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TRIVENI

JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

(With which is incorporated 'THE NEW ERA')

EDITOR

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAO, B.A., B.L.

22 APR 1931

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Jan. Feb. 1931

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Pushpabalkara
By Damela Rama Rao

GREETINGS TO 'TRIVENI'

Dear Mr. Ramakotiswara Rao,

I greatly appreciate your self-sacrificing labours for conducting your periodical, 'TRIVENI'. It is, what you call it, really a journal of Indian renaissance. It is a fine specimen of our cultural enterprise. I hope you will be able to convert it into a monthly in another year or two.

With kind regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
RAMANANDA CHATTERJEE,
Editor, "The Modern Review"

Memories of Damerla Rama Rao

BY OSWALD COULDREY, M.A., (OXON)

(Author of "South Indian Hours")

I have been gradually persuaded by my own conscience, aided from time to time by the painter's elder brother and by the Editor of this magazine, that I ought to put on record my memories of Rama Rao. When I consider how well we knew one another, Ram and I, and how much our association meant and means to me, I am surprised how little of that association I can remember that seems worth recording. I once excused myself to Mr. Ramakotiswara Rao from writing of the painter on the plea that I knew little of his most productive years. I was told that I could at least describe 'the brooding genius'. The phrase describes the Rama Rao of the Art School period so well that I wonder whether it originated with Adivi Bapirazu. I say the Art School period, because my impression is that before he went to Bombay Ram was distinctly more communicative than he afterwards became, when the diffidence of adolescence, and perhaps a certain estrangement due to our separation (for months, if not miles, are longer at eighteen than later) may have inhibited his impulse to speak out. But the boy's talk, apart from elementary 'art shop', was naturally much like that of other boys. What he had to say, that other boys have not, he said with brush and pencil.

He was first brought to me, I believe, about 1912, when he was fourteen, but, for that year and the next I find little written of him in the book of my memory, except that he and his friend Varada Venkataratnam used to bring their drawings to my house. From this time until he went to Bombay I must have seen nearly everything that Ram drew or painted. After my return from Japan in June 1914 we became more intimate. Ram joined his brother and me in our Sunday evening walks. Venkata Rao and I talked hard of everything under the sun (rather more politics than I liked some-

times, I remember) and Ram was quite ready to join in when the themes veered in his direction. Used as I was to solitary rambles, I always strove not to let our talk come too solidly between us and the visual beauty of the Bomoru Hill, or Nagalanka, or the fields of Dowleishwaram; and I remember teaching Ram, as I had taught myself long before, not to walk in the country with his eyes on the ground. I hope psychology will not some day prove me wrong.

In 1914 my students produced two scenes from *Julius Caesar*. I designed two back curtains for these scenes and Ram for the most part painted them,—they were still in the College when I left. We worked in a class-room of the Training College. I was surprised at Ram's mastery of the technique of scene-painting. He had learnt it from the scene-painter of the local theatre, whom I knew as Mr. Ram, and whose work must have done much to turn his young namesake's thoughts towards pictorial expression. Mr. Ram had clearly a strong natural artistic gift, but he studied, of course, the taste for exuberant decoration then current in theatrical circles. His flamboyant painting contrasted oddly with the quiet power and refinement of his comic acting, or rather character-acting, which would have made him famous, I used to think, in any other country. One of our curtains represented the Senate House where Cæsar was murdered, and Pompey's statue, larger than life, was to be painted on it from a small design which I had prepared. To enlarge this to the requisite size was beyond even Ram's draughtsmanship at the time, nor did I succeed any better myself. Damerla Venkata Rao, who was looking on, came to the rescue, and outlined the design perfectly on the larger scale with a free-hand 'in no time' as they say. This seemed to me to show a remarkable power of eye and hand. Just so much of the painter's gift Venkata Rao had in a remarkable degree. My account may for the second time seem to be wandering from its theme, but this I do not admit. We are members one of another, and Ram's gifts and work alike can be better understood in the light of a knowledge of the relevant gifts and interests of his relations and early associates. Artistic gifts, graphic and visual, are evidently prevalent in Ram's family. Some work, which

TRIVENI

I saw by a maternal uncle of his, seemed to me very delicate and remarkable in the barren artistic environment of his time. Ram's sister's work is well known and will, I hope, be better known.

Among my treasured memorials of Rama Rao are four Christmas cards, the earliest of which belongs, I think (for the two earlier are undated) to 1914. These cards have a faint pathos of their own, apart from the tragic interest which now attaches to them. The two earliest consist of two sheets each, folded double and stitched with silk ribbon into a booklet. The outer leaves in each case are of stiff drawing paper and bear a small landscape by Ram. The inner leaves are thinner and bear the mottoes and messages usual on Christmas cards, indeed at first sight they appear to have been torn out of rather superior printed cards (they are noticeably simple and elegant both in style and wording) and used with Ram's landscapes. In fact they are examples of his brother's calligraphic genius; copied, no doubt, but not by machinery; vulgarized beauty re-consecrated by handicraft in a strange land. Both pictures have a group of palms reflected in still water. The first, very small, seems to be a memory of Nagalanka (as the riverside pastures at Rajahmundry are called), for there are huts and what seems a kiln; but the trees might be Egyptian date-palms; the young painter's imagination is still bookish. In the sky lingers a primrose afterglow, the reflection of which in the pool is treated as lovingly as by still water. The next year's landscape is a sepia monochrome, an upright picture this time, twilight, with a moon and a bat. The trees are now our true palmyras. The picture is no larger than the first, but has a border of figures and foliage delicately drawn in pencil, the whole making a charming design. The allegory of the border is distantly related, perhaps, to some drop-curtain of the Rajahmundry theatre. I recognize Painting, Music and Poetry, stars, clouds, a shower of flowers, tree-canopies, and an hour-glass in a setting sun. The Muse of Painting sits at an easel; on her tiny card or canvas she has just traced in faintest outline the pool and palmyras of the central picture.

The third card is larger, a single sheet of dark-green drawing



"Rama Rao as I knew him"

1916

paper folded double. On the outside, under the greetings and a few red roses painted in 'body-colour', are the names of both the brothers and the date 1916. Inside is pasted a delightful water-colour of hilly country, probably near some Bombay hill-station. This is the most charming of Rama Rao's landscapes known to me. Very simply and directly painted, it composes exquisitely. It is three inches by seven. Ram always liked the long oblong. This landscape hailed of course from Bombay, whither the young painter proceeded in the course of 1916 to study in the Art School. The wisdom of Ram's choice of a school has been questioned in certain quarters, and as I was partly responsible for it, I should like to say something on the question here, at the risk of adding fuel to the fires of a controversy which probably rages as hotly in India as that between the schisms, irreverently known to one another as the photographic and the jazz, rages in England. I say that I was partly responsible because Ram himself had resolute notions on the question, out of which it would not have been easy to persuade him; but for these again, I suppose I was partly responsible.

I wanted Rama Rao to be distinctively an Indian painter; but I did not think it essential that an Indian painter should adopt the mannerisms or even the methods of the last millennium, any more than I myself think it necessary to adopt a linear method of painting because the missal-painters of Norfolk and the fresco painters of Winchester excelled in that method as late as the early fourteenth century A.D. Moreover I was not satisfied that the painters of the Bengali renaissance (for the choice with Ram lay between Bombay and Calcutta) were infallible interpreters of the essential Indian style in painting. Much of their work seemed to me to be nearer to Japan than to Ajanta, while Ajanta by the same figure seemed and seems to me to be nearer to ancient Greece than to China and Japan. I was told recently by an Inspectress of Girls' Schools in this country that there was a radical difference between the Occidental and the Oriental way of (literally) looking at things, the Occidental seeing them in the round and the Oriental as flat surfaces bounded by lines. Put thus simply, the absurdity of this view is obvious to any one

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who knows anything of the history of Art in either continent. I cannot suppose that the modern Bengali painters subscribe to this dogma in its crudest form; indeed it is clear from much of their work that they do not; but their failure to notice or to use, except in a very much diluted form, the comparatively powerful modelling, say of the frescoes on the back wall of the First Cave at Ajanta, argues a hankering in the direction of such heresy, and lends support to the view that their practice has helped to give it currency. Their hankering may be due to local graphic tradition, descending ultimately from the twelfth-century miniaturists of Behar, or their contemporaries, who may themselves have been influenced from China in the same way though not in the same degree as their Nepalese heirs were influenced. This pedigree may justify this feature of modern Bengali painting in itself but it hardly helps their claim (or the claim sometimes made for them) to be the only heirs or re-discoverers of the Indian graphic tradition. It is perhaps significant that while the old Bengal folk-art seems to have been largely linear and always flat, the figures of Bala-krishna and other deities painted on glass which used to be sold in my time in the Rajahmundry bazaar, were modelled (or shaded) in a manner remarkably like that followed at Ajanta, especially by the painter of the Samkhapala-jataka in Cave I and of certain scenes in Cave II.

Such were my views at the time, less explicitly formulated but not the less obstinately held for that. Moreover I was convinced that a youth with Ram's powerful visual imagination, having seen what he had, though as in a glass darkly, of Western Art, would not be happy until he had learned all that could be learned about the pictorial use of visible Nature. He would then be in a position, I thought, to select and to reject at will. He should be 'as a god, knowing good and evil', not stupidly righteous like Adam before the Fall. It was a heavy burden to throw upon his powers, but I believed them to be equal to it. I counted on being by to help him solve his problems. What was more important, I supposed that he would be given time.

What he did at Bombay I have only the vaguest idea. My

impression at the time was that he was woefully idle. Another youth named Bhashyakarlū, of whom I have since lost trace, went to Bombay about the same time, supported, I think, by the Rajah of Pithapur. He used to bring back elaborate studies in oil, of heads and figures, such as grow in Art Schools. I do not clearly remember seeing any such study by Ram, much as I wished him to master the method. Pencil studies of figures he brought home in abundance, as well as landscapes in water-colour and various other designs. These showed such development that I felt satisfied on the whole that his studies and the companionship of his school-mates and teachers were doing him much good, but I did not cease from upbraiding him for not sticking closer to his regular studies. I heard recently that the Headmaster once complained to Ram's father of the idleness of this 'unruly young man'. If this report was distinct from that which I am about to recall, I did not hear of it at the time. I was surprised, however, that Ram's obvious gifts had apparently attracted no attention at the School, and for this reason, and also because I was uncertain of his diligence, I wrote to the Principal to ask how Ram was doing. I got merely a routine report from the Headmaster (not the Principal) complaining that he was very irregular in his class work, but otherwise saying nothing of his abilities or prospects. Partly perhaps to counteract the effect of this document Ram seems to have waylaid the Principal with his portfolios of sketches and obtained from him an enthusiastic testimonial, stating that the youth had the makings of a great painter. This must have been in '17 or '18. I also remember visiting the School myself in October 1916 on my way to Elephanta. I wanted to find out what I could of Ram's situation and prospects. It was in vacation. I saw one of the professors, of whom Ram often spoke to me later, and who received me charmingly. But he knew nothing of my protegee. This was natural enough at that time; and I was as naturally disappointed. Regarding Ram's failure to bring home oil-studies like Bhashyakarlū in my time, I now think it probable that the latter, owing to his greater diligence or docility, had been promoted to the painting class before him, and that Ram was

too proud to tell me this plainly, and Bhashyakarlu, perhaps, too loyal.

I have a letter of Ram's dated Matunga, 26th December 1917. It belongs, in a way, to the series of Christmas cards, as it was written to explain that he had been unwell and unable to finish the 'small painting' he had started for me. The letter is very typical. "I am glad to tell you one thing, that I changed my residence, to a very beautiful, calm and healthy place, which is outside the city. . . . Since three days I have been doing a big composition in oils, which I hope to finish very highly. Its size is 6 feet by 5 feet. No doubt it will take a very long time to finish. But I am doing very interestingly. It is an expensive thing too. The canvas itself cost Rs. 17-8-0, and its frame Rs. 5-0-0. The colours will come to some 10 Rs. by the finishing. . . ." This great work fared little better, I believe, than my 'small painting' had done, less well perhaps, for the latter may be still extant as one of two very delicate water-colour tree-studies in my possession. One represents part of a nearly leafless bush in the Japanese manner, and its dispositions are worthy of a Japanese. The other is a remarkable experiment in minute leaf-drawing. Two or three small white-flowering bushes are drawn in pencil on dark-green paper with marvellous delicacy, every leaf being outlined. One or two of the blossoming boughs have been painted in body colour, both flowers and leaves being paler than the paper. I have a Rajput Ragini picture in which one of the bushes is treated very similarly, though rather less convincingly. Ram probably saw this or a similar picture. In any case one feels that it was the beauty rather than the wonder of the result that prompted this little drawing. Ram was very sensible of the beauty which could be secured by a judicious use of elaborate detail. One of the most beautiful of his paintings represents the garden of the Art School, with banyans and other trees and plants. It owes much of its beauty to the loving pains taken over the details. It was painted before I left India in 1919, so that my two little sketches belong to the same period. This love of detail and ordered complexity was, I think, a genuine Indian trait. You seldom hear elaborate

finish praised by professional painters in the West. It doesn't pay there.

During the three years that Rama Rao was studying at Bombay I visited many famous Indian sites, sometimes in company with one or more of my young friends and pupils. Thus in June 1916 Damerla Venkata Rao and I visited the 'buried cities' of Ceylon together. The brothers were so closely associated mentally that the ideas aroused by this and other of the elder's pilgrimages cannot have been without effect on the mind of the younger. In the spring of 1917, both the brothers, with their cousin, Kavikondala the poet and Adivi Bapirazu, came with me to Bhuvaneswar. We were all rather awed at first, not to say shocked, if I remember rightly, by the voluptuous sculptures with which those lovely fanes are profusely decorated. Presently Ram declared, I forget with what arguments, that there was nothing shameful in these sculptures. It was a truth which I had not yet entirely learned myself, and I have always remembered this declaration on the part of a boy of 18 as an instance of the fearless perspicacity of genius. It is possible that he had the hint from his older friends (I have never thought to ask them) who were themselves shy of advancing it openly, but even so, Ram's championship is characteristic. My companions also walked the four miles or so to the caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri, while I was laid up with a cold. I do not remember that these made a deep impression at the time.

In October of the same year the two future painters, Adivi Bapirazu and Rama Rao, accompanied me to Ajanta, probably a yet more pregnant pilgrimage for all three of us. We made the last forty miles or so from Jalgaon station in pony tongas in two stages. It was like riding into the far past. I shall never forget the passage of the flooded ford under the walls of the little town of Neri, at dawn on the second day. We met the outgoing cattle in midstream, we walked as if in a dream through the little paved streets and examined the carven wood-work of the lattices. On the way back we passed Neri at noon, and Ram confessed to a feeling of disappointment at finding that the place was not so wonderful as it had seemed before. Its glamour belonged partly to the dawn,

and partly to the wonder in our hearts that had since been spent on matters more worthy of it. But Ram's admission, if it shewed inexperience of life, shewed also the candour of the artist who is faithful to his impressions and refuses to pretend.

Of Ram's reaction to Ajanta itself, apart from the reverence common to us all, I can only remember that he and I disagreed about the artistic merit of the two later Chaitya-halls, which seemed to me to be overburdened with sculptural ornament. Regarding the smaller one at least I am now ready to admit that he was right.

From Ajanta I went on alone, I believe, to Sanchi, while my companions were sent home by way of Ellora, which I had seen the year before. I told Ram what I had chiefly admired there myself and he agreed with me in preferring above all else (of the figure sculpture) three groups in the Dasavatara cave, and that of the famous Ravana who strains so realistically at the foundation of the Kailas.

The last excursion I made in Ram's company was to the Godavery gorge in the following April. His brother and Bapirazu came too. The beauty of which we were now in search was not of man's making, but Nature's. We also had plenty of rather boyish fun. We borrowed a D. P. W. staff boat and managed by sailing, quanting and towing to make the narrows and back in the three or four days at our disposal. At nights we sat on deck and talked and sang. The number and length of the songs and recitations out of plays, which Ram had by heart, astonished me, and revealed a side of him of which I was hardly aware. My impression is that they were largely of Bombay origin, and probably the Parsi theatre quickened his evident passion for music. My memory on this point may be confused. I try vainly to remember whether he had sung to us in earlier days, as on the occasion of my two visits to his cousin's village near Korukonda at Christmas in 1914 and 1915, when singing was often the order of the time. These two visits, I ought perhaps to have mentioned before, for Ram's boyish image is indissolubly linked in my memory with the lovely landscapes of that neighbourhood. But I have not quite finished with the records of that voyage up the

river in 1918. One morning while we were all swimming I pushed Ram under the water for fun, forgetting for the moment that he was not so nearly amphibious as his friend Bapirazu. I can still see the expression of mingled panic and disgust with which he clung to the gunwale of a log-boat that happened to be near. On this expedition we both made a number of sketches for landscapes, some of which were duly realised later.

