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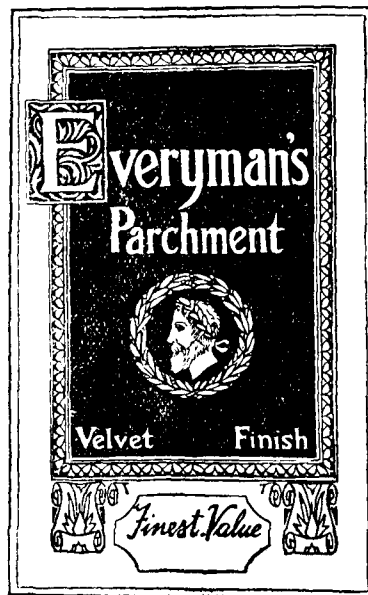
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# EVERYMANS REVIEW

Vol. 9

MARCH 1924

No. 3

## Thiagaraja

**A Great Musician Saint—VII**

By M. S. Ramaswami Aiyar, B.A., B.L., L.T.

**B**ESIDES Krithis, which alone were sufficient to immortalise his name, our musician composed Kirthanas\* as well. He was, again, responsible for five more works, viz., Divyanamavali, Ragarathnamalika, Bhakthavijayam, Nowka-charithram and Pancharatna.

The first forms a body of very simple songs intended to help the veriest tyro to pray to God with sweet voice which He likes. The second consists of one hundred kirthanas in one hundred ragas, beginning with *Ragarathnamalikache* in Ritigowla. Both these works have been rightly merged in the main work of Thiagaraja.

The third, viz., Bhakthavijayam, forms a body of devotional kirthanas composed for the purpose of deep contemplation and worship. The full name of the work is "Pahlada Bhakthavijayam." If the songs found therein were dedicated to Pahlada, we should have no remark to make. But if they purported to have been sung by Pahlada, or in other words, if Thiagaraja ever meant to put the forty-five songs of Bhakthavijayam into the mouth of Pahlada, then, our musician must be deemed to have committed the mistake of anachronism, even from the

\* For difference between Krithis and Kirthanas, see my *Modes of Music*.

point of view. The reader will note that almost all the songs of Bhakthavijayam address themselves invariably to Rama, as for instance—

(1) *Rama, Abhirama,*

and (2) *Thamasamela Sitamanoramana.*

Prahlada knew only the first four avatars and could not therefore even dream of the future Rama. Again, we see no reason why these four score and five songs should still remain under a separate category and why they should not be merged in our musician's main work, as has been the case with his Divyanamavali and Ragarathnamalika.

But 'Nowkacharithram' has its own tale to tell and deserves an independent classification. It narrates the story of an excursion, in a pleasure-boat on the Jumna, of the Gopis of Brindavan in company with Lord Krishna. A terrible storm tossed the boat furiously and threatened to drown it. The Gopis prayed to Krishna for help but in vain; for, the waters were rising and making their way into the boat. They came through some new cracks that opened at the bottom. The Gopis screamed: *Allakallolamaye*. With a stern voice, however, did Sri Krishna order: "Fill the cracks with your garments." The helpless women resigned themselves to the will of the Lord. Suddenly the whole scene changed; and the Gopis found themselves safe on the banks of the Jumna with their garments. Their joy knew no bounds. The songs of Nowkacharithram are of a simple type of melody; and Mr. Thirumalayya Naidu compares them to Handel's *Water-Music*, which was performed by a party of musicians in a boat which followed King George I. in his barge down the Thames, the object being to appease the royal hearer's wrath.

Govinda Marar's\* memorable meeting with Thiagaraja has

\* Since Mr. Lakshmana Pillay and I have each independently got from the same Vedadrisadasa Mudaliar the information of Govinda Marar's meeting with Thiagaraja, who had got it from his own uncle that was bodily present at that meeting, any tradition to the contrary or giving any other name, such as Kesaviah, must be brushed aside.

yet to be related. In the early part of the 19th century, there lived in Travancore—Ramamangalam of Moovattupuai Taluq... a famous musician, called Govinda Marar, whose date has been found to be approximately 1798 to 1843. He was small in stature but big in fame and afflicted with rheumatism which made him a cripple for life, but endowed with extraordinary powers which made him a celebrity for life and even after. He used to sing with a thambura in one hand and a kanjira in the other; so self-contained a musician was he. His thambura had seven strings, unlike the four-stringed thambura of to-day, consisting of 3 saranis, 3 panchamas and 1 mandra. His unique thambura had a flag of challenge attached to it. We hear of a similar instrument having been used by Peria Vythi who, in his best days, travelled in a palanquin and

"High placed in hall, a welcome guest,  
He pour'd to lord and lady gay  
The unpremeditated lay."

But the voice of even the Sivaganga musician could not reach the high pitch of the Travancorean's special instrument. Govinda Marar's *forte* was pallavi-singing in *shadkala* or six degrees of time; and he was therefore called "Shadkala Govindan."

The Shadkala system of singing pallavi may be described thus: A man who sings on the second degree comprises the pallavi into half the space of time which he took to sing it on the first degree. To sing it again on the third degree, he would have to compress it into one-fourth of the same time; and so on up to the sixth degree. But the ordinary powers of the human voice are such as cannot permit any musician to sing a pallavi on the sixth degree, unless the first degree of time is extraordinarily slow. Again, the powers of measuring and regulating the first slow degree of time by a mere mental estimate will be heavily taxed and tested to the utmost limit. So volatile, unsubstantial and evanescent is time that, unless a reasonably short interval is allowed between two beats, its measurement is likely to elude the grasp of even the subtlest intellect. To be a successful Shadkala-singer of pallavi, one must be able to sing it either at an electric speed or at an extraordinarily slow speed.

Govinda Marar adopted the second method; and there he was terrible to his rivals.

This celebrated Govinda Marar heard of the more celebrated Thiagaraja and wanted to meet him. Nalla Thambi Mudaliar,<sup>1</sup> keeper of the Royal Stables of Trivandrum, took him all the way to Thiruvaiyar, where the historic meeting of the two great men took place in 1838. What a glorious sight must that meeting have been! It was as if Shakespeare and Milton, or Tasso and Dante, or Kalidasa and Kamban met together. The famous "squint-eyed" Vadivelu was also present there. Thiagaraja's private friend, Annachi Rayar, lodged them in a convenient building and attended to their other comforts. The same night at 8 o'clock, Thiagaraja and his disciples sat together on the small pial of his humble cottage with a castor-oil lamp acting as a representative of the departed sun. The people of Thiruvaiyar and the surrounding parts had already assembled in large numbers in front of the musician's house. The disciples began to sing. Meanwhile Govinda Marar, Nalla Thambi Mudaliar and Vadivelu went there, paid their namaskaras and squatted. A grim silence followed the disciples' music; and none dared to break it. At last Govinda Marar boldly requested Thiagaraja to sing.

"HOW CAN YOU," remarked Thiagaraja, "EXPECT AN OLD MAN OF 79 TO SING TO ORDER?"<sup>2</sup>

"If you are not disposed," replied Vadivelu, "I shall ask Marar to sing."

"What is a rheumatic patient, that he seems to be, going to sing?" asked Thiagaraja.

"A little," was Vadivelu's reply.

Thiagaraja nodded his head as if he wanted to hear that little.

Quite unaffected by whatever had transpired in his very presence, the "short-fingered" Govinda Marar readily took his thambura, which itself attracted enough notice, and began his

<sup>1</sup> Brother of Sulochana Mudaliar and Uncle of Vedadrisadasa Mudaliar.

<sup>2</sup> These words of Thiagaraja's are very important as they help us to find out the date of his birth. Compare my 2nd. article.

ragamalika—alapana. 'Thodi' was the first raga he elaborated. At once a great king, decked in all his regal glory and parading the pomp and circumstance of his lofty position, appeared to stalk before the audience. The singer changed the raga to *Asaveri*. Lo! that king was deposed from his throne of power and immersed in a sea of grief. *Kirvani* was sung next. A sage it was that, with a serene mind, sat in a lonely forest and calmly contemplated the beauty of nature. Thus did Govinda Marar play on the emotions of his hearers. He knew what phase, temper, circumstance or condition of life, high or low, serious or comic, a raga should illustrate. He could vividly feel, see and sympathise with the various sentiments of a raga—despondency, timidity, heroism, anger, tenderness, contentment, joy and sorrow and let the tone of his voice and the play of his countenance be in keeping with those sentiments. In fact, he could be what he sang.

The Ragamalika over, he jumped into the dark mine of *Panthuvarali*, traversed the whole cavity with a self-propelling light and amazed the wondering audience with a rare set of flawless diamonds of sangathis placed before them. Then he commenced a pallavi—*Chandana Charchitha Nilakalebara*—in his usually slow measure, the first of the six degrees. None knew where he began or where he ended. It was a labyrinthine web that he wove. It seemed a vast forest of lovely shades and dark shadows which none but a trained hunter could enter and leave, without missing the track. As, however, Marar quickened the degree, the hearers forgot they were on the earth. Some went in trance and some went to dance. Some felt transported to the region of mystery and others perceived the moral value of their lives raised. Some again felt the thrill of battle and others thought they were initiated into the serenity of meditation. While thus their ears fed on their ambrosia, their tears flowed down their cheeks.

Thiagaraja, visibly moved, exclaimed; "Beautiful, beautiful! Your silvery music is as charming and fascinating as my golden Rama. Vadivelu misled me by saying you knew only 'a little to sing' Now it is clear you are a Master of Music. Yes, you

are a Master greater than even Lord Govinda. I therefore call you, not Govinda Marar, but Govinda *Swami*."

"I would rather be Govinda *Das*," was Marar's humble reply.

Anyhow Govinda Marar thenceforward went by the name of Govindaswami; and his Varnas were, as they are even to-day, called "Govindaswami Varnams." Thiagaraja's pride melted before the fire of Govindaswami's music; and a song of humility at once issued out from him, much in the style of Govindaswami's Varnas. This was *Entharo mahanubhavulu*: "Many indeed are the great men of the world; to them all I pay my respects."

Govindaswami, on his part, felt that, with this one colour, Thiagaraja drew such a marvellously beautiful picture as to throw his own, so elaborately done, quite into the shade. Not long after, he composed four more songs in the wake of *Entharo mahanubhavulu* in Nata, Gowla, Arabi and Varali, to which a common name of *Pancharatna* was given.

Before we proceed, we feel bound to make mention of another meeting<sup>1</sup> that took place on one fine August evening at 5 o'clock in 1843, between Sulochana Mudaliar and Thiagaraja. Sulochana and his major son, Vedadrisadasa (the future High Court Judge of Travancore) were both on their way from Madras to Palamcottah. The news of the celebrated meeting of 1838 between Thiagaraja and Govinda Marar, doubtless, lured Sulochana to meet the grand old musician of Thiruvaiyar. The father and son Mudaliars approached Thiagaraja and were duly welcomed, warmly received and richly entertained with the sweet music of the disciples, though not of the master.

The music over, Sulochana broke the silence that prevailed; and the following interesting conversation took place between him and the famous musician, in which even Vedadrisadasa joined, though at the end.

*Sulochana* :—My brother, Nalla Thambi, gave me a glowing account of your meeting with Marar—.

1. I had the privilege to learn of this meeting directly from Mr. Vedadrisadasa Mudaliar who was bodily present there along with his father.

*Thiagaraja* (interrupting) :—You mean Govindaswami?

*Sulochana* :—Y—e—s.

Here, Sulochana sighed heavily, as if he had with him a very sorrowful news and yet feared to communicate it.

*Thiagaraja* :—Why do you then call him *Marar*? I changed his name from Govinda Marar to Govindaswami. O! how beautifully he sang! where is he now?

*Sulochana* :—Soon after he left you, he went to Tinnevely and then to Trivandrum. He told all his friends that it had been his unique fortune and rare privilege to have met you here and that you had overpowered him with your admirable *Entharo mahanubhavulu*. He even sang it to us more than once.

*Thiagaraja* :—(To God) O! Dasarathi! Can I ever discharge my debt of obligation to You, for Your<sup>1</sup> having extended my reputation to distant parts? (To Sulochana) Indeed Govindaswami should have polished my *krithi* and made it nicer to hear. Is he doing well?

*Sulochana* :—Well, Sir; hale and healthy I found him a few months back at Madras; and I even wished him god-speed, when he left it, on a pilgrimage, for Benares. But, just a day prior to my departure from Madras, I heard he had reached Pandrapur, where he—d-i-e-d!

*Thiagaraja* :—Peace! Peace!! Peace!!! (After a pause) O! after all he is a young man and ought not to have died so soon.

*Sulochana* :—True; but God has *His* own way of doing things.

*Thiagaraja* :—Why do you say so? Will not God adjust *His* way according to our earnest prayers.

*Sulochana* :—I wish He had so adjusted. But my young son, whose ideas have been dipped in the vat of western philosophy, now thrown open to us, has been telling me that

1. Vide his *Thodi Krithi*: *Dasarathi Niranamuthirpa Natharama*. Here Thiagaraja seems to feel a special pride that, in the midst of false and faithless musicians and composers, the right man (viz, Govindaswami) carried his name and fame to Tinnevely and Trivandrum; and the learned Brahmin of Benares to North India.

prayer has no efficacy in this world, inasmuch as it cannot change or even suspend the divine laws but it can only bring us into conformity with them.

Thiagaraja :—Ah ! I'm sorry I forgot it. My old groove of thought seems to refuse to make room for new sentiments especially at this stage of my life. Now I remember that, some-time ago, a learned Brahmin, who delivered here an interesting and instructive lecture on "Avathars," spoke also of this same philosophy of prayer as having been propounded even in our Shastras.

Vedadradasa felt now gratified that his new-cherished idea had its blessings even from the Hindu shastras and said : "I am very glad to hear that our own philosophy has forestalled the Western philosophy on this vital point. I am of opinion that mere praise of God's *sugunas* with an overambition to draw Him towards ourselves but with no record to our credit of any virtuous deed or a generous gift is tantamount to base blasphemy. O, how I wish for a strong wave of seriousness to sweep through our time-honored fallacies ! When we knew that God has been ruling the world according to the immutable Law of Karma, what is the fun of praying to Him to hold the Laws of Nature in abeyance to suit the convenience of indulging individuals ?"

This fearless remark of the budding youth had, however, a salutary effect on our musician's mind ; and he calmly replied : "This new train of thought, happily brought back to my memory, is well worth cogitating upon. I should even like to crystallize that thought in one or two of my krithis."

Happily for us Thiagaraja did crystallize the "new thought" in two of his krithis, viz., Chakravaka song, *Sugunamule* and Vanali song, *Aparadamulanorva*, both of which will be explained later on.

Now, after composing hundreds of krithis and kirthanas of different varieties and teaching them to different sets of pupils ; our musician felt, especially when his wife had predeceased him leaving behind a duly married daughter, he had been rather too long in the *Grahasthasrama* life and therefore rightly yearned to become a sanyasi.

