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Original Research Article

Sir Dinshaw Manockji Petit, First Baronet

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This paper looks at the life and contributions of Sir Dinshaw Manockji (Maneckji) Petit, First Baronet, as well as the legacy that he has left behind.

Born in 1820, Sir Dinshaw Manockji Petit, played an important role in the growth and development of the city of Bombay. He was an industrialist as well as a great philanthropist. Sir Dinshaw was a pioneer in the cotton textile industry of Bombay and owned several mills in the city. Under him, the Petit family became one of the leading industrial houses of India.

Apart from his business ventures, Sir Dinshaw was a well-known philanthropists and gave munificent donations to various charitable causes. He supported education and set up schools for both boys and girls. He set up charitable libraries, hospitals and institutions for the infirm. His legacy in philanthropy has had a great impact on this city.

Sir Dinshaw was also a part of the city's political and social fabric. He served as Sheriff of Bombay as also a Justice of the Peace of the city. He was a contributor to the early national movement and supported the early Nationalist groups.

In 1890, Dinshaw Manockji Petit was created a baronet by Queen Victoria. He was the second Indian to receive this title.

Sir Dinshaw Manockji Petit passed away in 1901. He left behind a lasting legacy that is still visible in this city, even more than a century later. His vision for this city and its progress was an inspiration for many. The institutions he supported remain a vital part of the city's heritage.

Keywords: Parsi, Philanthropist, Cotton Textile Industry, Baronet.



Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit
By Unknown photographer, carbon print, published 1889
NPG Ax28690, National portrait Gallery, London
https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/use-this-image/?mkey=mw157548

Born in a relatively humble home, Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit went on to become a wealthy magnate, a munificent philanthropist and one of the foremost merchants of Bombay. His contribution to the city of Bombay can still be seen in the many institutions and buildings that were set up due to his generosity.

Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit was born on 30th June 1823. His family hailed from Surat. He was the son of Manockjee Nasserwanjee Petit and Bai Humabai, who was the eldest daughter of Sheth Jeejeebhai Dadabhai Mooghana (Sorabji 1889, 89). However, Ratanji Faramji Vatcha, in Mumbaino Bahar, gives the name as Mugasheth and explains that this name came about as Jeejeebhai's paternal grandfather was mute (Vatcha, 2024, 231).

The story of how the family came by the surname Petit is well known. Sir Dinshaw's grandfather, Nasserwanjee Cowasjee, (Vatcha 2024, 487) came to Bombay from Surat to look for employment. He became an agent for the French ships coming into Bombay port, as well as the East India Company's vessels. This is where he gained the patronymic Petit as he was a man of short stature. (Sorabji 1889, 89) His French colleagues gave him the title of Le Petit Parsi. He then came to be known by that name 'Petit' or rather, the English version of it. (Sorabji 1889, 89)

Sir Dinshaw grew up in Bombay. His parents, wanting to give their sons a good English education, sent him to one of the best known day schools of the time. This was a school run by a pensioned sergeant named Sykes, who had started this school after retiring from the army. From there he moved to another prestigious school run by Messrs. Mainwaring and Curbet (Sorabji 1889, 90). Sir Dinshaw Wacha in his book, Shells from the Sands of Bombay, mentions that both brothers were also educated at the Boswell school in the Fort where almost all the sons of rich Parsi and Hindu parents were educated. The school stood on Hornby Road, close to the home of the Petits (Wacha 1920, 284-86).

Sir Dinshaw was married in 1837 to Bai Sakarbai from the Panday family. He was fourteen years old and she was eleven. (Natesan, 1930, 59-60)

In 1840 (Sorabji 1889, 90) Sir Dinshaw got his first employment as a clerk in the office of Messrs. Dirom, Carter and Co. (Edwardes, 1923, 10). Sir Dinshaw, who would go on to become one of the richest men in India, started his work life as an apprentice with a salary of Rs. 15 per month. His father, Manockjee, worked at the same firm as a broker and also traded on his own account, (Sorabji 1889, 90) through Messrs. Dirom, Carter and Co., (Edwardes 1923, 10) with London and China (Sorabji 1889, 90).