Of the other expeditions made by our little group at this period Ram heard only at second hand, but our recitals doubtless stirred his imagination and prompted him to repeat some of our experiences later for himself. In what was to prove my last year in India, as if urged by some premonition, I travelled so assiduously in my spare time that Ram and I can have met little, since our holidays largely coincided. To the following Christmas belongs the last of his Christmas cards. It bears a large self-portrait in brush line, showing that he was already interested in this method. It is not a joint effort this time, and the lettering, unlike the decoration, shows a falling-off. After this Christmas I was growing rapidly deafer and could no longer take part in general conversation, but I caught one remark of Ram's which I have always remembered. Whether it was his own or borrowed I do not know. He declared that the feet of Burne-Jones' angels had evidently been disfigured by the practice of wearing boots!

I left India in the spring of 1919, and henceforth I can only follow Rama Rao's career by glimpses and conjectures. Ram continued at Bombay till March 1920, and much of the rest of that year seems to have been spent in travelling. I notice that, of the thirteen studies in oil exhibited at the Damerla House in Rajahmundry, all but one belong to this year. The exception, a composition, belongs to the year following.

The year 1921 is not so easily characterised. The memorial catalogue suggests no great output. I have a letter dated June 22nd, written by Ram when he was recovering from a broken collar-bone, which had kept him six weeks abed and idle. The letter is mostly concerned with my own belongings, which he was evidently helping to look after. He asks to be allowed to keep

an easel and certain books which he had found useful, viz., Havell's *Ancient and Mediæval Architecture of India*, Sir Alfred East on *Landscape Painting* and an uncommonly fine series of pre-war reproductions of Turner's Farnley water-colours. The last was by that time out of print and irreplaceable, but he could not know this. I let it go without a murmur, though not without a pang! The list throws light on his interests at the time.

Late this year, says the memorial catalogue, he visited the Oriental Society of Indian Art at Calcutta. Of this important visit I would gladly know more. I wonder whether any water-colour figure compositions in the flat linear style, which appear immediately after, preceded it. I believe that he had hankerings after such a method even before I left India; but I suspect that it was the sight of the work and the influence of the ideas of the Calcutta painters which led him to adopt it almost exclusively. In February '23 he wrote to me: "Throughout this whole year I was working very hard. I cultivated a style of painting which is purely Indian and my own. Mr. Abanindranath Tagore who is the greatest artist of the Oriental arts in India now expressed that my style of painting is purely Indian and will form a new school of Indian Art, and all my pictures were highly appreciated by him." Certainly the *Krishna Leela* which is the nearest of his masterpieces to this visit in time, being painted in 1922, is also the nearest in spirit to the work of the Calcutta School. It may even reasonably claim to be regarded as on the whole his most successful picture. The undulating, lyrical rhythm, and the absence of any effort to transcend the second dimension seem (at first sight at least) to suit the purely linear method better than the solidier and more static compositions which he afterwards tried to render in it. With this picture (now, thanks to the piety of his brother, my own most cherished possession) only two others, as far as I am able to judge, deserve to be compared, the larger *Nandi-Pooja* and the *Pushpalankara*, the second of which I know only from photographs. Both these pictures date from 1923. Both show a certain revival of Western influence, Grecker poses and draperies, yearnings into the third dimension, furtive lights and shadows. It is obvious that the painter is not content with what



Nandi-Pooja
By Damerla Rama Rao

he had so happily achieved in the earlier picture. The dilettante may be conscious of incongruities in the new experiment; but I ask myself whether this feeling be more than a matter of trivial associations, such as always have to be waived in favour of a pioneer,—a pedant might even find precedents in favour of the young painter's procedure. I have seen damsels almost as nearly Greek on Gupta door-jambs; Ajanta painters used bolder shadows on a linear scheme; Kiyonaga's far deeper distances are one of his peculiar charms. It seems to be the fashion to prefer Ram's landscapes to his figure pictures. Apart from the garden landscape already mentioned I can remember none (and they seem mostly to have been painted in my time) which stands out from the work of his Indian contemporaries as the best of his figure-pictures stand out. How delightful are the forms and rhythms, how complicated and yet impeccable the scheme, of the three pictures above mentioned! How accomplished, too, within its self-imposed limits, is the representation! Never, as far as we know, since Ajanta had so much of the visible aspect of Hindu social life (if I may call Ajanta Hindu for the nonce) been used pictorially with such triumphant ease and mastery. Nay, one feature at least, which plays an important part in the living Indian scene, the droop and flow and fold of drapery, is rendered in a way which some at least of the Ajanta painters would surely have envied. I am thinking particularly of the painter of the Kempeyya Jataka in Cave I, one of whose compositions, a long group under a Mandapa, bears a distinct general resemblance to Rama Rao's *Nandi-Pooja*, and who shows a peculiar interest in the rendering of drapery. It is true that the modern achieves his purpose with the help of observations borrowed from the Greek tradition, but these are not foreign to him as they are in Europe, for they are derived from a spectacle which must have been the very double of that which he portrays. This Greekness of the South Indian spectacle struck me very forcibly when I first came to the South. I always dreamed of seeing it some day rendered pictorially, and when I saw Ram's picture at Wembley my dream came true.

Others, it seems, reacted otherwise. "Even though the subject-

matter be Indian, as when Indian figures are put into the framework of an Ajanta Vihara, there is a total failure to seize the spirit of Ajanta and to create a true Indian atmosphere. These figures are Indian studio models posed according to European academic rules, arranged mechanically in Leightonesque attitudes in a decorative pattern, but they are wholly un-Indian in thought and unnatural in expression. The artist is bound hand and foot by a scholastic tradition foreign to his own nature and is unable to find himself." Thus the (English) father of the Calcutta School dismisses (*Rupam*, January 1925, the month before Ram died) the Bombay exhibits at Wembley. It is an obvious caricature of the *Nandi-Pooja* and Ram's other pictures; but horribly stuffed as it is with epithets of war, I doubt if it means much when analysed except that, for Mr. E. B. Havell, any reminiscence of Leighton (who is out of fashion in the West) destroys 'that Indian feeling'. Leighton for him means South Kensington, studios, models, academic rules, a dead scholastic tradition, mechanical arrangement and all that. For Rama Rao Leighton stood for something quite different. He stood for the fresh and wonderful art of Greece and for the living world behind it, which was nearer to Ram's than it could ever have been to Mr. Havell's. This after all is the natural response of a youth in Ram's position, a born visualizer and artist who knows nothing of fashions and fopperies, the satieties and sentimentalities of Paris and London. It was not an attitude foreign to his nature imposed upon him at the Art School. The Art School merely taught him to do what he had dreamed. I happen to know this, but my testimony will not appear surprising to anyone who conceives the situation dispassionately.

What Rama Rao's final development would have been it is not so easy for ordinary mortals to conjecture. That it remains a matter of conjecture is one of the tragedies of Art. Of the loss which Indian painting suffered in Rama Rao's untimely death I fear to say more, for though I know better than most how great it was, I cannot easily separate that knowledge from the feeling of what I have lost myself.

Modern Bengali Fiction

BY DR. P. GUHA-THAKURTA, M.A., PH.D.

The title should really have been "Ultra-modern Bengali Fiction", as I wish only to discuss a group of young Bengali novelists of the present day, and, moreover, fiction itself is very, very modern phenomenon in Bengali literature. Strictly speaking, therefore, any discussion of modern Bengali fiction ought to include the novels of Tagore and Mr. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. But that is not my object here. It is rather with those young novelists who profess to be different from their immediate predecessors, both in method and outlook, that I am concerned. First let me name these writers in order of seniority—not the seniority of individual age but the seniority of first published works: Mr. Sailajananda Mukherji, author of nearly a dozen works, of which perhaps the best two novels are *Mahajuddher Itihas* (The Tale of a Battle) and *Ban-Bhasi* (Flood) and two volumes of short stories, most typical of the author, *Atasi* and *Nari-Medh* (The Butchery of A Woman). Mr. Mukherji is in many respects the pioneer of the ultra-modern type of Bengali fiction, and was followed by Messrs. Premendra Mitra, Achintya Kumar Sen-Gupta, Jagadish Gupta and Buddhadev Bose, each one of whom has to his credit at least two or three works of fiction of outstanding merit. Among the most notable of Mr. Mitra's works may be mentioned his novel *Pank* (Mud) and collected short stories, such as *Panchashar* (Cupid) and *Benami-Bandar* (The Nameless Harbour). Mr. Sen-Gupta's first novel is *Bedey* (The Gipsy), and the second and more ambitious work is *Akasmik* (The Unexpected); and *Tuta-phuta* (Flotsam and Jetsam) is his only book of short stories so far published. Mr. Jagadish Gupta, in spite of his admitted imitation of the methods of Mr. Mukherji, is a promising author of a book of short stories named *Binodini* and a novel entitled *Asudhu Siddhartha* (The Dishonest Siddhartha). Mr. Buddhadev Bose is the youngest and most puzzling of modern Bengali writers. Some of them are

equally good, if not better, as poets and writers of short plays, specially Mr. Sen-Gupta and Mr. Bose. Mr. Bose has been a bit of a versatile writer ever since he began to write. His first novel, rather of a juvenile type, is *Sara* (Response) and his first volume of short stories to be published is *Abhinoy, Abhinoy Noy* (The Play is the Thing, and is Not). He is the most prolific of writers of the new school and his contributions range from fiction to poetry, plays, critical essays, etc.

As a group, these writers are distinguishable by several very broad features, both of style and subject-matter, which link them up together. All of them claim to be anti-romanticists, and, naturally, followers of the cult of realism—realism often in its utter shamelessness and stark nudity, and more often than not, at the deliberate risk of what readers and critics in general would consider to be the basic doctrines of æsthetics and indispensable conditions of artistic work. This is one of the reasons why they have not yet been successful in getting the audience they rightly deserve. At the present moment, they only appeal to a small minority of Bengali readers. In Bengal, today, Tagore is more or less an intellectual necessity, which none of these writers is. Every age, somehow or other, invariably reduces itself to a catch-word or slogan. The slogan of these ultra-modern Bengali novelists is neither 'reason' nor 'restraint' nor 'golden mean', as opposed to the sickly and frothy sentimentality of the followers of Tagore, such as Messrs. Charu Bannerji, Manilal Ganguly and Manindralal Bose, or the meaningless artificiality, bumptiousness and verbosity of the earlier Bengali novelists like Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Ramesh Chandra Dutt, but their slogan is 'uniqueness'. In one word, they claim to be different from their precursors and contemporaries alike. For all practical purposes, this uniqueness may be translated into what one may call cynicism—a kind of contemptuous mental and intellectual detachment. I doubt very much if any of these writers have themselves any precise conception of realism, cynicism, or uniqueness, call it what you like. They believe realism to be more or less an end in itself. Where Tagore would be inclined to glorify real life, they would subject it to merciless scrutiny and expose it inside out

Both extremes. Their observation of things, albeit reproduced with scrupulous fidelity, is generally limited to objects which suggest ugliness rather than beauty, specifically in the works of Messrs. Mitra and Sen-Gupta, things like dirt, garbage, dust-heap, damp darkness, rotten rags and shells of eggs, stinking smell of decayed matter, dilapidated dwellings, ruins, etc. To Mr. Sen-Gupta, these are the only realism, the representation of the real in actual appearance, not by any means in accordance with intrinsic probability. Mr. Sen-Gupta was a romanticist to start with, and even in his very latest works, his characters exhibit predilections for day-dreaming and sentimentalising. The core of each one of his stories is that kind of incorrigible idealism which, at the beginning of his career, he took in large doses from Mr. Manindralal Bose. Mr. Sen-Gupta's affinity with the ultra-moderns is more an affinity of style than of treatment or attitude. He has worked hard, rather painstakingly at times, to make his style appear, at least on the surface, brisk, crisp, and staccato to such an extent that it seems at times merely decorative and artificial. Tennyson in his *Locksley Hall* spoke of "maiden-fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism". Mr. Sen-Gupta's art deserves that description, not exactly Zolaism perhaps, but the cult of Knut Hamsun and Johan Bojer. No '-ism' ever saved a book beyond a day, and I would venture to say that if Mr. Sen-Gupta does not get rid of this pernicious habit of wearisome word-painting of merely physiological sort, he might some day get lost. You cannot produce a fine novel by merely scientific recording of facts, any more than you can produce a great picture by an endless succession of photographs. Fact is not fiction. Technique cares for facts, no doubt; but Art cares for facts only as they reveal realities. The bankruptcy of realism is complete when artists, in pursuit of anatomical facts, forget to see, feel and think.

Mr. Mitra prefers a heap of ruins to a landscape, Mr. Mukherji a tenement house to a mansion, and Mr. Sen-Gupta the stench of filthy poverty to the perfume and light of a parlour. So realism has come to be associated with their names as something unpleasant—things that are physically repellent, or things that offend æsthetic

sensibilities, or very likely a combination of both. In any case, to my mind, the greatest contribution of these writers to Bengali literature has been the creation of a new technique of writing—free from wordiness and vapour of rhetoric. In it there is dramatic vitality, vividness, and life-likeness. They have freed the Bengali language from the bondage of long, windy narrations, and intensified it with the pulse-beats of the spoken word. They have scrupulously avoided pictorialness. They have given the Bengali prose a fresh lease of life. The only trouble is that technique and nothing else at the back of it has been the besetting sin of all realists in all ages. It is very easy to outdo literary rivals in cleverness and tricks of the pen, and the temptation is rather strong. These young Bengali writers must, therefore, be definitely on their guard that their technique does not get stultified, as may already be noticed in some of their works.

The influences in operation amongst this group of young writers are mainly two; firstly, the almost overpowering impression of European literature, and secondly, the strong but very legitimate desire in them to find a public which has hitherto been 'doped,' to use their own language, by the methods and practices of the old-fashioned periodicals of the orthodox school, like *Prabasi* and *Bharatbarsha*. First let me speak of the second factor. In the beginning, one or other writer of this group, notably Mr. Mukherji, could manage to get his stories published by these magazines of established reputation. But later, their works were generally ignored, especially when they formed among themselves a sort of literary coterie. But they themselves brought into being half a dozen literary monthlies, no doubt of necessity, as vehicles of their own ideas and line of thinking. Unfortunately, most of these magazines have now ceased to exist. In spite of the fact that they were of an ephemeral nature, each one of them served its purpose, because individually and collectively they succeeded in getting a section of the Bengali public to read their works and talk about them. To their credit it must be said that these writers were not intolerant of criticism, however unkind or adverse. In fact, they were almost impervious to it. At one time a violent

campaign was started against them by a now defunct periodical, called *The Saturday Letter*. First week after week, then month after month, by parody, burlesque, satire, lampoon, direct or indirect insinuation, personal vilification and what not, this paper poured out its wrath upon these writers. *The Saturday Letter*, apparently, claimed to stand for commonsense and truth and took into its head the noble mission of defending Bengali society, morals, and literature from what is known as vulgarity, indecency and pornography in modern Bengali fiction. The moderns rebutted the attack as best as they could, at least showing better taste than their literary antagonists, and disinterested spectators watched the spectacle with much amusement. Financially and in other respects, the moderns were a trifle helpless. However, the only practical effect of this campaign of *The Saturday Letter* was to make the moderns notorious, if not famous. The trouble with *The Saturday Letter* was that it had itself no constructive programme to offer in place of the things it criticized and disapproved of. During the fag-end of its career it had antagonised even the celebrities of Bengali literature, and it looked as if it was doing the madness of trying to destroy all old reputations and personalities, not excepting even Tagore. The net result was, therefore, purely negative. Looking back now, the whole affair seems so utterly grotesque and ridiculous that this washing of dirty linen in public and indiscriminate mud-flinging could really have so much sting as even to hurt any body. Bengali literature is no longer an infant; it is strong enough to withstand assaults of this nature. So, it is not surprising that the young writers have partially survived the attack, although much damaged and dispirited. At all events, the question of vulgarity or indecency in literature is so very ticklish that, except from the artistic point of view, it is difficult to draw the line. The subjective element which necessarily enters into every product of man's creative effort is precisely what gives the highest value to Art—the subject-matter being practically of no importance. What is commonly taken to be vulgarity in the hands of superior craftsmen like Flaubert, Anatole France, or Maupassant, may give to Art the enduring significance and beauty as a record of the human

spirit. In any case, Mr. Buddhadev Bose or Mr. Sen-Gupta seems very mild and harmless beside the late Mr. D. H. Lawrence or M. Marcel Proust, just as water unto wine. So the entire question boils down to precisely how much should be permitted in literature; and considering that fact and the existing conditions of Bengali life and thought, I have no doubt that Mr. Bose and his friends would now own up that they overdid it a bit. Like other provinces, Bengal is firmly rooted in established traditions and customs, in Art as well as in morals. So, in this country, for a sincere artist it would be merely a waste of time to try to shock it, just for the sake of shocking it, unless he has something more than shocking to say. The art of shocking is not exactly a vice, but it is not a virtue; it is as unnecessary as silly. But to have an ideal of inciting the people to think rationally and face the facts squarely is commendable. Literature can never be merely an advertisement of goods, damaged or perfect; it can at best within its proper limits serve as a medium for literary cults or slogans.

