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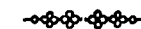
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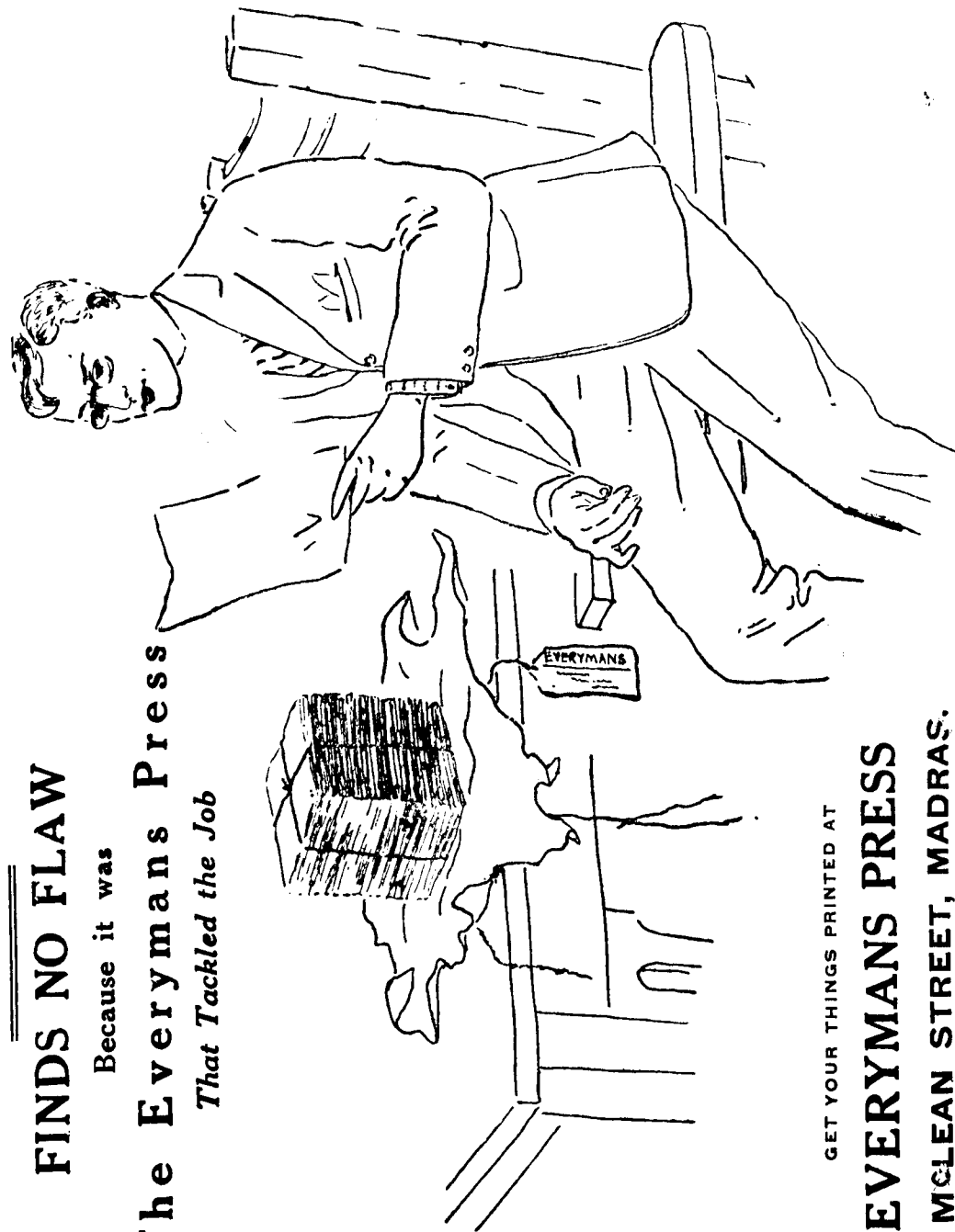
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EVERYMANS REVIEW

Vol. 9

APRIL 1924

No. 4

Thiagaraja

A Great Musician Saint—VIII

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

STILL, one may urge, the vital question remains unanswered, viz. Whence comes the authority of the Law of Morality? And what is its Sanction? We answer that the source of the Law of Morality, like that of the Law of Nations, lies in the Will of the people and that those who violate either law, are alike visited with punishment, with this difference that the Nations' King metes out the punishment immediately, while the King of Morality, viz., God, ultimately.

To teach or preach, therefore, that the moral laws emanated from the Vedas is as childish as to state that the Jasmine flower smells sweetly, because the book, that describes it, says so. The Vedas only reflected, but never created them. It was a mischief that Europe committed in the 16th century to hold the Bible above the Law of Nature. The same mischief is now being committed in our country, with the result that the opinion of our moralists do not carry weight beyond the limits of our own country and, at times, even within them.

Make the question of morality a matter of reason instead of authority; and the whole world will be at the feet of the moralists. Beware of inculcating principles of morality by merely enunciating or preaching them, or by causing them to be mechanically repeated 10, 100, or even 1000 times a day. Just as

good writing cannot be achieved by a mastery of grammarians' rules but by constant study of the best authors; so, good character and highly moral life cannot be achieved by a mastery of the moralists' rules but by constant study of the best biographies. But the most telling way of learning the moral law, is, as mentioned already, to know them, betimes, in the midst of a well-regulated family or of a well-toned school, where the child, seeing them put into *actual practice* every day, will form moral habits, so that when he reaches years of responsibility, those habits are already ingrained in him to such an extent as to incapacitate him to fall a prey to any kind of temptation whatsoever. For, then, his conscience will have no need to argue but will cry aloud against the temptation with the revolt of invincible disgust.

Though, doubtless, both precept and example form the *sine qua non* of moral teaching, example is not only better than precept but also must precede it. As for the precept, it must be illumining rather than dazzling, rational rather than superstitious, and persuasive rather than authoritative. While the dazzling, superstitious and authoritative type of precepts is to be found in the old phase of religion which hinges on faith in Prayer and Swarga; the illumining, rational and persuasive type of precepts is to be found in the new phase of religion which hinges on faith in the immutable Law of Nature, the necessity of man's adjusting himself to that Law, and the wisdom of identifying the worship of God with the service of humanity. Hence the greatest benefactor to the world is, not he who has given it a legacy of mere personal prayers of the *mampahi* type, nor even he who advises for the performance of Yagas and Yagnas,¹ but he who has taught it, both by precept and example, that the channel of prayer must be diverted from God to man and that the worship of the former must merge into the service of the latter.

It was under the stress of some such pressing thoughts, running counter to Lord Tennyson's—

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of,"

1. Vide Thiagaraja's Jayamanohari Krithi, Yangadulu.

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that a mighty Krithi issued out from Thiagaraja's soul which was to flow and fertilise the world in the fullness of time and carry with it many a tributary stream of panting human souls, finally to the ocean of the eternal truth, viz, 'Service of Humanity is Worship of God.' This truth had long ago proclaimed itself in Isopanishad—"Let man, at work here, wish to live a hundred Aeons." This truth, be it noted, revealed itself in Japan in three striking words, "Patriotism, Loyalty and Charity," and raised that country, as though by a magic wand, to a paramount power in the far East. This self-same truth, be it remembered, will ere long convert the miserable Dependency, into the cheerful Dominions, of India. The unique Krithi suggesting this unique truth forms a sign-post to many a wandering pilgrim and belongs to the fourth and last period of Thiagaraja's career. What is that Krithi?

Here it is:—*Aparadamulanorva*, the meaning of which, in effect,² is:—"O! God! This is the proper time for you to forget and forgive me for the great offence I committed by offering prayers to you, in season and out of season, in the shape of hundreds of my kirthanas. Now I know that you have been, from the very beginning, ruling over and protecting the Universe so beautifully as to drive home to these mortals the homely lesson that God helps those who help themselves, that the best help is that help which engenders and fosters self-help and that men must never be taught to crawl like a serpent with petitions and prayers for selfish purposes but trained to trust in God and *do* the right. I wasted my time with mere personal prayers of the *mampahi* type, as though I were the only living being in this

2. The *literal* meaning of the Krithi is as follows:—"I (Thiagarajar have a wavering mind; I've not known your (steady) mind; I've created my own difficulties; yet I complain. Again, inasmuch as you, having, ascertained the merits and demerits of the world (i. e. the people), go on protecting them (in your own pre-arranged way); I composed and sang hundreds of kirthanas in order that you might know to save my individual self alone, (irrespective of others). To excuse me for such heavy or serious offences, this is the opportunity. Have mercy."

Universe and as though I could unfailingly bind you with my prayers, no matter what the nature of my Karmas may be."

Thiagaraja had time only to think out this idea and crystallize it in a krithi, as promised to Vedadrisadasa Mudaliar four years back, but not to develop, much less act up to, it. For, the moment the idea got out of him in the shape of a unique Vanali Krithi, he felt a call from the unknown region, wherefrom no traveller returns. He met, in a nocturnal dream, his dearest Rama who addressed him thus:—"Enough of that one Krithi conveying the Practical Wisdom you called for. That krithi will act as a seed out of which a mighty tree of wisdom will grow. Your life-mission ends here and I shall grant you Sayujya in ten day's time, within which you will do well to become a Sanyasi." The day dawned; and forthwith the necessary ablutions and ceremonies were gone through. Now Thiagaraja became in fact, as he had all along been in spirit, a SAINT.

The ten days promised by Rama were over and Thiagaraja sang his last song *Parithapamukani* in Manohari: "O! Rama! When you were recreating yourself (literally shining), along with matchless Sita, on an excellent golden boat in the midst of the river Sarayu; you (somehow) noted my pitiable condition and addressed me, with a merciful eye, the following words—'In ten day's time, I shall save you.' Have you now forgotten them?" Forthwith our musician-saint's flame went out and attained Sayujya on Wednesday, January 6, 1847. His body was, with form and formality, buried³ on the left bank of the Cauvery, a little to the east of Thiruvaiyar; and his graveyard has been visited every year by hundreds of music-lovers on his anniversary day, on which "Thiagaraja's festival" used to be celebrated more on the religious side. Later on, religious festival developed into a musical festivity on a par with Handel Festival; and its duration has increased to a week and tends to increase still.

It is gratifying to note that Dr. Rabindranath Tagore began from where saint Thiagaraja ended. The former, like Shakes-

3. A Sanyasi's body is not, as a rule, burnt, but buried.

peare, sang the Practices of Life; while the latter, like Dante confined himself to the Theories thereof. But, unlike Dante, Thiagaraja hinted, though at the end of his life, the Practices of Life also and enabled us to have a glimpse of the ancient Human Philosophy of India which, in the hands of Tagore, is coming more and more into prominence.

Take, for instance, the tenth verse of Gitanjali: "Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest and lowliest and lost." The Hindus are only too familiar with what is called *Padapooja* or Feet-Worship. They generally place before themselves each an image of God, made of clay, wood, copper, silver or gold, according to his means, and, having poured water or milk and strewn flowers over its feet—no matter whither their mind roams—feel satisfied that they have done the *Padapooja* required of them. Reader! this is a huge self-deceit. Thiagaraja only hinted it; but Tagore has drawn our pointed attention to it. His memorable verse, quoted above, drives us to the irresistible conclusion that *Padapooja* is not to be interpreted as meaning only the worship of an image's feet but figuratively also the worship of "the poorest, and lowliest and lost," who live in those feet. *Padapooja*, then, really implies the elevation of the depressed (or submerged) classes. But do not the people studiously avoid the uphill-task of elevating the submerged classes but resort to the trickery of a comparatively easy-going "chanting and singing and telling of beads" over the feet of an image? Hence the immortal Tagore feelingly sang:—

"Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and, even like him, come down on the dusty soil!

"Deliverance! Where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever.

"Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense ! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained ? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow."

This eleventh verse of *Gitanjali*, be it noted, is Thiagaraja's *Aparadamulanorva* writ large.

The signal service the saint rendered for the music-world may be said to be five-fold :—

1. He surveyed, with a comprehensive view, all that science had till his time produced ; measured the talents and resources of some of the more important preceding artists ; and focussed all their rays in his novel *Krithis*.

2. As a necessary corollary, he introduced, for the first time in the history of Indian Music, the system of developing "sangathis" or music-phrases.

3. Incidentally, he extricated music from the tyrannical grip of words.

4. He emphasised the principle that prose suits music far better than poetry.

5. He crystallized the *apurva* or rare ragas into so many *krithis*, but for which those 'apurva' ragas would have long ago vanished into airy nothing.

These five points we shall consider in detail.

