of European science ; a national industry, with boycott of all foreign goods except the few things that India could not produce ; and the encouragement of private arbitration, in place of the law-courts, for the settlement of disputes.

But behind these simple means a deeper spirit was at work. Arabindo Ghose had already, I think, formed the project of developing out of the Congress, or in place of the Congress, a nationalist and democratic body that would prepare the country for self-government and, indeed, act within limits as a true Indian Parliament quite apart from the Anglo-Indian system. A few weeks later, a leading article on the subject, probably written by Arabindo himself, appeared in *Bande Mataram*—

"Let us try the experiment," it said, "of a self-governing popular assembly, so far as is consistent with the existence of an alien bureaucracy seeking to restrict our independent activities in every possible way. No growth is possible under perpetual tutelage. We must devise means for stimulating activities on the part of our people. This cannot be better done than by organizing a really representative assembly that in its annual or periodic sittings will decide on our course of action. It does not necessarily follow that such an assembly will come into collision with the powers that be. We have every right to organize ourselves independently. The agitators have so long been

taunted with absolute dependence on the bureaucracy that people cannot reasonably try to repress an assembly for the offence of carrying out their own precepts. . . . As they cannot see their way to giving us any real voice in the administration, even in a dim and distant future, we have no other course open to us. Let us relieve the bureaucratic administration of as much of its duties as we can by undertaking to govern ourselves in as many departments as possible." *

Courage, he rightly saw, was the first thing to maintain or to create in any people, especially in a subject people like the Bengalis, who had so long been taunted with cowardice by one master after another. The taunt of cowardice is like one of those prophecies that fulfil themselves. It implants the cowardice that it derides, and if you call a people timid they begin to shake. Ever since Macaulay wrote, the Anglo-Indians had been brought up by their schools and coaches to regard the Bengalis as the cowards of the world, and what was far worse, the educated Bengalis had been taught to regard themselves as the cowards of the world too, just because Macaulay had delighted himself one morning with a brilliant passage of rhetoric. †

* *Bande Mataram*, January 21, 1908.

† As Macaulay is no longer thought generally necessary to education, it may be worth while to recall a few sentences of his indictment of a whole people nearly twice as numerous as his own. The passage comes in his essay on Warren Hastings: "A war of Bengalis against Englishmen was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against demons. . . The physical organization of the Bengali is feeble even

Necessity of Courage

Where the consciousness of timidity exists among a people, the first duty of a patriot is to remove it at all costs. So in the columns of his paper and in his rare speeches Arabindo Ghose was insisting especially on the necessity of courage :—

"Courage," said a leader in *Bande Mataram*, "is your principal asset. Heroism, says Emerson, feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right. If you are to work out the salvation of your country, you will have to do it with heroism. You have voluntarily cut yourselves off from outside help to develop strength from within. Darkness will hem you round, disappointments will cross your path, slander will pursue you from behind, but you are to depend on yourselves, and yourselves alone. You must press on and not allow yourselves to be dragged back by encumbrances in the name of unity. You have your only guide in the loftiness and spirituality that make their heaven in the thought of the wider light and purer happiness that you may bring to your country by long force of vision and

to effeminacy. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hardy breeds. Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situations are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness, for purposes of manly resistance; but its suppleness and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration not unmingled with contempt. All those arts which are the natural defence of the weak are more familiar to this subtle race than to the Ionian of the time of Juvenal, or to the Jew of the dark ages. What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengali." And so on, for many more sentences of nicely balanced rhetoric.

endeavour. The rapturous contemplation of a new and better state for your country is your only hope. What great element is wanting in a life guided by such a hope?" *

There is a religious tone, a spiritual elevation, in such words very characteristic of Arabindo Ghose himself, and of all Bengali Nationalists, contrasted with the shrewd political judgment of Poona Extremists. In an age of supernatural religion Arabindo would have become what the irreligious mean by a fanatic. He was possessed by that concentrated vision, that limited and absorbing devotion. Like a horse in blinkers, he ran straight, regardless of everything except the narrow bit of road in front. But at the end of that road he saw a vision more inspiring and spiritual than any fanatic saw who rushed on death with Paradise in sight. Nationalism to him was far more than a political object or a means of material improvement. To him it was surrounded by a mist of glory, the halo that mediæval saints beheld gleaming around the head of martyrs. Grave with intensity, careless of fate or opinion, and one of the most silent men I have known, he was of the stuff that dreamers are made of, but dreamers who will act their dream, indifferent to the means. "Nationalism," he said, in a brief address delivered in Bombay, early in 1908 —"Nationalism is a religion that comes from God":—

* *Bande Mataram*, January 22, 1908.

Bengal Nationalism

"Nationalism cannot die, because it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to gaol. Have you got a real faith, or is it merely a political inspiration, a larger kind of selfishness? . . . You all know what Bengal used to be; you all know that the name of Bengali used to be a term of reproach among nations. What has happened? What has made the Bengali so different from his old self? One thing has happened, Bengal is learning to believe. Bengal was once drunk with the wine of European civilization, and with the purely intellectual teaching that it received from the West. It began to see all things, to judge all things, through the imperfect instrumentality of the intellect. When this was so, Bengal became a land of doubters and cynics. . . .

"The intellect, having nothing more to offer save despair, became quiescent, and when the intellect ceased to work, the heart of Bengal was open and ready to receive the voice of God whenever he should speak. When the message came at last, Bengal was ready to receive it, and she received it in a single moment. In a single moment the whole nation rose, the whole nation lifted itself out of despair, and it was by this sudden awakening from a dream that Bengal found the way of salvation, and declared to all India that eternal life, immortality, not lasting degradation, was our fate. . . .

"There came a time, after the first outbreak of triumphant hope, when all the material forces that could be brought to bear against Nationalism were gradually brought into play, and the question was asked of Bengal, 'Can you suffer? Can you survive?' The young men of Bengal were now called upon to suffer. They were called upon to bear the crown, not of victory, but of martyrdom. . . .

"It is not by any mere political programme, not by National Education alone, not by Swadeshi alone, not by

boycott, that this country can be saved. Swadeshi by itself might merely lead to a little more material prosperity, and you might forget the real thing you sought to do, in the glamour of wealth and in the desire to keep it safe. In other subject countries also there was material development. . . . When the hour of trial came, it was found that those nations which had been developing materially were not alive. . . . The forces of the country are other than visible forces. There is only one force, and for that force I am not necessary, you are not necessary, he is not necessary. Let us all be thrown aside as so much waste substance, the country will not suffer. God is doing everything. When He throws us away, He does so because we are no longer required. But He is immortal in the hearts of His people."

