

Everymans Review *revised*

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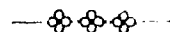
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THE PUBLISHERS.



The Atheist's Code of Honour

I'm like all other men
Under heaven :
I utter many a lie
To gain a pie ;
I cheat beyond all measure
In search of pleasure ;
I boast and slanders raise
To win some praise ;
Forswear and feel no shame
To shirk a blame ;
But I will ne'r believe,
Or others deceive,
That Man is aught but sod,
Or there's a God!

A. MADHAVIAH.



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Rabindranath Tagore

Hbb

A Study of His later Works, VI

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

I HOLD tight thy hand and thy touch is with me in my loneliness." Another Godward-leading quality is that of renunciation. The acquisitive efforts of man never remove his beggarliness but the passion of renunciation is the parent of the true affluence of the spirit as described in the 47th poem. What is the best offering that the soul of man can make to God? Our arms lifted up in supplication, our *Anjali*.

In the 51st poem Tagore says : " But I find I have no gift remaining and I hold both my hands up to thee. In the 64th poem he offers his offering of song, his *Gitanjali*. "But when I come to my King's house I have only this single song to offer it for his wreath". In the 65th poem he describes how God is pleased with the music of devotion which itself is his own gift. He says: "My songs are the same as are the spring flowers, they come from you. Yet I bring these to you as my own. You smile and accept them, and you are glad at my joy of pride". How akin are the utterances of the great poets and saints will be realised by us easily when we recall to our minds the magnificent last stanza in Sankaracharya's *Soundarya Lahari* :

"Like the waving of a tiny lamp in worship before the sun, like the offering of a handful of water oozing from the moonstone in worship to the moon; like the offering of a little sea water to the sea itself. Even such, O mother is to poetry this hymn of words due to thy inspiration."

The same idea is beautifully expressed in the 72nd poem :

"My heart came with her songs to thy side, whispers were exchanged, and she put her wreath on thy neck.

I know she has given something which will be treasured with thy stars."

But by far the most important message of this section of the poems is their message of service and renunciation. He who shuts his heart to the world shuts his heart to God. But he in whose case as described in the 58th poem "the world went in and out as it pleased—the world with its dust, doubts and disorder—and with it's music" is the person whom the love of God seeks and dowers with "the peace which passeth all understanding."

Other poems in this volume describe the glorious certainty of God-realisation if we cultivate and perfect the Godward qualities in us. The seeming failures of righteous effort ought not discourage us. There is an eternal even watchful eye that sees everything and helps each good thought and word and deed to its full fruition. In the 18th poem the poet says :

"I know that this life, missing its ripeness in love, is not altogether lost....."

I know that my dreams that are still unfulfilled, and my melodies still unstruck, are clinging to some lute-strings of thine, and they are not altogether lost."

In the 14th poem is described in memorable words the rapture of God-attainment.

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"Love's play is stilled into worship, life's stream touches the deep, and the world of forms comes to its nest in the beauty beyond all forms."

What are the signs by which we may know that our spirit has touched God in an ecstasy of union. In the 31st poem he says :

"You, who ever elude my touch, come there in secret silence hiding your lamp.

I shall know you by the thrill in the darkness, by the whisper of the unseen worlds, by the breath of the unknown shore."

In the 38th poem he says :

"My heart bends in worship like a dew-laden flower, and I feel the flood of my life rushing to the endless."

Various poems in the volume describe as well as human language can express the inexpressible—the raptures of realisation.

In the 44th poem he says :

"Light's greetings spread from the East to the West,

And at the ramparts of the ruined prison rise the paeans of Victory !"

In the 50th poem the poet describes the rapture by means of a symbol as old as man's love of Love.

"I knew not when your doors opened and I stood surprised at my own heart's music.

But are there still traces of tears in my eyes though the bed is made, the lamp is lit, and we are alone, you and I ?"

Such are the great and uplifting thoughts contained in this volume. The book mingles with Tagore's peculiar power of mingling beauty and holiness and revealing the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty the great Indian idea that there is nothing sweeter or higher in life than the search for and attainment of God. Such attainment is the consummation of a dedicated life and not a mere matter of creed or conduct. We cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting here the perfect gem of prayer contained in the 55th poem :

"Let they love play upon my voice and rest on my silence.

Let it pass through my heart into all my movements,

Let they love like stars shine in the darkness of my sleep and dawn in my awakening.

Let it burn in the flame of my desires,

And flow in all currents of my own love. Let me carry thy love in my life as a harp does its music, and give it back to thee at last with my life."

Stray Birds

IN this wonderful volume of poems which seem at first sight to be separate and disconnected we have the quintessence of wisdom and vision in regard to questions of vital interests to man. In the work of interpretation that I have set before myself and consistently followed in regard to Tagore. I have tried to place his precious ideas in true sequence and in the beautiful setting of his fundamental revelation of the soul of things. The poetic mood is the most fitful of visitors and hence the poetic fancies and sentiments and intuitions that urgently seek and find expression come and go as they will. But the prevalent poetic temper is an ever-present atmosphere and a student of a great poet's inner endowment as revealed in his works can relate each separate poem to the common centre of the poet's soul. The songs of the poet attain a newer and richer fulness of meaning when

thus seen in their inter-relations and their relations to the soul of the poet himself.

The very phrase "Stray Birds" describes perfectly the nature of the spontaneous poetic mood. Poems 1 and 2 in the volume bring out its significance very well.

"Stray birds of summer come to my window to sing and fly away.

And yellow leaves of autumn, which have no songs, flutter and fall there with a sigh."

"O Troupe of little vagrants of the world, leave your footprints in my words".

During the bright season of the radiant and fragrant warmth of poetic vision, poetic emotions and intuitions come like tuneful-throated and splendour-winged birds in summer and flash the radiance of their wings and pour forth the ecstasy of their songs at the windows of our minds and fly away leaving behind them the memory of their exquisite music. And as our lives fall into the sere and yellow leaf, the hours drop from us like dead leaves and are not brightened by the reappearance of the birds of poetic thoughts. Happy are they in whose aging hearts vestiges and memories of the spring time of love and poesy remain like footprints to show that the birds of poesy had been there with shining wings and singing voices.

In the 17th poem Tagore shows us how the poet-thoughts are like the rustle of leaves and leave "their whisper of joy in my mind".

It is a natural transition from this conception of the spirit of poesy to Tagore's ideas about art as revealed in this remarkable volume. His longing for the spacious silence of art that speaks with the eloquent voice of its repose amidst the multitudinous babel of the voices of our worldly activities is expressed in the 319th poem which says : "I long for the Island of Songs across this heaving Sea of Shouts". Though Plato has said that poets are liars and would not admit them into his Republic, Tagore has seen deeper into things and points out that the so-called fiction is only the dress in which Truth moves with ease. Aristotle has said : "Poetry is more philosophical and more sublime than history.....The superiority of poetry over history consists in its possessing a higher truth and a higher seriousness". Tagore says this in his inimitable poetic way when he says in the 140th poem : "Truth in her dress finds facts too tight. In fiction she moves with ease." At the same time art should be natural, should be in touch with life, and should be based on life, though it may add "the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the poet's dream". He says in the 231st and 256th poems :

"Set the bird's wings with gold and it will never again soar in the sky."

"The eyes are not proud of their sight but of their eyeglasses".

Another great truth taught by the poet is stated tersely thus in his 233rd poem : "In heart's perspective the distance looms large." In the world of fact the distant always appears small till it eventually reaches the vanishing point. But in the realms of poetic emotion and spiritual intuition the distant has a haunting melody and sweetness "like horns of elfland family blowing, and the more distant it is, the brighter and sweeter it shines in the firmanent of the soul. Tagore has expressed the very heart of this feeling in the fifth poem in *The Gardener* where he says:

"I am restless. I am athirst for far-away things.

My soul goes out in a longing to touch the skirt of the dim distance.

O Great Beyond, O the keen call of thy flute".

In the 204th poem Tagore points out the supreme place of poesy in the

hierarchy of arts. The gradation of rank in the hierarchy of arts depends on the subtlety of the medium employed by each art. In architecture and sculpture the medium is stone and marble. In painting we have a more plastic medium viz. colour. In music the medium viz. sound is subtle and plastic in a wonderful degree. In poesy we have the subtle and plastic medium of words which are at the same time spiritual and suggestive. Words are spiritual things and have come down the stream of time with the aroma of emotion clinging to it from their having been in contact with the fragrances of the hearts of untold generations. Every art realises the infinite in beauty but poesy does so most fully and well. In the 204th poem Tagore says:

"The song feels the infinite in the air, the picture in the earth, the poem in the air and the earth;

For its words have meaning that walks and music that soars."

But poesy attains this realisation in beauty best when we surrender our hearts to God and allow His silence to ripen our thoughts into speech and His lotus feet to shine on our song. This beautiful idea is perfectly expressed in the 305th and 306th poems.

Thus in these few poems many volumes of luminous ideas about the nature and function and inspiration of art are expressed with that clarity of vision and golden felicity of style that mark the true poet. It has well been said that the most penetrative pieces of criticism full of true insight and revelatory power in regard to poets and poems have come from poets. This is eminently true of Tagore. I shall now deal with the poems which deal not with art in general but with the poet's vision of the world and the raptures and intuitions of the poet heart. If each poem is explained as fully as it so richly deserves this chapter itself would swell into many volumes. I can only indicate the abundance of the treasure of Tagore's poetic and spiritual thought and no more. He points out that to the poet the world of beauty puts off its mask of vastness and manifoldness and reveals the principle of beauty of which everything else is but variation and modification. The 3rd poem is so perfect that it deserves to be quoted and treasured up in our hearts:

"The world puts off its mask of vastness to its lover.

It becomes small as one song, as one kiss of the eternal."

The poet thus dwells in the universal and elemental feelings and joys. He takes the whole of beauty into himself—beauty not walled off from itself by partitions of pride or grandeur but beauty shining in the harmony of its fulness and rejoicing in the perfection of the universal elements of life. Poesy does not worship in the light of the petty lamps of worldly glory or sing the songs of human self-satisfaction, but realises and glorifies the joy of God as revealed in the universal revelation of the sunlight of love. The 285th poem says this truth beautifully:

"They light their own temples and sing their own words in their temples.

But the birds sing thy name in thine own morning light, for thy name is joy."

Above all it is poesy's communion with God that makes the grass of human life blossom in flowers of songs of love. The 260th poem says: "Wayside grass, love the star, then your dreams will come out in flowers." Tagore says that God Himself takes the form of Beauty to win the love of man and that poesy is the spiritual approach of man towards God through the gate of Beauty. In the perfect 62nd poem he says: "The Perfect decks itself in beauty for the love of the Imperfect."

Such is the wonderful description of the appeal of Nature and oversoul

to the poet-heart. I shall now deal with the poems dealing with the inspiration and function of a poet. In the 11th poem Tagore points out that the really poetic poems are due to inspiration. It says: "Some unseen fingers, like an idle breeze, are playing upon my heart the music of the ripples." Before I deal with the poems describing in a rich variety of symbols and images the poet's true function in life, I shall refer to the poems describing the poet's response to the music of the world, his relation to the entire range of creation. The poet loves the whole world and his self-revelation is a revelation of the passion of his love. The 29th poem says: "My heart beats her way at the shore of the world, 'I love thee.'" In the precious 12th poem Tagore shows us the eternal answer of the sky in silence. Life has not merely the music of joy but also the music of sadness and perhaps the latter is the sweeter of the two. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." In the 44th poem Tagore says: "The world rushes on over the strings of the lingering heart making the music of sadness." But this melancholy is not the pale melancholy of grief but the golden melancholy of the temperament that seeks to comprehend the Infinite in the Finite. The poet has unlike other men, the faculty of hearing the music of things all through his life. In the 164th poem Tagore says: "In the dusk of the evening the bird of some early dawn comes to the nest of my silence." The same idea is expressed by D. G. Rossetti in the well-known and beautiful lines:

"As many men are poets in their youth,

But for one sweet strung-soul the wires prolong

Throughout all change the indomitable song"

As regards the poet's function in life, the 7th poem points out the poet by his song and movement removes the lethargy of the souls about him, as the dancing water by its music and movement carries the sands with it out of their torpor. He has at the same time spacious silences full of the fragrance of still joy in his soul. Just as a flower blooms in silence amidst storms though the rustling leaves make agitated answer as described in the 23rd poem. The poet gets his gift of song when he is fully himself and expresses himself in a spirit of buoyant self-expression. The 36th poem says: "The waterfall sings, 'I find my song when I find my freedom'". Another symbol expressed in the 64th poem makes us realise that poesy in a poet is like a lamp in a lampholder's hand. It illuminates the way of the heart for all, but we must not forget the lamp holder standing in the shade with constancy of patience". In the 70th poem he is described as "The fountain that throws up these flowers in a ceaseless outbreak of ecstasy". In the 76th poem he is described as the wind which is "out over the sea and the forest to seek his own voice", because it is amidst the never-changing elemental tracts of the region of the heart that the poet finds himself and finds the joy of real and full utterance. In the 85th poem Tagore gives us a precious truth in a concentrated form. "The artist is the lover of nature therefore he is her slave and her master". It is the privilege of the lover to be passive and active in his moods, and his moods of surrender and domination are each sweeter than the other. It is the poet that by his song fashions the universe after the heart of God more than the noiser reformers of the lives of individuals and nations. As the 126th poem says well: "Not hammer-strokes, but dance of the water sings the pebbles into perfection".