The influence of foreign literature on Bengali literature goes back a long way, and it has proceeded with accumulative force for nearly two hundred years. In fiction, as in other things, Tagore, of course, has tried to pour Western wine into his country's old bottles, but Western wine is much less strong in his novels than in those of the writers under review. Of the ultra-modern group, Mr. Buddhadev Bose is perhaps the most Europeanized writer. His recently published volume of short stories, *The Play is the Thing and is Not* bears ample testimony to this. He draws the characters of his stories from the Anglicized, and, to his view, the only cultured section of Bengali society. They speak the language of highly sophisticated men and women: they talk of theatre and tennis, musical comedies and champagne, of Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward, of European art, painting, music, and morals. In one word, they are the so-called 'highbrows' of modern Bengali society. But, I am afraid, Mr. Bose's pictures lack reality, simply for this reason, that he has not yet had the requisite experience to be able to paint them in a convincing fashion. They are, one and all, exaggerated figures, lacking in actuality, but certainly

they are not just caricatures. Again, his stories of this Anglicized society are altogether too full of trivialities and trifles, which give the impression of merely slices of only one cross-section of modern Bengali society—the kind of society which, I am afraid, generally consists of snobs and bores. Even as slices of life, glittering with 'talking shop' and spurious smartness, one would have hardly any cause to grumble if Mr. Bose had intended them purely as satires. Mr. Bose has a certain amount of satirical sense in him, no doubt, but being essentially a poet, he cannot help investing his creations with high seriousness. This naturally leads one to suspect that perhaps he himself prefers, and therefore paints in such glowing colours, the idiosyncracies and ideas of this highly sophisticated Bengali community. His real purpose does not appear to be quite clear. As satires, they are failures, and as serious stories, they do not always ring true. Mr. Bose is rather inclined to hero-worship; he has his periodic literary gods to whom he offers worship, and they range from George Bernard Shaw to Mr. Michael Arlen, none of whom, to laymen, would be worthy of being considered as Olympians. Undoubtedly, he is a well-read man, but one doubts if he has quite digested everything he has devoured. Except for this particular phase of his work, we have every reason to be proud of his achievement. His craftsmanship is spontaneous and effortless, his style has vigour and masculinity; and, above all, his mind has colour and variety. He is still young, but the flood of reading matter that has flowed from his pen is astoundingly large and varied. We expect he will yet give us really great things, provided in future, I venture to presume, he concentrates more on fiction of a psychological type. We have had occasional glimpses of his ability to portray characters from the intellectual and mental side, which suggests that, should he care more for the life in the mind of his characters rather than for their external mannerisms and habits only, he is likely to achieve much better results.

A different aspect of the same Western influence is to be noticed in Mr. Mukherji and Mr. Mitra. In the case of Mr. Mukherji, it is to be found in his preference for drawing material from inferior classes of people—coolies, mine-hands, day-labourers,

rustic folk, semi-educated clerks, maid-servants, etc.; and in the case of Mr. Mitra, the tendency goes one step lower—into the lower depths of humanity, such as pick-pockets, habitual drunkards, gamblers, generally men and women outside the pale of society. Mr. Mitra's *Mud* is a full-length portrait of the fallen, despised, and destitute in their shameless ugliness and distress, but painted with pity, love and understanding. In this, the influence of Russian novelists, specially of Gorkii is more than apparent. Going still lower down, Mr. Sen-Gupta delves into the life of brothels and the *demi-mondes*, but, curiously enough, on account of the characteristic idealistic tendency of his, to which I have referred before, the all-too-realistic harlots of his novels seem to be infectiously idealistic. The author has ascribed to them feelings, emotions and ideas which it would be difficult to find in them in their habitual attitudes and environments. Mr. Mukherji's small sketches of the simple, unsophisticated folk in *Atasi* are extremely powerful in their own way; in fact, these are the best he has done so far. The disciples of Tagore had never even thought of considering this section of Bengali life as fit material for fiction, far less of exploiting it. Mr. Mukherji has revealed what an ample store lies there for Bengali story-tellers to draw from. Moreover, Mr. Mukherji possesses an intimate knowledge of it. The ideas of socialism and liberation of the poorer classes from the age-long tyranny of wealth and caste, did not apparently take very long to make an impression in the minds of the Bengali youth. Mr. Mukherji's style is simple and straightforward, although lately, he is showing a tendency for unnecessary ruggedness. Most typical of his longer works is *The Butchery of A Woman*, a much more balanced work than *Flood*, for instance. In *The Butchery of a Woman* he has skilfully handled the theme of man as an eternal tyrant, merciless and brutal in his treatment of woman. It is, however, on a smaller canvas than on a large, that is to say, in the short story, that Mr. Mukherji and his friends have been most successful. And in this field, Mr. Mitra is unrivalled; for, he has the surest touch of them all. In spite of Gorkii or his other masters, he stamps each one of his short tales with his own individuality. *Cupid* is perhaps the finest example of

Mr. Mitra's art. Mr. Sen-Gupta's stories in the *Flotsam and Jetsam*, quite good in their own way, do not possess either the structural beauty or imaginative vitality of those in Mr. Mitra's *The Nameless Harbour*. Mr. Mitra's favourite theme is either frustrated love, or the love which has a way of remaining unfulfilled by some sudden turn in the course of events or some disconcerting twist in human affairs. Mr. Mitra has the right instinct for constructing the right kind of framework for his stories and builds it on a marvellous economy of words. The artistry that these writers have shown in the selection of their material, in the grouping of their characters, and the judicious choice of necessary matter, is to a large extent due to the influence of the European type of short story.

In Bengal, today, we are living in the most incongruous of all possible worlds. It is an absurdly hybrid world—a mixture of insoluble ingredients. We still suffer from the inhibitions of old antiquated ideas in art and morals, and, strangely enough, the new ideas that we often welcome are only for the purpose of just theorising upon or academic disputations. At any rate, it is a world of which any intelligent man or woman in Bengal must feel ashamed. The old path is precarious to tread on, and the new path also seems full of pitfalls. The older writers feed us on sops and soap-bubbles, and the young writers insist only on man's immediate acts and needs, means and ends, and always with a touch of cynicism. Of course, the cause of this is the Bengali youth's violent disillusionment, which is now acting on a rebound. Cynicism is inverted love; and, as Sainte-Beuve has said, nothing represents a hollow so much as a swelling. But is it altogether impossible for the disillusioned Bengali youth to make some effort to impress their fellowmen with the necessity for straight thinking and clear perception, instead of being only cynical and bitter? From their pictures of life some day we should like to feel the conviction of ascertained values of art and morals, and the vibrations of disciplined and instructed hearts.

The World View of the Gita

BY S. V. RAMAMURTY, M.A., I.C.S.

The Gita is over 2,000 years old. There is perhaps none other of the Hindu scriptures which, while it emphasizes the highest vision of Hindu philosophy, is yet so able to relate it to the everyday life of the Hindu. The Gita is not merely for ascetics, though the ascetics know no more than the Gita can tell of God. It is not merely for the plain man who is concerned with the practical way of life, though it gives him as definite a rule of life as any man may wish. The strength of the Gita is in its balance of wisdom and work, of self-realization and the loss of one's self in the Supreme Spirit. A work so comprehensive as the Gita was bound to base its teaching on a vision of the world as wide as it was possible for men to take when the Gita was written. I am here concerned in considering what was the world as the Author of the Gita saw it and whether that world view needs to be, and if so how, recast as a result of what men have learnt in the last 2,000 years.

Most of us view the world as our present-day teachers, learned in the learning of European science, bid us do. We look with tolerant understanding from our post-Copernican heights back to men who, till but three centuries ago, did not know that the Earth moved round the Sun. Aryabhatta in the 5th century A.D. did go so far as to say that the Earth moved round an axis rather than that the whole world of stars moved daily round the Earth, but he was pooh-poohed even as the same idea was scorned in Europe. It is substantially true to say that, till Copernicus, the Earth was deemed to be the centre of a world which revolved daily round it. The Gita did not know Astronomy as post-Copernican men knew. The Gita is in that sense pre-Copernican.

The science we learn not only tells us of the configuration and movements of the heavenly bodies, it also carries out an analysis of mathematical structure which is Cartesian and tells us that the world is 3 dimensional, that it is of substance matter residing in space,

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moving in time. Whether mind has a primary reality or is but a secondary quality is not of importance to science. Till recently, the space, in which matter is, has been considered to be absolute; the time, in which matter moves, has also been considered to be absolute. In the last two decades the idea has risen that space is not absolute, that time is not absolute, but a compound of the two which is not 3 but 4 dimensional is absolute. Under the world-view of Newton as supported by Descartes, the contributions of science to God are an absolute space and an absolute time. Under the world-view of Einstein, the contribution of science to God is an absolute space-time. On all views, God, if He be, is absolute. Space and time according to Newton, space-time alone according to Einstein, are somehow characteristics of God; they are part of His being.

The Gita is not only pre-Copernican, it is also pre-Cartesian inasmuch as it does not analyse the world on the simple Cartesian model which has furnished the framework for the enormous development in breadth and depth of scientific knowledge.

So much for the Gita as viewed from the background of our modern knowledge of the world. Let me now analyse the vision of the world which the Gita had.

The Gita teaches men a three-fold path—of gnana—knowledge, of karma—action, and of bhakti—devotion. This three-fold path is in a universe where there are three categories of existence—prakriti, purushas and Purushottama. The teaching of the Gita is purported to be given by the Purushottama for the release of purushas from the grip of prakriti. We are told that while prakriti holds purushas in its control, purushas are subjected to the delusion of the pairs of opposites and to the power of the three Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Thamas. Each purusha suffers from a mind—manas—which is restless, hard to curb. Through the mind, it has contacts with matter which come and go; it undergoes re-incarnation. The path of knowledge taught by the Gita is the path of Samkhya. Under the Samkhya view, so long “as mind and purusha are associated with each other, the sufferings (of purusha) will continue. Chitta (mind) must be dissociated from purusha.” The path of action taught by the Gita is the path of Yoga. Mind has to

be curbed by practice and dispassion. The Gita teaches that action without desire for the fruits of action is preferable to renunciation of action. He who endures the force born of desire and passion is harmonized. When mind free from the force of desire finds harmony with matter, purusha ceases to suffer from the grip of prakriti. Having, through knowledge and desireless action, been freed from mind, what else has purusha to do? It is to realise its true nature by losing its self in the Purushottama through devotion to Him. The true nature of purusha is therefore the nature of Purushottama. So then, we have on the one hand prakriti consisting not only of matter but also of mind, and on the other purushas who, through the grip of mind which is alien to the nature of purusha, are unable to realize their true nature, namely, the nature of Purushottama. Prakriti is spoken of as one unmanifested from which all manifested beings stream forth at the beginning of a world age. Purushottama of whom purushas are but parts is another unmanifested. What is the nature of Purushottama? In the tenth discourse, Sri Krishna gives illustrations of what Purushottama is. He is time, space, matter, motion, life, mind, knowledge, deities, all qualities including good and evil, the seed and container of all things. Elsewhere He tells us, "He is minuter than the minute, of form unimagined"¹ and that the whole universe is "one fragment of Himself."² Again He says that, "all beings are rooted in Him but He is not rooted in them" and that "as air is rooted in the Ether (Akasa), so all beings rest rooted in Him". He is being and non-being. Thus prakriti is derived from Purushottama and yet it is different from Him. How are we to understand this Being who is also non-Being, who contains all space but is minuter than the minutest, who contains time and is yet timeless, who is all the manifestations of matter and mind and yet is unmanifested? Therefore the Gita tells us that the Supreme Spirit is "of form unimagined". Vedanta tells us that the One Spirit is *Neti, Neti*—not this, not this. Sunyavada Buddhism tells us that beyond this, there is Nothing.

These are not the God and His Heaven that religions sprung

¹ VIII (9).

² X (42).

up elsewhere than in India teach, where God is the Father of humanity and Heaven and Hell are located in a pre-Copernican space. Such a Heaven and Hell have been crowded out of space by Copernicus. It is a sign of the profound truth of the Gita that, while it too was pre-Copernican, it is not opposed to what Copernicus discovered. Purushottama of the Gita reigns as supreme in the heart of things and is the container of all, whether the Earth moves round the Sun or the Sun moves round the Earth, whether in the whole of space there is no Heaven or Hell which is not also to be found on Earth, or whether the Earth has a Heaven above and a Hell below. The Gita therefore—and Hindu philosophy in general—have studied Reality from a direction where Copernicus had no place. He is to be found on the other side of Reality from which we have approached.

But Reality with all its sides is one. Synthesis is as much a part of it as analysis. The synthesis of Vedanta needs to be reinforced by the analysis of Samkhya. The Samkhya tells us that mind is a part of prakriti and not of purusha. Prakriti is thus not matter as the word is, I think, mistakenly translated, but matter-mind. Samkhya regards mind as a substance. Matter-mind is thus a substance of more complex structure than matter which, on the Cartesian analysis, is 3 dimensional. Has Cartesian analysis led us to any structure which is more complex than 3 dimensional and yet contains the 3 dimensional as a part of it? That is just what has happened through the Relativity theory of Einstein. That theory has led to a 4 dimensional space-time being regarded as the absolute form of the world. Einsteinians do not recognize mind as part of it, but space-time has been constructed in order to eliminate the relation to the observer's individuality and it is not unreasonable to hold that mind enters the structure of space-time.

I present it as a hypothesis that prakriti which the Gita and Hindu philosophy in general speak of is a 4th dimensional world of matter-mind which also includes space-time, and that in that world there are three associated qualities each of which is opposed to the other two, in place of the two qualities of positive and negative in a 3 dimensional world. This hypothesis (of which

I believe that the 2nd part can be derived from the first) is an extension of the results of Samkhya analysis. On the Samkhya view, prakriti is matter-mind. All manifestations from it are made up of three real elements—Sattva, Rajas and Thamas—as against all matter being made up of two opposite elements, positive and negative electricity. Sattva is opposed both to Rajas and Thamas. So also Rajas and Thamas are opposed to the remaining two respectively. Thus, if good and evil are the associated opposites in a world of matter, good, evil and what is both and neither are the three associated opposites in matter-mind. This involves a synthesis of opposites.

Prakriti and purusha as object and subject, as field and knower of the field, are both the same and yet different. In so far as they are the same, Purushottama who comprehends all purushas is also prakriti and therefore He is time, space, matter, mind, knowledge, all purushas including the 'shining' category of Devas. He is all that is illustrated in the tenth discourse and yet because He is different from prakriti, He transcends prakriti. No one—not even Einstein—has yet satisfactorily imagined the fourth dimensional world. Therefore Purushottama even in His lower 'unmanifested' form may be described as unimaginable. The three dimensional entities of heavenly bodies and all living things are "threaded on Him as rows of pearls on a string".¹ "All beings are rooted in Him but He is not rooted in them."² As "air is rooted in the Ether, so all beings rest rooted in Him". The reality of this three dimensional world that we see tends to be *nil* compared with the reality of the fourth dimensional world of which it is a section and therefore may be described as Maya, illusion. It is as if a volume made different patterns on the surface of water in which it floats. The patterns are unreal compared with the reality of the volume. They are impermanent.

I suggest to gentlemen who are learned in Hindu philosophy that they may take the hypothesis that I have presented as a working hypothesis and see if it is not substantially consistent with the world view of the Gita and generally of Hindu philosophy.

¹ VII (7)

² IX (4)

It is an irony of fate that, as observed from Das Gupta's *History of Indian Philosophy*, any important growth of Indian philosophy practically stopped at the middle of the 17th century, —that is to say, just when Newton was born. Yet Newton heralded the new era of human knowledge which is the era of Natural Science. Our philosophy therefore has yet not had the benefit of what men have achieved in knowledge and experience in the last 300 years. Leadership in thought and action in India has largely passed over from Sanskritists to scientists, and considering the powerful backing science has in the world which it could not have if it were not within its limits true, Sanskrit learning has to find a rapprochement with science. I have suggested to you a working hypothesis on which the rapprochement can be made. On this idea, how is the world view of the Gita to be re-presented?

