7. My First Visit to the National Congress

THE most remarkable incident, in my career as an under-graduate, was not so much the training I received as the visit I paid to Allahabad, in the Christmas week of 1888, to attend, as a visitor, the fourth session of the Indian National Congress, held under the presidentship of a distinguished British merchant and an ex-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Mr. George Yule. The first session of the Congress, which was held in the Christmas week of 1885, and at which less than hundred persons were present-though they were the most cultured, the most advanced, and the most patriotic Indians had passed almost unnoticed in Bihar; but its second session, which had been held in Calcutta, in 1886, under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji-rightly described as "the father of Indian nationalism, and constitutional agitation"- had attracted notice. While no one from Bihar had attended the first of the Congress, Calcutta being near-and also at that time not only the capital of India, but also the capital of Bihar-several Biharee delegates attended that session, and amongst them there were three from my native town of Arrah-one of whom was my first cousin and the other two, my father's friends. On their return from Calcutta, they gave me a vivid and glowing account of the proceedings of the Congress, which fired my imagination. They told me how a venerable and distinguished scholar, Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitrs, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, and Dadabhai Naoroji, as the President of that session, had eloquently spoken in their addresses of nationalism and patriotism as the great ideals to be adopted by all educated Indians.

I also read detailed account of the proceedings of the Calcutta session in *The Indian Mirror*, the only Indo-English daily[56] then in Calcutta, which enjoyed a unique position and influence, as it was edited by a great patriot, Narendra Nath Sen, who was a close relation of the great religious and social reformer, Keshab Chandra Sen, whose name was quite familiar to us, more for his eloquence than for his reforms.

The Indian Mirror published detailed reports of the proceedings of the Congress which were devoured by me, and my fellow-students, with great avidity, interest and enthusiasm, and so I made up my mind that whenever a session of the Congress was held in Upper India I would make it a point to attend it. Unfortunately for me the session of the next year (1887) was held at Madras, and it was impossible for me, to attend it, owing to the long distance of Madras from Patna and also because I was involved in my affairs as a rusticated student, for my delinquencies against the Headmaster of the Arrah Zilla School. But I read carefully the proceedings of the Madras session-specially the highly

[56] This is a specific usage by Sachchidanand Sinha depicting an English daily run by Indians.

nationalistic presidential address of Mr. Badruddin Tyabji (a great Muslim leader) and became a confirmed Congressman in spirit. I was delighted to see it announced that the next session of the Congress would be held in the Christmas week of 1888 at Allahabad, and made up my mind to attend that session at any cost.

Accordingly, on a cold December morning, in the last week of December, 1888, I started for Allahabad in a "passenger" train. There were no expresses running on Indian railways at that time; the only two train services being known as "mail" and "passenger". The former carried generally first and second class passengers, mostly British, as few Indians travelled in the higher classes-and there was no intermediate class on the mail trains at that time. The journey to Allahabad was uncomfortable and tedious, as a large number of people were travelling by that train, all bound on the same errand as myself, as delegates or visitors to the Allahabad session of the Congress. I reached Allahabad late in the afternoon, when the sun was about to set and drove immediately to the house of my relations, who were living at that time in the area to the north of Muir Central College, which is now the site of splendid hostels attached to the University of Allahabad, which had been inaugurated in the previous year (1887) as a merely examining body, but which has been since 1922 one of the great unitary (that is teaching and residential) universities in the country. The next morning, on which the Congress was to meet, was a busy day for me. A huge pandal had been put up by the Reception Committeee in the grounds of what was then called the Lowther Castle, but which has been known since as the Darbhanga Castle.

