

RANADE, GANDHI AND JINNAH

*Address delivered on the 101st Birthday Celebration
of
MAHADEO GOVIND RANADE
held on
the 18th January 1943
in
the Gokhale Memorial Hall, Poona*

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my dear Manohar,

Pray excuse me for not replying to your letter of the 15th March earlier than to-day. I am glad you liked my address via Ranade. I share your regret over the omission of the part dealing with Phule. I am however far from being right of its importance. I will take some occasion to enlarge it and publish it. I don't know what trackers have done with Ranade. I have not had any news from them. I am busy now with the new edition of Pakistan. I am writing three more chapters. They will be very short. I propose to set out in those chapters my conclusions. I thank you

RANADE, GANDHI AND JINNAH

PREFACE

The Deccan Sabha of Poona invited me to deliver an address on the 101st birthday of the late Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade which it proposed to celebrate and which fell on the 18th January 1940. I was not very willing to accept the invitation. For I knew that my views on social and political problems, a discussion of which could not be avoided in a discourse on Ranade, would not be very pleasing to the audience and even perhaps to the members of the Deccan Sabha. In the end I accepted their invitation. At the time when I delivered the address I had no intention of publishing it. Addresses delivered on anniversaries of great men are generally occasional pieces. They do not have much permanent value. I did not think that my address was an exception to this. But I have some troublesome friends who have been keen on seeing the whole of it in print and have been insisting upon it. I am indifferent to the idea. I am quite content with the publicity it has received and I have no desire to seek more. At the same time if there are people who think that it is worthy of being rescued from falling into oblivion, I do not see any reason for disappointing them.

The address as printed differs from the address as delivered in two respects. Section X of the address was omitted from the address as delivered to prevent the performance going beyond reasonable time. Even without it, it took one hour and a half to deliver the address. This is one difference. The other difference lies in the omission of a large portion of Section VIII which was devoted to a comparison of Ranade with Phule. For the omission there are

two reasons. In the first place, the comparison was not sufficiently full and detailed to do justice to the two men ; in the second place, when the difficulties of finding enough paper compelled me to sacrifice some portion of the address this appeared to be best offering.

The publication of the address is taking place under peculiar circumstances. Ordinarily reviews follow publication. In this case the situation is reversed. What is worse is that the reviews have condemned the address in scathing terms. This is a matter primarily for the publishers to worry about. I am happy that the publisher knows the risk and he takes it. Nothing more need be said about it except that it supports the view taken by my friends that the address contains matter which is of more than ephemeral value. As for myself I am not in the least perturbed by the condemnation of this address by the Press. What is the ground for its condemnation ? And who has come forward to condemn it ?

I am condemned because I criticized Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah for the mess they have made of Indian politics, and that in doing so I am alleged to have shown towards them hatred and disrespect. In reply to this charge what I have to say is that I have been a critic and I must continue to be such. It may be I am making mistakes but I have always felt that it is better to make mistakes than to accept guidance and direction from others or to sit silent and allow things to deteriorate. Those who have accused me of having been actuated by feelings of hatred forget two things. In the first place this alleged hatred is not born of anything that can be called personal. If I am against them it is because I want a settlement. I want a settlement of some sort and I am not prepared to wait for an ideal settlement. Nor can I tolerate anyone on whose will and consent settlement depends to stand on dignity and play the Grand Moghul. In the second place, no one can hope to make any effective mark upon his time and bring the aid that is worth bringing to great principles and struggling causes if he is not strong in his love and his hatred. I hate injustice, tyranny, pompousness and humbug, and my hatred embraces all those who are guilty of them. I want to tell my critics that I regard my feelings of hatred as a real force. They are only the reflex of the love I bear for the causes I believe

in and I am in no wise ashamed of it. For these reasons I tender no apology for my criticism of Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, the two men who have brought India's political progress to a standstill.

The condemnation is by the Congress Press. I know the Congress Press well. I attach no value to its criticism. It has never refuted my arguments. It knows only to criticise, rebuke and revile me for everything I do and to misreport, misrepresent and pervert everything I say. Nothing, that I do, pleases the Congress Press. This animosity of the Congress Press towards me can to my mind not unfairly, be explained as a reflex of the hatred of the Hindus for the Untouchables. That their animosity has become personal is clear from the fact that the Congress Press feels offended for my having criticised Mr. Jinnah who has been the butt and the target of the Congress for the last several years.