Over a period of time, Sir Dinshaw was promoted and was soon earning Rs.100 a month. Around this time, Mr. Richmond of Dirom, Carter and Co., severed his connections with the company and set up his own firm, obtaining consignments and collecting indents to be transmitted to the London agents. Mr. Richmond retired in 1852, and the London agents started their own business in Bombay, Messrs. George Rennie and Co.. Manockjee was appointed broker to the firm and Sir Dinshaw became its manager of general business. Manockjee also became a broker for the firm Messrs. Siller and Co., and Sir Dinshaw took over the running of their general business as well. As business had increased manyfold, Manockjee now took his sons into partnership and continued as broker for all the firms and entrusted the general business of Messrs. George Rennie and Co. and Messrs. Siller and Co. to Sir Dinshaw, and that of Messrs. Dirom and Co. to his younger son, Nusserwanjee. Father and sons continued to work in this manner until the death of Manockjee in May 1859. The two brothers worked together for the next five years, but then separated by mutual consent. They had been inordinately successful in their business with their father as Manockjee left the brothers twenty-five lakh Rupees on his death. (Sorabji 1889, 90)

Sir Dinshaw is considered to be a pioneer of industry in this country. The first cotton spinning mill was set up in 1854 by Cowasji Nanabhoy Davar, and Manockjee Nusserwanjee followed Davar's example. (Sorabji 1889, 90) In 1858 (Edwardes 1923, 13) he opened a spinning mill with the addition of looms for weaving cloth. The Oriental Spinning and Weaving Mill, (Sorabji 1889, 90) as it was called, was set up with a capital of twenty-five lakh Rupees (Edwardes 1923, 13). Sir Dinshaw was employed at this mill, and he felt that there was a great future in store for this newly established trade. (Sorabji 1889, 90) He believed that though there were risks and difficulties involved in this new industry, it could lead to great prosperity, with careful management (Edwardes 1923, 13).

After Manockjee died, the Oriental Mill came under the management of Sir Dinshaw's brother, Nusserwanjee. Sir Dinshaw decided to open another mill, this time in partnership with his brother-in-law, Merwanji Framji Panday. When word of this spread, several merchants of some standing in business exhorted Sir Dinshaw to convert the business into a joint stock company. He and Merwanji decided to issue 2500 shares at a price of Rs. 50 each. 700 shares were taken up by European and Indian business houses and the remaining shares were placed on the market. Ten thousand applications were received in a matter of a day. On 16th July 1860 the property was formally transferred from Sir Dinshaw and Merwanji to the Manockjee Petit Manufacturing Company. (Edwardes 1923, 13-14) The mill began with 61,000 spindles and 1200 looms (Sorabji 1889, 91).

Other businessmen saw the opportunity to expand and by 1865 ten mills had opened in Bombay, with a combined total of 250,000 spindles and 3400 looms. They employed over 6000 workers, and 40,000 bales of cotton were consumed annually. There was a lull during 1865-66 due to the price of cotton rising abnormally as a result of the American Civil War but, by 1867, Bombay cotton goods were in demand again (Edwardes 1923, 14).

Sir Dinshaw also purchased the Fleming Mill with its 50,000 spindles and 800 looms. He set up the Dinshaw Petit Mill, and in the years that followed he built or purchased more mills including the Mazagon Mill, the Framjee Petit Mill, the Victoria Mill, and the Gordon Mill (Sorabji 1889, 91) (which was later renamed Bomanaji Petit Mills (Edwardes 1923, 22). His mills branched out into the manufacture of hosiery, damask and other "fancy goods" including sewing cotton. Partnering with the proprietor of a dyeing enterprise in England, Mr. J. Alton, and the manager of the Manockjee Petit Mill, Mr. Naoroji N. Wadia, he set up a yarn dyeing factory (Sorabji 1889, 91). This was set up with a capital of twelve lakh Rupees and was named the Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company (Edwardes 1923, 22). This factory now produced yarn in Turkey red, green, red and yellow. Their annual sales were between two and three lakh rupees, showing others that this could be a profitable business. His goods were sold to China, South Africa, Persia and the Straits Settlements (Penang, Singapore, Malacca and Dinding – territories controlled by the British as a Crown colony). New markets were added each year (Sorabji 1889, 91).

Sir Dinshaw was also actively involved in other business activities. In 1860, he became a trustee of the newly set up Central Bank, which opened with a capital of fifty lakh Rupees and had branches established in London, Calcutta, Madras, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Australia. In 1865, he was appointed a director of the Royal Bank. However, neither of these banks survived the share market crash that took place that year. He also became a director of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation and of the Colaba Land Company in 1865. In 1866 he became a director of the Frere Land Reclamation Company. Both of these land reclamation companies were subsequently bought over by the Bombay Government on behalf of the Port Trust. Sir Dinshaw was also one of the promoters of a company set up to construct a tramline to Hog Island in the Bombay harbour, but this project did not take off as the government finally did not give permission for it (Edwardes 1923, 15).