A bird's eye-view of Indian Music from the pre-historic time down to Thiagaraja's day shows that the growth of music could be brought under four main stages, viz, Talking, Speech, Emotional Speech and Recitative Music. Prose talk, Prose chant, Verse chant and Lyrical Song were never distinct from, but ever tended to shade with, one another. Nay, human speech passed into all the four states between which the only line of demarca-

4. For a List of Musicians and Scientists to whom he felt indebted, see his *krithi* in *Mayamalavagowla*, *Vidulaku mrokkale*, wherein he referred to Kamala, Gowri, Vagiswari, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Narada, Amaresa, Bharata, Kasyapa, Chandisa, Anjaneya, Gajamukha, Markandeya, Agasthya, Nandi, and even Sharangadev author of *Sangitharatnakara*. Mr. Thirumalayya Naidu's view that Thiagaraja "inherited nothing from those who preceded him," is obviously incorrect.

tion was the degree of emotion. In war, some set phrases were singled out from common talk ; in funerals, some other phrases rose into prominence ; in hunting, the hunters' emotion took a poetical form which they chanted ; and in story-telling, the meaningless chorus asserted itself ; and also in love-making, metaphors came to be freely employed. From these small beginnings, there emerged a distinct stage when orations or highly emotional speeches came to be delivered. These orations will be found, on careful examination, to have grown out of simple talking, even which has a rise and fall in pitch. They distinguish by intonation questions from answers ; touch emphatic words with a peculiar accent ; and form thus a phase of music which may be roughly written down in notes. The more emotional a language is, the more musical it becomes. Compare, for instance, the emotional language of Andradesa with the monotonous one of the Nilgri Hills. If even simple talking has its own rise and fall in pitch, the emotional speech of a trained orator is invariably accompanied by exalted tones and cadences. "Just as," observed Herbert Spencer, "from the orations expressed in the metaphorical and allegorical style natural to them, there sprang epic poetry out of which lyric poetry was afterwards developed ; so, from the exalted tones and cadences in which orations were delivered, there came the chant or Recitative Music from which Lyrical Music has since grown up. The parallelism lies not only in genesis but also in results. For lyrical poetry differs from epic poetry, just as lyrical music differs from recitative music. Each still further intensifies the natural language of the emotions. Lyrical poetry is more metaphorical, more hyperbolic, more elliptical and adds the rhythm of lines to the rhythm of feet. So lyrical music is louder, more sonorous, more extreme in its intervals, and adds the rhythm of phrases to the rhythm of bars. And the known fact that out of epic poetry the stronger passions developed lyrical poetry, strengthens the inference that they similarly developed lyrical music out of recitative."

This theory of Herbert Spencer had been already anticipated by our ancestors, inasmuch as they classified Music into two

broad divisions, *Margi* and *Desi*. Text-Book Writers have defined 'Margi' to be what was sought for by Brahma and practised by Bharata; and 'Desi' to be what varies according to the tastes of the people of various countries, tending to the gratification of the sense of hearing. Again, Margi is said to be *Bhavabhanjana* or Destroyer of Births; and Desi, *Janaranjana* or that which pleases the people. The former represents the old style and the latter, the new style. But wherein lies the vital point of difference between the two styles? Mathanga answers; "Margi is *Nibadha* or set in and bound by words; while Desi is *Anibadha* or free from the slavery of words." This exactly is the difference between Herbert Spencer's "Recitative and Lyrical" music. Hence Margi is Recitative music; and Desi, Lyrical Music.

Samaganam is *Margi* or Recitative music in a crude form. The whole of Ramayanam was sung by Kusa and Lava so excellently that all the ascetics who heard the music were seized with surprise and, with eyes flooded with tears, exclaimed: "Ah! What charming music! What sweet verses!" What kind of music could it have been but the same Margi or Recitative Music, though in a refined form? Has the reader at any time heard Ramayana Sastris expounding to their eager audience the whole poem, or a part thereof, in a subdued chant? That, again, is Recitative Music. Has he noted that Harikatha performers first make speeches, then slowly take their audience to vrithas (verses) and then to avatharikas (Introductory), which would imperceptibly develop into full-fledged songs? That exactly was the way in which music grew stage by stage.

As time went on, Recitative Music fell into two divisions, viz,

(1) Recitative Music, pure and simple, which took the name of Vrithas; and

(2) Kirthanas,⁵ the function of which was either a narration or a prayer—

5. Kirthanas, like Vrithas, are set in or bound by words and lend themselves to prayer. Hence they came under Margi or Bhavabhanjana or Recitative Music.

A commingling of these two divisions marked a distinct epoch in the history of Indian music; and Arunachala Kavi's *Rama Natakam*, consisting, as it does, of Vrithas and Kirthanas, fully represented that epoch. It was published in 1772, when Thiagaraja was a boy of 13 years.

Side by side with this development, the composition of Varnas, Ragamalikas, and Swarajits went on in its fullest swing. Text-Book Writers, like Venkatamakhi, composed Lakshanagithas, Varnas and their paraphernalia to illustrate the principles they discussed in their text-books. Hence this special species of compositions was primarily intended to help the learners to understand the principles enunciated in texts but never to be displayed before an audience. Later on, sahithyas (wording) were added to the swaras, with the result that both the swaras and sahithyas became a matter for display. Special pains were then taken to see that the letters of sahithyas were, as much as possible, the very letters of the swaras, as for example.⁶

This habit finally led the South Indian musicians to their peculiar *swaraganam*. To what kind of music do the Varnas and Ragamalikas belong? Doubtless, they belong to Recitative Music, for they are no better than Kirthanas, with an additional burden of swaras. Further, they are *Nibadha* and, lending themselves, as they do, to prayer,⁷ come under the category of Recitative music.

We will not be far from being true, if we infer that, prior to Thiagaraja, South Indian Music was in the Recitative stage and that it fell to the lot of Thiagaraja to carry it on to the next stage of Lyrical Music. Indeed Thiagaraja focussed in his novel krithis all the rays of music previously found scattered among Vrithas, Kirthanas and Varnas. While narration or prayer formed the uniform subject-matter of these three, each of them had a special, and even distinct, feature to mark out from others.

6. For an explanation of signs employed in this Figure and other figures that follow, see my *Sargam Notation*.

7. Quite recently the subject of love, sometimes low love, was introduced in it, much to our shame, for public display.

The development of sangathis was the special feature of Vrithas ; the control of thala, of Kirthanas ; and the swara vinyas, of Varnas. Thiagaraja happily blended all these three features in his krithis and presented to the world an entirely new and fascinating species of composition.

Though he was not inclined to compose Varnas and Raga-malikas, as they were the special work of a Text-Book Writer, which he never was; he made a few of his krithis look like, and even savour of, them. Some adopted only their spirit, such as *Koluvaigunnade* in Bhairavi ; and some kept their form, though fragmentary, such as, his *Pancharatnas*.

The way in which the various sangathis or music-phrases succeed one another in his Krithis is highly artistic and felicitous. The first sangathi is a very simple melody ; the next is a little elaborate ; the next is still more elaborate ; and so on, until the last brilliant sangathi presents, in the compass of the same *avarth* or time-limit as the first sangathi, the maximum of rhythmic liveliness and melodic fulness. All the sangathis glide into one another so easily and so gracefully that they seem to be natural evolutions and involutions of one another. Thiagaraja will ever be remembered for this striking innovation which has doubtless enriched music to a most astonishing degree.



Daughter of the Gods-- (*The Cauveri*).

Surely some poet hoar, in days of yore,
Wandering along these lovely banks did deem
This shapely, sinuous and soft-flowing stream—
Buoyant, broad-brimming, filling either shore
With wealth of golden grains and plenteous store
Of ripe and luscious fruits, lustrous in the gleam
Of dying sunset, lurid in its sloping beam,—
E'en by the gracious lovely smile it wore.

A Daughter of the Gods! What heavenly grace
When trees on either bank lean down to gaze
Upon her loveliness and theirs! How calm
With verdurous gloom of *pipal* and the palm
The eve, when under light of moon or star
The multitudinous waves illumined are!

T. B. KRISHNASWAMI.

Gopal's Home-coming

The Story of an Evolution

By N. K. Venkateswaran.

THE 'Hero' of this story is just like you and me and the rest of us, neither big nor small, just the ordinary sort of man whom you meet in hundreds every day of your life. If he be in a crowd, you can scarcely pick him out, for he is of the stuff of commonplace humanity and not one out of it like your Alexanders and Kaisers. This remarkable quality of not being different from his fellow-men is his only qualification for his aspiring to become the unheroic hero of not an untrue tale.

Again, like millions of others, he was an egotist, a harmless egotist though, for not for once in his life did he envy another, not for once in his life did he cease to envy himself. Himself an object of emulation, he cared not a rap, if others became great or small, made a noise in the world, or 'passed out of it in an ebb-tide of silence. He had an all-absorbing hobby of telling his simple tale to whomsoever he met and such was his simplicity and frankness, such his sublime ignorance of this busy, fussy world that he who refused to lend him his ears had surely none and so none to lend. Therefore, I will tell his tale to the public at large which undoubtedly lacks no ears.

This apostle of amiability was born of ordinary parents, of a husband and wife between whom love and hate, in equal measure, were lost. Ardent was their love for each other when they agreed and intense their hatred when harmony frowned on them. They were, however, always at one in the matter of loving their only son. The husband and the wife were bound together by the cord of common affection. And whenever the broil of domestic warfare threatened to dissolve the sacred marriage pact, the thought of their beloved child bobbed up before them to avert the calamity.

This, by the way. Let us return to our story. Gopal was his name and *Gopal* you know is the name by which every other man in the street is known. Nor was the house of his birth in any

way remarkable. It was a mixture of sunshine and sorrow, a home in which many were born and many were gone the way of all the Earth. The family genealogy was, as usual, buried in the grave of oblivion. No body cared to dig it up. No shining escutcheon ever sowed the seed of ambition in any of its members. Little wonder, then, that Gopal showed no vestiges of precocity nor the slightest sins of coming greatness.

When Gopal was a baby, his fond parents looked at his beauty and loveliness through big magnifying glasses only. In the days of Gopal's infancy the uses of a microscope were open only to fathers and mothers and so the wide world that stretched away beyond his house had neither an access to his beauty nor cared to have. This cold, old world is starkly blind.

When Gopal became a boy, there suddenly burst into his view a horrible something called *a school* and a frightful class of apparitions called *schoolmasters*. A mischievous God had created them to heckle and to harass innocent loveable boys. At any rate, Gopal had some such vague idea and he gave expression to it by occasionally playing the truant and malingering disease. So sickly a boy was never born. Such a big eater was seldom seen.

Years, however, were very merciful to him, for they gave him their accumulation with unstinted generosity. Therefore, his approach to adolescence was like the flight of an aeroplane shooting through space with mad velocity. But his progress from class to class had somehow got into the muddle of a checkmate and so his prosperity in years was countervailed by his adversity in knowledge. None the less, what with the goading of birchen schoolmastership and the entreaties of sobbing parents, an erratic wave of industry washed Gopal on the shore of the Fourth Form. There he lay! A long time came and went.

Meanwhile Gopal was not absolutely idle, certainly not. He was busy incubating a novel programme in the heat of his adolescence. In this period of storm and stress, of intense passions, his inborn hatred for the school-subjects and for those who were engaged in the nefarious task of teaching them, overflowed the banks of his mind and his love for things glistening in the enchantment of distance became an irresistible mania. He

would tolerate no more the crochety schooling of a witless educational system.

One fine morning Gopal bolted. He managed it cleverly enough. Goodness knows what resourcefulness he employed in disburdening the family cash-box of a large part of its contents. Goodness knows how he eluded the vigilance of a watchful world and found himself in the happy region of a railway-station where all manner of people including run-away schoolboys have an excellent chance of escaping into the depths of the unknown.

Gopal too disappeared leaving a blank behind. Days swelled into weeks and weeks into months and yet the veil of obscurity stayed untorn. The magic hands of time were rocking Gopal's parents in the cradle of consolation. But Gopal was no respecter of even this kindhearted embodiment of age and had no scruples to destroy his laboured ramparts. Therefore he suddenly issued out of darkness and shot the following bolt from the blue at his forgetting father. "Send T. M. O. for two-hundred rupees, or———". Gopal, Commercial College, Bombay."

It was an ultimatum. That word "or" opened upon an unlimited array of terrific possibilities. Was Gopal intent on carrying fire and sword through the world? Never was flashed through the telegraphic wires a more minatory message. The money had to be found although all the bowels of the Earth had to be dug up for finding it. That dazed fatherhood of whose loins this Napoleonic son was born, found it and sent the amount as per the military order. It was thus that Gopal gained admission into the portals of the Commercial College.

In these days of Gopal's sojourn in the city of mercantile Pharoahs, the bark of his humble home was being launched on the waters of bankruptcy. Mortgage laid its violent hands on the few acres of the family property. Utensil after utensil went their way to the pawn-broker's clutches. Jewels followed suit and money-orders poured into the elastic pockets of happy Gopal. A full year passed away like this and the shattered home was now heading on to a rock.

At this psychological moment Gopal made two important discoveries. One was that the art of type-writing made a typist

minus nerves and the other was that its twin-brother short-hand made a short hand writer plus rheumatism. And it so happened—one of those things for which nobody can account for—that Gopal was prepared neither to part with his nerves nor to keep open doors for the numerous varieties of rheumatic complications. Therefore, Gopal beat a hasty retreat from that cunning trap of a Commercial College. For some months, the College authorities pursued Gopal with epistolary declamations which, however, were drowned in their own vehemence. Gopal, therefore, was safe in his comfy little home.

One fine evening Gopal went to the temple. He knew not why he went. His locomotives which were becoming petrified in a plethora of rest were more responsible for his shuffling along rheumatically than himself. The temple was on old dilapidated house of the Goddess *Kali* beneath a leaky roof and within a broken wall with a cluster of old gaunt trees standing like some immortal sages in attendance upon an immortal queen. Parrots and Bulbuls made melodious music from within their leafy bowers and a stray mischievous crow introduced now and then a note of harsh disharmony into this gamut of song. It was an idyllic spot with a quaint beauty, a place where one could have poetry for the mere gathering of it. To this temple in the evening of every Tuesday came all the women-folk of the locality to offer their garlands of prayers. The young to whom religion meant little went there to see and to be seen, to hunt for the juice of love among the blossoming buds of the neighbourhood. When Gopal's eyes were wandering aimlessly in all directions they were suddenly arrested by an object which shone with the balmy radiance of the beautiful moon. It was the figure of Kamala Devi playing elfin tricks on the outskirts of womanhood. There was magnet in her eyes and beauty in her blooming cheeks. The glory of a rare charm sat smiling on her lips. Her swarthy wealth of hair artistically tied into a tuft was a crown of charms on a bunch of feminine fascinations. It was a most wonderful vision that any young man could see. Certainly, it was such to Gopal.