However strong and however filthy be the abuses which the Congress Press chooses to shower on me I must do my duty. I am no worshipper of idols. I believe in breaking them. I insist that if I hate Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah—I dislike them, I do not hate them—it is because I love India more. That is the true faith of a nationalist. I have hopes that my countrymen, will some day learn that the country is greater than the men, that the worship of Mr. Gandhi or Mr. Jinnah and service to India are two very different things and may even be contradictory of each other.

22 Prithviraj Road
New Delhi
15th March 1943

B. R. AMBEDKAR

RANADE, GANDHI AND JINNAH

I

I must tell you that I am not very happy over this invitation. My fear is that I may not be able to do justice to the occasion. When a year ago the Centenary of Ranade's Birthday was celebrated in Bombay, the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivas Shastri was chosen to speak. For very many reasons he was well-qualified for performing the duty. He can claim to be a contemporary of Ranade for a part of his life. He had seen him at close range and was an eye witness of the work to which Ranade devoted his life. He had opportunity to judge him and compare him with his co-workers. He could therefore expound his views about Ranade with a sense of confidence and with intimacy born out of personal touch. He could cite an anecdote and illuminate the figure of Ranade before his audience. None of these qualifications are available to me. My connection with Ranade is of the thinnest. I had not even seen him. There are only two incidents about Ranade which I can recall. First relates to his death. I was a student in the first standard in the Satara High School. On the 16th January 1901 the High School was closed and we boys had a holiday. We asked why it was closed and we were told that because Ranade was dead. I was then about 9 years old. I knew nothing about Ranade, who he was, what he had done ; like other boys I was happy over the holiday and did not care to know who died. The second incident which reminds me of Ranade is dated much later than the first. Once I was examining some bundles of old papers belonging to my father when I found in them a paper which purported to be a petition sent by the Commissioned and non-Commissioned officers of the Mahar Community to the Government of India against the orders issued in 1892 banning the recruitment of the Mahars in the Army. On inquiry I was told that this was a copy of a petition which was drafted by Ranade to help the aggrieved Mahars to obtain redress. Beyond these two incidents I have nothing to recall of Ranade. My knowledge about him is wholly impersonal. It is derived from what I have read about

his work and what others have said about him. You must not expect me to say anything of a personal character which will either interest, you or instruct you. I propose to say what I think of him as a public-man in his days and his place in Indian politics today.

II

As you are well aware, there are friends of Ranade who do not hesitate to describe him as a great man and there are others who with equal insistence deny him that place. Where does the truth lie? But this question must, I think, wait upon another, namely, is history the biography of great men? The question is both relevant as well as important. For, if great men were not the makers of history, there is no reason why we should take more notice of them than we do of cinema stars. Views differ. There are those who assert that however great a man may be, he is a creature of Time—Time called him forth, Time did everything, he did nothing. Those who hold this view, in my judgment, wrongly interpret history. There have been three different views on the causes of historical changes. We have had the Augustinian theory of history, according to which history is only an unfolding of a divine plan in which mankind is to continue through war and suffering until that divine plan is completed at the day of judgment. There is the view of Buckle who held that history was made by Geography and Physics. Karl Marx propounded a third view. According to him history was the result of economic forces. None of these three would admit that history is the biography of great men. Indeed they deny man any place in the making of history. No one except theologians accepts the Augustinian theory of history. As to Buckle and Marx, while there is truth in what they say, their views do not represent the whole truth. They are quite wrong in holding that impersonal forces are everything and that man is no factor in the making of history. That impersonal forces are a determining factor cannot be denied. But that the effect of impersonal forces depends on man must also be admitted. Flint may not exist everywhere. But where it does exist, it needs man to strike flint against flint to make fire. Seeds may not be found everywhere. But where they do exist, it needs man to ground it to powder and make it a delectable and nutritious paste and thereby lay the foundation of agriculture. There are many areas devoid of metals. But where they do exist, it needs a man to make instruments and machines which are the basis of civilization and culture.

