

Everymans Review

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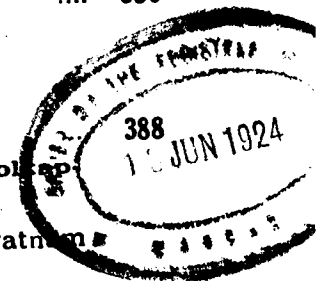
Everymans Review

JUNE]

CONTENTS

[1924

Rabindranath Tagore		361
A Study of His Later Works		
By K. S. Ramaswamy Sastry, B.A., B.L.		
The Haunted House—II		369
A Story		
By T. K. Venkataraman, M.A., L.T.		
Habit Culture in Hinduism		377
By P. V. Aghoram Aiyer, B.A., B.L.		
The Cape to Brindaban		386
A Pilgrim's Conclusions		
By K. R. R. Sastry, M.A.		
The Religion of the Ancient Tamils		388
This Religion according to Tholapiam		
By the late Mudaliar Sabaratnam		
G.G.J.C of Jaffna.		
On Truth		397
By C. Lakshmi Rama Sastri, B. Sc.		
Fumigation		401
By V. Aravamudan.		
Marriage and Personal Freedom		403
By S. Sathivagiswaran, M.A., B.L.		
Agricultural Holdings in South India		410
The Disadvantages of Fragmented Holdings—III		
By Rajaiah D. Paul, M.A.		
Memories and Thoughts		419
Our First Moffussal Trip, II		
By Rao Sahib P. Sambanda Mudaliar, B.A., B.L.		
Reviews		423



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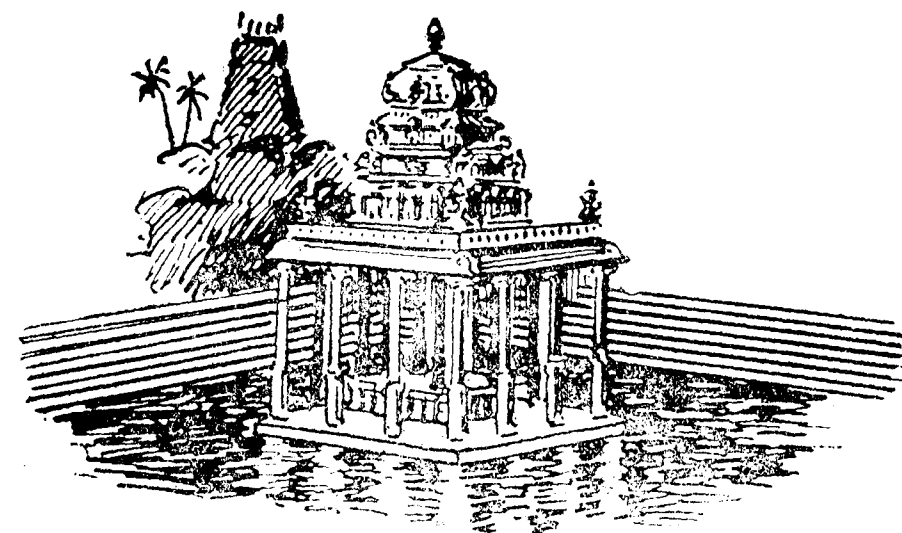
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EVERYMAN'S REVIEW

Vol. 9

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No. 6

Rabindranath Tagore

A Study of His Later Works

By K. S. Ramaswamy Sastry, B.A., B.L.

INTRODUCTORY

"LIFE'S memories are not Life's history, but the original work of an unseen Artist. The variegated colours scattered about are not reflections of outside lights, but belong to the painter himself and come passion-tinged from his heart." Thus writes Rabindranath Tagore in his beautiful autobiographical work called *My Reminiscences*. The valuable portion of every life is the self-revelation of personality by thought and word and deed. His genius has unfolded itself in newer forms of self-dedication to our beloved motherland in a mellower sweetness in his poems and plays, in a wider range of his story-telling power, in the expression of a higher and loftier nationalism than the world yet knows of, and in the utterances of a deeply spiritual philosophy.

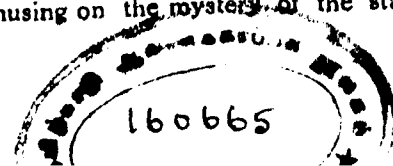
One event that stands out in Tagore's later life as worthy of special mention is his prophetic vision and utterance in respect of the Great War of to-day. Earnest Rhys says in his preface to his excellent volume on Tagore:

"It was one of the rare occasions during his visit, when we were able to talk uninterruptedly about the state of India and our own affairs, and he spoke with alarm of the temper of the great nations and the life of the great cities like Paris and London, whose love of luxury, need of sensation and craving for excitement were up against every finer instinct he cherished. When he spoke of the forces in the western world which he thought must become disruptive and lead to trouble, and stretched out his hands, it might have been the moral map of Europe, with its teeming continent and restless atoms, that lay spread out before him. The major energies, as he viewed them, were not constructive: they did not make for the world's common-wealth, and by their nature they must come into conflict sooner or later. Now, as I recall that afternoon—not much more than a twelve months ago—it is impossible not to see in the present war the grim realisation of those misgivings."

Since that prophecy the great war has come and gone. Tagore has shown both in his *Sadhana* and his *Nationalism* what are the social and moral evils that render possible, nay inevitable, such cataclysms that periodically convulse the world. No mere patching up of strikes, no fever of legislative activity, and not even the winning of wars can ever prevent this pitiful self-wastage of the spirit of man. The remedy lies in a realisation of the true nature of the soul and the Oversoul in the multiform relations of life. Force and love can never co-exist in spite of our sophisms or persuasions or compulsions.

II

I RECENTLY came across certain passages of description and appreciation of Tagore which deserve a permanent record. Mr. W. B. Yeats stated at a banquet in the Trocadero hotel when introducing Tagore: "To take part in honouring Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is one of the greatest events of my artistic life. I have been carrying about with me a book of translations into English prose of one hundred of his Bengali lyrics, written within the last ten years. I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics." Need I say that this volume of wonderful lyrics was *Gitanjali*? Mr. Basanta Kumar Roy says of him: "The Hindu poet's flowing hair; his broad, unfurrowed forehead; his bright, black, magnetic eyes, chiselled nose, firm but gentle chin, delicate sensitive hands, his sweet voice, pleasant smile, keen sense of humour, and his innate refinement, make him a man of rare and charming personality. To look at him is to notice the true embodiment of the artist.....Like the prose-poet Tolstoi, he has travelled from the worship of the senses to the quiet of sainthood.....He would spend hours together watching the mystic flow of the Ganges or seeing the moon kiss the sacred river into ripples. Here he would spend night after night upon the flat roof of the house, musing on the mystery of the starlit universe.....But he is



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above all, the poet—the poet of love. Love flows from his heart, mind, and soul in a continuous stream, assuming all different forms in its windings from the gross to the spiritual, from the known to the unknown, from the finite to the infinite. He interprets love in all its multiform expressions—the love of mother, of son, husband, wife, lover, beloved, patriot, of the Dionysian, nature-drunk, and of the God-frenzied."

A recent vivid pen-picture by Mr. J. H. Cousins says: "The poet's own room is on the upper floor of a bungalow near the public road. It is furnished in the simplest possible way. There are no chairs save that in which he reposes in his illness. His writing desk is close to the ground. He sits at it cross-legged. There is a large white cloth square on the floor stretching to one of the walls, and on it two large white bolsters for leaning against. A jar of water stands on a low stone table. There is not a picture on the wall. The doors and windows are open on three sides, unless when storm or rain come". The same picture tells us further: "At six I wandered about and came upon the students at the opening devotions of the school day songs to the Divine Spirit under the shade of a row of fine trees along one side of a quadrangle of cottages. The songs over, the students went to their classes, not their class-rooms for there are not any, but to places at the feet of trees that put the students into the relationship of *chelas* to the great fundamental *guru*, Nature. There was happiness everywhere as there must always be where freedom rules".

III

AMONG the chief events of Tagore's life since 1916—I take this year as the starting point as in my volume on Tagore I had dealt with his life till then—must be mentioned his first to Japan and America. It was in the course of this extended tour that his genius expressed itself in all its fulness of mellow wisdom in regard to the proper social and political conditions through which alone the soul of man can realise itself and in regard to those perversions of social and political life that lead to the ruinous competition and rivalry of nations and the exploitation of weaker races by the stronger races. The special correspondent to the *Manchester Guardian* said of Tagore's visit to Japan that, "Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who is now in Tokio, has had an extremely cordial reception in Japan, which has a significance more than literary and personal, for it is one of the many indications of the growing intimacy between Japan and India and of the evolution of a new Asia awakening to a consciousness of unity". At Tokio Tagore stayed at a distinguished artist's house near Meno Park. A beautiful and intimate personal touch is revealed in the correspondent's description: "His speech is gentle, with the delicate softness of a tongue attuned to languages less harsh than our own, but it has a full range of expression, and it becomes intense when he speaks of the present and future of his own country". Tagore

pointed out in that interview that the modern and the ancient ideals have to be adjusted and harmonised. He said in true and forceful words which clearly enunciate the difference between eastern and western ideals and which have been quoted by Professor Kale in *Indian Economics*: "In the East we are conscious through all individual things of the infinity which embraces them. When I was in England I felt there was an incessant rush of individual things upon me; it was not a question of noise and bustle and haste only, but the whole atmosphere lacked the sense of infinity. Upon me it had the effect of hampering reflection and meditation. No, I should not describe the difference as one between spiritualism and materialism, though that is the way it is often put. I have known too many noble and devoted men in England who practise renunciation and self-sacrifice and strive for humanity, to deny your western civilisation spirituality. No country could stand the shock of this war if it lacked spirituality. But it is a different kind from ours. It is not penetrated, as is ours, with the abiding sense of the infinite". Tagore said further that the modern social and political efficiency could and should be harmonised with oriental idealism. He said: "Do I think that Eastern thought, the Eastern outlook can be reconciled with the mechanism of Western civilisation? I think it can and must be.The fine task of science is to enable all men to have enough to satisfy their material wants, and by subduing matter to achieve freedom for the soul. The East will have to follow the same road, and call in science to its aid." In what way the racial traits are vitally connected with the physical graces and glories of the country and the hereditary endowment of the people and the beauty and value of the institutions of the land it may not be easy to define but all the same the vital interconnection is easily and fully felt. Tagore said: "Whether this characteristic outlook of nations is a matter of race is a hard question. I know that in England my thoughts were not free, and I had to return to India for them to acquire their freedom. The colour of the sky, the air, the soil, all colour and shape and thought, help to make the philosophy of one nation different from that of another. Though I look forward to science and the mechanical arts of civilisation becoming a common possession of the whole world, I have no fear that the mind and soul of the whole world will become uniform, for these things are external like a garment, and do not touch the inner core of a people. I conceive a kind of federation of nations, in which each contributes its own characteristic philosophy." The legitimate racial self-consciousness of Tagore shone out when he said to the interviewer that "we are not inferior intellectually to the Japanese" and that if England should literally encourage scientific education and industrial development in India, Indian intellect would achieve wonders of attainment and that England can preserve her own indomitable spirit of freedom only by entering into relations of freedom with India.

In the course of his address on 11th June 1916 at the Imperial University

of Tokyo in Japan he laid stress on various important aspects of national life. He said about himself: "When a request comes to me to address a public meeting, I feel very great reluctance to accede to it. For the most part of my life I have cultivated writing poetry, and you know that poetic imagination is a shy bird, it builds its nest in seclusion, away from the eyes of the multitude." His addresses at Tokyo have been embodied in his book on *Nationalism* under the heading of *Nationalism in Japan*. I shall quote here a few passages from his address not found in the above said chapter.

"I cannot help thinking that it is only the divine in man that can perform this miracle of transmuting the old into the new, the weaker to the strong the insult into a glorious victory. And that divine in you was born not in these sordid days of screeching machinery and gigantic selfishness, not amidst the blatant lies of statecraft and the snug self-satisfaction of prosperous hypocrisy, but in the dawnlight of that heroic manhood when heaven came nearer the earth, and man had faith in his own soul and the soul whose revelation is the world."

He said further:—

"As for us Indians we have our own problem before us. It is the problem of the world in miniature. India is too vast in its area and too diverse in its races.....India tried her best to respect the social freedom of all the individual sections of the population contained within her boundaries while claiming allegiance to one social autocracy. This has produced a stupendous organisation named Hinduism which it is almost impossible to define. It contains under its shelter manners and customs and creeds varied and contradictory. But it has a spirit pervading all India too subtle to be pointed out with fingers, yet too real and living to be doubted or ignored. It has given freedom yet has guided. If we must know where this spirit abides, it is not so much in ritualism and customs—it is in ideas. It is through this communication of ideas that a Bengali recognises a Madrasi as his Hindu brother, though outwardly their differences are as great as possibly can be. To my mind this gives the key to the true solution of the race problem, which is the one great problem of Man in history. Diversity of races there must be and should be, whatever may be its drawback, and you can never coerce Nature into your narrow limits of convenience without paying one day very dearly for it. Man will have to respect differences, even where they are small, and in those who are small themselves. And through those differences an ideal unity must always inwardly act—the unity whose basis is the consciousness of Man's spiritual oneness,—the consciousness that there is one great history, which is Man's history, having its innumerable roots in the histories of all the races of the earth, the consciousness of unity which urges us to give freedom to other races than ours, to fulfil their highest possibilities, feeling sure that it will come back to us in the common treasury of humanity."

Besides his addresses at Tokyo Tagore delivered a great address at Asaka in the Tennoji Public Hall in 1916. Before delivering it he was entertained by the leading Journalists of Asaka at a dinner. He said in his address:

"Yet this modern civilisation with all its mechanical appliances for making life comfortable and progress rapid on the outside has become itself a barrier in its turn with regard to the inner spirit of man because it has made our life so intricate that it has lost its transparency of simplicity. Our things are more in evidence than ourselves. Our engagements are too numerous, our amusements are too frequent. The surface scum of life has become thick and muddy. All the odds and ends, the vast waste materials of civilisation floating about it, have created a growing barrier, not only shutting out our deeper nature but smothering it to a great extent. Exhibition of man's nature has taken its place on the surface, where richness is in his materials, his strength in organisation, his heroism in his ambitious undertaking, his mind in his science. Man's heart is squandering its strength in its craving for the draw drinking of sensationalism—pitifully asking for its continual doses of fresh news and fresh noise,—losing its healthy taste for food in its insatiable thirst for stimulant."