As regards the poet's domain, Tagore says in the 150th poem that the joy and the beauty of nature are the poet's kingdom and that he rejoices in the blue infinities of space and the dark infinities of time and renders into music, "The thoughts that range through eternity". The poem is very beautiful. It says:

Light and shadow are described by another beautiful piece of symbolism that bring to our minds the passage of Rama and Sita in the forest, Sita following with large eyes full of love in the footsteps of the Lord. In the 47th poem the poet says :

"Shadow, with her veil drawn, follows light in secret meekness, with her silent steps of love."

Taking up the poems dealing with the daily miracles of loveliness in the heavens, Tagore describes in the 112th poem the sun as having "his simple robe of light" which "the clouds are decked with gorgeousness." In the beautiful 183rd poem the evening sky is thus described :

"The evening sky to me is like a window, and a lighted lamp and a waiting behind it".

By this natural magic of the simplicity of his art Tagore has achieved more than Byron's elaborate description, deservedly famous as it is, about Hesperus, brings before our minds' eye. In the 196th poem the sunset cloud which preserves the golden burning kiss of the sun in the shining casket of its evening hues is beautifully described. Then comes the silent but warm breathing beauty of the night which is described in the 120th poem with that fragrant and idealising sensuousness which is the supreme charm of Kalidasa.

"I feel thy beauty, dark night, like that of the loved woman when she has put out the lamp."

In another poem a higher and more serious note is struck in regard to the beauty of the night. In the 320th poem the music of the sunset is described as the solemn hymn to the ineffable dark and as the commencement of the prelude of the night. The milky way is thus described in the 251st poem :

"The night's silence, like a deep lamp, is burning with the light of its milky way".

In two poems to the moon the essence of the sweetest poetry about the "goddess excellently bright" is condensed. In the 234th poem Tagore says : "The moon has her light all over the sky, her dark spots to herself". In the 320th poem the moon is figured for us as the bringer of the aching secret of love, as the incarnate pain and bliss of love's ethereal passion.

"To-night there is a stir among the pani leaves, a swell in the sea. Full Moon, like the heartthrob of the world. From what unknown sky hast thou carried in thy silence the aching secret of love?"

Coming down to the nearer aspects of nature, Tagore says in his 249th poem that "dark clouds become heaven's flowers when kissed by the light". In the 72nd poem "the widowed evening veiled with mist and rain" is described as appealing to the solitude of heart. The 160th poem describes the raindrops as earth, home sick children comes back to mother earth—a description showing the down points of contact between science and poesy. The 74th poem about mist describes how it hides and shows nature's beauties in the course of its spontaneous movement and play, as life's play hides and shows the beauties of the heart.

"The mist, like love, plays upon the heart of the hills and brings out surprises of beauty".

The hurricane is thus vividly described in the course of its destructive march that makes way for itself everywhere and is finally stilled. The 60th poem says :

"The hurricane seeks the shortest road by the no—road, and suddenly ends its search in the nowhere".

(To be continued)

Thoughts on Thoughts

By V. R. M. Chettiar

HUMAN mind is an eternal stream with its banks filled with thought-flowers which are full-blown and fragrant. A true thought is born of the right mind. The best thoughts of great men taste as sweet and delicious as honey and milk and fruits. Just like rose and jasmine, those thoughts diffuse the sweetest fragrance imaginable. The childish conceptions of the meanest intellect are just like flowers without fragrance. The minds of great men, dwelling on various themes, suddenly flare out their intellectual beams; the soaring mind is often called the spring of thoughts. The great thoughts of mighty minds are indeed thought-gems; they are worth their weight in gold.

In spite of differences of clime and tongue, it is true "great wits jump together." Great thoughts often agree. The imperial minds of great poets are indeed ornaments with dazzling rubies set on them. Fanned by the flame of wit, their minds prove the noblest and most tempting dishes of delicious thought-morsels. Mind can live only on thoughts—the divine food for the intellect. A fountain lends water to one and all, and gives them joy eternally. Just so is the case of a mighty mind which is the growing fount of thought, inspiring the rest to peculiarly thrilling delights. But the shallow mind is just like a rude column of rock—, nay a Cimmerian cave bristling with thorny bushes and prickles. Great minds form the very temple of wisdom, enjoying infinite space and a flood of light; they are so full of beautiful thoughts that they are just like the flower-garden where enchanting flowers are supremely fragrant and bewitching.

"My thoughts shimmer with these shimmering leaves and my heart sings with the touch of this sunlight; my life is glad to be floating with all things into the blue of space, into the dark of time". The same idea is described also in the 259th poem. "The infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn" are also as much his domain as beauty and bliss, because

"Aye, in the very temple of delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sov'n shrine"

In the poet's case however pain does not issue in bitterness or sourness of spirit but is transfigured into song and sweetness. In the 167th poem Tagore says: "The world has kissed my soul with its pain, asking for its return in songs". Another important poem giving this idea to us is the 180th poem. In regard to the poet's domain a great truth is given to us in the 177th poem. Tagore says that though the poet's smile is the smile of Nature and his song was Nature's music, his heart is the "red ripeness of the human heart" and especially the rapture of the love of woman. It is there that he is most thoroughly himself. It is the central point of his nature, the sun of the solar system of his being. An yet another kingdom in the vast universe of the poet-heart is the kingdom of memories. In the 182nd poem full of wondrous poetic suggestiveness he says! "I am like the road in the night listening to the foot-falls of its memories in silence". "The tone of meditation slipping in between the beauty coming and the beauty gone" gives added splendour to the memory and relates and links it to the delights of coming experiences. The spontaneousness of poetic moods, the ways in which,

"The sweetness of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go."

the joy of the poet's adventurous voyage on the ambrosial seas of emotion without helm or rudder or chart and trusting to God's own breezes inspiration and with no definite port in view but leaving the end as well as the means to love and joy which are only two different names of God, are all brought out in the brief 218th poem: "My heart has spread its sails to the idle winds for the shadow island of anywhere." Another great truth in regard to the poet is brought out in the 224th poem which recalls to our minds Mr. William Watson's immortal line "Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine". The poet has wondrous heights and elevations of soul in which he is alone with himself and the Light coming from the Sunrise of Love, though in relation to the world he embodies the universal elements of pain and delight. The poem says! "My friend, your great heart shone with the sunrise of the East like the snowy summit of a lonely hill in the dawn". Hence it is that each poet has his own wonderful individuality though rooted in the earth of the universal hopes and joys and pains and griefs of mankind, just as each great mountain has its different crown of snow, its peculiar glory of the flush of sunrise on it, its own individual communion with the sun and the moon and the stars, though each is rooted in, and broadbased on, the earth. Another great aspect of the poet's domain is expressed in the seemingly simple, but utterly profound, 238th poem: "Timid thoughts, do not be afraid of me I am a poet". There are thoughts with clear-out outlines, shining in the daylight of reason like cut and polished gems. There are other thoughts that have soft and curving and even hazy outlines and that shine the faint ethereal colours of the lunar rainbow. These "charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy". As the poet of beauty says:

"Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line.

Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine.
Unweave a rainbow".
On the other hand the poet's poet, his friend and elegist says:
"On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept:
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses
But feeds on the ærial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses".

The main function of the poet, however, is to dispel the darkness of mental and spiritual ills by the revelation of beauty. He is a fighter in the world-old war of sense and soul and his song's sword kills the lower tendencies in man and ensures at the same time his resurrection in love. The 261st poem says: "Let your music, like a sword, pierce the noise of the market to its heart".

What is the poet's true reward for his peculiar and precious service of man and God? As a matter of fact his real reward is in his becoming a vital nay even an unrecognised though not unfelt, portion of the universal heart of man. He must become a force, a joy, a pervasive presence, an atmosphere. In the 134th poem Tagore says: "The roots below the earth claim no rewards for making the branches fruitful." Two beautiful poems—Nos. 80 and 273—deserve to be read and realised in this connection and speak for themselves:

"Your voice, my friend, wanders in my heart like the muffled
sound of the sea among these listening pines."

"Let my thoughts come to you, when I am gone like the after-
glow of sunset at the margin of starry silence."
I shall show later on how the unclaimed and unworked for, but certain and perfect, reward of the poet is the attainment of the realisation of the Eternal Beauty and Love and Bliss.

The next group of poems to be dealt with is that of the Nature poems. In Tagore's nature poetry the great characteristic is its commingling of human emotion and spiritual rapture with descriptions of nature, the undertone of suggestion lending an added loveliness to the beauty of the description. As poetry of sheer natural beauty taken in itself and for its own sake his poems cannot rank high. Nor has he attempted anywhere to paint nature on a broad canvas. But his method of isolated description steeped in the enchantment of the light of the heart has a rare beauty and charm of its own. The most important of these poems are those describing night and day—the most universal of natural phenomena. The 119th poem describes how the night is the grave as well as the life-giver of the day.

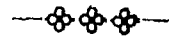
"The night kisses the fading day whispering to his ear, 'I am
death, your mother. I am to give you fresh birth.'"

A most beautiful idea is expressed in the 124th poem which says that the moon is the loveletter which the sun sends to the night and that the night's answers to the loveletter sent in the steadfast sweetness of the moon are contained in the tears of joy which are the shining dewdrops full of pure radiance. In another poem—the 157th poem—Tagore describes the night as the gentle lady whose touch makes the flowers open in an ecstasy of joy, though the Day claims and gets the credit for what the night had done. Another beautiful idea is contained in the 213th poem which describes night's darkness as "a bag that bursts with gold of the dawn." Perhaps the most beautiful of all the symbols is that found in the 298th poem.

"The silent night has the beauty of the mother and the clamorous day of the child."

If an alert mind avoids thinking, it will soon be overpowered by a drowsy languor. Thought shall whip the mind into a winged steed. Thoughts must not run pell-mell. They must never be elastic nor intricate. Thought must be a transparent glass. There should be no elliptical jump. Thoughts must be sprinkled, not scattered. One must study a theme in all its aspects. One must think and think, and enjoy the genuine charm. Every moment we think of it, our mind will dance in sheer ecstasy! To think deep and to select thought-gems—, this is pure joy divine. It is only great thinkers who, by musing on God on and on, have realised Him tangibly. Deep thinking is the key-note of prayer in the divine scheme. Again that alone tampers the mind into a certain mellow peacefulness. Thought-mass should be chopped and squeezed until the real essence emerges in oily splendour. All great men have been once truth-hunters, yielding costly inferences to posterity.

Like golden bees, let us be “lily-cradled” in the sweetest thoughts. Let us “bustle down in those blue-bells.” Deep thinking should be practiced. Constant thinking ever keeps the mind on the alert. Idleness, the devil’s workshop, shall rapidly consume the rotting mind. There is no sweeter joy than thinking, deep thinking—nay musing deeper still.



How the Pay was earned

By N. Ramabhadran, B.A.,

IN the old archives of an old Police Station, then manned by an old Police Officer, yecept ‘the Head’ and styled ‘The Station-House Officer’ several occurrence reports were found with some note-books called ‘private’ and marked ‘Confidential’ with instructions not to be opened before 1924.... The books and reports were eaten away by moths and worms in several places, and much vital information as the names of the stations, the ranks of the officers concerned and the like that would be of material use in unravelling the mysteries of the olden days could not be gleaned from the dust-covered volumes. The note-books, however were severely plain in certain places, obscure in others, and otherwise intelligible to the one acquainted with the ways of the Guardians of Peace of those interesting olden days.

It was the 5th of November of a certain year—more akin to the days of old Guy Fawkes—when the old head-constable with his portly body, big mustaches, and blood-shot eyes appeared trembling before the Divisional Inspector. It was morning and the four other station-house officers of his division were already in attendance. The chief of Police was having a gay time with them issuing instructions, and distributing the well-earned pay. But, the biggest and the proudest of them was forbidden the smiles of the Chief, and the pay of the month as well. The benign government had indeed passed his pay, but the chief would not allow him to touch his pay; nor was that all; the chief ignored his presence, refused to look at him and allusively spoke of the renegade who disgraced the police force, and who came to take his pay having slept the entire month in the sta-

Our great religious minds of the rich hoary antiquity (Arunanthi Sivachariar etc.) are noble examples of the Sacred Temple of Wisdom where, the moment we enter, our soul meets light and greets splendour. Everything within is a mighty symbol of learning. In the mighty minds of Chekilar and Thiruvalluvar and Kambanadar, we behold the celestial flower gardens where we are at once lost in admiration of the alluring splendour of Nature, bright colour-contrast, and bewitching fragrance. Again entering the blessed company of Cheethalai Chathanar and Elangovadigal, it is indeed a feast of delight to see the theatre where the most artistic thought-curtains at once enchain our eye and rob us of our senses. Their beautiful thoughts tending to admirable descriptions are too deep and illuminating. The minds of the mediocrity are worse than the fish-market where the noise of folly is full and fruitful at once.