Take the case of social forces. Various tragic situations arise. One such situation is of the type described by Thayer in his biography of Theodore Roosevelt when he says :

“There comes a time in every sect, party or institution when it stops growing, its arteries harden, its young men see no visions, its old men dream no dreams ; it lives on the past and desperately tries to perpetuate

the past. In politics when this process of petrification is reached we call it Bourbonism and the sure sign of the Bourbon is that, being unconscious that he is the victim of sclerosis, he sees no reason for seeking a cure. Unable to adjust himself to changed and new conditions he falls back into the past as an old man drops into his worm-out arm-chair."

The other kind of situation is not one of decay but of destruction. The possibilities of it are always present whenever there is a crisis. The old ways, old habits and old thoughts fail to lift society and lead it on. Unless new ones are found there is no possibility of survival. No society has a smooth sailing. There are periods of decay and possibilities of destruction through which every society has to pass. Some survive, some are destroyed, and some undergo stagnation and decay. Why does this happen? What is the reason that some survive? Carlyle has furnished an answer. He puts in his characteristic way:

"No time need have gone to ruin, could it have found a great enough, a man wise and good enough; Wisdom to discern truly what the Time wanted, valour to lead it on to the right road thither, these are the salvation of any Time."

This seems to me to be quite a conclusive answer to those who deny man any place in the making of history. The crisis can be met by the discovery of a new way. Where there is no new way found, society goes under. Time may suggest possible new ways. But to step on the right one is not the work of Time. It is the work of man. Man therefore is a factor in the making of history and that environmental forces whether impersonal or social if they are the first are not the last things.

III

Who can be called a great man? If asked of military heroes such as Alexander, Attila, Caesar and Tamerlane, the question is not difficult to answer. The militarymen make epochs and effect vast transitions. They appal and dazzle their contemporaries by their resounding victories. They become great without waiting to be called great. As the lion is among the deer, so they are among men. But it is equally true that their permanent effect on the history of mankind is very small. Their conquests shrink, and even so great a General as Napoleon after all his conquests left France smaller than he found it. When viewed from a distance they are seen to be only periodical, if necessary, incidents in the world's movement, leaving no permanent mark on the character of the society in which they live. The details of their career and their moral may be interesting, but they do not affect society and form no leaven to transform or temper the whole.

The answer becomes difficult when the question is asked about a person who is not a military general. For, it then becomes a question of tests, and different people have different tests.

Carlyle the apostle of Hero Worship had a test of his own. He laid it down in the following terms :

“But of great man especially, of him I will venture to assert that it is incredible he should have been other than true. It seems to me the primary foundation of him, this... No man adequate to do anything, but is first of all in right earnest about it; what I call a sincere man. I should say *sincerity*, a deep, great genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic.”

Carlyle was of course particular in defining his test of sincerity in precise terms, and in doing so he warned his readers by defining what his idea of sincerity was—

“Not the sincerity that calls itself sincere : Ah no,” he said, “that is a very poor matter indeed ; — a shallow, braggart, conscious sincerity ; oftenest self-conceit mainly. The great man’s sincerity is of the kind he cannot speak of, is not conscious of : Nay, I suppose, he is conscious rather of *insincerity* ; for what man can walk accurately by the law of truth for one day ? No, the great man does not boast himself sincere, far from that; perhaps does not ask himself if he is so : I would say rather, his sincerity does not depend on himself ; he cannot help being sincere!”

Lord Rosebery proposed another test when dealing with Napoleon—who was as great an Administrator as a General. In answering the question, Was Napoleon Great ? Rosebery used the following language :

“If by ‘great’ be intended the combination of moral qualities with those of intellect, great be certainly was not. But that he was great in the sense of being extraordinary and supreme we can have no doubt. If greatness stands for natural power, for predominance, for something human beyond humanity, then Napoleon was assuredly great. Besides that indefinable spark which we call genius, he represents a combination of intellect and energy which has never perhaps been equalled, never certainly surpassed.”

There is a third test, suggested by the philosophers or, to be more accurate, by those who believe in divine guidance of human affairs. They have a different conception of what is a great man. To summarise the summary of their view, as given by Rosebery, a great man is launched into the world, as a great natural or supernatural force, as a scourge and a scavenger boon to cleanse society and lead it on to the right path who is engaged in a vast operation, partly positive, mainly negative, but all relating to social regeneration.

