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Bharata Samaja

ANNUAL CONVENTION, 1929.

30th March, 1919.

The third Annual Convention of the Samaj, under Supplemental Rule 4, will be held at Adyar, Madras, 30th of March 1929, at 3-30 p. m. in the T. S. Headquarters Hall.

All registered members of the Samaja are requested to attend.

AGENDA

1. Consideration and adoption of the Annual Report.
2. Election of the Council of Management.
3. Discussion on the future policy and the work of the Samaja.

ADYAR,
9th February, 1929.

C. RAMAIA,
Jt. Secretary.

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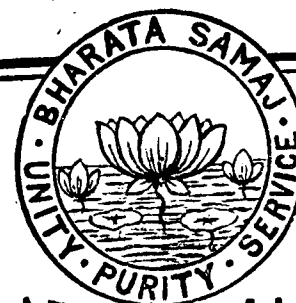
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BHARATA DHARMA

(The Official Organ of the Bharata Samaja)

VOL. VI

FEBRUARY 1929

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Age of Marriage & Age of Consent

By Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

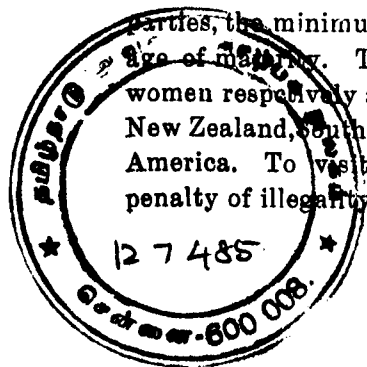
Much angry criticism has been levelled against the Government of India for having agreed to the postponement of the consideration of Mr. Sarda's Bill till the receipt of the report of the Committee appointed to enquire into this subject. Though Mr. Sarda's Bill deals only with

the subject of the age of marriage, it is obvious that the question of the age of marriage is intimately connected with the age of consent, and that it is neither desirable nor practicable to deal with one or the other subject until the Government and the country are in possession of the results of the investigation by Sir M. Joshi's Committee.

The main argument of those who advocate the fixing of a minimum limit of marriage is that it leads to premature child-bearing as the result of premature conjugal relations. India has suffered so long from the evils of child-marriage that it is absurd to contend that the postponement of the Bill for six months or even a year is dangerous to social welfare, or to suggest that the Government is out of sympathy with the measure. The fact is that the attitude of the Government gives the impatient social reformer and the legislator a convenient stick with which to beat an unpopular Government. A practical legislature has to consider not merely what is theoretically best but also how far it is possible to introduce a change affecting the habits and customs of the people without doing undue violence to popular opinion.

The advocates of responsible Government and democracy must remember that when their goal is attained it will be impossible to carry any measure into law in the face of popular opposition. It is a matter of some difficulty to ascertain the real trend of popular opinion or how large a dose of social reform may be administered without exciting violent opposition or serious discontent. The wisest course for a legislature, anxious to secure steady progress, is to take the line of least resistance.

The main theoretical considerations by which the age of marriage or consent should be determined are the welfare of the individuals concerned and the welfare of the society or race. From the individual point of view the primary question is: Does the well-being of the parties to a marriage require the imposition of a minimum age limit and if so what that limit should be. Considered purely from an abstract point of view and having regard to the importance of the consequences flowing from matrimony, it might be suggested that the age of majority which law presumes to be the age for contractual capacity should be fixed as the minimum limit of age for marriage. But there are numerous objections to such a limit. In the first place, even in countries where marriage is looked upon as a contract between the parties, the minimum age limit for marriage has been fixed below the age of majority. The minimum age limits for marriage for men and women respectively are, 14 and 12 in Great Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Italy, Spain, and in 8 of the United States of America. To visit marriages below the age of majority with the penalty of illegality will be not merely opposed to the practice of most



civilized countries but would also have the serious consequences of rendering the marriage illegitimate. In India, where marriage among Hindus is primarily regarded as a sacrament, and a religious obligation in the case of women, it will be improper to refuse to recognise the strength of this conviction. Post-puberty marriages are certainly not illegal or invalid and they are as a matter of fact gradually coming into practice. But it would not on that account be advisable to introduce legislation regardless of the sentiments of the people. Speaking for myself personally, I should—on theoretical considerations—be in favour of fixing the minimum limit of age for the marriage of girls at 16 and for the marriage of boys at 18. But I should not consider myself justified in forcing my views upon society. Having regard to the fact that a considerable number of girls in this country attain puberty by the age of 13 and the religious objections of large sections of people to post-puberty marriage, we are driven to depart from the desirable standard to that of practical expediency. It is necessarily a question of degree and it is impossible to adopt any particular limit of age with any pretensions to logic or principle. Remembering that there is at present no limit fixed by law as to the age of marriage for girls, the limit which, in my opinion, may be safely fixed at present is 13. This will be a sufficient step in advance for the moment. The fixing of a minimum age does not imply that marriages will necessarily be celebrated immediately after the limit is passed. With the growth of education, with increasing economic pressure, and with the daily growing difficulty of finding suitable bridegrooms, we may safely trust to the natural operation of these causes for the steady rising of the age of marriage.

Throughout the discussion of the Age of Marriage Bill the consideration which has most largely weighed with the reformers is not so much the necessity for free choice of a husband by a girl but the necessity for the prevention of premature child-bearing. How far the element of choice by a girl should be encouraged and to what extent her own wishes and preference should be consulted by her guardians, do not find place in the controversy. The majority of our countrymen would probably be disposed to hold that the judgment of the parents of a girl is a far more valuable guide to a suitable selection than her own deceptive fancy, and that the results of our present system, notwithstanding the absence of any romance of love, is far more favourable to the stability and orderliness of family life than the system of courtship and love-matches, and that the present system is quite compatible with the growth of affection and mutual fidelity, even more than the system of free choice by the parties, however drab and uninteresting our married lives may appear to the outside observer.

JL.
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Coming then to the main argument urged by reformers in favour of a high minimum of marriageable age, it has to be pointed out that their arguments assume that a low limit of marriage necessarily involves a low age of consummation, and that a low age of consummation necessarily involves premature child-bearing. The religious objections to the postponement of the age of consummation, are being worn out and there are numerous cases in which consummation is put off for two or three years after the puberty of the girl without any social inconvenience. Legislation for postponing consummation till the girl completes 16 years of age would be much less open to popular objection than the raising of the age of marriage to 14. The reason, however, why our reformers do not have faith in a legislative postponement of the age of consummation without raising the age of marriage is that, after the celebration of the marriage, it would be impossible to object to or prevent the married couple from meeting under the same roof, and that opportunities for consummation might be utilised without going through the formal religious ceremony. There is considerable force in this view. But I am not on that account disposed to reject the idea of penalising consummation below a certain age, say 15 or 16. In spite of considerable evasion the legislation may have a deterrent and educative effect, provided care is taken to obviate the possibility of backmailing, by suitable provisions in regard to the initiation of prosecution and the trial of offences. As pointed out by me above, the early entrance upon conjugal relations need not be followed by child-bearing. Modern science has rendered it quite feasible to avoid premature maternity. A true remedy is to be sought not so much in legislation as in the education of public opinion and the popularisation of the requisite knowledge—a course which is urgently demanded in the case of grown-up people, at least as much as in the case of the young.

