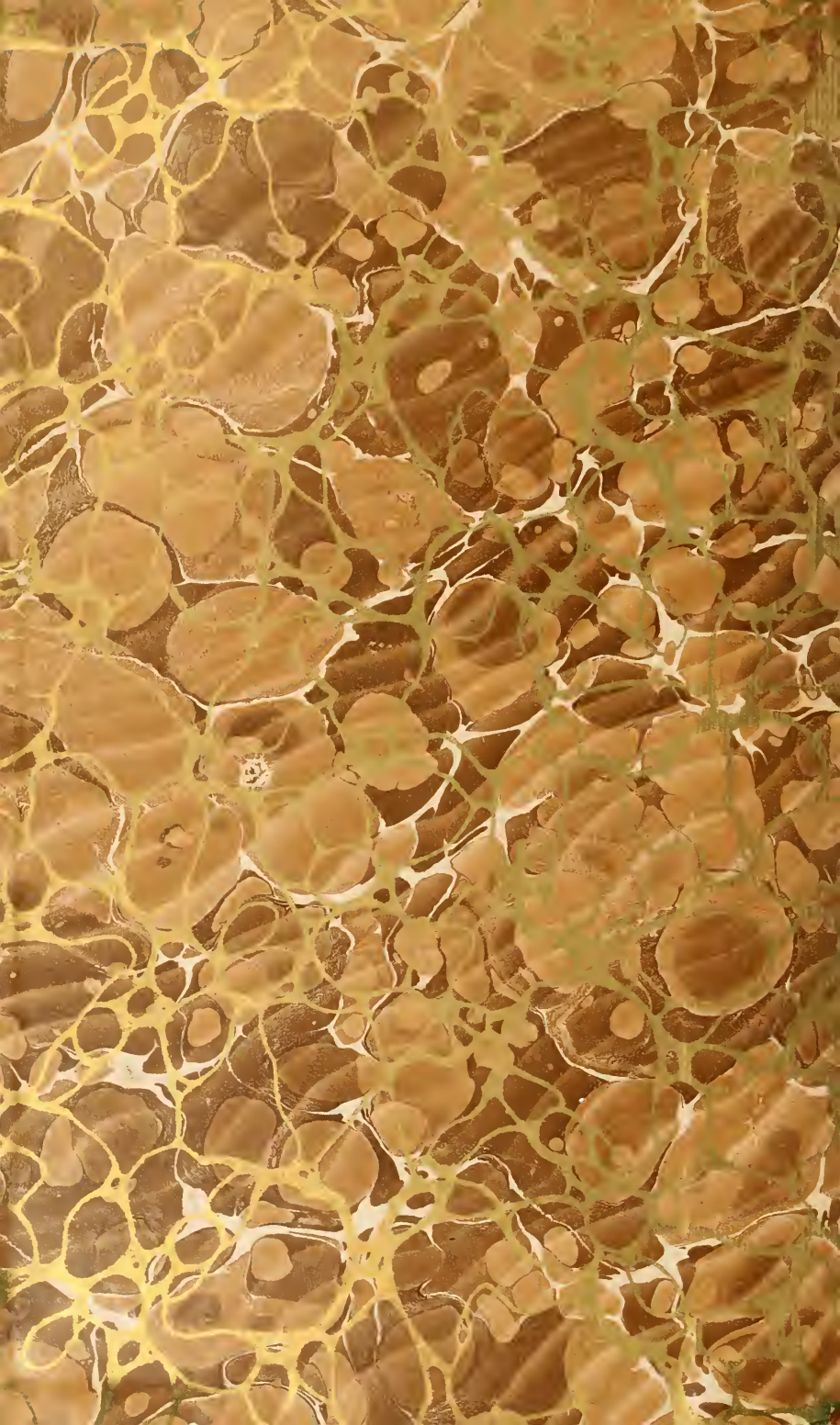


A MEMOIR
OF
RAO BAHADUR
RANGHHODLAL GHOTALAL,
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A MEMOIR
OF
RAO BAHADUR
RANCHHODLAL CHHOTALAL, C.I.E.



RAO BAHADUR RANCHHODLAL CHHOTALAL, C.I.E.

Memoir

OF

Rao Bahadur

Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, C.K.C.,

LATE MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, BOMBAY,
AND FOUNDER OF THE MILL INDUSTRY OF GUJARAT.

COMPILED BY

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LATE OF THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE (BOMBAY),

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LATE OF THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE (BOMBAY),
FORMERLY COLLECTOR OF AHMADABAD AND COMMISSIONER, N.D.

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INTRODUCTION.

It was for many years my ambition to write a memoir of Rao Bahadur Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, one of the ablest, most courteous and most progressive Hindu gentlemen with whom it was ever my lot to be associated during my thirty-five years' career in India. It was to assist in the fulfilment of this object that some years after I had left Ahmadabad, Mr. Ranchhodlal's grandson, the late Sir Chinubhai Madhavlal, Bart., C.I.E., kindly entrusted me with a long typewritten account of his grandfather's career, prepared by Mr. Trikamlal Damodhardas, a High Court pleader of Ahmadabad, which he was anxious that I should use in the preparation of the long contemplated biography. I also collected further information from other friends and acquaintances, among whom I must particularly mention Rao Bahadur Bulakhidas, late District Deputy Collector ; Mr. Trikamlal Dinanath, who supplied me with certain information and statistics relating to the mill industry in Gujarat, and Mr. A. H. A. Simcox, I.C.S., who, in 1916, while he was serving as Collector of Ahmadabad, sent me a very useful note on the water-supply and drainage system of that city. The India Office records were also consulted, and Mr. L. Robertson, C.S.I., Secretary to the Bombay Government, helped me with some valuable details. A variety of circumstances prevented me from utilising the collected materials and commencing to write the memoir of my old friend until the close of 1919 ; and then, alas ! I began to realise that the energy requisite for such a compilation was no longer vouchsafed to me. *L'homme propose, Dieu dispose.* Almost in despair, I appealed to another retired Indian Civilian, Mr. S. M. Edwardes, who served, like myself, in the Bombay Presidency, to write the memoir for me and so assist me in paying my last tribute to the

memory of my old friend, the founder of modern Ahmadabad, and he most kindly consented. The following pages, descriptive of the career and character of Rao Bahadur Ranchhodlal, are thus the work of Mr. Edwardes, who has freely utilised the typewritten memorandum of Mr. Trikamlal Damodhardas and the rest of the scattered materials above-mentioned. The author has enhanced the value of the publication by the inclusion of a combined index and glossary designed to assist English readers who may be unacquainted with Indian terms and nomenclature.

And now I am fain to add a brief word to the tale set forth in the succeeding pages. Between April, 1888, and November, 1891, I held the appointment of Collector and Magistrate of Ahmadabad and Commissioner of the Northern Division at the very time when Mr. Ranchhodlal Chhotalal was immersed in the heavy task of introducing an improved water-supply and a modern system of sanitation into the populous capital of Gujarat. Mr. Ranchhodlal was at that date President of the Ahmadabad Municipality, having been appointed a year or two before my arrival by Lord Reay's Government. He was the first Indian gentleman chosen for the post, in pursuance of the policy of Lord Ripon of associating Indians with the work of local self-government; and in his capacity as President he became responsible for all the executive work of the municipality. The appointment was no sinecure, as anyone with experience of urban administration in India will readily admit. Scarcely a day passed, while I was in Ahmadabad, that Mr. Ranchhodlal did not call upon me early in the morning to consult me about improvements and reforms or to report the progress of his schemes. Consequently, I soon became on terms of great intimacy with him and learned to appreciate his tact, ability and modesty. His actual achievements in municipal administration are described in a later page, as also his successful introduction into Gujarat of the cotton-spinning and weaving industry. The latter work formed the basis of the large fortune which he gradually accumu-

lated—a fortune which was subsequently developed by his son and grandson. I have been told by leading men of business in Ahmadabad that Ranchhodlal could have accumulated much greater wealth, had he elected to devote his whole time to the textile industry instead of spending a large portion of the day on the problems of urban improvement. After I left Ahmadabad, Mr. Ranchhodlal became a member of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Bombay. His work on the Council was marked by the same sincerity and the same degree of personal application that had characterised his work in Ahmadabad.

Mr. Ranchhodlal was one of the few Hindu gentlemen I have known who maintained throughout life an unquestioning and unshaken attachment to the faith of their ancestors. This devotion was combined with a most progressive spirit in material and mundane affairs. I well remember how once, after his return from Bhimnath, a remote and very holy spot in the Himalayas, whither he had made a pilgrimage with some of his family, he sought my assistance in carrying out certain projects designed for the benefit of the pilgrims who annually visited the shrine. He was anxious that the flights of steps leading to the sacred waters should be repaired or rebuilt, and that certain sanitary works, the value of which he had learnt to appreciate in Ahmadabad, should be constructed. He believed that if I, as District Magistrate, appealed on his behalf to the Deputy Commissioner of the district, with whom he was personally unacquainted, and remitted the money required for these projects to him, there was greater possibility of the amount being advantageously expended. Gladly did I write to the officer, explaining the situation and Ranchhodlal's object, and in due course received a cordial reply, as a result of which Ranchhodlal forwarded through me a sum of two thousand rupees to meet the cost of the necessary works.

Reference is made in the pages of this memoir to Ranchhodlal's son, Madhavlal, with whom I was also

acquainted. His death on April 4th, 1900, marked the close of a calm and uneventful life, and the fortunes of the family were then transferred to the keeping of his son, Chinubhai, upon whom the mantle of Ranchhodlal had truly fallen. For not only was he a great captain of industry, controlling two of the largest and most successful cotton mills in India, but, like his grandfather, he played a prominent part in civic affairs, and gave on a princely scale to philanthropic and educational objects. The progressive educational policy which marked Lord Sydenham's term of office as Governor of Bombay, found in Sir Chinubhai a warm supporter. He gave £60,000 for scientific and technical education at Ahmadabad, £20,000 to the Gujarat College, and £6,666 to the Sydenham College of Commerce in Bombay. These handsome donations, together with his active participation in public affairs, brought their natural reward. In 1910 Sir Chinubhai Madhalval received a knighthood, and three years later a baronetcy, being the first member of the Hindu community to receive the latter distinction. His death in March, 1916, at the comparatively early age of fifty-two, closed a career which seemed to be imbued with the spirit of Ranchhodlal's achievements and offers an inspiring example to his young son, born in 1906, who is now the guardian of the family wealth and traditions of service for the public weal. May the latter uphold worthily the standard set by his distinguished great-grand sire, of whom it may be truly said:—

“His life was gentle; and the elements
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

H. E. M. JAMES.



MEMOIR OF RAO BAHADUR RANCHHODLAL CHHOTALAL, C.I.E.

CHAPTER I.

CASTE, PARENTAGE, AND BIRTH.

Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, the subject of this memoir, belonged to the Sathodra division of the Nagar Brahmans of Gujarat, which takes its name from the village of Sathod in the Baroda State, whither, according to tradition, sixty families of Nagar Brahmans of Vadnagar were transferred during the thirteenth century A.D., by a ruler of the ancient Vaghela dynasty. The Nagar Brahmans, whose other more important divisions are the Vadnagar and the Vishalnagar or Visnagar, have a long and illustrious history. Modern research has shown that they were originally the priests of the powerful Gurjara tribes, who entered India from the Central Asian steppes in the trail of the Hunas or White Huns during the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., and whose name survives in that of the Gujars of the present day. These Gurjaras, who are shown by inscriptions to have ultimately developed into the Pratihara sept of Rajputs, founded kingdoms at Broach and at Bhinmal in Southern Rajputana; while the ancestor of the famous Guhilots or Sisodiyas of Mewar—the proudest of the Rajput septs—was actually, as Professor D. R. Bhandarkar has proved, a Nagar Brahman from Vadnagar (Anandapur), a town now included, like Sathodra, in the Baroda State. The

Nagar Brahmans as a class may therefore be said to have an ancient and historical connection with those early Huna-Gurjara invaders, whose upper ranks gradually crystallised, after their settlement in India, into the leading Rajput clans of Sisodia or Guhilot, Parihara or Pratihara, Chahamanas or Chauhans, Pramaras or Pawars, and Solankis, otherwise known as Chalukyas.¹ This fact may account largely for the political ability and capacity for public affairs which undoubtedly distinguishes the Nagar Brahmans of Gujarat. "The Nagara community," wrote General Le Grand Jacob, "is very powerful in the Peninsula (Kathiawar); they are by profession a *corps diplomatique*, and devoted to the arts of government. They are a shrewd race, and work their way into almost every Darbar by their ability and tact; most of the native servants of Government are of this class."² The Sathodra Nagars, to whom Ranchhodlal belonged, are mentioned by Wilson as belonging to the *Madhyandin Shakha* of the White Yajurveda and as being resident in various cities and towns of Gujarat. According to the latest information there are few, if any, of them now residing in the village of Sathod.

Ranchhodlal's ancestors were true to the official traditions of the Nagar caste. One of them, Vallabhji Kanji, held the office of chief minister in Malwa; another, on the maternal side, named Umedram, served as Vazir to the Babi chiefs of Balasinor, a state now included in the Rewa Kantha Political Agency, and was succeeded in the same office by his son, Harshadrai; while Anand Rai Mashraf, Ranchhodlal's great grandfather on his mother's side, was the minister of Kamal-ud-din Khan Babi, known usually by his title of Jawan Mard Khan, the last Mughal viceroy of Gujarat, whose family is now represented by the Nawab

¹ W. Crooke, on *Rajputs and Mahrattas*, in *Journal Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. xl, 1910; Vincent H. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 85, and *Oxford History of India*, pp. 173, 181.

² Quoted on p. 99, vol. ii, of *Indian Caste*, by J. Wilson, 1877.

of Radhanpur, a native state in the Palanpur Agency.¹ The Mughal Emperors of Delhi continued to appoint viceroys to Gujarat until 1748 ; but their power was purely nominal. For absolute anarchy reigned in the province, which was ravaged impartially by the hostile leaders of the Peshwa's and the Gaekwar's armies, by the Rajas of Jodhpur, by the agents of the Nizam-ul-Mulk, and by local Moslem chiefs like the Babis, to whom Jawan Mard Khan himself belonged, the Jhaloris who settled at Palanpur, and Momin Khan, who began to scheme for the independence of Cambay about 1736. In 1745, during this period of anarchy, Anand Rai Mashraf was assassinated,² and in 1753, Kamal-ud-din Khan (Jawan Mard Khan) was expelled from Ahmadabad by Raghunath Rao Peshwa and Damaji Gaekwar, two of the leaders of the Maratha power.