"It is the stupendous unreality of this modern civilisation, always changing its shapes and shifting its course, furiously riding upon the dust-storm of unmeaning restlessness, scattering about it in the wind-shreds of things torn and mangled, decaying and dead,—all this is making the real man invisible to himself and to others. In the days of heroic simplicity, it was easy to come near the real man, but in modern times it is the phantasm of the giant Time itself which is everywhere, and the man is lost beyond recognition; while the means of communication itself is diminishing in its reality. The whirlwind of modern civilisation has caught Japan as it has the rest of the world, and a stranger like myself cannot help feeling or landing in your country that what I see before me is the temple of the modern age where before the brazen images an immense amount of sacrifice of life is offered and an interminable round of ritualism is performed. But this is not Japan. Its features are the same as they are in London, in Paris, in Berlin or in the manufacturing centres of America. Also the men you meet here for the first time have the same signs of the push and the pull of the rotating machine-wheels of the present age. They jostle you, they drag you in with the rest of the crowd, they rapidly take note of your exterior and offer their exteriors to be taken in snapshots. They have a curiosity for the superficial details, but not love for the real person. They are satisfied with the unessentials, because these can be gathered easily and got rid of soon, these can be handed and soiled and swept away in the dustbin with as little loss of time as is possible. For everything must make room for the next ephemera, the shock of sensations has to be carried on, and the men who have no time to

lose must be amused in a hurry. They try to break chips off the permanent for making playthings for the temporary. At first sight what you see most in the land is the professional and not the human."

"These are the drawbacks of the present time. And the obstacles that I shall have to surmount in order to come near the heart of your country are far more difficult than those which our ancestors had to deal with in their communication with you. For it was only the barrier of Nature, and not human nature, which stood in their way. But now man has to be reached through the barrier of time and not space and this is the most difficult task to perform. But I must not lose heart. I must seek and find what is true in land—true to the soul of the people—what is Japan, what is unique, and not merely a mask of the time which is monotonously the same in all latitudes and longitudes. I earnestly hope that I shall not have to be satisfied with bird's eye views and flashlight impressions, with snapshot pictures of all that hides you from view; and I shall claim my privilege as a poet, whose only gift is the gift of sympathy and ask to be allowed entrance into a corner of your living heart, and to carry away your love with me to the land which can justly feel proud of herself for having been able to send to you as per gift not machine, not munitions of war, but her best that she could offer to all eternity."

IV

HIS tour in England and America deserves an even more detailed consideration. His lectures there on *Nationalism* have been dealt with by me elsewhere. He delivered addresses then under the auspices of the Quest Society in London and also at Oxford, Harvard, New York, Chicago and Illinois. His great discourses made a very deep impression on thoughtful minds in England and America. They reached and impressed the higher minds of both those great countries. The philosophical circle at the Harvard University, the members of the Quest Society, and men like Mr. Balfour and others were profoundly influenced by them. Already his poems had influenced western thought powerfully because he was the impersonation of a fruitful and vital system of life and thought, reasserting itself with the might of a reawakened self-conscious mastery. As Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie says; "The poems of Rabindranath could not credibly come except on the crest of some large and vital impulse moving through a nation; the *milieu* for such a work as this must either be the youthful vigour of a new civilisation or else an ancient and refreshed civilisation achieving again some positive ideal mastery in life." Tagore's simplicity and clarity of spiritual vision was the embodiment of Indian genius in its reawakened power and spoke not only through his poems but also through his great discourses on the deepest problems of life. Tagore was in his discourses not so much an individual glory as a racial refinement. The mystic Indian realisation of the infinite in the finite was present in every one of his utterances. There was

also present in them the modern note of the realisation of the wonderful manysidedness of surface life and its practical values for the soul.

In his discourses called *Sadhana* it was this mystic note that was predominant. In the later discourses there was another distinctively Indian message. The great world war had rendered such a message as befitting as it was beautiful. His mystic insight enabled him to give the message in all its fulness of vital beauty. As the *Christian Commonwealth* said:—"One saw at last the thinness of the modern moneymade and moneymaking civilisation in the piercing light of Tagore's gospel of the radiant joy of life and the wonderful unity between mankind and the universe." The lectures delivered by Tagore have been published in the volume called *Personality* which has been discussed in an earlier volume by me. Mr. James B. Pond organised the lecturing tour. Tagore's tall and graceful figure, his soft and luminous eyes, his sweet and winning personality, and the wonderful musical quality of his voice added to the charm of the great discourses. The San Francisco Bohemian Club gave him a grand dinner. His rich culture in union with this simplicity and sweetness of nature won him friends and admirers everywhere. His address on the Cult of Nationalism was delivered at various places in America and was more powerful than his former address at Rochester on Race-conflict and its solution. It was a call to the western world to rise from nationalism to cosmic humanism.

It was on 18th September 1916 that Tagore arrived at Seattle on the *Canada Maru* from Japan. Mr. W. W. Pearson was his private secretary during that tour. A crowd of interviewers beset Tagore from his arrival in America till his departure, and Tagore was unsparing in his denunciation of the origin of this interviewing craze—a craze for sensationalism which keeps man busy on the surface of thing to the neglect of the higher and deeper and truer interests of life. In *Seattle Nash Times*, 20th September 1916, we have a description of an entertainment given to Tagore at the Sunset Club where forty distinguished men met the poet. Tagore said there: "East and West are not so far apart, and it is such occasions as this that hurry forward the time we are all looking for, the day when intellectual hospitality will be universal." His address on *The Cult of Nationalism* was read at 2-30 P.M. on that day to the members of the club, and at 8-15 P.M. to the general public. The papers described it as "a literary feast of beauty and wisdom." From Seattle he went to Portland. *The Portland Ore Oregonian* called him an "international master." There he gave in interviews some of his maturest ideas on American culture. He said:

"All of this organization, the system and method may be well enough in business! Some things are better made by machinery, but when you come to life, complete life, machinery has no place in that. The day will come when you will feel a real thirst for perfection of human ideals. This cannot come through any particular system, through any outward influence: you will have to go to the root, which is the soul, the spiritual life."

"You have accumulated things such a vast accumulation of things—and such systems as your nation has worked out, but they are all a sort of dissipation of your youthful energy. But you can afford to go through that to reach the deeper wisdom of the spiritual life. This is the playtime of your civilisations and even play has its meaning and its use by letting forth energy and giving strength and fuller growth."

(To be continued).

The Haunted House—II.

A Story

(Continued from the last issue)

By T. K. Venkataraman, M.A., L.T.

AS I carefully lifted my step to the steps, a man, who had watched me curiously from a house beyond, rushed to me, shouting the usual tale. I, however, unceremoniously brushed him aside, and ascended to the door. I watched the bewildered man gasping at me as he retreated, and no doubt he thought me out of my senses. The massive door was merely shut, and I entered, pushing it open. Just as I entered, I realised that I was the unenviable cynosure of a small group of people gathered, some distance beyond, obviously on the report of the man who had talked with me. I shut the ponderous door which creaked heavily on its hinges, and viewed the scene that confronted me.

The first object that met my gaze was a burly, misshapen piece of humanity that scowled at me from a shaggy, unkempt face with eyes that had a wild, horrible stare in them. He was robed in a dirty rag which served as a loin-cloth, and his huge limbs stood out, covered with a thick growth of hair and crusts of dirt. "Who are you?" croaked out the brute in a rasping, harsh voice. "I thought it was Ammani, caretaker, come again."

I had no difficulty in recognising this creature as Shunmugham, and I said "A friend of Rajaram," slowly repeating my words to see whether the name had any remembrance for him. After a vacant, bewildered look, a horrible, nervous twitching arose in his forehead, and with a disagreeable chuckle, he rasped out, "Rajaram! what have I to do with Rajaram? No, no. Rajaram is dead! Killed by devils! How long!" As he shrieked this out in jerks, his face underwent horrible alterations, and his dirty and little fingers worked in convulsive movements.

He, suddenly turned round and slid back into the big covered court inside which is called in Tamil homes as a "Kudam." It was full of sand and dust, and numberless lizards and other insects ran across the worn-out floor, and the mildewed walls. Wild vegetation grew in rank abundance everywhere. A rough, wooden staircase ascended from the right-hand

corner of the court, and rooms with locked doors opened out from the court on every side, while in the middle was the large depression characteristic of Tamil houses, called the "Muttam."

The lunatic stopped short, and suddenly turned to me with a sudden change in his manner. He caught hold of my hand, and, as if unburdening himself of a great secret, asked me in whispers with a face full of the most intense and comical anxiety I have ever seen, "Oh stranger, have you heard of the fact that the great diety, Karuppannaswami, lives here?" He looked round and round, as if he feared eavesdroppers, and then continued in a lowered voice with bated breath: "Now, I will tell you this. It is all silly bosh talked by people who are interested in keeping this house empty. That is why so many people urge me to leave my ancestral house." Here, he proudly surveyed the surrounding dust, and then shouted in a hoarse passion, "I know their internal object. That is why I remain here, and will be removed only on being killed by the conspirators. Oh, they will even kill me one day, I assure you. They are bound to," he asserted and his voice again dropped, "I have conversed with visions which have told me that. But, I perish—a brave hero on the battlefield. I shall not falsely flee to gratify their cursed spite." As he rambled on, I realised the strength of his obsession for the house. I was recalled to him by his clutching my arm with convulsive violence and turning to me a face full of entreaty, "Oh my benefactor," he sobbed "would you leave me alone for the day? Here I am—an important sovereign over my subjects. They," he waved his arm round, "no longer obey me. Hullo, Chamberlain!" he cried suddenly as if addressing somebody, and his eyes wandered round the room, and at last lighted on me, while his wild eyes burned with an unnatural flame. He grasped my arm again, and with a note of eager anxiety, he implored me in gentle accents to keep him company for the night only as "the devils so torment him during the hours of darkness."

I smiled, and said that if he would only stop his chatter and go to sleep, I would meet the devil on his own ground, and look after his safety. A strange gleam passed across his face, and

executing a few ungainly gambols, he jumped up the staircase, two steps at a time, and vanished.

After a few minutes spent in melancholy ruminations over the fate of the mansion, I followed my strange companion up the creaking stairs, which led to a covered story from which a large number of locked rooms faced me. Only a miserable looking attic at the opposite end was open, and I stepped towards it carefully along the dusty floor. The tiled roof was gone in places, and the weather had much damaged the structure.

The condition of the attic was even more deplorable, and the lunatic was seated in the dusty sill of a window which opened from this. His face was settled in a moody gloom which the baleful stare of his wild eyes rendered frightfully interesting to view. Neither the necessarily loud noise my feet made, nor my open presence in his sanctum roused him. I went towards him and called him. I even touched him on his clammy, misshapen shoulder without any effect.

It was now rapidly getting late, and the growing dusk emphasised the effects of the silent depression of the madman's company in that desolate expanse of a ruined house, and my very footsteps gave rise to startling echoes. Amidst the increasing darkness, my imagination, hard and matter of fact as it was, conjured up a thousand phantoms revelling in the gathering sinister gloom. I picked my way down, and settled myself on a stone seat extending in a border of the central "Kudam," brushing off the gathered dust on it.

Anxious as I was to solve the mystery, I was resolved to keep awake the whole night. But, I realised the limitations of the human mind best in that oppressive atmosphere, and my fancy, failing a supernatural explanation, lighted upon the theory of the house being a haunt of a careful gang of robbers who were trading upon the curious legend attached to the house, and who might be supposed to share their ill-gotten wealth at dead of night here. I do not know what made me think of this curious theory, for I was not aware of any ground for this. Anyhow, I felt I was foolish and reckless in thrusting myself into this nefarious den—a combined detective and knight-errant pursuing

a quixotic errand without even anybody inviting me to do so. But, there was the practical impossibility, had I ever really tried to do so, of convincing any man about the truth of my views, and more, bringing him to share with me the perils of the night. I recalled the prospect of going to Rajaram next morning with the solved mystery, and if anything were to happen, I had the advantage of the muscular, athletic frame of mine on which I often had prided myself, and at the worst, I had the open door to flee away. I tried to summon once again in its full strength that inexplorable, reckless dare-devil disposition of mind which had urged me to this purpose.

The minutes slowly passed, and sitting there idle and dull, I began to feel the effect of the vigil of the previous night spent in the train. To disperse the gathering sleepy feeling, I arose and strolled for a few yards, but the ground was so unsavoury that I soon desisted. Resuming my seat with a will never to close my eyes, and forsake a golden opportunity of solving a mystery, and besides expose myself to the risk of a surprise attack, I thought of a device about which I had read recently, and began to recite aloud verses from Wordsworth's "Excursion."

I do not know how long my tongue mechanically rolled on. I cannot even now call to mind at which psychological moment my frame inclined itself on the seat and my eyes automatically closed in slumber. What I remember is a dream which has burnt itself on my memory on that terrible night. Methought I was wandering on the banks of the Adyar where the railway bridge spans it near Saidapet Railway station. It must have been a very dark night, for the flickering stars merely accentuated the deep gloom. I cannot explain why I was walking on the banks, and then sat on a small stone or how I suddenly encountered an ordinary serpent-charmer with two or three Cobras round his neck, each coiling and uncoiling its great length on every side. The man rapidly drew near as I sat petrified, and lifted a fiendish countenance which in all its horrid appearance maintained a distant semblance of familiarity. I was fascinated by his concentrated stare, and my limbs refused to stir from the baleful scene. Meanwhile, the man dropped his face to mine and

peered at me in a frightful way, while, at the same moment, his Cobras suddenly darted on to my neck and began to coil themselves round it with overpowering tightness. I tried to scream out without effect, and in the convulsive struggles to get rid of the ever tightening coils, I awoke. Oh gracious God, was it a horrid nightmare or the fearful truth itself? Monkeyish hands were gripping and squeezing my windpipe and my legs and hands beat out in useless attempts to get at blessed air! The horrible vicelike clutch tightened, and ever tightened, as I struggled to get free. Those horrible seconds, which seemed to be centuries of torments, even now have left their marks on me, and I shudder to dilate upon the frightful experiences of that brief interval.