The Universe consists of purushas coming from Purushottama and functioning in a fourth dimensional world of prakriti as matter-mind. A purusha attaches itself to a mind part of prakriti and is then born in the world of matter. Salvation of the purusha is its release from the mind and this release comes through knowledge and desireless action and the loss of self in the Supreme Spirit through devotion. Hindus have studied prakriti qualitatively. If prakriti is a fourth dimensional world, its quantitative study remains to be achieved in the future, so that a passage may be made from Samkhya to physics.

Need the world be to us the same mystery as it was 2,000 years ago? Are we not entitled after two millennia of thought and action to know the reality a little more than we did? May not the mystery which hid the reality from us be due to a lack of mechanism of expression, which mechanism has, been supplied to us since through European science? Let us think of these matters with reverence and also with the confidence that is our responsibility.¹

¹ The above is the substance of a lecture delivered under the auspices of the Samskrita Academy, Madras, in connection with the Gita Day celebrations.

Collision

BY K. S. VENKATARAMANI

I

The beautiful, little railway station of Akkur, new model, stands in a shady grove on an arching curve of the track, like a bird on the leafy branch of a mango tree. It is a beauty spot on the short branch line from Mayavaram to Tranquebar, the Queen of the Coromandel Coast.

The soil is fertile. All around the vegetation is rank and luxuriant though so near the sea. The cocoanut trees peer the sky. Giant banyan and stately mango cover the earth with a deep shade of solemn green. Life in Akkur seems a little idyll. The railway line gives it only a fresh and added charm, a snake-like beauty and fascination.

The little dots of fresh white buildings in the railway compound look like huts in a hermitage. The station seems a place for reverie, and no wonder even the trains move so dreamily, whistling a love tune to the bracing winds from the sea.

II

The sky was almost free and the crescent moon seemed to crawl and play with the wayward, floating shapes of thin cloud. A steady breeze from the sea was blowing in, and Akkur, standing on a little eminence of its own, received it to the full.

No. 8 had just left for Tranquebar leisurely winding her way to the lull of the evening sea.

The clock struck eight. Ramanujam had finished his work, and rose to go to his residential quarters near by, blithe as a bull to its feed after the day's hard work.

"I knew of this fate for me even on my wedding day," growled Lakshmi greeting her lord coming home after the day's work.

The growling voice was soft and rich but it was loaded with a

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heavy charge of emotion. The station master, young and alert, quick of sight and sound, felt danger in the rumbling voice.

Will the peace of the night be disturbed? How best to avert a collision?

But with Lakshmi at home everything went wrong, from the broomstick to the well. For, the broomstick was rough and long, and looked more like an instrument of chastising power. And the well stood in lonely splendour a little way off, and the South Indian Railway rejoiced in using rubble everywhere within its sacred precincts, which hurt Lakshmi's tender, unprotected sole. A bruised foot puts the feminine soul in revolt?

"What is the trouble, dear, why on the very first day you are complaining?" Ramanujam ventured to ask in a kindly and conciliating tone after a long pause, "Look around, the place is magnificent. The station stands on a little eminence of its own. . . ."

"What is the trouble!" Lakshmi cut short the glowing description, "In this forest none but bears can live. Not a soul or sound for miles around but the screech of owls, the hiss of snakes and the music of the frogs. I can't live here a day longer. Either get a transfer by wire to-night; you have been so good at telegraphing all your life for others' weal and woe, pray do it now once for yourself. Signal at once your distress to your officer, and get a transfer. Or send me home to Guntur by the night train which catches the Boat Mail. Enough have I seen of this arid life."

Lakshmi finished decisively, and flung the silver cup to her lord, which had borne as meekly as he the several dints of her temper. Ramanujam caught it nicely from the googly bowler for he had always a quick and trained eye for all moving things, from trains that fly at forty miles an hour to domestic furniture that spins eccentric circles.

The cup was meant for Ramanujam's *sandhya* prayers which would be some atonement, Lakshmi held, for his un-brahminical service on railways. Of course the train timings did not permit their proper performance at their correct *vaidic* hour with the

twilight. But better late than never was Lakshmi's creed so far as her husband was concerned.

Ramanujam turned the cup uneasily in his hands, up and down, half afraid to declare by word of mouth that it was empty. Lakshmi shot a look of scorn from the left corner of her left eye, and pointed out the well outside that shone in lonely splendour unconscious of its great part in this little drama of life. Then she softened a little, and with an air of contempt and condescension showed the tub near her.

Ramanujam stole half limping to the tub of water near her. Seeing that things were going too far even on the first day, he mustered a little courage and desired to nip the mischief in the bud.

"You call this a fit place for bears. It is the most envied spot, dear, on the whole line. The trains are few. The traffic is *nil*. Tranquebar, the Queen of the Coast, is but a station off and waits for you. Ours is a little paradise if only we know how to enjoy it well together. Enough have I slaved in junctions both night and day without rest or sleep! Here the work is nothing; indeed my pay is pension."

"Yes, indeed, your pay is on the pension scale: twenty rupees a month and no extra income. My brother will be ashamed even to own me. What you get for a month he gets for a day. He rules over the flag in another way." She made a very unkind reference to the station-master's emblem of power.

"Yes, yes, he is a very lucky fellow. Whoever thought that Sarangan would bloom into an I.C.S.! Is he now an Assistant Collector at Guntur? All can't be Collectors: then trains won't run." Ramanujam attempted humour to scatter the frown gathering like bees on Lakshmi's lotus-face, and continued in a slightly ingratiating tone, "But, why, dear, he has not been writing to you of late? When is his marriage? We can travel free to any station."

Lakshmi ignored the question proudly and asked her own. "Why have you spread out to-night so broad a leaf like an eating *purohit*?"

Ramanujam hoping that supper would have an excellent effect on

her temper and save a domestic collision whose after-effects it would take a long time of skill and patience to repair, ran through the *sandhya* with great speed letting down quickly much water slip between his fingers. Then he himself took out a broad plantain leaf and began to spread it out for his meals. He sprinkled a little water thereon, cleaned it nicely over and over again, and in subdued grunts and appropriate gestures was declaring himself ready.

Lakshmi caught him in the act and put the above incisive query.

Ramanujam dared a straight reply this time. "Because, plantain leaves grow splendidly in our compound. It is a fertile spot the like of which you don't have for many miles around."

"Then eat the leaves; for rice bags don't grow wild here, and twenty rupees can't feed two souls."

"Dear, rice bags too will grow wild for us very soon. If you would but learn a little patience and win the favour of God. . . ."

"Learn it yourself and earn first the favour of Railway gods."

"It will come with God's favour. The goods section will soon be opened, and, dear, you will have then everything for the mere asking: the finest table-rice, gram and pulse. God has fixed a generous scale of fees to the under-paid and over-worked dogs of this earth."

III

Ramanujam spoke sitting and polishing his leaf patiently with sprinkled water which rolled like drops of pearl from end to end. Lakshmi stood like a goddess in a prophetic fit of anger. Peace or war trembled in the balance like the water-drop on his own fresh leaf. Peace it proved to be.

Lakshmi, overwhelmed with a gracious mood, wheeled into the kitchen with a stately motion all her own, and slipped a plateful of cooked rice all over the leaf in such fine disorder as only an angry wife knows how to slip.

The sight of polished rice in unbroken grains of beauty swept away all taste in Ramanujam even for a manly protest. He began in between handfuls his story of pacification with increased zest,

dramatically opening another chapter of his conquest for his Cleopatra's sake.

"The local magnate is already my friend. You don't know how mighty rich he is: three hundred *velis*, two thousand acres of first-class *nanja*. Even from the station yard I can spy his hayricks and grain-heaps as high as hillocks. It is a sight for the gods."

Ramanujam had read in novels of women's delight in the tale of rich and powerful men. Why not try the effect of a neighbour's story on the peevish mind and mood of Lakshmi?

"Yes, Mr. Mudaliar is already my friend. We owe indeed this railway line to him, and this beautiful little station of Akkur is wholly a creation of his. It is of no use to others. It is his own. He asked for it and got it. Mr. Mudaliar is a member of the Taluq Board and the District Board. His proud boast is that he signs his name in such a way in Tamil that it is easily mistaken for English. He even thinks of standing for the Legislative Council. A rich man can do many magic things in this world."

Lakshmi seemed to listen to the story, Ramanujam chuckled: yes, reading maketh a full man, and novel-reading makes one a good pilot in stormy seas.

"The great Mudaliar swept into the station in all the glory of the new Auburn Sedan this afternoon to catch No. 6. He was gaily dressed like a peacock, and his white teeth shone like lightning in a cloud-spread sky. He is young and corpulent. His body gleams like polished iron rubbed a little with oil. That is the way of all old fat and blue flesh."

Lakshmi nodded leave to go on but hinted that the philosophic bits might be left out.

"Fortunately, No. 6 was late by half an hour, as the driver was kept a trifle longer by his lady love at Tranquebar. I had all the time with Mr. Mudaliar. We gave him our best chair. Though it had a broken leg it was well fixed with a country nail—our porter, Karian, is a fine fellow, and he used his inherited skill, his father was a blacksmith, to bring together a broken leg and a chair, and charge a carpenter's fee for the same! Mr. Mudaliar was very kind to me and he promised me his support. On his return he will

send us two bags of first-class *irriku semba* rice. I understand that the station-master is reckoned as part of his household and royal luggage."

Ramanujam boldly spun the tale. Half of it was fact and the other half the legitimate inferences of an aspiring, hen-pecked mind. And Lakshmi's smile was worth any bold venture or gypsy tale. Yes, there were visible signs of returning good temper. Lakshmi's face was lit with a very sly smile.

Ramanujam rejoiced beyond measure. He would have even clapped his hands for joy. But the right hand was busy gathering into a regular mound the fine grains of rice scattered all over his leaf. Thank God, it was broad enough.

"As for the goods section it is as good as sanctioned, all a question of days. You will have everything you dream of, dear, from petty greens to lordly cabbage; from choice fuel to table-rice, gram and pulse; of course, all free. Mudaliar himself exports to Colombo twenty thousand bags of rice every year, and imports in return all fruits and flowers, all dainties and luxuries from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. And everything must pass through our hands of course, dear."

"Twenty thousand bags of rice! Incredible, mighty rich he must be for that! What does he do with all that flood of wealth?" There was a subtle change in Lakshmi's voice and now one understood the native charm of her talk in peaceful moods.

Ramanujam felt the triumph of his strategy. He continued in an absorbed tone, "Yes, yes, marvellously rich these fellows are, and equally idle and vicious. The miser's hoard of three generations of sweated labour of the poor is now seeing the light of day. The young Mudaliar has a nice band of advisers, and I understand that the station-master of Akkur has an ex-officio place therein. He has already finished the liquid cash of ages. I am told that his gay march this evening was to a money-lender at Mayavaram. I have tramped from Rameshwer to Peshawar, dear, and nowhere the idle rich are so selfish, callous and low as here in our own Tamil land. Rice has cut at the root of all our manly virtues and tamarind has soured us for ages and completed the ruin."

Lakshmi was getting more and more absorbed in the story and was just beginning to discover a slender vein of poetry in her lord. Has sylvan solitude and sea-breeze such mystic effects on over-worked and under-fed men? She wondered.

Ramanujam thought that this mellow mood was a ripe occasion to ask for a favour. He had not yet progressed with his meals. He was all along waiting for soup. After serving him with rice so well, Lakshmi sat down opposite to him intent on the tale with all the grace and majesty of her static pose.

Ramanujam gently began, "The rice is rather getting cold. The place is as chill as Ooty. Some *sambhar* if you please, dear."

Lakshmi fell from Heaven.

"*Sambhar!* Is there any feast today? Why do you love this *sambhar* so wretchedly well? Now I see that it is the tamarind in the *sambhar* that has soured you, indeed, as you say."

Lakshmi repeated herself. "*Sambhar!* Is there any feast today? I have not had the time even to set my things in order or wash my face. Is it not enough to get cooked rice on the first day in a new house? Strange indeed are the ways of men! They think no better of us than as beasts of burden and toys of pleasure."

There was a strange glint in her eyes and a hollow look in her face. The malady seemed far deeper than the immediate cause of *sambhar*. Every touch of home life seemed to hurt her deeply.

Ramanujam simply collapsed. There was hushed silence for several minutes.

IV

Middle-statured, a little soft and plumpy, shining with the colour of burnished gold, Lakshmi looked a round-faced, perfect Burman beauty. But the high brow, the rising forehead, and the eagle nose and eyes, and the unfading lustre of a high-class Brahmin girl gave her a marked look of distinction and aristocratic birth to which she had really no claim. Hers was a humble birth and her classic beauty was a strange gift of the gods in the infinite mutations of life.

Her father was an agent in the household of one of the leading

aristocratic Mahratta Brahmin families of Tanjore. Though his pay was only ten *kalam*s of paddy and five rupees a month, he was the real master of the household. In such an environment of aristocratic culture and refinement Lakshmi grew till her tenth birth-day.

The great house had a sudden fall. It went into insolvency. For, the traditions of hospitality were royal without royal means, and three important law-suits went against it in all the courts. Lakshmi's father died with his chief a broken-hearted man, when she was just ten. Her mother lived only to see her married at fourteen.

Ramanujam was a remote, poor kinsman of hers. He was a bright boy at the College at the time of his wedding. But a strange ill-luck seized him almost immediately after. A wander-lust filled his mind once proficient in geography in the High School. He roamed all over India without a pie in pocket as a young *sadhu*: thanks to the beneficent railway system which winks at a free ride by all who care to smear their bodies with the sacred ash, and tell beads piously when the flying squad of ticket examiners click their fingers before them as so much of their own time and money wasted.

Somehow this roaming life for Ramanujam came to an end when a kindly and young Assistant Traffic Superintendent, recently and directly recruited to the Service, discovered this bogus young *sadhu* at Madura. He sympathised with the story of Ramanujam's wedded but truant and unfulfilled life, appointed him as a ticket-collector at Mayavaram on promise that he would take in his partner and set up home.

Ramanujam's as a ticket-collector and signaller was a splendid record of good and earnest work. He kept his promise and set up home. But even on the first day he saw that Lakshmi was too great for him, in every way; indeed, too great for the touch of man. He appeared to himself as a slender stream of water springing from obscure depths by the side of a mighty river which moved with all the majesty of a mountain-birth and inborn motion. He dared not break the lofty bunds of reserve and mix with the moving stream his humble offering of love. He was content to crawl along

by her side obeying instinctively her sweeping curves of gesture and high turns of mind.

But Mayavaram did Ramanujam one definite good. It gave him back his old school-boy love of books. And one common trait cheered him, that Lakshmi too loved reading. He became a voracious reader of books; thanks to the Higginbothams' book-stall and to the friendly relations he kept up with its clerk, who shared with him the decent view that books are in the first place for being read, then for sale to those who can buy but do not read.

Ramanujam was tired of the strenuous work and night vigils at the Mayavaram Junction for over five years. When the branch line was opened from Mayavaram to Tranquebar he had his eyes on Akkur, the coveted station on the whole line. He knew that his urban-minded partner would scarcely like the calm, the solitude and the grandeur of Akkur. But he was not prepared for the thunderstorm even on the opening day.

Ramanujam had merits of his own which yielded decisive success in many measures of life. His was the insinuating way. He had not the frank and striking force or beauty of direct power. He made a point through endless manœuvres. Usually he doubled this skill before the august presence of Lakshmi. That was the fatal error. Women hate this kind of skill, and Ramanujam had read of it even in the cheaper novels of the book-stall. But in real daily life it was impossible for him to change by magic or tuition the winding, sneaking tissues of his body or the secret glands that poured continuously this malicious stream of subtle strategy into his halting blood.

The net result was that Ramanujam was still waiting on this fateful day for his soup while Lakshmi was squatting with the full splendour of her queenly face turned on him like a search-light.

Time passed painfully and the delicate deadlock continued.

V

No. 8 on her return journey from Tranquebar was screaming at the outer as No. 13. Whistles shrieked with a vengeful noise and a petulant ire. Ramanujam was still waiting for *sambhar*, still

mounding the scattered pearls on his broad leaf. He broke his fine work at the first scream of the whistle, and scattered the heap of rice all around in anger as the one act of protest, and rushed out to receive the roaring train, crying at the top of his voice, "In the branch line they have no sense of time. They come and go early and late as they choose. But that shall never be hereafter. Where is the scoundrel, Karian?"

Karian is the prop of the whole station. He is the man whose good-will is essential for the motion of trains. But he too had for the day his share of domestic troubles. He got home dead drunk, for he made for himself eight annas more than the usual daily luck from a rustic who came with a gunny bag of excess load. What could he do in the intoxicated mood, but stagger home, break the pots and his wife's head? He too had difficulty in getting his food; for his earnings for the week never reached home as the gin-shop stood on the way. On hearing the screaming train he too came swearing and cursing as if he would blow up everything.