1865 was the nadir of the Share Mania in Bombay. The entire city was involved in an almost insane amount of financial speculation as huge amounts of wealth flowed in from the high prices of cotton. Sir Dinshaw Petit could not have remained personally unaffected by this period of speculation. He had invested money in several of the companies that were formed during this time, as well as lent money to many of his friends who needed cash to promote their speculative ventures. But every good thing must come to an end and when the war concluded in April 1865, the price of cotton crashed. Most speculators found it impossible to meet their obligations and a panic ensued. By the end of 1866, most of the financial associations had failed. It was at this time of crisis that Sir Dinshaw showed proof of his business acumen. He had lost money in ventures and the thirty lakh Rupees that he had loaned to friends would never be seen again. However, he still had much of his wealth intact and used it to help those who had lost everything. He provided funds to support entire families and helped with employment for many (Edwardes 1923, 18). Sir Dinshaw emerged from the financial crisis of 1864 with a staggering fortune and a reputation as an astute businessman (Sorabji 1889, 90).

His business acumen was much sought after by public companies and he was a Director of the Bank of Bombay, the Bombay Fire Insurance Company, the Hyderabad (Deccan) Spinning and Weaving Company well as several others, in addition to being a director of all his own mills (Sorabji 1889, 91).

In 1867 Sir Dinshaw entered into a contract with the British shipping company, P&O, to provide for speedy transit of mail, to and from Bombay. The contract provided for weekly mail transfers with a transit time of 26 days (Edwardes 1923, 33).

By 1874 normalcy had returned to the economy and the mill industry was flourishing one again. The number of mills had increased and this expansion led to the foundation of the Bombay Mill-owners Association in 1875. Sir Dinshaw was appointed a member of the Managing Committee and became its Chairman between 1879 and 1894. He was actively involved in the mill-owners' attempts to secure greater protection for the industry and was part of the debates revolving around the Factories and Joint Stock laws which affected the cotton spinning and weaving industry (Edwardes 1923, 20-21).

Another institution that Sir Dinshaw helped to found was the Bombay Native Stockbrokers Association. The stockbrokers who had survived the stock market crash had set up an informal association but, in 1875, they decided that they needed a regular association. Several of them had helped Sir Dinshaw sell the shares in his Victoria Mills and, in return for this, he gave the association a block of Victoria Mills shares worth Rs. 19,000 (The Indian Finance Year Book (1938) by Rangaswami says this was Rs.38,000). After he received his knighthood in 1887, Sir Dinshaw gave the association another donation of Rs. 12,000 which was used to build the Dinshaw Manockjee Petit Brokers' Hall which opened in 1899 (Edwardes 1923, 21-22).

Sir Dinshaw was also deeply involved with public activities and was seen as a leader in the community. He involved himself in political, social and communal activities throughout his life. These gave him much influence, as well as popularity, with both the government and within the community.

One of the earliest matters he was involved in was related to the matter of personal laws for the Parsis. There being no codified laws in the religion, Parsis in Bombay were subject to English Civil law and those outside Bombay were subject to different and often unwritten rules. The community held a mass meeting in August 1855 to decide on a course of action. A committee was set up to deal with the matter and Sir Dinshaw was part of this Managing Committee. In 1861, he was appointed part of the sub-committee that was set up to draft a new set of laws that would be applicable and suitable for the Parsi community. This ultimately bore fruit in the form of the Parsi Law Commission and the Parsi Succession and Marriage Acts. He was subsequently appointed as a delegate to the first Parsi matrimonial court in 1865 (Edwardes 1923, 27).

In 1860, Sir Dinshaw was appointed as a trustee of the Parsi Panchayat (Edwardes 1923, 27). The first Parsi Panchayet was a self-constituted body of elders and influential members of the community. It was centered at Bombay as this city had a large number of Parsis. The Panchayet final authority on social and cultural matters and was the chief distributor of charity (Karaka 1884, 217). Sir Dinshaw was also made a Justice of the Peace for the town and island of Bombay in 1860 (Sorabji 1889, 91).