Anand Rai Mashraf left behind him a daughter, Prankor, who subsequently married Udayashankar, an orthodox Nagar Brahman, and bore him a son, Chhotalal, the father of Ranchhodlal, whose history is herein set forth. Udayashankar, after serving the ex-Viceroy for some time at Patan, accepted an appointment in the service of Damaji Gaekwar, and eventually died at Patan in 1799, leaving behind him his widow, Prankor, and two sons, Chhotalal, born in 1781, and Lalbhai, who was born two years later. At this date the practice of *Sati* (Suttee) was universal ; and the lady Prankor, whose attachment to her husband was only equalled by her orthodoxy, determined in spite of

¹ The Babis were an Afghan family of importance. The first Babi entered India with the Emperor Humayun. Bahadur Khan Babi was appointed Faujdar of Tharad in the reign of Shah Jahan. In 1693 his son, Jafar Khan, obtained the *Faujdar* of Radhanpur and other districts, with the title of Safdar Khan. In 1704 he was made Governor of Bijapur (in Gujarat) and in 1706 of Patan. The Babis also founded the Junagadh and Balasinor States.

² His murderer is said to have been a son of Jawan Mard Khan, who had quarrelled with his father, and suspected Anand Rai of poisoning his father's mind against him.

remonstrance to immolate herself upon her husband's pyre.¹ The ceremony took place upon the banks of the sacred river Sarasvati ; and here, at the spot where their mother passed out of their lives, the two boys built a temple which Ranchhodlal, honouring the memory of his pious grandmother, caused to be repaired about two years before his death.

The two sons, thus bereft of both parents, faced the future bravely. Chhotalal, the elder and more able of the two, managed to obtain the post which his father had held under the Maratha government at Patan, where, in addition to the discharge of his official duties, he studied Persian to such good purpose that he was able to read Persian medical works with ease and acquired a considerable reputation for his treatment of diseases. Chhotalal in due time married Labhma, daughter of Umedram, the chief minister of Balasinor, who is described as having possessed "every womanly virtue." Their first child was a daughter, whom they named Mohotiba. Upon her Chhotalal and his wife lavished all their love, and she in return rendered them affectionate obedience. At the age of eight she was married, according to Hindu custom, to a Nagar Brahman boy of high family, who died before his girl-wife had completed her twelfth year. The disabilities of Hindu widowhood pressed heavily upon Mohotiba, who was forbidden by caste rules to remarry, and was obliged to contemplate an unhappy future in which the performance of minor household duties would alternate with the performance of the penances pre-

¹ The practice of Suttee was finally abolished by Regulation XVII of 1829, during Lord William Bentinck's administration. The Regulation applied to Bengal only, but was followed by similar enactments in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. The practice of Suttee is very ancient ; it was well established in the Punjab in the fourth century B.C. ; wholesale burnings of women were perpetrated by the Rayas of Vijayanagar. The feeling in favour of the rite is not quite extinct yet. A case occurred in Bihar as late as 1905, and sporadic cases during the nineteenth century are on record. (See V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, pp. 663-66.)

scribed for widows in the Shastras. The spectacle of their only daughter's ill-fortune told so heavily upon Chhotalal and his wife that they determined to relinquish their home and pass the remainder of their lives in seclusion. With this object Chhotalal, who was now in his thirty-eighth year, handed over all his property and effects to his brother, Lalbhai, and set forth with his wife, his widowed daughter and one servant to the sacred city of Benares. The journey was long and tedious. Railways were then unknown; the roads were rough and unmetalled, and ran through tracts inhabited by robbers or infested by wild animals. Yet Chhotalal and his small party, patiently bearing the difficulties of the journey, reached Benares in safety about three months later. Here they abode for two years, during which time a second daughter was born to them, whom they named Kashiba after her birth-place.¹ They then moved to another place of great sanctity, Mathura on the river Jumna. Here likewise they rested for two years, and then, in response to repeated entreaties from Lalbhai, and finding that time had laid a healing hand upon their grief, they resolved to return to Gujarat.

On their way back they visited the famous Girnar mountain, about ten miles east of Junagadh in Kathiawar, which rises 3,500 feet above sea-level. Arriving at the foot of the mountain late in the evening they lost their way in the darkness and reached their destination after great delay. An aged ascetic—the only living creature in the place where they halted, hungry and fatigued—took pity on them, provided them with water and a few edible roots, and permitted them to pass the night in his company. In the course of conversation with the Sadhu, Mohotiba enquired whether her parents would be blessed with a son, to which he replied in the affirmative, adding that the god Hari would send a son “who would become famous for good deeds.” On the following day the party set forth again on their journey to Patan, halting for a few days on the way

¹ Kashi is a synonym of Benares.

at Dakor, a celebrated place of pilgrimage in the Kaira district, where there is a temple of Ranchhodji or Krishna. Here on the 15th of the dark half of Chaitra Samvat, 1879, *i.e.*, April 29th, 1823, Chhotalal's wife gave birth to a son, whom his parents named Ranchhod in honour of the deity of Dakor.¹

After his return, Chhotalal resumed his official career and served at Patan until 1828, in which year the British Government found it necessary to sequestrate the Gaekwari districts of Petlad, Kadi, Dabhoi, Amreli, and Songhad, together with certain revenues from Kathiawar, Mahikantha, and Rewa Kantha in satisfaction of a debt aggregating more than one crore and seven lakhs of rupees due by the Gaekwar, Sayaji Rao. The collection of the revenues of these districts and the general control of their administration was entrusted to the Gaekwar's chief minister, Vithal Rao Devji, who fixed his headquarters at Amreli. During a visit to Patan he met Chhotalal and recognising his ability, offered him the appointment of Bakshi or Army Paymaster, which Chhotalal accepted. The latter thereupon moved with his family from Patan to Amreli, his son, Ranchhod, or Ranchhodlal, being at the time about six years old. Vithal Rao Devji, dying in 1831, was succeeded by his brother, Govind Rao, who held office only until April, 1832, when by an agreement sanctioned by Lord Clare, Governor of Bombay, the sequestered estates were restored to the Gaekwar, and Govind Rao, who together with his brother, Vithal Rao, had incurred the displeasure of Sayaji Rao Gaekwar, was dismissed from office by the latter. Chhotalal shared the fate of Govind Rao, who was forbidden by the Gaekwar to enter Baroda; and the two families therefore emigrated to Ahmadabad, where Govind Rao and Chhotalal both purchased houses in Desai's Pol. Ultimately however in 1841, the Gaekwar relented and gave the Devji family permission to return to Baroda, whither they were followed by their devoted friend,

¹The image of Ranchhod at Dakor is said to have been brought from Dwarka by a Rajput named Bodhano.

Chhotalal, who remained with his family at Baroda till within a few years of his death.

Chhotalal appears from such accounts as exist to have been a man of sterling character. Orthodox in his views, he performed the daily duties of his religion with scrupulous regularity and was careful to carry out other ceremonies enjoined by the Shastras upon the Brahmanical classes. His household was orderly and well-managed, and the members of the family were united by bonds of mutual affection and esteem. Though his monthly salary at Amreli and Baroda was by no means excessive, his economical habits enabled him to effect savings, which, invested in good securities, formed the foundations of a respectable competence for his later years. His work as Bakshi, in which there must have been ample opportunity for speculation, was discharged with honesty and efficiency. To a dignified, almost austere, manner, he united a rare suavity of speech, scorning to use the pronoun "thou," and addressing even children in terms redolent of courtly Persian etiquette. Always abstemious in diet and eschewing self-indulgence in any form, Chhotalal throughout his life cultivated the habit of self-reliance and never entrusted to others work which he felt himself capable of performing. The natural devotion and gravity of his character, coupled with the love of his wife and children, enabled him to bear the heaviest sorrows of his life, namely the widowhood of his elder daughter, Mohotiba, and the desertion of the younger, Kashiba, whose husband, to whom she had been married at the age of eight, suddenly left home for an unknown destination and was never heard of again. The burden of these misfortunes, accepted with the true Hindu spirit of resignation, must have been lightened by the sight of his only son, Ranchhod, waxing daily in health and strength throughout his childhood and giving proof of a natural disposition to follow the example of his devoted parents and imbibe the lessons of a tranquil and well-ordered home.

CHAPTER II.

BOYHOOD, MARRIAGE, AND EDUCATION.

Ranchhodlal's boyhood was uneventful. The fact that he was their only son was doubtless responsible for the unusual care taken by his parents to shield him from harm ; for we learn that he was never permitted to go abroad in the company of strangers and that arrangements were made at home for his recreation, a few chosen boys of his own age being admitted to the house as his playmates. These precautions were naturally relaxed as he grew older, and by the time he had reached the age of thirteen he was accustomed to move about with as little restraint as other boys of his age. The influence of this upbringing is perhaps indicated by his predilection for chess-playing with his elders—a form of amusement in which he showed considerable skill. When he was eight years old his *Upanayana* or investiture with the sacred thread was celebrated,¹ and in the same year he was married to Jethiba, the daughter of a wealthy government official, named Bapuji Mansukhram who held the office of principal Sadr Amin² in the city of Ahmadabad. Jethiba, whose name will be mentioned in later pages, is described as a bright and intelligent girl, who had been taught reading and writing and elementary accounting, and had acquired a fair knowledge of household management and economy in her father's home. Of a devout nature she was a constant visitor to the temple

¹ The meaning of the word *Upanayana* is "introduction to knowledge," for by it a Brahman acquires the right to study. From the moment of investiture with the triple cord he enters the first of the four stages of a Brahman's life, namely that of Brahmachari.

² This post was equivalent to that of a First Class Subordinate Judge in these days.

which her father erected in the street, where she subsequently lived with her husband Ranchhodlal, and her charity, which was not the least of her virtues, took the form of grants of free medicine and free food to all classes, and of clothing and vessels to the Brahmans and mendicants who visited her house for alms.

Ranchhodlal was six years old when he commenced his education at a private school in Amreli. Education in those days was of a perfunctory and limited type, for no regular schools had been established by the State and there were very few books to read. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century the indigenous schools, as the late Mr. K.N. Kabraji has recorded, were owned by so-called *Mehetajis*, penurious men of limited intellect, who often held their classes on the verandah of a house free of rent. Chairs and tables were unknown, and very few pupils possessed slates or pencils, their place being taken by a portable wooden board, on which the pupil wrote with a reed pen dipped in a chalky fluid and which was repainted at Divali by the *Mehetaji* for a small fee. When his parents moved, as recorded above, to Ahmadabad, Ranchhodlal was sent to an elementary school of this type kept by one Tuljaram Master and acquired there a smattering of Gujarathi literature. Thanks, however, to his father Chhotalal, who was a good Persian scholar, Ranchhodlal was taught the rudiments of the Persian language, which was at that date in constant use in the courts and offices of government, and having made good progress under his father's personal tuition, was placed for further study under Munshi Bapubhai, a Nagar Brahman, and later under Maulvi Faizuddin, both of whom were Persian scholars of some repute. Nor was Sanskrit forgotten. When Ranchhodlal was thirteen, his father arranged for him to study the sacred language under a Pandit named Bindu Vyasa, with whose assistance he made rapid progress in both Sanskrit literature and philosophy, showing considerable aptitude for the intelligent discussion of some of the intricate problems enshrined in that language. His success in

mastering Persian and Sanskrit served to direct his mind towards fresh fields of study, and he determined to learn English. But here the difficulties in his path were greater. No proper English schools were in existence; suitable teachers were very scarce; the extent to which the language was used in Gujarat was very limited, and the public had not yet begun to appreciate the advantages of English. He was obliged, therefore, at first to attend a private school opened by a Portuguese and later to engage as tutor a Marathi-speaking native of the Deccan. But he soon mastered all that they could teach and left them with a feeling of disappointment that his progress had been so slight.

At this juncture fortune befriended him. The British Resident at Baroda, whose headquarters were at Ahmadabad, had a Daftardar named Sarabhai, whose son, Bholanath,¹ was one of Ranchhodlal's friends. The visits of Ranchhodlal's father Chhotalal, in company with Govind Rao Devji, to the Resident on official business had led to an acquaintance between Chhotalal and Sarabhai, which soon ripened into friendship. Sarabhai, like Chhotalal, was a good Persian scholar and also possessed a tolerable knowledge of English, and believing in the value of the latter language had engaged able tutors for his son. Arrangements were soon made for Ranchhodlal to share Bholanath's studies, and within a comparatively short time Ranchhodlal had attained sufficient mastery of the language to enable him to continue his work unaided. He was never averse from seeking assistance from those willing to help him, and at one period of his life, when he was employed at Gogha, he learnt much from an English missionary who was stationed there. But, broadly speaking, the foundation of his

¹ This boy afterwards became Rao Bahadur Bholanath Sarabhai, who served Government in the Judicial Department, and was closely associated with the establishment in Ahmadabad of the Prarthana Samaj, of which he acted as President for several years. He composed several poetical works, which are still widely read.

knowledge of English was continuous study in his own house, whereby he acquired a proficiency which attracted the attention of British officials in his earlier years and enabled him in later years to take an active share in the debates in the Bombay Legislative Council. Those of us who know India of the twentieth century and have witnessed the extraordinary proficiency in English which many Indians acquire while still young, may be disposed to make light of Ranchhodlal's mastery of the language. But if we recollect that he achieved his object before the days of the Board of Education and before the establishment of a properly organised department of Public Instruction we shall surely not hesitate to pay a tribute both to his natural intelligence and his tenacity of purpose.

CHAPTER III.

SERVICE UNDER THE BOMBAY GOVERNMENT.

In a petition which Ranchhodlal submitted to Government in September, 1854, he states that he finally completed his education in 1842 and in the same year was appointed private clerk on a monthly salary of Rs. 10 to Mr. A. W. James, Assistant Collector of Customs at Ahmadabad, who afterwards became a District Judge in the service of the East India Company. Two years later, 1844, he entered the service of Government as clerk on Rs. 20 per mensem in the Customs department at Gogha on the Gulf of Cambay, which, at that date, still retained a certain commercial importance, and had not yet seen its trade supremacy threatened by the rival town of Bhavnagar. Here Ranchhodlal's abilities seem to have attracted the notice of his superiors; for Mr. Remington, the District Judge of Ahmadabad at that date, recommended him to the favourable notice of Mr. Thomas Ogilvy, the Political Agent of Rewa Kantha, who appointed him in 1845 English clerk in the Agency Office on a salary of Rs. 30 per mensem. From that date his abilities earned him rapid promotion. In 1846, he was promoted to a post on Rs. 40 per mensem, and in the following year was deputed to serve at a monthly salary of Rs. 60 in the Hereditary Offices in Ahmadabad. But his late chief in the Rewa Kantha Agency was loath to lose his services, and only four months after his transfer to Ahmadabad he was recalled to Rewa Kantha to fill the appointment of Daftardar¹ on a salary of Rs. 75, raised subsequently to Rs. 150 per mensem. In the capacity of Daftardar,

¹ Literally "Record-Keeper"; the principal native revenue-officer on the establishment of the head of a district.