Which of these is the true test ? In my judgment all are partial and none is complete. Sincerity must be the test of a great man. Clemenceau once said that most statesmen are rogues. Statesmen are not necessarily great men,

and obviously those on whose experience he founded his opinion must have been those wanting in sincerity. Nonetheless no one can accept that sincerity is the primary or the sole test. For sincerity is not enough. A great man must have sincerity. For it is the sum of all moral qualities without which no man can be called great. But there must be something more than mere sincerity in a man to make him great. A man may be sincere and yet he may be a fool, and a fool is the very antithesis of a great man. A man is great because he finds a way to save society in its hours of crisis. But what can help him to find the way? He can do so only with the help of intellect. Intellect is the light. Nothing else can be of any avail. It is quite obvious that without the combination of sincerity and intellect no man can be great. Is this enough to constitute a great man? At this stage we, must, I think, make a distinction between an eminent individual and a great man. For I am certain that a great man is something very different from an eminent individual. Sincerity and intellect are enough to mark out an individual as being eminent as compared to his fellows. But they are not enough to rake him to the dignity of a great man. A great man must have something more than what a merely eminent individual has. What must be that thing? Here comes the importance of the philosopher's definition of a great man. A great man must be motivated by the dynamics of a social purpose and must act as the scourge and the scavenger of society. These are the elements which distinguish an eminent individual from a great man and constitute his title-deeds to respect and reverence.

IV

Was Ranade a great man? He was of course great in his person. Vast in physique—he could have been called “Your Immense” as the Irish servant who could not pronounce Your Eminence used respectfully to call Cardinal Wiseman—his master. He was a man of sanguine temperament, of genial disposition and versatile in his capacity. He had sincerity which is the sum of all moral qualities and his sincerity was of the sort which was prescribed by Carlyle. It was not a conscious “braggart sincerity”. It was the natural sincerity, a constitutional trait and not an assumed air. He was not only big in his physique and in his sincerity, he was also big in intellect. Nobody can question that Ranade had intellect of a high calibre. He was not merely a lawyer and a judge of the High Court, he was a first class economist, a first class historian, a first class educationist and a first class divine. He was not a politician. Perhaps it is good that he was not. For if he had been, he might not have been a great man. As Abraham Lincoln said, “Politicians are a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people and who, to say the most of them are taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men.” Ranade though not a politician was a profound student of politics. Indeed it would be difficult to find in the history of India any man who could come up to Ranade in the width of his

learning, the breadth of his wisdom and the length of his vision. There was no subject which he did not touch and in which he did not acquire profundity. His reading was on the scale of the colossal and every inch he was a scholar. He was great not merely by the standard of his Time, but he was great—measured by any standard. As I have said no claim for being a great man can rest on the foundation of sincerity and intellect either singly or in combination. Ranade could not be called great if he had these two qualities and no more. His title to being a great man must rest upon the social purposes he served and on the way he served them. On that there can be no doubt. Ranade is known more as a social reformer than as a historian, economist or educationist. His whole life is nothing but a relentless campaign for social reform. It is on his role as a social reformer that this title to being a great man rests. Ranade had both the vision and the courage which the reformer needs, and in the circumstances in which he was born his vision was no small a virtue than his courage. That he developed a vision of the Prophet—I am using the word in the Jewish sense—cannot but be regarded as a matter of surprise if the time in which he was born is taken into account. Ranade was born in 1842 some 24 years after the battle of Kirkee which brought the Maratha Empire to an end. The downfall of the Maratha Empire evoked different feelings among different people. There were men like Nattu who served as accessories before the fact. There were some who played the part of accessories after the fact, inasmuch as they were happy that the cursed rule of the Brahmin Peshwa was brought to an end. But there can be no doubt that a large majority of the people of Maharashtra were stunned by the event. When the whole of India was enveloped by the advancing foreign horde and its people being subjugated piece by piece, here in this little corner of Maharashtra lived a sturdy race who knew what liberty was, who had fought for it inch by inch and established it over miles and miles. By the British conquest they had lost what was to them a most precious possession. One can quite imagine how the best intellect of Maharashtra had its mind utterly confounded and its horizon fully and completely darkened. What could be the natural reaction to so great a catastrophe? Can it be other than resignation, defeatism and surrender to the inevitable? How did Ranade react? Very differently. He held out the hope that the fallen shall rise. Indeed he developed a new faith on which this hope was founded. Let me quote his own words. He said :

“I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed. This country of ours is the true land of promise. This race of ours is the chosen race.”