And this happy young man saw it and stood like a statue,

struck by the endless glories, beauties, wonders, that were now exhibited to his view from within the mysterious chamber of love. Kamala Devi was surely designed for Gopal by a beneficent God. The course of love in his case was neither tedious nor rough. There was no plighting of troths. No letters were written. There were no stolen hours of talk under the shade of advancing nights. There was no robbing of budding kisses from the branches of fragrant cheeks. There was no waiting and worrying, no sleepless nights, no lying on thorny beds of rejected love. He made no fuss; she made it neither. They went into the wedlock of marriage and allowed no tragedy to grow out of their folly.

These were really happy days for Gopal. It seemed to him that life had blossomed into its final significance. Indeed, Kamala Devi and he were a lovely pair and they loved each other dearly. In an Indian home marriage invariably makes love when love fails to make marriage. In most cases, the Indian is content to marry and love. In the present case, love had made marriage and marriage love. And by and by Kamala Devi bore a beautiful babe that wove a purple patch into the web of their happiness.

But life is not all beer and skittles. In the garden of life are prickly pears and bristly thistles. The aging parents of Gopal were still managing to keep the wolf from the door by the disciplines and economics that could be learned only in the school of bitter experience. Gopal had not yet known what it was to bear the burden of existence. He was too happy and too blunt to understand them early or to shoulder them willingly.

One day Gopal's old mother called him and said, "My dear son, your father and your mother are but mortal and must die. They stand at the end of their span of life. Ah, my beloved son, what would you do when they are gone; who, in the world would look after you; My heart grieves to think of it, my son, my son!" Gopal answered thus. "Be consoled, mother. The God who made us will feed us. Oh, Mother, why are you so cruel to me to-day? Why do you speak to me of death, misery and want?"

However, the words of that loving old mother went deep into

the heart of Gopal. His peculiar psychology led him into strange avenues of thought. Brooding on her words, he made a couple of astonishing deductions which submerged his mind in a flood of rare wisdom. They were the unreality of existence, its elusive and illusive tricks and the dismal disaster of marriages. Not that he did not love his wife and child but that it was a sheer stupidity to have married at all. The idea of death, of the evanescence of everything on Earth made him realise the unreality of all realities. The uninitiated Gopal found himself in the thick of metaphysical speculations.

At this time of our hero's inner earthquake, Bhakthan Swami Vinayak and his itinerant party came to the village in one of their proselytizing campaigns. Such invasions were unknown in the annals of this up-country humble abode of just a couple of hundreds of inhabitants. Gopal was a willing victim for a hungry spiritualistic fraternity. The initiatory ceremonies sent a thrill through every fibre of his frame. A two days' tour through its mysteries wrapped him up in an oblivious role of irresponsibility. Gopal forgot his father, mother, wife and even his one year old child. In fact, his brain became a spotlessly clean *tabularasa*. This stray stream of spiritualism that had meandered into this nook of a village carried down Gopal again into the regions of the unknown.

This time his sudden and mysterious disappearance was mourned not only by his superannuated parents but also by the emblem of an ideal wife. The freaks of Gopal were drowning these simple folk in the depths of misery. Up till now the lengthening shadow of debt in his house had been brightened up by the effulgence of a hoping age, a loving wife, and a smiling baby. Now all that went to pieces. The pall of sadness was on it. The light of life was hushed in the dusk of woe.

Meanwhile Gopal was sounding the sea of philosophy and religion with the plummet of unquestioning belief. It was as though he was in a prolonged trance. Bhakthan Swami Vinayak had captivated him by the shining apparel of false-godliness. But even a gullible intellect is bound to see through the flimsy

folds of hypocrosy. The shell of spiritualistic pretence is a threadbare thing.

It, however, took Gopal a couple of long years to find out the cloven hoof. Austerities by day and revelries by night, wordy pietism and vicious practice, fine professions and pestiferous convictions—this was the regimen of Swami Vinayak's troupe. Even Gopal discovered it. That was his third great achievement in life. When the bubble of spiritualism was pricked, an enlightened layman issued out of it and stood on firm ground.

The return of Gopal was the home-coming of wisdom and sanity. The two years had taught him lessons that would abide in his mind. He yearned to bring comfort to the grieving hearts of his old parents. He saw in his mind's eye the pretty little village, the quaint old temple and his sweet wife caressing his three year old child and forgetting her heavy load of cares in the enchanting hopefulness of his existence. His impatient mind fretted at the snail-like pace of his lazy legs and looked upon them as a harassing encumbrance rather than as a means of conveyance. He could not understand the philosophy of shutting up life in the dark prison of flesh and bones. "Poor humanity is clapped into a cumbrous house" he exclaimed and he put it down as the cause of wars, strikes and plagues.

Thus thinking, philosophizing between whiles, Gopal wended his gladsome way, never missing an opportunity to tell his tale to whomsoever he met. Now, kind reader, if you be anxious to see this Gopal, you have but to go of a morning to the fine field adjoining his village and you will find him driving his pair of bullocks and pressing hard his plough-share deep into the soil. If you will condescend to spend some little time with him, he will narrate to you the story of his attainment of wisdom after a weary journey of years through the ups and downs of a giddy life. He will occasionally lighten it up by the ringing laughter of a fearless peasant-mentality. My version of his story lacks the fragrance of personal experience. The story of Gopal's home-coming must be heard from Gopal's mouth, for he is a prince among fearless autobiographers.

Agricultural Holdings in South India

I—The Actual State of Affairs

By Rajaiah D. Paul, M. A.

THOUGH it is now admitted on all hands that the biggest obstacle in the way of agricultural progress in this country is the fragmentation and excessive sub-division of holdings in the ryotwari tracts, one is afraid that the problem has not been realised in all its magnitude, and in its huge bearing on the agricultural salvation of the country, as is evidenced by the fact that there has been a general hesitation to make experiments and try tentative solutions. Action would sooner have been taken if it had been realised how this canker is eating into the very vitals of the country, and how all agricultural methods and results are kept at a very low standard by the present state of affairs. The present is but an attempt to show up facts and figures which would reveal the actual condition of affairs in a not untypical part of South India.

The problem that confronts us can be summarised as follows. The agricultural holdings—over a greater part of India—are, firstly, far too *numerous*. That is to say, the available extent of arable land has been divided up into far too many individual possessions. Secondly, as a natural result of the first, the extent of these, on an average, is *very small*, too insufficient to maintain an average family. Thirdly, even the individual holdings are in small bits *scattered* all over the revenue village, and sometimes even in more than one village. Minuteness, numerosness, and scatteredness are the three evils in the present condition of our average holdings.

The position is rendered much more complex by the existence of what are called joint holdings; that is, holdings in which more than one person possesses interest, and the shares of these

different persons have not been sub-divided either because the land cannot be sub-divided further,—it may be a well, for example, or part of a tope,—or because the bit of land is already too small; or because the number possessing interest is far too big to allow cutting up of the land. The partners of these joint holdings may also each have another patta in his own name. Secondly, there are also the one-plot holdings of people who are not wholly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood; the village barber, the carpenter, the blacksmith, and washerman, for example. They generally own small bits of land, but do not wholly depend on them for sustenance. There are also agricultural labourers and petty traders, who also own small plots of land, but whose main source of livelihood is not land but labour. And when we talk of holdings in general, the inclusion of these holdings is likely to render the average lower. Their presence is due to the lack of sufficient non-agricultural employment, and to the fictitious status which possession of land is supposed to give.

The only way to impress on another the seriousness of the present condition is to give figures for a number of typical villages, in the part of the country to which these remarks have reference.

For purposes of illustration, four villages in two of the taluks of the North Arcot district have been chosen. North Arcot district lies practically in the middle of the Presidency and is in many ways typical of the Presidency.

The first village selected was one by name Tiruvalam, in the Gudiyattam taluk. Tiruvalam is situated about 28 miles east of the head-quarters of the taluk, and is on the metalled road from Madras to Chittoor. The M.S.M. Ry's main line from Madras to Bangalore passes within the limits of the village; and the village has lent its name to the railway station which however is two miles away, and outside the village limits. The village is a moderate-sized village, the total area being 708.18 acres, of which 403.83 acres are occupied; 35 acres of dry land unoccupied, the rest being required for communal purposes. The village contains 248 houses, with a population of

1612, which is far above the average for a village of its size. This is due to the fact that from about the beginning of the last century for a long time Tiruvalam was the head-quarters of a taluk of that name. Besides, its temple is of considerable local celebrity.

The second village investigated was Vengunam, in the Wandiwash taluk. It is situated about a mile north of Wandiwash town; and is 20 miles from Acharapakam Railway station, (S. I. R.), and is on the metalled road from Wandiwash to Arni. It is a big village, with a total area of 1317·9 cres, out of which 578·95 acres are under occupation; about 21 acres are unoccupied; and 272·88 acres are Inam lands; and the rest, nearly 450 acres, are communal porambokes.

The village contains 182 houses with a population of 1110.

The third village selected was Avanavadi, also in Wandiwash taluk. It is situated three miles southwest of Wandiwash town. It is a small village with a total occupied area of 239·12 acres of which 89·16 are wet, and 149·96 are dry. 42·37 acres of dry land and 0·42 of wet are unoccupied. 38·13 acres are Inam lands. 257·98 are porambokes. Hence the total area of the village is 577·60 acres. The village contains 39 houses, with a population of 252.

The fourth village selected is Nariambadi, in Wandiwash Taluk. It is 19 miles west of Wandiwash town, and 16 miles from Arni railway station. It is a mile from the metalled road from Arni. Its total area is 479·29 acres, of which 46·09 acres wet and 270·50 acres are dry; and the rest, except for 7·30 acres of unoccupied land, are communal porambokes. The village contain 68 houses and a population of 495.

Now we shall consider the conditions in these villages, as revealed by the following figures.

(I) Numerousness of the Holdings

THIS means, that the average agricultural holding is very small and that therefore the number of individual holders is very large. From a whole mass of figures gathered from the village accounts, and by enquiry, the following table which shows at a glance some interesting particulars about the ryotwari holdings

has been compiled. More detailed figures could of course be given; but are not likely to interest any but the professed student of rural economics.

Pattas paying.	Tiruvalam.			Vengunam.			Avanavadi.			Nariambadi.		
	No.	Av. Ex.	Ass.	No.	Av. Ex.	Ass.	No.	Av. Ex.	Ass.	No.	Av. Ex.	Ass.
		A. C.	Rs. A.		A. C.	Rs. A.		A. C.	Rs. A.		A. C.	Rs. A.
Re. 1 and less ...	109	0 16	0 5	108	0 24	0 7	18	0 35	0 8	39	0 51	0 11
Rs. 10 and less; above Re. 1 ...	118	1 82	4 2	163	1 78	3 8	56	1 73	3 13	75	2 11	4 5
Rs. 20 and less; above Rs. 10 ...	15	8 85	17 0	30	4 37	14 1	12	4 04	16 4	17	4 84	12 3
Rs. 30 and less; above Rs. 20 ...				9	7 11	24 9	8	7 08	23 4	4	7 68	21 8
Rs. 50 and less; above Rs. 30 ...	1	6 53	33 11	8	9 11	35 4	5	8 58	38 1	1	11 26	30 7
Rs. 100 and less; above Rs. 50 ...	...	...	...	3	10 85	59 9	...	...	...	1	20 27	55 3
Total ...	243	...	...	321	...	...	99	...	...	137	...	...

What does this table show? 45 per cent of the pattadars in the village of Tiruvalam pay an assessment less than 1 Rupee and what is worse, above half of these are joint pattadars; that is to say, hold their land jointly with one or more others. 48·5 per cent pay over one Rupee but less than 10 Rs. Six per cent pay an assessment of Rs. 30 and less; and only one person in the village, (half per cent,) pays an assessment above thirty Rupees; his holding being 6·52 acres. Therefore we see how nearly 95 per cent of the pattadars in the village have to be content with a holding of less than two acres. In Vengunam village, only 63 per cent of the total number of pattas are single; and taking only these into consideration, we find that no less than 78 per cent pay an assessment less than 10 Rupees. In fact, the average assessment of those who pay between 10 Rs. and 1 Re. is only Rs. 3—8—0. Thirteen per cent pay an average assessment of 14 Rs. And only 9 per cent pay an assessment above 20 Rs. In Avanavadi again, no less than 71 per cent of the single pattadars have lands less than 1·75 acres in extent and pay an assessment less than 10 Rs.,—the average being as low as Rs. 3—13—0. In Nariambadi, we have again the same phenomenon of more than 75 per cent of the pattadars

paying an assessment less than 10 Rs. The average holding of these people being 2 acres with an assessment of 4 Rs.

So tabulating the figures for the average holding in these villages we get the following instructive table :—

		Average holding taking only single pattadars.		Average holding taking all pattadars.	
		Extent	Assessment	Extent	Assessment
Vengunam	...	2.25	6-13-5	1.80	5-7-0
Avanavadi	...	2.92	9-0-0	2.66	8-0-0
Nariambadi	...	2.81	6-14-0	2.31	5-8-0

We shall not be far wrong therefore if we say that the average holding in this part of the country is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

The same thing can be proved from another point of view. In the following set of figures the holdings have been classified from the point of view of their extents while the table given above was from the point of view of their assessments. A consolidated table for three villages is given below.

	Tiruvalam	Avanavadi	Nariambadi
Holdings above 20 acres in extent	1	nil	1
„ „ 10 acres below 20	7	3	1
„ „ 5 „ below 10	11	13	14
„ „ 3 „ below 5	28	15	24
„ „ 2 „ below 3	34	9	17
„ „ 2 acre below 2	49	17	18
2 „ below one acre in extent	130	42*	62†

(* Of these 42, 12 are below 50 cents, and 13 are below 25 cents.)

(† Of these 62, 17 are below 50 cents, and 19 below 25 cents.)