At this stage, he sang three krithis, viz, *Idisamayamura*, *Kripajoojutaku* and *Gnanamosagarada*. In the first, he remarked that men had been made sheep to the Yagas of Rogue's Matha and felt very sorry to think of the appalling ignorance under cover of which they, like the very sheep, licked the hands just raised to shed their blood. In the second, he found that the so-called Prabhus (Lords) were so many time-serving sycophants that would stoop to do the meanest thing and please, for their purposes, even the meanest of men. In the third he cried for practical wisdom.

Forthwith a new train of thought, perhaps in response to his cry for 'Practical Wisdom,' passed through his mind like a flash of lightning. He felt at the eleventh hour, for he was now 88, he must start again with a clean slate. He called back to memory the words of wisdom that had fallen from the lips of the learned lecturer of 'Avathars' as well as the bold words of the budding High Court Judge of Travancore. He thought, now seriously, that, while he prayed and prayed his life away, the world was going on and on in its own usual way and questioned to himself whether he did not, after all, waste his life-time in merely praising God's *sugunas*<sup>1</sup> or excellent qualities with an overambition (literally evil desire) to draw Him towards himself but with no record to his credit of any virtuous deed or a generous gift. The history of prayer seemed to him the history of disappointment. "Does man after all know," he seemed to argue in his latest groove of thought, "how to pray and what to pray for ? Now he desires a thing and fervently prays for it. Let us take that God grants it to him. Soon the thing granted begins to prey upon him and proves his deadly enemy. Down again on his knees he goes and raises his supplicating voice that the evil thing may be taken away from him."

How far Thiagaraja was right in this new way of thinking, we shall now discuss.

It is said that, when the big steamer, the *Titanic*, ran upon an iceberg of the Atlantic Ocean and went down all the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Sugunamule Cheppukonti* in Chakravaka.

passengers on board the vessel (men, women and children) cried their utmost to God and sent Him their fervent prayers to save their lives.<sup>1</sup> But the God who had heard Gajendra's cry and immediately run to his rescue, now preserved a grim silence. Why? Because the one was a fiction and the other was a fact. In the former we cooked the dish to our own appetite; while in the latter, Nature cooked it for us in her own way. Again, when the Athenians were defeated by the Lacedemonians both by sea and land, they sent a message to the Oracle of Jupiter Ammon to ask the reason why they should sustain so many defeats, in as much as they had erected numberless temples to the Gods, adorned them with costly offerings, instituted therein many a pompous and ceremonious festival, and slain thousands of hecatombs at their altars—as against the Lacedemonians who fell very short of them in all these particulars. The Oracle made a significant reply: "I am better pleased with the prayer<sup>2</sup> of the Lacedemonians than with all the oblations of the Greeks." The philosopher, who told us the story, proceeded to show how the most vicious man might be devout, so far as his victims were concerned, and how such a vicious man's offerings would be regarded by God as mean bribes and his petitions as gross blasphemies.

Which prayer, then, would be easily wafted to heaven and willingly accepted by God? In answer to this question, Emerson observed: "Prayer that craves a particular commodity—anything less than good—is vicious; and when it is treated as a means to a private end, it degenerates into meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as a man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in action." Longfellow sang—

"Trust no Future, how'er pleasant;  
Let the dead Past bury its dead;  
Act, act<sup>3</sup> in the living Present;  
Heart within and God o'erhead"

Appar exclaimed—

1. The same may be said of those that suffered under the recent, terrible earthquake of Japan.

2. The Lacedemonians' Prayer is:—"O, God! give us all good things, so long as we are virtuous."

3. The poet wrote "Act, act" and not "Pray, pray."

"உன்கடன் அடியேனைத் தாங்குதல்;  
என்கடன் பணிசெய்துகூடப்படுதே."

And Lord Krishna advised—

"Your business is with *action* and never with its fruits."

The four answers, quoted above, seem to point to the conclusion that the omnipotence of God is limited by man's destiny, that the Law of Karma is the only working hypothesis in this world, that the doer of good karma need not invoke His mercy at all, which will even otherwise deign to be bestowed upon him automatically and that the doer of bad karma (or for that matter, the non-doer of any karma) expects, whenever he prays for special concessions, that the laws of nature should be held in abeyance for his own convenience.

What, then, is the efficacy of prayer? To answer this question, we have to postulate, at the very outset, an important premise on which alone we can build a workable theory of prayer, viz.,—

"The Universal Cause

Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;

And makes what happiness we Justly call,

Subsist not in the good of one, but all."

Herefrom we infer an important proposition that—

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole

Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."

If, then, man proceeds, either in the plenitude of his ignorance or in the puff of his pride, to pray for his own selfish ends; such selfish prayer will, in the light of the above-mentioned premise, look as absurd and ridiculous—

"As if the foot, ordained the dust to tread:

Or hand, to toil: aspired to be the head;

As if the head, the eye, or ear, refined

To serve mere engines to the ruling mind."

Two forms of prayer we, however, find commonly prevalent among mankind—one for the prosperity of self and the other for the adversity of non-self. Both are wrong; for, the former proceeds from man's ignorance of "the Universal Cause," while the latter from his perverse and perverted nature. The right form of prayer is one that is invoked for the prosperity of all.

Hence Socrates advised Alcibiades to adopt the following characteristic form of prayer—

"O! Jupiter give us\* those things which are good for us, whether they are such things as we pray for, or such things as we do not pray for; and remove from us those things which are hurtful, though they are such things as we pray for."

Hence Solomon resolved to submit all his inquiries and anxieties to the Will of the Creator and exclaimed, after a laborious process of reasoning—

'O! God! In my act, may Thy great Will be done!'

Hence finally our own Gayatri refers to the prayer of all for all: "*We meditate on the adorable light of the Supreme Creator of the Universe. May that light guide our intellects in the pursuit of truth.*"

But does God, it may be contended, need to be reminded by man of His duty? Does not Omniscient Almighty know better than ignorant man what is good for him, how much of it he deserves, and when and under what circumstances it is to be bestowed on him? In other words God's Will will be done, whether or no man prays. Why, then, should you and I pray at all, even for the prosperity of all, inasmuch as God's Will will be done, whether or no we pray?

Two lines of answer may be drawn up to this question; but the second appears to us to be more rational.

Firstly; Our prayer is not to be interpreted as an ill-timed petition of abject beggars, but a well-timed recognition, by the loyal subjects of the Kingdom of God, of validity—not to speak of the utility—of the eternal laws enforced there. When a knowing man prays: "Let all men be happy"; it conveys no petition, nor even a reminder, to God that He should make all men happy; but it is tantamount to his recognising the validity of God's eternal law that all men are, or should be made, happy. The more he thus cultivates the habit of so recognising, the more he learns to identify himself with the Universal Law itself; and the more he becomes at one with God Himself. We may therefore safely state that the efficacy of prayer consists in bringing about

\* Note—'Us—not me.'

man's union with God and in strengthening in the former a habit of recognising the validity of the latter's eternal laws. Prayer, in short, reminds—or is intended to remind—not God of His duty but man of the validity of His eternal law as well as of his duty to recognise it as such. This way of viewing the subject of prayer will, like fire, burn all the dross of selfishness from the mind and make it as pure as sterling gold.

Secondly; the fallacy of the question (viz, why, then, should you and I pray at all, even for the prosperity of all, inasmuch as God's Will will be done, whether or no we pray?) is due to the loose use we make of the word 'Prayer.' *Begging* which indicates man's helplessness, *worshipping* which indicates his sense of gratitude and *praising* which indicates his overflowing love—are all confusedly rolled into one word—Prayer. By all means, worship God and justify your innate dignity of expressing your gratitude to Him for kindness received, whether solicited or not. Again, by all means praise Him, for it is the nature of love to praise and love exults in the repetition of loving words amounting to praise. Does not a lover feel his vocabulary too poor to address his mistress—my dear, my dearest, my darling, my honey, my dove, my love, my life, my all, etc., etc.? So a real Bhaktha has, for the gratification of his love, to coin names for his God in tens, hundreds and even thousands; and *that* accounts for the existence of 'Sahasranama' and 'Brihatsthothraratnakara.' Telling the beads too, like kissing the mistress, is the result of the repetition—loving Love. Hence, we repeat—praise God. But do not beg Him, for two weighty reasons\* :—

(1) In major cases, God's Will will be done, whether or no man begs; and

(2) In minor cases, your own Will will have its sway; and begging, then, is out of place.

\* Mr. Salter, in his *Ethical Religion*, backs me up thus :—

"Prayer to the Unknown God involves a double vice :—

(1) first, distrust of the beneficence of that order through which he is already manifested and which holds fast, whether we pray or not; and

(2) second, a despair of our ability to act as proximate causes and to bring about the results we wish ourselves."

# Letters of Mahatma Gandhi

Translated into English

By A. Rama Iyer, M.A.

I.

YOU have put me many questions about Plague, Cholera and such like diseases. It is true that, when there was a rat-fall at Rajkot, I advised the people to leave their houses. But that was in 1894, and my views have completely changed now\*. My motive, however, has always been the same, namely, the pursuit of truth. Now I have come to believe that by vacating our house at the time of an epidemic we are showing our ignorance of the nature of the soul. This does not mean that we should under no circumstances leave our house, for, if it catches fire, we should certainly leave it. We should do the same if the house were so infested by scorpions or snakes as to endanger our life. Even this I say with some reservation, as, to the man who has fully realised his soul, the sky is roof enough, and deadly creatures like the scorpion and the snake are like friends. We, on the other hand, keep inside the house for fear of the heat and cold of the weather, and leave it for fear of diseases like the Plague, and still we flatter ourselves with the delusion that we can realise our soul! This is at any rate how it strikes me. M—Left the house at the time of the Plague, leaving a servant to take care of it. This is surely unworthy of any man. If on the other hand the house had been burning, the servant also would have left it. I hope you can understand my distinction from this example. I consider the fear of Plague and other epidemics as meaningless. The Mussalmans never leave their homes, but continue to stay there with a firm faith in God. Of course, if any remedial measures can be taken with such calmness, so much the better. But, so long as we flee from the Plague in right, there is no hope of the extinction of the disease. Is it not our weakness that, instead of trying to discover the causes of the outbreak of Plague we

\* In 1908—A.R.

1924]

LETTERS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

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should flee from it? I am afraid you will not be quite satisfied with what I have written, as I myself am not satisfied with it. I can fully explain myself to you only when we meet and discuss the question. There are two reasons for my present inability to give you a convincing explanation of my position. One is that I am now too busy to write to you at length; and the other, that there is still some difference between my ideal and my actual life. When my word and deed are in perfect accord with each other, I shall easily find fit words in which to make my arguments clear to you. If your elders should ask you to leave your house or even village at the time of Plague, you should do so, since obedience to elders is a duty, so long as it is not against our moral good. You will be acting quite blamelessly, if you leave your house, not for fear of Plague, but in obedience to your elders' commands.

In these times we are often faced by the problem of the propriety or otherwise of yielding to our elders. It is my view that the bond of love that binds us to our parents is so sacred that we shall not be justified in giving them pain except under a stern necessity. But my conscience does not allow me to lay down an equally rigid rule in the case of elders other than the parents. In cases of moral necessity, we shall have to act against the wishes or commands of our elders including even our parents. If to-morrow my father should ask me to steal, it will be my duty to disobey him. If I want to live a life of *brahmacharya*, and if my parents want me to act against it, I shall have respectfully to disobey them. I think it wrong to get our M—and R—married until they are able to stand on their own legs; and if my parents were alive to-day, and if they should ask me to act against my conviction, I should respectfully oppose them, and I fully believe that they would approve of my action.

9th November, 1908.

II

MR. WEST'S telegram about your health reached me to-day. It broke my heart, but I am not in a position to come to your aid. I have dedicated my all to this battle of *Satyagraha*, and I ought not to leave my host of duty under any circumstances. I shall not be able to meet you, even if you are sentenced. You

will soon get better, if you are brave and observe strict regimen. But, even if you unfortunately leave me while I am unable to go to you, I can tell you that I shall not shed useless tears over it. By virtue of my deep love for you, you will continue to live for me even after you have left this world. Your soul can never die. I wish to repeat my assurance that I shall never marry again after your death. Give up your life, if it comes to that, with a happy heart and with firm faith in Providence. Your death will also be a part of our fight of *Satyagraha*, for our fight is not merely political, but also spiritual, and hence holy. So we ought to continue the fight to the end, irrespective of life or death, so I hope (I request) that you will not give way to grief in this matter.

## III

(To Manilal)

YOU should always bear in mind that everything in this world except the Soul is transient, and you should be working every moment of your life for the realisation of your Soul. The more I think over it, the more I am convinced of the supreme need of Truth and Brahmacharya. Strictly speaking, Brahmacharya and all other virtues are but different aspects of Truth, but Brahmacharya is so important that I regard it as on a par with Truth; and it is my firm conviction that all our difficulties will vanish by the observance of these two. The real difficulty lies in our passions. If we cease to depend for our happiness on external things, we shall learn to ask ourselves in all our actions, "What should we do?" instead of "what will others say?" With blessings.....

## IV

MY great anxiety now is that I should not have to return to my practice any more. My wish and my prayer is that I should be able to live all my life in a Phoenix state of complete poverty. But, alas, everything seems to point against this; it seems as if I shall not have the rare privilege of spending my days in complete ignorance of where my next meal is to come from! I call it a *rare privilege*, since only in such a state can we realise some of the best things in this world. Buddha and others lived such a life in the past, and those who are like them will have to live such a life in the future also. I am convinced that, without it, we can never realise our selves.....To live a life of sensual enjoyment, and to say at the same time that our senses are only doing their functions, is the mark of a rank atheist. Only he has a right to say this, who has brought his senses under complete control, and whose senses function only so far as is required for the continuance of life; and this right cannot be had except under a life of absolute poverty.

## Kuhne and our University

By C. Narayana Menon.

THE new converts to the Kuhne system will be surprised to learn that they have been out-done by our University in observing the regulations about diet given by the eminent benefactor of our race. It is to be hoped that a perusal of this will remove the apprehensions of our venerable fathers and guardians that our boys and girls may catch intellectual diarrhoea by going through the three heavy courses in our University. We make bold to assert not only that the ideal of our Alma Mater is lofty but that it is also worked to perfection even in its details.

That we eat much is Kuhne's contention. Nothing is more abominable to our kind Mother than the spectacle of swinish gluttons who disturb the gilt-edged loaves of bread from their ancient perch in show-rooms and secretly devour them with powerful spectacles on their noses. Gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins. By discouraging the so-called higher comparative eating, and by greatly reducing the number of dishes for the various courses our pious mother has done her level best to wipe out this scandal. She has caused it to be clearly understood that no test will be allowed requiring acquaintance on the part of candidates with other dishes. Nay, if an examinee should betray the least sign of having tasted other dishes, let him fail. A fixed standard of digestion must be conformed to, and woe to him who pretends that he has a better digestion than the examiner's.