Turning to the provisions of the Bill as amended by the select Committee, I am in favour of the proposal to fix a minimum limit of age of marriage for males at 18 years. I am also in favour of the punishment proposed for a male above 21 years of age contracting a child marriage.

One serious defect in the proposed legislation is its failure to provide against the marriage of young girls to men of middle age and over. Any male of the age of 40 or upwards who marries a girl who has not attained the age of majority should be liable to be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term of six months.

Shri Guru Gobind Singh

A PROPHET OF SHAKTI

Address by T. L. Vaswani, delivered at the Birthday Anniversary of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, celebrated by the residents of Barrage Town, Sukkur, Sind.

I should prefer not to speak on this sacred occasion. I would rather sit in silence in your midst because silence is stronger than speech. You have been very kind in asking me to meet you, and I feel grateful, and am very glad that members of different denominations have come together on this sacred day. I feel happy to hear that some of you are thinking of organising an association with a view to celebrate the days sacred to the Great Ones of Humanity. Sometime ago you celebrated Guru Nanak's day. I look forward to the day when you will also celebrate the day sacred to the memory of Mohammed, for he too was a Prophet, he too a Great Teacher, he too a Builder of a great civilization. I shall feel happy, too, if under the auspices of the proposed Association—"The Brotherhood of Faiths" Barrage Town, Sukkur, you will make it a point to celebrate a day sacred to the memory of Jesus. And so, if you come together in this spirit of reverence for the Great Teachers of the World, I feel sure you will grow in the spirit of fellowship; and it is the spirit of fellowship which India urgently needs to-day. If I were asked this question: "What is the most piteous need alike of East and West, the most urgent need of humanity?" My answer would be: "The most urgent need of India, indeed, the most urgent need of humanity today, is not mere economic prosperity; the most urgent need of India and of the world is not some new political constitution, the most urgent need of India, I humbly submit, is not even that Swaraj for which our hearts are longing: the most urgent need of the nation today is the spirit of Brotherhood; the Spirit of Fellowship; the Spirit of Love." Believe me you will solve the great problems of nation-building, the problems of social reconstruction, you will solve the great problems that are before you only when you are inspired by the spirit of fellowship, Love—Love—Love; Fellowship—Fellowship—Fellowship! That is the solution of the great problems of humanity, and I take it that this meeting is a humble witness to the spirit of fellowship that is working in the hearts of some of you. I believe that the great ones of humanity are brothers in one spiritual family. And Guru Gobind Singh is not alone yours, O Sikhs! Guru Gobind Singh is not alone yours, O Hindus of India! Guru Gobind Singh belongs to the whole world. He is not the

monopoly of one religion, or one community, or one country. Guru Gobind Singh belongs to the whole universe. He is as the sunshine of God; he belongs to all. All the great ones are sons of the one Divine Humanity: and I love to see the working of the one spirit in them all.

There is a pretty little story told in one of the ancient books of the Hindus. It is the story of Narada. Narada is a great Bhagat, a great devotee of Shri Krishna. One day Narada says to himself: "Let me see Shri Krishna, my Master, my Lord." Shri Krishna is no longer a Flute-Player at the time when Narada wishes to see him. He has left Vrindaban, for Dwarka. Shri Krishna is become a great statesman, a leader of the people. Narada says: "Let me see my Master in His glory." Narada comes to see Krishna, and Krishna meets Narada with great love. Narada says: "Master! You are living in a fine house which has many chambers. May I look into everyone of these chambers?" Shri Krishna says to him: "You are most welcome to satisfy your curiosity." And so Narada goes into chamber No. 1. What does he find? He finds that Shri Krishna is playing upon a flute, as he did in the blessed days of the Vrindaban life. Then Narada goes into chamber No. 2. What does he find there? He finds Shri Krishna, but in a different form. Shri Krishna is taking a bath. Narada wonders and says: "Let me proceed to know something of chamber No. 3." He opens the door of the third room. What does he find? Again Shri Krishna, but in yet a different form. Shri Krishna is teaching the Bhagavad Gita, teaching something of His wondrous wisdom. Narada goes to chamber No. 4 and to chamber No. 5 and to chamber No. 6 and to a hundred other chambers, and in everyone of them he beholds the one same Lord, the one Beloved, in Krishna.

This story is suggestive. It indicates the great truth that there is the One Lord working in all. Diverse religions are as so many chambers in the one house of the Lord; and in everyone of these chambers is the one Lord. In all the Teachers of Humanity is the inspiration of the One! You, my Sikh friends, have this thought beautifully expressed in your own sacred Scripture. You read in the *Granth Sahib* that the One Light shines in all the ten Gurus. The Gurus are many but the Light shining in them all is that of the One. Many religions, many Teachers, many Prophets, many Scriptures, many Nations, but the Light is One. And I am here this morning to indicate to you, briefly, how this One Light, the Light of the Lord, did shine in the life of Guru Gobind Singh.

The story of his life falls easily into two great periods. The first is the early period of his life. It is the period of his study and meditation. The second is the period of Action and Sacrifice. Guru Gobind