Ramanujam was in a rage. "You rogue, where had you been sleeping?"

"Sleeping! No, Master, I was quite awake. I had some trouble at home and my meals were not ready and I beat my wife. Ere I could finish with her and get meals, the train is roaring before time. Let her roar. I fear the driver is drunk."

"Beating your wife! Karia, to get your food!" Ramanujam wondered how such a thing was possible and so easy to a porter. But the train was screaming, and there was no time for a more elaborate investigation of the methods of Karian to get at his recipe for good and quick meals.

"Go and lower the seme-phore and see that the points are in proper position." For, on the second line there were a few empty rakes of a ballast train.

Karian went tottering to the handle to lower the seme-phore and the station-master cried out, "Karia, Karia, you seem to be dead drunk; take care, don't fall on the line and get crushed; see to the points."

"Who is dead drunk? Karian? No. The engine driver is,"

Karian roared to himself at the top of his voice and tried to lower the signal cursing and muttering, "Come, come, you strumpet, I'll break your jaw even as I broke her head just now. Not a moment of peace in this wretched work on railways."

Hardly the signal seemed to lower, No. 13 started thundering along the lines.

The key barely turned in the doors of his office room. Ramanujam had not yet reached even his coat and flag. There was a terrible crash as of engines fighting for way. The little vagabondish train ran against the ballast engine and empty rakes on the second line. No. 13 leapt out of the track.

Ramanujam stood thunderstruck. The crescent moon was struggling through a heavy cloud.

Fortunately there was no injury to life except for a hearty shake at a chill hour. No. 13 came almost empty except for Mr. Mudaliar and his gay retinue. But Mudaliar himself did not travel as an ordinary passenger but drove the engine with his mighty hand on the throttle and the driver by his side, presumably for emergencies. He was naturally proud to guide a train himself on a track which was so much his own.

Lakshmi flung aside the conventions of her life at this critical hour. She who was never afraid of collisions at home was rather taken aback at the terrific sight of riding steel and smashed timber before her very eyes. Almost immediately she was seen on the station platform by the side of her lord with a troubled face where-in anxiety shone like the cloud in the moon.

Yes, collision was in the air since eight o'clock in the evening.

Thank God that the whirlwind which sprang at home spent itself abroad.

Thank God that what came to wreck life wrecked only steel and timber.

Yes, collision was in the air since eight o'clock in the evening. Thank God that it wrecked only vagabondish trains and empty rakes, and not young and beautiful lives in their first making.

The Artist's Solution to the World Problem

BY C. JINARAJADASA, M.A., (*Cantab*)

In spite of every religion and every philosophy that exists, mankind will never give up asking certain questions concerning the origin of things. In far-off days in India, men asked: "At whose behest doth mind light on its perch? At whose command doth life, the first, proceed?" (*Kena Upanishad*). In spite of the answers given by the Upanishads, we still ask the same questions.

Till lately, in the history of civilisation, two types of answers are familiar to us; they are the solutions offered by religion and philosophy. The answer of religion is either that all life is the action of a Personal God, a Creator, or that it is the manifestation of an Impersonal Principle, an Absolute; the answer of philosophy is largely to show that in man himself is the solution.

With the rise of modern science, another answer is offered to us which, summarised briefly, is that all life is the result of a mechanical process due to forces inherent in the composition of matter itself. 'Evolution' is the word which sums up the solution of science to the world problem, just as religion sums it up in the word 'God' or philosophy in 'Unity'.

There is yet another solution to the world problem, to which so far little attention has been paid. It is that given by Art. Scarcely any seeker for truth looks to Art as having solutions to his puzzles, for mankind mostly looks upon Art, the cult of Beauty, as merely the embellishment of activities, the result of refinement and sensitiveness to civilisation. That Art may have a solution to the world problem equal in rank or value to that of religion, philosophy or science, is perhaps a novel theory.

But it is that theory which I wish to propound, though I cannot expound it here at any very great length. Indeed, somewhat as a pioneer, I have to feel my way far more by intuition than by clear

mental sight; and hence there will necessarily be many gaps in my exposition.

Let us start with an example, that of a rainbow. Suppose one were to ask, "What is a rainbow?", we shall certainly have the scientific explanation, that it is an effect due to the refraction of light, as that light is broken up by prisms made by falling rain-drops. That explanation is true. But it is only one explanation. But a second explanation, not less true, is that of Art: "A rainbow is an exquisite thing of beauty." The two truths do not contradict; nor do they supplement each other, for they move on two different planes. But what will be the effect of a rainbow on a sorrowful man or woman who sees one? It will be to suggest a "way out", for however brief a time, from the prison-house of grief, by offering pictures to the mind, or tendernesses and realisations to the intuition. Does not an artistic reaction to the beauty of a rainbow contain a solution to one part of the world problem?

I have before me as I write a small picture by Manishi Dey, the size of a postcard, of a Madras jutka and pony. The moment I saw it, I "fell in love" with it, and purchased it. My heart went out to the pony, and every time I look at him I feel that he is the archetype of all the suffering jutka ponies of Madras. Certainly he is bony, and depressed; but the artist has made him near to my heart. I know that that picture whispers to me one tiny part of the great answer which I am seeking. Opposite to me on a bracket on a wall are two brass *lotahs* picked up for a few rupees the other day in Calcutta, and a tiny earthenware cup (its worth is one-twelfth of an anna) found in Benares some years ago, and now mounted in a glass case; I know they too whisper some part of the great solution. My shelves are full of books describing this or that solution to the great problem; but so do my artist, my brassware maker, and my potter. For where Art is, there too is something of the great solution.

Who can describe what type of solution is offered by a great landscape? It cannot be stated in words; yet a solution is there. We cannot describe in words the formula for an algebraical equation; the formula is a sequence of symbols, and yet to the mathematician the sequence gives an illumination, a solution. I

know by experience that the following lines are true, for they describe the way that a landscape, or the painting of one by a great painter, affects me.

Once,

On looking from a window on a land
That lay in silence underneath the sun—
A land of broad green meadows, through which poured
Two rivers, slowly widening to the sea—
Thus as I looked, I know not how or whence,
Was borne to my hush'd expectant soul
That thought, late learned by anxious-witted man,
The infinite patience of the Eternal Mind.

What a different type of a solution to the riddle of life is offered by a great piece of architecture, for instance, that of the Taj and its attendant mosques and gardens. It is as if some great Divine Thought had descended to earth and become materialised in marble, with an aura of green trees and sunlit water. So too is the effect of Borobudur in Java.

It is when we come to music, that the solution given by Art to the great problem is profoundest and most lasting. Thus speaks Adelaide Anne Procter in her *Lost Chord*:

I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then;
But I struck one chord of music
Like the sound of a great Amen.
It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.
It linked all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence
As if it were loth to cease.

That one single chord of ten notes should link "all perplexed meanings into one perfect peace"—does not that prove that Art has a solution to the great problems? It is only when we come to the 'abstract' music of the West—its sonatas and symphonies—that we find the majestic power of music, especially in this particular aspect which I am considering of Art as offering solutions. Every

sonata and symphony of Beethoven—particularly Beethoven—has to me a solution. What that is I cannot state in words. It is the same with every musician's composition.

Consider the solution to the problem whither death leads offered in the three great "funeral marches" of Beethoven, Chopin and Wagner. They tell us of *Something*, greater, nobler, more majestic than anything we know in our human experiences, more poignant in sorrow, more radiant with hope, more certain than life itself. I think the Upanishad gives a faint realisation whither great music leads. "What no word can reveal, what revealeth the word, that know thou as Brahman indeed, not this which they worship below." Of all the three funeral marches, it is Wagner's that moves me most. It describes the life history of Siegfried—the love of his father and mother, his heroic youth, the curse on all three, his glory and his failure, the strange karma of it all—by the interblending of musical 'motives,' in a slow march so awe-inspiring and majestic, that one feels that the composer is uttering truth, describing not only why an earthly hero must cease to be but also why a whole cosmos must come to its cessation.

All who know what Western music at its greatest can be feel immediately that it was a far-reaching truth which Browning uttered when he said:

Sorrow is hard to bear and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe;
But God has a few of us, whom He whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason, and welcome; 'tis we musicians know.

So Art too has its solution. The poet, the sculptor, the painter, the architect, the musician gets a flash of that solution, and states it adequately or inadequately in his creation. Not less a great dancer also. But as to the dance, do we not know in India that Shiva is ever dancing a cosmic dance, and that the flow of His rhythm is in the clouds as they fly and in the branches as they wave? Let us certainly be thankful to the saint, the philosopher and the scientist for showing us 'the Way'; but not less thankful to the artist that he too is showing us that Way, even if his own feet are not yet treading it.

The Ancient Tamil Civilisation

BY V. NARAYANAN, M.A., M.L.

Modern writers on the history of South India are fond of pointing out the existence of a Tamil civilisation independent of the Aryan civilisation in the region south of the Vindhya. They have mainly relied on the following evidence for their theses:—

- (1) The peculiarities of the Tamil language as seen from the earliest extant Tamil poems.
- (2) The classification that is made in those poems of the five *Thinai*s and of *Aham* and *Puram*.
- (3) The references to the products of the Tamil country by the geographers of Greece and of Rome.
- (4) The references about the region south of the Vindhya in Vedic literature.
- (5) The differences in the forms of worship as found in the Aryan Vedas and the Dravidian Agamas.

But these studies of the characteristics of the Tamil civilisation are vitiated at the outset by the assumption that there was a Dravidian culture and a Dravidian race independent of the Aryan culture and the Aryan race. It is important to note that there is no reference in Sanskrit works to Dravida as opposed to Arya. The five Dravidas known to Sanskrit writers are five sections of a group of the Aryan people; the early foreign writers of Greece and of Rome refer to the whole of India as one unit, and if they refer to Tamilakam it is only as a name of a division of the country, just like a reference to Bengal as the 'Ganges' and to Ceylon as 'Taprobane.' I shall now deal with the five classes of evidences *seriatim*.

Firstly, as to the peculiarities of the Dravidian language and of the Tamil language: No systematic study was made of the words or of the grammatical forms prevalent in early Tamil. A systematic attempt was made in this direction by the late Mr. R. Swami-

natha Ayyar. The evidence that he had gathered and published serves to show that the peculiarities of the Tamil language as regards grammatical form and construction are common to the Prakrit languages, and that the vocabulary of earlier Tamil bore close affinities to the vocabularies of the Vedas and the earlier Prakrits which prevailed in the Punjab regions. Much emphasis is laid by modern writers on the scanty references in Vedic literature to gold, ivory and pearl; and inferences are drawn that these were therefore the special products of the Tamil country. But these inferences are based on the mistaken notion that the Vedas embodied the entire civilisation of the early Indians. The Vedas and especially the Mantra and the Brahmana portions were manuals prepared for use by the adherents of a special school of worship. There are indications in these compilations which point out that these Mantras and Brahmanas were not written for the occasion but were selections from the earlier poets which were considered of special efficacy when used as magical incantations at Fire oblations. A later attempt in the same direction is by the Sutrakaras who selected passages from these compilations for use on the occasions of the several ceremonies prescribed by them for the householder. Although the selected pieces (which are arranged in the order in which they are to be used at the rituals) contain occasional references to followers of other schools of worship, those references themselves indicated that the dissentients also belonged to the same race and spoke the same language and were brought up under the same cultural influences. It will be as vain a task to re-construct the ancient Aryan civilisation from the Vedic Mantras and Brahmanas as to attempt re-constructing the ancient Tamil civilisation from the eight anthologies and other relics of early Tamil literature. Both the Vedas and the Sangam works are anthologies, and anthologies with definite purposes. The Vedas were compilations from the earlier Vedic poets of passages which in the opinion of the compilers had value as magic. The Sangam works were anthologies from earlier Tamil poets made by grammarians in support of their own theory of the *Thinai*s. Just as in the Vedic Mantras there are indications that offerings were

not always made to the deities through Fire, there are indications in the Sangam works that the early Tamil poems did not necessarily conform to the Procrustean doctrine of *Thinai*s; but naturally because of the object these anthologists had set before themselves, one cannot expect much evidence about matters not falling within their scope.

Thirdly, references to gold, ivory and pearl would naturally be few in the Vedic mantras; but it is important to note that it is not merely the enemies of the Vedic school but their friends also that are described as having plenty of ivory, pearl and gold. If the products were peculiar to the Tamil country, how is it that the words for ivory and elephant are derived from Sanskrit? If ivory was known to the Greeks by the Sanskrit name *Ibha-danta*, then it must either be a North Indian product, or the Tamil and the Sanskrit words for ivory must have been the same even in those early days. In other words, advocates of the theory of an independent Tamil civilisation are faced with a dilemma. They have to face the Scylla of identity in language or the Charybdes of identity in one important characteristic of civilisation (namely, the articles of value). The word for pearl is another instance. Of course it is easy to say that the Sanskrit word *Mukta* came from the Tamil word *Muttu*, but such an answer is unconvincing. Pearl was apparently called *Mukta* because it did not grow in bunches, but grew separately, a single pearl in an oyster. That the word *Mukta* or *Muktaphala* was used in Sanskrit in distinction with the bunches or *Kulas* of fruits is seen from the nomenclature for single verses and for bunches of verses linked together. The former is called a *Muktakam* and the latter *Kulakam*. The same nomenclature is copied by Tamil grammarians; and one is familiar with *Kulai*, the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word *Kula* for bunches. As regards gold, references in Sanskrit indicate the several varieties of gold that were current in Northern India in the early days; and the names of these varieties themselves indicated the sources from which gold came. Many of these sources are to be found in Northern India. Similarly, elephants were also classified according to places or forests wherefrom they were obtained, and the names of these places indicate that elephants were not peculiar to South India alone.

Next, the absence of numerous references to the regions south of the Vindhyas in early Vedic literature proves only that the Fire Cult was confined to a particular region in North India. In fact, references are similarly very few as regards large portions of the country north of the Vindhyas. The region of the Uttara Kurus was held particularly sacred by the followers of the Fire Cult, as many of the elaborate sacrifices and rituals were conducted in that region. It is therefore natural to expect more frequent references to that region than to the other regions of India in Vedic literature.

The two forms of worship, one of offering sacrificial oblations through Fire and the other of worshipping images, have been in existence in India side by side from very early ages. Worship of God through images seems to have appealed more to the popular imagination, while the worship through Fire was confined to a small group of persons who had specialized in the rituals elaborated in the Mantra and Brahmana manuals. In course of time the popular Agamic cult also came under the control of a special priesthood who performed elaborate rituals prescribed in the Agamas. That the Agamas existed in the early days, although they were considered heterodox by the Vedic school, is seen by the discussion of their evidentiary value by the Sutrakara Badarayana. The distinctions between the Vedic and the Agamic rituals are also to be seen in the daily life of the people. To the follower of the Vedic school the natural way of the disposal of the dead would appear to be to offer the dead body as an oblation to the gods through Fire, while to the follower of the Agamic school burial would be a natural way of disposing of the dead. Worship of the departed ancestors would take the form of the offering of funeral oblations through Fire or through a Brahmin, who was considered to be an incarnation of Fire; while ancestral worship would take the form of erection of memorials and statues to the departed which could be worshipped in accordance with the Agamas in the same form as the Icons of the several deities. Agamas existed in Sanskrit from the earliest times, and it would be idle to contend that they were translations of Agamic works in Tamil or in other Dravidian languages. Similarly, in the earliest Tamil

poems now extant, we find indications not only of Agamic forms of worship but also of the Vedic sacrifices. From the discovery of old burial urns in certain deserted places in South India, it would be rash to draw the inference that the earliest civilisation of the Tamils knew of only one way of disposing of their dead: nor does the absence of such burial urns in Northern India prove conclusively that the whole of Northern India had adopted the Vedic method of disposing of their dead. It may be that the ravages of time are much more complete in Northern India than in the South. It is interesting to note that a *Kula* or group of statues of ancestors, earliest in point of time, has been discovered only in Northern India.

I have endeavoured to show that the evidences from which modern historians of South India reconstruct with the aid of their imagination an independent Tamil civilisation are, all of them, inconclusive; that they have no evidentiary value at all, because of the places whence they are culled; and that, on the other hand, the very sources of these 'evidences' contain indubitable proofs of an identity of culture throughout India.

Wanted a Synthesis of Ancient Indian History

BY PROF. M. VENKATARAMAIAH, M.A.