He did not rest quiet by merely enunciating this new Mosaic Gospel of hope and confidence. He applied his mind to the question of the realization of this hope. The first requisite was of course a dispassionate analysis of the causes of this downfall. Ranade realized that the downfall was due to certain weaknesses in the Hindu social system and unless these weaknesses were

removed the hope could not be realized. The new gospel was therefore followed by a call to duty. That duty was no other than the duty to reform Hindu society. Social reform became therefore the one dominant purpose of his life. He developed a passion for social reform and there was nothing he did not do to promote it. His methods included meetings, missions, lectures, sermons, articles, interviews, letters—all carried, on with an unrelenting zeal. He established many societies. He founded many journals. But he was not content with this. He wanted something more permanent, something more systematic for promoting the cause of social reform. So he founded the Social Conference, an All-India Organization which ran as an adjunct to the Indian National Congress. Year after year the Conference met to discuss the social ills and to find the ways of remedying them, and year after year Ranade attended its annual sessions as though it was a pilgrimage and fostered the cause of social reform.

In fostering the cause of social reform Ranade showed great courage. Many people of this generation will perhaps laugh at such a claim. Courting prison has become an act of martyrdom in India. It is regarded both as a patriotic act and also as an act of courage. Most people who would otherwise be beneath notice and in whose case it could rightly be said that they were scoundrels who had taken to politics as their last refuge, have by going to prison become martyrs and have acquired a name and fame which, to say the least, is quite astounding. There would be some substance in this view, if prison life involved the rigours to which men like Tilak and those of his generation had been subjected. Prison life today has lost all its terrors. It has become a mere matter of detention. Political prisoners are no longer treated as criminals. They are placed in a separate class. There are no hardships to suffer, there is no reputation to lose and there is no privation to undergo. It calls for no courage. But even when prison life had, as in the time of Mr. Tilak, its rigours the political prisoners could make no claim to greater courage than a social reformer. Most people do not realize that society can practise tyranny and oppression against an individual in a far greater degree than a Government can. The means and scope that are open to society for oppression are more extensive than those that are open to Government, also they are far more effective. What punishment in the penal code is comparable in its magnitude and its severity to excommunication? Who has greater courage—the social reformer who challenges society and invites upon himself excommunication or the political prisoner who challenges Government and incurs sentence of a few months or a few years imprisonment? There is also another difference which is often lost sight of in estimating the courage shown by the social reformer and the political patriot. When the social reformer challenges society there is nobody to hail him a martyr. There is nobody even to befriend him. He is loathed and shunned. But when

the political patriot challenges Government he has whole society to support him. He is praised, admired and elevated as the saviour. Who shows more courage—The social reformer who fights alone or the political patriot who fights under the cover of vast mass of supporters? It would be idle to deny that Ranade showed courage in taking up the cause of social reform. Indeed he showed a high degree of courage. For let it be remembered that he lived in times when social and religious customs however gross and unmoral were regarded as sacrosanct and when any doubt questioning their divine and moral basis was regarded not merely as heterodoxy but as intolerable blasphemy and sacrilege.