Singh was a great scholar. He knew more than one language. Remember, it was he who sent some Sikhs to Benares to study Sanskrit. He realised the value of Sanskrit. Guru Gobind Singh was a great student of Persian. He was a Poet, a Scholar, a Sage, and he was a Mystic. He tells us in his Autobiography—a book which you should all read—he tells us in that wonderful book how he was sitting upon the mountain meditating and praying to God, spending his days in quiet study and worship. Several years were spent in this way,—tapasya, study and worship of God. In the Christian Books you read how Jesus meditated and studied for twenty-nine years, and after having gathered knowledge, after having drawn strength through communion, he at the age of thirty, stood before the people to preach the great Truths of Life. Guru Gobind Singh, also at the age of thirty, comes out of his seclusion and so begins the second great period in his life—a period of Action and of Sacrifice. Let me indicate to you briefly under what circumstances Guru Gobind Singh came out of his seclusion. He tells us in his Autobiography—"I sat in the mountain and to me came a call—a call from God." The call of God comes to him: "Come out of your seclusion!" Why did the call come to him? If you would know the right answer to the question, understand something of the condition of India in the days of the Guru. In his days, India was governed, or misgoverned, by the Moghul Emperor, Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb was not without virtues. I know a different version is given you in certain books. I plead for broad-mindedness. Aurangzeb was in his private life very humble. He was an ascetic. Aurangzeb realised the value of self-control. He read his own scriptures with great devotion. He was a good student of the Koran. He was a great scholar. But he had a narrow conception of Religion. He thought—wrongly—that he would be acceptable to God if he imposed the religion of Islam upon the Hindus by force. He believed in a policy of coercion. He did not realise that one cannot love God and hate man. Aurangzeb confounded Religion with creed and spiritual life with sectarianism. He thought he would earn merit in the sight of God by compelling Hindus to become Mohammedans. Aurangzeb did not understand the deepest spirit of the Teachings of the great Prophet of Islam. He trampled upon the vision of his great predecessor, Akbar. Akbar, remember, was a Sindhi, for Akbar was born in Umerkot in Sindh. And Akbar had in his heart the great Sindhi vision, the vision of the mystics and poets and prophets of Sindh. Akbar wanted to bring Hindus and Muslims together in the service of India. Akbar followed a policy of assimilation. But Aurangzeb followed a different policy. Aurangzeb did not believe in assimilation or co-operation. He believed in coercion. The one great sin of

Moghul Imperialism in the days of Aurangzeb was the sin of fanaticism.

Guru Gobind Singh surveyed the situation in India and felt the time was come for him to be up and doing. Do not think for a moment that Guru Gobind Singh hated the Muslims. May I remind you that one great Pir with a large Muslim following was a devoted friend of Guru Gobind Singh? Guru Gobind Singh had friends among Muslims. He was a Lover of Muslim literature. He had in his house a *Paan*. Unfortunately, that Pathan, later on, forgot the teachings given him by the Guru and stabbed him to death. In the heart of the Guru was love for all, and not for a moment would he desire that that Pathan who stabbed him should be punished. Guru Gobind Singh surveyed the situation in India. He said to himself: "I must come out of seclusion in order to save the people." I salute Guru Gobind Singh as a saviour of the people, a saviour of India. He realised that Aurangzeb was following a fatal policy. In a letter to Aurangzeb Guru Gobind Singh writes certain things which are very suggestive. Let me give you some quotations from that letter of the Guru to the King. One quotation is this. The Guru says: "Be not reckless, fear God." In another quotation, the Guru says to Aurangzeb: "You look to your kingdom and your wealth; I look to the immortal Kingdom of God." And so on. I could give you quotation after quotation indicating the great vision of Guru Gobind Singh. He was a saint who became a warrior in order to save his nation and he poured out his life as a sacrifice to God for the people.

You know the story of the sufferings of his sons. They were buried alive beneath the well at Sirhind. His sons would not betray their father, nor be faithless to their faith. They died as martyrs and the Guru also died as a martyr. Therefore has he ploughed deep his name into the history of humanity. One European critic compares Guru Gobind Singh with Napoleon. I think the comparison is not correct. Napoleon was a great general, and so was Guru Gobind Singh. Napoleon fought with courage, so did Guru Gobind Singh. But the Guru was better than Napoleon—the greatest man of action in his century in Europe. Napoleon had courage, but he was egoistic. Guru Gobind Singh was humble in the hour of his greatest victory. In one of his Poems Guru Gobind Singh says: "I have taken refuge at the feet of God". Always he thought of God: herein is the greatness of the Guru—his humility. You have heard of the name of General Foch, the great Frenchman who commanded the allied armies in the World-War. Sometime ago General Foch paid a high tribute to Napoleon; and in the course of his article said that Napoleon had many virtues but fell because of his egoism. Guru Gobind Singh was profoundly humble. As I think of Guru Gobind

Singh I think of some of the greatest men of humanity. Thinking of him I think of Moses, the great Prophet who led the Jews out of captivity; of King Arthur. We read in the story of Arthur of how that great King built a Round Table. King Arthur had a number of Kshatriyas and it was the duty of the Kshatriyas to protect the poor and the innocent. King Arthur built his Round Table, Guru Gobind Singh built the Khalsa. There is no time for me to tell you what the Khalsa did in the days of the Guru and how the Khalsa served the poor. Guru Gobind Singh was a lover of the poor.

To-day we talk of Democracy, but Democracy to-day threatens to be a Mobocracy. Remember Freedom is not built of shouts and noise and clamour. The Khalsa that the Guru built was a symbol of true Democracy, true Brotherhood. Members of the Khalsa dined together and worshipped together. The one great vow taken by every member of the Khalsa was "Service". To-day many think of Democracy in terms of Power rather than Service. The Khalsa was a Brotherhood, a Brotherhood of Service. Power will not solve the World's problems, but the spirit of Service will, the spirit of Fellowship, the spirit of Love and Sacrifice will.

A short time ago a number of engineers met together in Sicily, where is a volcano known as Mount Etna. The engineers met in order to do something to protect the steamers passing along that route and they said: "Let us build at the top of the mountain a great lighthouse." And they thought that this lighthouse should be supplied with illumination of a billion candle-power so that the light might be seen all over the sea. The lighthouse, they said, must be built ten thousand feet above the sea-level. A magnificent lighthouse! I think of Guru Gobind Singh as such a Lighthouse. His life is a Lighthouse shining, shining with billions and billions of candle-power.

I want everyone to take home with himself this little message this morning: "Be a Lighthouse". Do not be a Volcano. To-day we talk so much, attend many meetings, many Conferences, and I say to myself: "We wish to be Volcanoes." We meet together in large numbers, listen to speeches and then go home and forget them. When we meet together at Conferences and cheer speakers who use violent words I say to myself: "We love to be like Volcanoes!" I say to everyone of you: "Be a Lighthouse, and do not be a Volcano!"

There is hatred to-day, there is passion to-day, there is strife to-day, there is discord to-day in our life, brother fighting brother, friend quarrelling with friend; one religion at strife with another, one community struggling against another! And I say to you on this sacred day, in the name of the great one whose memory we are celebrating

I say to you: "Away with quarrel and strife and hatred and passion. Let everyone of you be a Lighthouse. See that your lives shine out with light. And there is but one light in all the world, the light of the earth and the heavens, of the sun and stars, the light of lights, and that light is Love! And may the blessings of the Spirit of Love be upon you all!"

Shri Tyagayya's Hymns

By Kirtanacharya C. R. Srinivasa Aiyangar, B. A.

IV

Raga, Todi. Tala, Adi.

Pallavi

*Dasarathe'! nee rnamu deerpa na tarama ?
Parama pavana nama !*

Anupallavi

Asa deera doora desamulanu prakasimpajesina rasika siromane !