(Principal, V. R. College, Nellore)

Of the achievements of historical scholarship during the last one century, nothing is more noteworthy than the reconstruction of the story of India's past. That which was completely shrouded in myth and legend has been brought to light; and with the help of Archæology, Epigraphy, Numismatics and Literature—Indian and foreign—a connected account of the history of the country for a period of four thousand years has been made possible. From the days when advanced civilisation and culture flourished at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus Valley (about 3000 B. C.) down to 1200 A. D. when the Turkish and Afghan armies swept over the country, the successive phases of history can now be recounted in broad outline with a fair degree of accuracy. There are of course numerous gaps to be filled and many dark spaces to be illumined. But the activities of the numerous scholars—mainly Indian—devoted to original research and investigation give the hope that, within a generation, it will be possible to have as full a history of our country as that of Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt and the Near East.

The work, however, that has been so far done requires to be synthesised; for it is not yet utilised by writers with a view to bring out prominently the central and dominant features in the development of the country and the evolution of its history. Historians of the type of Mommsen, Bury and Flinders Petrie have not yet considered it worth their while to direct their efforts to the history of our land. Books like those written by Vincent Smith and Raichaudari deal only with the dry facts of political history. The writings of scholars like Jayaswal throw light on some special aspects of the subject

or on particular phases of civilisation. All this is like the preliminary work of the explorer in relation to the work of the geographer whose business is to co-ordinate the results of exploration and discover, with reference to any particular part of the world, the relation existing between man and his environment. It is work of this sort that is now necessary in the field of Indian history.

The task of the historian consists not merely in the assembling of facts arranged in chronological order, but in their interpretation with a view to explain the nature of their sequence and the vital factors that guided the motives and actions of persons responsible for the events. Changes, as all are aware, are brought about not by any extra-human time-spirit but by conscious forces swaying men and women, and especially the leaders who are looked up to as guides by the people in mass. It is such a study of changes that has now to be taken up by the historians of our country.

The failure, so far, to accomplish this task has resulted in students not gaining a correct impression or having before their mind's eye a general picture of the history of India. It has also led many to think that there is not anything inspiring or ennobling in that history. There are many who believe that while a striving after the ideal of freedom and beauty is the dominant note of the history of Greece, and the attempt at bringing together under one system of law and order people belonging to different countries and races is the moving force behind the history of Rome, there is not discoverable any such tendency to give meaning to the events in the history of Ancient India. And the consequence of this belief is that even among Indians the study of the history of India occupies a place much below that occupied by the study of the history of Greece, Rome and England.

This result is all the more deplorable because the attempt at synthesis and co-ordination made by some historians is entirely from the political standpoint—which is not the right standpoint in relation to Ancient Indian history. Because the Indians are at present subject to foreign supremacy and were also occasionally subject to the rule of foreign dynasties in what is generally known as the Muslim Period—although all Muslims were not foreigners—and

because this foreign domination was the outcome of the preceding political disintegration and warfare among rival kingdoms, it has been laid down by many historians widely read that this was the vital feature of Indian history in ancient times and that this history is merely a story of successive hordes of foreigners invading and subduing the land, of the setting up of numerous States and the never-ending rivalry and warfare among them. The enormous space given to dynastic wars in the existing books on the subject lends colour to this view.

But this is a false reading and an incorrect understanding of the history of our country, and it is so for two reasons. In the first place, it exaggerates the number and importance of the so-called foreign invasions and internal wars. In the second place, it misses what is really the vital element in the history of our country, *viz.*, the unbroken continuity and the vigour of its cultural, religious and social system. The latter is the correct standpoint from which one has to look at the subject. Then alone is it possible for one to understand wherein consists the true genius of the people of this country and their inherent strength, and in what respect they differ from the other great nations of the Ancient World, —the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Persians and the Romans. If, unlike these peoples, India is still living, it is because of the uniqueness of her culture, religion and social organisation. A synthetic view of Indian history should take this as its central theme and group round it all other phases of the nation's activities. It is this that gave life to the India of the past and that has left permanent marks behind it.

Political historians are generally apt to exaggerate the importance of foreign invasions and domestic wars. The only corrective to this is to draw up a list as it were of all the foreign invasions of India from the days of recorded history, to note the duration in time and mark the extent of the territory affected by each of the invasions and the permanent results left behind them, and compare all this with a similar list as regards countries like Greece, Germany, France and Italy during a corresponding period of time. Such a comparative study will make it clear that in the long stretch of centuries

between the Age of the Rig Veda (2000 B. C.) to the coming of the Afghans and the Turks (1200 A. D.) India was perhaps less subject to foreign invasions than several other famous countries in the world, and that it was only a narrow corner—the North-West and a part of the West—that was affected by them. To regard these as constituting the real history of the country will lead to as false a perspective as the view that the Gallic invasions, the Hannibalic invasions, the attacks of the Cimbri and the Teutons and the invasions of Mithradates are the central events in the history of Rome, ignoring the unification of Italy and the Mediterranean world under Roman leadership and her system of colonisation, transport, law and citizenship. It is not right to infer that, simply because more information is available or has been gathered on the subject of invasions, they are intrinsically more significant.

The same is true of domestic wars. It was after several centuries of internal strife, of feudal rebellion and civil war, that countries in Europe attained political unity; and some of them achieved that unity so late as the nineteenth century. The wars between rival kingdoms in Ancient India—taking the vast size of the land—were not proportionately more numerous or more disastrous, and there is no reason why they should be taken as forming the central feature of Ancient Indian history.

What appears to have been the main problem in Ancient India was the devising of ways and means for enabling the people of this vast country to live as members of one family. A real community of life could not have been based in those times on allegiance to a common political head or government. Attempts made by monarchs like Chandragupta, Vikramaditya and Harsha in that direction achieved only a partial and temporary success. And it could not have been otherwise. The nature of the country, its large size and the existence of numerous physical barriers—mountains, forests and deserts—between one part and another, placed serious obstacles in the way of political unification. The absence of good and rapid means of transport was the characteristic feature of those days. Stray military expeditions over long distances might have been possible, but to hold all the country for any great length of

time under one government was impracticable. Armies required for this purpose could not be marched rapidly from place to place. This accounts for the tradition that gained ground that normally the country consisted of fifty-six States. Conditions are now quite different. Science has conquered space and distance and physical barriers have ceased to be such. More powerful than the triumph of science is the modern discovery of representative government which has made possible the formation of big States based on popular consent instead of military force. It is these that have changed politics in India at the present day as in other countries, and community of life based on common political allegiance bids fair to become a permanent feature of our future history.

To the leaders of Ancient India an attempt to found an all-embracing empire based necessarily on force appeared to be an impossibility and they did not direct their efforts into that path. On the other hand, they found from experience that the existence of numerous States in the country was not an unmixed evil, although occasionally it led to wars, bringing, as all wars do, disasters, misery and suffering in their train. Most of the States in Ancient India were fairly big in size—as big as modern England, France, Germany, etc. They were not like City-States, small in extent, with few opportunities for people to have a broad outlook on life or develop a many-sided activity. In each of the Indian States there was free scope for all kinds of development. Moreover, healthy rivalry existed between State and State and monarch and monarch and this resulted in the culture of the country becoming rich, many-sided and widely distributed. The capital of every kingdom became the centre of art, literature, architecture, industry and trade. Each kingdom had its own universities, temples and places of pilgrimage. With one Government over the whole country, India could not have produced so many styles of art or so many centres of greatness. It would have been fatal to the variegated development of the creative faculty.

There was also another extenuating circumstance. Most of the foreign invasions of the country were in their results like the movements of immigrants into America, Australia and other sparsely

inhabited countries of the present day. India is a country of vast extent and in ancient times population was thin. There were large areas of waste and forest land to be cleared and brought under cultivation. Peoples from Central Asia penetrated into portions of the country just as Germans, Italians, Poles and Russians poured in their thousands into the United States until the prohibition of immigration in recent years. And most of these invaders became in two or three generations completely absorbed into Indian society, embraced Indian religion and were recognised as belonging to one or other of the four castes. All this was similar to the process of Americanisation which has been transforming immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, unacquainted with free and democratic institutions, into good American citizens cherishing the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. It is this capacity to assimilate the alien populations—however savage and ferocious they might be—that characterised the civilisation of Ancient India and was the outcome of the elasticity and flexibility of her social and religious institutions.

It is hoped that Ancient Indian history will be written and studied from a correct standpoint and that there will be a proper understanding of the relative importance of the great movements of the past.

Can We Accept the Round Table Scheme?

BY "A SCHOLAR"

Some eminent Indians went to London to attend a Conference with the representatives of the British Parliament. Many of them had refused to put their case before the representatives of Parliament when they came out to India, because they came as a 'Commission.' Now the same politicians were willing to put their case before another body of representatives of the same Parliament, because now it is a 'Conference' which, by the way, has, though sheer perseverance, secured official recognition for the title of Round Table Conference. The Indian politicians and leaders went to London to demand 'Dominion Status' and they returned with 'Responsibility at the Centre', securely fastened with many reservations and safeguards.

The Congress leaders have been set free, and it is hoped that they will consider the Round Table Conference Scheme for the future Government of India. The following are the main prominent features of the Scheme:

1. The future Constitution of India will be of a Federal nature.
2. The Indian States will join the Federation.
3. The Provinces of British India will be re-constituted on a more rational basis.
4. The Provinces will be completely autonomous States.
5. The Federal Government will be responsible to the Federal Parliament, with *necessary* safeguards and reservations for the *transition stage* until India becomes a full Dominion.

An expert Committee is to be appointed for further consultation with Indian leaders and to draft a Constitution. A Boundary Commission will take up the question of re-constituting the

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Provinces. We had already a Commission and a Conference, and now we are to have a Committee. The Constitution that we have to draft must be such as will place India in a position of equality with the Dominions automatically, without any further need for commissions and conferences. Any mistake at this stage is sure to necessitate fresh commissions and conferences in another ten years. So the whole scheme has to be very carefully considered.

It is accepted by all that the Provinces have to be re-constituted. There is no reality about the present Provinces. The Congress scheme of Provinces will be an acceptable one for the future Government of India. Some alterations in details may be necessary. I assume that the following can be the major Provinces:

Assam, Bengal, Behar, Hindi Area (C. P. and U. P.), the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sindh, Gujerat, Maharashtra, Utkal, Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil and Kerala.

(Then there are small areas like Coorg and Berar.)

If the Bombay and the Madras Presidencies are so split up, Bombay will cease to be a Provincial capital, and perhaps Madras also. They will have to be 'Free Cities'. I assume that Poona will be the capital for the Mahratta area, and Surat or Ahmedabad for the Gujerati area; similarly Bezwada may be the capital for the Andhra Province and Trichinopoly for the Tamil Province (being in the centre and easily accessible from all parts of the Tamil districts).

If all these Provinces are to be autonomous units of an All-India Federation, in which all the Indian States will come in, as is proposed at the Round Table Conference, what are the consequences? What chances have the Indian democratic forces to function in such a Constitution? Even with full Provincial Autonomy and responsibility at the Centre, what chance has such a Constitution to function smoothly along the current of nationalistic feeling in India? What reservations and safeguards must be provided on behalf of Indian nationalism in such a Constitution? These are points that must be considered.

At present, the chief Provinces have a Governor each at the head. There are nine of them. In the future Constitution, Burma goes out. And yet we must have about fifteen Governors, besides the Chief Commissioners for smaller areas and the Free Cities. Who will be the Governors? Public men from England? We have only three such Governorships now. Are we to raise it to fifteen? Or, are the Governors to be selected from the Civil Service? We have six such Governors now. Every one knows what Provincial Autonomy would mean with about fifteen I.C.S. Governors in India and about five I.C.S. Chief Commissioners. Then the only other choice is to have fifteen Governors and five Chief Commissioners selected from among the public men of India.

If we can have all the Provinces and Cities with Indian public men as Governors and Chief Commissioners, assisted by a Cabinet of popular Ministers responsible to an elected Legislature, and this immediately, then the Federation will work. Then the minor details can easily be settled. Are the Governors to be nominated or elected? Can a popular Governor be his own Chief Minister also, as is the case with the President of the United States? Or, should there be a Governor *above* the parties in the Legislature? Should the Ministry be removable or can it be given a fixed tenure, but under the control of the Legislature? These are details that can be easily settled, if the main principle is accepted.

But if we are to have about twenty heads of Provinces, some appointed from England, some recruited from the I.C.S. and a few nominated from among the public men of India, Provincial Autonomy will be a sham. There must be some reserve powers for such heads of Provinces and the time will never come when the transitional period will be over. The prime necessity is that the heads of Provinces in the next Constitution must be Indians outside of the administrative machinery, that is, that they must be chosen from among the public men of India. If this can be got without any conditions, then there is little to be considered. But if some price has to be paid for this, then what should that price be? This is the problem that I consider.

I am prepared to surrender Provincial Autonomy, in order that

India may not have foreign and I.C.S. Governors with their patronage, durbars and State receptions. If the Provinces are not to be autonomous, what is the authority to control the Provinces? It cannot be the Federal Government. Then the only alternative is that the whole of British India should be under a unitary form of government, and the Provinces will be only parts of this unitary government. The Provinces shall have such powers as are devolved on them by statute, both in respect of legislation and administration. The real power will be in the Central Government for British India. The Central Government shall be a full sovereign State and will be the unit for federation with the States. The Federal Government shall be quite different from the Government for British India.

Each of the Provinces shall have a Governor (elected or nominated) but never an official, with a popular Ministry responsible to a fully-elected Legislature. These Provincial Governments are not autonomous. They are subject to the Central Government for British India. They will be glorified District Boards, with wider powers for legislation and administration and higher status. The size of the Legislature and of the Ministry must depend on the area of the Province—say, for the Legislature there can be not less than forty and not more than one hundred and twenty members, and the Ministers can be not less than three and not more than six.

The Government of British India shall be vested in a Governor-General advised by a Cabinet, responsible to a fully-elected Legislature, as is now proposed for the various Provinces. This Government shall be fully autonomous. The Legislature can have about three hundred members, say about two members for every million population. The British Parliament shall have no direct control over this Government. All the appointments shall be made by the Government of British India and none by a member of the British Cabinet. The Governor-General shall be appointed by the Crown.

The Federal Government shall be vested in a Viceroy with a Federal Executive and a Federal Parliament. The method of representation to this Federal Parliament shall be decided by the federal units. None of the constituent States (including

British India) are *under* the Federal Government. The Federal Government's jurisdiction shall be well defined in the Constitution and all the residuary powers shall be in the constituent States. The sources of federal revenue also shall be clearly defined. There need not be any dyarchy in the Federal Government. During the transitional stage, there can be an irremovable executive, controlled by the Federal Parliament. It is much better to have a unitary government, than to have a government partly composed of Ministers responsible to the Parliament and partly those who are responsible to the Viceroy. And even this technical responsibility of the Ministers to the Parliament, circumscribed by all sorts of safeguards and reservations even for a transitory period, will cease to have any value. Let the Ministers be irremovable. All the items of the budget must be subject to the vote of the Parliament. But the Viceroy can have powers of veto and certification.

If Muslims and other minority communities want separate electorate, let them have it. But there must be some way to automatically terminate such separate electorates, with the full consent of the community. Some device can be found out for recording such consent. I propose the following plan: The communal representation is conceded on the ethical principle that no minority community shall be exposed to the coercion of the majority in the State. I think that the same ethical principle must be applied to the individuals in the community. If an individual belonging to a community to which special representation is conceded, wishes to vote in the general constituency, he shall have that privilege. The community shall not coerce him against his convictions, for the mere accident of his being born in that community. The number of seats reserved for the community through separate representation shall diminish in proportion to the number of members of that community joining the general electorate, in each succeeding general election. Now, on account of the communal representation, there are many individuals belonging to such communities who are practically denied a vote; they cannot vote outside of the communal electoral roll, and they do not want to participate in communal election.

My central point is that what is now claimed and conceded for the various Provinces may be claimed and conceded for India as a unit. It will be found that the subjects in which safeguards and reservations are wanted are mostly federal subjects—external loans, financial obligations, defence, foreign relations and others. These things can go outside the control of British India, and even outside the scope of technically responsible government. One need not worry much about responsibility on paper. After all, the responsibility at the centre secured at the Round Table Conference is of a very diluted nature. It is much better that complete sovereignty, free from control of British Parliament, is secured for the whole of British India. The affairs of British India, just like the affairs of the States, shall be placed outside the scope of Parliamentary legislation. When a stable and strong Government is established in British India, then the Federal Government may be handed over to a responsible Ministry. Let this be the transitional stage.