Ranchhodlal was able to render material assistance to Government on more than one occasion. When, for example, a Commission was appointed to enquire into the rights and financial condition of the Girasias, Watandars, Desais and Majumdars of Rewa Kantha, Ranchhodlal's tact and knowledge of the conflicting claims of the various parties were largely instrumental in effecting a speedy settlement of a somewhat complicated problem. His assistance was equally valuable in connection with a boundary dispute between the British Government and the Rajpipla State, which is bounded partly by the Mehwas estates of Rewa Kantha and partly by British districts and the territory of the Gaekwar.

Ranchhodlal's services were duly brought to the notice of the Bombay Government, who shortly afterwards appointed him Assistant Superintendent of Pavagarh¹ in the Panch Mahals district—a post corresponding to that of Assistant to the Political Agent in these days and the highest appointment to which an Indian in the political department of the Government could at that date aspire. The Panch Mahals district formed part of the territory of the Maharaja Sindia, who eventually transferred it to the British in 1861; but from 1853 until the date of transfer the actual administration was conducted by the British Government, who introduced order into the chaotic Maratha revenue system, and abolished the transit duties and other vexatious levies of the former government. Ranchhodlal, whose salary was Rs. 300 per mensem, was for all practical purposes the representative of the Bombay Government in this

¹ Pavagarh, from which the appointment received its name, is a famous hill-fort in the Kalol Taluka of the Panch Mahals district. Seized by Chauhan Rajputs in 1300 A.D., it was reduced by Sultan Mahmud Begara in 1484, after a two years' siege. The Emperor Humayun took it in 1535. In 1573 it fell into the hands of Akbar. Sindia seized it about 1761, and Colonel Woodington captured it from Sindia in 1803. It was restored in 1804 to Sindia, in whose possession it remained until 1853, when the British took over the management of the Panch Mahals.

corner of foreign territory. It speaks highly for his abilities and the confidence which he inspired that he obtained this appointment when he was barely thirty years of age. The British officers of the Political Department under whom he served, notably Messrs. Ogilvy and Samuel Mansfield, Major Browne and Major Fuljames, were not slow to recognise Ranchhodlal's industry and intelligence and the punctilious character of his official work, and even after he had become involved in the unhappy charges which led to the Bombay Government dispensing with his services, they found it difficult to believe that he had wittingly receded from the strict standard of integrity which he observed while still serving under their orders.

Ranchhodlal had held his new appointment at Pavagarh for only a brief period when the storm broke over his head. Considering his services to Government in his early years and the distinguished and important part which he later played in the commercial and municipal history of Ahmadabad, one would fain draw a veil over the transactions which resulted, justly or unjustly, in the close of his career as a servant of Government. But without some reference to these matters Ranchhodlal's biography would be incomplete, and the very repetition of the tale may perhaps serve to point the moral that a man is master of his own destiny and may rise, even as Ranchhodlal did, victorious over the mistakes and follies of earlier years. Before giving the bare facts of the case reflecting on Ranchhodlal's integrity, it is but fair to mention that his Indian biographer declares the whole unhappy affair to have been the direct outcome of the intrigues of Ranchhodlal's enemies. To support this view he refers to the mutual hostility which subsisted at this time between the subordinate officials and clerks of the Baroda Residency and those of the Political Agent, Rewa Kantha, whose headquarters were also at Baroda; to the enmity felt towards Ranchhodlal in particular by the native agent to the Baroda Resident, who endeavoured for some time to embroil the young Daftardar

with his official superiors without much success, and even attempted to force him to give false evidence against one Narsupant, a subordinate official of the Residency, in a prosecution arising out of charges deliberately and ingeniously fabricated against the latter; and finally to the determination of Ranchhodlal's enemies, many of whom were doubtless jealous of his rapid promotion, to make the appointment of a new Political Agent—a man “who knew not Joseph”—the occasion for humbling Ranchhodlal's pride and requiting him for his consistent repulsion of their dishonest advances.

The story is concerned with the succession of an adopted prince to the *gadi* (throne) of the Lunawada State in Rewa Kantha, the chief of which is a Solanki Rajput, descended from a dynasty which ruled at Anhilwada and is supposed to have established itself at Virpur in A.D. 1225. About two centuries later the family removed to Lunawada, having probably been driven across the river Mahi by the increasing power of the Muhammadan Kings of Gujarat.¹ In June, 1849, the chief of Lunawada, Fateh Sing Partab Sing, died, and as he had no heir he adopted a few hours before his death one Dalpat Sing, a distant relative, who died in October, 1851. Accordingly Mambai, the mother of the late Rana Fateh Sing, adopted in February, 1852, one Dallel Sing Salam Sing as Dalpat Sing's successor; but she too died unfortunately before the Political Agent, Rewa Kantha, could discuss the matter with her and give official countenance to her choice. Her death was the signal for various competitors to lay claim to the succession, and doubtless opened the way for a great deal of intrigue. Eventually, however, the

¹ Lunawada was originally tributary to both the Gaekwar and Sindia. The rights of the latter, guaranteed by the British Government in 1819, were transferred by him with the cession of the Panch Mahals in 1861. The chief town, Lunawada, is so called after the god Luneshwar, whose shrine still stands outside the Darkuli Gate of the town. About the beginning of the nineteenth century the town was a centre of the trade between Malwa and Central Gujarat.

Bombay Government accepted Dallel Sing, the choice of the deceased queen-mother, and he was formally installed as the ruling chief of Lunawada on September 22nd, 1852.

By 1854 rumours and reports had reached Major Wallace, who was then Political Agent of Rewa Kantha, regarding Ranchhodlal's activities in connection with the Lunawada succession, and in that year Ranchhodlal was suspended from office and definitely charged by Major Wallace with receiving in May, 1853, through his wife, Jethiba, a bribe of 8,000 Baroda rupees from the Chief of Lunawada, on the score of his having assisted Dallel Sing in succeeding to the *gadi* by his supposed official influence as Daftardar of the Rewa Kantha Agency. After some correspondence Ranchhodlal was tried on this charge before a Special Commissioner, Mr. Hebbert, and was acquitted. The prosecution relied chiefly upon a statement by one Jani Lakshmiram Deoshankar, the chief Karbhari of Lunawada, that on the 25th May he had paid the amount above-mentioned to Ranchhodlal's wife, Jethiba, at their house in Ahmadabad. Though Jani was shown conclusively to have received the sum from the Raja of Lunawada, there were various discrepancies in his account of the subsequent transaction. In Ranchhodlal's defence, his wife, Jethiba, pleaded an *alibi*, stating that on the 25th May, the date on which she was alleged by the prosecution to have received the rupees, she was at the village of Dakor, forty miles away from Ahmadabad, with her family priest Ambalal. She supported this story with a petition, purporting to have been presented by Ambalal on 26th May to the Police Jamadar at Dakor, asking for redress in the matter of a minor assault which had been made upon him. The original petition was produced at the enquiry held by the Special Commissioner. It was subsequently shown however that the Dakor register-book, in which the petition had been filed, had been tampered with, and that in all probability the petition, upon which the *alibi* mainly rested, was a forgery. This led to the prosecution before the

Political Agent of three persons for tampering with the village records, all of whom were convicted and sentenced in the first instance, but were subsequently released on a ruling of the High Court at Bombay that the three accused were not subject to the jurisdiction of the Rewa Kantha Agency. Ranchhodlal having thus been acquitted, the question of his reinstatement in the service of Government had to be decided, and in reply to a letter from the Bombay Government soliciting his opinion, Major Wallace wrote a long report criticising Mr. Hebbert's judgment adversely and declaring that, in his view, the *alibi* put forward by Ranchhodlal's wife was false. The Government, accepting Major Wallace's opinion, dispensed with Ranchhodlal's services and declined to employ him again in any capacity.

The case then entered upon a new phase. Ranchhodlal, smarting under the implied opprobrium, whether deserved or undeserved, asserted that the fraud in respect of the village documents at Dakor was not committed by anyone in his interests but at the instance of his enemies, and he proceeded for the first and last time in his life to prefer a charge of forgery against one man and of perjury against another, whom together he held responsible for his undoing. So far as the law was concerned, Ranchhodlal was again successful; for although the former accused was acquitted, the latter was found guilty and punished, while both Mr. Gray and Mr. Walter, the magistrate and judge respectively of Ahmadabad, who dealt with the cases, declared their belief that Ranchhodlal was innocent of the charge of corruption originally brought against him by the Political Agent. For reasons, however, which it would be tedious to give in detail, the Bombay Government, after the most mature and scrupulous consideration of all the facts and evidence, could not bring themselves to alter their opinion, and in May, 1859, issued a formal order declining to restore Ranchhodlal to the public service. Mr. Gray, the magistrate, who still believed in Ranchhodlal's innocence, made a final effort to persuade the Government to revise their order,

but only succeeded in eliciting at the end of August, 1859, a re-statement of the Government's conviction that their final order was justified.

Thus Ranchhodlal passed out of the service of Government. The proceedings from first to last had occupied five years, during which period he had been obliged to devote much of his time to endeavouring to clear himself of almost the gravest accusation that can be made against a public servant. The bare facts have been recorded, not with the object of re-opening the question of Ranchhodlal's guilt, which, it must be admitted, received the most patient and ample consideration from those with whom the final decision lay, but rather with the intention of throwing into stronger relief the well-deserved success which he attained in later years and the great services which he afterwards rendered both to the public and to the Government, whose salt he had once eaten. The misfortune which befell Ranchhodlal might have soured and broken a weaker and less capable man. Ranchhodlal rose superior to his fate, and at the close of a long career in the service of his countrymen was able to inspire the British officials and others who knew him with the same feelings of affection and respect which he had aroused in those under whom he commenced his official career in Rewa Kantha. His natural fortitude and mental capacity were directed into fresh channels, and the shadows which closed around this period of his life vanished before the signal achievements of his later years.

CHAPTER IV.

COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES.

During the ten years of his career as a Government servant, from 1844 to 1854, Ranchhodlal had from time to time contemplated the possibility of revivifying Indian industry by the application of European methods and machinery ; and with the help of his friend, Major Fuljames, had obtained details of the textile industry from England. In 1850, at a time when the Bombay Presidency was wholly destitute of cotton spinning and weaving plant, Ranchhodlal made his first attempt to found the textile industry of Ahmadabad. A prospectus was issued ; a local weekly, the *Ahmadabad Samachar*, was employed to give publicity to his project ; and the *shroffs* and bankers of the town were approached with a view to the provision of the required capital. But the merchants of Ahmadabad, though possessed of ample means to finance several mills, were conservative in their views and shrank from co-operating with Ranchhodlal in so novel a departure from their time-honoured lines of business. Ranchhodlal thereupon approached the merchants of Baroda and other places and met with a more favourable reception. The initial expenditure required for the erection of a mill was estimated at about two lakhs of rupees, half of which amount was to be provided by a certain Mr. Landon, who had already erected a ginning-factory at Broach on the strength of information supplied by Ranchhodlal, and the other half was to be furnished by Ranchhodlal and certain other promoters, chief among whom were the leading Baroda bankers, Gopal Mehral and Shamal Bhecher, Gaurishankar Oza, the chief minister of the Bhavnagar State, and the Raja of Rajpipla. This project however never materialised.

Meanwhile the advantages offered by the establishment of an indigenous cotton-spinning and weaving industry had attracted notice in other parts of the Bombay Presidency. In 1851, a well-known merchant of Bombay, Mr. Kavasji Nanabhai Davar, projected a similar scheme to that of Ranchhodlal and eventually opened the first spinning and weaving mill in Bombay in 1854. Mr. Landon, to whom reference is made above, built a spinning mill at Broach about the same date, while four years later, in 1858, Manekji Nasarvanji Petit opened a second textile mill in Bombay island. The example of these pioneers encouraged Ranchhodlal to persevere with his own projects, and eventually in 1859 he succeeded in establishing the first mill in Ahmadabad, the company which owned it being known as the Ahmadabad Spinning and Weaving Company Limited. The capital involved amounted in the first instance to one lakh of rupees, divided into twenty shares of Rs. 5000 each, and the mill contained at first 2,500 spindles only and no looms. Much delay occurred between the foundation of the mill in 1859 and its actual opening in 1861. The Suez Canal had not at that date been opened and all vessels from England had to sail to India *via* the Cape; the ship which was bringing out the machinery for the new mill caught fire and was lost at sea. The machinery, which had been ordered in England through the late Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, was however fully insured and with the sum so realised fresh machinery was purchased. In the meanwhile the English engineer, Mr. C. Dall, who had been specially engaged for the mill and had reached India some little time previously, died before the arrival of the new plant. When it eventually did reach India, it was decided to land it at Cambay, owing to the complete absence of railway communication between Bombay and Ahmadabad. To Cambay therefore Ranchhodlal himself proceeded and there spent four months watching the machinery being unloaded and packed on to country bullock-carts. Further delay occurred after the machinery had been delivered in

Ahmadabad. Four European engineers in succession were engaged to erect it in the mill, but all of them proved unsatisfactory and had to be dismissed after completing a portion only of the task. In this predicament Ranchhodlal himself set to work to erect the machinery with the assistance of a Hindu astrologer, Sankleshwar Joshi, who knew something of applied mechanics, and made considerable progress. He was eventually relieved of further anxiety by the arrival of a new European engineer, Mr. Edington, who, after completing the erection of the engine, boiler and other machinery, served for two years, 1861 to 1863, and put the whole mill into good working order.

At the outset the mill barely paid a dividend of six per cent. and Ranchhodlal therefore determined to increase the original capital by the issue of new shares of Rs. 1000 apiece, to increase the number of spindles from 2,500 to 10,000, and to establish a weaving department with 100 looms. On the departure of Mr. Edington, Ranchhodlal was fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr. Whittle, who managed the mill for the next four years, added fifty new looms, and supervised the business so successfully that the shareholders received a dividend of nine per cent. and a substantial sum was annually carried over to the reserve fund. The condition of this reserve fund enabled Ranchhodlal to erect a second mill in 1872, containing about 14,500 spindles and 800 looms. This mill prospered also until 1875, when a disastrous fire destroyed practically the entire building, which was uninsured. Nothing daunted, Ranchhodlal set to work to rebuild it at his own expense, without calling for further assistance from the shareholders; and by the installation of machinery of a new and improved type, he managed within a comparatively short time to wipe off the losses incurred in the fire. The capital of the mill was raised from $6\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs to nearly 10 lakhs of rupees, each shareholder receiving scrip worth Rs. 500 for every thousand-rupee share originally held by him.

