CHAPTER V
PARTITION OF BENGAL

Lord Curzon:—

The Shakespearian aphorism—‘The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones’—applies with somewhat like an uncanny vengeance upon Lord Curzon. He is chiefly remembered in this part of the country as the author of the Partition of Bengal. Few of us realise as they pass through some of our ancient cities rich with the memory of a hoary past and where every mouldering stone is a chronicle, that it is his scholarly insight and sympathy that has saved these from the ravages of time. He has exhumed works of glorious workmanship for which every Indian takes a legitimate pride. We forget that as Viceroy he sought to instil into the mind of every Britisher in India that he would rather run the risk of incurring the organised displeasure of the entire European
Community, than allow the honour of an Indian woman howsoever humble to be violated with impunity or leave justice unvindicated.* One other beautiful feature of his character, all the more beautiful because of its rarity, was that he used to see to judge things for himself and not through ears as is usually the case with plenipotentiaries. He was wide awake to the bare details of administration and no viceroy has ever

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* An Indian woman in Burma was raped by some British soldiers in consequence of which she died. The military authorities assisted by the civil officials tried to hush up the matter. Whisper of this reached Lord Curzon. He ordered prosecution, but it broke down on technical grounds. But he was bent upon punishing the miscreants by a departmental enquiry. The culprits were dismissed from the army; high military officers were severely censured and some of them relieved of their commands; the entire regiment was banished to Eden with leave and other indulgences suspended for two years; the civil officials also came in for some hard knocks for their negligence and apathy.

The following year, two troopers of 9th Lancers of Sialkot had beaten a native cook for his refusal to procure an Indian woman for them. The man succumbed
responded to human considerations with such an amazing promptness as he used to do. I was told in my boyhood that as in one of his tours Curzon noticed from his special train the peculiar inconveniences insulting to a degree, he peremptorily ordered third class railway compartments to be provided with that elementary amenity of water closets. The same calousness continues, but never has such sympathy been shown. Everything said for and against, History shall never fail to pass one unassailable verdict that even those who felt either on question of principle or cause personal or public, most irritated to the injuries a few days after. The matter, as usual, was hushed up. But when Lord Curzon came to Sialkot, somehow or other he came to hear of it in a vague, indefinite manner. He at once saw to it that the Commander-in-chief instituted an enquiry. Failing detection, collective punishment was inflicted upon the Regiment to the displeasure of the entire European community. Even after three long years, it manifested itself in all its nakedness at the time of the Delhi Durbar, when the 9th Lancers passed by Lord Curzon amid a "storm of cheering", to quote his own words, from the European Group.
against him, shall not breathe a protest to what he himself claimed as having "loved righteousness and hated inequity much above his fellows." Yes, much very much above his fellows. But the Nemesis is proverbially jealous.

If he was brilliant, he was none the less bellicose. If he has painstakingly preserved the ancient monuments of India, he has installed that astounding fiction the Black hole in Calcutta. If he has fought tooth and nail and to the prejudice of his own position against the Home Government for saddling India with the huge expense of a Ball to the Sultan of Turkey and in its attempt to shift the burden of expenses incurred to entertain the Indian visitors to the coronation of Edward VII in London, he plunged India into an unconscionable depletion of the exchequer for the pomp and grandeur of a Delhi Durbar, when, "for days the eye was dazzled and the senses sated with the brilliance and colour
of an unending pageant"* while in the dismal background we have millions of Indians groping in darkness, because, the Government cannot afford to spend for primary education and thousands die like flies in summer with parched throats for want of drinking water, people being compelled to drink water that a well-trained pig would not. Again with everything that constitutes a gentleman, he was given to too much of gasconading and what is fatal in a ruler, he used to think aloud. He once said that Indians by their environment, heritage and upbringing were unequal to the responsibilities of high office under British Rule. I hope, I am doing no injustice to any when I say, that this is the view of average Englishman flushed with the insolence of the ruling caste. But, what he does, is that he gives vent to it, when he has to, in the language of the Sermons of the Mount. Is it what made Churchill

* Ronaldshay—Life of Curzon.
observe in his Great Contemporaries that Curzon could not go to the topmost because he was too much of a gentleman? Did he, one may ask, violate the Imperialistic formula—Preach it not in the streets of Ascolin?* I suppose it is so. His notorious Calcutta Convocation address dwelling on the Ethics of the East and West, will live as a piece of monumental folly. He partitioned Bengal, but could hardly conceal the fact that it was to divide the two major communities, the Hindus and Mahomedans in twain and make this Divide and Rule the sheet-anchor of administration. It is, however, seriously worth considering whether for the subject-people there is anything to choose between a Curzon who partitioned Bengal and a Hardinge who annulled it. Curzon's new province

* As a commentary one may recall that Baldwin desired Churchill to observe the Gandhian vow of silence at least during the Passage of India Bill in the House of Commons.
East Bengal and Assam was designed to be 60% Mahomedan and 40% Hindu. Has not Hardinge worked out, roughly speaking, identical percentage for the whole of Bengal? Sylhet, Cachar and Goalpara already gone to Assam (1874), Singbhoom and Manbhoom gone to Behar (1911), does not Bengal stand fatally dismembered for the European group to dance communalism at its worst? Over and above, is not she economically hit beyond redemption?

In 1905, Curzon proposed to tack in to the province of Assam the districts of Dacca and Mymensing and the whole of Chittagong Division and make it a new province, East Bengal and Assam. There was an indignant protest in the country, Hindus and Mahomedans joining hands. Curzon resorted to a ruse, the same old game. He engaged his protege to win over public opinion of West Bengal. Fraser invited the leading gentry of West Bengal in the
Belvedre and the burden of his song was—'Look here gentlemen, have not you been noticing that people coming from East Bengal have been usurping all the Government posts? What chance is left for your children?' Curzon himself undertook a tour in East Bengal to wean, failing which to overawe public opinion. The first rebuff he met was from Maharaja Suryya Kanta Achariya of Mymensing. He told the Viceroy straight in his face that he could not lend himself open prejudicially to the interest of his country. Curzon now revealed himself unabashed. Brazen-faced attempts were made to alienate the Mahomedans from the Hindus. The new province was to be preponderatingly Mahomedan, the Mahomedans would dominate the Council, the Government services and other patronages would be on the basis of population*

* Alas for the shade of Khoda Bux who expressed it in brutal rather non-urban frankness.
etc. etc. The estrangement between the two communities on acute communal lines as antagonistic to a broad national outlook chiefly dates from this period. And, since then we have not scrupled to pawn away the freedom of this country in return for brokerage in terms of crumbs of loaves and fishes, worse still, for frippery and tinsel or blank cartidges. It is interesting to recall that the tendency to nurse and fan up communalism by the Administration took such appallingly deep roots in the soil that Morley as Secretary of State for India could not help commenting upon it in one of his letters to Minto, Curzon’s successor. "I only respectfully remind you once more", says he, "that it was your early speech about their (Mahomedans’) extra claims that first started the Mahomedan hare." The author of Cromwell, Burke and Gladstone, it may be observed in passing, was like Macaulay’s Steele spending his
ment who condemned the hasty action of Curzon be antagonised. But there was no gainsaying the fact that the ball was already set rolling. It was like a spark igniting the country ablaze. Surendra Nath was never in a fix. He only bided his time and responded to the demand—nothing short of this retaliatory measure would satisfy Bengal. Aurobindo Ghose gave up his job, a prized one, at Baroda, came down to Calcutta to serve motherland and began preaching in his own incisive way a new doctrine envisaging cultural revolt. Yet, paradoxical as it seems, Romain Rolland describes Aurobindo as the completest synthesis of the genius of the East and West.