In that dim moonlight which streamed into the Kudam from the top windows, I felt a malignant countenance glaring furiously at me, while hands, lithe and slender, turned themselves still tighter. In the growing confusion of my ideas and the muddling sensations of the brain, I felt that I was in the fearful grip of a malicious being of Hell.

In my instinctive struggles, I let go my fist swift and strong into the terrible visage which with its inflamed eyes held itself in furious glee near my convulsed face, and before I knew anything further, a wild and piercing yell of pain rang through the place and at the same time, the deadly clutch became relaxed. I, forthwith, lost consciousness.

When I recovered, the pale rays of dawn were peeping into the court. I felt pain all over the body. But, in a flash, the event of the previous night came to me, and the painful sensation at my throat fixed it as a horrid reality in my mind. My confounded brain refused to piece together the incidents which had occurred except the single reflection that the malignant being had spared my life this time.

As my head cleared a little, I saw a big mass lying in the floor close to the stone seat on which I lay. I bent and touched it. It was a human corpse weltering in its blood. Puzzled, and yet with a feeling of exaltation that my visit was not, after all, a gruesome failure but that the key to the mystery has been found, I turned the body on to its face. Its head had fallen

on the rockstone of the seat, perhaps, when it fell back after my fist-blow, and the skull was fractured.

I turned to look at its face. Imagine my great bewilderment and horror when I saw before me lit up by the early dawn the familiar features of Shunmugham, the lunatic, but with its terrible expression intensified. His unnatural face was rendered more frightful by the blood which had dyed it crimson. So, this was the key!

Amazed and stupefied, I watched my handwork for a little time in that flickering dawn, and at last unable to endure the sight, tottered out of the house. There was nobody in the street, and I speedily gained the road. The cool bracing air of the morning steadied me a little and enlivened me to enable me to gain Kumbakom Railway station and leave for my home. Before I reached my house in Tiruvadi, burning fever attacked me, and it was long before I recovered from the severe nervous shock I experienced.

I have thought much over the affair: everything seems as clear as light now. The boy, Shunmugham, seems to have inherited the full taint of madness, though apparently harmless. There is no reason to doubt that he was imbued at times with fits of desperate homicidal mania, and that the first manifestation of this must have occurred on the day when the remnants of his frail reason snapped on the fateful occasion of the jutka-disaster. The presence of a tree struck by lightning, across the road sufficiently indicates that just as the jutka was struggling across the rains and winds, this disaster to the tree in front must have driven the horse wild with terror leading to the calamities succeeding. The victims of these fits of mania were first those for whom the maniae had love and regard like his aunt and father. Then, these impulses were aimed against every suitable object within reach like the government officer, the children, and finally myself. It is curious why the maniac, in his periodical fits, did not rush out of the house and give himself away by his wanton fury. The regions of abnormal psychology have still unexplored fields.

I did not tell Rajaram the real truth, and the letter I received from him some time after I reached Tanjore confirmed my ideas

not to brand myself as his brother's murderer, even though I acted only in self-defence. I had better give his letter below, as it would show how his natural temperament worked. After taking me to task for leaving suddenly, he continued. "You may be shocked and surprised to hear about the strange event which occurred in our village some days ago. You know we were preparing to remove my brother from his unsavoury haunt, but the spirits of darkness were before us. One evening, a stranger was seen to wend his way to our house. Observers swear they saw hellish flames leap often from him as he walked. As he began to enter the house, Mahalingam—a courageous neighbour of ours—approached him with curiosity. The Devil's Messenger suddenly turned upon him, and with baleful fires starting from his eyes, just pointed at him with his little finger—when, lo, Mahalingam was forced back with tremendous force by a mysterious power, and had to catch himself at the street lantern to save himself from falling. He carried his news to other people, and an excited throng saw the man repeat certain words before the door which suddenly flew open, and the stranger vanished inside. The people outside, greatly excited, dreaded for the safety of my unfortunate brother who had attracted their pity in his harmless and miserable seclusion.

"Nothing was heard for a long time, and the people—all tremulous for their safety—dispersed to their homes. Many kept awake the whole night and saw fearful portents. A cat crossed the path of Mahalingam, who was thus rendered all the more anxious.

"About 12 or 1 p.m., some man who had come outside heard with fright strange words spoken from inside the house, and an alarmed concourse massed together on the side, and distinctly heard a high-pitched voice uttering spells in a mysterious language which nobody had ever heard before. Afraid of what would happen, they retracted back, and about an hour after, an unearthly, inhuman yell sounded from the house. The whole street was thrown into an awful consternation, and barring all the doors and windows, all the people remained trembling inside their houses anxious for the morrow and the remaining night.

After broad day-light, a group gathered together, and found, to their astonishment, the door of the haunted house wide open. It was long, ere accompanied by two or three policemen who were sent for, that they mustered courage to enter the house. A hideous sight met their eyes in the Kudam. My poor brother lay dead, his skull crashed, and the whole place was dyed with blood. No trace was seen of the mysterious stranger. It is positively certain that he had suddenly vanished from the scene, for nobody was seen to go out of the house. It is surmised here that the diabolical yell which was heard might mean his triumphant shout of exit after the perpetration of his fearful deed. He might have come specially to forestall our efforts to remove a man who had been of service to the devil as a medium, and his spells probably drew my poor brother to his side from the attic where he is always to be found. You see this directly upsets my theory that mad men are immune from the evil effects of ghostly influence. It is still unknown why Shunmugham was then spared so long, but the ways of the evil powers are inscrutable. The police inquest has revealed nothing.

"The whole street is now scared, and it is likely that the residents may leave it soon. This sad narrative may serve to show you the essential truth of the opinions I had held, and the fallacy of your views. You may now grow to recognise that what you call silly superstitions may really represent important truths."

* * * *

Anyhow, the family curse seemed to have expired with its last victim. The house had, since, been purchased by a European missionary who had erected a church on its site, and no new sensation has occurred. Rajaram, after a successful career as a teacher in a High School in Madras, died some years ago, and the bitter grief of his loss is enhanced by the close intimacy which continued between him and myself all our life. His death had now enabled me to give out for the first time the real facts connected with what has been popularly called the "Kumbakonam Devil Mystery," though really there was no devil, and the mystery did not take place in Kumbakonam at all.

Habit Culture in Hinduism

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

ETIQUETTE is the point of distinction about western society, and the word represents all the refinement which can come into human character under the influence of breeding. It may have its weak side as when it is not the natural expression of the inner life of the people, but descends into dry formalism and routine. But there is an aspect of its culture which is lovely to look at, and when it is seriously taken up for practice by the members of society, life becomes richer and fuller. A similar unique distinction may be assigned to habit culture in Hinduism. In my conception of habit culture I include those usages and practices of the average man in Hindu society, so far as his daily life goes, which have the approval of his fellows and the sanction of religion and are intended to give that elementary training without which no Hindu is ordinarily good enough to gain an insight into life. In its essence it is the product of an institution which aims at reforming the average life of man. Being meant for masses of mankind it necessarily suffers from a certain superficiality. In the nature of things your reform cannot go very deep. It can have reference predominantly only to the external life of people.

(2) Hindu society is in a sense a loose theocracy. It has no Pope to whom the whole of society has to bend the knee as in catholicism; nor has it an organisation to drill people into obedience to the orders of the ecclesiastical head. In the very early ages when there were no foreigners marching with their invading hosts into India, and the general population lived in plenty, and the sovereigns who ruled over Hindusthan were rich and powerful, the idea of a perfect social organisation assigning the first place to learning was conceived, and the leaders of those times devised measures to confer the advantages of clean and healthy living upon all men in society. The builders of social organisation were the sages—and they wrote

illuminating texts laying down the injunctions suited to men in different stations in life. They dealt with great and small themes alike. They formulated the principles and went into details as well. The greatest of Hindu law-givers is Manu. Every other is in a sense a shadow of that man. Whether the book called the Laws of Manu as it has been handed down to us to-day is the work of one brain or many, whether the original writing has been enriched by subsequent additions or not, I cannot resist the astonishment I feel in looking at the vast and massive mental stature lying revealed in that book. There may be much in his writing that may look crude and uncanny to the modern sceptical mind. The study of the details of life may appear to have been carried to tedious, if not disgusting lengths, through his many pages. But there is no doubt whatsoever that he has a strikingly profound conception of the aims and endeavours of social life. He is the first great Aryan who envisaged society from all points of view. It is a mistake to think of him as one having bequeathed the curse of a petrified social institution to India. He is no stickler to forms. He is of the race not of puny minds, but gigantic thinkers, nor is it proper to point to him as the originator of the Hindu social institution of caste. He takes account of the institution which had already come into existence prior to his time. He provides means for the harmonious working of the social machine. I think it is an insult unwittingly done to the genius of that great man to think of him as some very powerful leader of his times who tried to throw society permanently and unnaturally into one mould.

(3) It is to the writings of Manu that one must turn to find the origin of habit culture in Hinduism. What was the aim of this sociologist in laying down the rules of good life in society? Not so much to earn the approval of one's fellows in society so far as one's conduct goes; nor was it conceived of as a system of rewards and punishments. Heir to a rich spiritual heritage as he was, it took him no time to see that the highest aim of the individual was the liberation of the soul, and all social action should subserve this one end. It was discipline, then, that was the primary aim which Manu set for the accomplishment of

society in laying down these rules of good conduct. The discipline of daily life consisted in numerous acts of self-denial which, as they were performed with increasing earnestness tended to raise human life from the level of the brute. In course of time the highest caste in the land became the preservers and promoters of habit culture. It cannot be denied that to a certain extent, the priests who had not sufficient renunciation to tap the springs of spiritual culture fell back upon the details of ritual and made a science of them. They might have even laid an undue emphasis upon them, and using their position as the leaders of society, they encouraged men to think of these details as constituting the goal of human endeavour. The tide of high religious enthusiasm which swept over the land, whenever a reform movement refreshed and invigorated it, must have spent itself sooner or later, and society in normal times got back to its old uses and settled habits. The only evidence it could give of its absorption in religious matters was this attention to the science of details. Thus habit culture must have gone on in the country fairly without a break through all these centuries.

(4) There is no doubt that the leaders of this habit culture were the Brahmins. As they occupied the highest place in society in the ancient days they had correspondingly higher burdens to bear. Their lives were intended to be set in rigorous self-discipline. Though in the course of centuries and during periods of spiritual sluggishness, this self-denial tended to become very much a matter of externals it is a fact that there was greater refinement in the general habits of life of these people than in those of the sub-Brahmin communities. They unconsciously set the model in refinement to the other communities. To this day in India the other communities who compose Hindu society ceaselessly copy the usages of the Brahmin. I would go further and say that they assimilate in daily life the habits of the Brahmin. In food, in marriage and other institutions, in worship etc, the progress in Hindu society is always from the comparatively unrefined practices of the sub-Brahmin communities to the refined observances of the Brahmin. I hope I am not hurting the feelings of any non-

Brahmin Hindu friend in making the above statement. I am just now not concerned to show how a fairly refined habit culture concentrated itself in the life of the Brahmin community. I do not propose either to examine the correctness of the charge against the Brahmin, accusing him of having created a monopoly in his favour in the matter of learning and culture. I only wish to point out the broad fact, that the outstanding institutions of the Hindu social life were zealously fostered by the Brahmin.

(5.) Vegetarianism is a predominantly Brahmin achievement in Hindu society, notwithstanding the deflection from this practice of some Brahmins in Bengal and elsewhere. This is the approved food in India, and many non-Brahmin communities, following the Brahmin practice in this respect, continue to be scrupulously vegetarian. Marriage before puberty and the observance of widowhood are institutions peculiar to the Brahmin. There are some non-Brahmin communities, notably the Komati Vysyas, who have wholly adopted this practice. In this latter respect no doubt, Hindus who have received a modern education and whose minds are disturbed by the new ideas presented to them by the westerns, are deeply dissatisfied with the old system, and they want more efficiency in the lives of their brethren and better justice done to the claims of all for finding happiness in life. There is no doubt however that at one time these institutions represented the cream of Hindu social effort, and it was then that the practice filtered down to the lives of men in the lower ranks of the social scale.

The early risings before daybreak in the small hours of morn, the meditation done in those calm moments, the morning immersion which refreshes the brain, the ablution which follows it, saying prayers before eating, repeating and remembering the names and attributes of God at all hours of the day, the fasts and the vigils undertaken with a view to get the body to subserve the mind, learning the scriptures and reading the stories of the sages and the incarnations, and many more details too numerous to mention are inseparable parts of that great institution which flourishes among the Hindus without an organisation and gives birth to the most enduring habit-culture the world has known.

It must again be said of this institution that it is the best mould for the preservation in normal times of spiritual memories. And whenever a great religious movement reared its head in the country with a rare hold on men, it was the men whose lives were set in a key of constant self-denial who were most forward in recognising the leader and appropriating into the body of the social faith the usages which were peculiar to him.

(6.) What has been the net result of good which has come into Hindu society through this institution? It has introduced a certain measure of refinement into life. It has opened wide the doors to a happy life to men who could willingly limit their wants and seek to conquer life by self-mastery rather than by self-indulgence. It has shown to average men the way to make daily life happier and pleasanter than ever. Its greatest weakness is its want of adaptability. This feature never became more apparent than in these modern times. Western and eastern ideas met on Indian soil and produced the keenest conflict. Unfortunately for ourselves we were in the ebbtide of our social consciousness, and instead of boldly investigating new methods and new ideas, and assimilating or rejecting them as they were good or bad, we went into our own shell, and desired to preserve every institution of ours without considering independently of western influences, the need for change, if ever there was. The crudest feature, then, of this institution was its dread of things outside one's own. One constantly hears of attacks made upon the Hindu Radical's position from the conservative section of society, not based necessarily on the ground that the innovation proposed is bad or injurious *per se*, but on the ground that occidental influences are behind the radical's outlook. Though higher Hinduism is markedly tolerant and extends the hand of fellowship and goodwill to all, in its social forms, when conservative and radical tendencies war with each other, the intolerance shown from the conservative side is sometimes grotesque. One finds the harshest things said of the radical, and at times, the basest motives also attributed to him.