Sir Auckland Colvin (the then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Chief Commissioner of Oudh) was bitterly hostile to the Congress movement, and he left no stone unturned to thwart the session being held at the capital of the province. Only one month before he had an acrimonious correspondence about the Congress and its object for the establishment of democratic government of India with Mr. Allan O. Hume, the General Secretary of the Congress, which when issued as a pamphlet-called *Audi Alteram Partem* had a very wide circulation. Mr. Hume had retired from the Indian Civil Service after having occupied a high position in the Government of India. Owing to Sir Auckland's attitude, the Reception Committee were unable to secure a suitable site for the holding of the session, and did not know what to do. It was at this stage that the Maharaja of Darbhanga came to the rescue of the Reception Committee, and offered them the use of Lowther Castle building and the grounds. Lala (afterwards Rai Bahadur) Ram Charan Das, a premier citizen of Allahabad, had put up in the Lowther Castle grounds a spacious and beautiful structure, called a "pandal" with accommodation to seat comfortably about 10,000 people. Owing, to the tremendous enthusiasm evoked amongst the educated public in connection with the Congress, the hostility to its being held

by the Lieutenant-Governor, the strong opposition on the one hand of Raja Siva Prasad, C.S.I., of Benares, and of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, K.C.S.I., of Aligarh, on the other, the Congress delegates had trooped in from even distant parts of the country like Sindh and Madras and their total number was somewhere near 1,500. I had purchased a ticket for Rs. 10, but taking advantage of the want of proper supervision and control on the part of the volunteers-such as is the case even now-I had managed to smuggle myself into the next higher class of those who had paid Rs. 15 for their ticket. From my seat in the fifteen rupees gallery I could clearly see the dais and also hear distinctly many, if not all, the speakers. The visitors' galleries, which were put up tier upon tier, were choked to suffocation. Though the accommodation provided in the visitor's galleries was for about five thousand persons, the huge gathering of visitors, crowding them, comprised a much larger number. As each leader came inside the pandal and walked up to take his seat on the dais, he was cheered to the echo. Everbody inside the pandal was excited at the truly great and magnificent gathering of almost all the great patriotic and intellectual leaders of the country, and all felt that Indian nationalism was at last coming into its own.

The proceedings began punctually at one in the afternoon when the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Pandit Ajodhya Nath, rose to deliver his address of welcome. His was a venerable, figure. Though by no means tall, he looked majestic with his long flowing beard; and dressed in the head-gear and costume, which obtained in Indian society in Upper India in those days, he impressed the audience by his *tout ensemble*. By reason of his high position at the Bar of the Allahabad High Court and also in public life, he attracted considerable attention. He read his inaugural address with great warmth and vigour, but I could not follow much of it, as his voice did not reach the visitors galleries, and there were no microphones, or loud-speakers then in existence. He made, however, a great impression on me by the animated gestures with which he accompanied the delivery of his address at the conclusion of which it was loudly cheered, and enthusiastically applauded. That function over, a number of eminent leaders who had seats on the dais came forward one after another to propose, second, and support the election of Mr. George Yule to the presidential chair. Amongst the speakers the two who made the greatest impression on me were Pherozeshah Mehta and Surendra Nath Banerjee-both of whom I heard for the first time-and who held the manmmoth audience spell-bound by their eloquence. Amidst tremendous cheering Mr. Yule assumed the office of the President, and delivered his presidential address. He had a fine modulated voice, and read out his address distinctly. It made a remarkable impression on that great gathering, because the speaker was the first member of the British community in India to have identified himself openly with the demands of the Congress, while the fact of his having been an ex-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce gave to his words an added dignity and pres-

tige. At the conclusion of his address, which was vociferously applauded, the Congress adjourned to the next day, after constituting a Subjects Committee, which was to meet that evening.

The Subjects Committee of the Congress was the first important business meeting of educated Indians which I had occasion to witness. It began its work after tea, at about 6 P.M., and continued till half past nine, when it broke up for dinner. It assembled again at half past ten, and worked continuously till half past two in the morning. I attended it right through, having been smuggled in by a friendly volunteer. I watched its work not only very carefully, but with a keen interest, following closely the speeches made, and more than that the procedure adopted for conducting its business; and I recall, even at this long distance of time, of now nearly 60 years, that I was grievously disappointed at the method adopted by the Subjects Committee in the disposal of its work. To begin with, no one who took part in the debates, or for the matter of that no member of the Committee, had a scrap of any text or draft written out from before, about the matters to be discussed and agreed upon for the next day's work, at the open session of the Congress. There were only speeches, and more speeches, but seldom was an effort made to focus the main point, or discussion, to be able to arrive at an agreed decision, and to record that decision then and there, with a view to getting it adopted by the Committee, and then to pass on to some other subject for consideration.