The press, the platform and processions were the three vehicles through which the Gospel of Boycott was preached. Volunteers split themselves up into different groups. Each group as the day broke sang round each mahallah national songs. Robindra Nath, Dwijendra
Lal, Rajani Sen, Kabyavisarad, and bards hitherto unknown came out with soul-stirring hymns. A new blood seems to have been infused into the lyrics of Bengal. People, accustomed to a rather placid domesticity, used to get up in the morning moulded unawares. Motherland was elevated to the pedestal of Divinity.

Gradually our women-folk came out of their seclusion to attend meetings and to take the vow of Swadeshi. The shops were picketed and it was not without some difficulty that a man could purchase British-made cloth or Liverpool salt. Even if a man succeeded to have it, he could not escape ridicule or reprehension. The Government no longer viewed the movement with indifference, but resorted to repression. This in turn intensified the desire for boycott stimulating industrial development on one hand and deflected the movement into dark, perilous chanels of anarchism on the other.
What stiff, bitter fight Bengal fought in espousing Swadeshi may be guessed from the fact that in those days, Bombay alone had some weaving mills and the mill-owners there not only raised the price of cloth to staggering heights, but passed off foreign cloth as Swadeshi. This was more deadly, more insidious than the Police batons and all that a Beaurocracy could devise to throttle Swadeshi. If what Herr Hitler indicates in his Meincamp that, Industry and Trade can only flourish as long as a national conciousness with high ideals provides the necessary setting, has any significance, the rest of India may well pause to reflect what it owes Bengal even in the matter of Industry. It may again be a piece of information to many that the Indian Leaders outside Bengal viewed this move with indifference bordering on apathy. The congress of 1905 clearly avoids the major issue and makes reference to what the people of Bengal were doing and opines that it is
perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them; and this too under President Gokhale's pressure. One full year passed by in the course of which there have been lathi-charges, imprisonments, stationing of Goorkha and Punitive Police and communal passions worked up to frenzied excesses that the Congress of 1906 blessed the move as legitimate. It must, however, be acknowledged that the two statery granite Tilak and Lajpat Rai were with Bengal from the beginning helping History being made by minority with conviction.

Two amongst the Provincial satraps of India will outlive the vagaries of time as having most unwittingly helped our cause. One is Bamfield Fuller, the first Lieutenant Governor of East Bengal and Assam and the other Michael O’Dyer of the Punjab of a much later day—the former for his foolish and febrile idiosyncracies and the latter for clenched teeth and iron claws. Fuller was sent with the avowed object of
stamping out the new spirit in East Bengal. He began his rule by doing everything conceivable and inconceivable to divide the Hindus and Mohamedans. He prohibited the students from joining political meetings and processions. But for the masterful personality of Ashutosh Mookherjea many a school would have been wiped out of existence. Stopping the grant-in-aid was only a normal order of things. Fuller’s subordinates treated with contumely trusted leaders and many of them were called upon to serve as special constables.

These silly outbursts of Fuller unleashed hooligan forces. Comilla and Jamalpur were at the mercy of plundering mob with a communal setting. The virus infected even the Judicial Tribunal and the Calcutta High Court took exception to the conduct of the Sessions Judge of Comilla in King Emperor vs Nibaran Chandra Roy and others for his preconcieved sympathies with the
Mohamedans and set aside the death-sentence. There was another feature of the case which cannot escape attention. One Mukbul Ahmed lodged the first information and after the first sentence of the first information was recorded, he was taken from the Police Station to the European Club and thence to the Circuit House and there the Court Inspector completed the record of the first Information in presence of the Commissioner Chittagong Division, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police. But the official vagaries reached a fever-heat in dispersing the Barisal Conference that met in April, 1906.

In the Industrial Exhibition as an annexe to the Calcutta Congress of 1906, there was a picture that always drew a very large crowd. The picture was that of a father with hands on the head of his son bleeding with wounds, depicting the cowardly attack upon the boy by the custodians of Law and Order at Barisal.
The father as drawn in the picture was addressing his countrymen to stick fast to boycott and the son with marks of violence writ large on his person was nevertheless smiling, to eloquently signify 'Repression notwithstanding'. The back-ground of the picture was the memorable Barisal Conference. The father in the picture is Monoranjan Guha Thakurta and the son, Chittaranjan.