What is required is not much eating but much chewing. We believe, and experiments point to the same conclusion, that a single mouthful thoroughly chewed, masticated and remasticated from morn till night is sufficient, nay the fittest food for an adult. More than one dish is mischief. Let the student rack his head in ransacking its corners, or let the teacher chew it, fashion it into small pills, and force them down the gullets of the yawning listeners with instructions when to vomit them and how to make

it seem that the rotundity was attained in digestion. If it does not avail to vomit in March let them be taken back for a repetition of the process in September. A right choice of the season, as in bloodletting, may produce better results.

There is a season for fasting too. Our Hindu Religion commends a nine day's fast for the brain, and the Christian observes an intellectual fast once every week. We have seen many who have observed a strict fast ever since their graduating without, evidently, any prejudice to their gravity or bigness. It is also observed that starving till just a week before the examination enables the brain to spew with exemplary success in that great vomiting test. On the other hand, he who foolishly allows time for assimilation finds, to his confusion, that the gorge shows an indisposition to be summoned at a moment's notice. In vain does he rave and curse and insert his fingers down the throat. Even if a little were to come out it will not show the globular polished form which is the criterion to pluck students by.

A prevention of such disastrous consequences, among various such useful results, is ensured by the observation of Kuhne's law that chaff must be retained. At worst, a quoting of chaff will enable the grain to preserve its pristine shape. Here we make bold to point out the great discretion of our mother in taking a further step in the right direction. Only such dishes are prescribed as already contain a good measure of chaff. When, however, to satisfy the other conditions any alteration in the way of adapting, abridging or mutilating has to be made the greatest care is always taken to see that all the chaff is preserved. Nay, this good principle has been so scrupulously followed that what is preserved is sometimes the chaff only, and nothing but the chaff.

When such care has been taken with grains it is needless to say that our University is sufficient disciple of Kuhne to reject animal foods. As regards this her order is brief, "Let it be neither fish nor flesh." Heavy foods, being slow of digestion are likely to stick in the internal cells and cause serious fermentation in the intellect; to prevent which unhappy consequence the dishes served are generally filled with such light foods as are

sure to leave the intestines of the brain during the spewing test without leaving the slightest trace of their once having gone in.

Fluid foods are, if possible, more vicious, we mean flowing i.e. current (literature, politics, etc.) No honest institution which has the care of the weak digestions of children can conscientiously allow such explosive material to find way into the cellars and show-rooms. Our Mother cannot be praised too much for her vigilance in keeping out the present deluge of such, flowing from the Press.

Her labours to rule out all pungent and hot dishes have not met with as much success as in the case of the wine-press. For one thing, the makers of dishes are seldom free from the vicious habit of spicing them. Not even the well paid imperial service has been quite successful in putting such dishes under water to make them tasteless. Such a highly spiced dish as Lamb for instance or the fatty salted Bacon refuses to become as insipid as we want. The evil of acquainting Indian throats with such pungent or sweetened dishes was originally due to the hunters and fowlers who as Major-domos to this messing department introduced butchers and butlers who almost refuse to go the way of all flesh.

But our University has overcome worse obstacles for instance in the matter of providing fruits. She was at a loss and even contemplated opening a chartered fruit market. Happily a league of chivalrous men came to her rescue and as a result the quantity of fruits vendible is increasing daily by leaps and bounds. Every Money (maker) and Master of the Arts and Retired (busybody) is now seen pushing into the market annotation plantains and critical pine-apples by cartloads, all as raw and unripe as Kuhne himself can desire. They are true masters of the Arts of puffing, grafting and reduplicating. The other day, on peeling the outer portion of a plantain, imagine our surprise to find it fall off into two portions; one stolen from a Master of the Art of Posing, and the other from a professor of the art of Puffing! The bookseller has further enlightened us that even the outer covering is only the cast off rind of a long-out-of-date fruit. We wonder how the Empire Exhibition forgot to give a

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medal to this prodigy of grafting. Anyway our students need not blossom themselves seeing that they can get ready-made fruits to graft on their stalks.

A glance at the above dietary must have already silenced the malicious and the misinformed who take a wanton delight in painting our Alma Mater as unprogressive. Harken to her own words. "Dear children, see to your mind's health, for is not the soul more than the body? Take heed when you burden it or give it food hard to digest. Take no care of your base physical diet. Season your foods, use tobacco, live exclusively on tonics and syrups, on drugs and bitters. I promise to connive at such. Be as constipated as you like, only—beware of the constipation of the intellect. Ye have heard it said by Kuhne of late times you must keep your bowels clean, but I say unto you keep your brains clean and empty."

You perceive, dear reader, that she is not come to destroy but to fulfil. He who recalls the time—yet green in our memories when the poor students were ground down by the mill or marked by the hunter cannot complain of slow progress. Yet there is no finality in human achievement. In the matter of passes for instance; to say that 70% of the people who followed scrupulously the above prescriptions for fourteen years cannot digest Mellins' Food is unbelievable. In Oxford they digest even oxcheek and mutton. If our University has a particularly delicate test for digestion let the school-final be lengthened by a year, the B. A. by three years and an M. A. be superadded for five years. We have never hesitated to express our conviction, in season and out of season that to a temperamentally dyspeptic race as the Indian an extension of spoon-feeding up to the fortieth year can only be highly beneficial. What we clamour for is a cessation of this slaughter of the innocents. We beg to point out to the authorities, who being chosen by democratic methods are sure to hear to us, that no better method can be hit upon than to let the candidates themselves—since they are the persons concerned—vote upon the question of the percentage of passes for each year. It will be less awkward, more fruitful, and surely quite as workable as the present method of their parents tackling the question.

## The Religion of the Ancient Tamils. II.

By the late Mudaliar S. Sabaratnam J. P.

### Their Original Home.

THE theory has been suggested by some modern thinkers that the original home of the Tamils was central Asia from where it is surmised that they migrated and found their way into India during some pre-historic period, and occupied the northern part of the continent, where they are said to have lived until they were driven to the south by the Aryans who followed them. The Aryans themselves are supposed to have come from the tableland of Asia and settled down in India long after the Dravidian immigration. The theory, however, is only a theory and it cannot be supported by any internal evidence, although it may be possible to trust certain Hindu mythological accounts in favour of it. *Jambudwipa* of the Hindu mythology may be supposed to represent the continent of Asia, and *Mahameru* may be identified with the north pole. As these two regions receive prominent mention in the Puranas as the centres of activity of the Hindu patriarchs, the new theory may be said to receive some corroboration from the Puranic accounts. But the absence of any allusion to any emigration in any of the early Indian literature—either Aryan or Dravidian—is noteworthy. None of these early writings make at least a sympathetic mention of an old home, and it is rather hard to conceive that our ancestors banished out of their mind all idea of their sweet home, if they had one outside India.

It will not be out of place to point out in this connection the existence of another theory that Lemuria was the cradle

of human race and that it was the original home of the Tamils. This theory may have the support of the general belief that *Bharata Varsha* is our native home—a theory that may be consistent with the Puranic accounts too. I can only say that we have not at present sufficient materials to decide the question one way or the other. It must however be pointed out that the probabilities, if there are any, in favour of the Indian colonisation from central Asia, may as well apply to the colonisation of Central Asia from India; and such a theory may be consistent with local traditions and with our ancient literature as well. I cannot understand why modern science should have a partiality for new ideas and an inborn prejudice against all old opinions, while, in fact, it is our duty as men of the world to respect old opinions until they are proved to be unsound.

#### A General View of the Religion.

UNLIKE many of the other nations of the world, the Tamils have ample materials to enable any one to form a correct idea of their religion. They are very rich in their religious literature which consists not only of philosophical disquisitions but of volumes of outpourings of genuine piety of such a character as will materially help anyone in forming an exact idea of the religion. They have again a rich lore of religious legends and a considerable mass of classical literature which will largely contribute towards an accurate knowledge of their religion. The Tamils have besides an excellent series of moral codes which will throw ample light on their religion. One has simply to direct one's attention to a study of their literature and he will find himself largely benefited by such a study.

There arose from time to time several scholars of great erudition in various parts of the Tamil land who expounded their religion with great zeal and genuine love. The Tamil land has produced more saints than any other part of India, or I may even say than any other part of the world, and these saints have rendered immense service to their religion by their miraculous deeds and by their still more miraculous exposition of the religion. The religion is no doubt a storehouse of several sublime spiritual

truths, and it is indeed a great pity that it has not been explored by Western scholars as ardently as its importance deserves, and that there has not been a Vivekananda to advertise it in the West. There have, however, been a few Europeans who chanced to have some idea of the intrinsic value of the religion, and I quote below the opinions of some of them :—

#### Prof. Max Muller.

“IN the South of India, there exists a philosophical literature, which, though it shows clear traces of Sanskrit influence, contains also original indigenous elements of great beauty and of great importance for historical purposes. Unfortunately few scholars only have taken up as yet the study of the Dravidian languages and literature; but young students who complain that there is nothing left in Sanskrit literature would, I believe, find their labour amply rewarded in that field.”

#### Dr. G. M. Pope.

“TO us ancient Tamil literature has been a favourite subject, and in the high-ways and by-ways of Tamil poetry and legend there is very much to reward the sympathetic student.”

“Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy is the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect.”

#### Rev. F. Goodwill.

“THOSE who have studied the Religion unanimously agree that this eulogy (of Dr. Pope) is not a whit enthusiastic or free worded. That the system is *eclectic* is at once apparent.”

#### Rev. W. Gondie.

THERE is no school of thought and no system of faith or worship that comes to us with anything like the claims of Saiva Siddhanta.

This system possesses the merits of great antiquity. In the religious world, the Saiva system is heir to all that is most ancient in South India. It is the religion of the Tamil people by the side of which every other form is of comparatively foreign origin.

In the largeness of its following, as well as in regard to the antiquity of some of its elements, the Saiva Siddhanta is beyond other forms the religion of the Tamil people and ought to be studied by all Indian missionaries.

As a system of religious thought, as an expression of faith and life, the Saiva Siddhanta is by far the best that South India possesses. Indeed, it would not be wrong to include the whole of India and to maintain, that judged by its intrinsic merits, the Saiva Siddhanta represents the high water-mark of Indian thought and Indian life.

The above opinions, expressed as they are, by christian missionaries and christian servants are entitled to great weight; and it is fervently hoped that a deeper research will be made into the religion before long and its real value made known to the public. Matters have taken such a turn that the beauty of our religion itself has to be told to our educated young men by European scholars, as otherwise they will not appreciate its value. A fuller opinion of these scholars will therefore be of great service to our country. It is very much to be regretted that the religion is not known even to many of our own countrymen—especially to those of North India—and many of the Tamils themselves who happen to receive an English education do not know what their religion is, and all that they know of their religion is a vague idea of what they call Hinduism gathered mainly from English books written by westerners.

It is not my object in this paper to give a detailed account of the religion. I have, I think, given sufficient details of the religion in my book entitled "The Essentials of Hinduism in the light of Saiva Siddhanta" and I am only concerned at present in tracing the source of religion. Different theories have been put forward by different thinkers as regards the source of the religion and I therefore think it desirable that any misconception on the subject should be promptly removed. In order however to enable the reader to follow me in my explanation of the source of the religion, I give below a broad outline of its main principles.

### Main Outline

THE religion of the Tamils is a pure monotheism generally known as Saiva Siddhanta and its main sources are the twenty-eight *Agamas*, although the religion fully accepts the authority of the *Vedas*. The religion postulates the existence of three *Padarthas* (entities,) viz :—

- (1) *Pathi*—God
- (2) *Pasu*—Souls and
- (3) *Pasa*—The elementary principle of the material world

and of its attendant evils.

These three *Padarthas* are considered to be eternal.

God is pure and perfect and in the interest of the second *Padartha* (*Pasu*). He creates the Universe out of the third *Padartha* (*Pasa*).

Souls are impure and imperfect sentient beings, their intelligence being covered with the veil of *Pasa*.

*Pasa* is a non-sentient subtler substance that obstructs the intelligence of souls and is the origin of evil. It is of three kinds viz :—*Anara*, *Maya* and *Karma*.

The action of God is indirect as he has no will power which results from limitation. In His sublime presence, the souls undergo the process of purification of *Panchakṛitya* until at last they are rendered fit for the enjoyment of eternal bliss. This is known in the general parlance as the action of God. This process of purification is also eternal and it repeats its different courses as often as the capacity of the soul requires. During the working of this process the souls are brought to various forms of life in different regions in accordance with their previous *Karma* and they are rewarded and punished according to their respective merits till at last they realise the truth. The change of bodies which the souls undergo in the meantime is known as transmigration.

In the course of transmigration, the souls are brought to life in the various organic forms of mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms according to their respective *Karma* and capacity until they are developed and become fit to take a human form. When they take a human form they are endowed with the power of

discrimination and with a sense of their duty to their creator and fellow creatures. Several moral duties are imposed on them when they take a human form, and such duties become binding on them only when they appeal to their conscience. The conscience of man is his best monitor. Religious toleration is therefore freely and fully allowed by the religion of the Tamils. Man has to pass through various religions suited to his taste and capacity and must eventually be brought under the guidance of Saiva Siddhanta when he has to pass through the four stages of life of *Brahmachariam*, *Grahastam*, *Vanaprastam* and *Sannyasam*, his social life being regulated by the rules of *Chaturvarna*—*Brahma*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*. When he gets into the plane of religion, he has to observe the rules of *Chaturpathi*—*Sariya*, *Kiriya*, *Yoga* and *Gnanam*,—which are helped by the four kinds of initiation of *Samayam*, *Visesham*, *Nirvanam* and *Acharyapishekam*. In the large majority of cases, man is not capable of attaining the last stage of *Gnanam* in a single birth and he has therefore to be born again and again till he qualifies himself for that stage. In this stage he realises his real state of Adwaita relation with God and enjoys eternal bliss. Such in short is the main outline of Saiva Siddhanta.

(To be Continued)

## Andi's Ambition

By Pandyan.

THERE were two tenants in a small house in Triplicane. Both were employed in the same office—the Revenue Board—and were fathers of decently large families, which they could scarcely maintain out of their regular monthly pay. Nevertheless Sundaram seemed to be a happy man. His co-tenant began to investigate more particularly into his affairs and found that Sundaram was able, very easily it seemed to Andi, greatly to supplement his pay. He was wanted by many, richer, happier

men. He was often found to spend his time in their company. More especially, when Andi was observing him, as Sundaram had sent his wife and children home to his father-in-law's village; his rich friends had heard it and were pressing him to pass his evenings and mornings in their company. Sundaram had now absolutely no expenses to meet with; he came home only to bed at night and that too not often. He had his morning Coffee, he told Andi, at Dewan Bahadur Subramaniam's. His breakfast was often in Mr. Ganapathi Ayyar's company. And Ganapathi Ayyar had the universal reputation, founded on his proverbial gluttony, of having an exceedingly epicurean palate. How Sundaram managed to inveigle himself into the company of even "miserly Muthu" was a puzzle even to those who knew Muthu more intimately than Sundaram or Andi. But there it was; Muthu would not miss him even a single evening at tea and if Sundaram perchance came late from his office, he invariably found a message from Muthu and an invitation to "hurry up." And if, now and then, availing himself of an invitation to a more substantial "Tea" elsewhere, Sundaram sent in excuses to Muthu Rama Ayyar pleading headache or colic, the household servants of Muthu found him fretting and had to manage somehow.