This fervour of nationality, which some would call fanaticism, certainly appears to differ in degree from the religious fervour with which we pray for the High Court of Parliament, "under our most religious and gracious King at this time assembled." But it would be no compliment to ourselves to doubt that at the back of both there is a unity of spirit.*

As to fanaticism of language and the violence that cannot keep outside the limits of sedition, I have seen violent and bloodthirsty passages translated from the *Yugantar*, the *Sandhya*, the *Hitaishi* ("Friend") of Barisal, and other vernacular papers.

* On May 3, 1908, Mr. Arabindo Ghose was arrested on the charge of being implicated in a conspiracy to provide rifles and dynamite for revolutionary purposes.

Such papers are fined, suppressed, have editors imprisoned, and under the new Press Act may have their type confiscated. But in none of them have I seen more deliberate attempts to stir up race hatred and incite to violence than in Anglo-Indian papers which suffer nothing. Take, for instance, this obvious instigation to indiscriminate manslaughter by the *Asian*, an Anglo-Indian weekly in Calcutta (May 9, 1908) :—

"Mr. Kingsford has a great opportunity, and we hope he is a fairly decent shot at short range. We recommend to his notice a Mauser pistol, with the nickel filed off the nose of the bullets, or a Colt's automatic, which carries a heavy soft bullet and is a hard-hitting and punishing weapon. We hope Mr. Kingsford will manage to secure a big 'bag,' and we envy him his opportunity. He will be more than justified in letting daylight into every strange native approaching his house or his person, and for his own sake we trust he will learn to shoot fairly straight without taking his weapon out of his coat pocket. It saves time and gives the elevation fairly correctly at any distance up to about ten or fifteen yards. We wish the one man who has shown that he has a correct view of the necessities of the situation the very best of luck."

That was written certainly at a time of great excitement, when an attempt had been made to assassinate the unpopular magistrate by a bomb, which killed two ladies, not only innocent, but related to one of those exceptional men whose sympathy with the people makes them justly beloved. But two

can play at the evil game of race hatred, and if the Indian press is violent, the tone of the Anglo-Indian press is almost invariably insolent and provocative. If "seditious" only means "likely to lead to violence," it is seditious too. There are fine exceptions, like the *Statesman*, the *Indian Daily News*, the *Empire*, and *Capital*, in Calcutta. Steadily supporting the official side, though with great freedom of criticism, as was shown in the case of Lord Curzon, the *Pioneer* of Allahabad maintains an honourable tradition. But as to Anglo-Indian papers like the *Englishman* of Calcutta and the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, it must have been difficult for any thoughtful Indian who loved his country to read them during 1907 without cursing our race. Even the *Times of India*, the best paper in Bombay, greeted Mr. Keir Hardie's arrival in the city with a whole column of insults, not only to the Labour leader, but to the Indian people. Judging from the style, I thought the editor must have bribed some poor, half-educated Indian to do the thing for him; but I heard afterwards, through one of the staff, that it was written by an Anglo-Indian, who was quite proud of his achievement. What cause he had for pride may be seen from a paragraph or two :—

"Mr. Keir Hardie's reception in Bombay was thoroughly in keeping with the rest of his experiences, and foolishly ebullient proceedings. All along the mountains have been

in labour; to the disappointment of excited and expectant Babudom the mighty throes have never produced more than here and there the proverbial mouse. Fifty Hindus, and a couple of Parsis: what a deputation from the wealthiest and most progressive commercial city of the East, what a characteristic greeting from the great heart of Indian labour to the personification of the political labourite spirit! Even this bathotic manifestation of the deplorable fact that the Oriental is almost entirely devoid of humour, as completely so as the labouring man and his chosen apostle, must needs miscarry. The fifty Hindu schoolboys and their two Parsi companions cannot find the god of their idolatory. Perchance he sleepeth, and cannot hear, or will not hear the piping yell of 'Bande Mataram'; at any rate look where they will in the compartments commonly occupied by their beloved agitators and demagogues, not a sign of this one is to be found. Topknots and draperies flying wildly to the winds, they race up and down chattering discordantly, baffled, desperate till at last, 'proh pudor,' they find him, not occupied in great meditations, not even spouting platitudes to the circumambient air, but prosaically strapping up his exiguous baggage, in a second-class compartment. 'Cophinus foenumque supellex.' A damper this and no mistake. Deputation from the dumb millions of India brimming over with enthusiasm and verbosity, subconsciously dominated by the traditional respect of the East for superior men, men to be looked up to, men on the summits, what to say to this essentially and markedly labelled second-class product! . . .

"Does it not occur to this man of the people, uncultured, illiterate, with at the best a stunted and perverted imagination, does it not occur to him, and the astuter ones who are making him their cat's-paw, that his enterprise is not only radically mischievous but overwhelmingly ridiculous? The

appeal from masses to masses, the slogan of gutter to gutter, cementing all the forces of inferiority, inefficiency, and serfdom, preludes war against all that is best and sanest and strongest in life. It is the voiced concentration of hatred, the hatred which the sick and the feeble and the bad by some strange law of antagonism cannot help cherishing against the healthy, the great and the good. On the one hand Aristocracy, the rule of the best, on the other Democracy, the rule of the mob, that 'bellua centiceps' representing again by the inexorable laws of nature what for the time being is the worst." *

And for the time being we certainly need not look, even from Democracy, for anything worse than that!

* *The Times of India*, October 26, 1907.

CHAPTER XIII

A Mahratta Shoe

It was roses, roses all the way—almost all the way during the forty-four hours in the train from Calcutta to Surat; and along the last part of our journey every platform was crowded with eager, smiling faces straining to catch sight of the future President of the Congress, and the long-trusted leaders who accompanied him. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose had been designated President by the Reception Committee at Surat, in spite of stormy opposition in favour of Mr. Tilak at a conference in Nagpur some two months earlier, and the subsequent proposal of Lajpat Rai by Mr. Tilak himself. He stood smiling at the carriage door, and answered with short speeches of thanks and encouragement. Or he walked the platform, and sat at station tea-tables while old men and youths hung long garlands of marigolds and jasmine round his neck, presented him with bright bouquets of flowers sparkling with "fairy rain," or sprinkled his coat and hands with Swadeshi scents from long silver bottles. Others

were with him—Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, the orator, Mr. Aswini Kumar Dutt, the leader of Barisal, members of the Chaudhuri family conspicuous in Calcutta, and many other well-known men who for years past had tried to carry on the work of constitutional reform in the face of Anglo-Indian ridicule, contempt, and hatred. A few younger men were there also, men of another party, who had abandoned appeals and petitions either to Anglo-Indian or British justice.