They chose to disobey:—The order of the Magistrate was not to take out any procession without license. Apparently the authorities wanted to withhold permission and stop any demonstration. They could not anticipate that the leaders would rise equal to any emergency and could ever choose to disobey. Surendra Nath himself led the procession of the delegates to the pandal of the Conference. On the way the police attacked the procession at the rear. But the delegates refused to disperse at the bidding of the Superintendent of Police. Chittaranjan, the boy in
the picture referred to above, was thrown into a tank and though was being beaten black and blue, he continued to shout 'Bandemataram'. The order of the Leader was to move on, unmoved at any torture that might be inflicted on them. But the sight was too much for Surendra Nath and he wanted to precipitate the crisis, and so did the Superintendent of Police—possibly it was a bit too unsightly for him as well. As they met face to face, Surendra Nath broke out "Spare these gentlemen, spare yourself the cowardly conduct; I am responsible for the procession, do what you like with me." Surendra Nath was arrested. "March on", said he to the vast concourse that was following him, "March on to your destination, do not flinch, but, do not retaliate". It was on this occasion, to anticipate the proceedings of the Conference, Bhupendra Nath Bose made that historic pronouncement—'It is the beginning of the end of British rule in India'; Keshto
Kumar Mitter refused to budge an inch and sat tight prepared to be shot dead on the spot, but was prevailed upon to leave the pandal in view of the decision arrived at, that the Conference should break up, so many ladies and children having assembled there. Surendra Nath was taken to the house of Emerson, the District Magistrate, to stand his trial. As he was about to take his seat in a chair close by, the Magistrate flew up into a rage, "You are a prisoner here" said he, "You must stand"; "But I thought", retorted Surendra Nath, "I had come to the house of a gentleman". For this contempt of court he was fined Rs. 200/- and another Rs. 200/- for leading an unlicensed procession. Seventeen years after, Surendra Nath as Minister-in-charge appointed Emerson President of the Calcutta Improvement Trust. Nature laughed in her sleeves but who the conqueror was, who the conquered is, remains yet to be determined. The conquered might have only stooped to conquer!
However, to resume, the delegates were enjoined and they faithfully obeyed their leader in avoiding even a walking stick with them; still there was this wanton attack. It is, to say the least of it, an enormity that makes one’s blood boil with indignation. But the foolishness of the powers that be, has always accelerated beyond computation a nation’s progress for freedom. This dispersal of Barisal Conference marks the parting of ways. It gives birth to a more robust type of nationalism based on what we have indicated before a cultural revolt enunciated by Aurobindo Ghosh, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Bepin Chandra Pal. It manifested itself openly in the Surat split. At Surat they were in a hopeless minority and their voice, if I may say so without any irreverence, was like a voice in the wilderness. Pheroze Shah Mehta characterised it as ‘whining’. They were expelled from the Congress particularly at the instance of Gokhale. Surendra Nath
was opposed to this drastic step, but he was weak enough to yield to it. He was too sensitive to suffer to be interpreted that he countenanced a cleavage in the Congress, because Aurobindo, Tilak and Lajpat Rai idolised him for his launching the boycott and Civil Resistance in Bengal. But he repaired the wrong by drawing them in the fold of the Congress by all the necessary pressure he brought to bear upon the leaders particularly upon Ambika Charan Mazumder, the President-Elect of the Lucknow Congress, who extended to them a personal invitation as well. But if historical perspective is to be respected, we should not hesitate to admit that their expulsion from the Congress gave a handle to the Administration to deal harshly with them. And, there was some kind of chuckling in the inner circle of Congress High Commands over their prosecution. If any one would care to read the Bengalee of those days, one can at once find out what respect Surendra
Nath bore them. It was the burden of his editorial in season and out of season that if there was anything needed to fill up the omission, the Beaurocracy supplied it by giving them the crown of martyrdom. Be that as it may, Nevinson of the Manchester Guardian who was present at the Surat Congress has embalmed in his book 'New Era in India' his impression of this first impact of the two opposing schools of Indian politics. He feelingly recalls the pregnant prophecy of Geothe at the cannonade at Valmy that 'he saw the close the old and the birth of a new order of things.'

As we are from now at a distinctive cross-road in the History of our National Evolution, we deem it proper to make a passing reference to that historic figure Robindra Nath Tagore. Robindra Nath. is the prophet of that cultural revolt which has redeemed the political awakening of India in the wake of Partition of Bengal fizzling away. His
contribution to reconstruct this Nation in the chaotic stage of development is too often lost sight of in the fact of his being a poet of transcendental greatness. Tilak was constitutionally opposed to what is uncharitably called the mendicant policy of the Moderates. He minced no matters, ploughed a lonely furrow, but could not suggest anything definite to replace the old line of action. He was too much of a revivalist as to be interpreted, quite wrongly we must say, for being out to found a Hindu Raj. Aurobindo Ghose only believed in immolating oneself on the altar of sacrifice. 'Suffer and she (motherland) shall rejoice' is the one slogan that crystallises his political creed. But, it was not before Robindra Nath put forward his clear-cut-constructive suggestions that the neo-nationalist school found a plank to stand upon. To exhaust even a summary of these is beyond the scope of this book; one can only attempt to illustrate by touching the central idea. He is the first
to strike the pivotal note:—"The problem of India is the problem of her village: revitalize the village and the Nation will grow and the Nation will live." "Even in ancient days" says he, "when there was no conflict of interest between the king (rashtra) and the society, it was the duty of society primarily to impart and control the education of the country: now that there is such a pronounced antagonism between the ruler and the ruled, how much more incumbent is it upon us to take up the education of our youths; fancy, we ask of our rulers to give us a training as will enable us to disyoke ourselves from their bondage."

He has himself tackled in a practical manner what is loosely called 'untouchability' and the question of questions the Hindu-Moslem unity. If attempts were made to rebuild the village in the lines he suggested, much of the bitter, irritating dissensions that have divided our House and which alone supply the nucleus to a
small oligarchy to dance to the tune of Beaurocracy to barter away the freedom of this country, could never have reared their head. At Santi-Niketan there is no such thing as Hindoo, Moslem or Untouchable. Yet, such is the strange irony of fate in this land of contradictions that the charge of communalism is also laid at the door of this great savant.

Robindra Nath Tagore has been in the field of Indian politics the apostle of self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control blended in one self-reliance 'leading to sovereign power.' It is happy to feel that he lives to see the dawn of a day when the seed he had sown so much ahead his time has germinated and the seedling bids fair to grow up into a fine tree. It is again a matter of supreme satisfaction that what he wrote in sober prose on political subjects is gaining in weight of gold with the efflux of time. The goal is distant, the pilgrimage is long and weary, but the future nationalist who
wants to serve his country not in the 'lacquered splendour' of the council-chambers, but in the tongueless obscurity of remote villages, animated by the one passion of uniting a people of conflicting creeds into one Nation, will have in these writings enough to sustain him.

After the Barisal episode, attempts were made by the new school to challenge the leadership of the old congress leaders and that of Surendra Nath Banerjea in particular. Though Robindra Nath was inclined intellectually to the general view point of this new school on other matters, he felt impelled from a sense of duty to utter a note of warning which bears repetition:—'If you want to quarrel', says he, 'it behoves you to shout; but if you want to fight you need a General; I invite my countrymen to gather together and publicly acknowledge Surendra Nath as our Leader'. What that leadership connoted is again emphasised by Dr. P. C. Ray, himself of
the Gandhi school, in his 'Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist', long after the spell that gathered round Surendranath had worn out. Referring to the part Bengal played in the Partition days Dr. Ray says—"Fortunately for Bengal, her destiny was then in the keeping of able leaders, under the guidance of Surendra Nath Banerje".

In June 1909, Surendra Nath went to England to represent the Indian Press in the Imperial Press Conference. He sought to impress upon the English people at home the extent of discontent in India so that they might bring to bear upon the British Parliament the necessary pressure to effect some changes in the 'too iron, too wooden, too inelastic' Constitution of India. This visit of Surendra Nath was an eminent success and the following observation of William Stead as Editor of the "Review of Reviews" will be read with a loving concern by every Indian—"He
was the only representative of the Indian Press at the Conference and none of the Editors of the Empire excelled him in eloquence, energy, geniality and personal charm."