So we find that in only two of the three villages there are holdings, one in each, above twenty acres in extent ; and both are just above 20 acres. But the Tiruvalam holding whose extent is 20.36 acres is wholly dry, and bears an assessment of Rs. 21. The Nariambadi one is 20.27 acres in extent. Of the seven holdings in Tiruvalam which are above 10 acres, five are wholly dry, and the wet extent in the other two are just 0.40 and 3.65 respectively. Hence the mere fact that they are above ten

acres in extent does not mean either that they are economic, or that the owners are well-to-do. Similarly in Avanavadi, the average extent of the three holdings which are more than ten acres in extent is only 11-80, with an assessment of 28—13—0. A man holding 11 acres of land which bears an assessment of only $2\frac{1}{2}$ Rs. per acre cannot be said to be well off.

But the smaller holdings give us even greater concern. We find that approximately 50 per cent of the total number of holdings are less than one acre in extent ; and above 75 per cent are less than two acres. But think of the 12 in Avanavadi village which are less than half an acre in extent ; and the thirteen less than 25 cents ; and of the corresponding 17 and 19 in Nariambadi. Of what use is such a minute extent of land ?

So we shall summarise the above figures in the following table :—

Tiruvalam. Avanavadi. Naria			
Percentage of holdings above			
3 acres in extent	18,	32,	20,
„ „ above 1 acre but less than 3 acres,	32,	26,	35,
„ „ less than 1 acre,	50,	42,	45,

The former calculation based on the assessment is more true than the latter based on the extent, because, as has been pointed out, the mere fact that a holding is large does not necessarily make it economic. But being just now concerned with finding how minute the holdings are, the figures are useful and show that the average holding is just about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, with an assessment of 7 Rs. The direct consequence of the smallness of the average holding is that the number of individual pattadars is very large ; that is to say, the available extent of land has been divided up into far too many individual possessions.

(II) Minuteness of the Holdings

NOW we pass on to the second characteristic of our agricultural holdings, namely, their minuteness. This means that each holding is not only very small in itself, but is also cut up

into numerous minute bits :—a process which is more accurately described by the Frech word *morcellement*.

The following tables for two of the village selected will illustrate the condition of affairs.

Avanavadi

Holders of	No. of pattadars with this no of plots	Average area of the holdings	Largest Holding	Smallest Holding	Average Size of the plots
One plot	 48	1.44	15.06	1 cent	1.44
Two plots	 19	2.37	5.51	0.27	1.99
Three plots	 8	2.03	2.78	0.76	0.68
Four plots	 5	4.61	9.62	0.83	0.15
Five plots	 4	4.20	10.23	1.14	0.84
Six plots	 5	7.40	11.05	2.73	1.23
Seven plots	 2	6.28	6.79	5.77	0.89
Eight plots	 3	2.86	3.64	1.51	0.36
Ten plots	 2	6.39	7.11	5.66	0.64
Thirteen plots	 1	6.01			0.46
Fourteen plots	 1	10.13			0.73
Sixteen plots	 1	10.11			0.63

Total no. of pattadars, 99

These figures indicate clearly the extreme fragmentation that has gone on in the village. The 99 holdings in the village are cut up into no less than 281 separate bits; i.e., on an average each holding is cut up into three bits. The average holding in this village is only 2.66 acres; and this small extent is held by the owner in three different bits each of an average size of 89 cents. The average size of the plots as calculated from the last column in the above table is also 85 cents.

The figures for *Nariambadi* are equally instructive.

Holders of.	Number of pattadars holding this number of plots.	Average acre of the holdings.	Average size of the plots.	Largest holding.	Smallest holding.
One plot	 56	0.75	0.75	4.53	0.01
Two plots	 20	1.26	0.63	5.60	0.05
Three plots	 8	2.54	0.81	6.80	0.22
Four plots	 7	3.56	0.89	3.88	1.01
Five plots	 5	2.03	0.40	3.44	0.92
Six plots	 4	3.24	0.54	6.36	1.46
Seven plots	 7	4.42	0.63	9.39	2.50
Eight plots	 6	3.91	0.49	7.69	1.47
Nine plots	 7	4.05	0.45	5.15	2.24
Ten plots	 6	4.94	0.49	7.00	2.91
Twelve plots	 3	7.10	0.54	9.77	4.72
Thirteen plots	 4	4.04	0.31	4.60	3.75
Fourteen plots	 2	5.70	0.40	6.29	5.11
Fifteen plots	 1	11.26	0.75	....	....
Eighteen plots	 1	20.27	1.13	....	....

Now therefore the 137 separate holdings in this village are cut up into no less than 564 separate plots, i.e. each holding into four plots on an average. The average holding in this village is only 2.31 acres; and this small bit is owned by the pattadar in four different plots each 51 cents in extent. The average size of the plots as calculated from the average column in the above table is 62 cents.

The same thing can be illustrated by another set of figures. While the tables given above give the number of small bits in each holding, the following is compiled from the point of view of the size of the small plots.

Size of plots.	AVANAVADI.			NARIAMBADI.		
	Wet.	Dry.	Total	Wet.	Dry.	Total.
Between 10 & 25 acres ...	....	1	1	....	....	....
„ 5 & 10 „ ....	....	6	6	....	1	1
„ 3 & 5 „	1	9	10	....	8	8
„ 2 & 3 „	2	7	9	1	10	12
„ 1 & 2 „	25	26	51	4	56	60
„ $\frac{1}{2}$ & 1 „	35	26	61	20	109	129
„ $\frac{1}{4}$ & $\frac{1}{2}$ „	27	31	58	34	93	127
„ 10 & 25 cents	37	22	59	46	77	123
Below 10 cents	....	16	10	26	10	94
.....	....	....	281	....	....	564

Hence in Avanavadi village half the number of separate plots are less than half an acre in extent. The biggest plot in the village is curiously enough a dry plot, 15.06 acres in extent, assigned on darkhast, i.e. given free by the Government, to four people who own it jointly. There are 6 dry plots above 5 acres in extent, each being on an average 6.42 acres. The largest wet plot is 3.56 acres. There are only two other wet plots above 2 acres in extent; 25 between 1 and 2 acres; all the rest below 1 acre; and 75 per cent these are below $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre.

Similarly in Nariambadi village we have no wet plot above 2.5 acres in extent. The largest single plot is a dry field 5.65 acres in extent. Such an astounding percentage as 85.6 of the total number of plots is less than 1 acre. And about one fifths of the total are less than 10 cents. One can understand if these 104 plots are all at least wet; for it may be that a ten cent wet plot may be worth something; but what a ten cent plot of dry land is useful for, it is beyond one to see; and yet there are 94 such in the village. There are only two wet plots above two acres in extent; and four above one acre. Of the remaining 100 wet plots 20 are above $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre and the rest below it.

No further illustration of the extreme minuteness of the plots seems to be necessary.

(III) Scatteredness

THE third characteristic of our holdings is their scatteredness. That is to say the different bits constituting a holding are scattered all over the village. This is a natural result of the

minuteness illustrated above. This characteristic can be best illustrated only by maps. But in an article of this sort, it is not possible to include maps, (or to reproduce them). Hence I shall content myself with describing the distance of each of the different plots constituting one or two of the holdings in one of the villages selected, from one another and from the owner's residence.

Here then is a typical case.

Patta No. 31, of Avanavadi village: name of pattadar,—Kuppan.

His holding consists of the following bits:—

	S. No.	A. C.	Assessment. Rs. A.
Dry,	15/4	0 53	0 9
	16/5	0 2	0 1
	106/5	0 30	0 8
	106/14	1 52	2 6
	111/1	0 62	1 0
Wet,	142/5	0 80	1 4
	74/2	0 3	0 3
	134	1 3	7 13
	135/5	0 67	5 1
	136/2	0 14	1 1

Total 3.79 + 1.87 = 5.66; Rs. 19-14. assessment.

Note that he has a fairly large-sized holding—much above the average—taking the total area into consideration; that it is in 10 scattered plots; and that there is an isolated dry plot 2 cents in extent.

To understand the description of distances of each of the plots from others and from the man's house, one must have an idea of the geography of the village. The village lies from west to east. The western extremity is a tank called the Kil-palayatteri. to the east of its bund lies its *ayakat*, i.e. the land irrigated by it; consisting of Survey numbers 110 to 145. The drainage water of the *ayakat* flows to the Avanavadi Eri which lies to the east of the *ayakat*. Then lies the *ayakat* of the Avanavadi Eri, consisting of S. Nos. 20 to 85. The village site lies to the north of this *ayakat*. The dry fields of the village lie to the north and south of these two wet areas. To go from the village-site to the *ayaka*

of the Kil-palayatteri, (western extremity of the village), one has to go across the Avanavadi Eri, when that tank is dry; or go along the tank bund (north to south) and then along a foot path, if the tank has water. This distance is about a mile and a half.

Now then; Dry, 15/4 is very near the village site; and adjacent to it. 16/5 is also near the village site and adjacent to it. The distance between 15/4 and 16/5 is about 100 yards. 106/5, 106/14, and 111/1 are dry fields which lie to the south of the *ayakat* of the Kil-palayatteri; and about a mile away from the village; but lie within short distance, about 100 yards, from one another. 142/5 lies to the north of this same *ayakat* and about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from the three dry plots just mentioned.

Wet 74/2 lies in the *ayakat* of the Avanavadi Eri and is about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the village. The other three wet plots, 134, 135/5 and 136/2 lie in the tail-end of the *ayakat* of the Kil-palayatteri and near the foreshore of the Avanavadi Eri. In fact the chances of his getting enough water from the Kil-palayatteri are so few that the man has a well in S. No. 134 from which he irrigates not only 134 but also 135/5 and 136/2. Between 134 and 136, there is only one field, 136 which is about 100 yards broad. Hence he could take water from the well in 13, to 135/5 and 136/2, if he keeps in good terms with the owners of the other sub-divisions of 135.

So this man has his holding scattered in five different places—excluding S. Nos. 16/5 and 74/2 which are isolated minute plots not worth while considering as useful for anything. Fortunately the greater portion of the wet holding lie in and near the *ayakat* of Kil-palayatteri, and comparatively near each other, though far away from his house. Hence the man spends the greater part of his time in these fields, walks about 6 miles every day. He has to walk to and fro four times a day.

This is quite a typical instance. And many another instance can be given to prove the scattered nature of the holdings, but in the absence of a map mere descriptions are not likely to interest anybody. The disadvantages of this scattered nature of our agricultural holdings are well-known, and oft-discussed. This characteristic of the holdings goes a long way in rendering even fairly big-sized holdings, which would otherwise be economic, uneconomic.

We shall next see what is an economic holding; and then pass on to see how these three characteristics of the holdings render them uneconomic.

Athreya and Priya

By K. T. Krishnaswamy Ayyangar.

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth and every common sight
To me did seem,
Apparelled in Celestial light,
The Glory and freshness of a dream.

Wordsworth

It was dawn when the cock crew to the following of the wheels of Day. Mother Earth was still slumbering in the dark heavy folds of sleep and silence rested on earth and sky. When lo! the temple bells began to hum their morning chant,

"Bells of the Past, whose long-forgotten music

Still fills the wide expanse,

Tingeing the sober twilight of the Present

With colour of romance!"

and the winged birds of music born of wind and bell were dropping as flowers from a gently-shaken flower tree. And dancing round and round in circling delight, they chased their flying mates in all directions, as if shy of the earth, to woe in the lonely sky. Creation melted in the east into one harmony of light and life. The golden harp of the Universe was struck. Life quivered to sob and shed its love-song of the Eternal.

Mother Earth felt in her heart the gentle touch of the Lord's feet. The tinkling of the anklets made mute music, thrilling her every limb and tuning her throbbing heart to the falling of His feet. With flute in hand and dance in foot, He lifted his countenance and opened His eyes becoming with a myriad-rayed smile. The light of His eyes illumined the Universe and the dance of His feet set the world in motion. The eternal quest after the Flute-Lover began in weeping and joying, in laughter and tears.

Priya who had got up with the crow and the cock and adorned the house-front with *Kolum*, returned from the bathing tank, with bright and glittering vessels on her hip and hands

and with washed clothes on her shoulders. The next house grandmother wakes up the children, plaits their hair and sends them to the tank now echoing to the bathings and chantings of early risers. A noisy band of youngsters stroll thither. With mischievous minds and stoning hands, they spy on bird and beast. But it is the hollow-booming hiding wood-cock that catches their prying eyes. And now with hearts more intent on frivolous mirth than spiteful harm, they tease the poorbird with,

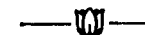
Reddy reddy wood-cock,
Yonder comes your Mother-in-law,
Run far and hide thy claw.

These words work like magic and set the timid bird hopping from branch to branch. But these noisy mischiefs, urged on by fearful monitions of the school master's knotty rod, run to the tank. In haste and spite they twist the meek and yielding banyan twig and cleaning their teeth, they tease the tank with stones and plunge into the splashing water. Some nip, some swim, some jump and the tank is set aroar with their mad pranks and gambols. It is good luck, the lazy grandmothers think, that sends the lads home alive. After a hurried cold-rice breakfast, with a thousand unavailing shifts and excuses they go to the school. Late are the boys, but later still is their teacher who comes on them like the wolf on a flock of timid and shying sheep.

Athreya returns from his morning round of widely-scattered fields, and answers every silly question of his aged mother and nods at her every little house-complaint, while his eyes dole stealthy excuses to his fond young wife by the door. Priya runs to the bubbling pot on the fire and prepares various Savoury viands of her own devices. Athreya is busy in many ways with a little devotional reading, a little accounts, a little sleep and a little household work. His mother, now grown through her advancing age more politic towards heaven, and hence more diligent in prayers, sits devout in the corner and mumbles "The Thousand Names", issuing orders at the same time to Athreya and Priya, observe the cow-herd and the servant-maid, while her sharp critical eye through the window the little breaches of etiquette of the forward and talkative girl of the next house.