Sundaram's neighbour Rao Saheb Krishnaswami (in a strictly literal sense he was more Andi's neighbour than Sundaram's, for Andi occupied that portion of the house which was next to the Rao Saheb's) was a retired Deputy Collector. Though cashiered by the Government on the ground of super-annuation and though his application for extension fetched him only the consolatory "Rao Saheb", Krishnaswami was feeling young at fifty-six, and had married a young girl of thirteen as his third wife only a couple of years earlier; he was fond of music, fonder still of the stage and most fond of the new fangled cinema shows in spite of the fact that the shows were inherently lacking in music and actual human representation. So Krishnaswami spent his time at the Royal Theatre on Saturday nights, at this "Sabha" or that on Sunday evenings listening to the expositions of vocal or instrumental music, and the rest of the week found him regu-

larly at 6 p.m. at one or the other of the three big 'show-palaces' on the Mount Road. And in all these several places, so Andi was told, Rao Saheb Krishnaswami was found invariably in Sundaram's company. This, miserly Muthu knew and gave Sundaram his usual five-thirty tea at four o'clock on Sundays to enable him to join the Rao Saheb at the 'Sabha'.

But what Andi envied most in Sundaram was his daily round of dinners. There was not one 'big man' in Triplicane or for that matter in Egmore or George Town that did not know Sundaram, if one judged even merely from the invitations he had to dinner parties. And the envy grew and ripened into jealousy when, now and then, Sundaram, with affected innocence, expressed his great confusion when the invitations overlapped and consulted Andi whether it would be better for him to go.

Thus Andi spent a month watching and envying Sundaram's jolly career; and he wondered how all these details of Sundaram's life—for these details had not suddenly appeared from nowhere—how all these enviable items of Sundaram's daily life had escaped him all these years of co-tenancy and comradeship at office. Andi was by nature unobservant; and but for the fact that his wife had gone to her father's house for child-birth at the same time as Sundaram had sent his wife and children home, these particulars of Sundaram's life would have escaped his notice for ever.

At first, Andi thought that this enviable state of Sundaram's was occasional and attributed it to the absence of Sundaram's family from town. But he soon found that he was mistaken. The same programme continued even after Sundaram's people returned from the village. Only, occasionally, when anything auspicious was being celebrated at home, Sundaram was found breakfasting or dining at home. Of course he came home more regularly at night and found time to pay an extra visit or two in the morning or evening and inquire after the needs of the family. Such inquiries, as Andi observed, did not always mean expenditure. Many things that were wanted by the family, Andi found to his surprise, came almost immediately as voluntary offerings from the houses of this or that friend of Sundaram's. Sundaram

was not the man who would buy things and pay for them—not if he could manage it otherwise; and Sundaram 'managed' many things. Even the clothes that he presented for the Deepavali to his only daughter and her husband the 'son-in-law' were generally presents that had been made on some earlier occasion of festivity at a friend's house to himself, and to his wife Kamalam.

Envy and jealousy, whatever they might induce in other men, foster in good-natured fools only a spirit of imitation and sometimes of emulation. Andi resolved that his "close observation" of Sundaram's daily life shall not go in vain. If Sundaram, who had only passed the Matriculation examination, who by mere dint of services, as he thought, had risen to occupy an equal place with himself at the 'office', if Sundaram the son of a poor Brahman of Tanjore could do all this, how much more and how much more easily could he, Palani-Andi Dikshithar, B.A. (First Class) son of the famous Vyakarna Singam Mahamahopadyaya Yegneswara Dikshithar accomplish if he only cared to. He had not cared so far: that was the only reason for Sundaram's success. Hereafter Andi will not be the 'Andi' of old but a new thriving, successful, enviable young man. So Andi resolved and set to work immediately.

Though one fact in Sundaram's life had been apparent to him from the beginning it now impressed his imagination with the irrepressible vitality of a new discovery. Sundaram had a goodly file of horoscopes of bachelors and maidens; and much of Sundaram's influence, Andi now inferred, was traceable to this file of horoscopes out of which Sundaram arranged many marriages among his 'big friends'. But Sundaram was an 'oldfangled' man. What trouble he must have had to accumulate those horoscopic details. He had not had a liberal education like Andi and was ignorant of "the modern ways" of tackling problems. Andi will not wait for years or even months merely accumulating information. So thought Andi on the way to his office one fine morning at the beginning of the "marriage season." That same evening, in all the daily papers of the city, appeared the following advertisement in a prominent corner.

### Matrimonial

**H**OROSCOPES compared and marriages arranged; for particulars of desirable brides and bridegrooms to suit all ages, purses and conditions, apply, to "PAMBA." Post Box No. 987 Triplicane, Madras, stating particulars and enclosing horoscopes." Day after day, brought Andi a sheaf of letters. Some of them he immediately put aside, as they proceeded from non-Brahmans, with whom he wanted no communion. The rest he closely examined. Not a few have applied to him without stating particulars of their own cases and without enclosing horoscopes in spite of the prominence he gave to these necessary details in his advertisement. Andi was nothing if he was not methodic. He arranged the horoscopes, grouped them in appropriate groups, sorted then and tried to match them. The little astrology that he had learnt from the Vyakarna Singam his father served him now in good stead. But in spite of his indefatigable energy, in spite of his best endeavours, he was not able to fix up even a single matrimonial alliance; probably, thought Andi, the saying is true that marriages are made in Heaven. Nor did Andi's optimism wane when the marriage season ran out fruitless, purposeless and empty. Next year might bring better luck. "Rome was not built in a day" Andi quoted to himself.

But even Andi was perturbed somewhat when he looked through one morning the accounts of this 'matrimonial' affair and realised what a big hole it made in his pocket. And he was revolving in his mind what to do when he and Sundaram started for their office together. So, when, on the way, Sundaram greeted M. Ramachandra Ayyar who was standing near the doorway of his house saying, "I will be coming in the night," Andi was exasperated. He will not lack behind Sundaram, anyway this time. He knew what Sundaram meant—he was dining at Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar's that night. And if he, Andi did not know Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar, he knew his cousin Mr. Lakshmanaswami Ayyar, who was living only two houses off. Ah, what luck! there was Mr. Lakshmanaswamy Ayyar, standing in the front of his house greeting him with a welcome "Good morning!" "Good morning!" responded Andi

and added, with a knowing look at Sundaram, "I will be coming in the evening." Evening came and found Andi in his *Panchakatcham* and lace *Anga-vastram* duly installed in a sofa in Mr. Lakshmanaswamy Ayyar's *koodam* vigorously haranguing on the eligible qualities of various bridegrooms; he had been discussing same horoscopes for Lakshmanaswamy Ayyar's young daughter on some earlier occasions but Lakshmanaswamy Ayyar had put him away, saying, "Not this year; Kalyani is yet a child." This time, he was listening patiently, smiling; although the marriage season was over, one might still look in advance for next year.

It was nine o'clock. Still Lakshmanaswamy Ayyar did not invite him into the dining room. "Is it late for dinner?" suggested Andi. "Yes, yes; wait a minute." Lakshmanaswamy returned within that minute from his room dressed in a silk *jubba* and wearing his lace-*angavastram* Gokhale-fashion. Andi was dumb with surprise. Lakshmanaswamy was apparently dining out that night.

An hour later, as Andi was alone in his room, moping and hungry, there came the cheerful voice of Sundaram "Andi, where are you?" followed almost immediately by the owner of that voice, with a round "protruding paunch" all smeared with sandal, his tuft of half-grey hair decked with flowers. "And where did you dine? Not at Lakshmanaswamy's, I bet; he was there at Ramachandra Ayyar's house. By the way, we settled his daughter's marriage just before the dinner. She is to be married to Tyagarajan; don't you know Tyagarajan?" Andi knew who Tyagarajan was; he was the young assistant Accountant General whose wife died of childbirth only a few days ago. Andi did not wince even under the stroke of such ill-luck as this. But, a few minutes afterwards Sundaram again came to his room and with a generosity born out of satiety handed him a brass tumbler saying This "*Pancha-Amirtam* was sent to me by Subramania Ayyar; I could not go with him to Palani. Just taste a little. He has sent me a full pot. It is however not half so good as what Muthu Ayyar sent me last month." It was too much for Andi to bear; and he would certainly have burst into

a rage and dashed the tumbler to the ground had it not been for the fact that the Diety of Palani was his household God and Pancha-Amirtam was his favorite *Prasadam*. "Velayutham! Subramaniam!" muttered Andi and gulped the "nectarine mixture" down.

## The Modern Tamil Novel

By S. Sathiavagiswaran, M.A., B.L.

IT is an exasperating feature of the modern age of the printing press that the literature of fiction should occupy so dangerous and so disproportionate a space in the output of published literary matter. The shelves of public libraries and peripatetic book-stalls are filled with a countless number of novels of the cheap six-penny variety, dealing in popular stunts and picturesque sensations, by far the only pabulum which supplies the intellectual stamina of the majority of people. The classics like Meredith, Hardy, Dickens, Thackeray are reserved only for the scholarly few. In their place C. Garvice, Harrison, Ainsworth and Mrs Wood have firmly established themselves. The best-sellers, with the exception possibly of Hall Caine, are intellectually not the highest nor morally the most stimulating. The picture of the fashionable Western lady whose main pre-occupation consists in rummaging the fiction shelves of the nearest circulating library is a threatening problem in modern society. Novel-reading, judiciously made, is a natural and necessary relief to over-taxed nerves of the modern man and woman; nay, it furnishes even a moral and intellectual education of a noteworthy kind. But reckless and voracious indulgence in the popular sensational kind of novel is apt to breed an idleness of mind and encourage a constitutional proneness to ennui and boredom which results in a paralysis and benumbing of all of our intellectual faculties. With our women-kind, who are now being victimised to a bastard variety of Tamil fiction, it is positively engendering a fatal indifference to the duties and obligations of

domestic life. If the women-folk of an earlier generation used to fritter away their energies in calculating the auspicious days on which to starve or by keeping wakeful hours listening to the inanities of popular expositions of hackneyed themes, they at least knew how to preside over the domestic hearth and at the end of the month somehow managed to make both ends meet without running into debt. The modern girl, fighting shy of the Ramayana or the Mahabharata, and her analogue, the vapid kind of young man, throw themselves headlong into the muddy currents of our Tamil novels with their piquant situations wild and improbable romance and that veneer of modern refinement with its disintegrating influence on the moral fibre of the uninitiated. So long as there is the demand for this kind of stuff there will be found writers and publishers enough who would provide their clientele to surfeit. It is the parent and the watchful husband who needs must perform the watchful function of censoring off the domestic hearth this trash, insidiously permitting its poison to percolate into forbidden regions.

The main characteristics of our modern Tamil novel can be briefly summarised. It partakes to some extent the characteristics of the western novel. This is but natural since the growth of a literature in novel in India is due to the influence of the West. Prof. Jadunath Sarkar mentions three aspects of this influence viz. (1) the growing interest in a keen analysis of character (2) a greater observation of historical truth and local colour (3) in the creation of a new kind of novel dealing with modern social, ethical and political problems. These are some of the salutary effects of the influence of western novel, brought to its greatest perfection in Bengal. Unfortunately so far as the Tamil novel is concerned the influence of the West in these above aspects is very limited and scrappy. In place of the analysis of character we see a morbid curiosity into the unhealthy animal passions of the sophisticated modern man and woman. The novelist, miscalculating the nature of his duty, eagerly dissects and analyses the mind of his character, loading it with all the petty superficialities or the questionable moralities which a too eager desire at realism leads to, and at the same time not laying

his hand on the primal elemental instincts of human nature. As for historical truth and local colour, we are treated only to the auctioneer's zeal for cataloguing things that do not matter. In regard to the last aspect, we witness an abortive tinkering with social problems, treated with a too obvious personal or communal bias or consisting mainly of a platitudinous distortion of facts. The South Indian novelist requires to be too often reminded that the novel is no medium for the propagation of communal rancour and that literary perfection is attainable only with the proper perspective towards life i.e. seeing life steadily and whole.

The apparently obvious and insistently intrusive feature of our Tamil novel is its excessive treatment of the erotic element. Love, especially in its lower and even questionable manifestations, is the eternal theme which attracts our aspiring novelist. It is true Love is an incident of life and there is no getting over it. But it is its treatment which is at fault. If in the Western novel, we now see according to Arthur Symonds, a morbid intensity in seeing and seizing things not normally apprehensible a feverish vision of Love, a diseased sharpness of over-excited nerves, the Tamil novelist is not possessed with this hectic display of abnormal alertness. He is in many respects incapable of even understanding the passionate, unhealthy impressionableness of Oscar Wilde, Husymans, Verlaine or the Goncourts. But his case is worse. He wallows and welters in the morass of his own devastating canons of morality; and in his effort to parody or imitate the western institutions of marriage with its incidental feature of courtship makes such a mess of his materials that even the apparently virtuous characters spout forth questionable moralities. "They interject incongruous, ugly and jarring Western elements picked at random and thrown in without reference to context, social propriety or harmony". He does not know how to be eclectic with determination and discrimination. His treatment of love is unhealthy, unnatural and un-Indian.

Then in the matter of dialogue, it is difficult to say whether inanity and silliness could go further. Most of our Tamil novels consist of dialogues insipid to the point of yawning tedium, full

of smirking indecencies and banal absurdities. The dialogue is stagy, going in snatches, with no plan, no determined purpose, dealing in sentimental twaddle or apparently trivial inconsequences. The characters do not know how to talk and so they talk about anything and everything at random. Dialogue is the best way in which to present characters adequately; and when dialogue fails, characterisation cannot but fail.

Plot which is intimately bound up with characterisation and dialogue is rarely understood in all its implications. Characters move and act at the bidding of a tyrannical author, and at a time when they are in an awkward quandary or in imminent danger, the novelist plays Providence, comes to their help and is his own *Deus ex machina*. Incidents rush on at such a giddy pace, accumulating fast one upon another, so that when they resolve themselves in the form of a denouement, we are as much interested in them as at the beginning. If they survive, we take it with half-credulous amusement; if they die, we do not waste a single thought on the point. The whole atmosphere is aesthetically spoilt by the fact that it is too much aware of the camera and the cinema.