Lord Morley as Secretary of State for India felt that he owed his Party to indicate a gesture of good will. Any make-shift, nay the apology of something might allay suspicion and restore the confidence of the people. Morley, yoked to Minto,—a square peg in a round hole—ushered into existence Councils, which were no better than glorified Debating Societies. I am afraid, I cannot in toto subscribe to the orthodox convention that Minto was a clog in the wheel of progress. No one can forget that Morley did not scruple to mock the very idea of Home Rule in India in a line with Irish Home Rule and characterised it to be as ridiculous to suggest, that if a fur-coat was good in Ireland, it could be as good in the tropics of India. With one
foot in the grave, he could not, at the inauguration of the Reforms by his erstwhile Under Secretary of State, foresee within the ken of human vision anything like Self-Government in India. But the pleasures of influence and publicity, the Reforms made room for, were too strong baits for people of a subject race and there was once again that sickening hiccup of jubilation in the country. Surendra Nath as a dismissed Government servant was disqualified to contest the election. But Sir Edward Baker, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, at once removed his disqualification. Surendra Nath, however, did not avail himself of the opportunity and stuck fast to his resolve to boycott the Council till the Partition of Bengal was annulled.

Lord Hardinge:—The Liberal Ministry sent Lord Hardinge to deal with India. A public meeting with the representatives of all the Districts of Bengal was announced to be held in Calcutta
to give the new Viceroy an idea of the feelings in the country with regard to the Partition of Bengal. Lord Hardinge called in Mr. Banerjea to the Government House. As Lord Hardinge argued that a memorial would better serve the purpose than a meeting, Surendra Nath replied "Yes, if your Excellency would look into that personally; the officers of the Government have again and again been consulted, it is time for the Leaders of the Nation to be consulted". Lord Hardinge agreed to receive the memorial and promised to look to things for himself. Surendra Nath and Ambika Charan Mazumder drew up the memorial and submitted it on the 25th June. Only two months later, on the 25th August, 1911, the Government of Lord Hardinge sent a despatch to the Secretary of State for India urging the annulment of the Partition of Bengal. Some of the very arguments of the Memorial were embodied in the Despatch.
Ambika Charan Mazumdar has from time to time been referred to. Dr. Sitaramayya has conceded this ex-president the noble space of six and half lines in the official History of the Congress, he worked so hard to build up. Like many a great man of Bengal, he passed his early life in hardships and squalor. ‘Slow rises worth by poverty depressed’, but it rises all the same and he rose to an eminence that the child of plenty and opportunities may do well to envy. In politics he identified himself completely with Surendra Nath and was always outspoken in his expressions. In the Delhi War Conference, convened by Lord Chelmsford, he told the Viceroy that if England would not have pursued the policy of distrust in India, her contribution to the War, great as it was, would have been still greater. And, he quoted Burke—‘A great Empire and a mean mind go ill together’. We have indicated before, how he had
urged Surendranath to resort to withholding co-operation to the Government and make it a live issue for general acceptance. I would cut short, and sum him up by saying that he was an Extremist amongst Moderates and a Moderate amongst Extremists for all that the terms imply. And, no obituary note was so appropriate as what Amrita Bazar Patrika said, that ‘he was a Lion amongst men’.

In his old age, as I too often saw him to listen to his narration of the rise and growth of the Indian Nation, he glided to the part Surendra Nath Banerjea played single-handed. I marvelled not so much at his loyalty as at his conviction which was a part and parcel of his being that to leave out Surendra Nath Banerjea in the History of our National Evolution is to leave out the Prince of Denmark in the play of Hamlet. He told me, that when in 1878 Surendra Nath visited Northern India, the most
U. P. of to-day, not to speak of other provinces, was so benighted, that he was at some pains to inspire even those later-day, sturdy fighters like Pundit Ayodhyanath, Pundit Sambhunath and others to devote their spare moments to the cause of the country. Pundit Ayodhyanath was so mightily impressed that he offered to finance a daily Paper to educate the people in the lines Surendra Nath suggested. I thought that the statement was the pardonable excess, hero-worship leads to. But when this book was in the Press, I found full corroboration of this particular matter in Kesto K. Mitter’s autobiography. As I have come by this book, I cannot resist the temptation to refer to one other thing of some importance sadly reflecting on our national character. One day I stuck up courage to the sticking point and desired to know from Ambika Charan Mazumdar how it was that a certain class of people were used to insinuate that Surendra Nath had
misappropriated the National Fund. The old man flared up, but he soon regained his calm and with a serene smile told me the history of the National Fund. The matter has been fully dealt with in Mitter’s autobiography. I cannot do better than quote two relevant passages. “The public condemned the action of High Court (Surendra Nath’s imprisonment in the Contempt case) and collected a sum of Rs. 17,000/- for Surendra Nath. Surendra Nath refused to take the money for himself but created a National Fund and had a Board of Trustees appointed. The Board purchased Government Papers. As the Indian Association publishes its Report every year, we find in it that Rs. 17,000/- is still intact and only the interest is being spent for political works”—Pages 123/124. Later on at page 258 we read a graphic description of that fateful day when the fiat of Lord Curzon divided Bengal and people in their thousands met in the house of
Pasupati Bose of Baghbazar. "In response to a stirring appeal that Surendra Nath made, money began pouring in. Kumar Monmatho Nath Mitter, grandson of late Raja Digambor Mitter, spread out his chadar and within a very short time about Rs. 50,000/- was collected. Kumar Monmatha Nath Mitter went about to some other places of Calcutta and within a few days collected another Rs. 20,000/-" He then gives an account as to how the money was being employed and then remarks—"A class of people in Bengal were too prone to speak ill of Surendra Nath Benerjea and Bhupendra Nath Bose. They used to circulate that Surendra Nath and Bhupendranath had between themselves misappropriated the money. Every year an account of that Fund is being published. Parfulla Nath Tagore, the wellknown Zamindar of Calcutta is the trustee of that fund and the amount is in deposit in the Bank in his name." I quote Keshta Kp Mitter in extenso not so much
because he commits to a statement of facts in writing, but because there is none so bold in Bengal, not even the political swell who would take bravado for fearlessness, can ever breathe that Keshta K. Mitter would state a thing if he was not satisfied with a full and perfect knowledge of his own as to its truth. The regret is that the gossip is not confined to the rifraff that gather in the grocer's shop for idle talk, but that people who are supposed to know better often allow such gossip to spread about as mere claptraps. We regret this tendency all the more, because unfounded aspersions against National Leaders shall have the one fatal result that people of the right type would twice hesitate to deal with funds so indispensable for any cause. As I close the topic 'Partition of Bengal,' I cannot help noticing one particular fact. Each of the Districts of Bengal in those days could claim as its Leader the giant of a man—Ambika Charan Mozumdar of Faridpur, Atwini K.
Dutt of Barisal, Ananda C. Roy of Dacca, Anath Bandhu Guha of Mymensingh, Jatra Mohan Sen of Chittagong and Baikunta Nath Sen of Berhampore. As I look at this galaxy, I cannot resist the sigh of a question, 'What explains the dearth of such men now'?