But the chief attention was centred on Dr. Ghose—Rash Behari, as people called him—a large, spectacled man of sixty-two, with strongly marked face and the general look and bearing of a European judge. From his student days at the Presidency College in Calcutta he had devoted himself to the law. He obtained the highest honours the University gives, he lectured in law, he produced the standard work on the "Law of Mortgage in India." I suppose he was exactly what people mean by a jurist. He prided himself also on a minute acquaintance with the whole range of the English classics, and it is almost impossible to read a page of his speeches without coming upon memories of some great passage in our literature. For he belonged to the time when education and capacity were estimated by a knowledge of English, and he had besides a genuine delight in the form and substance of words. But civil law was his life's

business, and in the knowledge of it he was called unrivalled.

He had taken to public politics late, only when the pressure of Government upon the growing national feeling appeared to him dangerous. But the weight of his knowledge, and his influence as one of the representative Indian members on the Viceroy's Legislative Council brought him quickly into notice, and in the previous December (1906) Calcutta had chosen him Chairman of the Reception Committee for the Congress, to which Dadadhai Naoroji had been brought from England as President to preserve the peace. Like all lawyers, he tended to moderation. He represented the spirit of the Congress as it had been established for more than twenty years—the spirit that had begun by hoping to win even Anglo-Indian consideration for its programme of reform, and, after abandoning that hope, still did not despair of influencing opinion in England, if only petitions and proposals could be heard.

His danger was the danger of all students—of all whose life is spent among writings that usually appeal to reason, and not among men, with whom reason plays so small a part. When it comes to action, such students are likely either to distrust themselves, to hesitate between opposite courses, in both of which they perceive advantages, and in hesitation finally to submit their wills to far inferior

intellects, out of a kind of awe towards men who have really done something. Or else they may show a childish impatience at disagreement, and suppose they have settled a controversy by ending it, like shutting a book with a bang. I thought the judicial hesitancy rather than impatience would be Dr. Ghose's temptation, but I was wrong, for he had, in fact, recently displayed a very decisive vigour in joining with Mr. Gokhale in denouncing the Seditious Meetings Bill on the Viceroy's Council.*

So amid acclamation they travelled to the Congress—the President-Elect and the other leaders.

On Christmas Day Surat was reached at last—a little old town on the west coast, between Baroda and Bombay, where early traders from England, France, Portugal, and Holland had built their "Factories," soon after Akbar's death. The crowd round the station was so tightly jammed that it was a long time before any one could leave the train.

* Towards the conclusion of his speech came the following characteristic sentences: "I oppose this Bill because it violates all the traditions which have up to this time guided the Government. I oppose this Bill because I wish to see the English Rule broadbased on the people's will, and not resting merely on the sword, whether Indian or British. And, lastly, I oppose this Bill because it will kill all political life in this country. . . . One word more. It is unfortunate that the 1st of November should have been fixed for this meeting. That day has always been associated in our minds with the gracious Proclamation of Queen Victoria. It will now be associated with the loss of one of our most cherished rights."

Reception at Surat

By reasoning and entreaty the youthful bands of "Volunteers" in khaki and forage caps at last cleared a space. A procession of carriages was formed and began to advance step by step through the shouting throngs of orange, crimson, and white-clad people. All the windows and tottering balconies of the beautiful but decrepit city that starves upon its past—even the galleries of Islam's crumbling minarets and the roofs of Hindu temples—were crammed with faces. Women peeped through shutters or stood shamelessly beside their children and brothers. Boys and girls thrust their heads through holes in the ruinous walls. At every few yards more garlands were offered, more bunches of flowers and sweet-smelling seeds. Thick fell the showers of rose-water sprayed from silver bottles. On every side rose the great cheer of "Bande Mataram!" From end to end the streets were hung with strings of pink and yellow paper flags, and here and there a triumphal arch uttered the universal welcome in Indian or English words. The great Pandal, or Pavilion, for the Congress, and the camp of tents pitched around it for the delegates from all India stood by the river side beyond the town itself. The distance was not much over two miles, and yet that journey took more than two hours to accomplish, so high ran the enthusiasm of joy.

But, behind the shouting and the triumph, one

heard the quiet voice that whispers of mortality. In the grey light of Christmas morning, as we came through some obscure junction in the train, we had heard that Mr. Allen, the collector of Dacca, had been shot on the platform at Goalundo in Eastern Bengal, and his life was despaired of. Mr. Allen did in the end recover, but at the time recovery was said to be impossible, and the news threw the same gloom and consternation over the Indian party of reform as struck the Irish Home Rulers on the news of the Phœnix Park murders. The month before there had been an attempt to wreck Sir Andrew Fraser's train as he was returning from Orissa; but this was the first political assassination, and every one knew that it would be answered by more repression, leading to further outrages and more repression again. Nothing worse could have befallen the party that still hoped for some sort of agreement in reform and conciliation with the country's far-off rulers, and the mute despondency that fell upon the leaders in the train showed the depth of their foreboding.

Even more ominous were the whispers of growing and violent division that reached us at Surat. The Extremist or Nationalist party had taken a new and decisive step in pitching a separate camp for themselves in a distant quarter of the town. For the last two days Mr. Tilak had been there, organizing and addressing them. The day before they

had held a full meeting of five hundred delegates, with Mr. Arabindo Ghose in the chair, and Mr. Tilak had spoken at length on the situation, especially denouncing the rumoured withdrawal of the Moderate party from the previous year's Calcutta resolutions upon Self-government, Swadeshi, Boycott, and National Education. Such a withdrawal was not to be endured. Rather than submit they would oppose the election of the President himself, even though the chair was waiting to receive him.