In 1862, he joined the Bombay Association (Edwardes 1923, 28) – a fledgling political organisation set up in 1852 by Naoroji Furdunji, Naryan Dinanathji, Dr. Bhau Daji and Dadabhai Naoroji (Pannikar 1981, 1) – and served as its chairman from 1875 to 1878. In 1867 this association morphed into the Bombay Presidency Association founded by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Justice Baddruddin Tyabji and Justice K.T. Telang. Sir Dinshaw was one of the first members of this new Association (Edwardes 1923, 28). He was chosen as one of the Vice-Presidents of the East India Association in December 1882 (Edwardes 1923, 36). It was in this capacity that he chaired the meeting of the Association held to prepare a petition to Queen Victoria, asking to extend the term of office of the Viceroy Lord Ripon. This was after the turmoil caused by Lord Ripon's proposed Ilbert Bill. After Lord Ripon returned to England, Sir Dinshaw took an active part in raising a memorial to the Viceroy. In 1884, the Ripon Club was set up and Sir Dinshaw became its first Vice-Chairman (Edwardes 1923, 37-38).

Very active in the social sphere, Sir Dinshaw was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Sassoon Institute and the Sir Jamsetjee Parsi Benevolent Institution and was a member of the Municipal Council (Sorabji 1889, 91).

In recognition of his services to the people and the city of Bombay the Government appointed Sir Dinshaw as Sheriff of Bombay in 1886. In February 1887, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, he received the honour of Knight bachelor. A large public meeting was held to felicitate Sir Dinshaw on receiving this honour and laudatory speeches were made by many, including Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy (Sorabji 1889, 92).

In 1887, Sir Dinshaw was invited to become a member of the Viceroy's Council and became the first Parsi to have a seat in the Supreme Legislative Council (Sorabji 1889, 93).

In 1890, Sir Dinshaw received a Baronetcy from Queen Victoria (Edwardes 1923, 48). He became the second Parsi to be given this honour, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy being the first. The announcement was made by the Governor, Lord Reay, in March 1890. The letters patent, however, were delivered to Sir Dinshaw on 15th September 1890. This was a time of both pride and sadness for Sir Dinshaw. Sadness, as Sakarbai, his wife of more than 50 years had passed away on 6th March 1890, just 10 days before the announcement. (Edwardes 1923, 48-49)

Sir Dinshaw was conferred with the title, Siro Khurshid, by the Shah of Persia in 1892, in recognition of his work on behalf of the Persian Zoroastrians (Edwardes 1923, 50).

However, it is for his work as a philanthropist that Sir Dinshaw is best remembered. These activities fell under two heads – charity for the Parsis and Persian (Iranian) Zoroastrians, and charity for the general public.

As a member of the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Committee, he gave generously towards the building of a dokhma or Tower of Silence, dispensaries and schools in Persia (Iran). When a severe famine took place in Iran in 1871, Sir Dinshaw and others sent money through the British ambassador to distribute free grain, and also set up a corpus towards the maintenance of the Iranis who had fled from Iran and were housed in the Vacchagandhi Fire-temple in Bombay. Between 1861 and 1882 he fought for the abolition of the jizya (poll-tax) on Zoroastrians in Iran. Pressure was brought to bear on the Persian government through many memorials sent through official channels. Finally, in September 1882, Sir Dinshaw as the President of the Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund Committee received word from the British embassy in Tehran, that the Zoroastrian community in Persia would be exempt from the jizya. The Fund Committee had spent close to a lakh of rupees paying the tax on behalf of Zoroastrians who could not have afforded to pay it (Edwardes 1923, 52-54, Murzban 1917, 134). Sakarbai's mother, Gulestan, hailed from Iran and had fled from there with her father and two sisters. Her brother, Mehervanji Pandey, was instrumental in the setting up of Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund Committee (Murzban 1917, 132).

Sir Dinshaw also spent his wealth generously to improve the lot of the poorer sections of the Parsi community. He was a member of the Society for the Relief of Destitute Persian Zoroastrians in Bombay (Sorabji 1889, 91). He gave money towards death ceremonies as well as wedding ceremonies (Edwardes 1923, 55) and Navjote ceremonies (Murzban 1917, 258). He gave money to the Parsi Panchayet to distribute amongst poor Parsis on the Muktad holidays; built and repaired Fire-temples and gave money towards building Towers of Silence in small upcountry areas (Edwardes 1923, 55). He built a large prayer hall (Sagdi) at the Doongerwadi in Bombay in memory of his late father and handed it over to the Parsi Panchayet (Vatcha 2024, 493).