The mighty minds of the truly great are tangible expressions of joy. Immortal books form "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." A famous book is Fancy's favourite child. It is such books that prove an "inspiration series" to those who can enjoy them with keen delight. Ardent youths should study the minds of great men and appreciate the sweet reticence of their noblest thoughts. Youths of to-day never think out their thoughts, unconsciously allowing their minds to rust and to crumble and to decay. Their minds are just like withering buds; they are often like the mirror, which loses its transparency and reflection amidst the dust which dims its bright face. Students of to-day blindly believe in the efficacy of mugging, never caring for a true understanding. For, they have neglected thinking. If they begin to think, they at once become lotos-eaters who find consolation in rest and balmy sleep. Nothing can wake them up but keen hunger. Having forgotten the habit of thinking, they lose their power of reflection, and their reason is too weak to hold the scales even. Their weak minds have not that critical acumen to be self-assertive and pass individual opinions. With some boys, their thoughts are wandering as well as their minds. If a

monkey can jump from twig to twig, minds too can do the same, with admirable ease and speed, often going astray.

The minds of ideal students vie with the full-blown blossoms in all their entrancingly sweet fragrance. Such minds are growing minds full of fresh thoughts spouting forth, every moment. Thoughts, with all the speed of lightning or electric spark, must goad the style into meteoric violence and make a deep impression on the palm-leaf. Thoughts must crowd into the writer's head, until he is really tired. Long before the ink stains the tip of the fountain-pen, the spring of thoughts must flow out with all the easy elegance of a water-fall. Just now, I must quote a famous remark about the writings of Meenakshi-sundaram Pillai, the well-known Tamil scholar. Words throng into his tongue and entreat him, "Kindly set me in this stanza." Each word vies with the other for space in the poetic piece. Thoughts must fill our mind before the tongue links them up. Thought is the delicate string of the word-flowers arranged in symmetry and grace.

Just like an unchained ocean, thoughts must stream out with the speed and lustre of racing pearls. If the pen fails to flow, thoughts must at once vex the pen and chase it on, until there is an inevitable slip. Then alone the charming grace of thought shall be visible. The more we write, the more our thoughts multiply. Thoughts often ripen with time. Thought is a true criterion of a student's merit. There are students whose thoughts never grow, but stagnate with a mild obstinacy. Those boys are pure machines designed for the copying routine.

Those students alone whose thoughts grow and expand can regenerate their country intellectually and spiritually. By sheer growth of thoughts, some bright students outshine their masters. Again that also makes it possible for one student to instruct and improve his class-mate. Those who are bent on improving and enriching thoughts must receive inspiration from a number of books. Reading books must imply thinking thoughts. Sweetest are the finest thoughts of great poets. Those rapturous thoughts tempt us like sweets. The fiendish ideas of the mean intellects are no more than deliberate intoxicants sending one reeling at once.

tion. The old man ate his mustache, doubled his beard, looked down and attempted to speak; but, none dared to look at him encouragingly, nor cared to notice his existence. All were jubilant, and their jubilation looked a thousandfold magnified to the venerable man. The gathering dispersed, and all the four went back to their respective stations to begin the new month with better plans, and still better schemings, each dreaming to surpass the exploits of the other and to take back the coming month's pay with better grace, and with greater credit from their all-protecting chief.

But, the old man, so the account ran, stood rooted to the spot as the others passed by exchanging furtive glances at him. The Chief disdained to look at him even when he was alone. The old man began to murmur something, and thought that something was wrong with the disbursement of either the contingent bill or the travelling allowance bill, the moot points of olden day disagreements. The Chief arrested the train of thoughts of the old man by a big grunt of displeasure. The head threw down his head shivering from head to foot—the head to whom the 50 villages in his jurisdiction would tremble, to whom the proudest mirasdar would fall at his feet, to whom whole villages would sweep and clean, and hang flags welcoming him, and to whom mere nod would fetch the hidden treasures of the veriest miser. This was humiliation indeed for the old head, but none of the members of his jurisdiction was present when the Chief poured down his wrath.

"I shall bring some interesting cases this month" implored the old man.

"But what were you doing the whole month? Idling away, eh?" angrily responded the Chief.

"Revered Sir," submissively spoke the old man, "no case occurred in spite of all efforts, and I could not get even a single case. All my people have gone tame, and even my rowdies do not come forward to exhibit their pranks on the people—so cowardly they have become. I invite you to go my jurisdiction, and see for yourself if I had not bent down the stoutest of hearts or the noblest of souls."

"Then" said the the chief, "do you suggest the abolition of the station? Money should be spent and the government should never be satisfied with the opinion of an idler and a drone like you."

"But Sir, you have been gifted with the enormous driving power of an Englishman. Kindly enlighten me about the chief grievance you have against me for this differential treatment," queried the head.

"You know it, and you pretend you do not know—and mind—your pay will not be given to you nor to any of your subordinates unless you bring some cases within the next few days. It is a disgrace to have a blank statistics from a station manned by an experienced officer of your standing."

The old head knew that there was no use arguing, and arguing was really a breach of discipline, and he was content not to have his pay and refrained from arguing lest he may be punished for disobeying orders also. He very well knew that the divisional Inspector will have to answer his superiors also, and that a blank statistics, and absence of work out of the common would also entail the retention of him also in the department.

The old head went back to the station, sat on the chair and looked to the wall. His six constables assembled on the verandah, peeped through the window into the station-house and found that the chief was wroth, and that something was amiss. But, they could not wait indefinitely; their pay ought to be got also, and the avaricious creditors should have to be satisfied. The bolder and the pet of the head slowly crept in and asked him about the cause of the melancholia with extra submissiveness and politeness.

"I have not got the pay of the force, and our work was not appreciated in high quarters," said the head sadly.

The worst of the lot waiting outside whispered to his neighbour "Please do not believe the old man—he ought to have spent the money on some woman—or he would not be so sulky. He had his pay and he would not care for miserable wretches like ourselves. Was the government so blind to our necessi-

ties— and what could they do with such ferocious old men like him—Prestige, discipline, old hand were summoned to aid if anything is said about him.

The head said that the chief refused the pay of the station on well reasoned grounds. The men were idling away their time and none of them were able to bring out any case for the past one month. The truth dawned on intermediary and the message was duly conveyed to all.

The head in his supreme humiliation dispersed the men to assemble at the station house by 6 p.m. in the night, and refrained indulging in vain talk.

The beat lantern with the usual supply of cocoanut oil and tin cans the receptacles of free beat toddy were in the hands of each of the beat constables. The old station was in the parting of four public highways, and all the six were deputed two on each side to haul up such of them as they could conveniently lay their hands on.

The right hand of the S.H.O. went north of the road for over four miles and searched in vain for his prey, and though it was past midnight he found none on the road. The head would not allow such an excuse to pass by without giving severe strictures. Vainly he tried to catch one but his walk was swifter than our indomitable beatman, and the man's gait clearly showed that he was in a hurry to go somewhere. Wearily the constable wended his way to the adjoining choultry and his equally unfortunate jodi also came to rest there with no encouraging result. The prospect was gloomy and a nil return would mean disaster for them.

In the choultry, a man was found snoring loudly. A small bundle containing meals for the coming morning was kept huddled by him. The tranquility of the chatram was disturbed by the stentorian voice of our heroes and the sleeping man rose half dazed from sleep. The minions of law and order asked him as to where he was going and as to why he was sleeping in such a suspicious way in the choultry. The stranger explained that he was going to a village ten miles off for condolence. Surely such a lame excuse could never be accepted without verification,

and he was hurried back to the station by the two indomitable constables against the alternative implorings of the man that he would pick up his meal bundle, that he was unable to walk if his going was insisted upon, and that he would require an hour's rest at least for his tiresome work for the day. The constables simply assured him that he would be better taken care of by them, and that others would take care of the departed soul.

More fortunate were the two that went the other way. They found two persons—father and son hunters by profession—slightly colored by the warm drink of the night supplied by the roadway tavern keeper—discussing over the drink, and planning ways and means to avenge the father-in-law who so ignominiously beat the hunter's son for a slight fault of his. The father was arguing that his son was a coward, and that he ought not to have returned from his father-in-law's house with such disgrace. The loud discussion on a highway was enough excuse for this set of beatmen to call them to the police station to have the argument threshed out by their justice loving 'head.' Indeed the protestations of the hunters that they would supply them with good honey the following morning and even the offer of a good five-rupee note declined to move the constables to show their sympathies on the two wretched souls. It was found out by casual talk and well-meant enquiry that the father had a conviction for three months for being bold enough to proudly walk out twelve years ago with three measures of paddy his master supplied him as cooly for honest work done in the sun-stricken fields while the youngster hale and hearty was found to have the highest possible notions about honesty common to the hardworking peasant folk.

The 'head' with his two other comrades was certainly not idle on this eventful day, and was busy enquiring after their old station K.D. who had tasted jail life, once for failure to give security, and escaped several times offering surities defying even the old time head who outwardly expressed displeasure, but inwardly sympathised with the coming out of this defier of law and order and according to his philosophy, even such a reprobate as

he would be of some use as even the smallest fry had its own duty to perform in this wonder-working world.

This K. D. was a passionate lover of liberty, and was known to have fought several times valiantly like the village Hampden that he was, during all the time the liberty of action was rudely threatened by the servants of His Majesty. The public applauded his courage in secret, and the police force knew that he was a man to be reckoned with. The slightest vacillation of any man to sympathise with this wretch of humanity, would result in that man also being classified in the category of the undesirables and the displeasure of a policeman as all very well knew were their own death trap. So, even the sympathising man had to join the police chorus in condemning, and the guardians of law found no difficulty in trapping him whenever opportunity occurred.

The kidnapping of this historical person was certainly no easy joke, and in spite of the personal superintendence of the head the assistants blundered once by walking near his dwelling house in right military fashion, and the head by threats of dire consequences exhorted them to implicitly carry out orders without comments either verbal or actional. The small hut was scaled over in a moment, and the kidnapping of the K.D. from his sleep to the police station without even waking up the slumbering inmates was so charmingly carried out that even the S.H.O. had to acknowledge that such a piece of work could never be undertaken even by expert house-breakers.

The work of the night was over for all, and the innocent head was sitting in the police station without exhibiting even the slightest emotion about the adventures of the previous night. The constables rendered the accounts and stories of ordinary beat duties unvarnished by romantic incidents. The daily book belied the heavy work of the past few hours.

The 'head' beckoned his trust, and issued some orders and in obedience to the same the proceeds of the previous night were escorted by all and taken to a neighbouring village at dead of night. There was again a cross road, and near the junction on either side were houses, chiefly occupied by honest, godfearing,

and law abiding servile citizens. One house only among belonged to the respectable class of the dancing girls. The most beautiful in the house was a girl of seventeen and patronised by the richest dandy in the village,—the trustee of the local Siva temple. The head had certainly made a note of her, and anyway, his advances were not given as much respect as they deserved. When our heroes advanced to the street, stones began to fall pell mell in the street, distant noise of heads being broken, and property looted were heard, while the roofs of several houses were beaten by invisible hands. There was a regular hue and cry, and a stampede into the street followed. Men got out of their houses with such weapons as they could catch for the moment, and inadvertantly tumbled on the four persons who were watching the scene with some amusement, and wonder. They were duly caught, and given all the ceremonies due to them. Gasping for breath and unable to bear the pain they blurted out that they came along with some policemen who had gone to some house for taking meals. But, their explanations only exasperated the villagers. The village headman who was soon requisitioned soon arrived at the spot and drew up a long report of an attempt at dacoity, the smart capture of the criminals red handed, and even pointedly made mention of the fact that the scene of capture was within the few yards of the famous dancing girl's house. The *talayaries* armed with the reports marched triumphantly to the police station dragging the unfortunate wretches with the least possible delay, and on being told that the 'head' was still sleeping in his house went there, and were given right royal abuse for disturbing his morning with barefaced false report. The 'head' however had the patience amidst his assumed uncontrollable anger to peep furtively at the report and noted that everything was in order.

Dame rumour spread like wild fire, and the exploits of the head and the villagers were the common talk of the whole magisterial division, and the smart capture of such notorious dacoits were unheard of in the police annals of the circle for the past ten years. Every honest citizen was amazed at the

dexterity with which the dacoits were captured; equally amazed were they at the exploits of the head, and his underlings who managed to trace out properties concerned in several dacoity cases which were treated as undetectable. The villagers were thanked and the 'head' was applauded. The subsequent history of the case was allowed to be devoured by the time-honoured white ants. But, tradition had it that the cases were tried in the Magistrate's Court, and sent to the sessions. The case was of course threshed out before the civilian judge, and the criminals figured more odiously when they cast reckless aspersions on the police that they concocted cases against them by catching them unawares and throwing them at the mercy of the villagers at dead of night near the cross road. Their contentions could not be proved even by superhuman efforts, and the relations of the accused who came to render help stood aghast at the immense capabilities of those seemingly innocent people. In vain, the accused protested their innocence, but the unseen hand of Providence hurled them into 'His Majesty's' shelter for a period of seven years, the allotted span of life for such class of people. Our head had the satisfaction to note that the Judge had remarked on the abilities of the enterprising old man who had exhibited such acumen in bringing the case to a successful conclusion. The 'head' had his grade raised in due course, and was held up as a model for idlers to copy, and the divisional inspector made profuse apologies for his rude behaviour.