The outlook so far as the Tamil novel is concerned is not assuring. The majority of our Tamil novels, with some noble exceptions, deserve to be thrown into the W. P. B. The original impulse, the primal source and inspiring genius is the detestable notorious G. W. M. Reynolds. Many of our Tamil novels are flagrant imitations, translations or adaptations of this 'blood and thunder' novelist. Consequently its morality is run down at the heels and requires to be rehabilitated. Our social novel presents at best a re-hash of exploded or questionable theories obtrusively put and unrelated to the main body of the novel. Our detective fiction is a base imitation of Sherlock Holmes series and is unreal, unassimilated and thoroughly useless. Dialogue is one desert of desolating barrenness. Characterisation is nil. The selection of themes is either exotic or in cases where they are otherwise incapable of literary treatment. The novelist is too fond of literary artistic effects, is too much of a poseur. Tagore's words addressed to a Bengalee short-story

writer are both a warning and advice "Don't you be going and getting entangled in historical or ethical complications. There are depths enough in the simple human heart; it is for you to go on telling us the ever satisfying history of the little joys and sorrows of the daily life of ordinary people." "Do not allow any complex character analysis or unusual fury of passion to muddy its sweet limpidness."



## Some Anecdotes about Auvaiyar

By P. V. Jagadisa Ayyar.

**A**UVAIYAR the authoress of many standard works in Tamil literature was born in a Village near Trichinopoly, named—Uraiyur, the capital of a Chola King. Her father was a Brahmin and her mother a woman of low caste—a pariah to wit. Her brother was the great famous Tiruvalluvar. She was deserted by her parents but as she was destined for important work in the world, she was taken care of by others. She manifested signs of rare genius even at a very early age and produced works of great erudition and literary merit in Tamil. Though she died a spinster, her description in her works, of housewives and their duties in a masterly manner, proves clearly the manifestation of divine wisdom and genius through her. Deprived of parental care and attention from childhood, she wandered from place to place, composing and singing stanzas to earn a living. The spirit of contentment even with a diet of light gruel, won her the name of 'the singer for gruel' and in fact, she actually composed and sang erudite stanzas for a cup of light gruel.

A loose woman was once vain enough to approach a poet named Kambar with a view to have a song composed in her praise, since famous men and kings had such an honour and she

had none. The poet wanted a fee of one thousand gold coins of the country. She realised only five hundred coins by the sale of all her properties and she gave it to the poet, who composed only the first half of the stanza describing only the country of her birth, since she paid only half the price asked for the song. Sore grieved at not finding her name in the song composed, she approached our Auvaiyar and represented her grievances. Taking pity on the simple minded women, though vain, she completed the latter half of the stanza, putting in her name and praise when lo! a gold anklet was visible on her foot in response to the burden of the song, at which the beholders were filled with wonder!

In the court of king Ugra Peruvaludi Pandyan of Madura, she defeated the renowned poets of the time, requiring them to sing about objects described by her in the language of the deaf and dumb, and thereby pleased the king very much. While on tour, she once reached a village at sun set. Happening to halt at the village choultry or inn, which was haunted, she was troubled by the ghost of the woman haunting it. By the potency of a song composed and sung by her, the ghost left her scatheless, to the wonder and admiration of the villagers who one and all expected that she would perish at its hands as so many who had slept there had done on previous occasions! It is also said that the ghost had told her its story, and was released from its miserable condition, by her wonderful powers. Once when she was at Tirukkoyilur two maidens presented her with clothes and protected her from the biting cold weather. Pleased with the attentions paid to her, she sung in praise of the elephant-faced deity, Vinayakar, who wrote to several kings letters, inviting them for the marriage of the maidens and had it performed on a grand scale!

While the kings were being regaled at a feast, Auvaiyar caused to the wonderment of all present, the pieces of a dry palmyra trunk that were lying near to yield tender palmyra nuts, which largely regaled the guests! She also made the river Pennar flow with ghee and milk and also caused a shower of liquid gold, to fall throughout the place!

At Uraiyur where she was born, she challenged the famous Pandits of king Kulothunga Chola's court and defeated them in literary contest.

At another place, while she was lying down on the pial of a certain house, very hungry, the owner of the house took pity on her and approached his wife with a view to obtain her consent to give her food, and thus relieve her from the pangs of hunger. Seeing the husband abused and beaten by the termagant of a wife for the pains taken on the poetesses' behalf Auvaiyar disparaged in a stanza the family life of an ill-mated husband and stated, that it would be better to lead the life of a *Sanyasin* than be a householder mated to a termagant, whereupon he became a *Sanyasin* and was released from the miserable family life he was leading with a troublesome and disobedient wife.

Once, the poets in the court of king Chola, were asked by him to compose a crore of stanzas in a single night and they were at their wit's end, since they thought it was not an ordinary task which the King had set for them to be performed in a single night. Auvaiyar came to their rescue, by composing a stanza of four lines which fully satisfied the king's requirements.

The deity Subrahmanyam, with a view to test Auvaiyar's skill, was on the top of a Jambu tree in the guise of a shepherd lad eating Jambu fruits. Auvaiyar when she came under the tree, was given Jambu fruits who in her turn sang stanzas, at which the Lord Subramanyam was very much pleased, and having directed her to compose and sing moral aphorisms for the benefit of humanity, disappeared.

Once, king Parthyan wanted his Pandits to sing stanzas and thereby make the firmly attached iron chains of a swing fall to the ground, and they were unable to do so. Auvaiyar thereupon, composed and sang a stanza which brought the chains to the ground to the intense delight of the king who loaded her with presents.

Hearing people talk disparagingly of women because of the bad traits in some of them, she sung stanzas forcibly bringing to

their notice the good traits in many, and thus put such scandal-mongers to shame.

A Sudra by name Pandan was attached to Auvaiyar very much. So, she sang a stanza and as its result he was transferred to the kingdom of *Nagas*-serpents, wherefrom he returned with an anklet, and a berry called *Amalakam* in Sanskrit. The anklet she wore, and of the berry she ate half, to exceed the span of life assigned to ordinary mortals.

A *Kurava* had two wives and one of them was always giving the other trouble and was trying to make her appear low in the eyes of her husband by her machinations. Once she cut her husband's favourite jack tree and threw the blame on the hapless co-wife. Auvaiyar rescued her from the impending punishment by singing a stanza which revived the jack tree and restored it to its original condition.

Auvaiyar's aphorisms have immortalised her fame, since they are so simple that there is not a school-going child but has mastered her famous "*Autti Choodi*," "*Kondrai Vendan*" &c.,

As she was a devotee of the elephant-headed deity Vinayakar she reached Kailasa through divine grace and thus realised her heart's wish.

## Vara Sulka

By P. V. Aghoram Ayyar, B.A., B.L.

THE impact of the West on India has been the main cause, for the creation of a conflict of ideals in this country. A generation ago the forward men from the educated Indian community tested the use and merit of our institutions by western standards and finding them far short of the western model gave to Hindu society occidental ideas of freedom in social matters and deeply disturbed the placid contentment of the bulk of the Hindus who represented the forces of reaction and conservatism. The Hindu social reformer applied the standard of reason and justice to many a social institution of his com-

munity. He proposed changes in the social order with a view to make society as fully expressive as possible of reason and justice. He proposed to legalise the marriage of girls after puberty, not because he respected the Hindu ideal of chastity less, but because he desired to equip men and women better for the struggle of life in modern times, by giving them adequate eugenical training and by taking all the known human safeguards for the rearing of stronger, and more vigorous progeny. He proposed to legalise the remarriage of the Hindu widow, and preferably of the girl-widow, not because he desired to violate the delicacy of sentiment in Hindu women who when they lose their husbands spurn earthly enjoyments and go cheerfully through ascetic training to live in the light of God. But he took notice of the undoubted fact that the great ideal proved a torture, an infliction, to some who desired to experience the ordinary joys and sorrows of human life, and implored society to look pardoningly on and give a place to the widow who was honestly below the standard of rectitude demanded of widowhood, if she preferred the honourable course of marriage.

I do not venture to suggest that the ranks of social reformers were composed wholly of men who fully understood the implications of the new dispensation. It is clear that there were many men of an inferior mental and moral calibre who swelled the ranks of social reformers, and swore by the new doctrines. Nor is it right to forget the fact that social reformers were to some extent guilty of exaggerating Hindu social evils and attributing all our misfortunes to them. Social reformers had perhaps also cherished illusions about the future state of Hindu society under the Reformed Regime. But it is not proper to accuse the top-men in their ranks of want of appreciation of the ideals of the Hindu community. I cannot think of a greater injustice done to the name of Iswar Chander Vidyasagar, the hero of widow-remarriage than to accuse him of coarseness of sentiment, and of obtuseness in the grasp of the Hindu ideals of life. Iswar Chander was soft-hearted and deeply self-respecting. He hated sham, and hypocrisy. He, the great humanitarian, who is said to have made the first great attempt in the city of

Calcutta to wean women in the brothels from a life of shame, was keenly alive to the greatness of Hindu ideals. Imagine Ranade whose life is set in a key of service and sacrifice for his country, and who so constantly nourished his spirit on the spiritual ideals of the Bhakti-school desiring to do violence to the cherished ideals of the Hindu people. My point is that some of the top men among the ranks of social reformers were good devout Hindus notwithstanding their reform-predilections. Their viewpoint deserves sympathetic study and understanding at the hands of the orthodox. On a more fitting occasion in the future I shall try to estimate, as fairly as I can, the work of the social reform movement in India.

My present object is to draw public attention pointedly to one very vicious usage which has come into vogue amongst Hindus and grows with such fearful rapidity that unless the social conscience is stirred and the leaders of society devise measures to check the evil, the middle and poorer classes of Hindus must be hit hard indeed and in the long run deteriorate and decay. I mean the Varasulka. The subject has long been before the public mind. The evil has been portrayed vividly in the form of stories. The Press is now and then alive with references to the subject. Hindu society as a whole is not any whit affected by these temporary protests and cries, and though almost every man is a victim to the trouble, nobody is sufficiently active and earnest to create and co-ordinate public opinion in increasing volume against the practice, so that the evil may be mitigated and eventually checked. I do not propose to show how low society has fallen by making this Varasulka, the final and acid test of fitness for marriage, notwithstanding devout protestations that marriage for Hindus is a sacred and sanctified institution. I will assume that free gifts made by the bride's father or relations to the bridegroom are not bad and do not derogate from the sanctity of the marriage institution. I have no doubt however, that, when a father is compelled to give money often beyond his means as bridegroom fee in order to dispose of his daughter and when this is almost the rule in society, the bonds are slackening and men are cruelly punished

for belonging to our community. In every society a man who wants a high connection for his daughter has to spend beyond his means and probably goes to ruin for the daughter. But it ought not to be the rule in any society. I am not exaggerating at all in saying that a good many Hindus are merely ruining themselves over the marriage of their daughters. Every society has institutions to protect its ideals, and its most perfect condition is that where the individual's freedom is interfered with as little as possible, but he is subject to healthy and wholesome checks upon his freedom. The conduct of every member of society comes under public observation and society is a greater tribunal than the established Courts of the land in rewarding some and punishing others. Our society now gives the least possible freedom to the individual and exercises the most galling checks and restraints upon his movements.

I shall try to illustrate this point with reference to the marriage question. The approved marriage among Brahmins is the marriage of the girl before puberty. That is to say, the Vedic ceremony of marriage and betrothal must be done then, the consummation being postponed to a later day. The area of choice is restricted to one's sub-caste, however irrational and perverse the insistence may be. Then, there are prohibited degrees of relationship recognised in all the systems of law and by all the religions. We fully admit their purpose and submit to the rule. Then there are the astrological omenisings. This is a very good basis, in itself, which must be carefully considered and given its due weight. There is always the risk of the conclusions going wrong, the data being in most cases uncertain. But there is a tendency to look upon this as almost an infallible test. When these different demands have been complied with, you may be put out of the way as not having enough to give by way of bride-groom fee. The bulk of the Hindus are so conservative by nature and upbringing that they fear to depart a hair's breadth from the original prohibitions. The question of sanctifying unions among the different sub-castes has been referred to the traditional interpreters of the law, and they from their entrenched citadel have not yet given their blessings to it. They are still less kindly dis-

posed to the marriage of a girl after puberty, as they think that in doing so, we lay the axe at the root of sanctity in Hindu marriages. But object, they cannot, to the disappearance of the hated practice of Varasulka from our society, powerless though they may be to check it. One very well understands how this practice came into vogue in our midst. It has done a great deal more harm than good. If it has helped in a few stray cases to give education to a deserving poor man, it has in a hundred cases bent the back and crushed the soul of many a parent. The homes mortgaged or sold to celebrate the marriage of the daughter are far too numerous for society to remain unconcerned with. The immolation of Snehalata Devi on the eve of her marriage to prevent the impending pauperism of her parents and brothers is the cry that outraged humanity makes upon the ears of Hindus not to be cruel and callous, but to take courage in both hands and deal with evil as brave men should do. Putting a stop to this evil is a matter of vital necessity for the Hindu people. It is required for the preservation of the hindu society.

The burden for redressing this wrong rests on the rich, the influential and the educated. The two former not being hit hard by this practice, are not likely to stir. They may be ready to take advantage of situations created in their favour by the labour of others. Supposing that the rich put a stop to this practice as such, they will introduce it in another form, having at their disposal the required resources. A real reform should come from the educated Hindus. The opinion of the majority of them is ranged against it now. It has not grown strong into conviction in many cases. They too follow the usual policy of drift, and tide over the crisis by some sort of makeshift and dependence. I don't think that the educated Hindus attach to this question the importance it deserves. There is a tendency to think we are powerless to do anything and to check even this evil. Consequently no organised effort is made, no public opinion is formed on the question. I do not know, if at least in their own interests, the educated Hindus could continue their indifference in this matter. They have increased their wants beyond their earning capacity. The majority of them live comparatively precarious lives. This

fearful demand for varasulka, sanctioned by the apathy of society, taxes their slender purses and the strain falls heaviest on them. They can, if they have the will, co-ordinate and strengthen public opinion on the question. They can, if they have the will, take courage in both hands, and make unions legitimate and possible between the sub-castes. There will be incidental inconveniences, and petty annoyances. But nothing worth while comes easy.

I have talked to many friends in private here and there, and I have been astonished to find an almost total unanimity of opinion on the question. Their feeling is equally strong. Though it may look at first a little curious to organise effort in this direction I think the matter is so urgent as to demand organisation for effective action to be possible. I have in my recollection some instances of organisations started in the past to reform marriages which came to nothing. This particular problem was never tackled by any organisation, and it is quite proper to have an organisation to form an idea of the number of Hindus who may be found willing and ready to act. Though there is no value in pledges unless the proper men take it, there may be a simple creed or formula by which all members may be bound. I am anxious that even if a good and efficient organisation does not immediately mature, the matter should be discussed fully and honestly in the public eye.