V

His path as a reformer was not smooth. It was blocked from many sides. The sentiments of the people whom he wanted to reform were deeply rooted in the ancient past. They held the belief that their ancestors were the wisest and the noblest of men, and the social system which they had devised was of the most ideal character. What appeared to Ranade to be the shames and wrongs of the Hindu society were to them the most sacred injunctions of their religion. This was the attitude of the common man. The intelligentsia was divided into two schools—a school which was orthodox in its belief but unpolitical in its outlook, and a school which was modern in its beliefs but primarily political in its aims and objects. The former was led by Mr. Chiplunkar and the latter by Mr. Tilak. Both combined against Ranade and created as many difficulties for him as they could. They not only did the greatest harm to the cause of social reform, but as experience shows they have done the greatest harm to the cause of political reform in India. The unpolitical or the orthodox school believed in the Hegelian view—it is a puzzle to me—namely to realize the ideal and idealize the real. In this it was egregiously wrong. The Hindu religious and social system is such that you cannot go forward to give its ideal form a reality because the ideal is bad; nor can you attempt to elevate the real to the status of the ideal because the real, i.e., the existing state of affairs, is worse than worse could be. This is no exaggeration. Take the Hindu religious system or take the Hindu social system, and examine it from the point of social utility and social justice. It is said that religion is good when it is fresh from the mint. But Hindu religion has been a bad coin to start with. The Hindu ideal of society as prescribed by Hindu religion has acted as a most demoralizing and degrading influence on Hindu society. It is Nietzschean in its form and essence. Long before Nietzsche was born Manu had proclaimed the gospel which Nietzsche sought to preach. It is a religion which is not intended to establish liberty, equality and fraternity. It is a gospel which proclaims the worship of the superman—the Brahmin by the rest of the Hindu society. It propounds that the superman and his class alone are born to live and to rule. Others are born to serve

them, and to nothing more. They have no life of their own to live, and no right to develop their own personality. This has been the gospel of the Hindu Religion. Hindu philosophy, whether it is Vedanta, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaishashika, has moved in its own circle without in anyway affecting the Hindu religion. It has never had the courage to challenge this gospel. That Hindu philosophy that everything is Brahma remained only a matter of intellect. It never became a social philosophy. The Hindu philosophers had both their philosophy and their Manu held apart in two hands, the right not knowing what the left had. The Hindu is never troubled by their inconsistency. As to their social system, can things be worst ? The Caste system is in itself a degenerate form of the Chaturvarnya which is the ideal of the Hindu. How can anybody who is not a congenital idiot accept Chaturvarnya as the ideal form of society ? Individually and socially it is a folly and a crime. One class and one class alone to be entitled to education and learning! One class and one class alone to be entitled to arms! One class and one class alone to trade! One class and one class alone to serve! For the individual the consequences are obvious. Where can you find a learned man who has no means of livelihood who will not degrade his education? Where can you find a soldier with no education and culture who will use his arms to conserve and not to destroy ? Where can you find a merchant with nothing but the acquisitive instinct to follow who will not descend to the level of the brute ? Where can you find the servant who is not to acquire education, who is not to own arms and who is not to possess other means of livelihood to be a man as his maker intended him to be ? If baneful to the individual it makes society vulnerable. It is not enough for a social structure to be good for a fair weather. It must be able to weather the storm. Can the Hindu caste system stand the gale and the wind of an aggression ? It is obvious that it cannot. Either for defence or for offence a society must be able to mobilize its forces. With functions and duties exclusively distributed and immutably assigned, what way is there for mobilization ? Ninety per cent of the Hindus— Brahmins, Vaishyas and Shudras—could not bear arms under the Hindu social system. How can a country be defended if its army cannot be increased in the hour of its peril. It is not Buddha who, as is often alleged, weakened Hindu society by his gospel of non-violence. It is the Brahminic theory of Chaturvarnya that has been responsible not only for the defeat but for the decay of Hindu society. Some of you will take offence at what I have said about the demoralizing effect of the Hindu socio-religious ideal on Hindu society. But what is the truth ? Can the charge be denied ? Is there any society in the world which has unapproachables, unshadowables and unseeables ? Is there any society which has got a population of Criminal Tribes ? Is there a society in which there exists today primitive people, who live in jungles, who do not know even to clothe themselves ? How many do they count in numbers ? Is it a matter of hundreds, is it a matter of thousands ? I wish they numbered