On the contrary, each subject was thrashed out at enormous length, without any attempt at coming to any definite decision, by focussing the issue on the points involved for consideration. Scarcely any one seemed to be concerned with time limit, and at the end of insufferably long talk, Mr. Allan O. Hume, the General Secretary of the Congress, was requested to draw up a resolution, embodying the sense of the House, as the Secretary understood it, or could gather it from the general trend of the discussion. Absolutely inexperienced as I was at that time in public affairs, it did seem to me a very wrong method of conducting business, and I felt that the proper course was for the mover of each resolution to place a written text, or draft, before the Committee, which should have considered all the texts of amendments sent to the Chairman, and then attempted to come to an agreed decision quickly, and recorded it then and there, instead of leaving the matter to the General Secretary.

Since I attended the meeting of the Subjects Committee of the Congress in December, 1888, tremendous changes had taken place in various respects, in the educational, economic, political and social life of the country, and the provincial angularities and diversities that then obtained amongst educated Indians in many matters-say, in the style of dressing hair, wearing clothes, and in other respects-had been, to a very large extent, obliterated by the levelling influence of English education and western cultural influences. A gathering of educated Indians today presents a much greater uniformity in costume, and several other

subsidiary matters, than was the case in 1888, when even the small number of Parsis wore head-gear in the three or four different styles-to say nothing of the various kinds of turbans, *pugries*, *dastars*, hats, caps, *topies* and, last but not least, the European top-hat-inverted-hat of the Sindhis, which had practically disappeared long since. On the one hand there were the few Europeanised Indian (like the late Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, the President of the first session of the Congress, held at Bombay in 1885, and several others) dressed faultlessly in European clothes, and with their style of living completely westernised, while at the other end there were pious Muslims in their flowing robes-*abbas*, *jubbas*, and *kabbas*-and orthodox Hindus (particularly from South) in various shapes and styles of costumes, some even habited in grotesque habiliments. Yet all such discrepancies, and many others, had almost completely disappeared during the last sixty years and had conduced to a much greater homogeneity than was then the case.

But I regret to have to say it that scarcely any change, worth the name, had taken place in this long interval in the method of conducting public business in the country, specially at gatherings at which there are no persons, possessing administrative or official experience.

I have attended since 1888 a large number of deliberative assemblies of my countrymen and have had occasion to watch their work at close quarters and I must state my conviction, in the interest of truth, as I conceive it, that the deficiencies and limitations from which the conduct of business suffered in the early years of the Congress, as I noticed it at the Allahabad session in 1888, still largely prevail at meetings of the educated Indians, which impede seriously the smooth conduct of our public affairs. The great proneness of Indian public workers, then as now, to incessant talking, and that too on matters mostly beside the point, and the gross indifference on their part to put down their views on paper, and to submit the written text as basis for discussion, is a great hindrance to quick disposal of work. Such habits, on the part of the members of a business meeting, naturally require a strong and, at times, a more or less assertive chairman. Unfortunately, by far large number of our presidents and chairmen are weak and unassertive, and cannot control discussion within proper limits, with the result that as a rule, it runs into irrelevance, most of the speakers flying off at a tangent. Usually, any attempt either to curtail irrelevance, or to focus the point at issue, is regarded as a gross interference with the speaker's indefeasible right to talk out the existence of the world.