There is a kind of orthodox Hindu and he is curiously enough to be found also among the modern educated, to whom the least little change consciously introduced by man is anathema. Our friend is sitting stern and still on the quickly moving flood of time. To him, mankind has reached its present state, less by voluntary human effort than by the hand of time. He will have his sharp bite at this proposal and ridicule the effort to alleviate a real suffering in the lives of the average poor. He may yawn in his leisure, and throw bucketfuls of cold water from his mind upon the aspiration. But we must leave him to himself and do what we think honestly to be meant for the public good. We may have no greater boon to confer upon the poor in our society—and they are alas! too many—than to root out this evil and enable them to form alliances without going into the devouring jaws of the money-changer. I desire to state that we may not complicate the issues by introducing other matters into our consideration, and giving room for endless controversy. The orthodox and the radical are on common ground here. It is time we recognised the trouble and set about to repair the mischief.

## Beggars—Their Mission

By K. Sreenivasa Acharlu, M.A.

BEGGARS! Ah, those naked pillars of the citadel of human existence, breathing monuments of the pervading wretchedness of a country, shattered shrines of decayed divinity—are nowadays receding into the background in the open streets of the metropolitan cities. The pitiful cry of the blind appealing in the name of God for a *Pisa*, the heartrending groans of the limbless and the deformed touching the deeper springs in our hearts, the silent gesture of a speechless mute pathetically struggling to express the inner desires, are no longer found in the street corners. Even the bug-haunted benches are subjected to the scrutiny of the Railway Police and the human contents swept off the doors. The busy streets, commercial quarters and monied markets are devoid of the beggarly element; and the dominance of wealth seems to have exorcised the spirit of poverty. No passport is granted to these fading plants. "Tresspassers will be prosecuted."

The growth of modernism and the consequent development in us of ideas absolutely alien, the greed after wealth and material longings which has fostered the bastard plant of selfishness, the undue over-emphasis laid on the theory of "work and live" irrespective of ability or human capacity, the mean and vulgar idea of social superiority based on the standard of wealth, are some of the causes which have contributed to the uprooting of the institution of beggary. The blind beggar is considered an untouchable both by the body and the mind. His approach is a pollution; his thought a desecration. The mind rebels to present his image and the body shudders at his appearance. He is not treated as a person, as an end in itself, but as a *thing*. The mushroom peer, the wealthy landlord, and the monied merchant cast an eye, if at all, of contempt at his down-trodden station in life and drive on dreaming of the incalculable profits of the day, or the arrangements to be made

for the reception of a Governor. "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" sighs a missionary whistling in a Victoria, at the unavoidable sight of a miserable barebone, and intimates the horse by the whip to trot faster to the automobile showroom. "No change" is the excuse of a fortune-wedded pedestrian who unluckily possesses only five Rupees notes in his pocket.

"The poor man", says Alfarache, "is a kind of money that is not current; the subject of every idle housewife's chat, the off-scum of the people, just trampled under foot and then thrown on the dung-hill; in conclusion, the poor man is the rich man's ass."

Ah, what a miserable fate is writ large on the eyebrows of the bleached beggar—the contempt of the rich and the scorn of the young. The world has forsaken him, divorced him for ever. Heaven's his guide. Mother Earth his home. When winter winds nip him bitterly the blue canopy above keeps him warm; when the summer warmth fries him alive the shady trees soothe him cool. Nature nurses him and God has ever an eye upon him. He wears the myrtle crown and the stainless staff of sceptre, decked in ragged robes. What an enviable life!

Abandoning public haunts where charity is his step-mother, this Lazarus of our prosperous world limps to spread his tattered rags beneath the solemn shades of a famous shrine, eagerly expecting a charitable pilgrim, who, with a look made of sweet accord, sheds a pitiful tear and offers a hearty thanksgiving to the Lord within to protect the world condemned. Multitudes of disabled and maimed, their pathetic appeals renting the Heavens, arrest the attention and blockade the pathway of temple-goers. The pagan pagodas have not only become the shrines of sacred silence but also mansions of misery, pain and degradation.

This universal crusade against the mendicant fraternity is an undesirable phenomena, a blot upon civilisation. For beggars are the sacred property of the State, the lesson for the nation. And the uprooting of this national institution results either in a most perfect world of moral souls (which is absolutely inconceivable), or a universe of human agents devoid of all softer feelings of humanity and sympathy, a universe of human rocks and crags.

Many useful lessons might be sucked out of these miserable creatures. (1) Their appeal to our higher nature arouses us from the dreams of a work-a-day life and reminds us our duties to our fellow men. There is a pause in the cycle of purely material existence and a ray of light gleams through the barren, hollows of selfishness and material greed. (2) Their attitude towards the world, devoid of the soul-killing passions of anger and hatred, is an ideal worthy of consideration. Chill penury has caused the repression of their nobler rage. A solemn indifference of outlook, universal in its nature, characterises their prospect—an involuntary negative ideal, nevertheless, noble. The ups and downs of life refuse to trouble their hoary head; the ever-changing fashions of the day worry not their famished frame; the miasma of politics spreads not contagion in their sucked blood. (3) They are the standing morals of a country. Gratitude is their life blood; simplicity the essence of their existence. (4) They are the monuments of education for our children. Left to itself, trained in the methods of nature, a child is sympathetically drawn towards the wandering beggar.

The Cabuliwallah captures the heart of a child not because he casts a devilish spell over her but because the two hearts echo. But alas! most of our children are taught in their cradles the science of contempt and dread. The avenues of their hearts are closed. They dare not stir out of their house for fear of the beggar. The night cry of a mendicant casts a spell over the incessantly crying child and soothes it to sleep. The poor, starving, clamouring beggar is the wizard of the children's mind. Send a child with a pie for purchasing sweets and let it hasten forth shouting gleefully, "Mamma, I gave my pie to a blind boy"—that is education, that is bliss.

The greatest men of the world have sung praises in honour of mendicancy. Jesus Christ stood in the midst of the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted. The history of great men, either ancient or modern, is another edition of the history of human wretchedness. Homer, the great epic poet of Greece, is the first beggar of note among the ancients. Luther prostrated before God for having made him poor and indigent upon earth. Shiva, the Great and Good, is the Eternal Beggar of the empty

skull, wandering among the chill graves of the giant Himalayas.  
Our bard of Santiniketan has sung,

"When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach  
down to the depth where Thy feet rest among the poorest, and  
lowliest and lost.

"Pride can never approach to where Thou walkest in the  
clothes of the humble among the poorest and lowliest and lost.

"My heart can never find its way to where Thou keepest  
company with the companionless among the poorest and the  
lowliest and lost."

The ineffable joy of the Infinite is realised not by potentates  
or philosophers but by the poor, the mutilated, the despised and  
the condemned.

Reader! Pause. Stir not from your house without a coin in  
your pocket; think not even for a while about the utility of your  
charity; look not at the world staring at your self with wondering  
eyes; stoop not into the abyss of falsehood to save a three pie  
coin; give and go: penniless, shed a tear.



## A Sonnet

When I hear people utter words of praise,  
Commend some little touch of mine in art,  
Or else pronounce a deed well-done, or trace  
In me some virtue of the head or heart;  
When persons pour their wealth of friendliness  
And fain with me would themselves closely bind;  
When gracious ladies beam their loveliness  
On me, dispensing favours sweet and kind;  
When youthful students crowding press around,  
Their hearts with eager love of truth imbued,  
To gather grains of wisdom to be found  
In me, and faces beam with gratitude;  
With anxious mind, I pray for worthiness  
Which may deserve such praise and kindness.

Benares.

P. SESHADRI.

# The World of Fiction

By P. R. Krishnaswami, M.A.

THE great men of every generation have continually  
striven to lead the younger minds to the splendid feast  
of literature and books. Bacon said that reading  
maketh a full man, Milton said that books are the precious life-  
blood of great men, and Ruskin described good books as the  
king's treasures. It is the pitiable plight of the average man that  
he cannot know the good things that surround him in existence,  
without guidance. This is even like the fact that of all living  
creatures man has the longest period of helpless infancy. Young  
men at college sometimes fail to realise the privilege of the  
companionship of books, of the value of the serene great souls  
that lie piled up in the numerous shelves of the college library.  
There should be no more fascinating section of books to the  
imaginative and idealistic nature of youth than that of Fiction,  
the concretest form of creative art in literature, and not less  
concrete than the drama. The creative work in a drama may  
be content to conjure up a small part of the world but the novel  
is ambitious to create for itself the unlimited universe with the  
sun, the moon and the stars and to invest them all with the  
freshness of a dream.

To read the novels of Jane Austen is to obtain the privilege  
of an introduction to respectable English society. To the Indian  
reader, the place of woman in English social life is an eye-  
opener. It is one of the attractions of a visit to England to  
Indians that it gives an opportunity to study English social life.  
When we read good fiction such as that of Jane Austen we get  
the education *gratis*, without the expense of journeying to  
England. I happened to read "Sense and Sensibility" before  
any other novel of Jane Austen's. Apart from the rich variety  
of types in the study of woman, presented in the novel, Marianne  
was the girl that pleased my romantic standards. Jane Austen

luckily reproduces this pleasing type in every other novel of hers and Emma is the most elaborate and the most fascinating of such studies. Her impulsiveness, indiscretions, errors, her candid confessions and her noble and at all times true nature, endear her to the reader to an extraordinary degree. The stupid and comical women like Mrs. Jennings, Mrs. Palmer, Lady Catherine, and the vain women like Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Elton, give us "God's plenty."

Who will not roam over the wide and distant regions of Scott's novels, meet mediaeval damsels transfigured by the idealistic loves of knights or follow the complicate threads of entanglement involving a large variety of the true Scotch types of character, and engaging the reader's breathless interest. Not to have read the "Bride of Lamermoor" and made acquaintance with inimitable Caleb Balderstone is to have missed a rare feast left to the succeeding generations of the human race.

I remember reading for the first time Thackeray's eulogy on Dickens in his lecture on "Charity and Humour;" his mention of his daughter's preference for his novels to his own. "I know one who, when she is happy, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she is unhappy, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she is tired, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she is in bed, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' when she has nothing to do, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby;' and when she has finished the book, reads 'Nicholas Nickleby' again." I thought at the time that Thackeray showed only modesty with reference to his own novels in praising those of Dickens and I even believed that there was 'conspiracy' in the member of a profession 'puffing' up the work of another member of the same profession. But later I realised how infinite the genius of Dickens was, and how inadequate any kind of superlative praise to do justice to it. The charm of "Pickwick Papers" is too abundant to be described here. But let us turn to "David Copperfield." The character of Steerforth is the most delicate piece of portraiture. Endowed with the most lavish gifts of nature and placed in the most propitious circumstances, is it not in the nature of man to go astray into the primrose paths of dalliance? Steerforth had genius and precocious

emotions, but a mother pampered him and affluence embraced him and the result was a tragedy of the soul. His character had every romantic attraction and we say to ourselves:

'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

The grandeur of the human soul is never so fitly represented in literary art as in its highest possibilities being shattered by the errors of the flesh.

It is difficult to choose from the wealth of creations in the novels of Dickens. The pathos of poor Nell's death may overtake us or the sight of Oliver asking for more rouse our pity. The other great master of the nineteenth century has given us at least four masterpieces in "Esmond," "Newcomes," "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis". The English novelist is growing here to the dimensions of Victor Hugo or Tolstoy. Art, Politics, literature or the problem of sex, nothing under the sun escapes the purview of the novelist. What can exceed the pathos of Col. Newcome's last-days at Grey Friar? Who can supply a whip of scorpions for the base in man so well as Thackeray, and at the same time who can deny the appeal of the pictures of human goodness in his novels?

Or we may turn to George Eliot and read at one sitting the perfect little tale of "Silas Marner." An orphan child crawls in a winter day into a miser's home and his soul blossoms into the sweet affections which are the gift of man. The "Mill on the Floss" or "Adam Bede" can give in the rarest intellectual treat without spoiling our warm interest in the careers of the numerous men and women who figure in them. We may turn to that giant of the Victorian age who died only towards the end of the first decade of the present century. The massive intellect of Meredith discovers to us a new dignity in the art of writing novels where the most learned yet manly and racy style is used to depict the deepest truths of human life and draw out its best humour. I remember the spinning out of the brilliant dialogue between the boy Crossjay and Col. DeCraye in the "Egoist" which so captured my imagination that in my dreams I used to listen to a long conversation between them which were

entirely the product of my own intoxicated brain. To turn to the story of the great Mr. Mel in Evan Harrington," what fresh studies in the grandness of man! Anything so grand, robust, and humorous like the character of Toru Cogglessly or any woman so absolutely noble and sensible and yet attractive in her queenly superiority, as Lady Jocelin?

Vast are the realms of fiction and infinite are the splendid vistas that open themselves to the seeker. From Meredith we may pass to seek his contemporary Hardy who remains the nestor of the present age. We may follow the trepidations of Bathsheeba Eberdeen in "Far from the Madding Crowd" or follow the strange destiny of "A Pair of Blue Eyes" under a brilliant star-lit canopy where the infinite beauties of the human soul seem to mingle with the infinite beauties of passive Nature.

There are many paths still untrodden. A brilliant panorama of English national life in recent decades may be sought in the novels of H. G. Wells. The new woman of Ibsen as illustrated in his "Doll's House" is probably the prototype of "The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman" of Wells's creation. "Tono-Bungay" conveys us the peace of the old times where social rank was inviolable to the age of advertisement where fortune dances to the tune of the adventurous. "Joan and Peter" is built in the grand scale where striking studies in the domestic parlour which may vie with Jane Austen's pen are combined with a presentation of the most thoughtful problems of empire. Can we forget here the story of the headmaster, who job-like, keeps his ideal untarnished above the depressing conditions of his environment, in "The Undying Fire"?

Our way is still unfettered to cross the English Channel and pass to France or farther to Russia. We may fall happily into the world of "Les Misérables" and shed tears over the true charity of the Bishop of D—or the infinite magnanimity of the later Jean Valjean on whom the mantle of the Bishop had fallen. We may wander to Russian borders and glimpse the exciting fate of the fair "Anna Karenina," but we shall stop. The words have proved sufficiently alluring and who would not voluntarily surrender himself to the joys therein?

## Pakshithirtham and Its Neighbourhood

By R. Gopalan, B.A., (Hons.)

PAKSHITHIRTHAM or as it is more familiarly known Tiruk-kalukunram is a well-known village celebrated for its hill-temple of Vedagirisvara, and is situated about nine miles from Chinglepet Railway Station. Lying on the foot of the steep but exceedingly picturesque Vedagiri hill, with its numberless trees and ferns growing luxuriantly around, and with its towering 'gopuras, mandapas,' processional cars and tanks, it presents the picture of a medieval Hindu village, a place where the visitor is transported many centuries back into a region of almost forgotten beauty associated with the early Hindu rule of the Tamil Kings.