The Sun has come right overhead and it is time for the street boys to come for mid-day. They come and take food and return to school. But Athreya's home looks empty and bare. He and his mother sit alone for food in his little home, little because not full with children. There is only one desire and one prayer in all three Priya, Athreya and his mother. The Sun, the moon and the beauty of the earth, says the mother "What are they for without a darling for my Athreya?" All their delights and joys are only in promise for the little one in the desire of their parent hearts. The tedious afternoon hours whose loneliness is drowned in heavy sleep pass wearily on and again each is set busy on the evening round of duties which brings the day to a close. The setting sun summons the men to evening prayers at the tank and reminds the mothers of their worship at the temple. Athreya returns home with pious hopes, after long and unusually protracted prayers at the tank. His hope is a light on his path illumining every object his eyes behold, and gladdening every word his lips utter. He prostrates before his mother and in her glad and ready benediction mingles the blessing of all the parental spirits of the home.

"In the lap of the deathless Spirit who rules
Our home you have been nursed for ages."



STRAY THOUGHTS

If you have a disagreeable duty to do at twelve o'clock, do not blacken nine and ten and all between with the colour of twelve. Do the work of each, and reap your reward in peace. So when the dreaded moment in the future becomes the present, you shall meet it walking in the light, and that light shall overcome darkness.

* * *
In all things throughout the world the men who look for the crooked will see the crooked, and the men who look for the straight will see the straight.

* * *
Be what your friends think you are; avoid being what your enemies say you are; go right forward and be happy.

* * *
The world usually pushes a man the way he makes up his mind to go. If going up, they push him up; if going down, they push him down—gravitation, however, making the speed greater on the decline.



By T. P. Santanam.

WHAT do Government Servants do after they retire from service? Generally they die soon after that event, but the few who survive die sometime later. Meanwhile they lead a religious life—whatever may have been the Department under Government, in which they served. Retired Police officers are said to be extra-fervently religious but we are not in possession of facts and figures to prove or disprove the statement. Few Revenue officials retire at all, as they generally die of die-abetes before they reach that retiring age. But a few Deputy collectors do manage to reach that age and as they cannot all of them become Ministers they generally make themselves useful as Honorary Magistrates or as Presidents of Honorary Magistrates' Benches. Tahsildars who never rise to be Deputy Collectors live longer and spend their retirement in religious study. But if they have grown-up sons they take interest in University Education and unemployment problems. If they have a large family they have to be content with sending for the Tri-weekly edition of a daily Newspaper. If they are 'non-Brahmin's they sometimes lend the weight of their support to the "Justice" party and are members of Reception Committees connected therewith.

Retired Judges feel interested in social, religious and educational problems. In recognition of this last, namely educational aspect of their activities, they are asked to preside over the functions of the local High School and the elementary schools of the place in which they spend the days of their retirement. On these occasions they talk of their personal reminiscences and of locally famous missionary educationists of their days. They bewail the deterioration of educational standards in the present day and go into raptures over *Bain's Grammar*, *Walton's Synthesis* and *Shephard's Manual*. If they are very old they talk of the benefits of British Rule and mention personal experiences of bullock-cart travelling.

Educational officers, like Revenue officials, do not retire either. The few who do so write elementary text-books and pass away before they could publish them.



Retired Engineers supervise building construction.

Retired Registrars lead religious lives too but they are not without their hobbies. Though generalisations are not easily possible, one cannot escape the conjecture that their hobbies are astronomy, astrology, clairvoyance, hypnotism and occult healing. Why these hobbies should be attributed to them the writer cannot explain. His own experience has irresistibly forced the conjecture on him and fresh news in this connection every day strengthens his conjecture.

Doctors of medicine when they retire from Government

service continue to be doctors; only they have more time now to play bridge, billiards and tennis.

Retired Engineers philanthropically supervise the building construction work of charitable institutions. The less philanthropic among them build their own new-fashioned houses in old-fashioned villages.

Litigation in connection with the newly purchased lands or houses absorbs a few retired officers. A few others attend to the previously postponed domestic affairs, marriages being most important among them. The un-encumbered among them undertake travels either as tourists or as pilgrims and spend their last days in contentment and in peace and harmony with all—except perhaps one or two impolite Railway servants.

—❖❖❖— A Vision of India

By Moolchand Deomal.

INDIA, the land of Gods—the land blest by all-embracing bounties of nature. The heaven-kissing Himalayas on the north, ocean south, west and east isolating her from the influence of outside “evils”—thus in her Himalaya-hedged-in and sea-girt kingdom, Goddess India reigned in glory. Her kingdom of fauna and flora, her mines of mineral—jewels and gold—her zephyrs and “zoo” her people and their pyramidal achievements in every domain of thought and life set India ablaze with the efflorescence of her civilization when the world was sunk in cimmerian darkness. Her religion—Adwaitic Monism—1 Seat of Siva—Auspiciousness in all—(even modern science cannot shatter, nay has set about to circumnavigate its citadel which is uncircumnavigable “Neti,” “Neti,”) her philosophy before which the world “is constrained to bend the knee,” her arts and science—2 pronounced as paragon of perfection even by

1. See the writers “Radha’s Lament” in Prabuddha Bharata, January 1921.

2. The Hindus were Spinozites 2000 years before Spinoza was born, they were Darwinians centuries before Darwin, they were evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution was accepted by the scientists of our time and before any word like evolution existed in any other language of the world—Sir Monier Williams and other European savants.

people other than Indian—these treasures that tongue-tie the human mind in awe, treasures of her divine Rishis *Si monumentam quaris circumspice* India of old was dowered with.

But India was insular in her august individuality.

Nevertheless the flotsam and jetsam of her gems of thoughts and things floated to other lands across the ocean and beyond the borders of India. And history quivers to record the chequered career that became her lot. Her neighbours from the north-west fired by their cupidity came in quick succession and pounced upon her peacock thrones. Allauddin invaded India and charged on Chitore to possess the pearl of Padmini—the pearl that threw herself on the pyre to preserve and save the honour of India. *Mirable dictu* Aurangzeb endeavoured to engulf India in Islam and impose his militarism upon her mentality, but this fared the fate of his forefathers. The august Akbar ruled with redoubtable power cum compassionate care to consolidate an incomparable empire, but he too is lost on the loom of time and there is now not a “memento” of a living Moghul in manifestation. Then *soi-disant* scions of sacerdotal and defunct dynasties essayed to dominate India but effaced themselves in the effort. All powers from far and near wooed India, sang serenades on her shores but among themselves were jilted in their love for the Indian Juliet. At last the Bengin Powers banned the old that was selfish and sordid individualistic and iconoclastic and brought the British on the scene. And the curtain dropped on old effete aristocracies and meretricious monarchies. The art of peaceful penetration began and the advocates of equality established themselves on a scale unparalleled in the history of the country before. The old order changed, yielding place to the new. But a century and a half and India is seen seething in a mighty upheaval in history. Revolution, religious and economic, social and moral charged with a keen chagrin at her *status quo* is riddling her being. And I was immersed in a cogibundity of cogitation at the crux in the situation. I implored the Sovereign Power with whose “electric chain we are all darkly bound” for light, for easing the insoluble enigma. Presently light irradiated my obtuse understanding.

Like "Trailing clouds of glory" came His grace. I became somnolent, but this I clearly perceived was the abeyance of my earth-consciousness, for spiritually I was awake and the eye of my spirit saw the silhouette of India. The etherial elusive form of Hind Devi holding a trident, discus, lyre and a conch-shell surrounded midst masses of clouds shot with gold on a blue black-ground bejewelled with stars broke upon my vision, and spake as follows—

O My child; whence thy craven spirit, the dire despondency? I am Krishna's queen, of immemorial age, mother of all that is the greatest, the grandest, the noblest and the most magnificent in all the lands. I transcend all as the Himalayas overtop high and low mountains of the world. All other nations of modern notions are the mushroom growth of yesterday. The Child Christ, the Babe in Glory bathed, I held in my lap. Mahomed the Message-Bearer I saw on the yonder land rearing his noble edifice to my own. Zoroaster that Child of the Pure Light beheld my ageless self but the other day. And Confucius, Moses, but what more of these Children of Light, all gravitated to the God in Me and assimilated in part my parables and the Great Gospel. But far far back unto ages there is no count of in history my shining ones Atri, Angiras, Kapila, and Yagnavalkya lived—then there was one casteless Truth alone then my Love lived in this His Wonderland. By the law of rotation of His Will, the golden age of my kingdom had rolled away. Then silver and copper times succeeded. They had had their bloom and like all time ended: their lotuses withered in the midwinter of their being. Then my own came again and blessed me with His Wondrous Feats, He the Slayer of Kamsa and now my kingdom mellowed with age, was overshadowed with the evils of approaching Kali. Things were at sixes and sevens. New kingdoms rose and fell. See how their ruins cumber the land and what gruesome tale history tells. Then my Krishna brought the British unto me. They revived the resources of my land, galvanised with new life the patiently suffering people of my country and entwined and inter-related my kingdom—albeit with the ninth letter of their alphabet in the forefront—with other coun-

tries. These British have been appointed to inaugurate and achieve the lost political solidarity of my peoples and thus pave way for my mission—of welding mankind into Spiritual Oneness—the sole mission of myself. See the ferment in the land. What a solvent is working to dissolve selfish divisions and demarcations. The unitive consciousness is growing and ultimately my growing child you will see that there shall be but one race, one caste, one colour, one creed comprehending the all. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, shall I say as my Child-Christ echoed with the chorus of my children? Nay more. Ekamevadvitiyam. And towards the Spiritual Unity I with my Lord am leading ye all. The unrest in manifold manifestation, the divine discontent with life engulfed in Gargantuan materialism, the yearning of your souls for the breath of Freedom are like your National Self rock-seated in Me shedding its chrysalis to be free. This intense unappeasable longing is making overtures to that glorious moment—is the prophecy of fulfilment—of the promised millennium in my land. And that destiny I am working up to through my erring children. Mistake ye not. All will worship at my altar again. For this list, work coolheadedly and realize your august estate with the world's apostles of Freedom: let self-help be your watch-work and unflagging faith in Him the perennial source of your power and be assured no power on earth can withstand or baulk your National Birth-Right.

The Goddess then fiddled the following fairy song waving her hand to the east and the west:—

The core of my being is Krishna, My heart is Hari,
Why fret fume, fight ye, why worry,
Sustain your love-lade hearts, all ye together'll go,
To equality's Elysium past petty ego,
And there meet all holy desires of your heart,
And chant glories of the Glorious Lord.

The vision faded. Down came I in the matter-of-fact world. But alas what scepticism of the ultimate aim? But in this temporary obfuscation of the issue now agitating the country there is the writing on the wall.

The world of camouflage is vanishing.
The old order is crumbling to give birth to the New
Era—of Oriental and Occidental At-One-Ment.
And the mighty mission of India of ushering the
Kingdom of Heaven on earth bides its time.

The Walking Stick

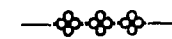
By S. V. Vijaya Raghavachari, B.A.

WALKING stick puzzles us. As we were one day idly standing at the Broadway junction lazily contemplating the surging crowd of humanity scuttling past us hither and thither, the thought suddenly struck us, Oh! the walking sticks! We could never come across a man without a walking stick, any more than without nose or eyes. We peeped into whizzing motor cars and in each of which whizzed four men—and four walking sticks. We got into a bus, squeezing nine passengers, and with them we squeezed nine walking sticks. We boarded a tramcar and there it was the same, carrying shoals of passengers and shoals of walking sticks. It was everywhere a man and a walking stick. And perhaps the only place where we missed it was inside the Museum. Which was due to the idiotic gate-peon. A co-visitor said something to us which suggested that the gate-peon was not so much idiotic as Satanic, for seducing people into bartering away their manhood for a tiny disc of numbered brass.

Yes, the walking stick puzzles us. We could never diagnose its need in the human organism anymore than the physiologist, the vermiform appendix. We successfully appraised the stiff collar, starched fronts, green waist-coats and all that sort of man's external appendage, but not a walking stick. We sometimes speculated that, perhaps, man, when he emerged from his monkey ancestry appended the walking stick for having forgotten the tail; and at the thought, we looked ourselves silly to be walking amphibiously about without a tail or the walking stick. And yet it cannot be. We have always read that Adam delved and Eve span; but nowhere that Adam ever balanced himself on a walking stick. The history of our ancestors, a hundred years ago, reveals the walking stick only as a helpful organ for a man with a foot in the grave, but nowhere do we find it an

attribute of youth and manhood. Without doubt walking stick belongs to the later evolution in human progress; and if one should be scientifically inclined, apparently man carried it about him as an emblem to impress on his neighbour the latest theory of the survival of the fittest.

It has become the fashion, especially after the War, with some unscientific and unimaginative folk to be banging into us that man has gone back to his savage instincts. If that were the way man is drifting, it is as sensible as saying that man, because he cannot stick a tail in the back has to stick the walking stick in the front. But the matter will at once be set at rest by the fact that a monkey never carried about him as many useless things as the twentieth century man, a circumstance which sets it clear that man has absolutely no danger of becoming a savage. The savagery of a monkey lay in its tail though useless but the civilisation of man certainly rests on the walking stick even if expletive.



Worship and Humility

By S. Sivasuri, M.A.

THOW art everywhere and about me. The thrill of the new leaves as the wind kisses them in spring, the gorgeous colours that flowers wear to woo winged visitors, and even the tremble of the mellow autumn leaves, half willing like man, himself to drop to Earth and die, are all Thy manifestations. The other day even mother Earth beneath my feet swayed a little as if with joy. Thy hand was there; I could imagine it engaged in the useful task of blotting out useless bits of land and rearing up new oceans. These and other sights infect me with joy, much against my grain and the cynic in me for the moment hides his head. I feel happy somehow and if Poesy yet lives in a heart that has pumped itself dry by too frequent response to inevitable sorrows, she may get inspired a bit and sing Thy praise. But is praising you equal to worshipping you? I believe not.