The Indian States will not join a Federation if the federating units are the *people* of the States and not the State Governments. If India is split up into twenty small Provinces, with official Governors and Chief Commissioners, and if the Federal Government can interfere with the provincial affairs even to the extent of supervision during the transitory stage (in which the States will not *openly* participate), practically the autocracy of the States will find its way into the administration of British Indian Provinces, instead of the tide of democracy and nationalism in the British Indian Provinces trying to wash away the autocracy of the States and the Provincial Governors. If, on the other hand, the whole of British India is under a democratic unitary government, with completely democratic Provinces as agents of the Central Government, and if such a British Indian Government federates with the States, it is then that Indian nationalism and democracy can exert influence over the States.

The disappearance of the official Governors and their replacement by popular Presidents will have a very healthy influence over the ordinary life in India. This I consider the first thing that must be achieved and no price is too much for winning this end. The

high placed I.C.S., the undemocratic wealthy people, all of them, all the title-hunters and all those people who hang about the Government Houses for honours and patronage, will lose the prop on which they lean. Further, splitting up of India into autonomous Provinces and the consequent loss of the sense of unity and nationalism is too big a price to pay for the Provincial Autonomy and All-India Federation with responsibility at the Centre, all these being mere moonshine with twenty Governors and Chief Commissioners, assisted by the autocracy of the States.

The idea of a Central Government for British India alone and of making this the unit for federation with the States was discarded at the Round Table Conference, presumably on the ground that it will make the Centre clumsy with two Governments. Perhaps the assumption was that the same Governor-General will be the head of the British Indian Government and also of the Federal Government, with two Parliaments and two sets of Ministers. This will be clumsy. Yet that was the case in pre-War Germany, where the Kaiser of Germany was also the King of Prussia. But in my scheme, the Governor-General for British India is different from the Viceroy for the whole of India. There is still some room for objection on the ground that the same city will be the capital for British India and also for Federal India. For one thing, that is the case with Germany now, Berlin being the capital of Prussia and also of the Reich. Even if this is a real objection, let Bombay, which ceases to be a provincial capital in the scheme of provincial re-distribution, be the capital for British India, leaving Delhi as the capital of Federal India.

Another objection that I anticipate is that if the whole of British India is under one unitary government, then the Central Government will be far away from the distant parts of the country, and that as such there may be inefficiency in the administration; if there are strong governments in the Provinces also, this defect could be got over, and as such, in the interests of efficient government, it is necessary to maintain strong governments in the Provinces also. This cannot be done if the Provinces should become mere subordinate parts of a big State. If the steel-frame

wants re-inforcement, let there be four Governors, dividing the whole of India into four administrative areas. These Governors will be mere parts of the administrative machinery. They will have no courts, durbars, State receptions, and such other appurtenances of royalty, which the Governors now enjoy. The present Inspectors-General and Commissioners of the various departments in the Provinces can remain. But all social functions attached to the heads of areas, like durbars and power to recommend for honours and titles, will be vested in the Ministers of the Central Government and in the Presidents of the Provinces. The I.C.S. should take its natural position in the State, *i.e.*, that of State servants. This is the only way in which the people can be placed *above* the Government. And yet the steel-frame, *i.e.* the departments, will maintain their efficiency through the hierarchy of Governors, Inspectors-General, District Officers and Sub-Officers in the districts. It is necessary that the Government machinery, to carry out the instructions of the Ministry, should not lose its efficiency.

Another objection to a unitary government for the whole of British India is that if the Provinces are mere subordinate parts of the central State, then this central State may not be responsive to the needs of the various Provinces with their varying cultures, traditions and requirements. This can be remedied by giving power to the Provinces to legislate on such matters as are of a purely local nature, provided such legislation is not against any enactment of the Central Legislature. There is no need to fear that the central State may thrust on the Provinces legislative measures which, considering the requirements and conditions of the Province, may be objectionable to the provincial feelings. In all such cases where the subject of legislation is not of a vital nature to the whole of British India, there can be made provision for local options. Everybody knows that in certain parts of India there is a super-abundance of local patriotism, and there must be enough security given to such Provinces.

If complete responsibility can be given to the Federal Government with no safeguards and no conditions; if the Provinces can have their Governors according to their choice, and if these Pro-

vinces can have absolute autonomy; and if the Princes will join such a Federation, my scheme needs no consideration. But if reservations are necessary, however temporary their nature may be, in the Federal Government and also in the Provinces; if complete autonomy cannot be given to Provinces with Indian Governors and Indian Ministers; then the Federation scheme approved by the Round Table Conference needs considerable revision, there must be considerable safeguard for the interests of the people. I believe that the above plan gives the line in which the Round Table Scheme may be revised.

I wish to make a practical suggestion. Each of the great political parties in India, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Liberal Federation and the South Indian Liberal Federation, should immediately hold their sessions and decide on general principles. Then each such organisation should appoint an accredited leader to negotiate on its behalf, giving its representative full plenipotentiary powers to negotiate, and to decide. The organisations must undertake to abide by their decisions. If, after that, these plenipotentiaries meet and discuss, there is a finality about it. Each of these organisations must take courage into their hands. They may have to lose on some counts, they will gain on other counts. If Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jinnah and Sir A. P. Patro can be given full powers to negotiate on behalf of their respective organisations, and if the organisations undertake to accept whatever they thought was acceptable, then Dominion Status for India will be a reality. If every such representative has to account for his actions before a big body after every item of negotiation, then there is no end. The fight has reached such a stage when the tail shall not wag the dog. There must be some leaders, whose word shall be a command for the following. Democracy and individual will are for times of peace.

Will these four big parties appoint their plenipotentiaries and settle the question once for all?

“Wanted a Bridegroom”

BY N. R. DEOBHANKAR

I

A few students were lounging in Vishwanath's room in the Senior Hostel. It was the end of the term; the examinations were nearly over.

“What luck today, Ajodhya?” asked Vishwanath of his friend.

“Any new vacancies?”

“Today's nickle over *The Trumpet* is a sheer waste,” the latter replied. “Out of the thirteen ‘wanteds’ only five refer to graduates. The rest ask either for a bride or a bridegroom. The paper is becoming nothing but a matrimonial agency,” he added flinging away the disappointing sheet.

These two had finished their B.A. papers and were staying on just to postpone their parting from the College. The day of beginning Life of which they had dreamt so long was at hand. How grim was the reality! They were already looking about for employment in anticipation of the University results.

“Why do you people waste time hunting for jobs when you might as easily secure a profitable wife?” asked Gajapati, a second-year student. “Look at this, for instance; ‘Wanted a bridegroom for a young and beautiful—’.”

“Oh, drop that vulgar stuff, my dear fellow,” interposed Ajodhya. “It makes one hot with shame just to see the beastly thing in print. Imagine what it must be to the poor creature who is thus put on auction! Where has our sense of decency vanished? To describe the points of a girl in the columns of a newspaper as if she were a filly for sale!”

“Leave alone all that for a while, and listen to this—you really must; ‘A high-caste virgin of sixteen with fair complexion’—.”

“I'll fair-complexion *you*, my lad, if you don't cut that rot,” roared Ajodhya again. “How can you revel in that slop?”—

and Ajodhya warmed up to his pet aversion and was in the middle of his harangue when the warning bell was heard. "I say, it's time," he ended abruptly, "I must be off and get ready for this hockey match."

"He is getting more and more superior everyday," grumbled Gajapati as Ajodhya left. "Why can't a fellow read a matrimonial notice without being snubbed and preached at by every Senior who fancies himself a Sir Galahad?"

"The sight of Ajodhya's back has stimulated your eloquence," laughed Vishwanath, enjoying the youngster's discomfiture.

"Gajapati has got the inferiority complex with regard to Ajodhya," rubbed in Kameshwar, another second-year boy. "Every time he argues he gets worsted and takes it meekly as long as Ajodhya is there."

"Nonsense, my boy", protested Gajapati, "what is he to me that I should care? Look here, I have got an idea. Let's go to the play-ground. I'll tell you as we watch the game."

"Now then, youngsters," laughed Vishwanath, smelling mischief, "you are up to some nasty trick or I am much mistaken. Don't forget the respect due to us Seniors."

"What rot!" answered Gajapati, "We are Socialist Democrats. We recognise no Seniors and Juniors."

"What is a Socialist Democrat, Gajapati?" asked Vishwanath.

"Oh, I know your game," replied Gajapati with a laugh, "I won't be drawn into your snare. No more argument for me today. Thank you."

"I applaud your wisdom, my friend," answered Vishwanath, "I wish it wasn't so rare."

II

One morning, a few days later, the postman delivered quite a conspicuous assortment of mail into Ajodhya's hands: two envelopes and a flat oblong packet. One was evidently his sister's letter. But the writing on the other two was unfamiliar. Both bore the post-mark of Rishikund. Being curious he took up the packet, cut the string, slit the wrapper and—stood gazing in bewilderment at

the likeness of a pretty girl, a total stranger! What could this mean? Seeking for a clue, he tore open the envelope and read hastily. ". . . his communication through *The Trumpet* office . . . brother's daughter. . . hardship of dowry. . . photo as requested. . . " Mystery piled upon mystery!—Then in a flash he guessed the truth—can it be one of those beastly jokes so popular in College? . . . Perhaps it was the doing of that ass Gajapati. He must have forged a letter to one of those infernal bridegroom hunters. What cheek! He must teach the young puppy a wholesome lesson. He didn't mind a rag. He could take a joke as well as anybody—but what impudence to drag a girl into it! He would have a heart-to-heart talk with Master Gajapati this very minute. . . And thrusting the packet and the letters into a drawer he strode out of the room and made straight for the Junior Wing.

But Master Gajapati had watched the drama from a strategic point. He had been posting himself in the next room for the last two days at the hour of the mail delivery. There was a convenient slit in the door—and he enjoyed his triumph. "That was the way to prick the swelled heads of these almighty beings!" he said to himself. "Think themselves Nawabs, don't they? Let him wait till the story goes round. It will be the best rag of the year."

The triumph, however, was short-lived. There came a sudden change in the angle of Ajodhya's jaw which Gajapati did not like, even with the door between them. Nor was the effect softened by the glint he caught in Ajodhya's eyes. By the time the avenger had crossed the yard, Gajapati came to a decision with the lightning speed worthy of a Napoleon . . . It would be wisest to spend the next day or two away from the College . . . Some people were utterly devoid of a sense of humour . . . He would go and stay with his aunt in town . . . Of course his mother would not forgive him if he failed to pay that dutiful visit. . . After all aunts had their use in the world!

When Ajodhya knocked at Gajapati's door, the latter had just cleared the compound wall and gained the road to town.

III

Ajodhya was annoyed that he missed Gajapati. He had no definite idea as to what he wished to do to him . . . hot-headed people hardly have on such occasions. There was probably a vague thought of putting him to shame—perhaps even of punching his head. But he realised, as he turned back, that this would have meant a scene. It was as well that the young bouncer was not within sight. Oh, yes, it would never do to get into a brawl. That would only mean publicity to his embarrassment, more ribald jokes. Just on the eve of his farewell to College too. Such reflections cooled his temper by the time he returned to his room.

That brought him back to the strange photo again. He pulled it out of the drawer and gazed at it. The longer he looked the more fascinated he felt. . . . The fresh oval face; the clear-cut, delicate features; the sad gentle eyes; the wavy dark locks; the wistful, patient expression—all exercised a subtle spell. How he would like a peep into the thoughts and feelings animating that pretty form! Would she relish being disposed of like a piece of merchandise? Had she no tastes and aversions, attachments and longings? Ah, he was nearly forgetting his sister's letter. Here it was:—

My dearest brother, (he read)

What is this mad project of *walking* to Almora and that in this hot season? What are railways for, may one ask? You would even risk a sunstroke to avoid us, I suppose. This has been going on for the last two years, I know. Perhaps you count a week or so that you spend now and then with us as more than what we deserve. You have always some excuse to stay away. Once it was the *Mela* at Hardwar, another time it was some Scout Camp; then it was an excursion to some mouldering ruins. Digging up buried temples and living with jackals was more interesting to you than spending the summer with us. Little Shyam inquires, I don't know how many times a day, about you, and his father said the other day: "What chance have we when he has such grand friends to go to?" Do you wish that your sister should hear such taunts? I don't want to rake up our last quarrel. I said I shall never pester you again about marriage and I shall be as good as my word.

It's true that I am your nearest relation and, unfortunately for you, the only one. But if you don't want to marry, why should I mind? If anything, I should be glad. Sisters-in-law never get on with each other. Have you ever met a wife who hasn't come between her husband and his sister? Besides, if you *do* marry, you will of course find your own bride. How can one chosen by your poor ignorant sister be worthy of you? All the girls that I know are simple country-bred creatures like me, who wouldn't know how to shake hands with your *Saheb* folk or to strut about in those high-heeled shoes. There is a sister of a dear friend of mine, so sweet and clever—worth any six of your perky town hussies—but there—I said I wouldn't mention the subject and I won't—even if you begged me on your knees! It is quite right that we should each mind our own business in this *Kali Yuga*.

Shyam will be four years old next full moon. There is still a week for his birthday. I should like you to be here for it even if you must go afterwards wandering over the hills like an old *bairagi*. If you make any excuses I shall never write to you again. You know my threats are not empty. So you will do what you think proper.

Your loving sister,
CHANDRAKANTA.

Poor *Didi* was evidently upset, thought Ajodhya. She did feel still sore over her match-making fiasco of last term and now she has evidently another girl up her sleeve. Dear old *Didi*! She was just a couple of years older and not much more than a girl herself, but how she loved to mother him and quarrel with him in alternate moods! The very thought of estrangement from her made him wince. . . . He sat down and dashed off a reply saying that he would be with her within four days and that she could then tell him all about her latest paragon and give him the rest of the scolding in person.

IV

"But you will surely give me five minutes, won't you?" protested Chandrakanta as Ajodhya clamoured for something to eat almost the moment he arrived. "By the time you have your bath your *nashta* will be ready. If it isn't it serves you right. You never

mention your train and I don't suppose you brought anything to break your fast at the river-crossing. You must starve if you *will* be lazy." And she bustled about preparing his repast, leaving him to the tender mercies of her son who was bursting to ask him a hundred questions and to tell him a thousand things.

"I am glad you have come, my dear Ajodhya," said Pandit Ramlal, Ajodhya's brother-in-law when he returned from office. "I wanted you for my own peace if for nothing else. Your sister has been very upset over your whimsical plans and for the last few days I felt I had married a powder magazine. Have you made it up with her?"

"What else is there for one to do, Ramlalji? It is easy for *Didi* with a devoted husband and a bright child all her own, to threaten to cut me for ever. A homeless orphan must come to terms."

"Homeless orphan indeed!" retorted his sister. "People deserve no mercy when they ignore those that love them."

"I was not ignoring you, my dear *Didi*—not even on the marriage question which has vexed you. All I ask is time. Have you heard, Ramlalji, about this girl who is worth any six hussies from town?"

"It's serious enough to marry one wife, my boy. As to marrying six in one, don't be so rash, if you ask my advice, it must be the deadliest form of polygamy."

"I am not worthy of even one, much less of your six."

"That's the bachelor's way of sugar-coating the same truth," laughed Pandit Ramlal.

"You people may have nothing better to do than making fun of others—but I have," said his wife, starting up to go. "I must attend to the dinner as the cook is busy with to-morrow's preparations."

"Oh, no, please stay," interrupted her husband. "We'll talk sense now. Did you—er—have a comfortable journey, Ayodhya?" he asked hastily to change the topic.

"We had a smooth run, thank you," replied Ajodhya enjoying Pandit Ramlal's alarm at his wife's displeasure. "One of the

tongas broke its axle between the station and the river and I had to give a lift to the passenger, a nice old lady."

"Was she as old as Shantadevi?" asked Shyam who was beginning to understand the conversation now.

"I don't know, my boy."

"Didn't you look at her?"

"Yes, but not at your Shantadevi. Who is she?"

"Don't you know Shantadevi—Bhola's granny?"

"No, my dear."

"She can take her teeth out and put them in when she likes.

Could your old lady do that?"

"I don't know, I am sure."

"Shyam, I told you not to talk of old people's teeth, didn't I?"

"Yes, mother, but uncle won't tell her, will you, uncle?"

"Oh no, my lad,—not even if she flays me alive."

"What happened to her *tonga*, uncle?"

"Its axle broke."

"Why didn't she put her hand in its place, like Kaiki?"

"Who's that now?"

"Don't you know Kaiki?"

"Some other relation of your Bhola, again?"

"Oh no, don't you know *Kaiki*—who asked for a boon and sent Ramachandra to the—?"

"Oh! you mean Kaikeyi, King Dasharatha's queen?"

"Yes, who else? Do you know any other?"

"No, I am afraid."

"Then why do you ask?"

"My fault, little one. Give me till to-morrow and I shall mug up the old stories for your birthday. And you must help me to unpack my boxes in the morning. I'll show some nice toys that are there for you."

"I am not sleepy yet, uncle, shall I help you now?"