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT:—

It is time, we refer to the revolutionary movement of Bengal. Surendra Nath bewailed it as a tragedy 'grim, futile and purposeless.' But the question can only be tackled by going straight to the root, why it is there? I would sum up this 'Why' with a very simple illustration. Just a few years back, I was passing by the magnificent buildings of the General Hospital, Calcutta, with a girl barely twelve. To her query I said that Indian patients are not admitted into that hospital. No question so relevant whether it is a private or Government institution, she at once asked me, as
though urged by the premial sensitiveness of human intelligence, "Is it because we are not free in our own land"? I was taken aback, and since then I have carefully analysed and the one and the only conclusion that has forced itself upon me is that in it lies the pith and marrow of the whole tragedy. It is the galling distinction, man to man, that explains the 'Why.'

There was a time when Indians characterised the advent of the English as divine dispensation. They sang hallelujah to the England of Cromwell, Burke and Wilberforce. But the rank parading of conquest by the sword and yet in the next breath the pompous assumption of solemn trust, the inevitable reaction against the purposefully-designed lessons in schools that England governs India for the benefit of India only, a snail's progress in education and other nation-building items in cruel context to the 'utterly ruinous military and police expenditure, a top-heavy Administration yielding a surfeit of affluent...
ence for the few with acute hunger and ignorance for the teeming millions are few of the rude facts to unhinge the supine outlook of the Indians. The rest was left to what Montague characterised 'bullying and hectoring' Imperialists of the Curzonian brand. When the Indian outlook was thus veering round to the other unsavory end, the Partition of Bengal burst upon an unsuspected people.

We have already indicated some of the items of repression the Government adopted; but nothing left such poignant memory as flogging the students for attending political meetings, nothing proved so malignant in its far-reaching effects. I would recite one such incident, that haunts me like a night-mare even at this distance of time. Pundit Madan Mohan Malavya went to Faridpur, possibly in the year 1911 and addressed the people on the founding of the Benares Hindu University. It was in the pandal where the Provincial Conference was having
its sitting. Two students strayed into the pavilion when Pundit Malavya was addressing the House. The following day they were whipped in the school, their plea that the political conference had then closed its deliberations being of no avail. Just a few years after, a Viceroy of India laid the foundation of the Benares Hindu University with due pomp and ceremony. But, I was instinctively thinking of those into whose flesh stripes cut their way through and through. Many a youth who was shot dead by the Police as at Balasore or who has had to spill his blood in the cellular jail of Andamans, shall have to tell one such melancholy tale which worked havoc with his imagination.

Again, worse than dotting the places, where the Swadeshi spirit was intense, with Police and Military of aggressive character, the stories that leaked out in gruesome details from Comilla and Jamalpur, where the Hindu population were in the hands of rioters for a stretch of days, set the Hin-
dus all over Bengal to think furiously as to what things were coming to. There was the smothered cry of helplessness. But the Government was bent upon exhibiting the tiger qualities and was not prepared to sheathe the claws, it had unsheathed. Gokhale appealed to Lord Minto to pacify Bengal; Dr. Rash Behari Ghose warned the Government against 'Russianising the administration and driving sedition underground'; the Secretary of State himself cautioned the Viceroy against 'thundering sentences' for sedition and still further moralised 'excess of severity is not the path to order, on the contrary, it is the path to Bomb.' But these were to the 'Man on the Spot' like water on duck's back. He replied by resorting to Regulation III of 1818 and deported such trusted, saintly characters as Aswini K. Dutt, Keshta K. Mitter and Syamsundar Chakraborty, such promising souls as Subodh Mullik, Bhupes Nag, Sachin Bose and others.
Just a few months after the Barisal Conference, two youths saw Surendra Nath at his residence at Barrackpore and flung upon him their fateful plan to shoot Fuller for which they had started. It took a heavy long time for bewildered Surendra Nath to dissuade these young men. His compelling persuasiveness triumphed for the moment; but the forces of reaction, fostered no doubt, by the unbalanced utterances of some people of light and leading who allowed themselves to be driven to the counsel of despair,* were too much for Surendra Nath or anybody to restrain. Nature seemed to be left to her remorseless course. "Blood has defiled the land and the land cannot be cleansed of that blood, except by the blood of him, who has shed the first blood"—a text of the Old Testament upon which Morley canonises Cromwell, is a dynamic

* Read Introduction to Robindranath Tagore’s fiction ‘Charadhyaya’.
principle but a dangerous maxim that has lured youths of every land into perilous waysides and it was no exception in Bengal. It looks very much like a section of the youths being smitten with the mania of leading a crusade against the Wrong and to strike a blow to right it—no matter who was hit. The murder of Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, the Alipore Conspiracy case, Naren Gossaine shot dead within prison walls, the murder of Ashu Biswas and Samsul Alam and a host of others fleet over our vision with all the consequences that trooped at their heels. Reason reels aghast to contemplate the wastage of finest materials but those who only condemn the young men that rushed headlong into it, without a word of condemnation for the provocative circumstances that led to it are like the Scribes and Pharisees who swallow camels but strain at gnats.

The scope of this Book, however, does not permit us to probe the subject
any deeper. Suffice it to say that those who trace anarchism to an economic origin do not utter even half-truths. Hunger is a contributory factor; but the master urge, that has swayed hundreds of youths to sacrifice themselves, is out and out political. It is again an incontrovertible, historical truth that no British bayonet could ever check the corrosive flow of this movement but the phenomenal hold of Mahatma Gandhi, to whom it is an outrage upon his Article of Faith. But he too could not have half tackled the problem if he could not supply another and no less potent an outlet. Yet, was this Mahatma Gandhi characterised the ‘dangerous maniac’ and charged for having ‘indoctrinated India with a murderous hatred for Law and Order’. It again looks very much like History repeating itself. Surendra Nath Banerjea the ‘irresponsible demagogue’, the ‘idle visionary crying for the moon’, was the ‘statesman of rare sagacity who
knew what opportunity was and how to seize it' when he was handy to down Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. But the dangerous maniac of yesterday is the one man now, India is being counselled to look to for guidance, because, Subhas Bose, who has resolutely lived for the Nation to the exclusion of forming any earthly attachment save what birth has saddled him with, is looming large in the horizon and is striving to energise the dull despair of the Labour and Peasant mass.