(7.) This habit culture is built upon the principle of conservation in society. Alluding to this phase of the matter Viveka

nanda said that eastern societies are mainly conservative, and western societies are largely liberal. The idea was expressed by him with unusual clearness and vigour when he said that in India social life was communistic, while the inner life of man was individualistic, while in the West there was social individualism hedged round with religious communism. According to him, "the conservative's whole ideal is submission, while the liberals' whole ideal is struggle, change. Before a millionth part of the change is accomplished, society has moved on to a new point of view. Consequently it is the conservative who enjoys life more than the liberal. In the conservative's philosophy there is an idea that a man cannot have all he wants. This is ugly; but it brings out points of light and strength. A perfect life would be a combination of both."

Vivekananda wanted to break the crust of conservatism in Hindu society, and he would have shrunk from no pains, no odium or censure which the task involved. No more striking tribute was paid by any Modern Indian than by him to the greatness of Hindu social institutions and no more scathing condemnation of its inherent weakness was made by any than by him. I cannot resist the temptation of quoting at length a passage from his writings which sets out his view in unmistakeable language. "Our motherland is a glowing example of the results and consequences of the eternal subjection of the individual to society and forced self-sacrifice by dint of institution and discipline. In this country men are born according to shastric injunctions, they eat and drink by prescribed rules throughout life, they go through marriage and kindred functions in the same way, in short they even die according to shastric injunctions. This hard discipline with the exception of one great point is fraught with evil. The good point is that men can do one or two things well with very little effort, having practised them every day through generations. The delicious rice and curry which a cook of this country prepares with the aid of three lumps of earth and a few sticks can be had nowhere else. With the simple mechanism of an ante-diluvian loom, worth one rupee, and the feet put in a pit, it is possible to make kincobs worth twenty

Rupees a yard, in this country alone. A torn mat, an earthen lamp and that fed by castor oil, with the aid of materials such as these, wonderful savants are produced in this country alone. An all-forbearing attachment to an ugly and deformed wife, and a life-long devotion to a worthless and villainous husband are possible in this country alone. Thus far the bright side. But all these things are done by people guided like life-less machines:—there is no mental activity, no unfoldment of the heart, no vibration of life, no flux of hope; there is no strong stimulation of the will, no experience of keen pleasure nor contact of intense sorrow there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty, no appreciation of new things. Clouds never pass away from this mind, the radiant picture of the morning sun never charms this heart. It never occurs to this mind if there is any better state than this; where it does, it cannot convince; in the event of conviction, effort is lacking, and even where there is effort, lack of enthusiasm kills it out."

(8) Habit-culture then has made Hindu society almost permanently static and inefficient for the modern struggle. Men have the duty not merely of preserving the past, but also of intelligently adjusting themselves to the changing times and pointing out the tendencies for the future. There is no virtue in automatic submission to the will of society and reducing all experience in life to learning a few good points of discipline. Though a constant state of revolution in social affairs is undesirable for the general well-being of man, seasonable changes show that the living soul in man is still responsive to outside influence, and that man has the genius and the adaptability to master the unexpected circumstance. A society that aimlessly floats down the tide of time, shutting its eyes to the reality around it, and resolutely refusing to make the adjustments demanded by changed circumstances, ceases to belong to the category of the living, and runs the risk of an embalment and preservation as a museum curio. All habit culture in Hinduism is not necessarily symbolic of crude conservation. The essential elements of it are needed for all time.

They ought to govern the lives of men in all ages. What

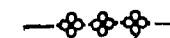
we have to do is to be more discriminating in our emphasis. Meanwhile modern competition is doing all it can to break up the old integral Hindu life. It will be a thousand pities if those features of the institution which have added a distinctive sweetness to Hindu life and form the hall-mark of the Hindu culture, should disappear from us under the grinding pressure of these hard times. When that crisis comes upon us, I hope, the Indian woman will defend with her life the institutions of her ancestors.

(9) Habit culture in Hinduism is largely heterogenous to-day. There are parts of it which you could rationalise, and all society speaks with approval of them, though the indiscipline that is fast overtaking us is making their observance rarer day by day among us. But very large parts of it go to pieces at the touch of reason, and the only correct description of them would be that they are superstitious observances. I do not suggest that superstition in one form or another does not prevail in every society. Modern influences are heavily attacking these superstitions everywhere; but ours are the longest lived and resist the invasion of reason with the greatest power. Every trifle of daily life has a religion and philosophy behind it in India. What may be a rule of fashion or etiquette in other societies becomes the basis of a religious injunction. There is probably no other society under the sun which has a religion about hair-dressing. There are rules for the wearing of Rudraksha beads by pietists. There are rules for rinsing the mouth and so on. There is a touch of the ridiculous in making the slightest departures from these rules punishable. We are told that those who do not strictly observe the rules about these trifles are less pleasing to God. A number of such artificial conventions have grown up; they hedge round the individual and reduce his personal freedom to zero. The result is that original thinking has little encouragement on this soil. Society conspires against the brave man who may have strong personal convictions, sends him to Coventry and embitters his life so fully that any but the best leaves the field of contest in despair.

(10) This state of things produces also the vice of double life among men. It introduces the bane of communalism into social

life. It creates caste pride, and the men who are the best samples of habit culture, not merely do not realise their obligations to their less fortunate brethren, but build round them walls of caste exclusiveness. It is in the name habit culture that Hindu society has perpetuated untouchability in the case of a class of Hindus. Men who belong to us and love the religion they are born in, are denied the elementary rights of citizenship and deliberately kept out of the amenities of life, not because they are wicked or unrepentant, but because social convention is content to keep them in their present state. Habit culture has signally failed to bring into existence ameliorative effort for the elevation of the down-trodden. To almost every demand of humanitarianism affecting this country, habit culture has not made even grudging concessions. All aspects of universal thought or universal experience, whenever their application to this country was attempted, found no friends from the students of habit culture in Hindu Society. There may have been nodding assent to the theory however high it may be. But these men shrug their shoulders at any practice or usage which flings down the walls of partition dividing men from each other.

(11) Habit culture in Hinduism flourishes now on the basis that man is almost wholly a body and very little of mind. Men who have it as the only distinguishing marks of their lives among us, think that it is a sufficient answer to all the demands of mind and soul. Having done great services to Hindu Society in the past, and having still a great office to do for society in future habit culture to-day presents more objectionable than useful features and threatens to overwhelm society. This is one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of Hindu Society. The chief need of the time is to reinforce those features of habit culture which are not repugnant to the enlightened conscience and understanding, with the strong points which this age can give us. Our society has to appropriate and learn the use of many modern achievements which may infuse a new vigour into our lives.



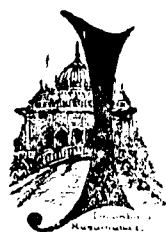
The Cape to Brindaban

(CONCLUDED.)

A Pilgrim's Conclusions.

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

Fellow of the Royal Economic Society, (London.)



IN the foregoing sketches, one could have had a peep into some of the more important holy places of India. We are naturally lead to ask a chain of questions of this type:— What are the differences between North Indian and South Indian temples? Is there the same controversy in the north regarding temple entry that we hear of more often nowadays in our parts?

Temples Compared

A CRITICAL study of our village-planning will bring in the fact of the situation of Siva's temple in the East and Maha Vishnu's in the West. Such a clear-cut distinction is never visible in the many of the North Indian villages. Wherever we go, we stumble across one village-shrine or other in the South—whereas, the contrary seems to describe the state of affairs in Calcutta and many of the Bengal villages.

To the new visitor, it is invariably the case that he has a view of the heavenward-bound towers of the South while a few miles from the place. Extensive *Madils*, Bali-peedam, Dwajas-thambam, and the inner prakarams—these are some of the characteristics of the South Indian Temples. The narrow, small temples of Northern India with their "Courts, Porches, and Subordinate Shrines" contain only one small room in which besides the presiding deity several minor divinities are frequently placed, leaving no room enough for a dozen persons to present their offerings at a time and to observe the prescribed ceremonies in an orderly manner.

The pancha-kala-worship, abhisheka-elaborations and picturesque deeparadhana—all these external ceremonials are

points favourable to the South. A comparison of Sri Ranganatha's Temple at Brindaban and the Gujarathi Sri Krishna's Temple at the same locality will bring into prominence these differences.

Bhakthi—in the North

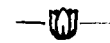
YET, when one has in view the all-pervading Jagannath at Puri and Viswanath at Kasi, it remains with me a questionable proposition if such rare devotion is seen within many of the otherwise brilliant South Indian Temples. While I embraced Lord Jagannath at Puri and worshipped Viswanath through *direct* contact, the intensity of devotion which pierced through my inner self I never experienced in any of these South Indian shrines. While with us here devotion has to be manufactured through many an external ceremonial, in the north we have rare opportunities of identifying ourselves with the Great self in us all—Sri Renganath at Shrirangam may strike awe in the devotees: Lord Alagar in the Alagar-koil (near Madura) may terrify the unsophisticated among us: Sri Meenakshi of Madura may infuse devotion through her magnanimous eye: Lord Venkatachalapathi in the Hills may draw out from us rare sacrifices: the Boy-Lord at Palni may make us all Miniature-Gods, and thrice-holy Chidambaram may enable us to enter into absolute communion with Nature: yet, I beg to repeat once again, the *rare throbbing of the soul* and the *supreme quiet* which I experienced at Puri, Kasi, and underneath the holy Banyan Tree of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, was never my lot in the South

Equality before the Great one

HOW to account for this? Anyone can worship the Lord at Puri and Kasi within embracing distance. What have we, Brahmans, gained by closing the Sanctum Sanctorum against other communities? So long as we are painfully aware of the fact that we are pygmies when compared to our great forefathers, is there any reason to base our claims on the poor plea of birth? The Great one never wants these unnatural distinctions. Have we heard of a better and purer Saint than St. Nandanar of the Pariah caste? If we attain power through

penance, all power shall be shown us unasked. In such a case, the artificial conventions become out of place. The path of Bhakthi has been specially recommended for use in this age and it is our duty to do away with these humiliations which we have been wont to inflict on the less fortunate of our brethren. Why god tanks and sacred shrines should be closed against our countrymen of other communities, is not at all intelligible.

Not in externals, but in the intensity of our bhakthi, lies our salvation. If a visit to Puri will not enthuse the devotee with a profound lesson of unity, if the mild Hindu will not learn to keep cordial relations with the fiery Musalman after embracing the idol of Jagannath, if the social tyranny that we are exercising over our brethren in the South is not to be supremely regretted after a *darsan* of Viswanath, if a new leaf could not be opened in the annals of communal-ridden South, really, I have no faith in such a despicable being.



The Religion of the Ancient Tamils

By the late Mudaliar Sabaratnam G.G J.C. of Jaffna.

This Religion according to Tholkappiam

ALTHOUGH the ancient Tamil classics are confined mainly to the material plane, they still afford us ample opportunity to trace the religion of the Tamils of that period. A study of these classics would clearly show that the religion of the Tamils was exactly identical with what is now known as the Vedic religion, as exhibited, of course, in the light of the Agamas. There may be some slight difference in the method of explaining dogmas, and such difference is only in method. But in other respects, the religion of the Tamils cannot be said to have been different in any way from the Vedic religion. We could

clearly see from the ancient Tamil classics that the authority of the four Vedas was fully acknowledged by the Tamils of these days, the Vedic Gods were invariably invoked and worshipped, the Vedic rites and Ceremonies were freely practised, caste distinction was rigidly observed, the doctrine of Transmigration was implicitly believed, the law of non-killing was largely enforced, temple worship was systematically carried on, and the moral duties enjoined by the Vedas and Vedic Sastras were accepted without exception.

I will first take up *Tholkappiam*, the oldest of the Tamil classics that we now possess, and see what was the religion of the Tamils according to this Book. It is quite apparent from *Tholkappiam* that the Tamils believed in the existence of God, that their religion was a form of pure Monotheism, and that they believed in a revelation given by God. These ideas are beautifully conveyed in the following couplet of that great work :—

வினையினீர்க்கி விளங்கிய அறிவின்
முனிவன் கண்டது முதலாலாகும்.

(The book given by God, who is the cause of all causes, who is self-knowing and who is beyond the reach of deeds and their effects, is what is known as the primary authority or revelation).

This couplet gives a clean conception of God, as our ancestors understood Him 4000 years ago, and it expresses in unmistakable terms the idea they had of revelation. The couplet describes God as the first cause, as a sentient being that is self-enlightened, and as a being that is not affected by deeds. That He is not affected by His deeds shows that He is immutable and pure—that He is free from likes and dislikes—that His motive is always grace, that none of His action are in His own interests that He is absolute and non-dependent and that He is above all wants. That He is self-enlightened shows that He is omniscient and blissful,—just and merciful. That He is the first cause shows that He has no beginning or end and that He is the maker of the whole universe. This single couplet may be said to embody in itself a clear idea of the several attitudes of God as expounded by the profoundest of religions philosophers. Can

we say in the force of this couplet, that the Tamils of the period in which Tholkappiam lived had no idea of a pure form of religion and that they were only a primitive race worshipping demons and goblins.

(2) Let us now see what the revelation referred to in the couplet is. To a student of Tholkappiam, it is not difficult to say what was the revelation that was accepted by the Tamils of these days.

The thirty-first *Sutram* of the ancient work reads as follows:—

உயர்ந்தோர்க்குரிய ஒத்தினன்.

(To those of the higher orders belong the Sastras brought out of the Vedas.)

The whole of the section known as பொருளதிகாரம் of this great work breathes a Vedic spirit and it is useless to multiply quotations in support of the veneration the Tamils had for the Vedas.