This habit of the educated Indians finds expression not unoften even at the Bar of the High Courts, in spite of the fact that the presence of learned judges on the bench operates to a large extent as controlling factor in the situation. I remember a friend of mine with whom incessant talking, in making his submissions to judges, was the very breath of his nostrils. In presenting an application, with no point in it, to a Judge in the Patna High Court, he spoke breathlessly

for full fifty-five minutes, before the Judge (an Irishman) feeling compelled to intervene, quietly handed over the petition to the Court Reader, as a gentle intimation that he (the Judge) had heard enough of the case, and was not disposed to listen to the advocate any more. The counsel on noticing what he no doubt regarded as an atrociously wrong, if not insulting, conduct on the part of the Judge, exclaimed; "Does it mean, my Lord, that your Lordship is not disposed to hear me further, and is going to reject my application"? The Learned Judge (who was the son of an Irish peer, and a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and himself a member of the Irish Bar) warmed up a bit and said; "But Mr. So-and-So, you have addressed me already for nearly one hour, without making a point to satisfy me that your application should be admitted. How long you expect me to hear your further?" The talkative counsel seemed to be astounded at this remark of the Judge, and he declaimed at the highest pitch of his stentorian voice: "One hour, my Lord, one hour, you said; why I have barely opened my lips for a couple of minutes." Roars of laughter, in which the learned Judge himself joined, drowned the subject-matter of the application, which was taken to have been rejected amidst the loud guffaws in which the Judge, the lawyers, and even those spectators (who understood English) all joined. It is true that while eminent leaders amongst the advocates are free from such lapses, the same cannot be said of the vast bulk of the rank and file in the profession, many of whom mistake reiteration, irrelevance, and long-windedness, as commendable features of successful advocacy, and the only method of impressing their clients, if not, judges, that they had done their work efficiently and honestly. While the standard of advocacy in the highest judicial tribunals (like the Federal Court, the High Courts, and the Chief Courts) had been mostly above reproach, there was room for improvement even now in the standard of advocacy in the District Courts, which deal out justice to the vast bulk of the litigants. But so far as our public meetings or committee discussions are concerned (not excluding our legislatures), things have not advanced beyond the conditions that obtained sixty years back.

The Great Congress Leaders in 1888

I shall briefly recall in this sketch some of the great political leaders who were present at Allahabad during the Congress session in December 1888, and whom I saw for the first time. First and fore-most, there was the commanding figure of Pandit Ajodhya Nath, the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The next to take the platform was the Hon'ble Mr. (afterwards Sir) Phiroz Shah Mehta, a member at that time of the Bombay Legislative Council, who proposed formally the election of Mr. George Yule, the President-elect. His was a truly outstanding figure. I have met almost all the great Indian Leaders since then, but I cannot

recall a single one who could be compared with Phiroz Shah Mehta as a towering personality. He commanded immediate respect and attention from that very large audience. Born in 1845, and thus in the prime of life, he was tall, well-built, robust with a fine physique and impressive appearance, embellished with large bushy whiskers. Dressed in a long Parsee coat and not in European costume, though a Barrister, and the now almost extinct sloping Parsee hat, he appeared on the platform as one who came and saw and conquered; and was hailed with incessant cheers, and tremendous applause. His speech evoked tempestuous appreciation.

Sir Phiroz Shah remained the greatest leader of political India until his death in his seventieth year, in 1915; and his warmest admirer was none other than that most respected publicist of his time-Gopal Krishna Gokhale. I remember very well that when proposing a vote of thanks to Sir Henry Cotton, the President of the session of the Congress held at Bombay in 1904, at which Pandit (now the Right Hon. Sir) Tej Bahadur Sapru and I were present as delegates, Sir Phiroz Shah roused such tremendous enthusiasm by his address, that the sedate and sober Gokhale got highly excited, and shouted at me: "Look, look, Sinha, is not Phiroz Shah a born leader of men?" Gokhale's verdict was absolutely correct; for there never has been a greater political leader of the educated, intellectual, and politically-minded classes in the country than Phiroz Shah Merwanji Mehta.

Although later in life I attended many, sessions of the National Congress almost regularly from 1896 to 1919, I do not think that any session of it was more representative than that held at Allahabad in 1888, in so far as it was a gathering of the leading public men of the various provinces of the country.