Charana

*Bhaktileni Kavijala varenyulu
Bhavamerugalerani kalalone yani,
Bhukti mukti galgunani, keertanamula bodhinjchina Tyagaraja-
kararchita !*

Pallavi

*Dasarathe'!—Son of Dasaratha
Parama pavana nama !—Whose name is all purifying.
Na tarama—Is it in my power
Nee rnamu deerpa—To clear off my debt to you ?*

Anupallavi

*Rasika siromane—Finest Æsthete !
Prakasimpajesina—Who made my name bright
Doora desamulanu—In far distant lands,
Asa deera—Beyond my wildest hopes.*

Charana

*Kavijala varenyulu—Hosts of famed composers,
Bhaktileni—Devoid of devotion,
Bhavamerugalerani—Know not my purpose.*

Yani kalalone—Appearing to me even in my dream,

Bhukti mukti galgunu ani—said "Happiness here and salvation hereafter is yours"

Keertanamula bodhinjchina—And taught me these keertanas (hymns).

Tyagaraja kararchita !—Oh ! Thou, adored by the hands of Tyagaraja !

This is the second hymn on the same subject. The Swami addresses himself to the Lord Shri Rama and says: "On two different occasions I have borrowed heavily from you. Being a Brahmana, that is but another name for utter poverty, I laid myself under obligations to you whenever I was in need. I cared not to ascertain how deeply I was involved. But, one day I grew curious to know what I owed you, And the result of the calculation fairly took my breath away. I may try to the end of time, but will never be able to repay a fraction of it.

Then an unnameable dread held me in its grip: "You will die a debtor. You will die with the crushing load of debts unpaid. Your coming birth will be correspondingly vile, mean and low. You have drawn upon yourself a sin that the most hardened wretch would avoid at any cost."

"Nay," I replied to the accusing voice, "I construe the point otherwise. He who dies a debtor suffers for it only if he takes what the creditor is in need of, what he cannot afford to lose or give away. But, if the creditor is none the worse for this loss, if the debt is to him but as a grain of sand, if he would not take it back, the debtor is allowed to go free. The creditor himself would not have the heart to punish him for it. Rama ! I have borrowed heavily of you. But you are the favoured son of king Dasharatha. You are the heir to his kingdom. You can afford a million times over to lose what I owe you. My heart finds peace in that thought.

"Again, taking it at its worst, even granting that the sin is too awful for any one to pardon, even though he be the Lord of the Universe, yet I have a way open to me to escape the consequences of my sin. The accumulated sins of the Universe, from the beginning of time vanish into nothingness before the untold might and potency of your blessed name. I can lay claim to having recited it ninety kotis and six. And that I believe is enough to ward off any evil from me in the shape of unpaid debt. And now, let me tell you what the debts are that I owe you.

"For sometime, there has been lurking in the innermost corner of my heart a desire, a weakness I may call it.

"The wonderful music you sing through me, the priceless gems of

wisdom that lie embedded therein, fill my heart with a sad regret. All this treasure of spiritual knowledge goes to waste. I am unknown to the world, and am but a poor Brahmana at best. The language in which I clothe my music is but one of the numerous vernaculars current in a corner of India. Now, the countless millions that call their home this vast continent between the Himalayas and the sea, are shut out from the light and life that radiate ever from these soul-stirring words of yours. I wish that they found an echo in the hearts of the good and true men of this Bharatavarsha."

"Now, this is a lawful desire, in one way. But viewed in another light, it is an unpardonable weakness. I am ashamed of it.

"I have kept this to myself. But, somehow, you have come to know of it; and, what is most wonderful and unexpected, you have realised my wishes beyond my wildest expectations. On more than one occasion, holy men have come to me from Kashi, Hardwar, and other distant places saying: "The Lord Rama, whom we serve, has ordered us to seek you out in your home and hear your wonderful hymns". Your all-seeing eye has read my unspoken wishes; and your infinite mercy has brought joy to my heart.

"Now, can I ever hope to repay this debt? It would be almost akin to wishing that we changed places and that I placed you under this great obligation. Now far be that thought from me. I would rather die a debtor's death a million times over.

"The second occasion on which I placed myself under a heavy obligation to you is this. One night you blessed me in my dreams with your radiant presence. You said to me: "My son, I would that you sing of me to the men of your time. Tell them of me, of my coming among them for their uplift. Tell them how I have lived as one of themselves, joyed and sorrowed, laughed and wept, loved and lost, won and failed. Tell them how I seek them. Tell them how they come to me. Tell them of yourself, your hopes, your aspirations, your fears, your failings, your gloom and light, your communion with me and everything that would give them heart to tread the hard, narrow path of devotion that leads them to my feet!"

"And to you I made reply: "Life of my life! Great men have sung of you ere now in various climes, in various tongues, and in various styles. What am I compared to them?"

"But you said to me: "Nay, not so. True, many have sung of me, but they are entirely devoid of devotion. They sing not from the heart, but from the head. They labour and create fine psalms which have in them no touch of inspiration. Again, they care not to read my purpose. They care not to be pure, simple and natural. Their words are hollow and soulless. Now, you know me, you have seen me,

you have talked with me, you know my purpose. You shall sing of me to them. I will speak through you and reach their hearts."

"Have you no memory of the far past when you did me the same service as the Rishi Valmiki? At my suggestion, Brahma came to you and gave you the open eye of the seer, the inspiration of the poet and the wisdom of the sage. He asked Sarasvati to sing through you and make you the channel of my message to the world. You sang the Ramayana to all men and for all time. Now, sing you the same theme to the people of your day in the tongue that they love best."

Then I put forth a request, even as I did in the far past: "Lord of Mercy! The channel has the first taste and touch of the cool waters of life. What shall be my meed, if I am so blessed as to be chosen the singer?"

And, as before, you gave me reply: "As long as these sky-clad mountains lift their heads to heaven, as long as the broad rivers wend their way to the Lord of waters, even so long shall the poem you sing live bright in the hearts of men."

Then I said, being utterly human: "That much for the Message. What of the messenger?"

The reply came at once: As long as the Message finds a place in the memory of me, so long shall you have the free range of my worlds above and below. Even so, your service to me in this age shall not go barren. Everything good and happy shall be your portion on earth. And when you choose to leave it, infinite bliss and wisdom are yours in the worlds of light. Now, sing on."

Then you taught me what I should sing and how I should sing it. The hymns that go in my name in the world of men, are, in reality, what you put into my mouth. Men know me as the singer thereof. It is not true. I shine in borrowed feathers.

Now, can I ever dream of repaying this crushing debt of gratitude, even if I try for all eternity?

Inter-racial Marriages

By Dewan Bahadur K. Sundaram Chettiar, B.A., B.L.