Therefore, the crux of the question, which is being avoided with a touch of studied wilfulness, is whether or not it is yet time for British Statesmanship, unless of course there has been a complete break-down, and for those who seek to heal up, at the call of Humanity, the yawning gulf between India and England, to pause to consider if any other policy but an honourable 'live and let live' can eliminate the chance of any disruptive force forging ahead. It is
time for England to weigh her work in India in the light of the acid tests that two of her own statesmen of two opposite schools have supplied;—one is Gladstone whose innate liberalism gives him an adored name that has conquered Time and the other that incorrigible Imperialist Lord Curzon, after, of course, he was freed from the crazy grandeur of Indian Viceroyalty and had time to reflect in the light of unrelenting march of events. "Our title to be there (in India)", says Gladstone, "depends upon a first condition that our being there is profitable to the Indian Nation and on a second condition that we can make them see and understand it to be profitable." What a strange, family resemblance does it bear to what Curzon— as Chancellor of the Oxford University— said long after. "The contented incorporation of India within the Empire", one rubs his eyes to think if he really said so, "depends upon her feeling that
she too profits by the bargain. Give her a sense of pride in Imperial partnership".* Has England satisfied the test? We would leave it to Sir N. N. Sircar then a Law Member of the Government of India to reply, as he spoke out in the Round Table Conference. My position (the position of India), says he—I may not quote him correctly but I shall, interpret him justly—is that of one moving on crutches face to face with one armed to the tip of his fingers; even if I like, I cannot run away. Is it difficult to trace in it that sense of helplessness which makes a man desperate? Has any hot-headed revolutionary said anything more saucy, more strident? A Gokhale wasted his sobriety, moderation, genius and mellifluous eloquence; a Surendra Nath thundered and co-operated; a Gandhi

* Place of India in the Empire—Curzon.
has hurled defiance to the British Lion* and has also sought honourable settlement on ‘bended knees’. But honourable settlement furthest retires when courted most. The impression, that ideals preached by England are not lived upto unless forced by the stress of circumstances, is not dislodged by an inch. The same nineteenth century Pecksniffism cloaks every form of exploitation. Rank colour-bar that has slowly yielded to race-prejudice is as rampant on vital matters. Every kind of concession wrested from unwilling hands is hedged in by so many reserve, residuary power as to neutralise its inherent efficiency. The traditional policy of the monkey of playing one cat against the other over a piece of cheese still continues. Where then has the angle of vision changed? We have seen what Morley was as Secretary of State for

*Gandhi’s ‘Shaking the manes’ is one of the articles which constituted his offence of sedition for which he was imprisoned.
India; what Macdonald, the author of the 'Awakening of India' has been as Prime Minister. The author of the, 'Heart of Aryabarta' who felt inspired to dream of India as the product of the two peoples of England and India working in 'willing and fruitful co-operation' has yet done nothing to the fulfilment of that dream. Yet in the final analysis, there seems to be no fundamental difference between Surendra Nath Banerjea and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in their viewpoint that British Commonwealth will develop to the extent of satisfying the aspiration of India. A more cruel oxymoron one can hardly think of!
CHAPTER VI
THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The Partition of Bengal was annulled in December 1911. In 1913 Surendranath contested seats of the Bengal and Imperial Legislative Councils and was returned to both at the head of the poll. His first move on the floor of the Upper House was for the separation of the Judicial and Executive functions. The agitation for this much-needed reform is associated with the hallowed memory of Manomohan Ghose. Romesh Chandra Dutt gave it a practical turn by formulating a scheme for Bengal. It was idle to expect that the Resolution would get through in the teeth of the official majority.

Surendra Nath next pressed for the modification of the Press Act. This too was negatived by the standing official majority. Sir Lawrence Jenkins as Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court declared in the ‘Comrade’ case that the safe-
guards embodied in the Press Act were illusory. A somewhat piquant touch is lent to the question as we remember that the authorship of this is ascribed to an Indian.

His other attempt of doubtful utility was successful. By making the Governor of Bengal the Chancellor of the Calcutta University instead of the Viceroy he wanted to make the Calcutta University an autonomous institution. The point worthy of note is that the Government of India too gladly accepted the Resolution because they were possibly thinking of a relief from the pressure that the Calcutta University could bring to bear upon its Head in the matter of Imperial Grant.

Surendra Nath once again pressed for non-official, elected Chairman of the District Board. The Government as usual opposed the Resolution and it was lost. But still we can claim for him a moral victory. It was a unique distinction for him that he created such forces through
the Press, the Platform and lastly through Legislative Council as to compel the Government to yield to the people's demand and initiate the Reform in 1918.

From his seat in the Imperial Legislative Council, Surendra Nath tried his best to mitigate the sufferings of the Interned under the Defence of India Act as a result of which a small committee with Sir Narayan Chandravarkar and Justice Beachcroft was appointed to test the evidence against individual cases.

The Reforms:

Now came the great European war of 1914. It shook the world to its foundation. Thrones tumbled down and events moved in the track of centuries. It is inconceivable that the much-vaunted principle of Self-determination trotted out by the big guns would sweep over India that bled herself white without stirring up and intensifying the desire for freedom. The revolutionaries, in intrigue with Germany, were broadcasting a net-work
of secret propaganda. Afganisthan, so long acting as the buffer-state between India and Russia had shaken off the friendly (†) yoke of England and assumed a completely independent status. Russia, just freed of stark Imperialism, wassmarting for retribution inside and outside. England, some would opine, considered it prudent to keep India absorbed in her own affairs so that she might not tune herself up to the pussiant forces at work in the world abroad. Judged from this standpoint and if there is any substratum of truth in the above suggestion, one can hardly conceive of a more astute politician, England has ever produced with reference to India, than Montague. He set himself to lull India to soft, silver dreams. He toured over India and hurriedly drafted a scheme of Reforms, modelled on the much-abused structure of Lionel Curtis. And, he always gave airs of having taken Surendra Nath and some of his collaborators into confidence.
Montford Reforms have always been an enigma to us. Is it any serious attempt to tackle the Indian Problem or was it a false scent to disarm and waylay the pilgrims of freedom at a time when England was in the throes of a deadly conflict? Surendranath and people who worshipped in the same temple hailed them with convulsive joy. But there were competent onlookers to characterise them as stopgaps and pitied India mounting and galloping over the trail. It is noteworthy that both Tilak and Gandhi steered clear of extremes and urged a fair trial of the Reforms, howsoever inadequate and unsatisfactory they were. In fact, Mahatmajee went still further. It is of historical interest to delineate some of his developments. In the Amritsar Congress of December 1919, he moved to delete the word ‘disappointing’ from the Resolution of C. R. Das who was for rejecting the Reforms and “begged loyally to respond to the sentiments of the Royal
Proclamation". The Hunter Report was published in May, 1920. It filled the country with disgust. The observation of level-headed Montague with reference to the calculated barbarities of General Dyre, in particular, that ‘he committed an error of judgement’, which in the words of late Byomkesh Chakraborty was ‘a prostitution of vocabulary’, was enough to exasperate India to a man. If we could however understand that it is the Punjab-Wrong, perpetrated with an infernal coolness and condoned with as infernal precision, that changed Mahatma from what he was when he wrote to Lord Chelmsford just two years back, ‘We must perceive that if we serve to save the Empire, we have in that very act secured Home Rule’, to one who now smelt ‘insidious poison’ in everything of the ‘Satanic Government’, we can follow the transformation. But the mystery deepens when he says that it was England’s betrayal in the matter of Khilafat that
made him make the final choice. 'Perfidious Albion' has reason to congratulate himself upon the fact that the Indian leader could ferret out 'Khilafat' as the only act of betrayal to justify a swift and decisive measure like Non-Co-operation. Or, if it was like the last straw on Camel's back we should have no hesitation to say that when Turkey had thrown out 'Khilafat' as a veritable jetson, we in India seized it. Shall we yet have the candour to admit that, profoundly well-intentioned though Mahatma was, this mixing up of Khilafat with the Congress so stoutly opposed by Tilak not to speak of Surendra Nath Banerjea and the other Moderates, only inflated a Pan-Islamic vision, which, when frustrated, degenerated into an aggressive communalism?