(3) The social life of the Tamils seem to have been regulated by the Vedic and the Smritic laws and there is any amount of reference in Tholkappiam to the practices ordained by the Vedas and their supplementary Sastras. I would draw the attention of the reader to the following Sutra:—

அறுவகைப்பட்ட பார்ப்பன பக்கமும்
ஐவகை மரபின் அரசர் பக்கமும்
இருபுன்று மரபின் ஏனோர் பக்கமும்

The elaborate commentary on the Sutra by Natchinar Kinyar would clearly show that this Sutra embodies in it the sense of the vedic Smrities, Ithihasas and Puranas especially the *Samskaras* connected with the Vedic fire, the different forms of asceticism prescribed by the Vedic Sastras etc., etc.

(4) The Vedic *Varnas* (castes) are distinctly mentioned in several places.

Sutra 29.

மேலோர் முறைமை நால்வர்க்கு முரித்தே

[The rules laid down for the high are common to the four (castes.)]

Sutra 144.

மேலோர் மூவர்க்கும் புணர்த்த காணம்
கீழோர்க்காகிய காலமு முண்டே

(The rules laid down for the first three higher orders will at times be applicable to the last as well.)

Sutra 126.

நூலே கரண முக்கோன்மணையே
ஆயுங்காலே அந்தணர்க்குரிய

(The thread, the water-vessel, the triple stick and the sandals belong to the Brahmins)

Sutra 128.

அந்தணனர்க்கு குரியவு மரசர்க்கு
கொன்றிய வழுஉம் பொருளு மா லுளவே.

(Some of the rules prescribed for the Brahmins are applicable to the Kshattriyas as well)

Sutra 603.

வைசியன் பெறிமே வாணிகவாழ்க்கை

(To the Vysia belongs the profession of trade.)

Sutra 636.

வேளாண் மாந்தர்க்கு ஞ்நூ ணல்ல
தில்லென மொழிப் பிறவகை நிகழ்ச்சி

(The Vellalas live only by tilling the ground.)

(5) The 92 Sutra of Tholkappiam refers plainly to the eight kinds of Vedic marriages.

மறையோர் தேயத்து மன்றலெட்டனுள்

(Of the eight forms of marriages that obtain among the Vedic people.)

(6) The Vedic Gods are referred to as follows in the fifth Sutra:—

மாயோன் மேய காடுறை யுலகமும்
சேயோன் மேய மைவரை யுலகமும்
வேந்தன் மேய தீம்புன லுலகமும்
வருணன்மேய பெரும் புனலுலகமும்
மூல்லைகுறிஞ்சி மருதநெய்த லெனச்
சொல்லிய முறையாற் சொல்லவும் படுமே.

(The forest land occupied by Vishnu
The mountain land occupied by Subramania)

The watery land occupied by Indra

The sea-girt land occupied by Varuna are respectively known as Mullai, Kurindai, Marukiam and Neithal.)

(7) It may be seen that the Vedanta Mahavakya of *Tatwamasi* is itself referred to in Tholkappiam.

Sutra 188.

வேண் டியதல் வியாண்டு முன்றிறவாது

(The period for acquiring knowledge such as Vedanta etc., should not exceed the limit prescribed, and the knowledge itself should not collide itself with the Maha Vakya of *Tatwamasi*—See Natchinarkiniyar's commentary).

(8) The practice of Suttee itself is referred to in Tholkappiam.

Sutra 79.

நல்லாள் கணவனோடு நறியழற் புதிஇச்

சொல்லிடைபிட்ட பாலை நிலையுங்

(Here the Palai or the desert land is compared to the fire which the chaste wife entered into along with her husband).

It would thus be quite apparent from the oldest of the existing Tamil literature that the religion of the ancient Tamil, was the same as the religion of the Vedic Aryans.

Their Religion according to the Literature of the Sangam Period.

I will now examine the Tamil literature of the third Sangam and see what the religion of the Tamils was according to that literature. All the literature of this period had Tholkappiam for their authority, and it is needless to say that their views as regards the religion of the Tamils will be exactly identical with those of Tholkappiar. It will be apparent to any one who wades through these literature that the religion of the Tamils was the same as the religion of the Hindu Vedas and Agamas. The following quotations will fully support this view and will clearly show that the Tamils have all along been followers of the Vedic faith.

(1) Vedas and Vedic Practices

Irayanar Agapporul was a great authority for the third Sangam poets and it begins with the following lines :—

அன்பினேந் திணை களவெனப் படுவ
தந்தண ரருமறை மன்றலெட்டனுட்
கந்தருவ வழக்க மென்மனார் புலவர்

(This sutra distinctly refers to the Hindu Vedas, Vedic marriages and Vedic Brahmins).

Nakkiniar, a fellow of the third Sangam and the able commentator on *Irayanar Agapporul* refers largely in his commentary to the four Vedas and to Various Vedic practices; and one could clearly see from his commentary what the religion of the Tamils was during this period.

Kalittokai

Verse 1.

ஆற்றியந்தணர்க் கருமறை பல பகர்ந்து
தேறுநீர் சடைக் கரந்து திரிபுரந்தி மடுத்து

Verse 2.

உறித்தாழ்ந்த கரகமு முணர்வு சான் முக்கோலும்
நெறிப்படக் சுவலசைஇ வேறே ராநெஞ்சத்தும்
குறிப்பேவல் செயன் மாலைக் கொள் நடையந்தணீர்

Verse 36.

கேள்வி யந்தணர் கூடவும்
வேள்வி யாவியினுயிர்க்கு மென்னெஞ்சே

Verse 69.

ஒத்துடை யந்தணை னெரிவவஞ் செய்வான் போல

(These passages clearly refer to the Vedas, the Angas, the Brahmins, the Vedic Asramas the ensigns of the Asramas, the Vedic fire, the Vedic Gods and to Puranic allusions.)

Purananuru

Verse 1.

மறை நவிலந்தணர் துவலவும் படுமே

Verse 2.

நாஅல் வேத நெறிதிரியினும்

Verse 6.

நான் மறை முனிவ லேந்து கையெதிரே

Verse 15.

நன்பனுவல் நான் வேதத் தருஞ்சீர்த்தி

Verse 166.

ஆறுணர்ந்மி ஒரு முது நூல்

Verse 362.

நான் மறைக் குறி.

(The four Vedas are directly referred to in these Verses)

Tirumurugattupadai

மந்திரவுதியின் மரபுளி வழாஅ

அந்தணர் வேள்வி யோர்க்கும்மே.

இருமூன் நேய்திம வியல்பினின் வழாஅது

அறுநான் கிரட்டி யிளமை நல்லியாண்டு

ஆறினிற் கழிப்பிய வறனவில் கொள்கை

மூன்று வகைக்குறித்த முத்தி

(The Vedic fire, the Vedic mantras, the Vedic Brahmins and the Vedic duties are profusely referred to)

Mathuraikkanchi

சிறந்த வேதம் விளங்கப்பாடி

ஒதலந்தணர் வேதம் பாட

(The Vedas and Vedic Brahmins are referred to)

Perumpanathuppadai

மறைகாப்பாளருறை பதிசேப்பின்

கேள்வியந்தண ரருங்கடனிறுத்த

வேள்வி தூணத் தசைஇ

செந்திப்பேணிய முனிவர் வெண்கோட்டுக்

கனிறுதரு விறகன் வேட்டும்.

(The Vedas, Vedic Yagnas and the Vedic Brahmins are referred to)

Mullaippattu

கற்றேய்த்துடுத்த படிவப் பார்ப்பான்

முக்கோல்

(The Vedic Brahmins, their Asramas and their ensigns are referred to)

Chilappadikaram

மாமுது பார்ப்பான் மறைவழி காட்டிடக்

திவலஞ் செய்து

நான்மறை மரபின் நீமுறை ஒருபால்

மறை யோராக்கிய ஆவுதி நறும்புகை

(The Vedas, the Vedic Yagnas and the Vedic Brahmins are referred to)

ஆரணவேதக் காதியந்த மிலையதுவேநெறி

(The Vedas are referred to here)

It would be clear from these passages that the four Vedas were fully and freely acknowledged by the ancient Tamils.

(2) Vedic Gods

The Vedic Gods were unreservedly acknowledged by the ancient Tamils, and in fact they have had no other God except the Vedic Deities, although some of them might have undergone some slight change owing to the change in the form of worship paid to them.

Kalittokai

தேறு நீர்சடைக்கரந்து திரிபுரந்திமடுத்து

படரணியந்திப் பசங்கட் கடவுள்

இடரிய வேற்றெருமை நெஞ்சிடந்திட்டுக்

குடர்கூளிக் கார்த்துவான் போன்

பொருமுரண் மேம்பட்ட பொலம்புனை புகழ்நெமித்

திருமறுமார்பன் போற்றிறல் சான்றகாறியு

மிக்கொளிர் தாழ்சடை மேவரும் பிறைதுதன்

முக்கணனுருவம்போல முரண்மிகு குராலு

மாகடல் கலக்குறமாகொன்ற மடங்காப்போர்

வேலவல்லானிறம்போல வெருவந்த சேயும்

அமரருண் ஞாயிற்றுப் புத்தேண் மகள்

விறன்மிகு நேமியானிறம்போல இருஞ்வர

(The Vedic Gods such as Rudra (Siva) Vishnu, the Sun and the celestials are referred to)

Purananuru

ஏற்று வலனுயரிய எரிமருளவிர் சடை

மாற்றருங் கணிச்சி மணிமிடற் றேனுங்

கடல் வளர் புரிவளை புரையுமேனி

அடல் வெந்நாஞ்சிற்பனைக் கொடியோனு

மண்ணுறு திருமணி புரையுமேனி

விண்ணுயர் புட் கொடிவிறல் வெய்யோனு

மணி மயிலுயரிய மரு வென்றிப்

பிணி முகவூர்தியொண் செய் யோனுமென

புகழ்த்துற்றோர்க்கு மாயோ னனை

நீனிற வருவின் மேனியோனும்

அஞ்சன வண்ணம் றந்து நிறுத்தாங்கு

படைத்தோன் மன்றவப் பண்பிலாளன்

(Siva, Vishnu, Brahma and Bala Deva are referred to here).

Tirumurugattupadai

பாம்புபடப் புடைக்கும் பல்வரிக் கொடுஞ்சிறைப்
 புள்ளணி நீள்கொடிச் செல்வனும் வெள்ளவேறு
 வலவயினுயரிய பலர்புகழ் திணிதோள்
 உமையமர்ந்து விளங்குமிமையா முக்கண்
 முவையின் முருக்கிய முரண்மிகு செல்வனு
 நூற்றுப்பத்தடுக்கிய நாட்டத்து நூறுபல்
 வேள்விமுற்றிய வென்றடு கொள்ளத்
 திரிரண்டேந்திய மருப்பினெழினடைத்
 தாழ்பெருந் தடக்கை யுயர்த்தயானை
 எருத்த மேறிய திருக்கோர் செல்வனு
 நார்பெருந் தெய்வத்து நன்னகர் நிலைய
 உலகங்காக்கு மொன்றுபுரி கொள்கைப்
 பலர் புகழ் மூவருந் தலைவராக
 நால்வேறியற்கைப் பதினொரு மூவரோடு
 ஒன்பதிற்பரட்டியு பரநிலை பெறியார்

(The Vedic gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra or Siva, Indra, the thirty-three species of celestials, the Ganas etc., etc., are referred to here with their functions as described in the Vedas and Upanishads.)

Malaipadu Kadam

காரியுண் யுக்கடவுள் திருக்கையும்
 இருநிலங்கடந்த திருமுறுமார்பன்
 நீன்ற யுருவினெடியோன் கொப்பூழ்
 நான்முக வொருவற் பயந்த
 பலபுகழ்த்தாமரைப் பொருட்டின் காண்வரத்தோன்ற
 இமையோருறையும் இமயச் செவ்வேள்

(Siva, Vishnu, Brahma with his birth from the navel of Vishnu as told by the Vedas are referred to here.)

Mullaippattu

நேமியொடு வலம்புரி பொறித்த
 மாதாங்கு தடக்கை நீள்கெல நிமிர்ந்த
 மா அல் போல

(Vishnu, his chakra and conch and his blue colour as the Vedas and Puranas describe are referred to here)

These passages would clearly show that the Gods worshipped by the Tamils were no other than the Vedic Deities.

On Truth

By C. Lakshmi Rama Sastri, B. Sc.

THE theme is sublime. Not less so is our audacity in proposing to write upon it. Our excuse is a simple one. We do not pretend to be moralists : it is not our line of country. But we recognise ideals: they find a place in our philosophy. It does not dishearten us that they remain only abstract notions: they rarely materialise. Still, it is good to cherish them. Dreams have their uses: we let loose our fancy. Our minds take holiday-trips into brighter lands. Then we see things with other eyes. We realise how sordid our world is and aspire higher. At any rate it is a step in advance. It is something to be conscious of our deficiencies: we know where we are. Of course it does not take us far. But it is a good beginning nevertheless.

A man may have ideals but he may fail to get to them. It constantly happens. We cannot reach up to them; we have not the necessary moral fibre. But that is no reason we should not have them at all: we may speak of them still. One need not be a saint to write upon saintly themes. For, just as the French say, there is no need for a sculptor to be himself made of marble, so may a man be not truthful and yet write upon truth.

It is said of Pontius Pilate that he asked, what is truth, and paused for an answer. Men have mocked him for this, but it strikes us that he took an eminently sane view. The words 'true' and 'truth' lie on every man's tongue. But if we were to ask the persons concerned as to their real meaning, ten to one they would stare idly and literally pause for an answer. In the hurly-burly of this world it is scarcely possible to hold men up and require them to explain the jargon they are using. But it would be a good thing if such a practice prevailed. Then we should see that much of our talk is of the kind that leads nowhere; that it is all 'sound and fury, signifying nothing.'

He says a very foolish thing

In such a solemn way;

The truth is that most of us do not know what we are speaking : we employ the words that come handiest and make no bones about them. It was, it will be remembered, Socrates who first taught us to use words with an eye to their true import. He suffered in the process but that is no detriment to his teaching : it only shows the reluctance of people to face the truth. We do not wish that our own words should be turned against us; and so we go on in our merry way, none the better for the mistakes of our forbears.