A slender Parijata-tree grows beside my gate. It hides its flowers from the fierce gaze of the Sun and opens them wide on the approach of night—small white flowers with mild fragrance. Purbblind moths flock to feed on their honey. When day dawns again, the tree sheds all its nightly glories and stands humble and bare as before. Anon a worshipper comes along, gathers up the cast-off-jewels of my Parijata and goes to ornament thy image in a near by temple. This is true sacrifice. The Law of sacrifice is as much in vogue in the universe as the Law of Evolution, only it is less easily seen and less widely advertised. There are laws and laws which derive their sanction from Thee. But is knowing them equivalent to knowing Thee? No. They merely make me open-mouthed with astonishment. The mechanism of thy realm is not thyself.

The scriptures say "Thou art in me" though I don't feel thy presence. There is a thing called conscience, which rebels at certain things and points me a warning finger on occasions. It is probably thyself in the guise of the policeman. Indeed you often direct the traffic of my thoughts and haul up for punishment rash driving in wrong directions. I know thy baton too which nails my wrongs on the counter of my memory and makes retrospection a painful rather than a pleasant process. But conscience is not always an infallible sentry. It is often out-witted by Intellect—that nimble but wayward faculty which can play plenty of tricks with logic and never appear the worse for it. Like the budget-framer that juggles with figures to show a deficit or a surplus as he chooses, it can justify wrong on ingenious principles with as much ease as it can condemn right. Conscience is often not clever enough to prove its pretensions and bombast. Art thou in my conscience? Probably thou art; and the best way to worship thee is to obey its voice. But what is to be done with the arrogant head that muffles it on occasions and leads me astray? Probably thou art there also, inciting it to rebel and inducing a conflict good for my spiritual anatomy.

Lores exist which initiate one into Bramahgnana, but where is the Guru that will teach me. "Amayantu Brahmacharina

Swaha"—is the best of prayers I can conceive of in the whole range of Upanishads. Given a Guru, any true pupil must achieve his salvation. But a Guru is as much Thy gift as anything else. Thou knowest best who deserves him and who not. Perhaps my deserts are insignificant and the best means adopted to deserve a Guru constitute probably one method of Thy worship.

To command a worshipful frame of mind is indeed a difficult matter. When I want to humble myself into a tiny live bit of organised dust, old old sorrows troop in from the backwoods of my memory and loudly cry out for Thy mercy. Against my will, they make me look like a "shorn lamb." Emotions which should be dead and buried get mummified without my knowing it, and stalk in ghost-like to disgrace the purity of my humbleness. For do they not place me on a par with the beggar that knows not how to appeal to human pity except by exposing an old pestering sore? Surely I want to gain Thy grace, but not on the score of old sorrows borne or old inflictions endured. Even granting Thyself hath inflicted the strokes, is it not silly on my part to perpetuate the bumps on my back in order to force Thy mercy and what is worse force myself into a worshipful attitude? Thy mercy should come free and my humility should be likewise.

Like a good soldier, a healthy mind rarely boasts its scars. If sorrows have cut deep ruts on it it is true manliness to cover them up and show a cheerful front and readiness to receive the furrow once again. True humility springs from true manliness.

Humility must possess the soul unsought. It must not need a push from old sorrows to set it going. Even present sorrows should not interfere with its spontaneity. What should inspire this quality is profound gratitude mingled with ecstatic affection and since the latter is by itself a limit-less virtue, humility has no bounds. A man may weight his soul with devotion and drop it into the depths of humility to plumb them. But it can never touch the bottom; the weight is always found too light.



The Cape to Brindaban

A Pilgrim's Impressions—VI—Sri Kasi

By K. R. R. Sastry, M.A.

WHEN will I have the rare honour of bathing in the Holy Ganges?—is the yearning of every Hindu. Tradition has grown round this sacred locality from pre-historic times. How Bhagiratha for generations tried to bring Ganges from Heaven, how only Rudra could hold the Ganga in his locks of hair, and how Ganges had her incarnation as Bhagirathi, after this strenuous devotee—is what every Hindu has learnt from his dear mother in moments of desolation.

To come to historic times the story round Gangaikondam and another pious pilgrim is green in our minds. Whatever element of historical truth underneath these later stories, it is the insatiable ambition of every pious Hindu to have a dip in the thrice-sacred Ganges before he crosses this veil of existence.

To Varanasi

The golden turrets of Aurangzeb's mosque as also the numberless golden *Stupas* of temples, the solemn flow of the water over which play a number of boats, the characteristic scene of indigenous umbrellas underneath each of which wait a panda, the imposing view of the Indoor ghat and the splendour of the Nepalese temple—all these constitute a picturesque view from the Railway Bridge, fully substantiating the epithet of the "Gorgeous East."

Getting down at the Benares Cantonment Station, one comes across another funny conveyance called "Ekka" with a horse like Desingu's Neelaveni may carry you to Heaven itself if you so desire. The dusty road south of the Ry. Station is as the road of the Cantonment on the other, is scrupulously narrow congested streets on the average 3 to 4 feet broad, three to four-storeyed buildings peering up, are a feature with

3.

THE CAPE TO BRINDABAN 160663

The Holy Bath

THOUGH there are as many as 32 holy ghats, Manikarni ghat easily bears off the palm. My first bath at the Ganges had the most welcome effect of appeasing my hunger. Within one hour, not less than six dead bodies were waiting to have the long-yearned for cremation at this ghat. The rich may have a complete cremation, the less fortunate men have their ill-burnt bodies dragged and dipped into the Ganges for ever. It affords an interesting theme to the chemical examiner as also to the casual observer to test the properties of Ganges water which, in spite of ages of this practice continues her endless flow free from bad smell. I leave it to the diver with special training in Mathematics to count the number of dead bodies within the bosom of Ganga.

To Lord Viswanatha

WITH holy Ganga water and a collection of flowers, we begin our march to the temple. After passing through many narrow streets we enter through a small gate no bigger than the first gate in our houses, Sri Viswanatha's temple. One will have to look in vain for the vast corridors, heavenward bound madils and gopurams at Kasi. The small golden gopura of Sri Viswanatha is mainly the gift of Ahalya Bai of Indoor. The holy of holies is never closed against us. We see already more than six pilgrims busy sprinkling Ganga water over the great Linga of Viswanatha. We embrace the Linga while we perform the worship. Such freedom of worship through direct contact with the great Viswanatha is a rare experience for the South Indian Brahmin.

The Gnana-Vapi and its Lesson

Within this small temple towards the left of the single prakaram, our attention is drawn to a well called Gnana-Vapi—(The well of wisdom) into which the old Linga of Viswanatha was dropped by a Panda while the orthodox and no less conscientious Aurangzeb ordered the mosque to be erected *en bloc* above the Hindu foundations. There is not even a wall to separate Viswanatha's temple from Aurangzeb's mosque, which to this day has its dome crushing its weight on the finely worked Hindu madils.

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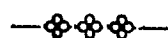
When I seriously think over this situation along with the manly bearing of Northern Hindus who love the cow a thousand times more intensely than us all—make deteriorated Southerners—I am not over-sanguine about the loudly talked-of unity.

Visalakshi's Temple

THANKS to the efforts of a Nattukkottai Chetty Visalakshi's temple has been renovated with good stone-work here and there. After paying our respects to Lord Bhairava, one gets ready to see the Taj at Agra.

A visit to the Hindu University, the monumental work of pious Malavyaji, is sure to get us into the company of South Indians which one so badly needs in such a place. Freedom of worship and reverence for the cow—these are the lessons for the weak Southerner from his manly brother at Kasi.

• (To be continued)



Tagore through South-Indian Eyes

By L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar, B.A. B.L.

AT this time when the claims of Rabindranath Tagore to represent the type of the synthetic neo-Indian genius has received recognition all over India, books which aim at popularising the genius of this great writer amongst South Indian readers through the medium of the South Indian vernaculars should meet with a hearty reception from all men alike for more reasons than one. Not the least weighty amongst such reasons is the fact—too sadly ignored amidst the political turmoils and conflicting passions of the present day—that failure to acquaint oneself with this poet's genius would not only be a mere

sacrifice of literary or artistic enjoyment but besides would, in these preliminary stages of our budding nationhood, be a sheer dereliction of duty to our common Mother. Attempts to familiarise South Indian readers with Rabindranath's genius through the Vernaculars themselves have till a recent date only been very few, and so the enthusiastic efforts of a small band of writers in the Malayalam language to popularise the great poet in our province deserves to be welcomed all the more heartily. The attitude of the kupa—Manduk which makes us rest content with our provincial things, clinging on with parochial pride to the ephemeral productions of our province is, in the field of literature as in all other fields an intellectual aberration which should have disappeared long ago from our midst but unfortunately has not done so. The number of Malayalam scholars or literary men who have cast their looks outside the restricted horizon of our province had, down till a recent time, been too insignificant to be of any value or force in enlarging the intellectual sweep of the reading public of Malabar. Of late, however, this parochial exclusiveness shows signs of welcome diminution, and the foremost poet of Malabar, Vallathol himself does not fight shy of themes and ideas foreign to those which had hitherto been in time-honoured vogue in Malabar. The literature of our province would only grow in virility and popularity if the efforts of the literary men of our province were co-ordinated with, and derived their inspiration from, the literary spirit and tendencies in other parts of India, for there is no denying the fact that, as the basic fundament on which Indian national culture (of whatever province it may be) rests, is Sanskritic, the mutual relationship existing amongst the various provincial literatures of India is close enough to allow of a useful and healthy interchange of literary ideals and incentives. The appeal made by Mr. James Cousins for the founding of an Indian Academy of Letters deserves therefore to be taken up with greater enthusiasm by the literary public than is at present displayed. An academy of this kind would, besides being useful in cementing the literary relationships of the provinces, pave the way for unity in other directions too.

Those books about Tagore, therefore, that have appeared in

the South Indian Vernaculars, apart from their intrinsic excellence, merit our commendation in so far as they help the widening of the literary outlook of our provinces. It is true that the literature of translations has always had only a subsidiary value but its usefulness in the development of the literary spirit of a language especially in the earlier stages and in enriching it with foreign ideas which would form the seeds of growth afterwards, can never be over-estimated. Translations of Tagore's works in the Malayalam language, therefore, possess a great value of their own, and no Indian provincial literary spirit is worthier of being transplanted in Malabar than the Bengali literary spirit. Here indeed can the literary public of Malabar echo the sentiments contained in Tagore's lines :—

"Surey Surey Vashi purey

Morey aro aro aro das !"

"Filling the pipe with ever-new tunes

Give us more, and more, and ever more !"

It is really a sad fact to note that the poet's genius has suffered an eclipse for some time past. The literary works of the poet have been decried in various places as too thin and as being full of un-understandable mysticism. The causes for this unpopularity are, in my opinion, to be traced to different motives and conditions. There are politicians who cry down his work because he does not subscribe to the principles of their respective political creeds; there are others who see no mark of greatness in his works because their insufficient cultural equipment has prevented them from penetrating the chamber of his genius; there are others again who steeped in Sanskrit lore obstinately refuse to recognise anything great in modern works; and lastly there are still others who not knowing how to approach Tagore's genius for a proper understanding of the same, make frantic wrong attempts and give up all hope of comprehending his genius.

In the 102nd verse of the English "Gitanjali" the poet has himself given a reply to all his critics :—

"I boasted among men that I had known you. They see

your pictures and failing to recognise you, blame me and go away in Scorn—And you sit there smiling.

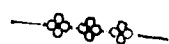
"I put my tales of you into lasting songs. The secret gushes out from my heart. They come and ask me, "Tell me all your meanings." I know not how to answer them. I say, "Ah! who knows what they mean!" They smile and go away in utter scorn. And you sit there smiling!"

This is indeed the poet's answer, satisfactory enough from the poet's point of view but it is doubtful if the critics would feel satisfied with it. The best answer to the first set of critics (described above) would be that the world of literature would cease to be what it is, if political prejudices and predilections were imported into, or allowed to influence literary estimates. The second set of critics need no answer except that they should not try to sit in judgment on literary compositions unless they equip themselves with all the necessary intellectual attainments. To the third set of critics we say that they should avail themselves of the earliest opportunity to thoroughly revise their criteria of critical judgment. It is quite possible that one can admire the genius of Kalidas and Tagore without decrying the one or the other. The last set of critics suffer, not from want of mental equipment or from prejudices, but from want of proper guidance in their attempts to understand Rabindranath. The beginner, beguiled by the phenomenal popularity of the English "Gitanjali" in the West, hopes to unbar the doors of this poet's genius by initially tackling "Gitanjali," entirely forgetful of the fact that all these reasons for which Gitanjali fascinated the West may not convey any appeal to the Indian reader. The best recommendation that we could make to such people is that they should begin the study of Tagore not at the wrong end with Gitanjali but in the only way in which the poet's genius could be approached, viz. with the short stories and a preliminary study of the first principles of the poet's views on life of which "Gitanjali" is the culmination and the highest expression. Of the three short stories themselves there are three different types the long novels like the "Gora," "Chokher Bali" (Eye-sore and "Nouka-Dubi" (the wreck); the short stories some of the best

of which are "Kabubwallah," "Living or Dead," "Elder sister" etc, and the Kothikas or storiettes many of which have been translated by me in several previous numbers of "Everymans Review." There are critics who are of opinion that the stories of Rabindranath Tagore alone would entitle him to a distinguished place in literature.