Anyway, the Calcutta Special Congress was the signal for a complete rout of Surendra Nath and his school. They seceded from the Congress and took to spoon-feeding the Reforms. From this
time onward the Moderates dwindled into obscurity only to shoot up at times into a sombre prominence but neither having the fibre nor the will to keep it up.

As the Reforms could not have any chance in the tense atmosphere of the country, Surendra Nath thought, that he could best strengthen the position of his party in the serene heights of Simla. He moved a Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council, as it was then called, for the formation of a committee to consider the Reforms and make necessary recommendations to the Government of India. In one bound, Surendra Nath the idle visionary', the irresponsible demagogue' became the embodiment of all sanity. Lord Chelmsford called him to the Viceregal lodge and pressed him with all the warmth of a personal appeal to preside over the Committee. "Roses, roses all the way" and Surendra Nath was hooked in body and soul. He now began arguing vociferously that he must have to save
the Reforms. The zeal of a new convert, they say, is proverbial and he glozed over some of the very palpable defects inherent in the proposed Constitution that could render it the shade of a shadow. He took to justifying, explaining and palliating. We cannot help being drawn to the picture of Woodrow Wilson looking at the clouds and the nimble opportunists Loyd George and Clemenchu picking his pocket; one by one the fourteen points slipped out to vanish into thin air. Montague tripped Surendra Nath unawares and when he got up, he was completely ‘translated’, nevertheless it will be sheer foolishness to suggest, Bottom-like. If he had however any sense of humour, he would never have accepted Ministry for himself and far less Knighthood. As Montague heard of it, he blurted out half in jest, half in sorrow—‘this will finish the old man’; or. was it any chuckling over his own triumph? He thought, he had reasons to chuckle over. Surendra Nath
was knighted and made a Minister; S. P. Sinha was elevated to Peerage and was made the Under Secretary of State for India; Charu Ghose, the Secretary of the Bengal Moderate Party, was made a Judge of Calcutta High Court; B. N. Sarma and Tej Bahadur Sapru were smuggled into the Viceroy's Executive Council and Bhupen Bose into the India Council; C. Y. Chintamoni and Lala Har Kishan Lal were made ministers; Srinivas Sastry was made a British Agent to be exhibited like a prize boy in the British Dominions, and, so on and so forth. But Montague proposed one way; Destiny disposed the other way. It only enabled Mahatma Gandhi to attack the Reforms from a point-blank range. To the people in general an idea that 'amongst the faithless, faithful is he' became well-rooted. What the old leaders of the opposite school, now absorbed in the bosom of Abraham, could urge for the Reforms and against the N C. O. were robbed of their
points. The country could naturally be in no mood to listen to them.

Be that as it may, the Franchise Committee and the Function’s Committee were appointed on the recommendation of the Montford Report. Surendra Nath, Sreenivas Sastri and Aftab Mohammad then a member of the India Council were the three Indian members of the Committee. The Committee visited the headquarter of each province, examined witnesses and consulted local Government.

The Reforms were attacked in bitter language by numberless Indians on one side and Sydenhamites on the other, who set up the cry “the wolf, the wolf”. In fact, to pilot them through the Scylla and Charybdis was no easy task. The Moderates decided to send a deputation to England to strengthen the hands of Montague. Surendra Nath was called upon to lead it. He was now past seventy but he cheerfully faced the strain and the growing anxieties incidental to the
responsibility of the task, encompassed as he was with sharp, agile tongues here and abroad. In Sreenivas Sastry he found an invaluable coadjutor. Tilak and Vitalbhai Patel represented the Congress. Mrs. Besant, who once characterised the Reforms as unworthy of England to offer and India to accept and then glided to the theory of 'buck-shot for brickbats', once again veered round and helped Surendra Nath.

The Committee sat from day to day in an anti-room of the House of Commons. All Indian witnesses, their differences notwithstanding, urged for Dyarchy in the Central Government. The Reforms held out hopes of another change after five years, but the Joint Parliamentary Committee changed it to ten years. Lord Meston on behalf of the India Government suggested a separate purse for the transferred Department. The Indian Witnesses, un-wisely enough, as Surendranath himself confessed later on, opposed this and the Joint Committee did not accept it.
Was Surendranath very much in the wrong to desire Indians to work the Reforms? He had faith in the bonafides of Montague. He held that the Punjab-Wrong was nothing in comparison with the policy of emasculation that was being pursued by England in India. The Reforms were a step forward to the cherished end and a mighty lever to disturb the 'pathetic contentment' of the inert mass. The suffrage of the people is made the key to power and position. People, tested in the ordeal of ballot-box, which though a rough method of assessing ability is the best, in the absence of anything yet devised to the contrary, will be called upon to direct and control the Administration. If they work on the principle "sufficient unto the day is the work thereof," great changes can be wrought in no time. The Calcutta Municipal Bill is an illustration to point. It has done much more than cart-loads of speeches to infuse a new life in the outlook of a Nation. Is there anything
ignoble in this way of looking at things? The fact that Mahatmajee could not stand at Amritsar the word ‘disappointing’ with reference to Reforms leaves no room for doubt that he sincerely believed that the Reforms were worth being worked out. Rajendra Prasad, than whom there has not been a more unflinching and selfless follower of Gandhi, has declared in a meeting of the European Association at Jharia-Dhanbad, long after the dust and smoke of the Non-co-operation movement had cleared out and the Congress has worked Provincial Autonomy, that Montford Reforms were in many respects better than Hoare-Willingdon Autonomy. The Ananda Bazar Patrika, than whom I do not know of a more powerful organ in Bengal to stand by Gandhi’s Non-Co-operation and to attack the Montford Reforms, stresses the matter in still more clear terms and declares (after the Tripuri-Calcutṭna Congress episode) that what the Congress claims to have achieved in the
matter of provincial administration under autonomy was easier of accomplishment under Montague’s dyarchy. Therefore, judged on merits, there was nothing ignoble in the view point that the Reforms were worth a trial. But this view point of Surendra Nath and others of his school could not have any audience because the promulgators themselves were now being merged one after the other in the Beurocracy. And, what is particularly note-worthy, every other consideration was swept away before the baffling personality of Gandhi. Personality alone counts in human affairs. In England of the Divinity of the King, Cromwell put a king to death but it was again this Cromwell who broke up the Parliament. And, both the extremes not only passed muster, but were hailed with hiccups of ecstasy.