To us the place is interesting not so much for its periodical festivals, its intensely devotional and religious atmosphere but for its historical and antiquarian associations in which the place is specially rich. The sthalapuranas and other legends connected with the place do not however help us in arriving at a correct estimate of its history or antiquity. They are for the most part concerned with the origin of the Vedagiri hill, and the daily visit of the Sacred-kites. As regards the origin of the hill the accounts relate that once upon a time all the Vedas went in a body to Mahadeva and after complaining to Him that they are no longer held in respect by men who did not pronounce them, requested Him to give them a permanent habitation near Him. In response to this request Siva is said to have directed them to become four-hills connected with one another and himself took his abode on them as Vedagirisvara. The story regarding the sacred-kites relates that long ago two Rishis implored Mahadeva in a too passionate and over-eager spirit that they might immediately

enter Heaven and were in consequence cursed to wait for a whole yuga in the shape of white eagles that they might learn the patience of the Gods, necessary for the entry into peace.

It is interesting to turn from these legendary accounts to the more sober facts that historical investigation has yielded in and around this ancient region. It is well-known that Tirukalukunram was already in the 7th century A.D. a famous Sivaite centre and is celebrated in the Thevaram hymns by Tirunavukkarasu-Swami and Sambandar, both of whom are known to have flourished in the 7th century. The inscriptions discovered by the officers of the Government at this place cover the long period from the seventh to seventeenth centuries of the Christian era and belong to the principal dynasties of South India—the Pallavas, the Cholas, the Pandyas the Vijayanagara' sovereigns and even the Dutch Governors of Sadras. (17th and 18th centuries.) From the known facts of Pallava history it is apparent that Tirukalukunram lying on the high road to Maha-balipuram (Seven-Pagodas) the celebrated harbour and principal city of the Pallava empire must have been a flourishing locality of the Pallavas and even possibly founded by one of the early Pallava kings.

During this period the region around Tiru-kalukkunram appears have been known as "Kalattur-kottam, one among the 24 districts into which the ancient Pallava kingdom was divided for administrative purposes. The inscriptions of the Chola King Rajakesarivarman discovered at the "Bakthavatsalesvara temple" at this place (Epig. Indi. Vol. III, pp. 277—280) as well as the Pandyan and Vijayanagara donative records inscribed in the temple walls describe the place as a town in "Kalattur Nadu" of the "Kalattur Kottam in Jayamgonda Solamandalam. The inscription of Raja Kesarivarman (9th century A.D.) refers to an earlier grant of Narasimhavarman—the capturer of Vatape the well-known Pallava King of Kanchi bearing that name and the founder of Mahabalipuram and its celebrated monuments.

The most ancient rock cut monument at Tirukalukkunram which is sometimes missed by the visitor is the monolithic cave temple originally dedicated to the Hindu-Trinity excavated in

the eastern face of an enormous rock about fifty or sixty steps below the summit of the hill. This is one of the most beautiful monolithic monuments and bears a remarkable resemblance to the rock-cut shrines at the Trichinopoly rock and at Mahendravadi. One of the damaged epigraphs inscribed on the capitals of one of the pillars here mentions 'Narasimhavarman (I) who captured Vatapi.' The standing figures of 'Vishnu and Brahma' as well as the two graceful life-size statues on the two sides probably representing the Pallava kings who had the temple excavated, are remarkable for their beauty and animation. The other inscriptions in this monolith which practically fill every available space on the walls and pillars are the signatures of a party of Dutch officials and merchants who visited the hill and the monolith. These include about twenty-five names the most important of whom were, the Hon. Mr. 'Anthony Pavilioen'—the Dutch governor of Coromandal between 1665- and 1676. A.D., 'L. Hemsinck,' under merchant and chief at Sadras from 1666—1686 A.D. and Martinus Pit, the Chief-merchant in Pulicat (Palaverkadu) and Second in Council and many others. (A complete list of these Dutch officials whose signatures appear on the pillars and walls of this monolithic temple for the Trimurtis is given on 123. 'Epig. Rep.' for 1909). It is evident from these that the summit of this hill with its 'beautiful heathen temple' commanding a fine view of the plains attracted the attention of even the Dutch merchants who happened to be travelling from Sadras and Pulicat on business as early as the 17th century A.D. (Havert's account of the Coramandal coast)

The Vedagirisvara temple on the summit of the hill is referred to as the MULASTHANA in the Chola inscription of Aditya I and is associated with the Pallava king Skandasishya (—Skandavarman) who is believed to have flourished in the fifth century A. D. In this case the Vedagirisvara shrine would be 'the most ancient structural' temple in the Tamil land that has survived to our own days. Visitors to the central shrine of Vedagirisvara temple on the top of the hill with a little careful observation would notice that it is built of three massive blocks of stone forming its inner walls and on which are carved in high

relief, 'Somaskanda, Brahma, Vishnu, Markandeya, Yogadakshina-murti' and two 'rishis'. A careful examination of this part of the shrine might disclose valuable inscriptions which might throw light on the origin of this temple and its actual age.

A little below the summit is the well-known 'Eagle-rock' on which every visitor of the hill has witnessed the familiar scene of two kites feeding from the hands of the priest known as 'Pakshi-Pandaram.' That this is by no means a modern feature can be gathered by the fact that the Dutch writer Havart who along with ten of his friends was on a visit to the hill on the 3rd of January 1681 saw the sacred birds feeding at about midday. (See Havart's "Open Ondergangvan Coramandal" published in 1693 which also contains (Vol. I, P 91) a beautiful illustration of the hill).

The following graphic description of the arrival of the birds taken from the impressions of an American visitor to the place is interesting in so far as it gives an idea of how the scene strikes a Western Scholar :—

....." And then came a winnowing of wings, nearer and nearer. I looked up and two great white birds were making steadily for the hill, straight as homing doves. They alighted on a rocky ridge close at hand—huge white kites, as I imagined, the colour of mellowed ivory, seemingly as old as the story and dignified beyond belief. The officiating Brahman prostrated himself before the holy birds, and a murmur of adoration rose about me as the brass vessel of food was brought forward and the birds fed with perfect confidence from his hands. We all watched in reverent silence; for having each contributed our mite to the feast, we also were spiritual guests. And when they had fed, they preened their plumes and lingered a little and then rising into the air and beating it with wide white wings, they fled away to the south to the holy Ramesvaran.

.....A stranger ceremony could hardly be with the touching faith of the pilgrims, the brotherhood of the birds and the loveliness of earth and sky about it. Heathendom at its worst, so say some, but to me the only true heathendom is the absence of belief in the unseen that is also the highest. These people believe, and we of

the western world who have lost our faith, who wander between a dead world and one as yet unborn, should consider very deeply and anxiously before we rob any peoples of their faiths which are the foundations of their spiritual life, lest in exchange we give them our own arid scepticism and the curse of a cruel materialism in place of the benediction of their own ancient gods." (L. Adams Beck, *Asia* Vol. 23 p. 12)

Among the places of antiquarian interest around Tirukalukunram the most important is certainly the Seven Pagodas, 'Mahamallapuram' containing as it does within it the largest and most remarkable group of monolithic temples bas-reliefs and sculptures in the Tamil land. The inscriptions of Mahabalipuram are situated in the 'Amurnadu' belonging to the Amurkottam. Of the other places of antiquarian interest which have yielded monuments and inscriptions in the immediate neighbourhood of Tirukalukunram, Singaperumalkovil, Vallam, Tiruporur and Saluvankuppam may be mentioned. Of these, Vallam situated about 2 miles from Chinglepet on the highroad to Tirukalukunram, contains three rock-cut temples dedicated to Vishnu, Siva and Brahma one of which has an archaic inscription of the 7th century A. D in Tamil which relates to the rule of Skandasena the local ruler and subordinate of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I who is described as having excavated the temple. It is plain from this record, that in the 7th century A. D. the region around Vallam was ruled by Skandasena the son of Vasantapriyaraja, and formed part of the Pallava empire, with its head-quarters at Kanchipuram. At Tiruporur temple of Kandaswami have been discovered inscriptions belonging to the age of Rajasimha which shows that the region in its vicinity is more than thirteen centuries old. (Insc. No. 76 of 1909)

The sanctum of Narasimhaswami temple at Singaperumalkovil is cut out of a single rock in the same pattern as the early Pallava monolithic temples of the 7th century. Investigations here might disclose valuable records as regards the early history of the place and other details.

Sadras, Covelong, and Chinglepet, also lying at a short distance from Tirukalukunram, figure largely in the modern Indian

history for their association with the Dutch and the English. The fort at Chinglepet erected towards the close of the 16th century and occupied by the last representative of Vijayanagar-house passed in to the hands of Golconda chiefs in 1644, and the Nawabs of Arcot. Its subsequent vicissitudes including its famous bombardment by Robert Clive in 1752 and the circumstances leading the British force operating against Hyder-Ali to seek refuge here, after the destruction of General Baillie's forces and its part in the Mysore wars are well-known to all students of modern Indian history and need not detain us here.



## Value of Tears

THE potency of a tear-drop, so long guaranteed by poets alone, has now become a scientific truth. As a result of experiments conducted in the laboratory of Sir Almroth Wright in St. Mary's Hospital, there has been discovered the existence in human tears of a remarkable substance. This substance he has called lysozyme, and one tiny drop of it will destroy millions of bacteria. Sir Almroth suspected its existence for a long time. After six months of experiments, he was able to show its existence conclusively, and to demonstrate its power to exterminate bacteria. Thus far this substance has not been isolated. When this is accomplished, scientists believe that the most powerful germ-destroying agency known to man will then be available for use. The germicidal properties of tear-drops were first publicly demonstrated by Dr. Alexander Fleming of Sir Almroth's staff at a recent conversation of the Royal Society. In the presence of several people he took a tiny drop of tear in a pipette and gave it as a lethal dose to a good many million bacteria which clouded the liquid in a test tube. Almost immediately the tear dissolved every germ in the tube. He further explained that this secretion—lysozyme—was present in nearly all the tissues of the body and in most of the secretions and ex-

cretions. It was at work all the time, he said, destroying many kinds of bacteria. But in the secretions of the lacrimal or tear glands a very high distillation of this potent juice took place, which made the tear-drop a reservoir of great power.

### Sneeze and Kill Germs.

COMMENTING on the London Scientists' announcement, a New York editorial writer said:—"Nature has many ways of protecting the body. There is salt in tears, and salt is one of the greatest protectors. Salt, acid, and violent shaking are deadly to germs. When you sneeze you kill germs. just as you would be killed if an elephant stepped on you."

To this writer, the London Scientists' claims as to the tear-drop seem entirely credible. He doesn't see anything unreasonable in Dr. Fleming's hope that ultimately human tears can be utilized to immense advantage in medicine and chemistry, but before that time comes, however, the problem of getting a world's supply of tears organised will have to be solved. It is unlikely that an artificial method of producing tears will be discovered. From Dr. Fleming's statement it is gathered that the peculiar processes of the lachrymal gland is necessary to the creating of lysozyme. The only plentiful sources of supply, therefore, are human beings. So now the maiden's tear, long celebrated by lovers and makers of verses, has a commercial value.

### Strange Possibilities.

THE possibilities suggested by this revaluation of tears are many and widespread. Will young women who are particularly adept at the exercise start weeping for a living, just as hundreds of people now sell their blood to hospitals at so much a pint? Will some unscrupulous person kidnap Jane Cowl or Florence Reed or the Gish girls, or other famous film stars, and force them to cry continuously and then bottle up the tears for sale? Will mothers stand around waiting for their babies to start wailing in order to catch the golden drops as they fall? The suggestions are fanciful, to be sure, but are well within the limits of the possible. The chances are that a class of professional

weepers will spring up from whom medical men and chemists will be able to obtain all the tears that are needed. But even professional weepers can't make them flow at will all the time. For the occasions when the lacrimal glands become stubborn it would seem appropriate for the weeper to bring into use an onion—or perhaps a bit of tear gas such as was used during the war.



Naidu Peon

## Peons

By T. P. Santanam.

PEONS, like officers, are necessary evils. A Muhammadan peon is generally very imposing and forms a splendid decoration for the stately double-bullock cart in which you make your tours. But the trouble with him is that his Tamil or Telugu is bad and your Hindustani does not go farther than your command of 'Jao' to the Rameswar pilgrim-mendicant. Otherwise this peon is more than what you expect of him. He is extraordinarily loyal and faithful to you and your family; and that is often why he picks up quarrels with the bazaarmen and with the cart-drivers and jutkawallahs who take you out on your tours. He is very fond of your children though they do not at first sight take kindly to his beard. But later your children find in him a valuable asset to frighten the neighbours' children.

Away from your presence, your peon—whether he is a Muhammadan, or a Naidu with a big caste-mark, or an ex-military man,—is a formidable personage. Your dignity, your power and your responsibility seem to descend on his shoulders. If you do not know how to maintain your official prestige, he knows how to maintain his, and yours too. But this is an old story.

He has his human side too. Well, I don't mean *that* side, you know, palm upward and then salaams in acknowledgement of etc. I mean something else. That is when he keeps his *beedies* and matches inside his turban. It is a much safer place than either his breast-pocket or side-pockets from where they may have a chance of dropping out when he stoops to open your *tapals*.



Stately Double Bullock Cart.

Of Hindu peons the Naidu peon is the most prominent: and of the Naidu peon his caste-mark is the most prominent. He tries to rival his colleague's beard by the formidability of his castemark. He is particular in the same degree with regard to the shine on his badge-plate. He forms an equally effective decoration on your tour cart. His ancient

sporting spirit is roused when the bullocks go slow and with his past experience of his once-rich cousin-in-law's thoroughbred bullocks, he takes the reins in his hands, with a gentle admonition to the *bandy-driver*—this admonition being later amplified, away from your presence.

Peons are generally very communicative—with your children and with your relations from the country; and your relations conclude that your immediate predecessors have always been

unpopular officers and that you are the first to have achieved the popularity of your remote predecessors—names, dates and contemporary events are always mentioned in this connection, with an occasional remark on the price of paddy in those days. Your mother, or your grandmother if you have any living, is the confidante of his domestic calamities, which could be mitigated only by an appointment for his English-schooled but unpassed son at least as an attender.

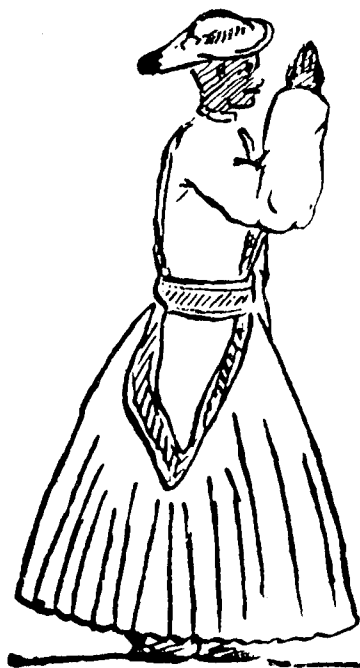
With an ex-military peon, your children and relations are treated to glorious tales of adventure and heroism, particularly in the



E-Service Man.

dreary interval between their return home in the evening and your return from the club at eight. These spirit-ed stories of brave deeds are suddenly hushed the moment the camp-lantern is sighted from the direction of the club.