District Judge (on leave)

The subject taken up for consideration is not one for smooth-sailing, but will lead one to a ship struggling in the midst of tempestuous winds, the captain of which must summon all his caution and courage to steer clear of the agitated waters, and land the vessel in a safe haven. Being aware of the highly controversial nature of

the question, I do not claim acceptance of the view which I strive to put forward but would be gratified if what I state should at least be taken in a tolerant spirit, as a point of view deserving of careful reflection.

Is this a Utopian scheme? At first sight it may strike even a sociologist that the accomplishment of inter-racial marriages can only be in the fairy-land of romance, and indulged in reveries, but in this prosaic world it would be an almost impossible task. The history of the world, corrected and supplemented by the investigations and researches in the fields of occultism and ethnology, indicates that in the distant past the fusion of different races occurred by colonisation followed by inter-racial marriages. Did not the great stock of the Aryan race, from its central Asian home, branch off in several groups, and migrate into the nooks and corners of the world, and did not those Aryans mingle with the vanquished races of the various countries colonised by them, and gradually break the shell of their community, and mix their blood with that of other races by inter-marriages? It is true that for sometime, especially in northern India, the rigid rule of exclusiveness was maintained, but in the South that rule appears to have been freely relaxed. Thus we see that some of the great nations existing at present, have originated from inter-racial marriages. History may repeat itself, and where is the impossibility or even the unlikelihood of the fusion of some of the races, at least by such inter-marriages, if times conducive to such alliances should arise, or exigencies should dictate the necessity thereof?

Having seen the possibility for such marriages in the future, we have to consider, from the stand-point of utility, whether they would be productive of any benefit to humanity or not.

There can be no two opinions as to which of the two should be preferred—World-peace or World-war. War has always been considered as the scourge of nations. A nation is a big group of individuals, and consequently the worth of a nation depends on the merits of the individuals composing it. A conglomeration of defective parts cannot make a perfect whole. The world is gradually evolving according to the great Plan of God, and in the course of the onward march of evolution, the primordial dross of matter in which the spirit lay immersed, has to be laboriously fused in the world's crucible, so that the spirit may regain its perfect lustre, purged of the impurities of the veils which have been enveloping it. In the intense heat of the struggle between spirit and matter, is experienced all the misery and evil so common in this world. Each tries to get the mastery over the other, but with no decisive victory or defeat for either. The root evil is selfishness, which grasps, at another's cost, resulting in clash. This

arch-evil has to be devitalised, and transmuted into the divine element by love, and when sympathy and love dominate over the other passions, there will be peace and good-will between nations, instead of hatred and jealousy. To secure such a millenium, the mind of humanity as it is at present must undergo a great modification, which will make co-operation the general inter-national rule, and not the exception, and might well be the prop for the weak instead of their oppressor, and peace and mutual good-will would be the order of the day, instead of dissension and strife. Soul-force will then shine forth in all its glory. Quite different will then be the outlook of humanity, and what is dreamt of as universal brotherhood will become a living reality, and the world will be a Federation of nations.

Will inter-racial marriages tend, even in a remote degree, to the promotion of peace and good will among the nations? If so, increase of the moral and spiritual nature of mankind, as stated above, can be expected from such marriages. Want of a proper understanding of the traits of one nation's character, by another nation, results sometimes in friction. Misapprehensions as to a nation's social and religious status creates, in the consciousness of another nationality, a sense of contempt and even aversion. One nation begins to look down upon another, misjudging the latter's cultural development. Fantastic are the notions formed of another race's worth, and division takes the place of appreciation. But the closer contact brought about by inter-racial marriages serves to dispel such illusions and to create a better understanding between them. Individuals of one race would necessarily begin to sympathise with those of another, on account of the ties created by such marriages. Much is the benefit derived from the acquisition of the virtues of adaptability, adjustment and tolerance. Great is the scope for mutual improvement, socially, morally, and even politically. Instead of a rigid conservatism, which makes one blind to the foibles of one's own traditions, there will spring up a liberal-minded outlook, capable of imbibing what is found to be a better trait in the other. If one nation happens to rule the country of another nation, the gulf between them can be narrowed by the spread of such inter-marriages, so that some of the political and economic disabilities of the subject-nation may in course of time be removed, by reason of greater harmony and mutual regard. Even among nations politically independent such alliances will be productive of kindly feelings and mutual good-will.

What is it that acts as a stumbling-block to the contraction of such marriages? The hereditary instincts of one race may be so incompatible with those of another, as also the social and religious customs, as to bring sentiments into play which would repel the very

idea of such alliances, and engender a revulsion in the feelings. Loud will be its clamour, and any attempt to bring about such union would be denounced as causing havoc. The potency of sentiment in matters like this cannot easily be under-rated, for it counts for much in the shaping of racial institutions. Invention can be exhausted, reason fatigued, but the obstinacy of sentiment cannot easily be conquered. In some cases, the tenacity of sentiment may be a safeguard against deleterious innovations, and has to be respected. If the sentimental objection happens to be prudent and reasonable, in the interests of the race, it is beyond question but that it should prevail. A race may be superior to another in many respects, its speciality may be its excellence, and it may run a serious risk, by its fusion with the other, by inter-marriages. In such a case, the deterioration of the superior race by contamination has to be deplored, despite any advantage which the inferior race may gain. But where the mutual gain would be greater than the mutual loss, or where the higher race does not receive any substantial setback, but the lower race stands the chance of marked improvement, inter-racial marriages should be welcomed, without being deterred by sentiment or the promptings of instinct. Anything productive of good to the greatest number should be viewed as an act of service to humanity, though it may clash with some individuals' interests.

If regard be had to the fact that several of the present races have had their origin in one root-stock, there need be no great sentimental scruples against the very idea of inter-racial marriages. Indiscriminate inter-mingling of the races, without paying heed to deleterious effects, if any, should no doubt be deprecated, but where the benefits far outweigh the injuries, inter-racial marriages deserve no condemnation.

As for the consideration of the points of view noticed above, in respect of the interests of India, that matter may be left for a later discourse.

Enthusiasm

By S. Raja Ram

(Continued from page 208)

Hanuman's daring and inspiring endeavour was successfully carried out, after these thrilling encounters, to the great delight of Shri Rama, the object of his devotion, and of Sugriva, his King. Let us now see what are the lessons to be drawn from the incidents briefly narrated above.

Shri Rama, the virtuous and noble Prince, happens to lose his beloved wife in the forest of Dandaka, full of dangerous influences—Rakshasas of unholy desires, unquenchable wrath, insatiable greed, impenetrable ignorance, unbreakable pride, and unthinkable jealousy. Their ten-headed and mighty chief, Ravana, representing the combined glamour of the ten *jñana* and *karma-indriyas*, covets and carries off Sita, the jewel of Shri Rama's heart, aided by the powerful illusion of his friend and guide, Maricha, in the desert (*marichika* is mirage), cast in the shape of a golden deer which dances before Sita, the mind. Even Shri Rama's mind is affected and comes under the spell. Sita is carried off by Ravana and kept captive in his protected capital, Lanka.