The success attending these two ventures enabled Ranch-

hodlal to establish a third ginning, spinning and weaving mill in the name of his son, Madhavlal, at Sarangpur in 1877. The original capital was $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, divided into 350 shares of 1,000 rupees each, and the paid-up calls aggregated 2 lakhs and 80,000 rupees, the balance being made up from savings carried to the reserve fund. Half of the capital was subscribed by Ranchhodlal himself and the other half by a few of his personal friends who subsequently, as the annual profits continued to rise, sold some of their stock in the open market. In 1877, 1878, and 1879, the number of spindles and looms was largely increased, and the savings accruing from careful management enabled Ranchhodlal to pay up the whole of the unsubscribed capital. The shareholders also profited by the issue to them of a fresh certificate equal in value to their original holdings. The capital of the mill was in this way doubled, and not long afterwards was trebled as a result of the steadily-increasing profits of its working. The market value of the shares rose to more than six times their face value. The credit for this result lies chiefly with Ranchhodlal's son, Madhavlal, who was manager of the mill from the date of its establishment; and in due course his mantle fell upon his son, Chinubhai, afterwards known as Sir Chinubhai Madhavlal, Bart., who inherited the business instincts and capacity of his grandfather.

The example of Ranchhodlal and his son was not lost upon their fellow-citizens, many of whom had hitherto done little except hoard their accumulated riches. In 1871 the late Rao Bahadur Becherdas Ambaidas, C.S.I., built a mill; another, named after Jamnabhai Mansukhbhai, was opened in 1877; other new mills appeared in 1881, 1882, 1883, and 1887. The industry continued to expand, so that by the time of his death Ranchhodlal witnessed the triumph of his labours as a pioneer and a vast addition to the wealth of Ahmadabad. A statement prepared in 1916 shows that in that year there were sixty-two mills in Ahmadabad, containing about 990,000 spindles and 21,000 looms, besides

a match factory, hosiery factories and oil mills. The mere figures of machinery however do not represent adequately the value of the enterprise in which Ranchhodlal led the way. The introduction of the textile industry generated a larger spirit of commercial courage in the merchants of Ahmadabad and taught them the value of European business methods ; regular employment was provided for thousands of the poorer people of Gujarat, who would otherwise have suffered more or less acutely during periodic seasons of crop failure and drought ; the value of landed property rapidly increased, and the rise in wealth and importance of the old city, which, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had been one of the most splendid places in India, soon justified its being ranked as the second city of the Western Presidency. Of this steady industrial expansion, Ranchhodlal, once the pioneer, became in turn the guiding genius. He presided by invitation at the opening ceremonies of new mills ; he presided by universal consent at the deliberations of the local millowners' association ; he was adviser-in-chief to all those who sought to emulate his success. He was ever on the look-out for chances of developing the natural resources of his country. In 1882 he interested himself in the subject of iron-smelting, obtained samples of iron ore and submitted them for analysis to an official expert, and from the samples had a few tools made for use in the smithy of his Shahpur mill. Two years later, 1884, he formed a company, he himself being one of the managing agents, to develop the iron and coal deposits of the Panch Mahals district. The scheme however was abandoned, as the Bombay Government were unwilling to concede the mining rights in the district on the terms and conditions laid down by Ranchhodlal.

Ranchhodlal was a firm believer in the value of personal application to the daily routine of business and personal supervision of his commercial undertakings. In a country where the desire for quick profits has led on more than one occasion to insane speculation and mercantile fraud, the

conduct of Ranchhodlal's business offered a most salutary example to all who desired to participate in the growth of the new industry. With speculative schemes he would have nothing whatever to do, and at the time of the famous share mania in Bombay, which resulted from the civil war in America and the consequent failure of the American cotton supply, he turned a deaf ear to more than one tempting offer from the promoters of the well-known Back Bay Reclamation scheme. The same considerations led him to limit the number of his own mills, for fear lest the efficiency of those already established might be impaired. Up to the time of his death he visited his own mill twice a day, entered every department, conversed with the workmen and issued personal orders on innumerable details, and even at the age of seventy, when most men have relinquished active duty, he might be seen standing for hours among his men, discussing points connected with the output or administration of the factory. "Every individual employee," writes his Indian biographer, "had ready access to him, and he would listen to what they had to say with wonderful patience. While he never let them know he was their master, he yet had the knack of exacting from them work to their utmost capacity. He was a friend to all. He never lost his temper. Never at rest, he was also never in haste. Invariably guided by reason and not mere sentiment, he conveyed his instructions with telling effect. He treated all impartially, and was careful not to overlook just claims. He loved all his men and they all loved him in return . . . They will long cherish the memory of his kind treatment, his sound advice, and his sympathetic efforts to promote their welfare."

Briefly, the story of the introduction into Gujarat of the now flourishing cotton spinning and weaving industry is the tale of Ranchhodlal's struggle to fashion for himself a new career. Though lacking the advantage of a mercantile training, and without influence and resources, Ranchhodlal's force of character enabled him to surmount

all obstacles and to divert the trade of Ahmadabad into new and wider channels. The material reward which crowned his diligence and perseverance was very great; his personal wealth increased *pari passu* with the industry which he founded; he was known far and wide as the Merchant-Prince of Gujarat. He realised fully the truth of the saying: "The night cometh when no man can work," and having mastered every detail of his business he worked without remission until the end. The commercial prominence of the capital city of Gujarat at the present day is the fruit of his earnest endeavour.

CHAPTER V.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Notwithstanding his strenuous work as a pioneer of industry, Ranchhodlal found time during the last thirty years of his life to devote constant attention to municipal work in Ahmadabad. The city came into the possession of the British Government in 1818, after the downfall of the Peshwa, and profited not a little by the abolition of certain vexatious taxes, known as town duties, which had been levied upon the citizens by the Gaekwar's government. Trade immediately revived, particularly a valuable trade in opium and Kashmir shawls which passed through the city on their way to the coast-port of Gogha. To afford additional protection to the traders of the city it was determined to repair the city walls, which were in a ruinous condition, and under the auspices of Mr. Borrodaile the people of Ahmadabad collected a fund known as "The City Walls Restoration Fund," which was administered by a committee composed of the Collector, the District Judge and two Indian members. By 1832 the city walls had been thoroughly repaired from the proceeds of this voluntary cess, and the fund still had a considerable balance to its credit. It was decided that this balance should constitute the nucleus of a general fund for the improvement of the city. The public, realising that their subscriptions had been advantageously utilised, were willing to continue to subscribe annually to the new general fund, the administration of which was vested in a regular urban committee charged with the duty of supervising and improving the sanitation of Ahmadabad. The city thus forestalled to some extent the municipal arrangements which were subsequently extended throughout the Presidency, excluding the city of Bombay, by the

promulgation of Act XXVI of 1852, and indeed continued its own system of urban administration for five years after that Act had come into force. On the 14th January, 1875, with the general consent of the inhabitants, the city was brought under the provisions of the Act of 1852, and twenty-four years later, on 19th November, 1874, a regular municipal board was created under the Bombay Municipal Act VI of 1873. A further step forward was taken when Lord Ripon's Government conferred the right of local self-government upon all city municipalities by the promulgation of the Bombay District Municipal Amendment Act II of 1884. The Board of 1874 was re-constituted on the 1st January, 1885, the system of election to the Board being for the first time introduced. Up to this time the Board had consisted of ten *ex-officio* members and twenty-two non-officials, or thirty-two in all. By the revised arrangements of 1885, this number was reduced to thirty, of whom ten were to be *ex-officio* members, twelve were to be non-officials elected by the people, and eight were to be non-official nominees of the Bombay Government. It was also subsequently decided that the President of the Board, who hitherto had always been the Collector of Ahmadabad, should be nominated from among the non-official members, and in consequence of this innovation the membership of the Board was reduced to twenty-nine, including the President, fourteen being elected and fifteen nominated members. About 1889 the Board's numbers were again increased to thirty, of whom fourteen members were elected by the ratepayers, two were elected by the educated and professional classes, and fourteen, including the President, were nominated by Government. Finally, in 1894, the total membership of the Board, or General Committee, was increased to thirty-three by raising the number of nominated members to seventeen.

Ranchhodlal entered upon his municipal career in 1868, when he accepted a seat on the municipal committee as a nominee of the Bombay Government. From that date

until 1883 he served continuously as a member of the Board and laid the foundation of that knowledge of urban requirements which subsequently enabled him to play so prominent a part in the municipal history of the city. He found time to study the leading works on sanitary science and hygiene, and made himself fully acquainted with the details of the municipal machine and with the actual conditions of life in Ahmadabad. The opportunity of turning his study to practical account occurred in 1883 when the permanent chairman of the municipality, Mr. J. F. Fernandez, resigned and the Bombay Government, which had noted Ranchhodlal's grasp of municipal questions, appointed him to fill the vacancy.

At the time Ranchhodlal became chairman of the municipality, Ahmadabad had an unfortunate reputation for unhealthiness, notwithstanding that it possessed a dry, porous soil and that the average depth of its subsoil water was more than twenty feet below surface-level. The mortality rate of Ahmadabad was the second highest in the Bombay Presidency, and during the five years prior to 1883 averaged forty-nine per mille; diseases such as cholera, dysentery and ague, appeared every year in more or less epidemic form and caused the death of hundreds of the population, whose health was undermined by the grossly insanitary state of the city. Overcrowding, the want of a proper drainage system, the absence of a pure water-supply and the presence within the residential area of dangerous and offensive trades were among the causes which contributed to swell the mortality statistics, and of these the two which in the opinion of Ranchhodlal's predecessor most urgently demanded attention were the system of sewage disposal and the water-supply. Ranchhodlal's first movement towards grappling with these problems consisted in drafting in December, 1883, and circulating among his colleagues on the municipal committee a memorandum of instructions and suggestions, in which he drew pointed attention *inter alia* to the pollution of the city's wells by percolation from

the *Khalkuwas* or cesspools, to the fact that in some parts of the city even this primitive system of cesspools was wanting, and to the immediate need of removing the night-soil depots to the south-east of the urban area and providing more rapid and up-to-date means of transit to the depots for the filth and sewage of the city. He suggested also that the evil effects of overcrowding should be impressed upon the public by means of lectures and pamphlets, that the Municipality should formulate a programme of street improvement, and that both Government and the Municipality should endeavour to check the further overcrowding of the urban area by refusing to sell unoccupied land within its limits for building purposes. He drew a comparison between the death-rates of Ahmadabad and of Bombay, Poona and Broach, pointed out the immense benefits which had accrued in London and Bombay by the practical application of the rules of sanitary science, and besought his colleagues to set their faces sternly against the fatalism, so prevalent among the people of India, which checks and discourages human efforts to ameliorate the material conditions and circumstances of life.

Ranchhodlal's memorandum, so far as the official authorities were concerned, met with well-deserved praise. "The memorandum," wrote the Sanitary Commissioner to the Bombay Government in May, 1884, "is, I think, a remarkable document for a native gentleman to have written, as it exhibits a breadth of view and a masterly appreciation of some of the main questions that affect the public health in that city." The Army Sanitary Commission in London, to whom the memorandum had been submitted in the form of an appendix to the Sanitary Commissioner's report, described it as "a very remarkable sanitary report," as "a model report of its kind," and pointed out that it threw most useful additional light upon the causes of fever in Indian towns. "Mr. Ranchhodlal," they added, "has rendered a great service to sanitary improvement by preparing it."

The more difficult part of Ranchhodlal's task was to persuade his colleagues on the municipal committee of the value of his ideas and to have his proposals translated into practice. With this object he called continual meetings of the managing committee during his first year of office, besides special and quarterly general meetings to test the general sense of the Board, and succeeded in obtaining sanction for certain minor improvements in the method of dealing with street-sweepings and garbage, for the construction of open gutters to carry off storm water, and for the erection of improved reservoirs for watering cattle. He also carried to completion, at the cost of about Rs. 70,000, a new arterial thoroughfare, now named after Sir James Richey, a former Collector of Ahmadabad, for the construction of which sanction had been obtained by Mr. Fernandez, his predecessor in office. This road proved not only a convenience to the growing traffic of the city but also a benefit to the health of the locality through which it passed. Yet Ranchhodlal had not yet aroused the "sanitary conscience" of his colleagues; and in the belief that the constant repetition of his theme must in time affect their placid conservatism, he devoted a considerable portion of the annual administration report of the Municipality for the year 1883-84 to a detailed re-statement of the urgent requirements of the city. He showed that of 41,000 houses in Ahmadabad, 8,800 were furnished with the primitive and insanitary cesspits, known locally as *Khalkwas*, and that the remainder had no provision whatever for the disposal of house-sewage, which was usually emptied directly on to the public streets and lanes. He drew attention to the very insanitary condition of the narrow streets, known locally as *Pols*, which occupied a considerable portion of the inhabited area. The main thoroughfares of Ahmadabad at this date were metalled and drained, but the *Pols*, being totally devoid of even surface and storm-water drainage, were in a sodden and putrifying condition and offered a fertile soil for the epidemics of cholera which

occurred annually after the outburst of the monsoon. On the subject of the removal of refuse he provided figures and estimates showing the cost of laying down a light railway, supporting them with a report from the Amritsar municipality in the Punjab, which had already adopted this method of dealing with town refuse. To these primary needs, including specially a proper water-supply, he added the removal from the city of dangerous and offensive trades, the widening of narrow streets and roads, the building of *chals* (tenement buildings) for the poorer classes, the regulation of milch-cattle stables, and the erection of primary school buildings. For the establishment of a drainage system, waterworks, and a sewage farm, Ranchhodlal estimated a probable capital outlay of about 15,00,000 rupees; and on the assumption that the Municipality could obtain a loan of this amount at five per cent. repayable in fifty years he proposed that a special tax, amounting to about twelve annas per head, should be levied upon the city. The imposition of such a tax, he argued, would cost the people less in the end than they would have to pay for the provision and upkeep of properly constructed *khalkuvas* and *tankas* (reservoirs) for the storage of drinking water, such as were then maintained in the more favoured parts of the city. But to obviate the chance of even so small a cess pressing hardly upon the poorer inhabitants he suggested that the Municipality should in the first instance make a general valuation of all immovable property in the city, and regulate the incidence of the tax on the basis of that valuation. Moreover, while recognising fully the duty of the citizens to provide by such means these urgently required improvements, he requested Government to assist their endeavours by advancing the necessary loan at four per cent., by conceding to the Municipality the right to receive the sale-proceeds of the occupancy rights of all unoccupied lands within municipal limits, and thirdly by paying the Municipality compensation for the loss of the octroi fees on country liquor which had resulted in 1881 from the require-

ments of the Government liquor-monopoly and farming system.