Truth like murder will be out, and evil gossip never stopped there, and the dancing girl who was reported to have lent some of her jewels for the case was said to be the invisible right hand of the old man, and rumour had it that she helped him with property in many an intricate case, and supported his career through thick and thin. But to the old 'S.H.O.' it was the triumphant incident of the pay well earned, and to the chronicler, the carrying out of the dictates of the mismatched worm-eaten confidential notebook.

Ancient Hindu Culture

HINDU Civilization is the earliest civilization in the world. Its antiquity is wonderful; its vitality miraculous. Simplicity with refinement, honesty with happiness, self-denial with plenty, are the splendid results of this time-honoured civilization. The fabulous age of the Greeks and the "Stone Age" of modern thinkers are but things of yesterday in the history of Hindu civilization. Nations have risen and fallen, empires founded and destroyed, races appeared and disappeared, but the Hindu Civilization that saw their foundation and destruction still remains. Take whatever department of human activity you like, you find the ancient Hindus eminent in it.

None can deny the great merits of their ancient constitution. Burke, the great English exponent of political Philosophy lays down, population and wealth as two important standards to test the nature of a government. No country could have satisfied the same conditions more fully than ancient India did. Megasthenes says that "there are 120 nations in India." As regards wealth, India has always been famous for its immense riches. "Golden India" is a hackneyed phrase. The great Hindu work on Law is a marvel of simplicity and wisdom. *Kautilya's Arthashastra* is an authentic composition of the Maurya age expounding the principles of statecraft. The *Laws of Manu* form the foundation of the queer medley of inconsistent systems of jurisprudence administered by the Privy Council and the High Courts of India under the name of Hindu Law. Even though Mill may have a low opinion of Hindu Law "his review is a piece of stupendous perversity, ignorance and stupidity."

The happy results of government depend chiefly on the character and society of the people in the country. For their generosity, honesty, truthfulness and courage, the Hindus are superior to all nations. The illustrious Yuan Chuang, the prince

of pilgrims says "the Indians are distinguished by the straightforwardness and honesty of their character." Elphinstone, the historian, remarks "No set of people among the Hindus are so depraved as the dregs of our own great towns....Including Thugs and Dacoits the mass of crime is low in India than in England" (History of India Page 201) Patriotism! In vain one ransacks the annals of Greece and Rome of modern and mediaeval Europe to find such noble patriots as Rana Pratap or Takur Das. Hindu society was based on scientific principles. The key-note of the system was national service. Society was perfected by Hindus.

"It is universally admitted that there is no better criterion of the refinement of a nation than the condition of the fair sex therein" (Tod Annals of Rajasthan Vol. I P. 609.) The high position the women have occupied in India would argue a very advanced state of civilization. They had not only equality of opportunities with men, but enjoyed certain rights and privileges. Manu says, "Where the females are honoured there the deities are pleased but where dishonoured there all religious rites become useless." In India, woman has no distinctive independent individuality in Hindu social polity. She is a part of the man. Draupadi's part in the administration of the empire was to instruct the subjects as to the duties and rights of women, superintend the management of the palace, and to supervise the religious institutions of the nation. The strong affection of a Hindu wife for her husband is typified in the conduct of Chandandas's wife so beautifully described in the political drama *Mudra Rakshasa*.

It is a truism to say "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war" The achievements of the Hindus in Philosophy, literature, art and other sciences prove their peaceful victories. Literature is the sure test of the real greatness of a nation since it embodies not only the intellect, but also the spirit of a nation. Taylor speaking about Sanskrit literature says, "To acquire the mastery of it is almost the labour of a life; its literature seems exhaustless." In the words of Prof. Maxmüller "The number of works in Sanskrit is more than the whole

classical literature of Greece and Rome put together" (India—What can it teach us P. 84). W. W. Hunter's words that "modern philology dates from the study of Sanskrit by the Europeans" (Asiatic Researches Vol. I. P. 423) tend to show that Sanskrit is the mother of all Indo-European languages. The achievements of Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali in the grammatical analysis are still unsurpassed in the grammatical literature of any nation. In the field of drama "India had a rich and varied development" (MacDonell's Sanskrit Literature P. 348) Kalidasa, Bhavabuthi and Visakadatta are but a few names. The masterpiece of Kalidasa is the play of Sakuntala. In the language of Mrs. Manning "Nowhere is love expressed with greater force and pathos than in this play" (Ancient and Mediaeval India Vol. II P. 148). In epic poetry the literature of the Hindus is rich. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the epics *par excellences* of India. "There is not in the whole range of Sanskrit literature a more charming poem than the Ramayana. As to Sita "she is a paragon of domestic virtues." (Monier Williams). "Mahabharata is an inexhaustible mine of proverbial philosophy." (MacDonell's Sanskrit Literature P. 378).

Philosophy in fact originated with the Hindus. Hindu philosophy is the fountain-head of Greek philosophy with regard to some of its cardinal points. "Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun" says Prof. Schlegel the distinguished German critic.

Science was carried to a high degree of perfection. The ancient Hindus attained a thorough proficiency in medicine and surgery. In mathematics the Lilavathi questions even now stand foremost. "To the Hindus is due the invention of Algebra and Geometry and their application to astronomy"—Monier Williams (Indian Wisdom P. 185). The Gupta Age is adorned by the illustrious names of Varahamihira and Aryabhata in mathematical and astronomical sciences. The mention of various Asthras, saasthras and many combustible weapons in the puranas

and the epics bears eloquent testimony to the fact that knowledge did not fail to unroll her ample page on the science of warfare to them.

Art, sculpture, and painting attained a degree of perfection not recognised until recently. "The Indian art soaring into the highest empyrean is trying to bring down to earth something of the beauty of the things above"—Havell. (Indian Sculpture and Painting Page 24.) The magnificent Hindu temples, the splendid palaces, the formidable forts and wonderful caves are truly monuments of human genius and marvels of human industry and skill. They have excited the admiration of the European critics and have elicited expressions of wonder from them, strength and durability, beauty and majesty, are the characteristics of the Hindu style of architecture. Speaking of the Halebid temple Mr. Vincent Smith says that it is "One of the most marvellous exhibitions of human labour even in the patient East." (History of the Fine Art in India P. 42). The Kailasa temple at Ellora built by Krishna I (760 A.D.) is memorable for the execution of the most marvellous architectural freak in India. Who can imagine the Taj without being struck blind by its glittering splendour? It is needless to dwell upon the high merits of painting as exemplified by some of the best frescoes at Ajanta and the Cognate works of Sigiriya in Ceylon. The Gupta period was a time of exceptional intellectual activity in many fields. It is in the annals of classical India almost what the periclean Age is in the history of Greece. "Europe of the present day has in art far more to learn from India than to teach." Havell. (Indian Sculpture and painting P. 130).

We have seen how in the various fields of activity art, philosophy, literature and government—India occupies the foremost place in the history of the world. The fact that she has always been the cynosure of all eyes, that people of less favoured climes have always cast longing lingering looks on her glittering treasures, prove that she has been reputed to be the richest nation in the world. By endowing India with the best and the choicest gifts she had in store, Nature herself ordained that this magnificent country should play the leading part in the history

of mankind. The vedic religion of India was thoroughly scientific and universal. In the Hibbert Journal Mr. Tully Seegar frankly admits that the Hindu idea of religion is much more developed than that of modern Christianity. In the words of Mrs. Beasant, "India is the mother of religion. In her are combined science and religion in perfect harmony and that is the Hindu religion, and it is India that shall again be the spiritual mother of the world" (Lecture delivered at Calcutta in 1906). To conclude in the words of Sir Thomas Munro, "The Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe; and if civilization is to become an article of trade between England and India, I am convinced that England will be gained by the import cargo."



The Village Temples

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

THAT India is essentially spiritual is a well-worn statement and nowhere is the number of temples so striking as in South India. Again, in the South more than in the North, the ceremonials connected with worship are so complicated that not unoften do we hear of disputes in minor points carried to so distant and ultimate a court as His Majesty's Privy Council. It is not so much an accident, as it is the result of the Sastras that a village without a temple, is considered as despicable, as the moonless sky.

Immemorial practice has it, that the guardian deities of the eight directions should be propitiated on the boundary sites of the village. Even so, we find Ayyanar, with his retinue of horses in baked clay at the entrance to the South Indian Village. Other minor deities as Marameri—(God who ascends up the trees)—who watches the trees—Sudalai-kathan—God who protects the Cremation ground—and goddesses as Esakki Amman and Mari Amman—who is specially propitiated during times of Cholera and Small-pox, and extreme drought are the favourites with the non-priestly communities in general and the Panchamas in

particular. The temples of these deities are humbler ones of brick and mortar work, and they are very often identified by the huge horses and giant watchmen who guard them. There are annual festivals when the deities are propitiated, through sacrifices of goats and rarely of bullocks. Specially all the Villagers co-operate and work like a man, when it is the Ayyanar-prithi-day or the Mari Amman Utsavam. Nay, it is considered a serious dereliction of one's duties, if a particular house-holder is found guilty by the Local Panchayatdars in this respect.

When one passes to the Agraharam, the new visitor finds as unfailingly the temple of mighty Mahadeva in the East, as he reveres the lofty Dwajasthambam of Maha Vishnu in the West. The Gopura, Dwajasthamba, Balipeeta, Nandi, the deities of Vinayaka and Subramanya, the Lord Siva and Parvati, the idols of Navagraham, the idols of sixty three saints, the flower-garden in the neighbourhood, the inner and outer prakarams, where there lies the small temple of Chandikeswarar and surrounding all the spacious madils—all these are some of the common characteristics of Siva temples in the South. It has been a pointed observation that the ornamentation in a Vishnu Temple stands to advantage on a comparison with Siva temples. The Vahanas and Vighrahas of Maha Vishnu and Lakshmi are always noted for their prominent features.

These Village temples are generally under the control of a local Trustee, appointed by the Devasthanam Committee of the surrounding regions. If it is a temple built recently out of public funds, there is a village elder appointed by the Panchayatdars to look after the proper conduct of the affairs of the temple. Invariably in South India the Sanctum Sanctorum has not been thrown open to those other than the Brahmans and those other than the four castes are allowed to worship in sufferance, from outside the main gate.

The present writer, after a visit to many Northern Indian temples as well, has given expression elsewhere (in the *Tamil World* and *Everymans Review*, Madras) to the desirability of treating everyone of the *Vegetarians as equal before the Great One*. The standing examples of Puri and Kasi have been cited

as showing us the beacon-light in this direction. The more one forces his way with great difficulty amidst choking atmosphere into the Sanctum Sanctorum of these temples, the more one leaves for temples built on hills and raised places as in Trichy and Swami Malai. Is it not desirable to have the idol of God in a High place, so that every passer-by can have a glimpse of the Great Protector?

Of these village temples many are well-kept; in all cases the administration of the temple varies in direct proportion to the high character of the trustee appointed to look after it. Riches always do not mean pure management of the temple, nor does poverty always imply aggrandizement of temple-property. One lesson more than any other is perfectly clear from the growing number of Chola inscriptions unearthed, that there were efficient committees appointed to look after temple property, misappropriation of which, was uniformly severely dealt with.

As in all institutions where human agencies are concerned, there are also types of temples left neglected and some allowed to decay. A few of the temples left in a maimed condition after Muslim Rules having come under Lord Curzon's farsighted Preservation Act; and thanks to the habitual policy of the Rich money-lending class of Nattukottai Chetties, hundreds of ruined and ill-kept temples have been renovated and maintained in a stable condition. Nattukottai Chetty's Choultries and temples are found in the Cape in the South as they are in evidence in far-off Benares as well.

Our temples stand for the preservation of our Acharas, and as such often represent the orthodox view. Signs are not wanting where progressive ideas have prevailed without appreciable detriment to the true basis of our religion. From Sri Padmanabaswami's temple where not even His Highness is, allowed to enter the Temple with a shirt, to places like Madura-Sri Rangam, and Rameswaram where the wearing of costly shirts and coats stands at a premium, the change is clear. From closely packed dungeons stinking with the agelong smell of bats to the airy prakarams at Madura with the electric lights of exquisite colour and design, the transition is perceivable. Will it

be too much to ask, of our custodians of orthodoxy to incorporate the lessons of Kasi and Puri in our temples also ?

For what does Gurudev Tagore say ? "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads ! Whom dost thou worship in this lovely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut ? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee.

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

• On Imagination.

By C. L. R. Sastri.