यततो ह्यपि कौंतेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

"O Son of Kunti, the excited senses of even a wise man, though he is strong, impetuously carry away his mind".

Bhagavad Gita—II (60).

असंभवं हेममृगस्य जन्म तथापि रामो लुलुभे मृगाय ।

"A golden deer is an impossibility; yet Shri Rama was himself deluded by the deer!"—wonders the poet.

Lesson 1.—Even the wise are not free from the dangers of delusion until the senses are under perfect control.

Shri Rama, in distress, searches for Sita and to find her secures the friendship and aid of the Vēnara Chief, Sugriva, and also the faithful and devoted services of Hanuman. His, Hanuman's, valor and power of sacrifice are recognised, and he is entrusted with the Chudamani, the loving token of Shri Rama's abiding link with Sita, though they are temporarily separated and living in extreme loneliness. The jewel was placed in the hands of Hanuman in perfect confidence in his faith and in his cultivated talents and resourcefulness. This itself should have given sufficient indication that his was a mission which was sure to succeed. Still, the full consciousness of it was to be awakened by a wise friend sometime later.

Lesson 2.—Perception of the goal and attainment are different. Says Krishnaji: "Most of you imagine that by the mere perception of liberation you have attained it. It is true that at any stage of evolution you can see for yourself the end of all things, which is liberation, but the seeing and the realisation, the perception and the attainment, are wholly different. Because you have seen, do not for a moment imagine that you have attained. For instance, from the valley you can always behold the mountain top, from the plains you can see standing

out clearly, in all its perfection, in all its serenity, the mountain top, but between you in the plain and in the valley and the attainment of that mountain top, there is a great distance to be travelled, many barriers to be overcome, forests to pass through, rivers which you must ford. Only the man of courage, of experience, of intense longing, whose desire to reach the summit is burning within him, will venture, will struggle, wherever he be, to attain that mountain top."

Lesson 3.—Obstacles assail a man of feeble decision and he fails at the critical moment. Angada, enthusiastic at the beginning, yields to depression, imagines calamities, loses courage, misunderstands his chief, receives cowardly counsel from his kinsmen and colleagues, and finally sinks. All this is due to want of confidence in himself and his leader. True *shraddha*, faith, should be cultivated and depression avoided at any cost.

Lesson 4.—Hanuman, though brooding and silent at first, flares up with right enthusiasm when his inherent capacities are awakened by his wise counsellor, Jambavan, and he takes up service with deep devotion and utter dedication and triumphs ultimately. Perfect self-surrender in a spirit of true dedication to the Teacher, the Leader, or the beloved Cause, is the expression of the highest form of devotion which alone can keep vision steady and enthusiasm undiminished and ever inspiring.

Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat;

Only we can't command it; fire and life

Are all, dead matter's nothing, we agree:

And be it a mad dream or God's very breath,

The fact's the same,—belief's fire once in us,

Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself:

We penetrate our life with such a glow

As fire lends wood and iron—this turns steel,

That burns to ash—all's one, fire proves its power

For good or ill, since men call flare success.

But paint a fire, it will not therefore burn,

Light one in me, I'll find it food enough!

—Robert Browning

Lesson 5.—A server with such glowing enthusiasm receives help from known and unknown sources, and also meets with unusual difficulties; witness the help Hanuman receives from the Devas and the Ocean, and the obstacles presented by Surasa and Simhika, which are conquered only by his radiant power and resourcefulness.

Lesson 6.—Steadfastness of purpose, the vision of the ideal, the wisdom to seek and devise adequate means, and skill to meet un-

expected situations that may arise—these are essential for the triumph of the aspirant, as well as unfailing enthusiasm for his high endeavour.

We have now seen that constant enthusiasm is the outward expression of deep devotion culminating in service and perfect self-surrender. We have also seen how these qualities were brilliantly illustrated in the life of Hanuman, to a large extent the same are seen in the lives of the Theosophical leaders, especially of their venerable Chief, Dr. Annie Besant; and also in a few of the present day political leaders, like Gandhiji. It needs the self-sacrifice of the martyr and the courage and self-effacement of the hero. Can we at this stage of the world's progress expect to find these qualities to be developed in any large number of people? The world needs many such servers.

Here are some extracts from the very remarkable speech of the well-known traveller and explorer, Sir Martin Conway, made in the course of a debate in the British House of Commons on the Revised Prayer Book:

"We are waiting for someone who will not overthrow the old revelation, who will not disestablish the old faith, but who will carry us into a wider field and will give us a new vision of the world that is beyond, a new vision of the unknown, of the eternal, towards which we ordinary folk can but blindly grope. Thus we, the puzzled people of the modern world, are waiting on the shore of eternity, each one of us authentically on its very margin every day, looking out into the unknown, waiting for a message of salvation, waiting for the new message that this world longs for, but which has not yet come. We want a new spirit, a wider revelation. We are waiting for the man who shall come with his lips touched with the live flame from the Altar of God."

Lady Emily Lutyens writing on the above says: "The world is waiting, that is true, but for whom and for what does it wait? For a Comforter, a Saviour, a Miracle-worker, a Solver of riddles or for a Teacher? Men, 'as hungry sheep,' are waiting to be fed. With what? The true Teacher does not take away the difficulties of learning from his pupils but he inspires them to grapple with the difficulties for themselves. He does not carry their burdens himself but gives them strength to carry their own. So the Great Teacher does not come to make life easier for us by removing all our difficulties for ourselves. He does not come to solve our problems, to disentangle the twisted skein of our lives, to do everything for us that we are too ignorant or too weak to do for ourselves. He comes rather to give us a new vision of Truth in the light of which we shall be enabled to solve our own problems, to meet our own difficulties, to walk on our own feet."

And *Truth*—what is Truth, how to get it, and to what does it lead? Let us hear what Krishnaji says on this point:

"Truth, which is the essence of liberation and happiness, does not lie in some far off realms, does not wait in some hidden corners far away but eternally dwells in the hearts of those who have the longing to attain, to seek out Truth. Those who have the desire to follow that truth, that liberation and that happiness, should cleanse themselves of all their narrowness, of all their prejudices, and delve deep into their hearts and there establish for themselves the truth, and there find for themselves liberation and happiness; for wherever there is eternal Happiness there liberation is found, for without happiness—the happiness which can never be changed, which can never be altered—you can never find liberation. You only arrive at that happiness when you have cast aside all your binding, limiting qualities, when you have thrown aside the mantle of darkness that is the heritage of all human beings who are still bound to the wheel of life and death. When you have cast aside all these and have followed the truth into your own heart and there established it firmly, then it becomes a part of yourself, part of your eternal vision, of your eternal longing, and then intelligent revolt takes birth. In casting off those things that bind, those things that create sorrow, anxiety and the fierce aching of desire, you will find that intelligent revolt which ever cleanses, which ever acts as a means to destroy those things that are impure, those things that are not in true alignment with liberation and happiness. So, the first thing for those who desire to follow the truth, to follow me into their hearts is to go within themselves, into their own being and there establish the truth, and there find their own happiness, their own liberation, and then they will have found my happiness and my liberation, which is the common heritage of all, the common product of all humanity." (*The Star*, May, 1928).