The anxious days of 1921-22, when the Non-Co-operation Movement swept past the country with the rapidity of a hurricane
defy scrutiny. Never was India confronted with a question of such unique complexity—'Which way salvation lies?'. The Leaders, who had hitherto been our accredited spokesmen, pointed to the Reforms as the path to the promised land. Even if the Reforms by themselves be not any vast import, they, it was contended, would create such forces, that in the fulness of time must culminate in that Universal Desire, which is the coping stone of Freedom. Surendra Nath, as the Leader of this group, strained himself to the utmost in the Press, on the Platform and on the floor of the Imperial Legislative Council to impress upon the people the unwisdom of throwing away the chance the Reforms provided. Two voices were there, one of Surendra Nath, the other of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The country accepted Gandhi's with a clear-cut definiteness.
The End:—

Chesterfield characterised Pitt's elevation to Peerage as "A fall upstairs". Even those, who stood loyally by Surendra Nath in all the trials and tribulation of his political life, could hardly resist this paradoxical feeling when he accepted Knighthood and Ministry on his return from England. The letter bags of some of the Newspapers were thrown open to windy laments. One such visualised. Browning's 'Lost Leader'—

"Just for a handful of silver, he left us, Just for a riband to stick in his coat."

Yet critically analysed, it is not difficult to attempt an adjustment of these seeming contradictions of his life.

It is said of Cincinnatus that when Rome was threatened with danger from within and without, the choice of the Nation fell upon him. Far off in a village he was living the life of a cultivator. He was prevailed upon to come. He came and staved off the crisis. But, when all
that is stately, all that contributes to pleasure and convenience was within the hollow of his hand, he spurned the lure and to plough he came back. Certainly, it would have been so nice of Surendra Nath if having once set the Reforms in motion, he returned to journalism as the Tribune of the People. Srinivas Sastry, for what I understood him, desired him to come back to his leadership of opposition in the Indian Legislative Assembly. He too ought have accepted the suggestion. His position in that case would have been all the stronger and his advocacy of Reforms justified. That it was incumbent upon him to prove the worth of Indians in the responsible conduct of Administration is a rank sophistry. The truth is that early in life, he was 'cloyed with the pleasures of ambition', and when in the evening he got the prize-post, the imagination of his boyhood had doubtless coveted, he possibly could not rise above it. He had not cultivated enough self-abnegation.
Moreover, he lacked that shrewd sense of humour which a Gandhi has and which is indispensable to retain leadership.

But, still as Minister, he rendered an excellent account of himself. In all that he came to handle is visible the impress of a striking personality. He proved once again that he was a man of intrepid initiative. His very first act was to appoint an Indian, J. N. Gupta, I. C. S. as the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation—a post that even flamboyant Curzon would not abjure on this side of the Suez, of course, next only to Indian Viceroyalty—and after him Surendranath Mullick an out and out non-official. He next applied himself to Indianise the Indian Medical Department and at once reduced the appointments reserved for the I. M. S. from forty to twenty four. Dr. U. N. Bramhachary and Dr. K. K. Chatterjee were requisitioned from the lower grade service to fill up vacancies in the Calcutta Medical College. To-day it is difficult to
imagine how Indian physicians of the type of Dr. Brahmachary who have shed undying lustre on the Science of Healing Arts by their laborious researches could be consigned to a position of standing inferiority. But such was the case and Surendra Nath had to face unbending opposition from vested interests. He next avenged his defeat in the Mackenzie Bill by piloting, the Calcutta Municipal Act that has given the Calcutta Corporation a truly democratic shape and colour.

But again, considered from the standpoint of major principle, these changes, even though they help the adjustment of the fundamentals, are not far removed from Loyd George’s ‘steel-frame’ outlook. It "falls terribly short of the ideal. In the old-school-politics, the mass, called in oratorical flourish ‘our flesh of flesh and bone of bones,’ were nowhere in the landscape. I am not aware of anything done by the then Ministry anywhere in India to disturb their ‘pathetic content-
ment' except that some of them had the thrills of motor drives and a few plates of sweets during the Election. It was the same Burgeus Patria Protestas all through. It is our allotted function to think out what is good for them, and it is for us to weigh, sift and apply; just as it is the white man's burden to do everything for us. The situation has improved, as it is bound to, in the gradual stages of evolution and the Non-Co-operation movement is never a failure on its moral side in as much as it has drawn the mass out of their age-long stupor.

But to resume the old thread of discourse: as against what Surendra Nath did as Minister, people never forgot that he opposed the reduction of Minister's salary though he was the pioneer in the field to protest against a top-heavy Administration. He descended to the unfortunate length of supporting the Hill-Exodus, though he cried himself hoarse
against it in the Press and on the Platform. The dictum of Plato—‘The idea dies in the particular’ applies with a cruel irony upon these two facts of his life. And, people revenged themselves so to say, in the General Election of 1923. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy gave him a crushing defeat. Dr. Roy was altogether new in the field of politics, but, people still chose him in such an overwhelming majority because it was the mandate of Deshabandhu C. R. Das. C. R. Das:—

Deshabandhu came into prominence by defending Aurobindo Ghose in the Alipore Bomb Case. His rise in the Bar was since then assured. His fabulous earnings, his indulgence and luxuries were the talk of the day. The reckless abandon of his charity and the plangent yearnings of his lyrics had made him dear to Bengal. His acceptance of the Creed of Non-Co-operation and consequent retirement from the Bar, before he had yet been able to make any provision for the rainy day,
made him the idol of the Nation. Essentially a poet, with whom, instinct claims the whole being, Chittaranjan was nevertheless gifted with the massive insight of a political Leader. There have unfortunately been people to read him in the light of text-book-morals. To do so, is to lose sight of the overpowering majesty of the man. To examine a man piece-meal is to lead to half-truths which are worse than untruths. C. R. Das with his large, volcanic heart, his deathless strength and sincerity exercised and will continue to exercise a strange fascination over his countrymen.

After his defeat at the poll, Surendra Nath retired for the time being from active public life to devote himself to finish his book ‘A Nation in Making’. The book finished, he once again took up the editorship of ‘The Bengalee’ and began amongst other things cudgelling what he called the ‘Tammany Hall methods’ of the Swaraj Party. But his days were numbered
and on August 6th, 1925, he breathed the last drop of 'BENEDICTIO'-the benediction, let us prayerfully hope—
‘Of those immortal dead who live,
In minds made better by their presence’.