LIFE is for most human beings a dreary thing. It is a vale of tears. At some moments it even becomes unbearable. The slightest thing will turn the scale. Man is cursed with a memory, with a conscience, with a soul. The present holds anguish enough for him: quite gratuitously, however, the past also, too often, thrusts itself in. The past, indeed, is a real part of us : as much a part of us as a limb. Like the poor, it is always with us. We cannot ignore it: it makes itself felt at every turn. The future is not less troublesome. We do not know what is going to happen to us an hour hence. Everything is shrouded in a cloak of uncertainty. An unfathomable abyss is for ever yawning before us; and every passing moment only draws us nearer and nearer to it. Uncertainty, viewed in a certain light, has its charming side. Philosophically considered, it is what makes the world so beautiful. But philosophy is a rare commodity; and most of us only look at the miserable side of uncertainty. Men cannot get rid of the notion that some hideous calamity is going to befall them at a future time. Though this ought to prepare them for that calamity and make it less hideous when it

comes, on the principle that to be fore-warned is to be fore armed, it only makes it doubly hideous. We feel miserable, not only when it arrives, but even *before* it arrives so, in anticipation as it were. It is true that the future may hold good instead of bad. But, somehow it only seems to hold the latter. At any rate, on account of our fear it appears so. Fear is a maggot in the brain that grows by brooding; and it even makes us see things which do not really exist. We ride with a spectre on our pillion. So, then, we feel miserable from every point of view. The present moment holds trouble: owing to the curse of our memory, the influence of our past troubles continue to the present time, and we become miserable *by retrospect*: and there is a misery pertaining to the future. The last is the worst of all.

One of the ways of mitigating an evil is to always keep in mind the opposite of evil. We must fix our eyes on an ideal state of affairs: our gaze must be directed upward. By always aiming at the ideal, we shall gradually come to forgetting the unhappy real. We should try to strip things of their material element, put ourselves in a state of mind in which the *accessories* no longer matter, and contemplate the ideal. Let us make up our minds that our unhappiness is only of *our* making; that it was not originally intended to be a permanent and predominant element in the universe; that it is accidental, not original without at all entering into questions of metaphysics: it is not very unreasonable to premise that the world in its commencement was a happy place to live in, at any rate, a much happier place to live in than it is now. If this is so, as we think it is, then our present universal unhappiness is of our own making: we are the architects of our own misfortunes. Any meddling with the pristine state of things is bound to result in chaos. The chaos may ultimately lead to order: that we do not know. We can only surmise from the actual condition of the world. We may take it as a general rule that the more we depart from the natural state, the more we have to rue it. Now the world is not what it originally was. Everything is altered; and we are but the ghosts of what we were. Again we say, it may be for the better. But this much is indisputable: the transition period is

a period full of trouble. Transition is, by its nature, an uncertain thing: at best, it is experimental. All the same, when the natural state is disturbed, consequences of great pith and moment are bound to arise. By saying this, we should not be understood to mean that there should be no progress, that we should be at a standstill. But we need not *misapply* things. That which we have evolved as a kind of advance upon the previous state of things should be used for the purpose for which we have evolved it, and not in such a way as actually to *retard* our march. It is possible to invent a thing by means of which our progress can be immeasurably accelerated, but by means of which our progress is, *actually*, in a corresponding degree, impeded. That is what has been done. Wherein, then, lies the advantage of departing to a marked degree from the natural state? Any departure, to be justifiable, ought to be of profit. But when this is not so, when it is actually harmful, it is worse than useless. It becomes a thing for mockery: We are like the man of the proverb, in short, who goes farther and fares worse.

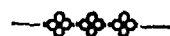
Whatever is, is, however. But, as we have said, we can do so by contemplating an ideal, an abstract state of things; by stripping things of the accidentals that go to make them so unhappy. In other words, we should rise superior to mere time and place. It is our own passion, our own native impetuosity, that is the cause of most of our ills: a little philosophy would make matters more shipshape. The chief end of the world is Beauty; Proportion; Harmony. The chief curse of the world is—the negation of all these. But by constantly dwelling upon these in our minds as well as in our actions—at least in our minds—by remembering these in the worst combination of circumstances, we can gradually forget the misery of the world: with the mind's eye, we can get a glimpse of the real purpose of the world. This requires a particular attribute of the mind—namely, Imagination. Imagination, in short, is an exercise of the mind by virtue of which we can soar into regions other than our own. It needs a certain detachment from our selves. We see ourselves, so to speak, from an outer standpoint. We shed our ego. We rise, as on unseen wings, into higher

altitudes. By so doing, we come to understand the primary, the essential, condition of things. In a word, we become saner.

It is the fashion now-a-days to decry any scheme that tries to construct a better world than that which we live in. To call anything 'utopian' has now come to mean the highest form of abuse: it is a final condemnation. We do not see, however, where the condemnation comes in. It is bad enough that most of us do not even try to transcend the evil condition of our existence. We have become callous towards it. But when, here and there, a man arises and points out to us the depth to which we have fallen, and asks us to bestir ourselves and come up once again to the surface of sanity and wisdom, we not only do not encourage him, we even throw stones at him. It is as if we were jealous of anyone who tried to lift us out of the mire of our degradation. The soil of our present-day world is not fit for seers,—it is only fit for sinners.

The property of imagination is that of exalting ourselves into a superior state of existence. It is also concerned with putting ourselves in the places of others, and seeing with their eyes. It is what is termed 'sympathetic imagination.' Here we rule out selfishness altogether. We try to understand the other man's point of view. We first recognize that there are other points of view than our own; and then sincerely try to examine them: and where their superiority is patent to us, we give up our own and take up theirs. It is not so simple and childish as it looks. Most of our petty quarrels, as between individuals and individuals; most of even the bigger quarrels that arise between different nations and assume the proportion of wars, can be eliminated if we exercise what we have called sympathetic imagination. The individual pride, the family pride that is grandiloquently termed 'Patriotism' ought to be confined within reasonable limits: they ought not to be made to stand in the way of the world's peace. Wars are after all only the conflict of national prides. They arise because every nation wants to get to the first place at the same time. 'Each one for himself and the Devil take the hindmost' is the fashion. It is this that is the cause of most of our unhappiness.

Imagination is a faculty: it is a faculty of the mind. Some are born with it. But it can also be cultivated. The only difficulty that stands in the way is our inborn nature. But the merit lies in overcoming the bad elements of our nature. 'For an accomplished spirit there is but one dialogue, that between our two egos—the momentary ego that we are, and the ideal one toward which we strive.' It is the ideal ego towards which we should strive.



The Postman

By R. Thiagarajan.

THE postman is the friend of all. He has rarely any foe, unless perhaps one of his departmental superiors has incurred his enmity by superseding his claim to a promotion or an allowance in his modest salary which seldom rises above a living wage. The postman always reminds me of his 'comrades in arms'—viz—the police constables and the Tramway conductors and driver's, both on account of the khaki uniform with a red turban that are given to them to wear while on their duty, and the standard of humble education that is generally regained to qualify them for entering into service—i.e., the completion of any or all of the three years' course in the S.S.L.C. or the old lower secondary grade.

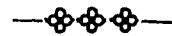
All of them are useful to us. But for the police, how can we hope to maintain 'the king's peace' in the country? The Tramway men are indeed necessary for conveying the people to and fro in the city. If they refuse to work, the school boys must remain at home, the officers must enjoy a holiday, and the workmen must lose a day's wages. (My friend whispers at my back that there are the Motor-bus men!). Now, if the postmen strike work, you may imagine what a calamity will overtake us. It may be more disastrous than the recent floods. Think indeed

what would have become of the irregular and uncertain postal and telegraphic communication during the floods if all the postmen had ceased to work. We would have starved for news from our friends suffering in the floods.

Of these three useful occupations, that of the postman seems to me to be the most enviable. In the morning, or in the noon, or in the evening, no other person is expected more eagerly, by the young and the old alike, than the postman. The fond husband or wife looks at the door in eager impatience to hear the noise of the postman's steps, and lo! when he comes smilingly approaches him to receive the letter of his or her sweet partner in life. The student at school or college, be he busy or idle, clever or dull, is the postman's best friend. His money orders and book-posts are quickly delivered by the postman, for which act of promptness of course, he receives a small consideration. The business men know to what extent their success is due to the postman. Letters of proposal and acceptance, insured letters, confidential business matters, and many other important affairs of commercial life are transmitted to and fro, thanks to the industry and energy of the postman, and the telegraph man (whom also I have impliedly included in the postman's class). On the occasions of Dasra, Deepavali and Pongal, what a lot of presents the postman receives from them! Again, in the administration of the work of the several branches of the Government, what a part the postman plays! The administration of the functions of the State depends upon the quickness of the postal and telegraphic communication which is mainly the result of the ready manner in which the postman discharges his duties.

The postman's domestic life is not less happy than his office. For I am yet to see a postman who really complains against his lot. He may say that his earnings are not sufficient to maintain his wife and children. He may tell you that he has to walk his round from door to door, in the sun and the rain, and may, sometimes even retrace his path to please a careless and negligent addressee that would miss the postman at the proper hour, and then shout for him from the end of the street.

Not infrequently, he will speak of the tyranny of the Inspector and the Superintendent—only if you are officious enough to ask him. With all this, he has a happy life, for he says, "Contentment is the greatest happiness in life. I like all, I serve all, and I am liked by all; and this contents me more than anything else." Who will not like him for his contented life?



Humorous Occurrences in Law-suits.

By D. P. Chinchalkar B.A., L.L.B.

AND B were two 'very respectable' merchants residing in two different Districts. There were vast Mercantile dealings between them on a very large scale for a long time. Further on disputes arose between them with respect to certain transactions. A began to think that B was indebted to him for a large amount while B thought quite the contrary and that A owed him a handsome amount. At last on one day A filed a suit against B in the Court of his town for accounts: on the same day B also filed a suit for accounts against A in the Court of his own town. A received the summons of B's suit. A went to B's place and engaged there a pleader of that Court informing him that he had filed a similar suit against B in his own Court. B also went to A's place and engaged a pleader of that Court informing him that he had filed a similar suit against A in his own Court. B's pleader raised in A's suit what is called the legal contention of "Res subjudice" and got the suit stayed till the decision of his clients' suit in the other Court. A's pleader also did not fail to raise the same contention of law in B's suit and got the suit stayed till the decision of his client's case in the Court of his own place. In this way the pleaders for both the parties in both the Courts freed themselves from the worry of conducting their cases and both the Courts

also did nothing beyond fixing a date at the end of every month or two for receiving the decision of the other case pending in the other Court.

About two years rolled on in this way and still neither of the cases came to be decided. Each Court kept wondering at the slow progress of the other in deciding cases. The parties also could not properly understand why their cases should not yet come for a hearing, although they had paid to their pleaders their full fees and expenses. The parties were not sufficiently literate to grasp the law-point of "Res-subjudice" that hampered the progress of their suits. Besides the parties had engaged different pleaders in different Courts and they were not brought quite in touch with each other. After two years the respective Courts inquired of each other how far the suits in each other's Court's had progressed and when they were likely to be decided. The replies of the two Courts to each other threw a flash of light on the mysterious workings of the Courts and happily the riddle was solved. Even thereafter the pleaders of both the sides in A's Court found out a legal remedy to save their client's labour and costs in their Court viz: that it was most convenient to have both the suits taken on the file of some one Court and that Court should be B's Court. For his own inconveniences A was not quite willing to take his suit to the Court of B, but wanted B's suit to be brought to his Court, but he was at last persuaded to show his consent to the same. But it was not very difficult for the pleaders in B's Court also to find out the same point of procedure and to take B's consent to have his case transferred to A's Court for the special convenience of a legal trial.

Thus A's suit was transferred to B's Court and B's suit came to be transferred to A's Court. The suits received new numbers and the parties received new summonses of each other and the pleaders also had to be engaged on fresh fees. On the date of hearing both the Courts came to see that their motive viz: to have both the suits on the file of some one Court was not really fulfilled and they therefore reported to their superior Courts for arrangements being made to have both the cases on

the file of some one of the Courts or to have both the cases being taken up by the Court above. They also wanted to have the view of the Courts above on another law-point viz: both the suits having been filed on the same day which suit had a right to proceed first? The Courts above sent their legal orders that B's suit transferred to A's Court should remain on the file of the same Court and that A's suit transferred to B's Court should also remain on the file of that Court but that B's suit in A's Court should first be decided and that A's suit in B's Court be stayed pending the decision of B's suit. Thus the pleaders and the sub-judge in B's Court thought that they were for the time relieved of the burden of conducting the whole trial of the case and had the pleasure of saving the costs and the troubles of the clients in that Court.