The Madras Presidency was represented by some of those who, in the fullness of time, came to preside over a session of the Congress; such, for instance, as Ananda Charlu and Sankaran Nair, although the most prominent man in the South Indian Group was that distinguished Barrister, Eardley Norton. At that time, Norton was the leader of the English Bar in the Madras High Court, where his father (John Bruce Norton) had risen to be the Advocate-General. Eardley Norton had great prominence, not only as the leader of the English Bar, but also because of his public and political activities as a pronounced Congressman. About a month before the Congress had met at Allahabad, Lord Dufferin, the retiring Viceroy, had made a highly provocative speech at the St. Andrew's Dinner, in Calcutta, on the 30th November, 1888, in the course of which he had indulged in a diatribe against the Congress, and characterised the educated Indians as a "microscopic minority".

The Viceroy's speech had produced a tremendous sensation. *The Indian Mirror*, of Calcutta, the only Indo-English daily at that time in the whole of Northern India, wrote, from day to day, a series of editorials denouncing Lord Dufferin's speech, which I remember to have read with great interest and

gratification. Those leading articles were also read out at various gatherings of the students of the Patna College. The other Indian papers had also followed suit and written bitterly-worded editorials against the Viceroy's speech. None of them, however, was so denunciatory as was the "Open Letter to Lord Dufferin," which had been published and circulated broadcast by Eardley Norton. It was a piece of terrible invective against the retiring Viceroy, in which Norton had dissected and shown up Lord Dufferin's St. Andrew's Dinner Speech and left, so to say, not even a rag on the Viceroy's back. This "Open Letter" was hailed with the greatest enthusiasm by the Indian Press and the English-knowing Indian Public, and its writer had suddenly become the hero of politically-minded Indians. As such his appearance on the Congress platform-a tall, handsome figure, attired faultlessly in morning dress-was the signal for an uproarious applause, by not only the delegates to the Congress, but even by the visitors and sight-seers who, rising in their seats, cheered Norton to the very echo. Not only I, but the other young men sitting in the group of visitors with me, made themselves hoarse by indulging in tumultuous shouts at the highest pitch of their voice! I had just then completed my seventeenth year!

The Bombay Presidency had also sent an eminent array of distinguished public leaders. There were amongst them, comparatively speaking, two young men who came to occupy, in due course, the presidential chair of the Congress-I Mean Messrs. Narayan Chandravarkar and Dinshaw Wacha. But, perhaps, the most interesting figure form the Bombay Presidency, next to Phiroz Shah Mehta, was Kashi Nath Telang, then a comparatively young advocate of the Bombay High Court. He was even at that early age renowned as a great Sanskrit scholar and had later translated the *Bhagwad Gita* for Professor Max Müller's famous series of Oxford University Press translations called the "Sacred Books of the East". He was elevated to the Bench of the High Court, not long after his appearance at Allahabad, but died young, in 1893. Though not in any sense an orator. Telang was a most skilful debator, and the speech he delivered, as the mover of the resolution in support of the case for constitutional reforms, then on the anvil: made a very great impression on the entire audience. In criticising the St. Andrew's dinner observations of Lord Dufferin, and more particularly also of those of the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Auckland Colvin (in the course of his controversy with Mr. Hume, referred to above), he spoke with a dignity, confidence, knowledge, tact, and sarcasm that raised to the highest pitch of debating skill his great powers as a successful controversialist.

From amongst the leading public men of the Punjab, the most notable was Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia, the founder of *The Tribune*, at Lahore, long since the most influential Indian journal in the capital of the Punjab. Later he created a great trust for administering his charitable endowments for maintaining several institutions for public benefit. But the Sardar was a silent worker, and not a platform speaker. He had seconded, on the first day, the formal proposal for the

election of the President, after which he sat quietly watching the proceedings. The honour of being declared the greatest Punjabi orator unanimously went to Lajpat Rai, who was dressed in the costume of the Punjabi youth of the time-European suit but with a Punjabi *pagri*. He delivered a thundering oration, quoting in support of his views passages from the pamphlet (originally written in Hindustani) by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, soon after the Mutiny of 1857, and translated into English by two of the British friends of Sir Syed. These passages, which were in favour of the establishment of Legislative Councils of representative Indians, naturally created a great sensation, and Lajpat Rai stepped down from the platform amidst roars of thundering cheers and vociferous applause.