a paltry few. The tragedy is that they have to be counted in millions, millions of Untouchables, millions of Criminal Tribes, millions of Primitive Tribes!! One wonders whether the Hindu civilization, is civilization or infamy? This is about the ideal. Turn now to the state of things as it existed when Ranade came on the scene. It is impossible to realize now the state of degradation they had reached when the British came on the scene and with which the reformers like Ranade were faced. Let me begin with the condition of the intellectual class. The rearing and guiding of a civilization must depend upon its intellectual class—upon the lead given by the Brahmins. Under the old Hindu Law the Brahmin enjoyed the benefit of the clergy and not be hanged even if he was guilty of murder, and the East India Company allowed him the privilege till 1817. That is no doubt because he was the salt of the Earth. Was there any salt left in him? His profession had lost all its nobility. He had become a pest. The Brahmin systematically preyed on society and profited in religion. The *Puranas* and *Shastras* which he manufactured in tons are treasure trove of sharp practices which the Brahmins employed to befool, beguile and swindle the common mass of poor, illiterate and superstitious Hindus. It is impossible in this address to give references to them. I can only refer to the coercive measures which the Brahmins had sanctified as proper to be employed against the Hindus to the encashment of their rights and privileges. Let those who want to know read the preamble to Regulation XXI of 1795. According to it whenever a Brahmin wanted to get anything which could not be willingly got from his victim, he resorted to various coercive practices—lacerating his own body with knives and razors or threatening to swallow some poison were the usual tricks he practised to carry out his selfish purposes. There were other ways employed by the Brahmin to coerce the Hindus which were as extraordinary as they were shameless. A common practice was the erection in front of the house of his victim of the *koorh*—a circular enclosure in which a pile of wood was placed—within the enclosure an old woman was placed ready to be burnt in the *koorh* if his object was not granted. The second device of such a kind was the placing of his women and children in the sight of his victim and threaten to behead them. The third was the Dhurna—starving on the doorstep of the victim. This is nothing. Brahmins had started making claims for a right to deflower the women of non-Brahmins. The practice prevailed in the family of the Zamorin of Calicut and among the Vallabhachari sect of Vaishnavas. What depths of degradation the Brahmins had fallen to! If, as the Bible says, the salt has lost its flavour wherewith shall it be salted? No wonder the Hindu Society had its moral bonds loosened to a dangerous point. The East India Company had in 1819 to pass a Regulation (VII of 1819) to put a stop to this moral degeneracy. The preamble to the Regulation says that women were employed wholesale to entice and take away the wives or female children for purposes of prostitution, and it was common practice

among husbands and fathers to desert their families and children. Public conscience there was none, and in the absence of conscience it was futile to expect moral indignation against the social wrongs. Indeed the Brahmins were engaged in defending every wrong for the simple reason that they lived on them. They defended Untouchability which condemned millions to the lot of the helot. They defended caste, they defended female child marriage and they defended enforced widowhood—the two great props of the Caste system. They defended the burning of widows, and they defended the social system of graded inequality with its rule of hypergamy which led the Rajputs to kill in their thousands the daughters that were born to them. What shames! What wrongs! Can such a society show its face before civilized nations? Can such a society hope to survive? Such were the questions which Ranade asked. He concluded that on only one condition it could be saved—namely, rigorous social reform.

VI

His greatest opponents however came from the political school of the intelligentsia. These politicals developed a new thesis. According to that thesis political reform was to have precedence over social reform. The thesis was argued from platform to platform and was defended by eminent people like Mr. Justice Telang, a Judge of the Bombay High Court, with the consummate skill of an acute lawyer. The thesis caught the imagination of the people. If there was one single cause to which the blocking of the Social Reform movement could be attributed, it was this cry of political reform. The thesis is unsupportable, and I have no doubt that the opponents of Ranade were wrong and in pursuing it did not serve the best interests of the country. The grounds on which Mr. Justice Telang defended the Politicians' thesis were of course logical. But he totally forgot that logic is not reason, and analogy is not argument. Neither did he have a correct understanding of the inter-relation between the "social" and the "political" which Ranade had. Let us examine the reasons for the thesis. Those that were advanced were not very impressive. But I am prepared to meet the most impressive arguments that could be advanced. Even then the thesis will not stand. The following strike me as being the most impressive. In the first place, it could be said that we want political power first because we want to protect the rights of the people. This answer proceeds from a very frugal theory of Government as was propounded by the American statesman Jefferson according to whom politics was only an affair of policing by the State so that that the rights of people were maintained without disturbance. Assume that the theory is a sound one. The question is, what is there for the State to police if there are no rights? Rights must exist before policing becomes a serious matter of substance. The thesis that political reform should precede social reform becomes on the face of it an absurd proposition, unless the idea is that the Government is to protect those who have vested rights and to penalize those