The hearing of B's suit in A's Court commenced. A number of dates passed on in filing the written statements, the counter written statements, the documentary evidence etc. and in framing the issues. But all of a sudden on a subsequent important date B missed his train as he had to come for his case from a long distance and he found that his case stood dismissed for want of his appearance on the day fixed. A felt a little joy at the dismissal of B's suit and taking the copy of the result with him began to prosecute his own suit against B in B's Court. But unhappily A had also the same experiences to meet in B's Court. On one date, he too unavoidably missed his train and as the suit had grown very old by that time the Court dismissed it for the Plaintiff's non-appearance! There was nothing unnatural or unusual in this as B's Court was to act upon the decision of A's Court and as A's Court had dismissed the suit for default of the Plaintiff, B's Court was bound to do the same thing as soon as an opportunity to do so arrived. For a time B felt overjoyed at the result. But after a little thought both the parties came to know that so much trouble and expense and loss of time brought forth no advantage to them, they having received no decision on the merits of the case from any Court.

Both the parties applied to have their suits again restored to the file for proper and valid reasons. In the meanwhile the

subjudges of both the Courts were transferred to each other's Court's i.e. the subjudge in A's Court was transferred to B's Court and *vice versa*. Both the judges at the time of their transfer thought that they were quite legally freed from the case but on assuming the charge of their duties in the new Courts found out that they had to meet with the same case again though in a different state. As the reasons for the non-appearance of the parties in both the cases were the same, the parties did not take objections in each other's applications for having the suits restored to the file and the judges were also kind enough to take both the suits again on the file. After so much trouble, expense and delay, the clients began to think very sympathetically about each other and to avoid further trouble, delay and expenses. Several influential friends of the parties intervened and got the cases compromised on the terms that each party was to bear his own costs and was to suppose that it did not owe anything to the other!



A New View of what the State is

By P. Jagannadhaswami, M.A., L.T.

LIKE draws to like; according to this law which is exemplified everywhere in the world, individual members of a community join together for purposes of achieving interests that are common to them all. These groups are the organisations and associations formed within the community. The efficiency of these associations depends directly upon the common will with which the common purposes are pursued. The more consciously the common consent is exercised, the more efficiently is the work of the associations carried on. Within the community are formed several associations, each one serving one avowed interest. Along with the differentiation of interests

that is brought about by the civilised condition of the community, more and more associations are organised so that in a highly civilised, community there cannot possibly exist one association for more than one common end. Under such conditions one individual member of the community may be an active member of more than one association; and he will resist any association that attempts to assume control of another and to dictate to it what should be its policy and organisation. An association can exist and operate only so long as all the members have a common will and common interest in virtue of which they seek to co-operate with one another.

The state is one of such association; but it is unique from all other possible associations. It is pre-eminent in that membership of this association is obligatory on all the individuals of the community and is compulsory in the sense that any one discontented with the prevailing policy of the state cannot submit resignation of his membership and free himself from it. But membership in any other association is primarily voluntary in the sense that the individual may secede at any time from the organisation; he may organise another in agreement with his minority view or may in an unorganised manner be the focus of a group of individuals who without a definitely laid out creed, possess common ends that bind them together by rather tender and flexible bonds. But in a state such a resignation and secession is impossible; nor can an individual be a member of more than one state. Except in this regard, the state association does not materially differ from any other association. But this unique character is often much exaggerated and is pressed into service to advocate many false and unhealthy theories.

It is true that the comprehensiveness of the state organisation imparts to it a certain form of pre-eminence which it exercises over every other association of the community. But as regards the *modus operandi* of this pre-eminence, there has been a mistaken notion that the state possesses the right of exercising force with a view to exact common loyalty and obedience from all its members. It is said as if a truism that if obedience fails, the state ceases and anarchy and rebellion come into

existence. But that obedience that maintains the health of the state can never be the result of enforcement by force but of the conscious exercise of common consent and of a conscious recognition of the common purpose and interest of the state. This obedience shall be in the form of a habit; and if any coercion is necessary, it shall be no more than that of social disapprobation. That the threat of using force for purposes of this loyalty is more a fiction than a practicable weapon is revealed in the impotency of states when called upon to deal with large groups of rebellious individuals. For example, penal laws against strikes and lock-outs are not given effect to in their maximum vigour, even though on the statute they find a place. In all civilised countries the purely external quality of force is recognised and is therefore resorted to; for the healthy form of obedience depends on the spirit and the spontaneity with which an act is done and force cannot engender them.

In what sense then is the state pre-eminent? When in the community there are a host of associations, it is rather possible that some of them may temporarily fall into the lapses of hostile relations. A central co-ordinating agency is therefore required to deal justice and to run smoothly these general associations. The justice here referred to is not the civil and the criminal justice but is rather social and personal; that is to regulate and control the evils of unfair competition carried on by the associations. The most urgent interference now longed for is in regard to a very vital matter e. g. how to afford equal opportunities to all as against unequal distribution of wealth and power, birth and creed that have now formed the canker of all the Governments in the world. The trouble is not merely economic though it is there most urgently felt but is largely cultural. The state justice is not therefore merely negative justice as exhibited in the prevention of crime or individual tyranny. It shall be positive and constructive. To endow research, to patronise art and culture, to protect against accident and ill-health, to stimulate and to encourage cultural centres and to develop the personality of the individual, to take charge of international relationships—these are some of the directions in which the state has to

utilise its quality of pre-eminence and co-ordination. These functions are potentially vested in the community and they tend to increase the communal welfare. The state is but an organ of the community that takes them up as its common aim in the same manner in which other functions of the community are the common interests of other organised associations.

Except the criminal and the felon, no one therefore aims to destroy this communal fabric for it is instinctively against his interests. All differences arising in the State are after all about the policy of the State, and about the means to be adopted to attain the common interests in the directest, cheapest and the best manner. In as much as the policy can be the accepted policy of the State, the usual procedure of majority and minority has a justification. But it is not therefore lawful to coerce the minority to acquiesce with the declared opinion of the majority. In the state the membership of which is not only non-voluntary but even compulsory, the individual has to choose the greater loyalty, either the will of the majority or his own personality; and if he disobeys the will of the majority, it is only in the name of the greater good. Moreover who knows that after all the minority is not in the right? There is therefore no justification for coercion of any form and if there are at any time any circumstances that render the minority view immediately injurious to the community—it should be injurious, not simply perverted—the coercion then permissible shall be negative. The state works under the mandate of the community and the individual who is the ultimate unit shall not be killed, for, that method which does not further his development has no validity whatsoever. It is indeed very true to say that if one is true to his own self, he cannot be false to any.

State is not thus the absolute sovereign; nor is it a mystic and independent body that possesses unique and supreme powers. It is only an organ of the community intended to work in harmony with all other organs that the community has formed or will form through the responsible behaviour of the units of that community. The foundation of the state organisation is no longer militaristic or militaristic-mercantile. The best interests

of a community are not now served by an exclusively all-powerful or all-rich state (even if such a state is possible). Not only culturally but even commercially the best interests of a community are served by getting beyond the state and by growing a network of social relations with other states and communities. Is not this laying a foundation for that greater community which is both inter-state and international? As the village community led to the city community, as the city community led to the nation community, so shall not the nation community lead to the world community? Why not?



The Coffee Craze

By P. K. Anantanarayana, M.A., L.T.

“**E**VERY tenth house in Madras is a coffee club, and I proudly say I have honoured every one of them with my visit,” remarked an Epicurean friend of mine the other day with the stagey air of a braggart and thumping the table with his clenched fist. I may not vouch for the statistical accuracy of his statement, but I believe it is not far from the border line of fact. Why, at the present day, any village, nay hamlet, will be deemed unworthy of its name unless it can boast of an upto-date ‘modern coffee hotel’ among its habitations. Who will dare say that India is not becoming *civilised* and *modernised* when we have such positive evidence to convince even the confirmed sceptic? The votaries of this fluid deity are legion, neither differences of sex nor age militate against their embracing this new ‘cult of the cup.’ The prince and peasant, the rich and poor, the robust athlete and the nervous invalid, the young and old, all alike offer their devoted worship, morning and evening, at his sacred majesty’s altar.

The spread of this Cosmopolitan habit among a conservative people like the Hindus has often set me furiously thinking, and may not be an insignificant subject for the study and investigation of an Indian Buckle. It has no doubt come in the wake

of western education, and the adoption of their modes and customs of life. Imitation, it is said, is the sincerest form of flattery; and some of the elderly gentlemen of the last generation, the first fruits of English culture, must have taken to this apéry along with other fashionable vices like smoking and drinking, the visible symptoms of their civilising process, in the noble hope of facilitating thereby social intercourse with their British masters. From the Indian official and Indian aristocrat, the *beau idéal* of their less enlightened countrymen, the fashion naturally filtered down to the humbler ranks of the people, who did not want to be left behindhand in the race of modern democratisation.

Lest I be condemned as an unsympathetic critic, let me confess myself an original sinner, as I was first instrumental in introducing coffee into our family, and thus contribute my humble share to the dissemination of this laudable practice. The evolution of this refined evil in our society affords an interesting study in psychology. My friend Kittu, having contracted this habit at Madras about 1900 during his student life, prevailed upon his indulgent mother to prepare it for him *alone* secretly at home. This novel drink of the *Mleschas*, consisting of three ingredients, was looked upon by his grandmamma with positive aversion as derogatory to their high caste; gradually she began to tolerate it, even among the other members of the family, as the current grew too strong to resist; and recently, I hear on unimpeachable authority, she has herself acquired such a keen craving for coffee in her sixtieth year that she literally lives on it (or in it?). 'Frailty, thy name is woman!' exclaimed the prophetic Hamlet. Poor daughter of Eve, I inwardly question myself, will she be able to procure this indispensable beverage in the celestial regions of Yama to which she will soon be transported, or will she have to incarnate herself once more in this mundane world to quench this new-born thirst for ever? I shall leave her to fight it out with her fates.

But what concerns me most is the fact that this coffee mania has not only become so widely prevalent, but has attained a chronic stage in many cases. The faithful Boswell admiringly

records in his world-famous biography that the great Johnson one night gulped down a dozen cups of tea at one sitting at the Club, as if it were a memorable went; but I know of some remarkable men and women among my acquaintances who can easily beat the venerable Dictator hollow in this respect. Many a staunch adorer, blooming idiots you might call them, has taken a vow to open his eye while awaking on nothing but 'bed-coffee'; another votary of the poetical muse can find his inspiration to lyrical outbursts only in coffee; and many more, I have heard, complain—who knows not legitimately?—that they invariably get headache, stomachache, toothache, and innumerable other physical and mental 'aches,' unless they take coffee in time and with constant frequency. This miserable hankering after cups without measure, with the resultant loss of wholesome appetite, distaste for simple and palatable foods, the morbid yearning for incessant stimulation, reduces those unfortunate victims into abnormal creatures and queer ghosts of their former healthy selves.

Nor is this habit without its economic ravages. Numberless middle class families, having meagre incomes, with whom the daily struggle for existence is itself a staggering problem, have been brought to the verge of ruin by this costly ingredient in their domestic budget. Moreover, the liberal patronage enjoyed by the innumerable coffee clubs in towns, especially at the hands of the ill-paid officials, poor merchants and irresponsible students, to whose fastidious palate they cleverly pander, is a sure indication of its immense vogue and the consequent drain on the slender family purse. I have known instances in which though the men, having realised their past folly, have endeavoured to put an end to this practice in their homes, their aim has been frustrated by the unexpected obstinacy of their women-folk, the strongholds of many a good as well as evil custom.

One fine morning, going on a visit to my friend Seenu to borrow a book, I quietly stole unobserved into his study, when I found him seated by the table with three steaming cups of coffee before him and singing the following rhapsody: "O thou soft sober and venerable beverage! thou inspirer of my thoughts, stimulator of my songs, refresher of my life, sweeter than ambrosia, more vitalising than the fabled nectar; thou Almighty cordial! to whose glorious insipidity I owe the happiest moments of my life, let me prostrate before thee!"

The Religion of the Ancient Tamils

(By the late Mudaliar S. Subaratnam G.G.J.P. of Jaffna)

Part I. Chapter VII.

Their Pre-historic Religion.

ALTHOUGH the Tamils have no historical literature, as I have already said, they are a historic race, and the literature that they possess throw ample light on their history. But the period of which there is no literature available is put down as their pre-historic period, and conjectures are freely indulged in as regards that period. Every nation had its own pre-historic period, and even the nations that now have a historical literature are no exceptions to this rule. In fact, the historic period of the world is quite insignificant when compared with the pre-historic period that merges itself into a vast expanse of time. The spirit of modern historical research does not seem to realise the significance of this fact, but rushes forward to decide questions that belong to the pre-historic period from the little that could be known from the history period—and what is worse, it proceeds on a gratuitous presumption that all historic periods are refined while historic periods are unrefined. It is not that I wish to speak disparagingly of any scientific spirit—but I only wish to point out that it is no science that ignores an incapacity to penetrate into the mysteries of the pre-historic times.

Another feature of the modern scientific spirit is to eliminate all God-idea from the physical law of the world, and to proceed exclusively on national lines; while in fact, no scientific research will be safe, or its results trustworthy, unless it proceeds on the hypothesis of the existence of a God. Although this spirit was provoked by certain modern religions which largely conflict with science, the influence of these religions may yet be

noticed to exist in the spirit itself. These modern religions may be found to restrict the human activities in the world to a very limited period; and although science would not accept this theory, yet by its attempt to survey the unknowable past with the tiny knowable historic period, it may be said to have been unconsciously influenced by the spirit of these modern religions.