The resolutions were nowhere to be seen. Rumour said they had been altered past recognition. The heading of a Draft Constitution for the Congress was found. There it stood written that the ultimate goal of the Congress was "the attainment by India of self-government similar to that enjoyed by the other members of the British empire." That was Mr. Gokhale's work! How inferior to the Calcutta resolution that "the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India"! "Other members of the British Empire" might mean Crown Colonies, Dependencies, anything! The Self-governing Colonies must be the model, and nothing else! That the heading of the draft implied nothing else, —that no one in his senses would apply the word "Self-government" to a Crown Colony, did not matter. Undermining ways were at work! The Calcutta resolutions were being tampered with!

the Moderates were capturing the Congress in the enemy's interest! It was not to be endured.

The whole air was full of suspicion. The mere choice of Surat for the Congress after Nagpur was abandoned—how suspicious that was! Surat, too close a neighbour to Bombay, the very stronghold of "Bombay Moderates"—Parsis, mere Parliamentarians, unredeemed by the fire of sacrifice, men who would make the best of both worlds, men who took titles from an alien Government! It was in Surat that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had founded his fortunes. Now he dominated all the west coast, all the Presidency of Bombay, and here he was seen with Mr. Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, most statistical of Parsis, himself President of the Calcutta Congress in 1901. All the other obedient satellites were circling round him too, bent on conciliating a Government that answered conciliation with titles or contempt. Was a National Congress to be manipulated by mitred Parsis? It was all very well to plead Sir Pherozeshah's services to India in the past —in the days when, as a disciple of Ranade himself, he had stood almost alone against the bureaucracy, had displayed a courage equal to Mr. Gokhale's, an eloquence hardly second to Surendra Nath's, a power of sarcasm hardly rivalled by Moti Lal's; had been chosen President of the young Congress in 1890; had conquered for Indians the control of the Bombay Corporation; had converted his city into a model

of local government; had swept away her slums and purged her administration. To the suspicious Nationalist these things were nothing now. They belonged to the past, to the scrap-heaps of dead reputations. The crisis called for other arms, other methods. It was no longer a battle of slums and water, no longer a thing of appeals for sympathy and dear old Lord Ripon's reforms. Even Sir Pherozeshah's address at the Bombay Congress only three years before was now suspect. He was chairman of the Reception Committee, and one remembered the passage which ran :—

"My steadfast loyalty is founded upon the rock of hope and patience. Seeking the will of Providence, like Oliver Cromwell, in dispensations rather than revelations, seeing God's will, like him, in the fulfilment of events, I accept British rule, as Ranade did, as a dispensation so wonderful—a little island set at one end of the world establishing itself in a far continent as different as different could be—that it would be folly not to accept it as a declaration of God's will. But, as I have often said, when, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, this country was assigned to the care of England: the choice was offered to England as to Israel of old: 'Behold I have placed before you a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the Lord your God; a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments, but go after other gods, whom ye have not known.' We cordially confess that, in the main, England has chosen wisely and well. . . . But the acceptance and announcement of a policy of righteousness is one thing, its application is another."

To the suspicious Nationalist the time for such language was three years past. Such compliments, such protests, all belonged to the age of innocence, before the Partition of Bengal proved the real character of England's domination and the futility of protest and of compliment alike. It was known that in a Provincial Conference lately, here in Surat itself, Sir Pherozeshah had secured the exclusion of the great questions of Boycott and National Education apart from Government aid. All evidences pointed one way: the Bombay Moderates were not the men for times like these; the Bombay Moderates must go!

So in the Nationalist camp suspicion cried aloud, and indignation grew on rumour. In the afternoon of Christmas Day, just before the President-elect arrived in insecure triumph, Lala Lajpat Rai himself went to the Nationalist camp—Lajpat Rai, the quiet, fearless man, with all the honour of dishonour still upon him; a Moderate, a close friend of Gokhale, but a patriot above suspicion, the man put forward as President by the Nationalists themselves, had he not refused to stand rather than hasten the dangerous breach. Surely he, if any one, might serve as peacemaker. He proposed a conference between the parties, five leaders a-side. The Nationalists appointed their representatives—Mr. Tilak, Mr. Arabindo Ghose, Mr. Khaparde of Nagpur, and two others. On the bare hope of peace, Lajpat Rai

sought Mr. Gokhale at the station as the President-elect steamed in. What a moment to arrange a conference! How could even Mr. Gokhale appoint five leaders to represent sixteen hundred delegates? For the twenty-two years of its existence the Congress had settled the form of its resolutions by a "Subjects Committee," which met for discussion in the evening after the Presidential address. Why depart from constitutional usage now?

So behind Rash Behari's triumphal carriage, amid the shouting and the garlands and the flags, death, distrust, and suspicion whispered of mortality. That night few slept. Backwards and forwards, from tent to tent and house to house, the leaders passed, discussing, consulting, deliberating, full of uncertainty and apprehension. Morning found them still apprehensive and uncertain. In a last effort to secure Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, if not peace, Mr. Tilak, Arabindo Ghose, and Mr. Khaparde went to his house with proposals. Mr. Moti Lal Ghose, of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, went with him as peacemaker, though that remarkable man had qualifications for the task about on a level with a porcupine's. To Surendra Nath they proposed two conditions under which they would refrain from opposing the President's election: the four Calcutta resolutions on Self-government, Swadeshi, the Boycott, and National Education must be repeated in the same form as last year, and some

"graceful allusion" must be made by one of the speakers on the election of the President, "to the desire of the public to have Lajpat Rai in the Chair." To make such an allusion graceful at such a moment might have puzzled even Surendra Nath's eloquence. But he was not the man to abandon either party in their need. He undertook both conditions for himself, and advised the Nationalists to seek an interview with Mr. Gokhale or Mr. Tribhovandas Malvi, a Surat gentleman, chairman of the Reception Committee, and supreme in the Congress till the President was elected. They did not attempt to see Mr. Gokhale. Mr. Malvi could not see them, because he was engaged in prayer.

One by one the fateful hours of the morning passed away. By noon the Congress delegates and the vast audience who had paid for seats began to gather in the Pandal. The meeting was to have begun at one, but, to allow time for burning the body of a Scinde delegate who had died, it was put off till half-past two. The delay was unfortunate. In that enormous pavilion of striped canvas full ten thousand people were already assembled. The architect had constructed it for something over ten thousand, and every place was full. The delegates from all the provinces of India, with a few to represent the Indian grievances in the Transvaal, numbered perhaps sixteen hundred, of whom five hundred might be called Extremists of one kind or the other.