In 1886, he and Sorabji Shapurji Bengalee paid for the much-needed construction of a road at Udvada and, three years later, built a second one there. He built a Daremeher (a small Fire Temple) at Udvada and houses for

the use of pilgrims. Money was given to support the Nassesalars or corpse bearers in many towns across India, and funds were given for the celebration of Gambhars (community feasts) (Edwardes 1923, 56).

Money was also given towards building charitable dispensaries in Bombay and, in 1886, he was appointed a Trustee of the Parsi Lying-In hospital to which he gave his financial support. After the outbreak of the plague in 1896, and during the famine in Western India, he made generous contributions towards supplying cheap grain for the famine stricken and also saving cattle from starvation (Edwardes 1923, 58-59).

The Parsi Panchayat received large amounts from him for charitable purposes. These were disbursed after the Uthamna ceremonies (Zoroastrian ceremony held on the third day after a death) of his relatives as well as after the Navjote ceremonies of his grandchildren (Edwardes 1923, 59). Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy mentions that Sir Dinshaw gave more than four and three-quarter lakh Rupees to the Parsi Panchayet alone (Edwardes 1923, 56).

Sir Dinshaw built low-cost housing for the Parsis in Bombay. It was difficult to find housing in the city as the rents had risen quite high. The first block of houses was completed in 1894. He built many more such blocks in memory of his wife, his parents, and his children who had predeceased him (Edwardes 1923, 60).

His generosity was not restricted to the Parsis and Sir Dinshaw gave money to a large number of other causes including the Irish Famine Fund (1847); sent money to the weavers of Lancashire during the Civil War; gave famine funds in different parts of India for helping both, humans and animals; and helped those who had lost everything in disastrous floods and in very bad fires (Edwardes 1923, 61-63).

Charitable dispensaries across the country were set up with funds disbursed by Sir Dinshaw. In Bombay he set up the Sir Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Women and Children in 1892 at a cost of 2 lakh Rupees. It was built close to the J.J. Hospital (later within its grounds but the building was demolished in the 1980s). Other benefactions included a fund for bringing English medical women to India for the benefit of women. In the last months of his life he gave land and money towards the building of an infectious diseases hospital. He spent more than three and a half lakh Rupees on it but would not live to see it completed (Edwardes 1923, 69-71). He also gave money for the building of a Leper Home in Ratnagiri and sent money regularly for its upkeep. He offered one and a half lakh Rupees to the Bombay Government to build a leper hospital on Trombay Island but the project fell through (Edwardes 1923, 67-68).

Sir Dinshaw had taken a keen interest in the Bombay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals when it was founded in Bombay in December 1874. When the society required a hospital for animals, particularly diseased cattle, Sir Dinshaw purchased a large plot of land in Parel. This plot and the large building that stood on it were bought for close to Rs. 50,000 and were then given to the Society to be used as a veterinary hospital. The Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals thus opened in Parel with three wards – one for horses and two for cattle. The then Governor, Sir James Fergusson, was also keen to have a veterinary college attached to the hospital and in 1886 the Veterinary College was set up on the grounds of the Bai Sakarbai Hospital. Further expansions were done to the hospital with new sheds, an isolation ward, a patho-bacteriological lab, a pharmacy and a shoeing shed being added. Almost all the funds came from Sir Dinshaw and his family including donations for purchasing grain and fodder for the sick cattle (Edwardes 1923, 72-73).

Sir Dinshaw also gave generously to the Society in other parts of India and assisted in the building of pinjrapols (animal shelters) and veterinary hospitals at other locations (Edwardes 1923, 74).

An equally large portion of his wealth was spent on education – particularly girls' education. Sir Dinshaw also endowed Zoroastrian Madrassas as well as libraries in various parts of India. He established schools, for both girls and boys, as well as funding the buildings of others. He gave generously to scholarship funds and Parsi benevolent institutions. (Edwardes 1923, 57-58) Here too, his largesse was not restricted to the Parsi community but to anyone who required it. He gave to museum funds, library funds, scholarship funds and to literary institutes apart from giving grants to schools and colleges across India. He also believed that manual and industrial training was very important and helped to set up industrial schools in Bombay, Poona and Ahmadnagar. He helped found the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute (VJTI). He gave over one of his properties in the Fort (valued at three lakh Rupees) in exchange for the building of the Elphinstone College at Parel. He then gave that building as a free gift to the Government for the Technical Institute (Edwardes 1923, 74-77). (This is the building that is currently the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Central Railway Hospital at Byculla).