So far as the water-supply of Ahmadabad is concerned, it must not be supposed that in formulating his schemes Ranchhodlal was breaking wholly new ground. The old system of tanks for the storage of rain-water and wells, coupled with an additional supply pumped from the river Sabarmati, was so insanitary and anachronistic that more than one scheme had been formulated for its supersession. The tanks leaked and collected all sorts of impurities ; the wells, surrounded by cesspools and rarely cleaned, were thoroughly polluted ; while the river water was rendered unpotable and dangerous to health by the universal practice of washing animals, clothes and utensils in the river, by the free admission to it of sullage water, and by the proximity of a night-soil depot, slaughter-houses, dyeing factories and tanneries. The pumping plant itself, erected in 1847 from the City Walls Restoration Fund during the Collectorship of Mr. Fawcett, had been from time to time improved, but was nevertheless inefficient and designed on lines that could scarcely be called strictly hygienic. Schemes for a new water supply had been prepared by an engineer named Ferguson in 1874, by Mr. Hatherly in 1876, by Mr. Borrodaile in 1878, by Mr. Pottinger, executive engineer for irrigation works in Gujarat, about the same date, by Mr. Playford Reynolds in 1883, and by Mr. Doig in 1884. These schemes however were "merely suggestions backed by rough estimates based on the express wishes of the Collector or the Municipality as to the quantity of water required per head of population and the pressure at which the supply was to be delivered." and were therefore in turn abandoned. In 1885 the Bombay Government, acting upon the request of Ranchhodlal, who was re-elected Chairman at the beginning of that year and became President in the following September under the provisions of Act II of 1884, agreed to lend the services of Colonel Walter M. Ducat, R.E., Consulting Sanitary Engineer, to the Ahmadabad Municipality for

one month for the purpose of preparing plans and specifications for drainage and water-works.

Up to this point Ranchhodlal's policy had met with no serious opposition. No sooner however had Colonel Ducat's plans been submitted for approval to the municipal commissioners than considerable hostility was manifested to the scheme both by Ranchhodlal's colleagues in the municipality and by the general public. It was widely held that the proposals framed by Colonel Ducat and supported by Ranchhodlal were impracticable and too costly, that they were ill adapted to the climatic conditions of Ahmadabad, would entail unduly heavy taxation, and might conceivably impose a heavy burden of debt upon the municipality. Mass meetings, at which Ranchhodlal's opponents on the Board presided, were held daily to protest against the schemes, and the native Press fanned the opposition with unjustified misrepresentation and frequently with bitter invective. Ranchhodlal himself attended several of the meetings and after listening patiently to criticism, which was not always free from personal rancour, sought by calm exposition of the facts to explain to his audience the merits of the proposals. The hostilities culminated in a monster meeting held at the Tanksal¹ and attended by thousands of all classes, in the hope of intimidating the President. It was bruited abroad that if Ranchhodlal attended and declined after open discussion to recede from his position, personal violence might perhaps be resorted to. Ranchhodlal was no coward. He attended the meeting, which greeted his arrival with hisses and other signals of dissatisfaction, and endeavoured by patient and reasoned explanation to remove misapprehension. But the crowd, which had been worked up by methods only too common in India, first shouted him down and refused him a hearing, and then proceeded to pelt him with garbage and

¹ *Tanksal* in Hindustani means "a Mint." The building here mentioned is probably the remains of the Emperor Jahangir's Mint.

stones. A party of mounted police, which had been sent by the Collector to protect him, managed to escort him without injury from the meeting to his house.

For the time being, therefore, progress in the direction advocated by Ranchhodlal remained in abeyance. His scheme, though rejected by the managing committee under the circumstances outlined above, had still to be laid before a general meeting of the whole municipality. A meeting was called on 22nd June, 1886, to consider Colonel Ducat's report, at which Ranchhodlal himself, after explaining the circumstances in which the Colonel's services had been lent by the Bombay Government, moved that the report on the water-supply be approved and adopted. The proposal was seconded by Major Robb, the Civil Surgeon. An amendment was at once moved by a member of the opposition to the effect that the cost of Colonel Ducat's water-supply scheme was excessive and that a further report should be made by a committee of nine persons, appointed *ad hoc*, on the desirability of improving and adding to the existing pumping-service. The amendment was carried by a majority of three. On the following day Ranchhodlal returned to the charge and moved that Colonel Ducat's drainage scheme be approved and adopted, being again supported by Major Robb. This proposal shared the same fate as the former. Ranchhodlal and his supporters were outvoted; ignorant conservatism for the time being won the day. Every effort was made by Ranchhodlal to bring his colleagues to a sense of their duties; he improvised a water-supply from the Sabarmati for his own mills; he laid down small drainage works and a small model sewage farm in the wide compound surrounding his house; he invited his colleagues to witness the working of this plant and tried to prove to them by ocular demonstration the value of the rejected proposals. Persuasive presentation of his plans and reasoned argument were of no avail; his opponents remained obdurate, and found moreover unexpected support in the views of Sir Theodore Hope, formerly Collector

of Ahmadabad and at this date a member of the Viceroy's Council, who, having been requested to give his views on the proposals, wrote a long minute from Simla in October, 1886, condemning Colonel Ducat's schemes in the strongest terms. Sir Theodore Hope, whose views were widely circulated in Ahmadabad and were also published in the *Bombay Gazette*, recommended his Ahmadabad friends to have nothing to do with underground drainage and to concentrate their forces instead on perfecting the removal of sewage by hand and on the surface-removal of sullage.

Sir Theodore's opinion, though unquestionably wrong, was a powerful weapon in the hands of Ranchhodlal's adversaries, and for the time being rendered active prosecution of Colonel Ducat's plans impossible. Ranchhodlal however, who realised that this distinguished official had been misled by hasty generalisations from the entirely different conditions and circumstances of other parts of India, notably of Lahore in the Panjab, replied to Sir Theodore's Hope's report in an elaborate memorandum, defending his own proposals and exposing the blunders of Sir Theodore Hope and his expert adviser. This memorandum he disseminated among his colleagues and the public of Ahmadabad, and at the same time wrote a temperate and practical letter to Sir Theodore Hope, pointing out the fallacies of his arguments and the costly impracticability of his alternative recommendations. He also gave a practical demonstration of the truth of one of Colonel Ducat's chief contentions by sinking a trial well in the river bed at Dudheshvar and demonstrating that double the daily quantity of water required by the city could be easily raised by machinery from a single well of the diameter and depth recommended in Colonel Ducat's scheme. Nor did he forget the educative influence of public discussion in the Press and wrote more than one letter combating the theories and statements of his opponents and justifying the detailed schemes of the expert. The latter, as may be imagined, was not disposed to accept Sir Theodore Hope's rather

pontifical pronouncement in silence, and on 30th November, 1886, submitted to the Secretary to Government in the Public Works Department, with whom rested the final verdict as to the adoption or rejection of his scheme, a lengthy and somewhat caustic refutation of the views of Sir T. Hope. Matters remained in an *impasse* however for some little time longer, during which Sir Theodore Hope wrote a further minute to Ranchhodlal, Dr. Thomas Blaney of Bombay was invited to give his views on the drainage problem, and Ranchhodlal continued his endeavours to educate the public mind and disarm opposition. At length on 2nd February, 1887 the report of the sub-committee appointed in June of the previous year to recommend an alternative water-supply scheme, was presented to a special general meeting of the Municipality. This sub-committee accepted Colonel Ducat's scheme *in extenso* with minor modifications, but recommended that the capital outlay on the scheme should not exceed five lakhs of rupees. The general meeting was twice adjourned owing to protracted discussion ; but at length on 3rd March, after a two hours' discussion, the Municipality passed by sixteen votes to ten a resolution moved by Professor Abaji Vishnu Kathavate and seconded by Mr. Hugh Fraser, that Colonel Ducat's water supply scheme, as modified by the sub-committee, should be adopted and that the sub-committee's estimate of five lakhs should be raised to six lakhs in order to admit of the provision of iron distributing pipes of rather larger diameter.

Thus Ranchhodlal's efforts were at length crowned with success. The sanction of the Bombay Government was quickly obtained, and in April, 1887, Ranchhodlal obtained the permission of the Municipality to raise a loan of six lakhs of rupees. The sanction of the Government of India was not received till May, 1888, and the actual works were commenced in March of the following year. The intermediate period was spent by Ranchhodlal in superintending the construction of the large well in the

river-bed at Dudheshvar, which formed one of the salient features of the scheme, and in subjecting the well to a series of tests, which proved conclusively to the satisfaction of all concerned, including Sir T. Hope who visited Ahmadabad to inspect the work, that a constant supply of potable water was now assured. Finally on 11th June, 1891, the Governor of Bombay, Lord Harris, opened the completed works, which comprised a pumping plant capable of supplying in twelve hours' working 1,300,000 gallons of water and 51 miles of piping. The scheme, which cost according to the final estimate a little more than $7\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees, was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Doig and his assistant, Mr. Fardunji, of the Public Works Department; Messrs. Little, G. B. Reid, and H. E. M. James, who successively held the office of Collector of Ahmadabad, lent official support to the undertaking; and, finally, the Government of Lord Reay, who preceded Lord Harris, assisted the Municipality by obtaining for it a loan of three lakhs at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the completion of the work.

The scheme has abundantly fulfilled the expectations of those who advocated its introduction. Since its completion as the result of Ranchhodlal's efforts, a second high-level reservoir has been built with a capacity of 318,000 gallons; to the two sets of engines and pumps provided in the original undertaking a third set was added in 1898, which, like the former, can deliver 1,800 gallons per minute to the high-level reservoir; a fourth engine has now been installed at a cost of nearly one lakh, and the question of a fifth engine is also under expert consideration. The water supply is constant, notwithstanding that the consumption per head has reached the high figure of twenty-six gallons inside the walled area and twenty-five gallons outside; but the increase of population and the excessive consumption in the northern parts of the city have necessitated the additional plant mentioned above and have also led to the laying of a new twenty-inch main for the supply of water to the suburbs and to the former twenty-seven-inch main being

*Superintending
Engineer's
and*

reserved purely for the supply of the city proper. The city of Ahmadabad owes a debt of gratitude to Ranchhodlal for his persistent advocacy of Colonel Ducat's proposals, which cannot be measured in words, and the most ardent of his former opponents now eulogize his prescience and perseverance for the public weal.

In the matter of the drainage of the city, Ranchhodlal's policy was not marked by the same degree of success. The system, which Ranchhodlal wisely desired to supersede, consisted of the removal of night-soil by hand and its subsequent transport to two very offensive depots at the Jamalpur and Shahpur gates of the city. He arranged in 1885 for its removal by tramway to a spot outside the city walls, known familiarly as *Bagh Firdaus*, "The Garden of Paradise." Local opposition to the scheme of underground drains, which he favoured, had received considerable support from the published opinion of Sir Theodore Hope already mentioned; and Ranchhodlal determined, as his first move in the struggle, to have a sub-committee appointed with ample powers to investigate the subject at issue and make recommendations to the municipal board. This sub-committee, which commenced work in November, 1886, reported without delay in favour of the removal of sullage water by pipes as a temporary measure; and at a meeting of the municipal committee in the following month Ranchhodlal succeeded in gaining approval to a proposal that for the area within the city walls the proposals of the sub-committee should be tentatively adopted, and that in the extra-mural area glazed earthenware pipes should be used to carry the sullage to a distance of two miles to the south of the city. The financial aspect of the proposal was reserved for further discussion. Opposition however was still so strong that the Municipality at a subsequent meeting in December declined to sanction the proposals and declared definitely in favour of the removal of sullage by hand. Their decision was condemned by the Commissioner, N.D., and by the Sanitary Commissioner, Deputy Surgeon-

General T. G. Hewlett, who described the Municipality's scheme as a mere make-shift, which would in the end cost the citizens of Ahmadabad a great deal more than a proper arrangement of permanent drains ; and the Bombay Government, concurring with their opinion, refused sanction to the Municipality's proposals and instructed the officials concerned to use their influence to secure the substitution of a proper drainage system. Then followed meetings to discuss the views of Government, the Sanitary Commissioner himself being present as a visitor at one of the meetings to explain the details and principles of underground drainage, and to endeavour to allay the mistrust of the majority. His efforts were fruitless ; for on 8th February, 1888, the Municipality definitely rejected Ranchhodlal's tentative scheme for a two-mile drain from the Maunda gate to a model sewage farm and declared again for the hand-service system. On this occasion Ranchhodlal's usual tenacity of purpose seems temporarily to have deserted him, for instead of continuing the struggle with his recalcitrant colleagues, he appears to have forwarded their resolution with a recommendation that the Municipality should be allowed to make trial of the imperfect and costly system of hand-removal. The Commissioner N.D. and the Bombay Government however declined flatly to countenance so futile a scheme, and matters remained *in statu quo* until 14th May, 1888, when doubtless with the double object of "saving their faces" and avoiding a direct challenge to Government, the Municipality resolved to instal underground drainage in one part of the city as an experimental measure and sanctioned a sum of one and a half lakhs of rupees for the purpose. Plans and estimates for the work were prepared by Mr. Baldwin Latham, the well-known sanitary engineer, and the work was practically completed by the close of 1893. Additional funds were voted by the Municipality for house-connections with the main drains, and these were steadily augmented as the value of the system impressed itself upon the public mind. It is noteworthy

that the scheme was initiated in the very parts of the city which had offered the strongest opposition to it from the beginning ; yet no sooner was its satisfactory working manifested than the inhabitants of those parts were urgent in their demands for house-connections and for the further extension of the scheme. By 1897 there was a general demand for the extension of the drainage scheme to other parts of the city, and under the auspices and direction of Ranchhodlal, plans and estimates involving an expenditure of eight lakhs of rupees were prepared and submitted for sanction to the Bombay Government. The approval of Government, coupled with their sanction to raising the requisite loan, was received by the Municipality after Ranchhodlal's death in 1898. For all practical purposes, however, the scheme which Ranchhodlal had first advocated in 1883 was on the high road to completion before his death, and, though on one occasion his determination seems to have faltered, it is chiefly to his work and to the support which he received from Government and its officials that Ahmadabad has been saved in great measure from the epidemics of cholera and similar diseases which annually took a heavy toll of the city in former days.

At the present time the underground drainage system, which has proved entirely successful, has been introduced into the south-eastern and south central portion of the intra-mural area. The sewage flows by gravitation to Jamalpur, whence it is pumped out to a thriving and well-conducted sewage-farm. Plans for an extension of the system to the whole of the walled area, which is estimated to cost eleven lakhs of rupees, have been prepared by Mr. Baldwin Latham, and a new pumping-engine, costing nearly a lakh of rupees, was ordered during 1916. Now that the war no longer places an embargo upon the raising of loans by local bodies, the Municipality may be confidently expected to complete the work initiated by their former President and his English advisers. The amount spent upon the scheme up to 1917 reached the considerable sum

of nearly 15½ lakhs, to which will before long be added a further sum of eleven lakhs devoted to auxiliary works of prime necessity. The underground drainage system of Ahmadabad at the outset was wisely confined to sullage only and not adapted, as in Bombay, to the removal of both sullage and storm-water. It is now generally admitted that, where monsoon conditions prevail, it is neither advisable nor practicable to attempt to deal with both sullage and storm-water in one system. That Ranchhodlal should have succeeded in introducing the underground system at all is alone sufficient to keep his memory green in Ahmadabad. There are some who, with experience of the present condition of the city's streets during the months of the monsoon, are apt to deplore the fact that a scheme for the surface drainage of the city was not prepared with the drainage scheme. But one must bear in mind the extraordinary opposition which Ranchhodlal encountered in respect both of the water-supply and drainage schemes and, rather than cavil at omissions which the experience of a later generation rightly considers important, pay a tribute of admiration to the man who secured the two prime needs of modern urban life in the face of the superstitious ignorance and blind hostility of the general public. Had Ranchhodlal lived longer, with his great faculty for work unimpaired, he would assuredly have turned his attention to the problem of surface drainage and have dealt with it as successfully as he dealt with the two major problems of his municipal career. There are people still living who can remember seeing him perambulating the city with Baldwin Latham, and calmly considering the details of his scheme amid the overt hostility and abuse of most of the traders and *vakils*. Few Indians would have had the moral courage in such circumstances to persist with their plans. But Ranchhodlal, physically and morally, was a man of stout heart; he held on his course undeterred by threats and fear of unpopularity. His achievement is to-day a source of pride to the citizens of Ahmadabad.