First Day of the Congress

On the platform sat some thirty to forty Indian ladies, Parsis, for the most part, but Hindus and even Mohammedans as well, significant of a deeper change than politics. The other thousands were the indistinguishable audience who had come to listen, or perhaps do more than listen. The whole interior, constructed on different levels so that all might see, rose and fell in waves of brilliant turbans, orange, crimson, gold, and white, according to the provinces from which they came, and in a black and solid square sat the bare-headed delegates from Bengal. Under the burning sun that pierced the roof the whole of that vast crowd remained for hours, disputing, arguing, exhorting each other in groups and districts, a dubious exercise of patience.

The platform people began to arrive. Among the first came Dr. Rutherford, Member of the Mother of Parliaments, now visiting India in hope of understanding a little of her distress. At his side was another of "the ruling race," come for the same purpose. As they advanced up the centre of the throng applause and shouts of "Bande Mataram" received them, but under all the shouting one heard low, penetrating hisses and angry cries of "Shame!" from men who no longer endured a sign of British rule, not even in the way of friendship. Then a quiet, white-turbaned figure, with sad determination in his look, entered from the side. Like one man, the ten thousand sprang to their feet.

Cheer followed cheer; it seemed as though the cheering would never cease. Who does not love the man that has suffered for a cause? It was Lajpat Rai.

A few minutes afterwards the Volunteers were seen lining the central passage again, and up the midst in a solid body came Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, President-elect; Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, the mitred Parsi; Mr. Wacha, the sane, unwearied master of statistics; Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, the orator of Bengal; Mr. Gokhale, whom some were tired of hearing called the Just; and other leaders of the Congress, famous and trusted for twenty years. At the sight, opposition shut its voice. The cheering rose, and rose again. In honour done to patriots so long conspicuous and so tenacious against contempt and failure, it seemed as though the day might yet pass without a rupture. The platform was reached. Mr. Tribhovandas Malvi, Chairman of the Reception Committee, rose to welcome the Congress in the name of his native Surat, and there was silence. He told the history of Surat, and passed on to the history of the Congress. People do not want to hear history when they are making it. Moghuls, Mahrattas, French Factories that stood on their very ground where now the Pandal stood—what did all of them matter? King Shivaji, he was dead. The early efforts of the Congress, the failures, the successes—all were dead. But the

present moment was alive and big with futurity. For heaven's sake, come to the present moment! So the assembly waited, impatient, but in silence, save that at the word "moderation" a breath of murmur stirred.

The address ended. Dewan Bahadur Ambalal S. Desai, late Chief Justice of progressive Baroda, learned in law, in banking, and commercial enterprise, rose formally to propose that Dr. Ghose, already designated President, should now take the Presidential Chair. At the name of Ghose, the deep murmur of dissent was heard again, and one shrill voice cried, "Never!" But the moment the Dewan sat down, Mr. Banerjea was seen standing in his place beside the table—Surendra Nath, the hero of a hundred platforms, grey-bearded son of thunder, youthful still in the service of the cause, by reason and temperament friend and champion of both parties alike. He was to second the proposal that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair. Hardly had his immense voice uttered ten words when, like the cracking of thunder that begins before the lightning ceases, the tumult burst, and no word more was heard.

Waving their arms, their scarves, their sticks, and umbrellas, a solid mass of delegates and spectators on the right of the Chair sprang to their feet and shouted without a moment's pause. Over their heads was the label, "Central Provinces"—Central

Provinces where Nagpur stands and the Congress was to have been. "Remember Nagpur!" they cried; "Remember Midnapur!" where, during the Bengal Provincial Conference a week or two before, Surendra Nath had attempted to keep the peace against the Extremists, and had actually sat on the same platform with a District Superintendent of Police! White turbans from Madras joined them. The whole ten thousand were on their feet, shouting for order, shouting for tumult. Mr. Malvi, still half in the Chair, rang his brass Benares bell, and rang in vain. Surendra Nath sprang upon the very table itself. Even a voice like his was not a whisper in the din. Again and again he shouted, unheard as silence. He sat down, and for a moment the storm was lulled. The voices of the leaders were audible, consulting in agitated tones—Dr. Ghose shrill, impatient, and perturbed with anger; Mr. Gokhale distressed, anxious, harassed with vain negotiation and sleepless nights. Already one caught the word "suspension." "If they will not hear Surendra Nath, whom will they hear?" said one. "It is an insult to the Congress," said another. "An insult to Bengal!" cried a third. Again Surendra Nath sprang on the table, and again the assembly roared with clamour. Again the Chairman rang his Benares bell, and rang in vain. In an inaudible voice like a sob he declared the sitting suspended. The platform rose, Surendra Nath

descended, the Indian ladies, who had beguiled the long waiting by chanting the hymn of "Bande Mataram" with quavering voice, filed out through a door at the back, and the leaders of the Congress movement disappeared into tents prepared for them.

After twenty-two years of steady and regular procedure the Congress had broken up in less than an hour. To the excited groups into which the great assembly split it seemed incredible. As when a growing child overturns the family routine and is astonished to find its parents distraught and weeping, so the Extremists stood a little amazed and dumbfounded at what they had done. Wild defence was met by wild denunciation, but no violence followed. It was still a polite and peaceful people, anxious to leave conciliation open. I conversed with Mr. Kelkar of Poona, editor of the *Mahratta*, as Mr. Tilak's lieutenant. The outbreak, he said, was accidental and unexpected. They had determined to oppose Dr. Ghose's election, but not by tumult; they would not even have opposed it had not the Moderate offer of compromise come too late. I visited the Nationalist camp, far across the town, and found Mr. Tilak himself, just returned from his dubious triumph, sitting naked in his cloth. He gave me the same assurance. The whole thing had been a mistake; it had all happened because the undertaking to renew the Calcutta resolutions had reached him too late—not till the

Chairman had begun his speech. The resolutions had then been handed to him by Mr. Gokhale, and he had admitted he would himself have been satisfied if certain changes in their wording had been removed and the original form restored. But by that time it was too late to reassure his followers, or re-establish his authority for peace.