who have none. The second ground that could be urged in support of the thesis is that they wanted political power because they wanted to confer on each individual certain fundamental rights by law and that such conferring of the political rights could not take place unless there was political power first obtained. This of course sounds very plausible. But is there any substance in it? The idea of fundamental rights has become a familiar one since their enactment in the American Constitution and in the Constitution, framed by Revolutionary France. The idea of making a gift of fundamental rights to every individual is no doubt very laudable. The question is how to make them effective? The prevalent view is that once rights are enacted in a law then they are safeguarded. This again is an unwarranted assumption. As experience proves, rights are protected not by law but by the social and moral conscience of society. If social conscience is such that it is prepared to recognize the rights which law chooses to enact, rights will be safe and secure. But if the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no Law, no Parliament, no Judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the word. What is the use of the fundamental rights to the Negroes in America, to the Jews in Germany and to the Untouchables in India? As Burke said, there is no method found for punishing the multitude. Law can punish a single solitary recalcitrant criminal. It can never operate against a whole body of people who are determined to defy it. Social conscience—to use the language of Coleridge—that calm incorruptible legislator of the soul without whom all other powers would “meet in mere oppugnancy—is the only safeguard of all rights fundamental or non-fundamental.”

The third argument of the politicals could be based on the right to self-Government. That self-Government is better than good Government is a well-known cry. One cannot give it more value than one can give to a slogan, and all would like to be assured that self-Government would also be a good Government. There is no doubt that the politicals wanted good Government and their aim was to establish a democratic form of Government. But they never stopped to consider whether a democratic form of Government was possible. Their contention was founded on a series of fallacies. A democratic form of Government presupposes a democratic form of society. The formal framework of democracy is of no value and would indeed be a misfit if there was no social democracy. The politicals never realized that democracy was not a form of Government : it was essentially a form of society. It may not be necessary for a democratic society to be marked by unity, by community of purpose, by loyalty to public ends and by mutuality of sympathy. But it does unmistakably involve two things. The first is an attitude of mind, an attitude of respect and equality towards their fellows. The second is a social organization free from rigid social barriers. Democracy is incompatible and inconsistent with isolation and exclusiveness, resulting in the distinction

between the privileged and the unprivileged. Unfortunately, the opponents of Ranade were never able to realize the truth of this fact.

One may judge it by any test and it will be found that the stand that Ranade took in this controversy and his plan of work were correct and fundamental to if they were not the pre-requisites of political reform. Ranade argued that there were no rights in the Hindu society which the moral sense of man could recognize. There were privileges and disabilities, privileges for a few and disabilities for a vast majority. Ranade struggled to create rights. Ranade wanted to vitalize the conscience of the Hindu society which had become moribund as well morbid. Ranade aimed to create a real social democracy, without which there could be no sure and stable politics. The conflict was between two opposing points of view and it centred round the question which is more important for the survival of a nation, political freedom or. strong moral fiber. Ranade took the view that moral stamina was more important than political freedom. This was also the view of Lecky the great historian who after a careful and comparative study of history came to the conclusion that :

“The foundation of a Nation’s strength and prosperity is laid in pure domestic life, in commercial integrity, in a high standard of moral worth, and of public spirit, in simple habits, in courage, uprightness, and a certain soundness and moderation of judgment which springs quite as much from character as from intellect. If you would form a wise judgment of the future of a nation, observe carefully whether these qualities are increasing or decaying. Observe carefully what qualities count for most in public life. Is character becoming of greater or less importance? Are the men who obtain the highest posts in the nation men of whom, in private life, irrespective of party competent judges speak with genuine respect? Are they of sincere convictions, consistent lives and indisputable integrity? It is by observing this current that you can best cast the horoscope of a nation.”

Ranade was not only wise but he was also logical. He told his opponents against playing the part of Political Radicals and Social Tories. In clear and unmistakable terms he warned them saying :

“You cannot be liberal by halves. You cannot be liberal in politics and conservative in religion. The heart and the head must go together. You cannot cultivate your intellect, enrich your mind, enlarge the sphere of your political rights and privileges, and at the same time keep your hearts closed and cramped. It is an idle dream to expect men to remain enchained and ensnaked in their own superstition and social evils, while they are struggling hard to win rights and privileges from their rulers. Before long these vain dreamers will find their dreams lost.”

Experience has shown that these words of Ranade have been true, even prophetic. Let those who deny this consider : Where are we today in politics