The then North Western Provinces and Oudh had sent to the Congress two great personalities (besides Pandit Ajodhya Nath), namely, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, of Allahabad, and Pandit Bishan Narain Dar, of Lucknow, both of whom occupied later the presidential chair of the Congress. Both these rising young men-who were below thirty, at that time-made excellent speeches on the subject of Constitutional Reforms, and created very favourable impression upon the audience, Pandit Bishan Narain had just then returned from England, after his call to the English Bar; and the fact that instead of appearing on the platform dressed in foreign costume, he wore Indian clothes, was naturally the subject of favourable comment amongst the audience. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was dressed in that unique self-designed picturesque habiliment which has adorned him all his life-for more than seventy years now. He was then in the flush of youth, and held the audience spell-bound during the long time that he took to deliver his speech.

Recalling my impressions of the Allahabad Congress, I cannot omit to record the appearance on the platform of Raja Shiva Prasad, C.S.I. The Raja had retired as an educational Officer of Government, having risen to be Inspector of Schools-a very high position in those days. He had also compiled and translated number of useful books for popularising Hindustani in its simple form, as opposed to the stilted Sanskritised Hindi, and the pedantic Persianised Urdu. For all his good work he had been made a Raja, and had also the Companionship of the Star of India order conferred on him. The Raja was evidently mighty proud of his Star, and appeared on the Congress platform emblazoning it on his breast. Like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, he also was a pronounced opponent of the Congress.

His theme was "Democracy not suited to India". He was a poor speaker, and made no impression on the Congress. But he was listened to very patiently and shown great consideration. Mr. W.S. Caine, M.P.-who attended the Congress session all through-issued a statement complimenting the Congress, and contrasting favourably its attitude towards the Raja with what might have happened at a political gathering in Britain in similar circumstances. At the same time, I could not help admiring the Raja's courage of conviction and strength of

character in thus trying to beard the Congress lions in their den-though he failed to achieve his object.

The two speakers from Bengal who made the greatest impression on the Congress were, of course, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Bipin Chandra Pal. Surendra Nath had come to acquire by that time the foremost position as a public speaker in the country. Some years before, he had made an extensive tour in Northern India, for political purposes, which had been a tremendous success, and in the course of which he had addressed large audiences at various important centres, between Calcutta and Lahore. This was early in the eighties, and the great success of his mission had impressed Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Cotton, then a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, to such an extent, that he had mentioned this fact (in the first edition of his well-known book, *New India*, published in 1885) as a proof of the growing solidarity of political unity in the country, and of the development and expansion of the spirit of nationalism in the land.[57]

Coming on the platform with such a high and well-established reputation, Surendra Nath's exordium at once brought down the House. He was cheered to the echo, and his continued forceful oratory soon swept the audience off their feet. The huge pandal, in which at least ten thousand persons were assembled, echoed and re-echoed with deafening applause, and we youngsters felt the satisfaction that we had heard the greatest orator the country had produced. But it is not only the youth assembled in the pandal who were carried away by Surendra Nath's marvellously perfervid eloquence; even the elderly folk who were there literally hung upon his lips. He kept the audience spell-bound for full ninety minutes, and such still silence prevailed while he spoke that you could hear a pin drop. His peroration, in the classical parliamentary style of the 18th century, brought tears in many eyes. Surendra Nath was at that time in the prime of his life; he possessed a stentorian voice, though not well-cadenced, as its drop was rather abrupt. He indulged frequently in gestures which, although not always pleasing, were invariably impressive. But we all felt that in hearing Surendra Nath, we had had the best of our life.