One of the salient features of Ranchhodlal's municipal administration was his constant personal supervision of the large works which he induced the Municipality to establish. Every morning he visited the works while they were in progress, suggesting alterations here and additions there, and, though possessed of no professional training as an engineer, was able to discuss the technical details of the construction with the experts and even to make suggestions, free from professional and departmental bias, which they were on occasions only too willing to accept. The management of his own business and constant attendance at public and private meetings were never permitted to interfere with his municipal duties ; in addition to his outdoor work in the mornings he worked at the municipal office for three hours every day and except on very rare occasions always attended municipal meetings. In this way he was responsible for introducing several reforms in the general urban administration. Public dispensaries, schools and institutes benefited from his constant supervision ; technical scholarships were granted to deserving students of the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute ; an institution for home medical relief was founded ; he induced the Bombay Government to pay a sum of Rs. 83,000 to which the Ahmadabad Municipality had long made claim and to sanction the participation of the Municipality in the proceeds of the sale of occupancy rights in vacant lands within the city. Tracts of land which for years had been the breeding-grounds of cholera and malaria were during his administration reclaimed and converted into building sites ; and when the first cases of bubonic plague occurred in the city, the measures for disinfection and prevention which were immediately carried out under his orders checked the spread of the disease and obviated the necessity for the stringent and harassing precautions which caused so much annoyance and such heavy expenditure in other parts of the Bombay Presidency. His interest in municipal affairs never flagged ; even during a visit to Mahableshtar for the sake of his health he con-

tinued his work, and he was busy with municipal matters till within a few hours of his death.

Ranchhodlal was a keen and accurate observer, a logical reasoner and a man of equable temper. Once convinced of the truth of a particular opinion, he was ready to support it patiently against all criticism without resort to anger, intrigue or retaliation, in the conviction that its truth must ultimately be made manifest. Avoiding any display of passion, he was ever ready in his public speeches and official reports to say a good word for his opponents and faithfully to represent their views, even though he himself might differ from them. In the height of controversy he was careful to avoid hurting the feelings of those who declined to accept his opinions and policy, and the respect which he invariably showed to all did much to assuage the bitterness of the conflict. His singleness of purpose, his capacity, his diplomatic handling of municipal questions, impressed all those with whom he came in contact. Successive Collectors of Ahmadabad, Mr. H. E. M. (now Sir Evan) James, Mr. G. B. Reid, Mr. C. E. Frost, Mr. M. C. Gibb, and Mr. P. J. Mead, from time to time recorded their sense of his devotion to the interests of the city and emphasized the value of his ripe experience and wisdom. *Mens æqua in arduis* might well have been chosen as his motto, for the temporary failure of his plans and the open hostility of the market-place were alike powerless to shake his courage and constancy.

CHAPTER VI.

POLITICS.

Ranchhodlal's achievements in the commercial and municipal spheres having been described, it becomes necessary to glance at his activities in the domain of politics, including therein both his work as a member of the Provincial Legislative Council and his policy as a member or supporter of the Indian National Congress. The Indian Councils Act of 1892, which was initiated by discussions during the Viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin, provided for the appointment by nomination or otherwise of additional members to the various provincial councils, thus opening the way for the closer association of leading Indians with the legislative activities of the provincial governments and leading directly to the famous Morley-Minto reforms of 1909. Ranchhodlal's merits were so conspicuous that the Bombay Government felt no hesitation in appointing him an additional member of the Legislative Council in 1892, and in re-appointing him twice in succession on the expiry of the statutory period of membership. His tenure of office thus lasted for six years, during which period he displayed in regard to public affairs the same moderation and the same reasoned judgment which had characterized his handling of municipal problems. Though fully in sympathy with the aspirations of his own countrymen, Ranchhodlal was nevertheless unfavourably disposed towards Western methods of public agitation. He believed in the theoretical fitness of liberal principles, but considered that the wholesale application of them to the problems of India, as she was in his day, might conceivably end in disaster, and that towards established authority a policy of conciliatory argument was to be preferred to that of blind opposition and resistance.

The first piece of legislation to arouse his interest was the

Mahuda¹ Bill, which was designed to check the drinking habit among the people of Thana district and of some parts of the Kolaba district. The Bill excited considerable controversy throughout the Presidency and was opposed by bodies like the Bombay Presidency Association and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, by many prominent members of native society, and by the vernacular Press. Their chief argument seems to have been that the restrictions embodied in the Bill constituted a serious infringement of the liberty of the people and that to their way of thinking "Thana free" was better than "Thana sober." Ranchhodlal, himself a strict teetotaler and enemy of intemperance, considered that these arguments were fraught with danger to the health and happiness of the people immediately concerned and might react unfavourably on the general morality, and in his capacity of President of the Temperance Association of Ahmadabad he contributed to the *Times of India* and the *Bombay Gazette* between June and October, 1892, a series of articles refuting the arguments of the opponents of the Bill and justifying the need for it by a careful array of facts and statistics. The Bill was subsequently passed into law. Ranchhodlal drew public attention to the question of temperance on other occasions also. At a Legislative Council Meeting held in August, 1894, while commenting in his speech on the Budget upon the increase in the Abkari revenue, he expressed regret that this should have been occasioned, as he believed it to have been, by a decided increase in the consumption of spirituous liquor and begged the Council to devise some measure whereby the people might be protected from the vice of drinking. In the following year he strongly urged Government to alter the system of farming the Abkari revenue, as it then existed in the districts outside Bombay, advocating the introduction of the system followed in the latter city and the enhancement of the rate of duty in all large towns. Government, however, for very good reasons preferred to adhere to the arrange-

¹ See page 70 (Index) for meaning.

ments whereby the public exchequer annually receives not less than a certain fixed sum on account of still-head duty on liquor issued from a central distillery, and the liquor farmer has a direct interest both in the suppression of illicit distillation and in the supply to the public of the quantity of liquor required for *normal* consumption.

Municipal finance was another subject to which Ranchhodlal drew attention in debate. He deprecated the practice followed by the Bombay Government of obtaining advances from the Government of India at four per cent. and charging municipalities four and-a-half per cent., on the ground that the additional half per cent. was needed to cover all risks. "This procedure," he said, "may have been right when the Government of India were paying interest at four per cent. on Government paper. But as now Government happily are able to command any amount of money at three and-a-half per cent., it is but fair that they should charge the local government at that rate, in order to enable the latter to charge the same rate or not more than four per cent. to local bodies." If this course was impossible, he urged that municipalities should be empowered to repay their loans from Government by borrowing in the open market.

In the course of the same speech, delivered in 1895, he referred at some length to the vexed question of the closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver. Ranchhodlal's views, which he also ventilated in a series of letters and memorials, were opposed to the re-opening of the mints to free coinage, by reason of the great fall in the value of the rupee and the reduction in the rate of the English exchange which must have followed a reversal of the policy adopted by the Government of India in 1893. On the other hand, he saw no reason why the Government should not make an appreciable profit by coining rupees for their own use, and referring to the current ratio of silver to rupees and to the fact that a balance of twenty-five crores of rupees was at that time lying idle in the Government treasuries, he calculated that on the basis of one-twelfth of alloy in the

rupee Government would realize the handsome profit of one crore and fifty-nine lakhs, if they were to invest only six crores of their balances in the purchase of silver and coin it into rupees in their own mints. These and other arguments in favour of re-opening the mints to their own coinage Ranchhodlal pressed not only upon the Government of India, but also upon the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, to whom he submitted a special memorandum embodying his views. His arguments did not impress the Government of India and the Home authorities, who subsequently decided upon the establishment of a gold standard for India in order to maintain the enhanced rate of exchange which followed the closing of the mints. The subject is now of little more than academic interest, particularly to those who have watched the rupee exchange rate rise to 2s. 8d., but it has been mentioned as being one of the matters which absorbed Ranchhodlal's attention during his later years.

As one of the pioneers of the cotton industry of Western India, Ranchhodlal naturally held strong views about the countervailing duty on cotton goods manufactured in Indian mills, which was imposed in 1896 at the instance of the millowners of Lancashire. His views, which he published in the Bombay press and embodied in a memorial to the Government of India in January, 1896, were briefly to the effect that as the cloth woven in Indian mills was coarse and suited only to the poorer classes, the proposed excise duty would be an unjustifiable burden upon the latter; that the imposition of the tax would be certain to create an impression that the Government of India desired to discourage the Indian mill industry in the interests of Lancashire; that it would discourage the introduction of labour-saving machinery; that if the Native States, as seemed inevitable, were forced to follow the lead of the Government of India, the constant advice tendered by the latter to the various Durbars to abolish taxes on local manufactures would be stultified; and that it was obviously unnecessary and unfair to levy a countervailing duty on

coarse cloth of a kind which could be proved never to have been imported from Lancashire. Whatever sympathy the Government of India may have had with these views, they were naturally obliged to bow to the decision of the authorities in England, and the Bill providing for the levy of the counter-vailing excise duty was accordingly passed, literally in obedience to the demand of the Lancashire electorate. Ranchhodlal's second objection, as noted above, was a very accurate forecast of Indian feeling on the subject, for the maintenance till quite a recent date of the duty on locally manufactured goods was widely accepted as conclusive proof that the authorities were positively encouraging India's industrial backwardness in the interests of British manufactures. The grievance of the Indian millowner has been finally laid to rest during Mr. Austen Chamberlain's tenure of office as Secretary of State on grounds which recall the protest of Ranchhodlal twenty years ago.

Ranchhodlal was likewise opposed to some of the recommendations of the Indian Factory Commission appointed in 1884-85 to consider the amendment of the Factories Act. Like other leading millowners, he was invited to give his opinion on the proposal to restrict the number of working days for women employed in factories, and declared himself opposed to any measure, such as this, which would operate to restrict the operatives' opportunity of wage-earning. His arguments on this subject were on the whole less convincing and less acceptable than the practical suggestions which he made on another occasion for the detection and prevention of cotton-adulteration. On this subject he was an acknowledged expert and tendered valuable advice to Government.

Ranchhodlal's sympathy with the aspirations of his countrymen and his position in the commercial world led naturally to his participating in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress. He had been elected a delegate on the occasion of the first session of the Congress in Bombay, and in 1893, when the sixth Provincial Conference met at

Ahmadabad, Ranchhodlal accepted the post of Chairman of the Reception Committee. During the deliberations he was personally responsible for resolutions advocating the modification of the rules regarding the levy of fines for the use of land for non-agricultural purposes, and demanding a system of local option in regard to the opening of liquor shops in urban areas. His general attitude towards Government, forming, as it does, a striking contrast with that of some of the more vociferous politicians of a later day, is best shown in the following extract from his speech as Chairman of the Reception Committee :—

“ It is a matter of regret that the misunderstanding
 “ should exist in some quarters that the persons who
 “ take part in these conferences are discontented with
 “ the present administration of the country. If such
 “ were the fact, I for one would have hesitated to take
 “ any part in such an assemblage ; but I fully believe
 “ that the educated people of the country think it their
 “ duty to try their best to promote the true happiness
 “ of their fellow-countrymen by all constitutional
 “ means, and are actuated with the best and most loyal
 “ motives to sacrifice their time and money for the
 “ public good. No honest person can for a moment
 “ doubt that the people of this country are in a variety
 “ of ways very greatly benefited by the present adminis-
 “ tration of the country, and they must therefore be
 “ most grateful to the present Government. Still,
 “ however well meaning a Government may be, there
 “ must always be some points in their administration
 “ in connection with which improvements may be
 “ necessary, and it is therefore desirable that intelligent
 “ and experienced persons in the country should try and
 “ represent their views to Government regarding these
 “ improvements in a loyal and respectful manner.
 “ There is no reason to suppose that any responsible
 “ officer of Government would be unwilling or slow
 “ to receive such representations.”

These pacific words, with their underlying determination to give credit where it is due, would scarcely commend themselves to some modern Congressmen by whom constant misrepresentation and abuse of the Government and its officials are apparently regarded as the high-water mark of political sagacity.

On the subject of foreign trade, Ranchhodlal was an advocate of protection against all countries that did not follow the doctrine of Free Trade. America, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, and some other British colonies all imposed a heavy and sometimes almost prohibitive duty on foreign goods with a view to the protection of their own industries. Was it just, he argued, that India should be made to grant free importation from such countries, at least so far as manufactured articles other than raw material, machinery and articles of food were concerned? England extended the indulgence of free imports to India, and it was therefore only just that her goods should be imported duty-free into India; but why should not India protect her paper-industry at Poona by imposing a duty on German paper in view of the fact that Germany imposed a heavy duty on yarn imported from Ahmadabad? Why should American cloth be imported free into Bombay when woollen carpets from Ahmadabad were subject to a heavy duty in New York? These questions still await a final answer. Since Ranchhodlal wrote, the demand for Protection, even against British goods, has grown more insistent, and is one of the chief elements in the cry for fiscal autonomy which the Indian politician considers the panacea for all ills. It is probable that before long the whole question of tariffs will have to be tackled by the liberalised administration introduced by the Government of India Act of 1919.