Lastly, Sir Dinshaw was a firm believer in the importance of physical exercise and gave donations to set up gymnasia across the city, one of which was the Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit Gymnasium at Carnac Road (Edwardes 1923, 78) established in 1895 (Murzban 1917, 251). The property was later given to the Government to set up the Lord Harris Memorial School).

In the last years of Sir Dinshaw's life, the mill industry faced a slump, and the outbreak of the plague of 1898 resulted in the fleeing of workers and further losses but the industry did recoup. Unfortunately, Sir Dinshaw was no longer around to see it (Edwardes 1923, 23). He did, however, realise that the proper housing of workers was necessary for the industry and one of his last recorded acts was the inauguration of a scheme to provide the workers of the Manockjee Petit Mills with cheap and sanitary housing (Edwardes 1923, 23-24).

Sir and Lady Dinshaw Petit had 14 children – 6 boys and 8 girls (Edwardes 1923, 79) – of whom 8 survived (Sorabji 1889, 94). Four of his children predeceased him, including his heir, Framji (Edwardes 1923, 82). Framji was married to Avabai, the daughter of Sir Dinshaw's brother, Nusserwanjee Manockjee Petit. Their son, Jijibhoy, became the second Baronet.

Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Petit died on the 5th of May 1901 at the age of 78. The Cotton Exchange, various schools he had funded, his cotton mills as well as those of his friends, were closed as a mark of respect for him. The Share Bazaar halted business for that day and the Municipal Corporation adjourned its meeting for that day. Public tributes poured in from all over India. Uthamnas were held in many places all over India as well as in Hongkong and at Yezd in Persia (Iran) (Edwardes 1923, 88-89).

A committee of Bombay's leading citizens decided to collect funds for a permanent memorial to this benevolent man and erect a statue of him (Edwardes 1923, 92). The statue stands at Bhatia Baug opposite the Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (formerly the Victoria Terminus).

The Rast Goftar published this obituary for Sir Dinshaw on 12th May 1901, which serves as an accurate summary for the life of this man.

> "The name of him who passed away on Sunday last will be remembered by future generations with peculiar veneration and gratitude. It is no mere conventional tribute to his memory to say that by his death the country has sustained a grievous and irreparable loss. The passing away of a great captain of industry, of a munificent patron of science and arts, and of a generous dispenser of large-hearted and catholic charities must always be a public

calamity. But the grief is deeper, the sense of loss is aggravated, when the person mourned for combined with these public achievements the rarer and more precious domestic virtues. It is impossible to conceal the fact that by Sir Dinshaw's death the last link in the chain that bound the old with the new has been broken, the last venerable figure who helped to remind us of the qualities of the old race which once made us great among the nations of the earth has departed for ever. The last of the great patriarchs of the Parsis has gone to his rest and left behind him none that can truly fill his place.

We are too near as yet to the date of his death to form a correct estimate of the good that Sir Dinshaw did to his race and kind. But if one may judge from the position which he occupied during his life and from the universal lamentation which marked his decease, he was accounted the chief figure among the benefactors of his own community and set up a standard of public philanthropy which succeeding generations will find it difficult to surpass. That wealth has its responsibilities as well as its privileges Sir Dinshaw was by no means the first Parsi to understand and acknowledge: but none among them, with the exception of the first Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai, acted so scrupulously and consistently upon that doctrine. Nor do we remember any other who gave as much for the simple sake of charity as did Sir Dinshaw throughout many years of his active life. To feed the poor, to clothe the naked, to succour the afflicted, were the cardinal dictates of the religious faith of this typical old Zoroastrian, and he sought to fulfil them without invoking the applause of his fellows or the recognition of the State. In the fullness of time, it is true, honours were conferred upon him in full measure, but it will ever be remembered to his credit that he was guided in all that he did by the voice of his conscience rather than by the expectation of public eulogy. Much has been said about his munificent gifts to charitable objects, and the hospitals, colleges, schools, and other works of public utility which bear a commemorative tablet are silent witnesses of his liberality. But these are far from representing the sum total which he devoted from his private sources to the service of his fellow-men. He was, if possible, more generous in his private than in his public benefactions, and hundreds of families whom he supported from his private purse must rue the day when he departed from among them. With all the influence and all the wealth still possessed by the Parsi community, there is none left quite like him, to whom they can appeal in times of difficulty, none who will strive so readily and ardently to promote their happiness and welfare." (Edwardes 1923, 90-91)

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