It is hard to say how far this difficulty about the Calcutta resolutions was vital, or how far a sincere desire for peace might have explained it away. The mere delay in supplying them to Mr. Tilak was accidental—the fault of a Surat printer. Mr. Gokhale has said so, and his word is above suspicion.* But he admits that "slight verbal alterations had been made in one or two of them to remove ambiguity," and it was left, as usual, for the Subjects Committee to decide in what form they should finally be submitted to the Congress. Unhappily, after the events of the day, there was no chance or thought of a Subjects Committee meeting, and the disputed alterations remained unsettled. Some were obviously unimportant, unless a quarrel was desired on any straw. The change from "the system of government obtaining in the self-governing Colonies" to "the self-government enjoyed by other members of the British Empire" in a draft constitution implied no change of meaning, but,

* See Mr. Gokhale's letters on the Breach in the Congress, the *Bengalee*, January 13 and 14, 1908.

hearing of the criticism, Mr. Gokhale had himself inserted the word "self-governing" before "members of the British Empire." In the Swadeshi resolution, the Calcutta version had promised "to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice"; in the new draft this sentence appeared as "to stimulate the consumption of indigenous articles by giving them preference where possible over imported commodities." Here the omission of the words "even at some sacrifice" was due to the inaccuracy of the newspaper copy, from which the resolution was taken. In the Calcutta resolution about National Education the clause proposing "to organize a system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—suited to the requirements of the country on national lines and under national control" had been altered in the new draft to a proposal "to organize an independent system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—suited to the requirements of the country." Mr. Gokhale defended the alteration on the ground that it avoided the triple repetition of the word "national," was more restrained in form, and "more in accord with what was being actually attempted in different parts of India." In the changes so far there was nothing to split a party determined to preserve its unity.

The difference in the remaining resolution was

vital. It went to the very root of the difference between the parties, and for the sake of it alone the proposed changes remain worthy of notice. In the original Calcutta resolution the Congress was "of opinion that the Boycott Movement inaugurated by Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate." In the new form proposed for discussion in the Subjects Committee the wording ran, "This Congress is of opinion that the Boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate." All the difference between Moderates and Extremists—just the one point which made genuine conciliation impossible—lay implied in that small difference of wording. "Boycott of foreign goods" was plain; it was a necessary part of Swadeshi, whether used as a political protest or as an encouragement to Indian industries. But "Boycott Movement" might mean the rejection of almost anything—the rejection of foreign goods, of foreign justice, foreign appointments, foreign education, foreign authority, taxation, Government itself. Already it had been so interpreted, both at the Calcutta Congress and frequently throughout the year. To yield on this point would be to hand over the Congress to Extremists for ever, to abandon the first principles of the Congress, which had been to work out the salvation of India in association with the British

rulers, and endeavour, in spite of Anglo-Indian mockery and hatred, to invoke the sense of justice which must somewhere surely lie in the heart of so great and free a people as the English. If these first principles were now to be abandoned, if the Congress was to be pledged to call upon India to go her own way, regardless of the English people and the English Government, the Congress as it had hitherto existed might as well give up the pretence of existence, and bequeath its effects to a new and different force. Here was no half-way house, no common ground for compromise. The alteration in the wording was vital.

On this difference at the root negotiation failed. The Boycott resolution was perhaps not even mentioned, but at the back of men's minds the difference lay. Through the evening and night negotiations continued. The Nationalists held another conference in their camp. Unless the Calcutta resolutions were replaced in the original form, they were instructed to oppose the election of Dr. Ghose, but to allow all speakers a fair hearing and create no tumult. Envoys passed between the camps; could not a joint committee of the parties meet for discussion? Could not Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Tilak meet? Could not Surendra Nath act as conciliator? Could not Dr. Rutherford, Member of the Mother of Parliaments, be asked for the advice of historic experience? Backwards and

forwards the negotiation went, and during that night also few slept.

The morning of December 27th again found them at variance, still uncertain, their mood more fretted by sleeplessness and anxiety. But a general anticipation of peace prevailed, because all foresaw what the enemies of reform would say if the Congress collapsed. By noon the Pandal was again full to overflowing. At one o'clock the Presidential procession entered. Again Dr. Rash Behari Ghose bore with him the printed copy of his Presidential address, which ought to have been delivered the afternoon before, and had, unhappily, appeared that morning in some of the Calcutta papers, with an attack upon the Extremists still unaltered.* At

* The main part of the address was a sorrowful indictment of Mr. Morley's government during the year, an answer to the Arbroath speech, and a criticism of the professed Simla reforms. It then passed to the situation between the two parties in India, and concluded with a strong repudiation of the Extremist position, and a warning to Extremists "not to be beguiled by phantoms, nor to expect they could end the British rule by boycotting the administration," whereas their only chance lay in co-operation with the Government in every measure likely to hasten their political emancipation. At the end of the copy which Dr. Ghose gave me, and which he intended to read to the Congress, was a manuscript note expressing deep regret at the murderous attempt upon Mr. Allen in Eastern Bengal, and the following peroration, also in manuscript :—

"I call upon you to fight for your rights, resolved not to be beaten, nor even knowing when you are beaten. To doubt of victory is to doubt the justice of our cause. It is to doubt our courage and the strength of our combination. It is to doubt the honesty and sincerity of a great people who are bound by every obligation of duty to redeem their pledges. It is to doubt the irresistible force of moral power in the affairs of nations. We may be baffled for a time, our efforts may

his side, as before, came the familiar Congress leaders, and amid stormy applause that breathed defiance to interruption, they took their seats behind the green table that stretched the whole length of the high-raised platform, before which there was no railing, but only, as it were, an escarpment for defence.

In the front row of the delegates, not in the place reserved for him on the platform, Mr. Tilak was seated. As the procession entered he sent a note to the Chairman by one of the boy Volunteers to say he wished to speak on the election of the President after the seconder had spoken. According to his own account, he added, "I wish to move an adjournment with a constructive proposal," apparently referring to another special conference of delegates from both sides. According to the Chairman and others who claimed to have seen the note, it proposed "an amendment for the adjournment of the Congress." It was a difference much argued afterwards, but the note itself had disappeared into chaos and could no more be recovered than the Sibyl's leaves that flitted round her cave.

In deliberate and expectant silence the proceedings began. Mr. Malvi called upon Mr. Banerjea

be abortive, but I have faith in the justice of our cause, faith in your patriotism, in the English nation, and in the sword of the avenging angel. Let us then work, not in sorrow or despondency, but in the joyful assurance that our cause will triumph and our country take her rightful place in the Federation of the Empire."

to take up his speech, seconding the appointment of Dr. Ghose as President. Speaking with a chastened exuberance, as of a hero rebuked by fate, Surendra Nath appealed to the past achievements of the Congress, appealed to the necessity of union for strength, and sat down amid silence, amid applause. Mr. Motilal Nehru, wealthy barrister of Allahabad, circumspect and respected, Moderate by nature in everything but generosity, said a few sentences. Every one went delicately, moving on a crust of ashes. In inaudible words Mr. Malvi proposed that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair as President, and amid various shouting he declared the motion carried. Heavy with years and knowledge, Dr. Ghose transferred himself to the seat, and rose at once to deliver that thoughtfully prepared address. "Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "my first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me."