This *resumé* of Ranchhodlal's activities in the political sphere may conclude with a few remarks on his attitude towards the question of widow-remarriage. Some few years ago, as the result of an agitation headed by a well-known Parsi philanthropist, the late Mr. B. M. Malabari,

the Bombay Government was pressed to take legislative action against "enforced widowhood" and "infant marriage." Ranchhodlal, on being consulted officially by Government on the subject, laid down the perfectly sound proposition that as the matters at issue were closely bound up with Hindu social and religious customs, it was manifestly undesirable that the State should interfere with them. He deprecated the use of the term "enforced widowhood," on the ground that a Hindu widow of respectable birth, however deplorable her condition might be, willingly set her face against re-marriage from religious conviction and a sense of honour, and that it would be extremely difficult for Government to distinguish between the few instances in which widowhood might truly be described as "enforced" and the great mass of cases in which the widow voluntarily accepted the conditions and penances prescribed by Hindu belief and custom. Government had, in his opinion, gone as far as was desirable in legalizing widow-remarriage by Act XVIII of 1856, and it was manifestly improper that it should now take further powers to compel an unwilling widow to re-marry. Contact with Western thought and civilisation was bound, in Ranchhodlal's opinion, to soften the asperities of ancient Hindu custom, and it was wiser policy to await the gradual alteration of harsh beliefs by such agency than to endeavour to hasten the process by legislation. Ranchhodlal freely admitted the justice of the charges levelled by reformers against the system of infant marriage; but he laid stress at the same time on the fact that the evil was a social one and could therefore be best dealt with by society. To invite the legislature to usurp the function of society was tantamount to disturbing the social order and striking at the very root of social rights and privileges. Ranchhodlal's advice was unquestionably correct. Matters have advanced since his day; but it is doubtful whether the progress of public opinion even now has been sufficiently marked to warrant the interference of Government in customs which date back

to hoary antiquity. As education, particularly the education of women, extends among all classes, and provided the advocates of reform act in consonance with their outward professions, the general community will in time spontaneously relinquish customs and beliefs that date back to less enlightened and less philanthropic ages.

CHAPTER VII.

PUBLIC CHARITY, HOME LIFE, CHARACTER
AND DEATH.

The large fortune which Ranchhodlal amassed by his own efforts was freely spent on charitable objects irrespective of caste and class. Hospitals, educational institutions, technical and literary societies, urban development, all profited from time to time by his benevolence. Up to the year 1878, Ahmadabad possessed only one institution for medical relief, besides the Government Civil Hospital, namely the Becherdas dispensary, founded by the late Rao Bahadur Becherdas Ambaidas, C.S.I. Realising that this dispensary was unable to treat more than a small proportion of the urban population, and that further medical relief was essential, Ranchhodlal in 1878 built and equipped at his own expense a large dispensary in the railway suburb of Ahmadabad. By 1881 the success of this institution was assured and Ranchhodlal therefore offered to transfer it to the charge of municipality, which agreed to the proposal on condition that the donor provided funds for its maintenance. Ranchhodlal immediately offered an endowment fund of Rs. 20,000; and subsequently, after the dispensary had been placed under municipal management, he bestowed further sums for the extension of the main buildings, to admit of the housing of indoor patients and of an increased hospital staff, and offered an additional sum of Rs. 5,000 for the cost of accommodating distressed persons of the middle and lower classes, who could not afford to pay the visiting fees of doctors and were at the same time too ill to visit the dispensary as outdoor patients. To provide food for this class of patients

he also gave an annual donation of Rs. 500. Located in a convenient centre, this dispensary has proved an undoubted boon to the people of Ahmadabad and surrounding villages ; more than 20,000 persons are treated by it every year, and its extension and efficiency are promoted by regular donations from the charitably disposed.

The subject of medical relief for women did not escape Ranchhodlal's attention. In 1885 he offered an endowment of Rs. 20,000 for the provision of a women's hospital ; but the matter was for the time being shelved as the Government were unable, owing to financial stringency, to promise their usual contribution to the funds of the new institution. Ranchhodlal however, after a little delay, revived the question, and in addition to the endowment previously promised offered to pay half the salary of the medical woman in charge of the hospital, provided that her total emoluments did not exceed Rs. 200 a month. On this occasion a Government grant was forthcoming, with the result that on April 1st, 1889, the hospital was opened under the title of the Victoria Jubilee Female Dispensary.

Not content with these two institutions, Ranchhodlal opened about the year 1895 a Home Medical Relief Institution, which bears his own name. His object was to provide medical relief for such of the poorer classes as might be unable to walk to a charitable dispensary, including the services of a doctor who would visit them in their own homes. A pensioned servant of Government, who had held the rank of first-class hospital assistant, was engaged, and for the first year of its working the total cost of the institution was borne in equal shares by Ranchhodlal and the municipality. Thereafter, as the work proved successful, Ranchhodlal placed it on a permanent basis by an endowment of Rs. 25,000, and handed over its maintenance to the municipal authorities. The scheme has proved of benefit to thousands of bed-ridden patients.

At a later date Ranchhodlal, who had remarked the success attending the dispensary founded by him in the

railway suburb, offered a sum of Rs. 70,000 towards the expense of raising it to the status of a recognised Civil Hospital, but the Bombay Government unable at the time to provide the prescribed grant-in-aid were reluctantly forced to decline the offer. Baulked in this direction, Ranchhodlal decided to extend the scope of his arrangements for medical relief by the establishment of a travelling dispensary. He therefore set aside a sum of Rs. 20,000 for the regular distribution of medicines to the poorer villagers of the Daskroi taluka, in which the city of Ahmabad is situated. He also provided medical relief at his own proprietary village of Auganaj.

Education was another subject very close to Ranchhodlal's heart. When the Gujarat Arts College, which since 1879 has been affiliated to the Bombay University, was about to be established, Ranchhodlal devoted several thousand rupees towards its maintenance fund, and afterwards, as one of the Board of Directors, made every effort to promote the interests of the College, giving handsome donations towards the cost of the building and providing at his own expense a number of rooms in the students' residential quarters. He also founded a monthly scholarship of ten rupees, tenable for the whole period of the collegiate course, for students of his own caste. The lower classes also were not forgotten ; for he established in the Shahpur ward of the city a vernacular school for the education of the children of his mill-operatives, which bears his own name, and many a poor student benefited by Ranchhodlal's catholic benevolence, receiving pecuniary aid towards the purchase of books and the payment of school fees. On the subject of female education also Ranchhodlal's views were progressive. His knowledge of the Hindu *Shastras* acted as a constant reminder that in former ages women freely partook of such education as was then available and frequently played no inconsiderable rôle in the social and intellectual life of ancient India. The almost universal ignorance of Hindu women in his own day struck Ranchhodlal

as a reproach to his countrymen and as inconsistent with the ancient ideals of Hinduism. These views underlay his foundation of a girls' school at a cost of Rs. 12,000 in the Khadia ward of the city. He supplemented this sum at a later date with a donation of Rs. 2,000 for the provision of scholarships for the more intelligent girls; and after his death, his son Madhavlal crowned the work by purchasing a new school building in a more convenient situation and securing the permanent maintenance of the school.

Among Ranchhodlal's miscellaneous charities may be mentioned his contribution towards the building of a *dharmashala*¹ near the Sabarmati railway junction; his erection in the Khadia ward of a hall for religious and social gatherings, costing more than Rs. 7,000; his donation of Rs. 7,000 to the *Sanatan Vaidik Dharma Samrakshak Sabha*—a society which he founded for the weekly discussion of religious topics; the establishment of a free kitchen for poor railway-travellers; his donation of Rs. 2,000 to the Gujarat vernacular society to defray the cost of propaganda directed against intemperance; his liberal donation towards the Imperial Institute in London; public dinners to the poor; the building of *ghats* at various *tirths* and holy places for the convenience of pilgrims; and lastly, the establishment of an asylum for orphans of both sexes in the Shahpur ward of Ahmadabad. In this institution orphan children of all castes were boarded and clothed at Ranchhodlal's expense, the boys, as they grew up, being given work in his mills and the girls being married and settled in life under the auspices of their patron and protector. The orphanage still flourishes and carries on the beneficent objects of the founder.

Though necessarily less known to the official public and the outer world, Ranchhodlal's household and private charities in no wise lagged behind his public benefactions. His Indian biographer is our authority for the statement

¹ Literally "a pious edifice"; a rest-house for wayfarers, corresponding to the South Indian Choultry or Chuttrum.

that Ranchhodlal's house was pre-eminent in this respect among the whole Brahman community of Gujarat. Food and clothing were daily distributed to mendicants of every class ; railway tickets were purchased for Brahmans and ascetics bound upon long journeys to distant shrines ; needy Pandits, poor students, struggling poets were helped according to their needs and their merits. To meet all these claims upon his benevolence he set aside in early years a tenth, and in later years almost three-quarters, of his princely income. No element of caprice or vanity marred his charity ; he gave of his great wealth to them that needed it because he believed it to be his duty to do so.

As may be imagined, Ranchhodlal's home life was singularly happy, and the obedience and affection which he had shown to his parents was in due course repaid to him in full by his own children. Ranchhodlal's mother died in 1863 ; his father in 1869 ; but the heaviest blow that befell him was the death of his wife, Jethiba, in 1876, when he was in his fiftieth year. Thereafter he lived for his children alone, for he never married again, widening the mental outlook of his son and grandson by lessons drawn from his own experience and by daily discussion with them of both public and private affairs. So long as he lived they rendered him unquestioning obedience, and the peace of the home was never broken by minor disagreement nor overshadowed by domestic strife. Ranchhodlal's daily life was ordered with the same care as his business undertakings. He rose at five a.m., and after the performance of his ablutions spent two hours in the religious rites or *karmas* prescribed for Brahmans in Hindu lore. Then for an hour or so he would walk or drive in the open air, and after visiting the mills and the municipal works under construction in various quarters of the city would return home about noon for the mid-day meal. From an early age his first morning meal consisted of a little tea and a plum steeped in candy syrup, so that he was quite ready for his mid-day dinner after his exercise in the open air. On his return to the

house he bathed again, donned the silken cloth of the orthodox Hindu, performed the minor Vaishvadeva sacrifice, and then sat down to his meal in company with the male members of the household. Dinner ended, he spent a couple of hours in reading business and official correspondence and also the newspapers, of which he subscribed to a large number. This work, together with the interviewing of visitors, lasted till about five p.m., when he would drive to the Municipal office and there transact business until eight-thirty or nine p.m. Returning home, he repeated the evening prayers, took a light supper, and then at ten p.m. retired to his couch for the night.

Socially Ranchhodlal was an agreeable personality. He was always accessible to visitors and was ever ready with advice and assistance to those who needed it. Europeans, Indians of all castes, rich capitalists, struggling traders and mendicants, all gained free admittance to his home or office and met with equal consideration at his hands. He kept his worries and troubles to himself, never allowing the cares of outside life to intrude upon the peace of his home. He affected the utmost simplicity of dress and, in spite of his wealth and commercial standing, bore himself with such humility and absence of pretension that the poorest of his callers and acquaintances felt at ease in his presence. No scandal, no rumour of evil ever touched his private life which, like his public career, was fully occupied in devising plans for the happiness or welfare of those around him. He was a genuine disciple of peace, in that he never tried to force his views upon others, but was content to represent them in tactful language, free of all trace of passion or intolerant contempt. He was averse likewise from identifying himself with ultra-radical principles and opinions, in the belief that these would necessarily arouse fierce resistance to the policy of their holders, and that reform in any direction must, to be successful, come from within rather than be enforced from without. Thus, orthodox and conservative Brahman as he was, he was able, without incurring odium

or censure, to point out and in a measure correct some of the defects which had become apparent in the ancient religion and social customs of his country. With all his innate conservatism none kept a mind more open to the progressive spirit of the age, and none showed greater capacity than he for gauging the force and tendency of public opinion.

In personal appearance Ranchhodlal was of medium height, with an aquiline nose, large eyes set well apart, and a high intellectual brow. At all seasons of the year he was accustomed to wear a long black coat, with a Kashmir shawl thrown over his shoulder, and a turban of a deep crimson colour. The latter was often not rewound for two or three months at a time; the coat frequently lacked a button here and there; both often needed a good brushing to rid them of fragments of cotton-waste picked up in the daily visit to the mills. But, as remarked above, Ranchhodlal was simple, almost careless, in the matter of dress, and was far too deeply absorbed in commercial and municipal problems to be able to devote attention to his personal appearance. He did not meet with any less respect on this account from the public, for his courtliness of manner and obvious good breeding produced far more impression than his harmless eccentricities of dress.

As mentioned above, Ranchhodlal was an extremely orthodox Nagar Brahman. From the date of his *upanayana* ceremony, when he was eight years old, until his death at the age of seventy-six, not a day passed that he did not repeat the *Sandhya Vandan* prayers and perform all the religious ceremonies prescribed by Hindu lore. His faith in the Brahmanic religion remained ever unshaken, and under his orders Brahmans were engaged daily to recite hymns and sacred texts from the Vedas for the preservation of the health and prosperity of the family. In the case of illness in the household, special appeals and gifts were offered to the god Rudra; on one occasion, some years before his death, he performed a *Gayatri Purascharana* sacrifice at enormous

cost, distributing very liberal *dakshina* or cash presents among the Brahmans who attended the ceremony ; while in 1896 he arranged for the performance on a magnificent scale of the *Sahasra Chandi Yajna* on the highest peak of the Aravalli hills, where there is a famous shrine of the mother-goddess Ambika. His belief in the various deities of the Vedas and Puranas was sincere, and throughout his life he took particular pleasure in hearing stories and legends from Hindu myth and epic. Coupled with his devotion to the gods and goddesses of Hinduism was a very tender regard for animal life, and the slaughter of animals was rigidly proscribed in the various sacrifices which he performed. The sight of the blood of a goat streaming upon the altar of a goddess moved him on one occasion so deeply that he made a personal appeal to the Rana, within whose territory the shrine lay, to abolish the custom of sacrificing live animals. On the occasion of a solar or lunar eclipse, when according to Hindu ideas every worthy action is rendered a thousand times more meritorious and more pleasing to the gods, Ranchhodlal would visit with his family the most sacred places in India, such as Benares, Hardwar and Prayag (Allahabad) and there distribute large sums in charity. On one occasion his Indian biographer spent a few days with him, at the time of an eclipse, in Chandod Karnali on the banks of the sacred river Narbada, otherwise known as the Rewa, which rises on the summit of the Amarkantak plateau in Central India and enters the sea below Broach in the Bombay Presidency. "We all went to the river bank," writes his biographer, "where we counted our beads until the eclipse was over. It was a touching sight to see the old gentleman, clad only in his bright yellow silken wrap, seated with his right arm across his breast on a pile of *darbha* grass and muttering the *mantras* (sacred formulæ) with deep faith and mental concentration. His features bore the impress of serenity and he looked like one of the Oriental sages or *Rishis* of old time meditating on the glory of the Supreme Being."