(To be concluded)

Whosoever Shall Offend?

By Annie Besant, D. L.

The Government of India is supposed to be a Christian one ruling over heathens. Missionary Societies in Britain travel up and down the country lauding the "blessings of Christianity," and telling how their God has placed a Christian Nation to rule over India, so that that benighted country may enjoy Christian civilisation. One of the things which they denounce—and rightly denounce—is the crime of child-marriage, and they explain how infant girls are married in their

cradles, and horrify the ignorant Westerners by describing the fate of widows in India, and then telling them how such little girls become widows by thousands, and are doomed to a joyless life. A novelist like Miss Mayo, armed with Government introductions, waves in the air the liking of Brahmanas for little girl-children of five.

It is very curious that our good Christians over here are so remarkably indifferent to the protection of little children, whose sad fate draws so many pennies into missionary-boxes at "Home." They apparently drop their Christianity when they enter the Suez Canal and breathe the eastern air! or at any rate keep it for "the Lord's Day," and regard the other days of the week as not belonging to God at all—presumably to the opposite pole of the theological compass. For, was not the solemn warning uttered by the compassionate lips of the Christ, who once took little children into His loving arms and blessed them:

It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. (S. Luke, XVIII, 1, 2.)

Quite a large stock of millstones seem to be needed in Delhi.

But let us descend from these high regions to the more ordinary world, and consider how facts down here condemn the crime of leaving our little girl-children undefended against the lusts of men.

Of course, we all know that the "first marriage" among Hindus is what in the West would be called a betrothal, with only one exception; the "child-wife" remains with her parents, and only goes to her husband's home after the "second marriage." But in the West, a betrothal does not make the betrothed girl a widow. But here in India, we have huge numbers of "virgin widows," children whose "husbands" have died before the "second marriage" takes place. The result is that all these girl-children who have been through the first ceremony are shut out from woman's highest function, Motherhood. Never can they hold their own child in their arms; never can know the love of husband, son, and daughter. They are dedicated to the life of the sannyasini—a noble vocation when self-chosen, but a cruel life of long penance when imposed by others. Since the women, the mothers, have awakened to a realization of their power, the sense of their duty with regard to their daughters has also awakened. They know what enforced widowhood means for these little ones, and are as resolute to save them. Innumerable Conferences have been held all over India, and they have, with one voice, demanded that the marriage age shall be raised by law.

Quite apart from the withering of so many lives by child-marriage,



it is accompanied by other evils. The death-rate of these child-wives leaps up by a shocking bound—the inevitable result of child-motherhood. The child's body is not matured enough for the bearing of a child, and it dies under the outrage. She has not known the careless happiness of childhood she cannot bear the shock of child-wifery and motherhood. The ghastly sufferings of an unnaturally-forced function mean early death to many a helpless victim.

Nor do women suffer alone; school-boys who are also fathers are drained of vitality and of nervous energy; they cannot bear the double strain of hard study and over-early parenthood together, they easily fall victims of diabetes and other diseases due largely to nervous troubles, and they talk of being "old" at fifty-five! Old when they should be enjoying the plenitude of brain, strength and self-controlled emotions. The old Hinduism imposed celibacy till the student-life was over, for, as in all the ancient religions, health was guarded by invoking the sanction of religion for hygienic laws. Boy-fatherhood means early old age.

Happily, the boys, the young men, are rebelling against premature marriage, and as they are also demanding educated wives—and early marriage cuts off girl-education at the age when she should be a student—they constantly, in their meetings, make 21 the age for young men, from 16 to 18 the age for girls.

Mr. Sarda's Bill was a modest one, too modest most of us think. He says the Government promised to vote for it. Well, if so, he has learnt the value of promises. The foreign Government has always been against social reform; it realizes that it will put an end to foreign rule over India. Another powerful reason for Dominion Status is that we cannot make real social reforms without the power of legislation. Will men be content to abolish laws against murder, to leave it to be dealt with by social opinion? And is not the death-rate of married child-mothers a form of murder, since it is caused by a disregard of natural law and can be brought down by man-made legislation? Is not preventable homicide a form of murder?

Only two Europeans voted for the Sarda Bill. Are the rest of the Europeans willing to uphold the introduction of child-marriage into their own families? If not, why have they kept it legal for Hindus?

I may add, lest I be thought speaking of a reform which I had not enforced when I had the power, that in the Central Hindu School, we did not admit married boys, and took a promise from the parents that they would not marry their sons while at school. Later, we increased the fees of college students who married, and had in view their exclusion. When we started, at the end of the last century, this policy was not found in any school, as far as I know.

The Madras Mail has a somewhat amusing article on the Government's breach of faith asserted by Mr. Sarda. It finds the proceeding "logical". If it means a logical sequence to the many breaches of faith that preceded it, it is so. But that is a poor defence. The Government wants to "ascertain public opinion towards the raising of the Age of Consent". It was less dilatory in the days of the East India Company, when the Company abolished the burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. Yet surely, that quick death, softened by drugs, was less cruel than the prolonged agony of premature marital life, often closed by death in child-birth. The Company bravely faced public opinion, and stopped the custom, even though it was originally based on a beautiful idea, and was so strongly rooted among women, that even now a wife will sometimes set herself on fire, that she may accompany her husband to the other world. *The Madras Mail* complains that "the reasons for the disparity of age (14 for girls and 18 for boys) have not clearly been stated"! Is it usual, then, in England for brides to be older than bridegrooms? We thought that the practice was almost universal, that the bridegroom should be some years older than the bride, and that the "disparity" is generally more than four years. One obvious reason is that education of the boy is longer than that of the girl, and further that the man seldom marries until he is fairly well established in his profession or trade, since he is legally responsible for the maintenance of his wife and minor children. The woman has no such responsibility; until recently, the husband became possessed of his wife's property and earnings, unless these were protected by a settlement, and in the Christian ceremony of marriage the wife promised to obey the husband. (This, we believe, is left out of the Revised Prayer Book.) The man was the head of the household, and if a wife committed a crime, she was acquitted if she showed that the husband instigated it as she was taken to be "under her husband's control." "In most countries, the passage of large measures of social reform have been preceded by a popular demonstration in favor of such reform." What about the many Conferences above mentioned? The whole article is special pleading in favor of a bad case.