I may, for instance, refer to the attempt made by science to trace the source of languages philologically. Although I quite appreciate the results of the scientific researches they will not be able to solve the problem to its final end unless we seek the help of religion. As there should be a religion given by God originally, so there should also be a language given by Him. God could not have given us a religion without a language and He cannot be said to have waited to give us a religion, until a language formed in the natural course of things. Religion as well as language require the help of an authoritative agent for their formation and development, and at any rate, their formation and development would be greatly facilitated by the help of such an agent, and we cannot say that a merciful God—if we believe in the existence of such a God—withheld this help from us. Of course when a religion or a language is once given, it may assume different forms according to the diversity in the activities and aspirations of human souls. But this is no reason to presume that God did not give us a religion or a language to start with. If we prosecute our enquiry in this direction with the help of the light thrown on the subject by Hinduism, we could find that Sanskrit was the language originally given by God—by which He revealed truths to the Devas—and it is therefore known as the *Deva Basha*. This fact may receive some corroboration even by some modern scientific researches. Modern Science cannot trace the origin of Sanskrit to any other language in the world, but on the contrary, other languages are traced to Sanskrit. It is the opinion of Oriental Scholars that Sanskrit had never been a spoken language, or that it had ceased to be such very long ago—and this gives additional support to the theory that it was only a *Deva Basha* which was used as a vehicle of the Hindu revelations; and that when it was utilised

by human beings in their worldly vocations, it gave birth to the various languages of the world in the natural course of things.

Whatever may be the present racial difference between the Tamils and the Aryans, it cannot be denied that at one time or other—however distant that time might have been—they belonged to the same stock or that they descended from the same parents. This is a theory that we cannot but accept, if we believe in the existence of a God and in the commencement of creation by Him. Their physical features and social habits, their spiritual instinct and mild temperament are strong proofs of their close affinity. Unlike the other languages of India, the language of the Tamils show evident signs of a master hand behind its formation, and although it differs from Sanskrit in many respects the structure and arrangement of both the languages, the alphabets and words that are common to them both, clearly show that they were formulated on the same principle and under the same influence. The conclusion is therefore most appropriate that the Tamil language itself was given by Siva, more or less on the same lines as Sanskrit, when he found the necessity for such a language and when He found that the original *Deva Basha* was too high for human morals. Such in short is the history of the two languages as explained by our religion, and this history is more coherent than any theory put forward by modern science. This theory may be put down by our present generation as either orthodox or superstitious, but it is very much to be regretted that their own superstitious belief in modern science has so much blinded their view that they entirely overlook the coherency of the former and admire the apparent beauty of the latter, however, incoherent it may be, and however impossible it may be, to maintain the theory to any finality. They only confine their view to a limited range and try to solve the problem of the inflection of languages; but they do not look beyond, and try to solve the more intricate problem of the origin of languages. They do not care at all to connect their theory with the origin of languages—and this cannot be done without the help of religion. Says a great Tamil author who was a perfect master of Sanskrit itself:—

இரு மொழிக்குங் கண்ணுதலார் முதற்குரவர்.

(Both the languages—Sanskrit and Tamil—have Siva for their original Preceptor.)

The Superiority of the Tamil language over the off-shoots of Sanskrit, provoked at one time the jealousy of the people who had these off-shoots as their mother tongues, and there seems to have been some rivalry between these off-shoots and the Tamil language—the former seeking the help of Sanskrit in their combat—and this rivalry seems to have been augmented by various political causes as well. It cannot however be denied that Sanskrit was a *Deva Basha* and Tamil was next to it in its order of merit.

If at all we wish to have a more or less correct view of the prehistoric religion of the Tamils, it is very necessary that we should have a clear understanding of the relation that existed between Sanskrit and Tamil. Although Tamil is an independent language so far as its formation and structure are concerned, yet it cannot be denied that it has very much in common with Sanskrit, and in the department of religion, it is wholly dependent on Sanskrit. We could clearly see that not only in the written religion of the Tamilians and the Sanskritists, but in their unwritten religion as well there is a common basis, and in fact, the difference if there is any, is very insignificant, when compared with the similarity. The little difference that can be noticed between the prehistoric religions of the two races clearly show evident signs of their original one-ness instead of a subsequent coalition.

Although all our literature of the first Sangam period have been lost to us, we are still in a position to have some idea of the Tamils of that period from Tholkappian. Tholkappian was a disciple of Agastyan and Tholkappiam is a prototype of Agastyam in its main feature, the same subject having been treated by the two authors in different forms. I have already given an account of the religion of the Tamils according to Tholkappian in Chapter IV and it would appear from that chapter that the religion of the Tamils as it existed among them from a long time back—and Tholkappian only reiterated what Agastyar had embodied in his work.

It will be interesting in this connection to have some idea of the age of Agastyam. Agastyam is said to have been the authority for the poets of the first Sangam, and it must therefore have been very much older than the first Sangam itself. According to an account given by one of the poets of the third Sangam, the three Tamil Sangams of Madura extended for a period of over ten thousand years—the first Sangam having lived for four thousand and five hundred years and the third Sangam for two thousand years—and it is more than two thousand years since the last Sangam was dissolved. So that twelve thousand years have elapsed since the formation of the first Sangam, and to this must be added the time during which the Tamil language was cultivated prior to the first Sangam. The antiquity of the Tamil language cannot therefore be said to be anything less than sixteen thousand years; and the attempt of the modern critics to draw inferences as regards the religion of the Tamils who lived sixteen thousand years ago cannot but be preposterous! They may perhaps say that the calculation as regards the antiquity of the Tamil language cannot be relied on and that it looks like a piece of mythology. If by mythology is meant hoary antiquity, it may even be argued that recent scientific discoveries which disclosed the existence of human skeletons of ten and fifteen thousand years old, are themselves mythological. Although the antiquity of the Tamils may be surprising to our modern critics, yet it has been supported by the evidence of competent Tamil scholars who lived two thousand years ago and the correctness of whose statements we cannot doubt at all. Suppose the discovery of human skeletons I have above referred to is discredited by our descendants, say a few hundred years hence, on account of the lapse of time since the discovery, can we say that our descendants will have acted wisely? There is no mythological legend connected with the antiquity of the Sangam periods and it is therefore not reasonable to reject it on the ground of mythology. If the antiquity of the religion of the Tamils is accepted, as it ought to be, the question has then to be asked whether the so-called prehistoric religion that is said to be disclosed by our existing literature was carried

over for these sixteen thousand years and upwards without being rejected or weaned out, if it were really the result of our primitive ideas. That is too big a pill to be swallowed. We have it on the evidence of eminent Sanskritists like Valmiki and Vyasa that the heroes of Ramayana and Mahabharata found the Tamils in a high state of civilization. The Tamils had far advanced in civilization even before the Vedas were codified in the present forms of Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva and they were then known among the Tamils by the names of Thayibiriam, Powdeiyam, Thalavakaram, and Samam. Can we then reasonably contend that the Tamils only improved their religion after their association with the Aryans? Even in the opinion of the critics, the Tamils had been highly advanced in civilization when the Aryans entered India and it is not therefore probable that a highly advanced race as the Tamils would have relinquished their religion in favour of the religion of the Aryan intruders.

If the Tamils had a religion different from the vedic religion, we must find at least some relic of that religion in the existing literature; but we find none. Even the so-called primitive practices that are said to be disclosed by these literature are common to both the Aryans and the Tamils, and these two civilised nations cannot be said to have composed notes and formulated a religion that may be acceptable to them both alike, and at the same time to have retained in that religion some of their primitive practices. It must also be observed in this connection that most of the technical terms used by the Tamils in the field of religion are of Sanskrit origin and this would clearly show that their religion was bodily adapted from Sanskrit. Even now the Tamils are found to use Sanskrit largely in all their rituals and a nation that has rightly been proud of their language could not be said to use a foreign tongue in one of their most important functions, if that function had not its origin in that foreign tongue. The gods worshipped by the Tamils even in the remotest antiquity were the Vedic gods and the idea they had of these gods was entirely Vedic. If they had a religion different from the Vedic religion we must at least find a single deity referred to in their ancient literature that is not

acknowledged by the Vedas or a single idea of that deity that is not entertained by the Vedas. Their *Mantras* again are all in Sanskrit terms, and even if they had no idea of *Mantras* before the advent of the Aryans they would have manufactured their own *Mantras* instead of adopting them bodily from Sanskrit. This would clearly show that for all sacred purposes the Tamils had recourse to Sanskrit, however rich their own religion might have been—and this was because the source of their religion was Sanskrit. The civilization of the Tamils is acknowledgedly anterior to that of the existing Aryan races, and it is absurd to say that a civilized nation borrowed their religion from uncivilized races. The civilization of the Aryans has been fluctuating from time to time and has been contending at times for supremacy with the Tamils in their material progress, but there can be no doubt that both of them had the *Deva basha* for the source of their religion. If we trace the source of these religions minutely, I am sure we may be able to solve the intricate problem of the original religion given by God.



The Love of Poetry

The Palgrave Centenary

By P. R. Krishnasawmi M. A.

AMIDST all the heated passions and politics of the day it is good to turn our attention to the memory of one who, a poet himself, has been cherished ardently these sixty-three years as a compiler of a collection of poems, unrivalled for its superior quality, and familiar to every reader of English literature. It is now exactly one hundred years since Francis Turner Palgrave was born, on the 28th September 1824, the son of Sir Francis Turner Palgrave, the historian of the Norman conquest. Francis Palgrave had a distinguished career at Oxford where he was Professor of Poetry later, in

1886-95. He occupied posts in the Educational Department, first in a Training College and later at Whitehall. After thirty-five years' distinguished service, he retired in 1885 and died in 1897. Clearness and lucidity, we are told, characterised his administrative work as they were conspicuous in his criticism as in the case of Matthew Arnold who held also an educational office.

Original Work

THE original work of Palgrave was not of his youthful years. "Lyrical Poems" appeared in 1871 and "Visions of England" in 1881 and these, if not showing the most splendid poetic inspiration have the perfect grace of a man of cultured taste. Among the numerous poets whose poems have been popularised by Palgrave's Treasury, more than any other, perhaps, Wordsworth with his unequal quality in verse, has been enabled to be presented in the most attractive way to English readers. But not many may know of Palgrave's poem on Wordsworth written in 1845 with the opening stanza:—

Gentle and grave, in simple dress,
And features by keen mountain air
Moulded to solemn ruggedness,
The man we came to see sat there:
Not apt for speech, nor quickly stirred
Unless when heart to heart replied;
A bearing equally removed
From vain display or sullen pride.

"The Visions of England" pass under review historical characters of successive ages and have no small value as patriotic poetry. The ring of the following lines on 'Trafalgar' is not inferior to that of Tennyson's or Newbolt's similar poems;

Heard 'ye the thunder of battle
Low in the South and afar?
Saw ye the flash of the death-cloud
Crimson o'er Trafalgar?
Such another day never
England will look on again,
When the battle fought was the hottest,
And the hero of heroes was slain!

The Golden Treasury.

But it is chiefly as a critic of poetry, as the compiler of the Golden Treasury that Palgrave's memory is dear to us. He was the friend of Tennyson and many other great literary figures of the age. The unerring choice of the best lyric poetry and the subtle arrangement of such lyrics have endowed Palgrave with imperishable fame. The compilation of the Treasury was carried through years of careful judgment, and of the judgment not of Palgrave only but of his most gifted friends. "I had put the scheme of my Golden Treasury before him" (Tennyson) writes of Palgrave, "during a walk near the Land's end in the late summer of 1860, and he had encouraged me to proceed, barring only any poems by himself from an insertion in an anthology whose title claimed excellence for its contents. And at Christmastide following, the gathered materials, already submitted to the judgment of two friends of taste (one, the very able sculptor, T. Woolner, lately taken from us), were laid before Tennyson for final judgment. . . ." The Treasury is, as all readers know, divided into four distinct epochs and the arrangement of the poems within the same epoch reflected Palgrave's peculiar genius. He himself writes that they had been arranged 'in gradation of feeling or subject. The development of the symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven has been here thought of as a model, and nothing placed without careful consideration.' On the value of poetry to humanity, we may listen to Palgrave discoursing: "Like the fabled mountain of the Azores, but with a more various power, the magic of this Art can confer on each period of life its appropriate blessing: on early years Experience, on maturity Calm, on age, Youthfulness. Poetry gives treasures 'more golden than gold', leading us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world, and interpreting to us the lessons of Nature." The ideals of man are apt to be obscured by the needs of the present hour. The perfection of man, it is usual to point out, depends on the harmonious development of his various faculties. All the vaunted glories of men come to naught when the harmony of development is not secured. How many are not reduced to utter, contemptible grossness, by not being

attuned to respond to the touch of lyric sweetness? Should not one say with Slender in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' "I had rather than forty shillings I had my book of songs and sonnets here?" And in this Treasury of Palgrave's we listen to the passionate call of the Elizabethan:—

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,—
to the exultant 'cavalier' music:

None but the brave

None but the brave

None but the brave deserves the fair!

to the sweet harbinger of the Romantic Dawn:

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon

How can ye bloom sae fair!