After having read the short stories and tales, the student of Rabindranath should turn to some of the smaller poems and dramatic pieces of the poet such as "Sacrifice" "Chitrangada" "Raja O Rani," etc. It is only after one has well studied these works of the poet and equipped himself with a sympathetic perspective that one should try to read "Gitanjali" or "Gardener."

The ecstatic admiration of Tagore expressed by some of the budding writers of Kerala—welcome voices of praise that make themselves distinct amidst the shout of ridicule and condemnation—leads us to wish that these writers would soon learn the original language of the poet and thus try to see the main light itself instead of contenting themselves with imperfect reflections of the original through a foreign medium. The inspiration which writers in Malabar could gain from a study of the original compositions of this poet would be infinitely greater than if they were to study the English translations only.



The Way Down Avernus OR The Way of Transgressors

By "Kitta"

VISWANATHAN was a fair young man and a Student in a Madras College. He was no doubt an intelligent man and he was not without ambitions. Like any other young man at that stage, Viswanadhan could fancy himself quite a hero dreaming of his future greatness now dormant in the womb

of time. He was married to the daughter of a high placed official. Ramaswami Aiyer had been a distinguished graduate of the University and he was recruited directly to the Provincial Police Service. Ramaswami Aiyar's daughter was a well-bred, well-fed and good-looking girl. When she became Viswanadhan's wife, she was transfigured in his fervent imagination into an angel whose very presence would be a privilege to feel. Viswanadhan and Minakshi grew up in years and seemed the happiest couple on earth. Minakshi was endowed with qualities that wear well in this world. The most dutiful of wives, her innate goodness was such that her unselfish conduct evoked endless praises from all the members of her husband's family to whom she had endeared herself by untiring service within the home.

Viswanadhan was also a very loving husband. He took great pains to cultivate his wife's mind. But whether by the imperviousness of Minakshi or by the gradual slackening of enthusiasm in Viswanadhan the idea of educating Minakshi at home in the knowledge of books was given up after a time. But the husband continued nevertheless to adore his wife as ardently as ever. Her golden heart was more than recompense for her intellectual defects.

She was the kindest of hostesses and her sympathy for the poor and the distressed was spontaneous and real. Viswanathan was apt to consider and praise his wife's qualities of the heart, as they were like the qualities of the head. Since the days of early girlhood Menakshi had changed somewhat in her appearance. Her features looked less attractive and a tendency to fat rendered her appearance ridiculous sometimes. Unkind critics among the relations used to own to a certain amusement when they beheld Viswanathan's gallantries and general solicitude to his wife.

II

LIKE many another young man, Viswanathan passed through a crisis of sex affectations at the time of entering manhood. He bore his share of yielding to the devil for a time but he was quickly recovered. The marriage was an important circumstance.

It filled him with a golden dream and he was weaned completely from all that was base. But temptations did not spare him at later periods. He was studying medicine in Madras when he came into intimate relations with an Indian Christian girl who was also a student of medicine. Beatrice belonged to the Catholic faith and came of very respectable parentage. She was strangely fascinated by Viswanathan and showed marked partiality to him. This was also viewed with much jealousy by the other students, the Indian Christian section of which believed that Viswanathan was the devil incarnate. Beatrice was highly imaginative. As she was passing into womanhood she dreamed of the partner she would have in life. A young man, a little older than herself, who preceded her in the university course by two years had become her chosen in her heart. But alas, Death took him away and Beatrice was filled with sadness. The world was to her wild and barren of all that was sweet and happy. Other men were indeed who would have made her happy by marriage but, they were all such contemptible competitors. Her own academical attainment gave her a standard to judge her would be partner which proved difficult to satisfy. Viswanathan who was two years her senior at the medical college was the idol of her heart. Who could be more handsome, and more sweet mannered than Viswanathan? Who could be more accomplished more intelligent and wise than Viswanathan? Her eyes glowed with admiration for him and admiration passes with adequate response into affection. It was bliss to have Viswanathan into her confidence, she thought. She would pour the tale of her troubles into his ear and seek his counsel and consolation. Viswanathan was no doubt getting into closer intimacy with her every day but as a married man he would disabuse Beatrice of all possible false hopes. Beatrice's warmth of feeling often fell flat upon him and she reproved him for inertness. She looked to Viswanathan as to a true brother and needed his true love to bear her in her troubles. There was much uncertainty between the two young people, or at least as far as Viswanathan was concerned. 'Brother' and

'brotherly love' were to him perfect shams intended only to conceal the natural attraction between a young man and a young woman thrown together with much common intellectual attainment and taste to electrify their mutual relationship. He said to himself that man was by instinct polygamous, and if Meenakshi made a good wife at home, there was no reason why he should discard other attractive women who came in his way. Bernard Shaw said, "Do not do unto others as you would they should unto you, for tastes differ." The simple heart of Beatrice felt puzzled as Viswanathan poured this maxim on her. At last an opportunity occurred when Viswanathan and Beatrice got to know each other better. Beatrice had of course a value in Viswanathan's eyes which Meenakshi could never attain. Beatrice was the splendid combination of East and West: she was a brown beauty and she had imbibed the best culture of the west. What is more fascinating in India than a good looking educated woman who can hold her own with the educated male section?

Romance came in Viswanathan's way. Beatrice bade Viswanathan, on the strength of a fraternal attachment which looked like the confident command issued to an adoring lover, accompany her one afternoon to a fairly cut of the way graveyard. The day was sacred to the memory of Beatrice's chosen who had departed this world a year previously.

In the loveliness of the grave-yard Viswanathan was responsive. He told Beatrice he was guilty of a trespass but their loves would be like that of birds, free and romantic. Beatrice sighed and she shed tears. Her burning lips were pressed with kisses and she looked to Viswanathan's sympathy. She told her lot, how a brute of a man loved her desperately and pined to have her and how she out of sheer sympathy was obliged to accept him.

Events cleared up yet later. There was no harm, Beatrice thought, in kisses and embraces. But Viswanathan had not the same innocence. If a woman allowed herself to be kissed, he had read in a book, she would allow more. He was convinced that his love for her was criminal and yet passable. He behaved with the ardour of a new lover, and gifts and tokens were

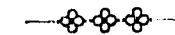
received by Beatrice. She was startled sometimes by these gifts, for she dreaded the possibility of a rift in Visvanathan's love for his own wife, which was indeed one of the bright qualities in him that specially elicited admiration from Beatrice.

Time wore on and Beatrice and Visvanathan drifted apart. Beatrice was reconciled to a dark brute and was happy, Meenakshi knew not the guilty kisses on Visvanathan's lips, and was happy with him. Visvanathan looked with regret on the period of intimacy with Beatrice for he had yielded, without any effort to resist, to the temptations that came in his way. He believed that Beatrice lessened her esteem of Visvanathan after she had known him at close quarters. She dreaded him like fire for the future and lived her life of copy-book maxims undisturbed. Visvanathan felt pained with the injury he had done to his soul. He was too animal-like and short-sighted to issue out a crisis of trial with honours to himself. There was another irreparable injury which Visvanathan bewailed. The period of excitement owing to Beatrice had synchronised with the time of an important competition for the prizes of life, and Visvanathan had lost. The memory of this brought to him daily and endless pain. Not however that he was without consolation. The patience and untiring goodness of Meenakshi shed peace and serenity on his domestic life, and he knew that whatever misfortune came over him, he had a true help-mate. The highest ideal of life has been described as a victory, a victory of the good over the evil. Are we to drift purposeless on earth, living like the "pig in the sensual sty?" If we cannot discern truly the innumerable hosts of the devil and put them to defeat we are reduced to the level of the basest. Life is a struggle, an evolution and a continual process of purification. By killing the baser desires we march towards serenity and divinity. Love is not love if it runs counter to the highest ideals of life, to the true spirit of universal brotherhood where individual monopolies and jealousies should be completely erased. Beatrice had somewhat helped Visvanathan to extend his vision. When vanity puffed up Visvanathan with the consciousness of being the chosen confident of Beatrice, he grew uneasy when Beatrice beamed her natural goodness

equally on others. Beatrice had noted this and remarked on Visvanathan's jealousy. Then he grew ashamed of himself and knew what it was to come near a living example of noble idealism. Life offered far greater things than the satisfactions of the flesh. He who would bid for the greater joys should necessarily deny himself the paltrier ones.

Were man but formed to feed?
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast :
Such feasting ended, then
Is more to an end to men ;

The love of man should grow into ever-widening circles. Sacred is the love of the mother, the love of sisters and brothers and sacred is marital love. What would marital or sexual love be reduced to if it meant the chaining of the human soul to the love of the grossly sexual ?



The Religion of the Ancient Tamils

PART I CHAPTER III

Its Source—and How to Trace it

By the late Mudaliar S. Sabaratnam, J. P.

BEFORE attempting to trace the source of the religion of the Tamils, I think it desirable to have some idea of the origin of religion in general i.e., to decide the question in the first place whether the religion is natural or supernatural—whether religion evolved in the natural course of things out of human thought, or whether it was given by God in a supernatural manner—provided of course we all believe in the existence of God. If the existence of God is admitted, can we say that He left us alone in this national plane without giving a religion for

our guidance? I have treated this subject at some length in my paper on "Evolution of Religion" and I therefore think it unnecessary to reiterate my arguments once more. I have made it clear in that paper that religion must have been originally given by God and that the different forms in which it is now found to prevail in the world must have evolved out of the original religion. I have classified for this purpose the religions of the world into three grades viz:—(1) Supernatural (2) Natural and (3) Artificial.

Supernatural religion being the one given by God with its different phases,

Natural religions being the different interpretations put on the different phases of the supernatural religion and other changes brought on the religion by natural causes,

Artificial religions being those formulated by human agencies, the question has now to be asked to which of these groups the religion of the Tamils belongs. Different opinions have been expressed on the subject and these opinions themselves may be classified under three main heads viz.,

- (1) the views of the Critics
- (2) the views of the Aryans
- (3) the views of the Tamils themselves

1. The critics, whose main object is to run down every religion other than their own, think that the religion of the Tamils—or at least its early form—was a gruesome type of worship peculiar to the primitive people. The critics try to maintain that the religion of the Tamils was a natural religion of a barbarous type, and for the matter of this, they are even prepared to deprive religion of its divine origin, and argue that it evolved out of human thought, the religion of the ancient Tamils having been one of the earliest stages of such evolution.

2. The Aryans think that the Tamils had no separate religion or religious literature of their own, and all that they have was borrowed from the Aryans. They go a step further and repudiate the value of the religious literature of the Tamils and ignore their importance altogether.

3. The slight offered by the Aryans—or to be more correct, by the Brahmins of South India—to the Tamil language and

literature has so much irritated some of the Tamils quite recently that they have now started a campaign against the South Indian Brahminical view of the question and they try to maintain that the ancient Tamils were far ahead of the Aryans as regards their civilisation and culture and that the latter borrowed their religion from the former and enlarged upon that religion in their own language. We have now to find out which of these opinions is correct and to which extent.

The Tamils are among the very few nations of the world who are proud of a literature of their own which would materially help us in forming an idea of their ancient civilisation and religion. It must also be pointed out that the literature now available is but an infinitesimal fraction of a vast store of literature which the Tamils possessed at one time and which seems to have perished owing to some reason or other. It would also appear from the existing literature that it was produced at the tail end of a certain civilisation or that it was produced at a time when civilisation was on the decline at one time among the Tamils. Literature of a very much higher order seems to have existed among the Tamils in addition to the existing literature, but it is a great misfortune that it has been wholly lost to us. We have therefore to make use of what we have, to form any idea of the religion of the ancient Tamils; but in doing so, we should not forget the fact that they had a voluminous and much superior literature which would have greatly helped us in our task if they were preserved for our use. Although that literature is lost to us, the very fact that there was such a literature must form an important factor in deciding the religion of the Tamils.

The literature that is now available to us is mostly devoted to the classical section of our language and does not deal with religion directly. A nation that had so far advanced as to produce a pure form of classics as the existing literature, cannot be said to have been quite primitive in its religious progress. Highly advanced as the Tamils appear to have been, they should have possessed a large stock of religious literature which appear to have been lost to us either by the one or the other

successive deluges that submerged our land from time to time, or by the still more formidable foe of foreign invasions, the chief object of such invasions having been to destroy all indigenous religion and religious literature. It must however be borne in mind that the Tamils are not wanting in religious literature even at the present moment. They have no doubt a very large stock of it and even of a superfine character. But most of them cannot be said to be as old as the ancient classics that we now possess. But the tone of the religious literature that we now possess is itself a sufficient evidence to prove that they were not the first of the kind produced by the Tamils.