So much for the peon in up-country districts. The peon in the metropolis is a miserable being. He has nothing of the grandeur of the district peon. He is inconspicuous, being one of several dozens in the establishment. His is a "slave mentality." In spite of his picturesque livery in some departments, his salaams have no charm



Picturesque Livery

in them. He has neither the dignified superiority nor the graceful politeness of the *mofussil* peon. He doesn't absorb your attention, he absorbs something else.

Altogether peons are a mighty race of men and without them officialdom will not be what it is. Let us earnestly hope that no retrenchment axe will deprive us of these useful and interesting fellow-creatures.

# The Cape to Brindaban

A Pilgrim's Impressions. V.

By K. R. R. Sastri, M.A.,

Fellow of the Royal Economic Society, (Lond.)

Kalighat and Dakshineswar

IT was a long-standing cry that man-slaughter was in vogue in Northern India to propitiate the fiery goddess *Kali*. During the panic of kidnapping of children in the South, one of the agents widely suspected was the Bhairagi from the North. It is a relief to learn that such inhuman practices are not now found at Calcutta. The term "Calcutta" is derived from "Kali-ghat," yet, it is a singular phenomenon that a city of palatial buildings as Calcutta has only a few temples to her credit. What Meenakshi is to Madura, Kamakshi to Kanchi and Visalakshi to Kasi, that Kali is to Calcutta.

## The Kali Temple

THE wide roads well equipped with a network of underground pipes are what we find at Calcutta, the capital of India till 1911. As we begin to learn, the main entrance to the temple has nothing like the grand Gopuram gates with heavenward bound madils. No bigger than an entrance to a private house one is surprised when he learns that he has really passed through the main gate to the temple. In front of the temple there is a holy tank, the stinky smell of which stands a favourable comparison with our dirty Pushkarams. The *prasadam*s to the patron deity are about 15 in number ranging from butter to doll.

The entrance to the holy of holies is through a very narrow gate which can admit only two at a time. The rush at the gate is comparable to the experience of the first half-an-hour during the opening of the gate on the Vaikunta Ekadesi Day at Srirangam. A portion of the surrounding walls has been renovated through elaborate use of marble stones. Kali's idol with outstretched tongue, all glowingly red strikes awe in devotees. With the right hand ready for a mighty blow, one of the left hands armed with a sharp sword, another with the plucked head of a

Rakshasa from which flows a never-ceasing torrent of red blood, and the right by pressing over the mighty chest of a villam—This is *par excellence* the *somhara* posture. The amsa of parasakthi and the living monument of destruction of evil-doers could never appear otherwise.

There is a historic tree in the outer prakaram from every leaf of which hangs a stone. Local belief has it that people not blessed with children tie these stones in order to propitiate the Goddess within. The poor are fed here every day, and the Kunkuma prasadam is administered direct to the forehead of the devotees by the pujari (Panda). With Dalhousie square on one side and Chowringhee on the other it grieves me to find Calcutta owning such a petty temple for the mighty Kali.

#### To Dakshineswar

EVERY pilgrim who goes to Calcutta should never fail to pay his respects to the Kali at Dakshineswar, where Sri Ramakrishna had the dazzling vision of the goddess. A beautiful temple five miles up the holy Hooghly on both sides of which rise numberless smoky jute-mills—is a much needed-reminder to the busy Babu. An extensive compound with a lovely tank and shady trees serves well as the resting-place for the devout pilgrims. Facing east, there is the Radhakrishna idol, northward bound is the image of Kali and opposite are 12 spires for Rudras. The panorama of this sequestered spot with the sacred Ganga flowing by enthused me with devotion of a very high order.

#### The Sacred Banyan Tree

A FEW yards off is the sacred Banyan tree under which Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa had his Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This reminds me of the Bodhi tree at Gaya. Two greatest saints by their attaining Samadhi under the two trees have given immortal fame to these sacred spots.

When I bade farewell to Calcutta to pay my respects at the feet of the Great Buddha at Gaya, I had almost concluded that Calcutta was essentially the centre of money-grabbing, choked as I was by the never-ceasing smoke from the Jute Chimneys; but a passing second thought, and the deep impression that Dakshineswar created in my mind served to point the way out.

(To be continued)

# Hard Heart Softened

(A Playlet)

By G. P. Aryaratna, B.A.

#### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

|                   |     |       |                     |
|-------------------|-----|-------|---------------------|
| Punchi            | ... | ...   | A village boy.      |
| Mrs. Wijewickrama | ... | ..... |                     |
| Nona              | ... | ...   | Her daughter.       |
| Kalu              | ... | ...   | Their servant girl. |
| A Juggler         | ... | ...   | .....               |
| Three Boys        | ... | ...   | .....               |

#### ACT I

[A gate behind a house in Ceylon]

NONA : Punchi, where are you going ?

PUNCHI : Nowhere, Nona.

NONA : Then why are you in such a hurry ?

PUNCHI : Well, that is the way, Nona. When I go about in a hurry, people think that I am engaged in some very important business.

NONA : Why do you want to make people believe what you are not ?

PUNCHI : Nona, you don't know. Public opinion is everything in this world.

NONA : How ignorant I am, not to know such a thing.

PUNCHI : Ignorance is a charming thing in a woman.

NONA : Why do you want us, women, to be ignorant ?

PUNCHI : When women are ignorant, they love us. Otherwise can any woman ever love a man ? It is our girls' schools that have created suffragettes out of quite harmless women.

NONA : Are you so bad, Punchi ?

PUNCHI : I am not worse than the others.

NONA : Then why do you want us women alone to be good ? Is it not charming to be bad like you ?

PUNCHI : We, men, want to worship you, specially when we realise how bad we are.

NONA : But men never worship us ?

PUNCHI : You simply do not allow us to, for you try to worship us and thus make us conceited.

NONA : But, Punchi, the men I know are such perfect creatures.

PUNCHI : There is not the worst among you that cannot bring the best of us to our knees.

NONA : We consider you as our salvation.

PUNCHI : That is how you spoil us. We sinners want to save ourselves by worshipping you, but you make us conceited, as I said.

NONA : You have not told me where you are going ?

PUNCHI : I am going to the bazaar where, they say, a new juggler has come.

NONA : Who is a juggler, Punchi ?

PUNCHI : He does marvellous things. For instance he can do the impossible.

KALU : [From a distance] Nona, Noan, Nona, your mother wants you.

NONA : Say, I am coming.

PUNCHI : Nona, please go. Your mother will be offended if you do not go at once.

NONA : Offended ? Why ?

PUNCHI : If you do not go at once.

NONA : You forget she is mother.

KALU : Nona ! Nona ! Nona !.

NONA : You silly girl, say I am coming. [To Punchi] You said that the juggler could do the impossible ? Can he make a hard heart soft ?

PUNCHI : I do not know. Shall I ask him ?

NONA : Please do. They say there is a man at the bazaar who has a wonderful box in which you can see marvellous things. It seems you see the Russians fighting the Japanese and that you can gaze at all the big cities of the world—all in the same box. Is it true, Punchi ?

PUNCHI : Yes, Nona, it is true. I saw it myself yesterday.

You have just to peep into the box and whatever you want to see is there.

NONA : Can I see *you* there ?

PUNCHI : Not that way, Nona. All wonderful things that are in other countries. [Punchi wants to go.]

NONA : Why do you want to go so soon ? You said you had no important business except to see that juggler man.

PUNCHI : The juggler might go away before I get there, besides I want to ask him what you said about the hard heart.

NONA : I wish he could make them soft. Will you tell me all about your juggler man when you return ?

PUNCHI : Certainly if you wish it.

NONA : I sometimes wish I were a man, Punchi, so that I might go myself and see these wonderful things that you speak of. It must be really nice to see the juggler man making hard hearts soft—and to watch the Japanese fighting the Russians.

PUNCHI : Never desire to be a man, for you little know how bad we are.

NONA : I am tired of being good and doing nothing. I want to be wicked so that I might be able to do something even wicked.

PUNCHI : If you talk like that I shall go away.

NONA : Stay, Punchi, I shall be good for your sake.

PUNCHI : When I come back I shall tell you what the juggler says about your hearts.

NONA : I hope you will not forget your promise.

[Exit Punchi].

My life is one weary thing after another. I love him, but I cannot tell him that, for I am a woman. I wonder if he understood me, but how could I be plainer than that ? Now I must go back to the weary routine of life which is one weary thing after another.

[CURTAIN]

## ACT II

[Inside A house]

NONA: Where is mother?

KALU: I don't know.

NONA: You don't know?

KALU: I really don't.

NONA: You silly girl, why on earth did you call me then?

KALU: Because I wanted you.

NONA: You, Miss Impudence, beware how you behave like this to me again, You ordering me about? What next?

KALU: I do not want you to talk to Punchi.

NONA: I call that cheek.

KALU: Cheek or no cheek, a big girl like you should not talk to young men.

NONA: Pray, why not?

KALU: Why? What will people say when they see you talking to street boys?

NONA: Punchi is not a street boy. How dare you insult my friends? I knew him at school. He was in the same class with me.

KALU: All that was in school, but now it is different, for you are a grown-up girl.

NONA: When one grows up, one must give up one's friends?

KALU: A girl has no business to have friends.

NONA: What is a girl to do then?

KALU: Why there are plenty of things for a girl to do in the house and the kitchen.

NONA: I see, we are to be caged in houses, while the boys go wherever they jolly well please. How charming!

KALU: I will tell your mother if you talk to Punchi any more.

NONA: What if you do?

KALU: Then you will know it.

NONA: Suppose I refuse to obey, what will happen then?

KALU: Happen, why, nobody will marry a girl who talks freely with boys.

NONA: Why will they not marry us?

KALU: I do not know why, but they will not.

NONA: Then I can only say that women should not marry men who move freely with other women—that is all.

KALU: Men are different. They may go wherever they please and do whatever they please, and nobody blames them.

NONA: Then why should we be blamed? This seems to be a world made only for men. We women have no place in it. And it is time we did something.

KALU: What are you going to do now?

NONA: I want to write a letter.

KALU: To whom?

NONA: You know to whom.

KALU: You are going to write a letter to Punchi?

NONA: And what is more, you must take it to him.

KALU: *Aiyo, Aiyo*, what will your mother say?

NONA: Let her say anything and you may do the same.

KALU: Oh, Nona, You will bring dishonour on your family.

NONA: What dishonour can there be in writing a letter?

KALU: You will ruin us all. Your father and mother will die of broken hearts.

NONA: You seem to imagine that I have no heart.

KALU: Girls should not have hearts.

NONA: You must take this letter to Punchi.

KALU: I can't, I can't.

Mrs. Wijewickrama: Kalu! Kalu!

KALU: Coming.

Mrs. W.: Hurry up.

[CURTAIN]



## ACT III

PUNCHI: What a sweet girl Nona is! We were friends at school, but now that is all past. I wonder if she is still fond of me! How can I ask? They are rich people

and I am poor man's son, and that makes a difference  
How can a rich girl ever love a poor boy? I dare not  
ask her?

FIRST BOY : The juggler is coming.

SECOND BOY : Is he a clever juggler?

FIRST BOY : I should think so.

SECOND BOY : My brother saw him juggling yesterday.

THIRD BOY : I saw him with my own eyes.

SECOND BOY : Then he must be really clever.

FIRST BOY : Here he is.

*[The juggler comes in. He puts down his  
bag and takes some articles out of it.]*

FIRST BOY : Look, there he is going to change that sand into  
sugar.

SECOND BOY : I say, yes. The shop keepers will have to  
give up their sugar trade.

THIRD BOY : Now he will make the mango tree.

FIRST BOY : What can he not do?

PUNCHI : I wonder if he can make hard hearts soft?

SECOND BOY : That is right. Can he make hard hearts soft?  
If he can, then he must be a clever juggler.

THIRD BOY : Let us ask him. I am sure he can.

JUGGLER : Jaldi! jaldi!

PUNCHI : I say, Juggler, can you make a hard heart soft?

JUGGLER : Of course.

PUNCHI : How do you do it?

JUGGLER : Why, with a kiss, of course. Have you never  
done it?

*(Roars of laughter from the crowd)*

Jaldi, jaldi, mango tree.

FIRST BOY : Now, we shall have the real thing.

THIRD BOY : Now.

SECOND BOY : There I see it growing.

JUGGLER : Jaldi Jaldi, one, two, three.

*(The Juggler uncovers the mango tree and the crowd is excited.)*

[CURTAIN]

# ACT IV

*[Near a gate]*

NONA : Punchi!

PUNCHI : Yes, Nona.

NONA : Have you seen the juggler man?

PUNCHI : Oh, Nona.

NONA : What's up?

PUNCHI : You should have seen that mango tree.

NONA : What mango tree.

PUNCHI : He made a mango tree?

NONA : A real one?

PUNCHI : What is more, it had fruits on it, and we ate them—  
they were real mangoes.

NONA : That is why I long to be a man to be able to see things  
for myself.

PUNCHI : How he made sugar out of sand! We ate the sugar.  
It is the same sugar as we buy in shops. Then he blew  
fire out of his mouth and began to cook a pot of rice with it.

NONA : Well, did he do it?

PUNCHI : I should think so. The rice was beautifully cooked,  
but there wasn't enough to go round the whole crowd.

NONA : What else did he do?

PUNCHI : A thousand and one other things all marvellous and  
wonderful—eggs out of boys' pockets, reels of thread from  
men's ears, rupees from bits of stone, and he ended up by  
swallowing a big sword.

NONA : Did he not die?

PUNCHI : Of course not. Oh, that bag of his! You could  
expect anything to come out of that. Wonderful bag that.  
How I wish I had one like that: surely I will be a juggler  
when I grow up.

NONA : You must do nothing of the kind.

PUNCHI : Why not, Nona?

NONA : You silly boy, you will have to wander from place to  
place and sleep in gutters and starve.

PUNCHI : Why should I starve, Nona? I will make sugar out of  
sand and mangoes out of nothing. Oh, how jolly it will

be to wander along the great endless road that goes from town to town.

[Nona puts on a sad look.]

Nona, why do you look so sad? Shall I tell you about that picture man?

NONA: You never asked the juggler that question?

PUNCHI: You mean that one about the hearts?

NONA: Yes.

PUNCHI: I did ask him.

NONA: Did he answer it?

PUNCHI: No, he only fooled me.

NONA: What did he say?

PUNCHI: He said that hard hearts can be softened with a kisse, and all the people laughed at me.

NONA: Come here, Punchi.

[She clasps him to her breast and kisses him.]

PUNCHI: [In a whisper] Oh, Nona, do you really love me?

NONA: Yes darling, the juggler is right.

[CURTAIN]

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