If we were to enquire into the ultimate nature of truth, we should, as likely as not, come up against a brick-wall. We should be no nearer the result at the end of our enquiry than we were at the beginning. It is a safe policy, however, not to give your ear to anything until sufficient proof is forthcoming; and even then, as the self-made merchant said, 'allow a fair amount for tare, and then verify your weights.' We may dismiss at once, of course, those who tell lies with premeditation. They have neither part nor lot in this matter. They have no qualms; they are case-hardened. We may treat them with 'patient, deep disdain' and pass on.

But there are others whose case is not so simple. They may also tell lies but they tell them with a difference. They are not conscious of the fact. They may be under a great delusion but they are simply not aware of it. Here our personal conviction is the important point. Let the truth be what it may; God alone knows it; so far as I am concerned I stick to my version; you may cry yourself hoarse to the contrary for aught I care; it won't matter a docken leaf, and that's all there's to it. Now you cannot quarrel with such an one. There are matters of which it is possible to take more than one view; and each one of us takes that view which is congenial to his nature. It is mostly a question of temperament. The wind blows where it listeth.

Truth, they say, lies at the bottom of the well. It lies deeper than that. None can sound its depths. Those who think they can are simply given to fancying themselves: they are like the confident gentleman who thought he was at the top of the stair

whent there were some more to go. If we know the truth there would be nothing more to know. Earth would be a paradise.

Generally, the word truth is understood in its smaller sense. Mere faithfulness to fact is often regarded as adequate. It is not so. There is a higher truth than truth to fact. It is the spirit underlying the facts *That* must be genuine, even if some of the facts are not. The material element counts for nothing; it is the spirit that quickeneth. This is far more important than a careful and correct statement of facts. There are some who have a consuming passion for accuracy; they would not be considered wrong for nuts. They are like penny-in-the-slot machines. One never heard of a Higher Intelligence guiding those machines. Similar is the case with these people: they simply cannot help being accurate. The idea is expressed beautifully by Stevenson. 'Truth to fact is not always truth to sentiment . . . A fact may be an exception; but the feeling is the law, and it is that which you must neither garble nor belie. . . . To tell truth, rightly understood, is not to state the true facts, but to convey a true impression; truth in spirit, not truth to letter is the true veracity.'

Truth, it is said, is stranger than fiction. Fiction that aims at realism takes facts from ordinary life and projects them on the imagination in connected story-form. Fearing for criticism it takes only likely facts, or what it regards as likely enough, and knits them up together into a single strand. Now the process has its drawbacks. It often omits really important facts. These startle if revealed; and people disbelieve them in consequence. That a thing is strange is no reason we should disregard it. It did not, as the phrase goes, swim into our ken, that is all; and in the result we become sceptical; we are bowled over, as it were, by the shock of it. But were truth told, it would outsell fiction. Far stranger events happen in real life than in the most extravagant stories. After all, stories are only transcripts from life: they are, therefore, smaller than life; in the same degree do their plots fall short from those that colour our daily lives. Romance is not the exclusive property of the imagination. Life is full of romances if we only care to record them: to the hearing ear and

the understanding heart it is the greatest romance of all. As Mr. Clutton-Brock says of the Chinese poets, "there are no incongruities and no separation of poetry and prose in life. All life trembles into beauty like leaves stirred by the wind; and it remains itself even while it trembles? Truth is indeed stranger than fiction. People are so much accustomed to the hearing of lies all their lives that if the truth were told for once they would not believe it: they would stare after it, as stout Cortez stared at the Pacific, 'with a wild surmise.'

It is sometime since the world began; and Man came into it a while after. His advent, in some respects, was a misfortune. He brought with him most of the evils that threaten life to-day. He is a wild thing on two legs. He has wrinkled the fairface of the world by his acts. He has strewn it with his evil deeds. What are the root-causes of the conflicts that have taken place and that, as the journalist would say, 'bid fair' to take place still? Many causes may be cited; and they may all be true. But the cause is this: the concealment of Truth. In domestic as well as in public life it is this that plays mischief. Most of our quarrels arise on account of misunderstandings; we do not see others as they really are. We are more prone to see the devil in them than the angel; and yet, it seems to us, there is a fairly equal admixture of both in their composition. If we are biased towards the one more than the other, it is probably because our own natures are more aligned to *that* than to the other; after all, like finds out like. In a free atmosphere foul things do not grow. A generous access to air *develops* things, it does not stifle them. Expansion is the rule, not suppression. Openness makes for safety. Anything concealed works like poison in the body. It first corrupts the subterranean passages; then it works its way up, stealthily but surely. One must know one's opponent well; then he will cease to be an opponent. It is want of knowledge that makes him look so hideous. We are all the children of God; the same processes work in others as they work in us. If we only knew the truth our enemies wouldn't look the devils they do. Our deadly feuds are really only slight misunderstandings enormously exaggerated. And even these are due in the first

instance, to the fact that we hide the truth from one another. 'Naturally,' as Mr. Edmund Candler says, 'Folk cannot come to an understanding who are always shouting angrily at each other through an impenetrable thick-set hedge; naturally they are blind to any human trait that may be discovered in the unseen monster lurking on the other side.'

It all comes back to this, therefore, that Truth should be allowed fair play: it should form the basis of our actions: it should be the care of our hearts and the colouring principle of our intellectual lives.

Fumigation

By V. Aravamudan.

HINDU Shastras have a scientific basis. Our daily social and religious observances are inseparably interwoven with fundamental rules of health. One such rule is that of keeping our houses and surroundings full of pure air, which is done by fumigation of certain things. Unfortunately, most of the modernised Hindus have ignorantly or wilfully neglected these daily observances. Consequently, nowadays towns and villages have come to need Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors. Formerly, no such need was felt, for each Hindu home was a Sanatorium in itself.

The Sacred 'Homa' lit up with the 'Samithu' (ஸமித்து) and nourished with cowdung and ghee is the greatest purifier of air. The smoke of the small twigs of the Arasa tree (அரசமரம்) destroys certain harmful bacteria. Its germicidal properties are the more pronounced when it is grafted with a margosa. People may have heard of the so-called marriage between the two trees, sacred in the eyes of the Hindus. The very breath of the combined tree is highly purifying and holy in nature. It is a matter of common knowledge that people perform several Prathakshinams (பிரதக்ஷிணம்) round such trees early morning after bath and do

Puja. All Nagaprathishtas are centred round this tree of all trees in the world. A Brahmacharya has need of the 'Samithu' too often. Evidently there is something remarkable about the whole thing. It is not idle superstition that prompt people to revere so much this venerable tree. It is no wonder then that the people of the older generation who performed daily 'Homa' with such materials, were endowed with longevity of life, enviable health, strength and intelligence.

Various other things are being frequently burnt in Hindu homes which keep off or destroy bad germs. The properties of the Margosa tree alone are too well-known to need lengthy comment. Planting of the Margosa near dwellings, burning of its logs for warming women during confinement in cold weather, and consuming its tender leaves and flowers in some form or other are evidences of its germicidal properties.

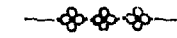
Fine Ahilor Chandhanam is used for various purposes in various forms. Its medicinal properties are utilised in the preparation of Chandanadhi. Thailam and other valuable medicines for urinary and lung complaints. A coating of Chandhanam on the abdomen and chest after meal, works wonders. We can't think of any Hindu marriage without the fumes of this valuable material inhaled alone or combined with ingredients and which have a remarkably purifying effect on our body. Few Hindu houses are new to the use of the pleasant fumes of Dasangam, Maddipal and Sambrani, which are plentifully burnt in temples where larger concourses meet to worship. The system of fumigating public places with such pleasant disinfectants ought to be encouraged.

Still another of this kind is the Camphor. People need no telling of its importance in all places of worship. The mere smell of camphor about a person is capable of warding off or destroying fell diseases. Camphordyne is a familiar medicine.

It is not surprising then that camphor is freely burnt in temples and houses too during worship, and its fumes caught and inhaled by people.

Other disinfectants used by modern doctors are sulphur and chlorine among others. These are too strong and injurious to the

system when inhaled, and they cannot effectively replace the more pleasant and harmless materials referred to above. The advent of the western civilization has tended to make people neglect these treasures of health. May God open their eyes to see and enjoy the vast treasures of life secrets embedded in our shastras.



Marriage and Personal Freedom

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

THE grandest fiction of our age is our dearly cherished superstition about the sacredness of personal individual liberty. The mark of civilization has been painted to be the invariable respect for and jealousy about the value of personal liberty which it assures to the individual. This is a strange and delusive doctrine to uphold, in as much as it will be found on closer analysis that the progress towards the so-called modern civilization implies an enormous increase in our personal and other relationships with external objects. This necessarily involves the surrender of many natural rights. I do not contend that that surrender is in many cases an unwilling one, nor that even in cases where it has been forcibly compelled by the state it has been for the harm or decay of the individual. Rather one characteristic of modern civilization has been the formation of a political society, organised and regulated by the rules and ordinances of mutual self-protection which assures greater safety for self-expansion of the individual in a collective state than would otherwise be in a community of mutual warring elements, uninspired by the high social consideration of the common good. Indeed this is the most infallible title of modern civilization to our respectful consideration. But to say this, is not to say every-

thing. Even after a surrender of a number of individual personal rights to the beneficent Moloch of modern society there yet remains a residue of personal freedom behind which the individual entrenches himself; and the evil of the excessive organisation, regulation and regimentation of modern life comes in when the supreme sovereign authority tries to dislodge the subject from even this modicum of personal rights, quite necessary for comfortable existence. There is a certain amount of acquiescence in this surrender to the central power as indicated by a large number of injunctions and prohibitions, restraints and ordinances which fetter our individual freedom in all ways. The majority of people are unwilling to risk the odium of public opposition and consent to sail along with the stream. For as Emerson said "The Virtue most in request is conformity" whereas "whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist.....nothing is at last sacred....."

This habit of mind, what is called in the Bhagavat Gita the policy of Lokasamgraha is seen most conspicuously in matters of caste and social customs. Rules of convenience framed to suit the exigencies of a passing phase of life gradually become crystallised into set and rigid formulae. Then the pious unreason and sanctimonious superstition of mankind raises it to the status of an idol which we begin to worship after the world's fashion, little realising the intellectual and moral slavery involved in this process. Always the problem of life is the problem of a non-conformist conscience. The problem of the conflict between individual and society in which society tries to better the natural course of individual reason and to inflict upon social rebels the penance of its collective persecution has been handled with a luminous insight in Tagore's novel 'Gora.' Tagore interests himself there in the fettering tendency of social rules and conventions by preventing the natural expansion of the soul, or as he says "barring the way to union of hearts in obedience to the behests of society but in opposition to the commandment of all history." What Tagore condemns is the absence of a social system anywhere in this world which can overlook petty differences of opinion for the sake of the Unities

that can make one grand Humanity. If marriage, (this is the theme of the novel) is the reciprocal passion between two individuals, the longing of one soul for the companionship of another, over-riding considerations of caste or sect, then why should society raise up the demon of caste or class to oppose this natural union, God-ordained? It is in this institution of marriage under the cumulative influence of law, custom and public opinion that we see the most flagrant violation of the right of the individual to free action. Society is so constituted that in spite of the recent developments of law in the matter of conceding freedom of marriage, society insists upon conformity to its usages although such usages do not stand the test of reason. I do not mean to say that even in countries very much advanced there is absolute freedom of marriage without legal prohibition of some sort or other. But for practical purposes, it is not law that stands more often in the way as social opposition which cramps and confines the right of man by making a fetish of conformity. In these matters it is rather for society to expand and give room to individual conscience. But what happens actually? Not only we obstruct the path of the legal reformer,—for example, remember the obscurantist opposition to permissive measures like Basu's and Patel's Bills,—but even where law forges ahead of society, society visits those who protest and act against its usages with its anger and persecution. We do not allow people even to face the consequences of their free action. It is true the genuine and conscientious rebel in his attempt at ameliorative social reform faces the penalty of social opposition even while claiming the reward. But with the majority of mankind this retaliatory spirit and vindictiveness of society is a great deterrent force which creates inherent prejudices and prevents free speculation and finally dulls the appetite of the individual in the exercise of his own natural rights by which alone we could attain the full stature of our moral being. Advocates of the status quo, particularly in India, try to fetter freedom of marriage by saying that social system and religious observances are closely even intimately, bound up and that marriage is not merely a personal matter but also a social matter. Further, according to

them, the problem of social morality rises up because there are many of us. Were there but one individual, no social questions would arise. Such people go to the extent of saying that there is no abstract idea of rights, as conceived by the Radical Rationalists which ignores society altogether. But their righteousness does not depend on individual or social considerations; rather on righteousness must be based social and individual considerations. The result of a clear and impartial observation would show that an advanced state of society which assures the greatest happiness to its individual members is that in which the greatest freedom is allowed to the members in the matter of personal rights consistent with collective welfare and also where a greater power of adaptation, readjustment to the changing tide of circumstances exists in society itself.

It is in this question of marriage that greatest difficulty is felt in apportioning the claims of individual and society. The basis and organisation of the machinery of modern society consists in directing man's self-regarding instincts to rise to what Benjamin Kidd calls "the emotion of the pure ideal", in compelling his directive self to yield to his social self. It could be said more positively in respect of this institution of marriage than of any other that "the individual withers but the race is more and more". But this expresses only one half of the biological truth. In a society where the rules and laws of marriage crush the individual and arrest the free development of individual personality, such a process could not reasonably be held to promote the welfare of the community or the race. The basis of marriage is love; its purpose is social or national welfare. Marriage is but the seal that society sets on the choice made by love. In an early stage of society mankind could not be presumed to found the institution of marriage with any pre-vision of its social value. It resulted from sex-love and was fundamentally based on the instinct of jealousy which, again, is the result of a need for protecting the rights of property, the wife, in primitive times, being a chattel who must be reserved for her lord. This jealousy is stronger on the part of man and more rigorous in its exactions. (Hence probably the universal prevalence of a laxer code of morality for

men and a severer for women in safe-guarding the rights of marriage). But whatever be the rigour of this jealous instinct of love, this jealousy for exclusive possession is of supreme importance to society which, therefore, saw the advantage of harnessing this instinct for the sake of its own integrity and preservation. That is why Bertrand Russell calls marriage as embodying the "creative impulses" (as opposed to 'possessive impulses') of life. Any system of law, therefore, which tends to regulate marriage must realise its larger purpose and any reform attempted must lead to the liberation of this creativeness. Above convention, above law, above sentiment is the larger purpose of marriage, its social justification. Whatever form of marriage favours most the successful upbringing of children is on that ground alone to be judged the best. The corner stone is the well-being of the next generation. This paramount consideration will force its influence backward on the institutions of every community. To save society from decay and extinction, marriage is regulated; and to that extent the freedom of the individual is subordinated to the larger concerns of life, the welfare of society. In judging of marriage, therefore, we must take into consideration Mr. Bertrand Russell's first point i.e. "What is its influence on the propagation and education of children?"