—*New India.*

The Spread of Vedic Dharma

Proposal For New Mission Society

Bombay, Feb. 2.—At a meeting recently held in Bombay with Shankaracharya Dr. Kurtkoti in the chair, a Constitution for a Mission

in India with branches in London, Paris and New York, for helping those who desire to do so to enter the Vedic Dharma was discussed.

His Holiness Shri Shankaracharya, in an introductory speech, said that following the conversion of Miss Nancy Miller, many persons belonging to various faiths applied for admission to the Vedic Dharma. It was announced at the meeting that several Princes and rich men offered material help to Shri Shankaracharya.

The proposal for the establishment of a Mission was widely supported at the meeting, which appointed the following, among others, as members of the committee to frame a Constitution:—Mr. Jayakar, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Dr. Moonji, Mr. K. Natarajan, Mr. G. K. Devadhar, and Mr. M. S. Aney.

Who Are Wanted?

Men are wanted, men of manners,
Men of grit and men of skill;
Men of word and men of action,
Men of courage and of will.
Men who dare to face the struggle
For the right with two or three,
Rather than to follow millions
In their pledged hypocrisy.
Men with soul as true to duty
As the needle to the pole;
Men who meet Earth's disappointments
In the calm of self control.
Men who trust the voice of Heaven
Read the Book and then Obey,*
Heedless of the sneers that echo.
Earth is full of cant and seeming,
Full of fashion and of pride;
God is calling. Who will answer,
"Count me with the Crucified"?

—ROBERT HARE

* We take the liberty of remarking here that we interpret this line to mean also that one should make one's choice and then abide by the consequences of doing so. The poem has been sent to us by Dewan Bahadur C. V. Viswanatha Shastriar.

Reviews

HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD.—By Dr. Parmanand Ahuja. M.B., B.S. With an Introduction by Prof. T.L. Vaswani, M.A. Published by the Model Printing Press, Karachi. Price As. 6,

Dr. Ahuja very rightly lays strong stress on the necessity for making education fit the needs of the country. He urges the need for complete physical attention to the child and the need for a modernised version of the Ashrama ideal of education in the open air and in the midst of nature. He also emphasizes India's very great need for the Brahmacharya ideal, particularly for students, to aid in reviving India's virility. He criticises the present curricula and suggests some reforms.

DIALOGUES IN AN ASHRAMA.—By A. H. Jaisinghani. With an Introduction by T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Re. 1.

This well-written little book reveals a clear perception in the author's mind of the values of the past, present and future. Like so many to-day his mind, he says, was agitated by the question: "How may the world be cured again?" After reviewing the situation the conclusion seems to be that a new dawn is at hand, that the world awaits a new Buddha, a Superman who will expound a higher knowledge, who will liberate the world from outworn forms, and help others to know the Truth even as he knows it.

THE VISION OF LIFE.—By A.H. Jaisinghani. With an Introduction by T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Re. 1.

The main theme of this small and very interesting book is the idea that the time is ripe for change. That Death and Life conspire to make ready for the future. Death sweeps away outworn forms in preparation for Life, who dreams a new dream. Life is coming again to shape the new, the Superman. The author carries one along with his thought and helps one to realise in his original imagery that Life is indeed resistless and creative, and emphatically so at the present time.

J. R.

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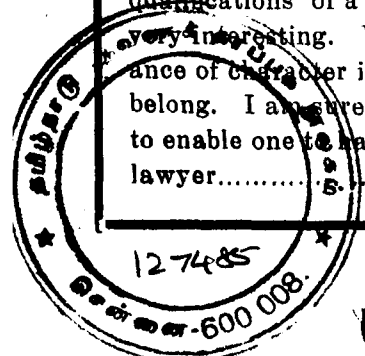
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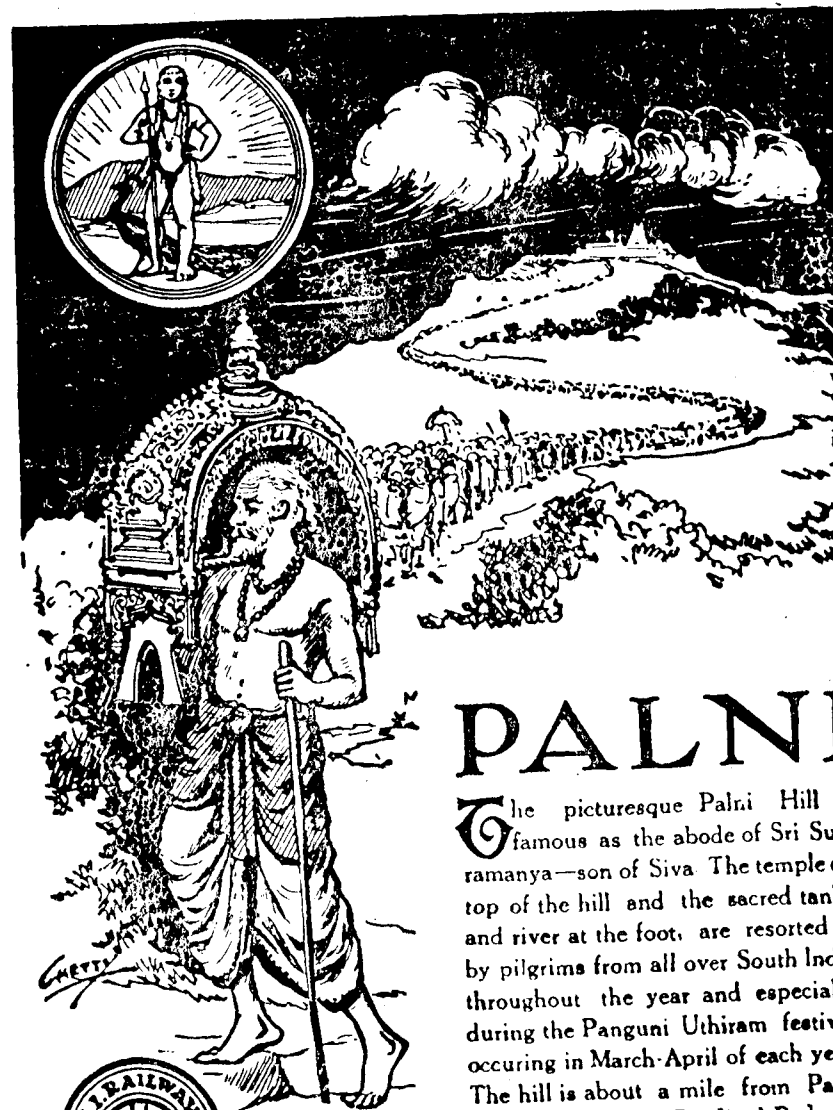
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