Beyond his first duty he never went. As when lightning flashes in air surcharged with storm, Mr. Tilak was seen standing straight in front of the Presidential Chair itself, expostulating, protesting, all in that calm, decisive voice of his, the voice of a man indifferent to fate. He had given notice of an amendment, he was there to move it, and there he would remain. "You cannot move an adjournment of the Congress," cried Mr. Malvi; "I declare

you out of order." "I wish to move an amendment to the election of President, and you are not in the Chair," Mr. Tilak replied. "I declare you out of order!" cried Dr. Ghose. "You have not been elected," answered Mr. Tilak; "I appeal to the delegates."

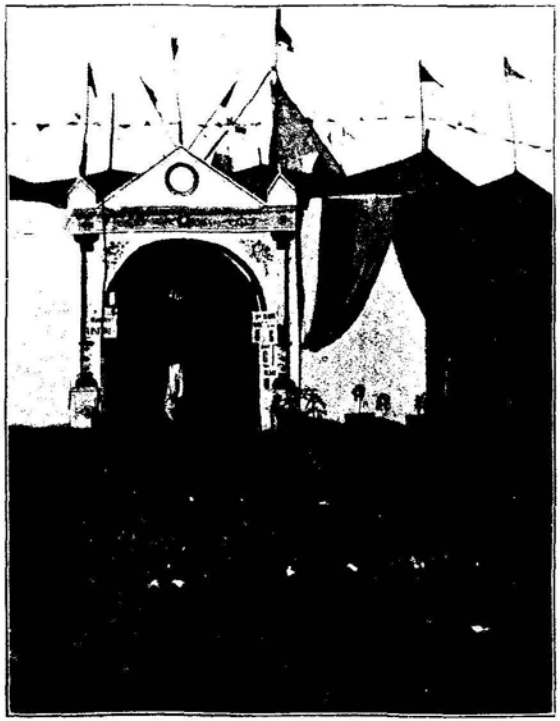
Uproar drowned the rest. With folded arms Mr. Tilak faced the audience. On either side of him young Moderates sprang to their feet, wildly gesticulating vengeance. Shaking their fists and yelling to the air, they clamoured to hurl him down the steep of the platform. Behind him, Dr. Ghose mounted the table, and, ringing an unheard bell, harangued the storm in shrill, agitated, unintelligible denunciations. Restraining the rage of Moderates, ingeminating peace if ever man ingeminated, Mr. Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood beside his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from the threatened onset. But Mr. Tilak asked for no protection. He stood there with folded arms, defiant, calling on violence to do its worst, calling on violence to move him, for he would move for nothing else in hell or heaven. In front, the white-clad audience roared like a tumultuous sea.

Suddenly something flew through the air—a shoe!—a Mahratta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendra Nath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off upon

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos.

Like Goethe at the battle of Valmy, I could have said, "To-day marks the beginning of a new era, and you can say that you were present at it."

The Indian ladies vanished. The platform leaders withdrew rapidly through a door at the back of the Pandal. Mr. Tilak was borne off by his followers. But in the vast pavilion itself a combat raged at large. Chairs, useless now except as missiles, flew through the air like shells discharged at a venture; long sticks clashed and shivered; blood flowed from broken heads. Group rushed upon group, delegate upon delegate. Breathing slaughter, they glared for victims. It was hard to tell friend from foe. Ten thousand men, all crowded together among ten thousand chairs, no uniform, no distinction, nothing to mark off Extremist from Moderate except the facial expression of a temperament—it was a confused and difficult conflict to maintain. Who would wish to fall to the bludgeon of a political friend? Nor was a



ENTRANCE TO THE PANDAL AT SURAT.

THE LINE OF RETREAT.

[*Face p.* 258.

certain chivalry or politeness wanting. Standing in the midst on a chair from which I could command the scene, I watched two champions, beaked vultures from the North, belabouring each other with murderous intent. By an adroit stroke one brought his stick down on the other's skull, and knocked his turban off. Instantly a truce was granted till the many yards of long white turban had been rapidly rolled tight again, and then with fresh fury the contest was renewed.

So with varied incident the combat swayed and raged and crackled. Suddenly the police appeared —no mistaking them in their short blue uniforms and the little clubs that made no political distinctions. Only about thirty entered, but thirty men who know what they want are to ten thousand who are not quite sure like a dog to sheep. With them came their Superintendent, their Inspector—Scottish, small and wizened as a prize jockey, calmly ordering here, ordering there, protected in the roaring turmoil only by courage and a penny cane. Bit by bit the tumult was driven out by the doors into the open. Within an hour the vast Pandal, strewn with broken chairs, sticks, and rags of raiment, stood empty as a banquet-hall deserted.

Even that night negotiations were again renewed. But suspicion had now gone too deep, and, as in an instinctive quarrel, each attempt at conciliation revealed a new distrust. Next day (December 28th)

opened with savage rumours of bloodshed, but two hundred police now guarded the wreck of the Pandal, and there, in anxious and regretful security, a convention of nine hundred Moderates met. They had signed an agreement to preserve order, to promote reform by constitutional means, and to aim at self-government similar to the self-government existing in other parts of the Empire. Dr. Ghose was in the Chair, some of the prominent leaders spoke, and a committee was appointed to watch events. The most significant point in the meeting was the presence of Lajpat Rai upon the platform, and his declaration that he would continue to fight under the old banner of the Congress was at such a moment worth a thousand men.