Even the classical literature that we now possess cannot be said to be wholly devoid of religious ideas. There is religion in these classics, but in order to have a correct idea of that religion, we must in the first place have a correct view of these classics. Classics of all advanced nations may be found to draw largely from nature, and the Tamil classics are not an exception to this rule. Civilisation is generally artificial and the imagination and the thoughts of cultured soul, when directed towards the national plane take a liking to nature and natural objects. Nature is in closer proximity to Divine land than artificiality which in the main is human. If we scrutinise for a moment the ancient Tamil classics, we will clearly see that they have a partiality for nature, and even when they depict human activities, they are fond of showing man in his natural colour than in his artificial or civilised form. Although all our literature of the first and second Sangam periods have been lost to us, we are fortunate in having one of them at least spared for our use, I mean *Thol kappiam* which belongs to the second Tamil Sangam period and which at least is four thousand years old. This is one of our old grammars and is the oldest of our existing literature. Grammar though it is, it gives us a clear idea of the Tamil society of that period and devotes one full section (*Porul athikaram*) for that purpose. The grammar furnishes ample proof of the high state of civilisation the Tamils enjoyed at a very remote period, and it gives us at the same time a clue to find out the general trend of Tamil literature. Tamil literature may be found to have

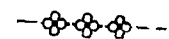
nature for its basis and this could be seen from the division of Tamil society by *Thinai*s or native soils, such as *Kurinchi*, *Marntham*, *Muthai*, *Palai* and *Neithal*, instead of any artificial demarcations such as towns and cities or villages and hamlets. It cannot be said that the Tamils had no idea of towns and villages in that period, because we find that they are amply referred to in the chapter on *முற்பொருள்*. For the classification of human society, however, they preferred to make use of natural divisions of land rather than artificial divisions. This clearly shows the great love our ancestors cherished towards nature—and this partiality on their part for nature explains another feature of the Tamil classics which is greatly misunderstood by the critics. Tamil classics may be found to indulge largely in what is known as *அகப் பொருட்டுறை* which is only an exposition of the inner feelings peculiar to each clan, the chief item of such feeling being love. The subject has been treated at great length in *Thol-kappiam*, and we may find that all Tamil literature is profusely charged with *Agapporul* ideas. If we prosecute our inquiry further and dive into the secret of our ancestor's love for love, we could find that it has a spiritual foundation. The whole universe is but an expression of love of our great Creator and it is by love we have to work our union with Him. The love that we notice in His creatures is but a reflection of His grand love through the Mayavic plane. This love has therefore received great attention in the hands of our ancient authors, but of course in the form in which it is manifested to us in the material plane. This view may probably sound strange to our critics who cannot see things except in their material colour. But if they will carefully study Manickavasakar's *Tirukkovaigar*—a highly spiritual and at the same time a classical work of great repute—they will, I feel sure, be fully convinced of the correctness of my view. I am afraid I am digressing from my subject; I only touched this point with the object of showing the trend of our ancient literature.

Although our ancient classical writers confined themselves to the material plane, without being suspected of getting into the

spiritual region, their works may be found to disclose the influence of a spiritual under-current, if we examine them closely. This is why they had a liking to nature in their description of material phenomena and this is why they devoted their attention largely to love. Our ancient writers were mostly philosophers, and philosophers of all times and all places had a preferential liking to nature which in man is expressed chiefly by his feeling.

Ancient Tamil poetries were mainly intended to benefit the materially inclined human beings and they therefore carefully avoided all direct spiritual disquisitions, but in order to prepare the student for the ultimate spiritual training, they deal largely with the natural side of materiality which is the nearest point in the material plane to the region of spirituality. Such is the trend of the ancient Tamil classics, and in tracing the religion of our ancestors from these classics, we must have prominently in our view this particular feature of our classics.

(To be continued)



Conjeevaram

An account of its Ancient History and Monuments

By A student of History

CONJEEVARAM, situated at a distance of about forty miles north west of the city of Madras, and an important town in the Chenglepet district, is at the present day mainly famous as a seat of pilgrimage. The pious Hindu regards it as one of the seven sacred cities of India, a pilgrimage to which is capable of finally releasing the soul from the bondage of the flesh. Its numerous temples—and no other single city in all India possesses as many—continue to attract thousands of pilgrims year after year.

To the student of history and art its unique and abundant antiquarian remains in the shape of ancient temples, with their antique sculpture and valuable stone and copper-plate inscriptions are of eternal interest. For almost alone of ancient South Indian cities, Conjeevaram has withstood wonderfully the ravages of time, weather and the iconoclastic zeal of the Mussalman that have rendered obscure many a city in ancient India and still preserves a good number of valuable monumental and lithic remains which fully confirm its claim to antiquity. Hiuen-Tsang the well-known Chinese traveller and savant who visited the city about the year 640 A. D. records the contemporary local belief that the founder of Buddhism visited the city and converted the people and that the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka built several *stupas* here in memory of the visit of Buddha. The pilgrim found one of these *stupas* as high as 100 feet still standing at the time of his visit. This tradition, if we can believe it, would carry the antiquity of this place to the fifth century B. C. But the investigations of archaeological and epigraphic research workers for the last quarter of a century have not disclosed any monument or inscription in its vicinity belonging to the Asokan period.

During the first two centuries of the Christian era, Conjeevaram appears to have formed part of the empire of the early Chola kings and was the seat of the northern viceroyalty. One of these Chola Viceroys was Tondaman-Ilam-Tirayan who is celebrated by a well-known contemporary poet Rudran-kannan in a work entitled '*Perumbanarrupadai*' which gives a description of the city of Conjeevaram during this period. The first four Tamil-Vaishnava saints, one of whom was born at this place were contemporaries of this Chola representative. From the reference to a large number of temples in the hymns of these saints, it appears that some of the most famous shrines of the city such as those of Varadaraja, Vaikuntaperumal, Ulagalanda-perumal, Tiruvehka, etc were in existence as early as 1800 years ago.

In the third century A. D. the city passed into the hands of the Pallavas and continued as their capital for more than six centuries. The earliest copper-plate record in the Tamil country

belonging to the reign of Sivaskanda belonging to about 225 A. D. is addressed from the city of Conjeevaram. In the middle of the fourth century the great Gupta Emperor, Samudragupta in the course of his southern expedition, claims to have defeated the contemporary ruler of Conjeevaram who is called Vishnugopa and presumably captured the city. In the sixth century A. D. Conjeevaram became a well-known seat of Sanskrit culture and the court of the Pallava kings, began to attract Sanskrit poets the most famous of whom Bharavi, the reputed author of '*Kiratar-juniya*,' is now definitely known to have flourished at the Pallava court of Conjeevaram about this period.

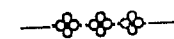
In the seventh century this city was the centre of the great renaissance in religion and Sanskrit letters that began in the country. The well-known Siva saints—Appar, Sambandar, and Sundaramurthiswami carried on their religious propaganda and have celebrated the temples of the city in their hymns. As has been already pointed out, Hiuen-Tsang the Chinese pilgrim visited the city in 640 A. D. and stayed a considerable period here. He records that during his period the city was about six miles in circumference, that there were a hundred Buddhist monasteries in which lived some 10,000 monks. It is strange that all traces of these buildings have disappeared at the present day.

Among the temples built by the Pallava kings at the city between the seventh and the ninth centuries A. D. the temples of Kailasanada, Vaikuntaperumal, Airavatesvara, Muktesvara and Matangesvara have come down to our own days; their unmistakable Pallava style and the inscriptions they bear, make it clear that they must have been constructed in the later Pallava period. Of these the Kailasanada temple is one of the most beautiful specimens and is contemporaneous with the 'Shore-temple of the Seven-Pagodas.' The hymns of the contemporary Tamil saints, refer to as many as twenty temples, Vaishnava and Siva, many of which are now known under different names.

Towards the close of the 8th century Conjeevaram was attacked by the Western Chalukya king Vikramaditya who finally took possession of the city. The details of the siege are not known but from the fact that the city is described in the

contemporary works, as being surrounded by a strong network of walls and a deep moat, it may be presumed that the city must have offered considerable resistance against the attacks of enemy invaders. The Chalukyan occupation of the city has been confirmed by the discovery of a contemporary inscription in the walls of the temple of Rajasimha by Dr. Hultzsch which alludes to this event.

In the beginning of the ninth century the Pallava dynasty sank into obscurity after an unbroken rule of six centuries at Conjeevaram. In the four centuries that succeeded, the city was occupied in turn by the Rashtrakutas, the imperial Cholas, the Kakatiyas of Warrangal, the Hoysalas, and the Mussalmans. A great deal of the ancient monuments and temples are believed to have disappeared in the devastating raid of Sultan Muhammad II against the city in A. D. 1481. The Vijayanagar Kings who obtained possession of the city in the 14th century carried out extensive restoration work and appear from the records discovered at this place to have enjoyed possession of the place till the close of the 16th century.



The Significance of Asoka's Edicts

By L. N. Govindarajan, B.A.

THE only solid foundation for the history of Asoka is to be found in his numerous and wonderful edicts inscribed on rocks and pillars which may be considered as the most remarkable set of inscriptions in the world. In the Buddhist world his fame is as great as that of Charlemagne in medieval Europe, and the wild legends which had gathered round Asoka's name obscuring the genuine history of his reign may be compared in mass with that which drapes the figures of Alexander, Arthur

and Charlemagne. The Asokan legend is not all either fiction or myth, but includes some trustworthy historical tradition. But we cannot deny the statement of Dr. Vincent A. Smith, who is undoubtedly the greatest authority on Asoka, that the legends are no better suited to serve as the foundation of sober history than the stories of Morte d' Arthur or pseudo Kallisthenes are adapted to form the basis for the chronicles of the doings of the British Champion or the Macedonian Conqueror. The learned Doctor is therefore warranted in concluding that the obvious canon of criticism has been forgotten by most historians of the Mauriyan period, who have begun their investigations at the wrong end with the legends, instead of at the right end with contemporary inscriptions.

The most copious and important source of early Indian history is derived from a study of inscriptions. Of these, Asoka's Edicts or sermons on stones form a distinct class by themselves, no other sovereign having followed his practice of engraving ethical exhortations on rocks. His inscriptions are principally devoted to "the exposition, inculcation and enforcement of a scheme of practical ethics or rule of conduct, which Asoka called Dharma." Moreover they constitute in a large measure his autobiography written in terms manifestly dictated by himself.

Asoka's inscriptions incised on rocks, boulders, cave-walls, and monolithic pillars supply the only reliable foundation for the history of his reign. The fact that all of them are written in various forms of Prakrit shows that at that distant past it was understood throughout India and that a knowledge of reading and writing was more or less general in that vast empire. The subject matter of these Edicts eloquently bears testimony to the earnestness and persistency with which the Emperor laboured to promote the material and moral welfare of his people. The learned scholar Mr. K. V. Rangasami Aiyangar, shrewdly observes that it is a matter of regret that the inscriptions on account of their being personal addresses by the king to his subjects, do not speak as fully of his reign as we should desire.

The engravings of Asoka designed for public instruction were placed either in suitable positions on high-roads or at

frequented places of pilgrimage where they were ensured the greatest possible publicity. The extent of Asoka's empire is known with precision from the details of the distribution of his monuments as well as from the testimony of his inscriptions.

We may broadly divide the records of Asoka into two large groups, those inscribed on rocks or on detached boulders and those inscribed on highly finished monolithic columns. The rock-edicts which are earlier in date occur mostly in the more distant and out of the way localities, while the pillars are found in the home provinces where fine sandstone needed for their construction was available.

A critical examination of the contents of the inscriptions will lead us to classify them under eight district types :—

I. The minor rock-edicts. 258 to 257 B. C. These earliest rock-edicts present greater difficulties in interpretation than any other Asokan document. They are of great importance in the study of the personal history of Asoka.

II. The Bhabru Edict of about the same date. This is considered as important in the history of the Buddhist canon because it enumerates several passages in the scriptures which the Emperor judged to merit the special attention of his people.

III. The fourteen Rock-Edicts 257 to 256 B. C. They contain an exposition of his methods of administration as well as of his ethical system. Perhaps the most important of them all is the thirteenth one wherein Asoka narrates in striking language how he was haunted by remorse by the calamities caused by his war against Kalinga and how he was driven to take refuge in the law of Piety or Duty (Dharma). Asoka goes on to explain that true conquest consists in subjugation of men's hearts by the Law of Dharma. He also mentions his attempts in converting various peoples and tribes to Buddhism. From this Edict we understand that he was the contemporary of Antiochos Theos, grandson of Selukos Nikator, Ptolomy, Philadelphos of Egypt, Magas the ruler of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus. We also learn of the existence of the Tamil Kingdoms of South India including Keralaputra and Satyamangalam. We thus obtain a welcome glimpse into the history of the far south at a definite

date, the first and for a long time the only chronological foothold in the story of the Tamil Kingdoms.

IV. The Two Kalinga Edicts. 256 B. C. These fix the principles on which the administration of the newly Conquered province as well as of the border tribes was to be conducted. The admirable instructions of Asoka to his officers show how Asoka's remorse for one aggressive war in his reign bore fruit in the benevolent administration of his distant frontier provinces.

V. The three Dedicatory Cave Inscriptions near Gaya:—These are brief dedications of costly cave dwellings for the use of a monastic sect called Ajiwikas. They show that Asoka was sincere in his declaration that he honoured all sects and followed a policy of Universal toleration and concurrent endowment.

VI. The two Tarai Pillar Inscriptions. 249 B.C.:—They are of interest as proving the truth of the tradition that Asoka performed a solemn pilgrimage to the sacred spots of the Holy Land.

VIII. The Seven Pillar Edicts. 242. B.C.:—Asoka who was at this time growing old and had been on the throne for 30 years undertook to review the measures taken during his reign for the promotion of religion and for inculcating Veritable truths. That review was codified in a series of edicts and inscribed on pillars. They must be read along with the fourteen rock-edicts to which they refer and of which they must be considered as an appendix.

VIII. The Minor Pillar Edicts. 240. B.C.—The historical interest of these pillar inscriptions was not recognised till quite recently. They all deal with the penalties for schism in the Buddhist Church and it is probable that they represent the decisions of the Buddhist Council held at Pataliputra some years before this date.

The foregoing summary account of the remarkable set of Asokan Inscriptions will be sufficient to show why they have attracted so much attention. While we cannot and need not minimise the significance of tradition as a supplementary source of information, it will be idle to deny that by far the greatest authority for the Mauryan Period is Asoka's own words engraved on rock and pillar. "The advent of the Mauryan dynasty marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian," says Doctor Smith and we are indebted for this extraordinary wealth of knowledge principally to the imperishable records of Asoka, which have defied the ravenous truth of time. From a study of his inscriptions India of the third century before Christ becomes a picture of astonishing completeness. We also learn about the personal character and ideals of Asoka who was Monk and Monarch and Ruler of Church and State, even as Charlemagne was long afterwards in Europe.

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