But this is not the only aspect of marriage. Mr. B. Russell says that the development of the character of men and women is equally important in judging of this institution of marriage. Most of the existing systems of marriage possess in a greater or less one or other of these two points but not both equally. It is even pointed out that these two aspects are possibly antagonistic and irreconcilable. This mutual antagonism is stated in bigger and more general terms in the formula for which Sir James Frazer among modern investigators is responsible, that laws exist to forbid men to do the things their natural instincts incline them to do. This is not generally true. Laws, howsoever apparently tyrannous, are based upon the fundamental impulses of normal life. Our customs, institutions and laws only formulate and emphasise the impulses of normal life. It may be that human ingenuity sometimes moulds them into extravagant shapes and camouflages

them with fantastic designs. This arrested development is very characteristic of our own days. But the general tenor of law is in the direction of normal human 'instincts,' using the word 'instinct' in the largest Bergsonian sense.

Nevertheless, inspite of this larger and humaner conception of instinct and law, our modern legislators and statesmen seem to imagine that the instinct of physical aspect of love and the social instinct are eternally opposed to each other. Hence it is that the free expression of love in modern times is cumbered by a thousand and one considerations as if it works to the detriment of society, nation or the state. The peculiar pathological manifestations of sexual love are taken as proof of this matter. To some extent the fact must be faced that the sex impulse remains more or less apart from the general life of civilised man. Though the sex-impulse, properly controlled, works for the welfare of humanity, yet, even in the best of us it occasionally retains its wildness and there is always some reversion to the savage and animal. There is a terrible truth in Walt Whitman's image of man emerging "stuccoed all over with reptiles and quadrupeds" and in Tennyson's picture of "Reversion ever dragging evolution in the mud." But such manifestations are, at best, fitful; and, carried to an excess, are symptoms of pathological instability due to peculiar heredity, want of proper nurture or other peculiar limitations. But such manifestations of the savage instinct are held in leash by the risks involved in them. As Professor Arthur Thomson says: "Sexual gratification outside matrimony cannot be abstracted off as if it were a purely personal and physiological episode. According to the form it takes, it has a train of consequences—personal, domestic and social," such as risks of venereal disease passed on to wife and children with its consequential general paralysis or sterility. Again the self-loathing and the personal self-abasement of having participated in sustaining a horrible social system works up the better instincts in man to come to play. All this and more such as the birth-stain of illegitimate children and the misery they mean to the mother, the personal and social loathing that follows the meanness of adultery, work towards a deadening of the animal instinct in man and an

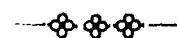
unconscious sublimation and transference of the force of the sexual instinct from mere sexual ends to higher cultural aims. It is true that the too excessively severe regime of marriage-systems lead to the danger, according to *Freud*, of following the dammed-up passion to seek out a weak spot and break through into neurotic "substitute gratifications." But, as mentioned above, the degenerations and nervousness of such sexual excesses are pure excrescences of city degeneration and not the inevitable results of cultural progress. It is therefore, quite possible to look forward, with *Freud*, to an increasing control of sexual appetite, to an 'adjournment' of sexual gratification till after marriage.

From these considerations it is possible to say that Mr. B. Russel's two aspects in respect of marriage, viz., its social justification and its influence on the character of the marital parties, which we shall in the course of this article call its biological justification, are normally and naturally related and harmonised to each other. It is true in early days man's feeling of possession of the wife he had captured or bought must have tended to secure in a somewhat coercive way her faithfulness. But as society advanced and when the conditions of life favoured an ample social development it must have naturally come to man's mind that this 'possessive' instinct on his part would not work for the progress of the community or the tribe unless the family tie is more adhesive. And the growth of conjugal and family sympathy must have laid on man the necessity of coercing himself into being faithful to his wife. Thus by a process of natural selection mutual affection must have been understood as making for the welfare of the family and therefore of the community. This consideration was later on supplemented by an ethical purpose which made for the realisation of mutual affection between the husband and wife as an end in itself.

Any marriage therefore, to justify itself must not only look to the good of society exclusive of all considerations, but also must look to the facts of life, to the disabilities of peculiar limitation of the individual ego who must not be allowed to "wither" too much, for, it is only the individuals who make society.

Marriage must admit within itself all that is possible and good for the free development of the character of the marital parties. We have already said that this must be, as a matter of social necessity, because it paves the way for the welfare of the family, and mutual affection between husband and wife. This mutual affection could be had only when there is understanding, and sympathy between the parties. We want it for the good of society: it is otherwise inevitable because our inner nature needs it. And thus it is there has been a vindication of permanent monogamic marriage. It is both a moral and social necessity.

(To be Continued).



Agricultural Holdings in South India

The Disadvantages of Fragmented Holdings--III

By Rajaiah D. Paul, M. A.

THE disadvantages of and the evils caused by the excessive fragmentation and subdivision of holdings have been so often discussed that it would be almost un-necessary to deal with this part of the question, were it not that while a few of the disadvantages commonly pointed out are axiomatic and follow from the mere fact of their scatteredness, there are others equally serious, if less obvious, which demand attention.

I. Agricultural Improvement rendered Impossible

THE greatest disadvantage of fragmented holdings is perhaps the fact that they prevent the use of improved agricultural methods. This is not a small evil in these days when the Agricultural department is seeking to bring the machinery and experience of more advanced countries into India. Labour-saving

implements and modern agricultural machinery cannot be used where the fields are small and scattered. Many of our well-to-do pattadars, who pay an assessment of about Rs. 30 to 50, could well afford to buy modern agricultural machinery, which are intended for use in small compact holdings from 10 to 20 or 30 acres in size. The use of such machinery will mean for them not only easy but also cheap labour, and will also result in improved outturn. But the fact that their holdings are scattered over ten or a dozen different places, in bits varying from a few cents upwards in extent, precludes their resorting to them. It can be said without exaggeration that the agricultural salvation of this country lies in intensive cultivation. Almost the whole of the available land has been brought under cultivation; and unless some forests are disafforested, or some communal porambokes, such as those now being used for grazing grounds, are handed over for cultivation, the extent of land under the plough cannot be increased. Even though all the available extent of arable land has been cultivated we are faced with serious shortage of food-grains when the season is bad. The only remedy seems to lie in intensive cultivation and in the employment of improved agricultural methods and practice. And the chief obstacle in the way of even willing ryots is this fact of scattered holdings.

II. Wastage of Labour and Time

SECONDLY much waste of labour and time is caused by the present condition of affairs. The fields being one or two miles away from the village site, and in different directions, the cultivator has to take his cattle and implements to and from every day. Moreover, he can attend to the different fields only on different days. If he had a consolidated holding in a single place, he can have at least his cattle and his implements in a shed there. The ideal is that he should himself live in his holding. This point has already been illustrated in the first article of this series, where the holding of a pattadar was taken and the distance of each of the ten bits of which it is composed from his house in the village site was shown: and it was pointed out that the man had to walk no less than six miles a day to go to his

fields and turn home. Quite literally the ploughman 'homeward plods his weary way'; for in addition to the day's work in the fields he has to do this quite unnecessary perambulation of six miles wasting an hour and a half in the bargain.

Consider also the difficulties of making arrangements for watching the fields properly, where they are scattered. Take the case of a man who owns both wet and dry plots. His ground-nut crop on one of his dry fields, his *varagu* on another, the first crop paddy sown on one of his wet fields, and perhaps some ragi in one or the other of his other wet plots, are all maturing as about the same time, sometime about December and January. Arrangements have to be made to guard the ground-nuts from being destroyed by wild pigs. The ragy crop requires the whole time services of at least a girl during the day, to keep away the birds; the paddy crop requires watering with the help of a *Kavalai* or a picottah (if the supply in the tank is insufficient). His neighbour near the *varagu* field, who is not on the best of terms with him, grazes his cattle occasionally in the *varagu* field, under pretence of grazing them on the bund. And the poor fellow finds it difficult to make arrangements for all these, which have to be done all at the same time. But a consolidated holding, with both dry and wet fields close by, and with the pattadar living on the holding, quite obviates this multiplication of labour.

(iii) Increased Cultivation Expenses

WITH a consolidated holding there is also a considerable saving in cultivation expenses. The present practice is to store manure in the village site itself, near the man's house; generally in its backyard, either attached or detached. And this manure has to be carted to the fields at the beginning of the cultivation season. Again after harvest the crops have to be gathered in one central threshing floor from all the fields to facilitate work and to make guarding the heap easy.

IV. Impossibility of Digging wells.

FOURTHLY, the present condition of affairs prevents agriculturists from digging wells even when and where they are absolutely necessary. For a well dug at a particular place it

may be useful only at considerable cost for the small bit of land within which it is situated. And this is by no means conducive to the best agricultural effort. The following figures reveal a surprising state of affairs:—

VILLAGE.	OCCUPIED AREA.						NUMBER OF WELLS.			
	F. 1295 (1885)			F. 1325 (1915)			Cns. of 1881	A present.		
	Wet.	Dry.	Total.	Wet.	Dry.	Total.		Wt. fds.	Dy. fds.	Total.
	A. C.	A. C.	A. C.	A. C.	A. C.	A. C.	...	...	...	...
Avanavadi ...	86 19	78 67	164 86	89 16	149 96	239 12	44	25	16	41
Nariambadi ...	44 70	241 83	286 53	46 09	271 50	317 59	34	7	51	58
Vengunam ...	132 99	346 93	479 92	131 86	447 9	578 95	71	53	29	82

In Avanavadi village, three wells which were in existence at the time of the original settlement of the village have since fallen into disuse; and no fresh well has been dug in spite of the increase in the occupied area of the village. The cultivation of the seventy acres of dry land newly brought under occupation is wholly dependent upon rainfall; and that means only such poor and wholly rainfed dry crops like groundnut, *varagu* and horsegram can be grown on these lands. In Nariambadi village there has been some increase, but only in the case of wells in dry fields. In Vengunam, there has been an increase of eleven wells but totally inadequate for an increase of 100 acres of occupied land. There are just 30 wells for 450 acres of dry land. This inadequate increase in the number of wells is wholly to be ascribed to this great disadvantage of scattered holdings. Given a compact continuous block of land there will be many who will be ready to sink wells, which can only then be remunerative. And of course the installation of oil engines and such modern methods of machine irrigation are quite unthinkable under the present circumstances.

V. Wastage by Ridges

NEXTLY, by having his holding in such scattered bits, the man has to leave a large amount of land for boundary baulks; and the wastage caused by these uncultivated boundary baulks

is very large. Here the question of shape comes also into consideration. The fact that the small bits are of all shapes : and many sided is also an additional disadvantage. The extent to which this a disadvantage is hardly ever recognised. Hence one or two illustrations are necessary.

One G—Nainar of Vengunam village holds the following bits of land :—

	Extent.		Assessment.		
	A.	C.	RS.	A.	P.
Dry S. No. 302/1	0	98	1	9	0
303/1	0	44	0	8	0
391/10	0	32	0	8	0
	1	74	2	9	0
Wet S. No. 178/1	0	25	2	0	0
181/2	0	19	1	12	0
219	0	11	1	12	0
221/1	0	20	2	3	0
226/1	0	8	0	14	0
232	0	31	3	6	0
233/5	0	13	1	7	0
234/7	0	14	1	8	0
221/2	0	2	0	14	0
	1	49	15	3	0

Total area of holding : 3.23 acres ; Assessment Rs. 17-12-0.

He holds 3.23 acres of land in twelve separate bits. Now the the length of boundary baulks is actually as follows :—

302/1 : $261+162+335+138+54+28+8+1+376+122+22+71$
150 = 1803 links

302/1 : $255+170+260+84+91=860$ links.

391/10 : $127+252+28+117+244=768$ links.

178/1 : $100+190+31+40+158+175=694$ links.

181/2 : $117+153+116+42+138=566$ links.

219 : $102+39+41+89+91=362$ links.

221/1 : $82+91+89+41+86+30+45+72+42+29+63+110+25=805$ links.

226/1 : $144+29+19+123+47+48=410$ links.

232 : $132+207+109+42+207=697$ links.

233/6 : $74+48+116+127+102=467$ links.

234/7 : $180+77+192+84=533$ links.

221/2 : $63+29+42+72+49+26+38+22+78=419$ links.

Total number of links 8384.

Allowing an average width of 2 links for the baulks, the man loses by these baulks 16,768 sq. links : i.e. nearly 17 cents of land (10 cents of wet, and 7 cents of dry) out of a total extent of 3.23 acres. It will be observed that very few of the bits of his holding are four sided ; one of them is twelve-sided ; six are pentagons ; two hexagonal ; and only one quadrilateral. The advantages of consolidation can be seen even in this point, that by having bought S. No. 221/2 because it was adjacent to 221/1 which he already possessed, he has gained $63+29+42+72$ i.e. 206 links of ridge-length ; that is about half a cent of land. If therefore he had all his dry land in one block and all his wet in another, the dimensions for the two blocks will be approximately 500 links by 348 links, and 500 links by 298 links respectively. And if they can be had in a rectangular form, the perimeter of the two blocks will be $4 \times 500 + 2 \times 348 + 2 \times 298 = 3292$ links. The wastage by the bridges will be but 6 cents ; and this is unavoidable.