Bipin Chandra Pal was a speaker of a wholly different type from that of Surendra Nath. Being just then thirty, he was younger in age than the veteran orator, whom he followed, and had just then begun to take part in public affairs. But he was fast coming into prominence as a great platform speaker. He was short in physique, and also lean in body at that time. His voice, however, was sufficiently strong to make itself heard throughout the pandal. His gestures were graceful as compared with those of Surendra Nath; and altogether he succeeded in making a very favourable impression on the audience, and came to be regarded as the coming man in Bengal, after Surendra Nath Banerjee.

[57] Sir Henry Cotton, New India or India in Transition, London: Kegan Paul, 1909 (1885, first edition).

In later years he acquired still greater prominence. He also achieved notable success as a journalist.

On the growth of what was then called the extremist Party of politicians, he became one of their recognised leaders; and he was intimately associated in hi public activities, after 1907, with the famous Marhatta leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and the noted Punjabi Leader, Lala Lajpat Rai, with the result that the trio came to be known as Bal, Lal,Pal'. Bipin Chandra held the field as a great leader of the Extremist Party for quite a long time; but for reasons, not necessary to go into he fell from grace several years before his death. His journalistic ventures having failed, he was driven frequently to contribute editorials, also special articles, as a means of earning his livelihood, to the columns of the now defunct Anglo-Indian daily of Calcutta, *The Englishman*, which was not unjustly regarded as bitterly hostile to Indian nationalism, and the political progress of the country. He was elected for some years as a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly, but in spite of his powers of oratory he failed to make an impression on that body, by reason of his association with the Englishman. He died in 1928, when his name and fame as a nationalist had long been almost forgotten in the political circles in the country, in which he had previously played a prominent part.

I have given above my recollections and impressions of the fourth session of the Indian National Congress. It remains to add that through the medium of my relations and friends then living at Allahabad, I managed to get myself introduced to some of the leaders of the Congress. The two from the United Province whom I came to know well enough during my stay at Allahabad were Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, and also Lala Lajpat Rai. Not long after I had occasion to know Pandit Malaviya more or less intimately. He came to Patna some months later in the summer of 1889, and stayed with me as my guest. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar-who presided over the Congress session held in Calcutta in 1911-remained my life-long friend. Whenever he came from Lucknow to Allahabad, he used to stay with me, as he had been on the friendliest terms with the family of my father-in-law when he and they were in London, during the mid-eighties of the last century and had known my wife since then. With Lajpat Rai, I renewed my acquaintance on the occasion of my marriage at Lahore, in 1894. From that time onward, he and I were on very friendly terms until his death in 1928. It may be noted that of the famous group of extremist trio, only Lajpat Rai presided over a special session of the Congress, held in Calcutta in September, 1920. No such distinction fell to the lot of either Bal Gangadhar Tilak or Bipin Chandra Pal-though both of them were immensely popular leaders of the Congress for many years.

Thus my visit to the Allahabad session of the Congress was a most notable event in my life. Being just over seventeen at the time, fairly well grounded in English, fond of public speaking, and my imagination fired with nationalism,

my experience of the Congress produced a very great impression on my youthful mind, and confirmed not only the choice of my professional career, but also materially influenced my decision about my life-work. Having already made up my mind to be called to the English Bar, I further decided to become a public man, attracted by the personality, position, and prestige of Mr. W.C. Bonnerji, President of the first session of the Congress, held at Bombay, in 1885, whom I saw and heard at Allahabad to Become a Barrister, and also a public man thenceforward became my sole ambition, with the result that I neglected my prescribed class studies, and spent much of my time in the study of literature, and also of newspapers, journals and periodicals, to keep myself *aufait* with public affairs. Ten to one, I would have failed at the intermediate examination had I sat for it. But providence willed it otherwise. And I left India, in December, 1889, while the next session of the Congress was sitting at Bombay under the presidentship of Sir William Wedderburn, for London, to study for the Bar, before the intermediate Examination was held.