Ranchhodlal was very fond of hearing *Haridasa Kathas*, especially on the anniversaries of the death of his parents and sisters, and during the last six months of his life he arranged for the weekly recitation in his house of poems in praise of Rama and Krishna composed by modern writers and devotees. Every part of the *Sruti*, the *Smriti* and the *Puranas*, dealing with the glory of God and enjoining morality and the subordination of the lower elements in human nature to its spiritual side, commanded his deepest reverence and admiration. Not a single *Vrata* (vow) prescribed by the *Shastras*, no matter how difficult or costly its performance might be, was neglected in his household. The *dana* or religious gifts, which play so large a part in the performance of such ceremonies, were granted with un-sparing hand, and the Brahmans profited by the gift to them of hundreds of cows and of provision for their sustenance for twelve months. Horses, together with funds sufficient to feed them for a year, and quantities of emblematic gold flowers, consecrated on various occasions to his household gods, were likewise distributed among the priests of his faith. Yet while thus observing the customs and practice of Hindu orthodoxy, Ranchhodlal was tolerant of any other faith that appeared to him to be based upon true morality. His absence of bigotry, and indeed his attitude of tolerance led on occasions to his ideas being widely misconstrued by his own co-religionists and to the prevalence of a suspicion that his faith in Hinduism was unstable. Nothing could have been further from the truth. To the end of his long and active life, Ranchhodlal remained a devout Hindu, staunch to the faith of his fathers. Lesser minds could not understand that genuine devotion to one's own creed is not necessarily incompatible with an attitude of tolerance towards the ideals and tenets of other faiths.

From the refined character of his personal religion doubtless arose his strong sense of duty in worldly affairs. No personal inclination, no afterthought was allowed to conflict with what he believed to be his obligations towards

others ; and once he had pledged his word or made a promise no amount of argument or moral pressure sufficed to make him resile from it. His trustworthiness in this respect became proverbial in Ahmadabad. Even in the most trifling matters of everyday routine no consideration of personal convenience was allowed to interfere with engagements entered into with others, and he was scrupulously careful to avoid making any promise which he felt in any way doubtful of his ability to perform. Forbearance was another notable trait in his character, and the Sanskrit motto which headed his notepaper, meaning "There is no weapon like forbearance," may be truly considered to have been one of the guiding principles of his life. In the face of great provocation, he never gave way to anger nor lost control of himself ; the most irritating circumstances failed to ruffle his temper ; and in the height of bitter controversy his language was always that of a calm and dispassionate advocate. His patience, when attacked, was so great that others, who sided with him, were sometimes disposed to take up the cudgels on his behalf. When, for example, the waterworks were under construction and Ranchhodlal, on his daily rounds of inspection, was greeted with abuse and insult by the more ignorant citizens, his family begged him to relinquish all active interest in his projects and so obviate the chance of contumely. "Their insults," replied Ranchhodlal, "surely do me no harm, for what I have been doing is for their good, and from good no evil can result. Their treatment of me resembles that of children who, when bitter medicines are administered to them, kick and abuse those around them in ignorance of their beneficial effects, but are grateful when recovery follows. These very people will soon discover their mistake and instead of cursing will bless me." He lived to see this prophecy fulfilled to the very letter. Many other instances of his forbearance live in the memories of his contemporaries and need no mention here. Let it suffice that his patient tolerance at length turned many a scoffer and opponent into an

admirer and friend, and that it is gratefully remembered to this day by people of all classes in Ahmadabad.

With this forbearance towards the foibles of others Ranchhodlal combined a capacity for close and regular supervision of the work of his subordinates. This was particularly noticeable in his household affairs, which, as he was wont to remark, are apt to become disorganised, even where a hundred servants are employed, if the master of the house is lacking in vigilance. These views were responsible for his rising at an unusually early hour, when guests were staying in the house, in order to see that his servants were up betimes and ministering to the visitors' requirements; they were likewise responsible when there was illness in the home, for his close personal superintendence of the sick chamber. Once the doctor had been called in and had given his orders, it was Ranchhodlal himself who saw that the treatment was duly carried out. Yet he was not a hard master, and was naturally disposed to make allowances for the errors and failings of those beneath him rather than to magnify and punish them harshly. Consequently there were few who were not proud to serve him and who did not consider themselves well repaid if they earned his confidence and commendation.

Ranchhodlal's equanimity of temper has already been remarked, and this virtue coupled with a surprisingly retentive memory and a natural ability to grasp the salient features of a problem, enabled him on more than one occasion to render great assistance both to Government and the public. Thus at the time when serious Hindu-Mahomedan riots had broken out in Bombay and sectarian feeling was running high in various centres of the Presidency, Ranchhodlal contrived by conciliatory measures and address to avert a rupture between the Hindu and Moslem populations of Ahmadabad. Again, during the early years of the disastrous plague epidemics, when the people of Bombay, Poona, Surat and other places were suffering much from regulations designed in all honesty to combat

the spread of the disease, Ranchhodlal by dint of the studied moderation of his language and his reasoned explanation to Government of the popular needs and apprehensions, was able to secure for Ahmadabad immunity from the more vexatious rules and restrictions which unfortunately led elsewhere to disturbances and the temporary dislocation of business. And here we may remark that while deeply attached to his own country and compatriots Ranchhodlal never permitted their complaints or dissatisfaction to lessen his fundamental regard and respect for the British. As in the case of the early plague regulations, Ranchhodlal's views, like those of his countrymen, were occasionally opposed to those of Europeans; but such divergences of policy and opinion never overshadowed the admiration which he openly showed for the courage and practical efficiency of the latter. He believed firmly in the *bona-fides* of the Englishman, whether official or non-official, and on that very account held a far stronger position as the leader and spokesman of his countrymen in Gujarat than could have been attained by a less broadminded or less impartial critic.

Ranchhodlal died on the 26th October, 1898, in his seventy-sixth year. His intellectual and mental faculties remained unimpaired to the last. But for several years before his death he suffered from a chronic pulmonary complaint which ultimately proved fatal. Entire cessation from active work, when the disease was in its early stages, might perhaps have arrested its progress; but Ranchhodlal was far too deeply engrossed in public and private work to embrace a life of idleness, and made shift therefore to fight the enemy with tonics and other medicines. The pain which accompanied the malady usually attacked him after midnight, and one who was an inmate of his house describes Ranchhodlal awaking from sleep and perforce sitting up for hours until the agony had passed. Later the attacks at night became more violent and he was not free from occasional pain during the day. Expert medical advice

was sought and every remedy was tried ; but the disease had obtained too firm a hold to yield to treatment. Other symptoms supervened ; his digestion failed in spite of careful dieting ; symptoms of old age became more marked. In several letters written about this time he remarks upon his growing lack of energy and contemplates the relinquishment of active work, but is afraid to follow this course lest the change should aggravate his illness. His friends and relatives besought him often to take a prolonged rest, but he could not be persuaded to give up the habits of a lifetime, and was actually engrossed in municipal affairs till within a few hours of his death. The day before he died he seemed a little better and went for a drive. But during the night and the following morning the pain became almost unbearable. Many persons called to enquire about him, and were admitted to his presence ; and from all of them he asked forgiveness for any wrong he might have done them. His medical attendant strove to alleviate the pain, and during such momentary relief as he could give, Ranchhodlal murmured his final prayers to God. At length, after oxygen had been administered and further relief had become impossible he sank into a condition of semi-coma and passed away quietly at eleven p.m.

The news of his death was received with wide-spread regret. Telegrams and letters of condolence poured in from a wide circle of friends and acquaintances ; English and Indian alike gave public expression to their sense of loss. At six a.m. on the following morning his body was cremated with the full rites of the Hindu religion, and during the twelve months following his death his son, Madhavlal, devoted a very large sum of money to the performance of the various ceremonies prescribed for the welfare and repose of the souls of the dead.

Ranchhodlal's death deprived Ahmadabad of the most distinguished of its citizens, deprived the province of Gujarat of its leading merchant prince, and robbed the State of one of its most loyal and devoted subjects. His achievements in

the field of commerce and urban government justly entitle him to high rank in the company of those able and distinguished men, both English and Indian, whose lives have been devoted to helping India along the path of progress. He will live long in the memory of the city, whose welfare he sought with such courage and consistency. His unfaltering optimism, his public spirit, his unfailing courtesy, his patriotism and catholic philanthropy—these are the keynotes of a career which must ever remain a source of pride and inspiration to his countrymen.

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ABKARI (from Persian *ab-kari*, the distillation or sale of [strong] waters, and the excise levied upon such business. In every district in India the privilege of selling spirits is farmed to contractors, who manage the sale through retail-shopkeepers. In Bombay the manufacture and sale of liquor is controlled by the provisions of an Abkari Act, and the details of the system of Government control vary in certain parts of the Presidency) .. 45

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- LUNAWADA (a second-class Native State in the Rewa Kantha Agency, with an area of 388 square miles) 15, 16
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- MADHAVLAL RANCHHODLAL
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- MADHYANDIN SHAKHA (a particular subdivision of Brahmans based upon the fact that its members treasure and follow a particular *shakha*, i.e., "branch," "copy," or "recension" of the Vedas. Those holding a particular *shakha* are said to belong to it and to be identified with it. The name *Madhyandin* is derived from the *sandhya* (junction) or season of worship at noon, to which the Madhyandin Brahmans attach much importance) 2
- MAHI KANTHA (a group of States forming a Political Agency under the Bombay Government, with an area of 3125 square miles. The most important Chief in Mahi Rantha is the Maharaja of Idar) 6
- MAHUDA or MHOWRA (a country liquor distilled from the flowers of the *Mahua* tree (*Bassia latifolia*), the chief Government distilleries being situated at Uran on Karanja Island in Bombay Harbour) 45
- MAJUMDAR (a grade of public officials under the Native Governments, who were usually paid for their services in a district by an assignment on the revenue, Under Sivaji in the Decan, one of the eight Pradhans or ministers was a *Majumdar* or auditor-general) 13
- MALABARI, Mr. B. M. .. 50
- MALWA (an extensive region now included for the most part in the Central India Agency, lying between the Narbada on the south, the Chambal on the north, Gujarat on the west, and Bundelkhand, was the seat of famous Hindu Kingdoms prior to the 13th century) 2
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PANCH MAHALS (district in the Northern Division, Bombay Presidency, comprising 1,606 square miles and divided into two parts by a strip of the Bariya State of the Rewa Kantha Agency) .. 13, 23	
PATAN (town in 23° 51' N. and 72° 10' E. in Baroda State, formerly famous as Anhilvada, founded in A.D. 746 by a Chavada Ruler and subsequently held by Solankis and Vaghelas. The last Vaghela Chief was overthrown by UlughKhan in 1298. Modern Patan, which is surrounded by a lofty wall pierced by numerous gateways, is chiefly the product of Maratha efforts, and has arisen on the ruins of the ancient city. It still contains the remains of some of the ancient buildings) 3, 4, 5, 6	
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SANDHYA VANDAN (daily religious devotions performed in the morning and evening and at noon by orthodox Brahmans) 59
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SRUTI (inspired revelation, <i>i.e.</i> , the Vedas; <i>see</i> SMRITI)	.. 61
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VISHALNAGAR (town in Bardoda State, lying to the south-east of Patan, founded by the first ruler of the Vaghela dynasty) .. I

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WATANDAR (holder of a *watan*, *i.e.*, hereditary right to a share in land or in the district and village establishments, the emoluments consisting of a certain

quantity of rent-free land or of an annual payment in cash or in kind in return for services rendered to the community) .. 13

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Y.

YAJNA (literally worship [in prayer or praise]; also a sacrificial rite, or sacrifice; the latter being the usual meaning) 60

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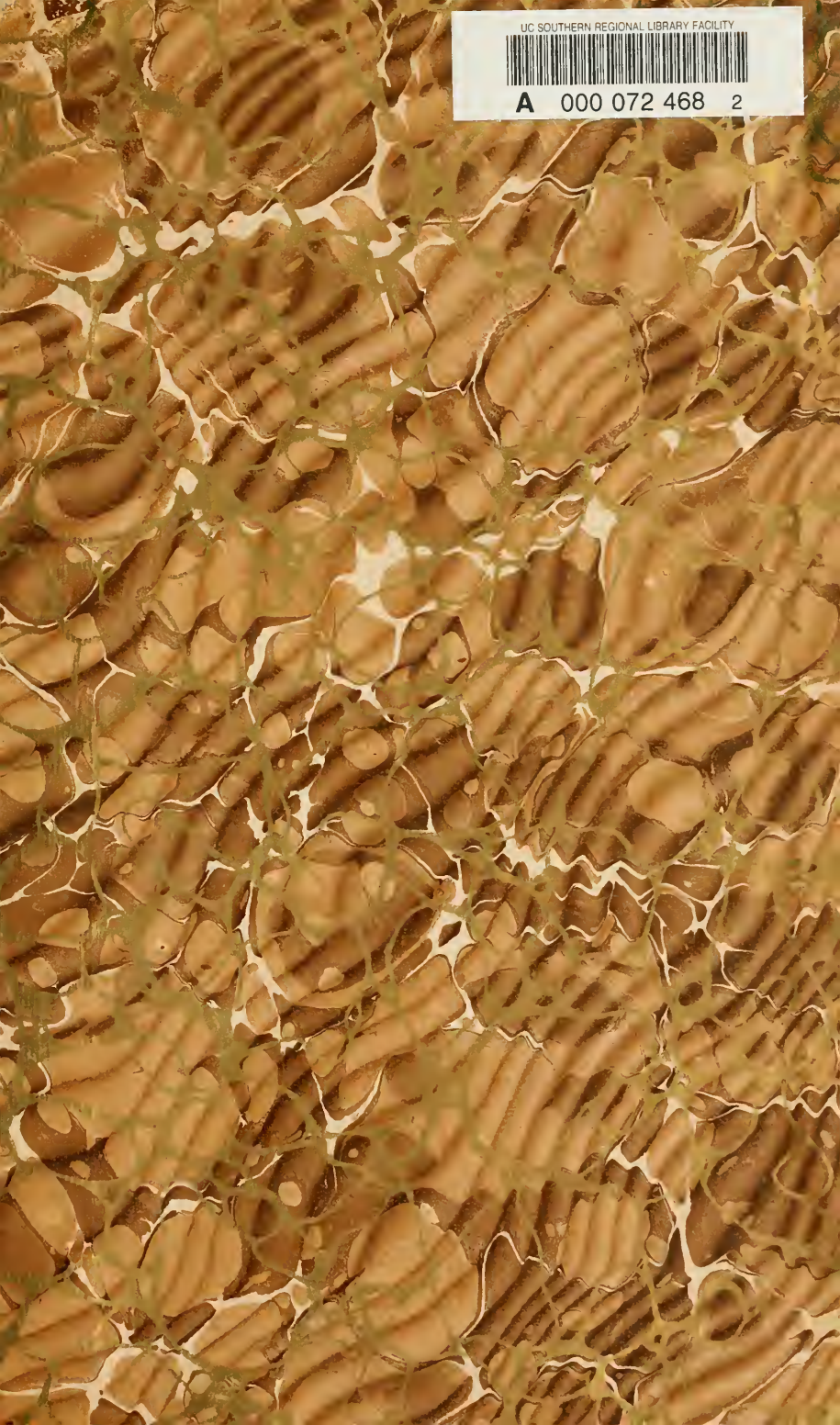
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