VI. Wastage by small plots being left Uncultivated

YET another disadvantage in the present condition of affairs is the isolation of small plots which have to be left waste under certain circumstances. This is no imaginary disadvantage. It may be that the bit left waste is too small even for a plough to get in. Or if the season commences late, the man cannot manage to plough up all his fields in time. The man naturally selects only the largest and the nearest first, and before he finishes the work there, it will be too late, and the others will have to be left waste. That small plots of lands are left waste every year can be shown by actual figures. On examining the cultivation figures for seven holdings in Vengunam village for a series of years it

was found that in each of the holdings a small bit was left waste every year. It is not always the same portion. That these portions are not uncultivable is seen from the fact that the portions have been cultivated in other years. The figures are given below :—

Holdings.	Total extent of holdings.		Extent left waste in fasli							
			1325		1326		1327		1328	
	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry
I		1.75	6.9	Nil.	1.50	0.4	Nil.	0.4	Nil.	Nil.
II		1.71	4.61	0.14	0.50	0.28	0.16	0.10	0.11	0.14
III		1.67	5.49	Nil.	0.16	0.12	0.42	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
IV		1.93	6.96	Nil.	0.82	0.1	0.91	0.1	Nil.	0.57
V		1.80	6.51	Nil.	1.71	0.4	0.82	Nil.	0.67	0.10
VI		1.91	8.43	0.1	1.48	0.2	0.80	Nil.	0.14	Nil.
VII		3.62	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	0.1	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.

When we remember that the ryot would leave cultivable land uncultivated only under stress of extraordinary circumstances, the wastage illustrated above must be held to be considerable. As will only be expected, it is only the dry lands that are left waste in preference to wet lands. One other striking fact is that the wastage illustrated above is in proportion to the number of bits constituting the holding. For example item No. VII holds only wet lands and that in a fairly compact block of 3.62 acres; and it is remarkable that no part of his holding is left waste at any time. And that these bits are left waste only because they are small bits was proved by the fact that these small bits are all surrounded by other peoples' lands which have themselves been cultivated in the year in which these have had to be left waste.

The same thing was proved by another investigation carried out by the writer. The purpose of the investigation was to find out by inspection and enquiry why every year a large number amount of land is being left waste and is reported in the official statistics as current fallow. Two villages were selected; and each bit of land, left as mamool waste, i. e., left waste continuously for a series of years, was inspected, and enquiries were

made about them. The results of that investigation are summarised below:—

	Village A.	Village B
Total occupied area lying waste in F. 1329.	149.04 acres.	153.01 acres.
Area covered by the investigation.	62.54 „	69.36. „
<i>Causes of the lands being left waste.</i>		

	Village A.		Village B.	
	Extent.	Percent-	Extent.	Percent-
		age to		age to
		total area		total area
		investig-		investig-
		ated.		ated
A. Absentee pattadar ; none in the village to look after the lands; lands which could not be sublet for various reasons	 10.02.	16	0.14.	0
B. Ownership of other large extent of lands	 29.19.	47	19.01.	29
C. Lands unfit for cultivation....	12.92.	21	15.47.	24
D. Isolated small extents	 3.98.	6	4.28.	6
E. Pattadar having other means of living	 3.11.	5	8.77.	12
F. Used for grazing or growing green manure	 0.52.	1	15.85.	23
G. Insufficiency of irrigation facilities; absence of a well....	2.80.	4	4.84.	6

Here points B and D prove our case. We find that no less than 44 p. c. on an average of the total extent of land lying waste year by year is due to the fact that the owners hold other extents of land and have neither the time nor the convenience to look after these bits.

VII. Cause of Litigation.

Yet another disadvantage may be mentioned. The litigious tendencies of the South Indian ryot are well known. On the

slightest pretence he will rush to the law courts, both civil and criminal, provided he can cause some loss to his adversary, either pecuniary or otherwise. He does not mind his own expenses in connection with it. The adversary is almost always a close relation, often a co-partner of ancestral property. The merest trifles are exaggerated and made the subject of litigation. And the present scattered condition of the holdings gives a premium to such unnecessary litigation, which is the ruin of the average ryot. A small plot of land which formerly belonged to a common ancestor has become the property of different, but related, individuals. For the irrigation of these all of them have to go to a common well, which is commonly held under a joint pattah; or to a common channel from the irrigation tank from which branch channels have to be taken to each of the plots. Or, if it is dry land, it is perhaps a *lope*. The trees thereon have been partitioned; but cannot, by their very nature, be described or specified in the partition deed. Then after a lapse of years one of the partners puts forth a claim to some other trees besides his own; and on some pretence or other they rush to the civil court to decide the question. Or the property of a common ancestor which was in his time a single field has been divided among a number of people. The different bits have to be irrigated by means of a common channel from the tank or from a common well. The channel goes between the plots of two of the co-partners. All goes on smoothly for some time. But suddenly one of them, A, in a fit of land-grabbing ploughs up the channel and sows paddy; saying that the channel must go in the land of B, not in his land. B does not allow it. As a result C suffers; but before that quarrels with A, and, probably at the instigation of B, takes a complaint to the criminal court for the wrongful damage caused to him by the destruction of the channel. Both ruin themselves by this litigation. For payment of Court and vakil's fees they do not hesitate to borrow; and finally have to part with that very bit of land over which they fought as valiantly as dogs over a bone. The civil dispute about the channel has to be decided again in a civil court.

VIII. Sub-letting.

Lastly, but not in any means in importance, comes this disadvantage that this fragmentary nature of the holdings leads to subletting of the lands, as the owner is unable to attend to the cultivation of all the different bits. And with sub-letting come all the problems of the relation between the landlord and tenant; the attempt of each to get as much as possible from the land, to the detriment of the other and the deterioration of the land between the two.



* Memories & Thoughts

Our First Moffussal Trip, II

By Rao Sahib P. Sambanda Mudaliar, B.A., B.L.

THE next morning I woke up with a very bad throat. I felt nervous because I had to act that night, the character of Manohara. Those who have read the Drama could easily guess the predicament in which I was placed. Of all the characters I have acted on the stage this one requires the greatest physical capacity and the loudest voice! In what is known as the chain-breaking scene, I have to raise my voice to its highest pitch and keep it up at that point for nearly ten minutes. I remember that at the first full-dress rehearsal of the drama, I literally fell down in a swoon on the stage at the end of the scene. Persons who have seen me act the same character for the past few years, could have no idea of the terrible strain I had to undergo in the nineties in acting that character. The first time I acted that character in the V. P. Hall, my good old friend, Mr. Hay Ellis, who was drowsing downstairs, rushed up to see what the matter was. He was alarmed by my voice which had awoken him. Now-a-days owing to advancing years and a weak heart I have systematically restrained myself in my vehemence in that scene. Now that I have acted that

character for the last time in my life with my friend Mr. C. Rangavadivelu as Vijaya, I must plainly confess that every time that chain scene was over, I used to thank God that I did not burst a blood vessel in acting this character in the drama and especially in this scene.

Now the reader can understand easily why I felt nervous that morning—everything depended on my voice for the success of our opening performance. I did not want to make my fellow actors equally nervous by communicating to them my predicament. All of us went out for a walk in the morning to a Flower Show held close by. I was under a delusion that with the advancing sun my voice would improve. By nine o'clock it showed no signs of improvement and I took the doctor of our company Mr. A. V. Pillai, aside and told him the news. He advised me—in all sincerity I daresay as far as he was concerned—to take half an ounce of Brandy! I had not then joined any temperance society: so I took the dose before meals. After meals I went to the Cubbon Theatre where our performance was to be given in the afternoon—and slept there. The result was that when I woke up at 4 p. m. my voice was absolutely gone. It might have been due to the Brandy: it might have been due to the place where I slept. Whatever the cause, the result was there. I could scarcely hear my own voice. It was bad enough in the morning, it was worse in the evening. I have had several shocks in my life: for most of them I was quite prepared: but this was one of the few unexpected shocks in my life for which I was not in the least prepared.

The shock quite unnerved me. I gathered the actors together and told them by signs the condition of my throat and voice. The reader can imagine their consternation. It must be remembered that this was our first mofussal trip and that the performance was Manohara—and Manohara could not even whisper. I remember my good old friend P. Sarangapany—I think he is now somewhere in Northern India—actually wept. The best medical aid was sought and I was told that there was nothing the matter with me and that my voice would be alright if I give my throat rest for two days! I implored them to do

something then and there, that I must anyhow go through my character that night and that I did not care for the consequences. A bottle of throat-pills was the only remedy they could suggest, one pill to be kept in the mouth constantly. I went on chewing pill after pill. Just before 8 p. m. before the public were admitted into the theatre I felt slightly better and I had the drop curtain raised and I tried my voice, having placed two or three actors in the auditorium: they told me they could just hear my voice and I thanked God for that.

I do not actually remember how I got through that performance that night: it was a regular nightmare to me: all that I remember is that the intervals between the scenes were spent by me in constant fomentation of my throat with hot vapour and chewing pill after pill. I knew the reaction would come sooner or later and I sent up a secret prayer to God that it should come after the dreaded chain-scene was over. At last that scene came and when I had myself chained and ready to burst into the scene I felt my voice going down! The reaction had begun. In a blind fury I emptied the whole of the contents of my throat-pills phial into my mouth and crunching them down rushed into the stage. I raised my voice and spoke the opening lines of my long speech. It was loud enough and the audience cheered me. That put additional strength in me and I went on and on. At the end of the scene, the stage directions are that Manohara swoons at his mother's feet and that day the swoon came really and naturally to me. There was a distant murmur in my ears of the whole house cheering, of my fellow-actors congratulating me for having got through the greatest ordeal—and I was carried off to the-green room and there was all along a dreamy feeling in me of a quiet gladness that I had saved the situation and did my duty by my Sabha.

But I paid the penalty for having swallowed so many pills at one time by the terrible agony I had to endure for the next two days. But let me at the same time tell my readers that under similar circumstances I would do the same to produce the same results and thank God for it.

Luckily in the Drama Manohara has very little to do in the later scenes and the few words that he spoke nobody heard!

Our second performance was Sarangadhara. The good impression produced by our previous performance drew a full house. The small Cubbon Theatre was packed an hour before the curtain went up. By that time my voice was alright. From the beginning to the end, the play was quite a success, the audience was very enthusiastic and cheered every bit of good acting and song. My late and lamented friend Mr. Rangaswamy was splendid with his songs, as Sumanthra. Mr. T. Jayaram as Chithrangi was superb and was cheered over and over again as it was the dying song of the swan, for that was the last time he acted a lady character and he was conscious of it and Mr. A. Krishnaswamiah was then a rising actor and as Ratnangi he was very effective. Mr. M. Doraiswamy ayyangar as Vidhushaka and Mr. Rajaganapathy as the Poetaster made a comic couple whose equal I have not seen either before or after.

That night after I was told what the gate-collections were, I slept the sleep of the just—for I knew the trip was a success in every way—even financially. The next day was quite a happy day for me. In the morning I went to the telegraph office myself and despatched a telegram to the Secretary of the Sabha at Madras, one of the oppositionists of the trip, announcing our success. All day long we were the recipients of congratulations from our newly made Bangalore friends. I felt intensely happy. I felt in my own humble way like a General who had planned a campaign and fought it after many difficulties to a successful end.

(To be continued).



Psycho-Analysis is only as interesting as the subject under analysis. It may be worth while to pull an orchid apart but who wants to probe a pumpkin.



Reviews

Sumathy. By V. Sundaram, G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras.
Re. 1-8.



HARLES Lamb said of a certain play of Shakespeare that it must not be acted but read. We can say the same about 'Sumathy'. Not that it cannot be acted, but it is better reading than acting. The style is too highflown to be followed by the ordinary stage-goer. Besides, the play is strongly reminiscent of Shakespeare and more pleasure is derivable from a leisurely perusal at home than from an attendance at a theatre where the play is enacted.

It is difficult, especially for one who neither is an Englishman nor is equipped with a training at an English University to wield a true Shakespearean style in blank verse or prose. So we must not judge Mr. Sundaram by absolute standards. We must be prepared for occasional jarring notes and deviations in a modern play written by an Indian in the Shakespearean manner. When we approach 'Sumathy' in this frame of mind, we find that Mr. Sundaram has done exceedingly well. What might otherwise appear as plagiarism appears natural when the author consciously adopts his master's style. The deviations if any from the orthodox rhythm of English verse pass undetected by the Indian ear. The author shows signs of considerable skill both in the construction of the plot and in characterisation. The Queen Sumathy, is a noble type of a woman who sacrifices Love at the altar of Duty and ultimately triumphs even in her love. Sundar is painted in all the brilliant colours of a Hindu hero, noble, faultless and praiseworthy. In fact, while the style reminds one of a student familiar with the best in the English language, the several scenes of the play echo faithfully the conventions and traditions of the Indian stage. You can meet with Kanthy, Sulochana and Rugmy any evening at the Madras professional theatres. Where the characters are not drawn from life, they are largely drawn from their prototypes on the Tamil stage. There is, withal, a vein of allegory a philosophical delineation of the truths of life that makes the book interesting to the careful reader. On the whole, we must congratulate the author on his boldness in coming forward with a drama in English in these days of vernacular movement and assure him not only of "the gentle reader's forbearance and sympathy" but also of his 'praise' on the production of a readable play.

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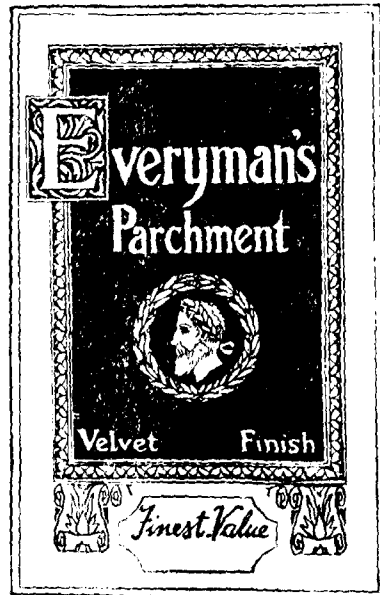
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| IV. Law of Eating: when,
how and what. | XIV. Children. |
| V. Law of Drinking. | XV. Women. |
| VI. Law of Breathing | XVI. Bathing. |
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