How can ye chant, ye little birds,

And I sae fu' o' care!

and to the ethereal song of the full Romantic Day which:

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire;

The blue deep thou wingest,

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.



Poetesses of the Tamil-Land

Tayang—Kanniyar

(தாயங்கண்ணியார்)

By Mrs. T. Tiru-Navuk-Arasu.

THOUGH we are not able to determine any details regarding the caste, place, time or name of this poetess, yet we have the satisfaction of being in a position to assume one important and interesting circumstance at least in her life. We may be fairly certain that she was the wife of one who was a famous poet himself, known as Erukkattur

Tayang-Kannanar. It was he that sang about the Chola King Kulamuttattee-tunjiya Killi Vallavan in the poem which appears as number 367 in *Purananuru*.

It is also probable that she herself was known generally as Erukkattur Tayang—Kanniyar, as may be concluded from the space, where the letters are indecipherable, appearing before the name Tayang—Kanniyar in the manuscript.

There is a beautiful poem composed by her, as an address by a woman who had just lost her husband, to the town they had been living in happily, which seemed to her deprived of all glory and beauty after his death. It appears as poem number 250 in *Purananuru*.

The poem may be rendered thus :—

"The sound of bubbling and sizzling in the Kitchen, caused by the flavouring of the delicious chutney prepared for the dish of rice, tempted the beggars who passed the house to tarry at the door, and the shady and fragrant arbours in the front of the house stopped the tears from flowing of those that came there for help. Ah! you prosperous and beautiful town, how deprived of beauty you now look, since the wife of such a house has shaven her head and cast off her delicate bracelet is living on alli rice, after he has gone all by himself to the cremation—ground—he, who was the father of these young sons with beautiful tufts of hair who not realising what has happened and having eaten their tasty meal, ask as usual for sweet milk to drink!"

We need have no doubt that the pathetic lines attempted to be rendered above, were written by the poetess, referring to her own condition and speaking of the house and town in which she and her husband had lived together happily before his death.

Not only is the description so true and accurate but there are two fine touches in the poem which are exquisitely pathetic. Even at the present day in Hindu households, they would not drink milk in the house after a funeral. But the little ones who had not realised the meaning of death, or what had happened to their father, are said to have eaten their dinner as usual, and asked for the delicious milk they had been in the habit of drink-

ing every night before retiring to bed. Poor little things, did they know they had become orphans that day?

The other touch is where the poetess on the death of her beloved husband, overpowered by grief, is still more affected by the sight of her orphaned and unsuspecting children and refers to the deceased, true to the instinct and habit of every Tamil mother, not as her husband but as the father of her helpless children.

In this beautiful little poem we have a picture of real life before us, entirely stripped of all artifice or pose that mars many a great literary work. The intimate personal note, the touch of resigned sadness, the unsophisticated words fresh from her aching heart in the first anguish of her bereavement, the infinite tenderness of heart at the sight of the young fatherless children, all help to give a forcible sense of reality to the mind and reveal a graceful simplicity of art. Out of the poetess's very pain this little poem seems to have taken birth. It is the eternal theme over again, Love and Death, the two potent factors in the world, the two supreme experiences that have swayed and will sway till the end of the world, the heart of every man and woman of genius. Yes, it is genius that is required to appreciate to the fullest measure the consequences of Love and Death. Love in this woman's heart like a great big flame glowed and irradiated not only the soul of the woman within but her house, her town and everything around. How daring indeed of this bereaved woman to feel in her stricken soul that the erstwhile happy house and beautiful town have suddenly lost their beauty and glory, just because there is sadness and desolation in her heart and home on the death of her husband. And what a touching tribute to the little home where the days of her happy life were spent.

There have no doubt been later poets in the Tamil language who have become distinguished for compositions of great poetic merit and greater length, but one may be permitted to doubt, whether after all in many of those we do not but see the reflected and mellowed light of the moon and not the direct and warm light of the rising sun.

Whatever one's views on such things may be, we cannot help missing in the latter Tamil poetry (and may I say in the later poetry of every language) the unadorned and unexaggerated description of scenes and facts, and the courage of the early strugglers in the art of expression who discerned beauty in what they saw with their eyes and heard with their ears, and were not deterred from giving expression to them by any false or foolish sense of the so-called common-place.



The Birth

By T. K. Krishnaswamy Ayyangar, M. A.

“WHERE have I come from, where did you pick me up?
“the baby asked its mother.

“You were hidden in my heart as its
desire, my darling,

— and when with clay I made the
image of my God every morning, I made and
unmade you then.

You were enshrined with our household
deity, in his worship I worshipped you.
Heaven's first darling, twin-born with the
morning light, you have floated down the
stream of the world's life, and at last you
have stranded on my heart.”

TAGORE.

All ceremonies being over, which invoke the blessings of the Gods and ensure safety and prosperity for the mother and the expected child, the gentle Priya now comes to the home of her birth. Here she moves about in a circle of grace and beauty, of tenderness and fragrance and no inauspicious signs or sounds are allowed to trespass into this heaven of felicity. Here motherly affection begets parental love in Priya and in the fulness of time, like the morning sun delivered of the night, the long hid baby sees the light of day.

The birth of the child is also the birth of the mother in Priya. She opens out into a beautiful and fragrant life of motherhood. Her lips quiver with a new song from the land of melody, the lullaby song that will ere long delight the tender eyes of her new-born darling, like the gentle singing breeze that thrills the lotus into a round laughter. Her heart throbs with a new love from the loveland of Gokula, the love which will soon strain itself to kiss the red coral lips, like the joyful bee which, in a mad humming delight kisses the flower. The whole village shares the joy of this little home. The young and the old come as to a temple festival to see this new heaven-born citizen of the little republic.

Day leaves day in merriment and joy, but the eleventh day is the eagerly-looked-for occasion when the child is to be given a name. Atreya and his mother arrive and in an auspicious hour on the morning of the eleventh day, the mother and the baby are given a bath. There is no end to the bustle and fuss of Priya's old mother. She struts through the house in lordly superiority and importance and the presence of the villagers touches and flares her vanity. For once in her narrow and close-circulated life, her charity melts and flows to the flattery and envy of others of her age, and status. The house resounds to the Vedic prayers and chantings of Brahmins and after receiving presents they disperse to return ready for a sumptuous mid-day feast. The whole house is strewn with plantain leaves in two long rows facing each other. Baskets and bowls, ladles and spoons go round. In fun and laughter all eat to *filling satisfaction*. They receive in the end sandal, betels and flowers, and showering hearty blessings on the house, the guests move heavily along to their homes.

But the rejoicings of the women and children come later in the evening over the baby's naming and cradling. The baby being the first-born male there is no difficulty in the choice of a name. It takes as a matter of course, the name of Athreya's father. They choose a nice part of the floor, adorn it with *kolum* and spread it over evenly with paddy on which they write

the name. Then the child with blackened eyes and beauty spots on the smiling face and cheeks is gently laid on the padded plot. The mother whispers his name into his right ear and in weeping and crying he accepts the name as though he would gladly remain the nameless one. That is how he harmonises the monotonous bursts of laughter which shake the house.

What eager eyes pour on the *lying babe*! What inquisitive tender women's questions concerning the colour, the shape, the resemblance, the lucky spots of the child, circle round and round the child, as a flower-garland of diverse colours and shapes. The little children wind in and out between the crowding mothers, to see "their" new baby—a new living doll whom they will carry about and make the silent observer and Umpire of their childish games and quarrels. In their happy moments they will pretend to be little merchants carrying this baby on their back and selling him as a precious bundle of salt. In their serious thoughts, he will be their idol. They will offer and share with him their sweetmeats. They will carry him as in a festive procession through the streets and stop from house to house, demonstrating in their own childish ways, the piety of their pure hearts and in their own foolish manner, turning the young and the old, the ignorant and the learned to God. Bala chandra is their little familiar talking sympathetic God.

Athreya's mother too superstitious to put her husband's name, calls him Chandra or Pattu and lifts him to kiss while he is all a-tremour with shrills and shrieks. Next he is laid in the swinging cradle—a present from his uncle. Now emulation and rivalry open the flood-gates of song in the young and songs burst forth, sweet lays of that Child who comes again and again into this world of sinful men.

O thou who didst descend into the womb
Of noble Kausalee,

By thee were severed the heads ten of Ravana
The King of South Ceylon.

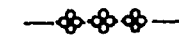
My Lord, who has tabernacled in Thy great world
And in our midst,

My jewel, Oh Raghava, my nectar, Tha-le-lo!

O Thou who through the lotus born Brahma,
Didst all the worlds create,
By thee was put to end strong Thataka,
The she-devil, of Lust
My Lord, whose beauty melts into long praise,
The hearts of all mankind,
My jewel, Oh Raghava my nectar, Tha-le-lo!

O Thou who didst show thyself to the world
As Love and Duty,
Lying on banyan leaf Thou didst rescue
Thy worlds in times of flood.
Thou didst curdle the roaring seas and gave
The gods nectar for drink.
My jewel, Oh Dasarathi my god, Tha-le lo'

This song festival ends in a Kummi dance, a kind of choric jumping with clapping of hands to the rhythmic beat of vocal music.



Literature & Social Progress

By V. K. Ramaseshan.

"Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what main:—
Thus ye teach us every day,
Wisdom, though fled far-away."

J. KEATS.

“A ROOM without books” says Cicero, “is like a body without a soul.” It may be said with equal force that a nation without literature is also like a body without a soul. The part played by literature in the history of

nations is great, nay even profound. The greatness or otherwise of a nation largely depends on the exertion that her citizens take in realising the time-ends of life or in the words of Carlyle, "in penetrating through the sacred mystery of the universe which Goethe calls the *open secret*." The aim of all true literature is the realisation of this great ideal and hence the importance of literature in the progress of mankind.

Literature and social progress are so closely allied with each other that we cannot conceive one apart from the other. What is literature? Literature is the distinct product of man's spiritual nature, the fruit of his mature being, the result of his overflowing individuality. Man wants to express himself as he cannot contain his overflowing impulse and for this restlessness he finds recourse in one form of art or another. Literature is one of those arts where such restless spirit finds supreme delight. Since man is a social being who has to live, move, and has his being in society he yields himself to the play of social forces so that his works abound in all those deep problems of human life. Thus literature becomes an 'expression of life' and instead of being merely an art existing for pleasure it "aims at understanding the mental and moral growth of nations and follows through their changing fortunes, the ebb and flow of the forces which fed their emotional energies and shaped their intellectual and spiritual life".

But this aspect of the question that literature exists for life and its chief function is to interpret life in all its aspects will greatly annoy those advocates of 'art for art's sake'. To them the real function of literature is pleasure. "All art" says Schiller, "is dedicated to Joy and the right art is that alone which gives the greatest enjoyment". Literature as an art must also comply with this great restriction and its primary function must be pleasure. If Wordsworth failed to obtain great popularity, it was because his poems were largely didactic, and he wanted to teach morality through his poems. If Dickens met with great denunciations it was because he wrote his novels 'with a purpose'. Didacticism and moral preaching are outside the realm of literary produc-

tions and their chief function is only to give pleasure and not instruction.

Still, to say that literature exists only for pleasure is to forget the wood in the trees. Literature has got a greater import to subscribe—an import which directly concerns human life and its everlasting problems. If we are to conceive that such books as 'Divine comedy', 'Paradise Lost' and 'Sartar Resartus' exist only for pleasure, certainly we are making a regular literary suicide. Hence as Hudson puts it Literature is made out of life, belongs to life and exists only for life."

Coming to know that Literature is expression of life and its ultimate function is to reflect life at all points, let us now proceed to study its part in general social progress. Knowledge is diffused to the world as one great writer remarked, through conversation, contact, and books. But it can be safely said, that the part played by books in instilling men with knowledge is considerably higher than the other two. Books are our hourly companions, our daily comforters and our sound teachers. It is through books that we call forgotten heroes into existence, live with them and inhale their spirit and teachings. In fine, the books form the best teachers of human race.

All forms of literature aim at social progress. The epic, the drama and fiction, all have for their common aim the improvement of society. The epic takes up an air of high seriousness and teaches men good things from a mystic plane; the drama calls up men at a single social gathering and instructs them by action and show; and fiction performs the same task in an amusing and pleasing manner. The same may be said of modern journalism and news papers. All these forms of literature teach mankind useful lessons of life and instil into them ideas of plain living and high thinking.

Illustrations are not wanting in history to prove that literature has always acted as a powerful tonic to the mental and moral improvement of nations. It is said of Homer that his poems were a sort of Bible to early Greeks and that he was worshipped as a demigod. That Ramayana and Mahabharata are still the perpetual model of reference to the Hindu race is

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MADRAS
31st May, 1923,

(Sd) C R. DAS.

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