The Convention then turned to consider the woes of Indians in the Transvaal, whose delegates had been wandering about in the chaos, tearfully lamenting the vanity of human wishes. In the afternoon the Extremists also held a convention, and also appointed a committee to watch events. In the large courtyard of a private house they met in silent crowds. Grave and silent—I think without saying a single word—Mr. Arabindo Ghose took the Chair, and sat unmoved, with far-off eyes, as one who gazes at futurity. In clear, short sentences, without eloquence or passion, Mr. Tilak spoke till the stars shone out and some one kindled a lantern at his side. He reviewed the situation, accused the

"Bombay Moderates" of seeking favour with the Government and rejecting the Nationalist offers of compromise. He had no wish to destroy the Congress, for its prestige was useful; but a new spirit had entered Indian affairs, and unless the Congress was permeated with the new spirit it had better die—it was dead already. By the new spirit he meant self-confidence and self-assertion, contrasted with the old methods of petitions for rights, appeals for justice, and other forms of mendicancy which the British Government answered with elusive promises, and the Anglo-Indians with scorn.

So, on that note of deep and perhaps irreconcilable divergence, the twenty-third Indian National Congress ended. Many delegates remained in Surat for a day or two, taking part in conferences upon child-marriage, widow-remarriage, the education of women, Indian industries, the drink problem, the revelations of the Divine Will, and other questions of permanent interest for Indian life. But the Congress was over. The work of the old Congress as it had existed for all those years was rolled up and done. Re-union of Moderate and Extremist in some form might still be possible; for a militant party, a nationalist party, an Opposition is never long divided, and oppression is a fine reconciler. But breach or no breach, all felt the Congress would never be the same again. In the twinkling of a shoe it had been changed, and a new spirit, a

different and difficult spirit, had indeed arisen in the country.

As I returned with the leaders of the Congress movement in the train, each station rang with shouts of "Down with Rash Behari!" "Down with Gokhale!" "Down with Surendra Nath!" Not a cheer, not a single cry of "Jai!" That was on a Sunday, and on the Wednesday before no cheering, no garlands had seemed enough. It had been roses, roses all the way.

THE SACRED RIVER.

[*Face p. 262.*

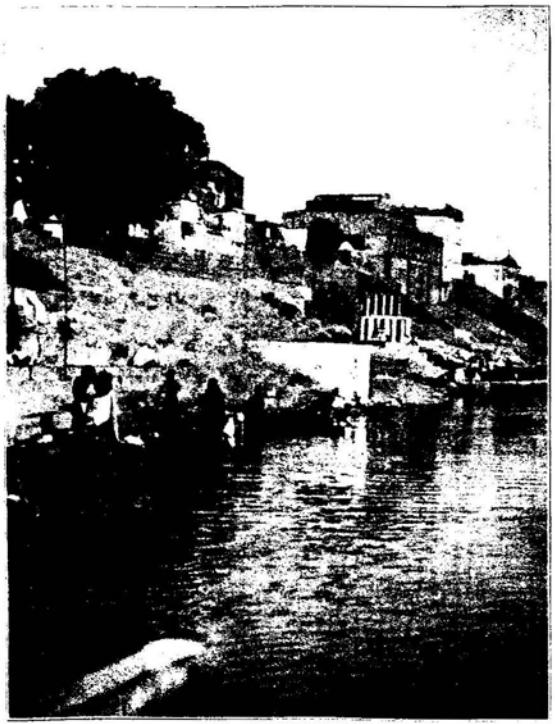
CHAPTER XIV

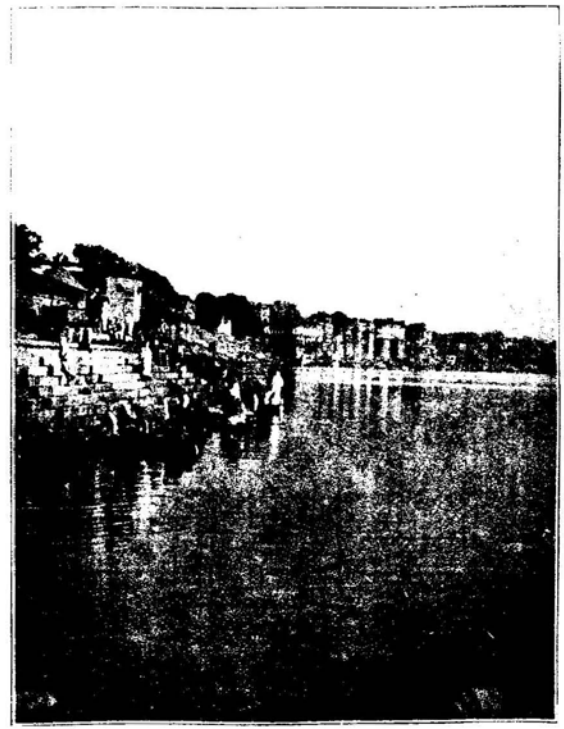
A City of God

I had escaped to the Ganges, as myriads of transitory pilgrims have escaped before. From the distractions of politics and the dust of practical reforms I had come to the quiet river, sliding under immemorial walls. The water was still white and dove-coloured with morning, but already along the thin crescent of the shore, white-robed men and women were coming down the steps with naked feet, and silently approaching the edge. They threw long strings of marigolds into the stream. Stooping down, they scooped up the water in brazen pots, and set a marigold upon the mouth of each. Hung with flowers, and bearing on their foreheads the triple mark of the god, men settled cross-legged upon slabs of stone or wooden platforms, and plunged at once into prayer, or, opening long and narrow books, began to recite aloud the words of inspired ancestors. Men and women alike, still draped in white, walked step by step down into the water, till it passed over their heads, and then came

back step by step, and stood dripping in prayer. They raised water in their hands, splashed it three times on their mouths and foreheads, and with arms lifted to the risen sun, poured what was left back into the river. Covering her face with her hands, one girl knelt upon the bare stone so long in adoration that the sun dried her one white length of sari, and it hung loose around her form again.

The common life of the holy city began, and the calling of the milkmen, the cake-sellers, the fruiterers, and drivers of bullock-carts mingled with the temple bells. They brought the dead down to the river, hung with marigolds, and wrapped in cotton cloths as when they lived. Pushing them feet forwards a little way out from shore, they let them soak in the holy water until wooden pyres should be ready to consume their deserted forms, happy in a double purification. Washerwomen carried down their bundles of linen, and swung each piece over their heads again and again upon flat stones in the water, until it was cleansed, with the added advantage of sanctity. Ascetics in brick-dust robes passed up and down among the crowd, bearing long staves in memory of their vow to constrain their thoughts, their speech, and their desires. Other ascetics, dressed only in a transparent coating of ashes, sat in perpetual contemplation, forgetful of the body and the world. One man I saw in faded yellow robe, worn by sun and rain, passing quietly





ON THE BANK. [Page p. 264.