"No, no, Shyam," remonstrated the mother, whose patience was all but over. "Uncle is tired now and he has also much to say to your father and to me. Come and have your dinner and get ready for bed. To-morrow is your birthday and you

must get up at sunrise and be ready for breakfast with us grown-up people."

* * * *

The birthday feast was over. Chandrakanta had invited Shyam's little friend Bhola and the ladies of his house. But he was taken ill and only his grandma and aunt came, whom Chandrakanta was now entertaining. Her husband had gone to the office. Ajodhya was writing letters and listening to the music that floated from her room. Little Shyam was investigating his uncle's boxes and playing with the toys scattered on the floor.

"Uncle, see how my elephant nods its head. Does it want to be stroked?"

"Very likely, my dear," repelled Ajodhya, bending over his letter.

"I am giving it sugarcane to eat."

"Fine idea," Ajodhya assented beginning with another sheet, "but where are you taking the gloy bottle?"

"It's water for the elephant, I won't spill it. Will you give me some string, uncle? I want to chain the elephant."

"You may find a piece in my box."

"Uncle, what is this man doing to this lady?" asked Shyam pointing at a picture magazine that turned up in his search. "Tell me the story."

"I must finish my letters, my boy. We'll solve that mystery in the evening."

"Will mother tell me now?"

"You might ask her."

"I'll take this other picture also," he announced, picking up something else.

"Do," assented Ajodhya without turning round, his pen still running fast. The boy raised a merry whoop and waving his picture over his head dashed through the door. This vociferous joy broke Ajodhya's train of thought. His pen stood still and he caught a glimpse of his retreating nephew. Then he became suddenly conscious of a vague uneasiness—something had gone wrong somewhere. And in a flash he saw what it was. "Shyam, Shyam, wait

a second, my boy," he shouted, giving pursuit. . . . "Good God, the little monkey has carried off that photo—the matrimonial advertisement affair. Oh dear, what would *Didi* say? What an awkward situation!" It was too late. There, as he burst into her room, he saw her staring at the thing and—why was the old lady of yesterday's journey there?—and a girl beside her! Good heavens!—had that photo come to life? Or was he dreaming? Surely there was the original by the side of the old lady. He stood agape, looking from one to the other, scratching his head with the pen with which he had rushed from his table.

"Uncle," said Shyam by way of introduction and with an air of proprietorship, "this is Shantadevi who can take out her—."

"Shyam!" called out his mother hastily, recovering from her bewilderment at last. "Go and play with your toys in uncle's room, my dear."

"But you haven't told me the story of the picture, mother. I want to know what this man. . . ."

"Yes, yes, my dear, mother will tell you all about that at bedtime. Now run along."

"This is the young man who was so good to me yesterday when our *tonga* broke down," said the old lady.

"That's my brother. I am glad he has made your acquaintance—and of someone else too, evidently."

"Oh no! It isn't so, *Didi*. You don't know the whole thing. It's all a confusion. I'll explain—I mean I can't explain," and he bolted from there.

Kusum, Shantadevi's youngest daughter, was painfully embarrassed during this scene. She felt somewhat relieved as Ajodhya disappeared. Pointing to the photo in Chandrakanta's hand she asked, "How does this come here?"

"That's what I wanted to ask you," replied Chandrakanta with a smile.

"You surely don't think that I—Oh, Chandrakanta, how can you?"

"What's wrong in that, my dear? If you know my brother well and let him have your . . ."

"But I don't—upon my word. This is the first time I see him. Uncle asked me to give a sitting to a photographer a couple of months ago, I didn't quite know why, and I never saw the print till this moment."

"Now that you mention your uncle I begin to see a glimmer of light," said Shantadevi who was puzzled more than she cared to show. "It must be my brother-in-law's doing. He had queer ideas of disposing off Kusum since her father's death, I know. People never could believe that he is her father's own brother. But you will know more about this mystery from your brother, I am sure. And now we must be going. Where is little Shyam?"

As soon as the guests had left, Chandrakanta opened a volley of questions, and when the searching examination was over poor Ajodhya felt more like a criminal than the victim of a joke that he was. But on the other hand he derived, however, a strange consolation from the disclosure that Kusum, the pretty original of the photo, was the same girl that his sister had mentioned in her last letter.

VI

Ajodhya noticed that his sister had now become strangely reticent about his marriage and never alluded to Kusum though several days had passed since their dramatic meeting.

"What has come over you, *Didi*?" he asked one morning, losing patience. "Why have you grown so indifferent all of a sudden? You give a fellow neither help nor sympathy."

"Why, wherein do you want help and sympathy, brother? Aren't you quite happy? You have just heard of your success at the University."

"Oh, hang the University! What I mean to say is—er—don't you wish that I should marry?"

"Of course I do. You know that yourself. But you are not a boy of 12 to be tied up by the elders to a girl of 5 in the silly old way. If you want a wife you must find her yourself. It's a responsibility which even a sister oughtn't to take up."

"Why this sudden change in your views? You were for instance so keen on this girl—what's her name—your friend's sister,

I mean. Why have you dropped her all of a sudden? You hardly mention her name now."

"Is it so? I didn't notice it. But you have been making up for me, anyway, haven't you? You are not ingenious at all, brother," she added with a mischievous laugh. "It's so amusing—the way you lead the talk to her in every possible and impossible way. As to my dropping her, what makes you think so?"

"You haven't seen her for nearly a fortnight now. . . ."

"You mean *you* haven't seen her—for myself I see her almost every other day."

"You mean *you*—er—."

"Yes," she replied with another tantalising laugh, "That's what I mean. I see her at her home—where else should I see her? You don't expect her to hang about here begging to be married, do you? The poor girl is already feeling miserable over the advertisement affair. Her uncle is a brute. I would like to lock him up in the cattle-shed."

Next day, poor Ajodhya ignorant that the state of his heart was an open book to his sister and unable to see through her diplomatic indifference, spoke to her with great trepidation and begged her to come to his help and approach Kusum with a marriage proposal. After much teasing and playful opposition Chandrakanta told him how she had guessed what was coming and promised her influence to win Kusum's consent.

Chandrakanta knew that her task was as easy as it was pleasant. Like a scheming sister that she was, she had taken care to see that Kusum would place Ajodhya in her gallery of heroes before they had met. Wise beyond her years, she knew that idealisation was the essence of romance and that what an innocent heart, awakening to the first thrill of its rich depths, wanted was to love, far more than to be loved.

That afternoon when Chandrakanta broached the subject, Kusum referred her, blushing and smiling, to her mother. The betrothal was duly settled, and when Chandrakanta announced the happy news, Ajodhya's happiness knew no bounds.

VII

The bridegroom and his friends were chatting merrily in a side-room overlooking a small garden. "But you seem to have come down from vehement condemnation to ardent support of these crude practices in match making," remarked Kameshwar. "This marriage of yours would be their best justification. How would you two have met at all had it not been for friend Gajapati's prank and the arrival of the photograph?"

"That had nothing to do with our meeting whatever, my dear Kameshwar. I feel just as badly as before about this vulgar advertising. In fact now I feel in addition a personal humiliation."

"How did you come together then?" continued Kameshwar.

"Ah, my dear friend, you don't know my sister or you wouldn't ask. When she makes up her mind she is Fate personified. My sister . . ."

He was interrupted by the entrance of the lady herself, carrying a heaped plate of sweets which form the chief occupation of the young people at all marriage gatherings.

"Nice doings these," she said with feigned displeasure hearing her name mentioned, "to gossip about people behind their back. Where are your manners, brother? If you can't spare your own sister. . ."

"It wasn't gossip, my dear *Didi*, I was growing eloquent over your diplomatic genius. I can't keep you out of my talk even for a minute, as you know."

"Oh yes, you must flatter me now. Mere words for me and deeds for someone else hereafter. I must get used to that soon. It's the way of brothers all over the world. Tell me how you like these sweets," she added, turning to his friends, "by the time you finish the plateful a fresh instalment will be ready, so don't spare the things."

"Where is Shyam, *Didi*? We haven't seen him since morning," asked Vishwanath.

"I can't get at him myself," replied the mother. "He is false like his uncle and has deserted me for a pretty face. He sticks to his new aunt like a shadow."

The laugh was once more against Ajodhya who seemed supremely happy at his discomfiture. "If you want the nephew I'll have to send the aunt also, since they are inseparable," continued Chandrakanta. "It will also save my carrying the sweets all by myself. She might as well begin her duties as a hostess from now."

There was no happier wedding that season throughout Hindustan.

The Artist and His Audience

BY N. RAGHUNATHAN, M.A., B.L.

(Asst. Editor, "The Hindu")

An interesting discussion has been going on in the London weeklies for some time past, in the desultory fashion characteristic of such discussions, as to what influence, if any, the consciousness that he is addressing an audience exercises on a literary artist. It would be sheer pedantry to deny that such consciousness does exist in the case of every writer, even though he may not share Dr. Johnson's downright view that no man but a fool ever wrote except for money. No man, be he artist or journeyman, philosopher or haberdasher but craves for the approbation of his fellows and this craving within limits is undoubtedly healthy; an elementary proof of which is furnished by the fact that it is a universal sentiment. We are not concerned here with those types in whom this craving becomes an obsession. But it will be useful to investigate the psychological foundations of this satisfaction that comes from recognition and to determine whether it is in any way hostile to that integrity which is the mark of all Art.

Here a digression may help. Dr. Alexander recently expressed the opinion that great art executes before it thinks. Sir Philip Hartog sought to controvert this by suggesting that a thought-mass must exist before it could be given expression to. He pointed out that when a bi-lingual person is confronted with an idea his brain is able to translate it immediately and effortlessly into either of the two languages known to him, which suggests that a thought-mass is antecedent to expression. It seems to us that the controversialists have here accidentally stumbled upon one of those fundamental distinctions that differentiate poetry from prose. Pure poetry is the supreme type of that art which executes before it thinks. It is the spirit that moveth where it listeth; the poet is but a medium, the reed through which the wind blows producing elfin

THE ARTIST AND HIS AUDIENCE

music. The perfect poem exists in essence in the depths of his subconscious, waiting for his liberating voice just as the Adam lay buried in the blue-veined Carrara for Michael-Angelo's liberating fingers. This is not to deny that there is conscious art in poetry—the greatest poets have also been great artists; but with them art is the handmaid of inspiration, the sculptor's chisel that chips away the redundant marble. The essential genius of prose manifests itself in a different way. Here thought not merely precedes expression; it is its very anatomy. The essential elements of prose are architectonics based on fundamental brain-work, the rainbow hues of emotion and the undertone of spirit communing with itself as in a dream. A great prose style is that which renders the murmur of the spirit as purely and faithfully as it represents the panoply in which it is set. A useful definition of style (it makes no claim to precision or accuracy) would be that it is the vesture of personality. (Does not the Upanishad say "*Isavasyam Idam Sarvam*"?) The style is the man in the sense that it is his natural mode of expression. One test of really good prose is that as one reads it aloud one seems to catch the continuous echo of a living voice with its individual timbre, strength and virginal integrity. But a man has many moods and his voice has many corresponding inflections to express them to a nicety; so also with his style. It is in ignoring this fact that the mistake lies of those critics who would classify and confine style into water-tight compartments, Athenian, Corinthian and so on. A man's prevailing mood, his temperament, may be such as to make one of them more germane to itself than the others; but it would be placing a restraint on the spirit of art which knows no such inhibitions, if it were to be contended that he should confine himself to one of these modes of expression.

The prose-writer clothing his nucleus in flesh and blood is called upon to do many things—to embellish, to hide, to hang a transparent veil over the face of Reality. But that nucleus itself must never be lost sight of. Now, what is the nature of this nucleus, by a sure grasp of which a writer claims attention and by an adequate rendering of which he enlarges, as we hope to

show, the bounds of the human spirit? To call it the central core of his personality would seem to carry the argument but a step further. It merely begets the question: What is personality and what is its relation to art? This is an issue too big to be raised by a side-wind as it were. We must be content to indicate the answer with the brevity of a formula. Personality is expressed when a unique response is made to the significant facts of the world around us. The man in the street does not stop to analyse in his own case these responses or the nature of that personality of his which is the tuning fork from which they sound. There is æsthetic as well as philosophic truth in St. John's vision of men as trees walking. Intense awareness is the pre-requisite of all creative activity and that posits an individual stand-point, a realised self. We are such stuff as dreams are made of; but the artist in reporting his emotions and intuitions is circumstanced even as the most common of us when we seek to rationalise the a-logical processes of a dream. There is the difficulty of establishing contact between different planes of experience as well as of managing the constantly shifting perspective which results from the mind, none too sure of itself, trying to adjust itself to this moving shadow show.

But the dream-analogy affords some guidance here. It is a common experience that even in the most riotous dream the dreamer maintains a curious detachment; his essential self seems to stand aloof, cool, critical and comprehending; it is the witness surrounded by tumult on every side but unsoiled and incorruptible. This dream-ego has a meaning for us. Deep down in his own psyche every man can, if he so wills, discover that essential self, firm as a rock, of which this dream-image is but a faint reflection. All attempt at creative expression is but an assay by the individual mind of its universal experience on the touchstone of this real self. In poetry this happens as spontaneous combustion, in prose it comes about in conscious effort. From which it follows that this self is the auditor whose approval the artist must gain. Style, which as we have already suggested, is in its essence a living voice, could find fulfilment only if such an auditor were predicated. Nor is there need for any other. Indeed more than one, not

to speak of a multitude, could only cause confusion, distracting the artist from his business of seeing life steadily and reporting it whole. For it is impossible for any of us to penetrate through the thick wall of personality, as Pater puts it, and hold true and direct communion with another soul, and the difficulty is repeated on a lower plane when the artist, in his effort to attune his vision to the supposed predilections of a hydra-headed audience, is forced to pose —than which there could be no greater sin against the light. We have thus come by a circuitous route to the point at which we started, with the conclusion that an artist must, if he is not to stray from the path of rectitude, visualise an audience of only one, his own self. In this sense all art is rigorously subjective.

An artist, then, creates primarily for himself. But when his work kindles in others emotions and intuitions analogous to his own, though perhaps of a less intensity, he, being a man as well as an artist, finds comfort in this confirmation of the fact that the core of his experience corresponds to something deep-seated in universal humanity. There his interest in his art as an objective entity begins and ends. As for the reader, he has gained a compass wherewith he may chart his own soul. The more he utilises it for independent investigation, the more meanings will he discover in the work of art which has sent him on this voyage of exploration. The sweetness in the mouth that great art leaves will on closer scrutiny be found to be manna distilled from his own soul.

A String of Poems

BY SRIMATHI NILIMA DEVI

I

I bring thee a chain, strung with pearls—
They are my tears ;
A beauteous garment woven with the threads
Of my sweetest dreams ;
A chaplet to adorn thy wond'rous hair,
Shining with the gems of my thought ;
Last—a lute—which is my heart,
For thee to play as thou wilt.

II

Thou answered not the call of my lonely heart, O Love !
The blossoms of my sweetest thoughts wilted at thy feet ;
My heart-strings I tuned—they ache,—so rusty, they break—
Yet thou played not thy music, and pale dawn finds me weary
Waiting for thee all night—still thou cometh not !

III

My heart is bleak and lonesome as a winter day,
Touch it with thy magic wand, O Love !
Make it bloom with a thousand flowers—
Make it fragrant with thy memories ;
My heart-strings are rusty—
Tune them to thy divine music :
If they break, no matter—
I'll remember thou didst play.

Love and Death

BY SRIMATHI NILIMA DEVI

Didst thou come in my doleful dreams
To light my darkest nights ?
Or didst thou shine on my stillest dawns
To fill my days with sweet delights ?
What songs didst thou sing ?
What music didst thou wring from my heart ?
The lilt of thy music—the cadence of thy songs
Eternally reverberates—all life unto death !
Beloved, if thou dost care,
Open the door of my heart—
There thou wilt find
A shrine on its altar—
Thy image divine !
—At its feet burns a lamp,
—Bright with my undying love.
Dearest one, when I die,
Dust will turn to dust :
But my soul shall wing its flight to the limitless,
Carrying thy image for ever in each life of mine !

The Provincial Fund and Federal Finance

BY B. V. RAMANARASU, M.A.
(Asst. Professor, The Nizam's College, Hyderabad)

I

After years of aimless drifting, it has now been settled that India should be a Federation. The only way in which the Conference in London respected the recommendations of the Simon Commission was by accepting the federal idea initiated and developed, however crudely, in their Report. Incidentally it may be said that it was the only service which the Commission did to a Government ignorant, knowingly or otherwise, of their own political destinies and constitutional colour.

In his financial proposals, Sir W. Layton too had to dance to the federal tune of the Commissioners. He came as an adviser but had to take dictations. One feels, as one goes through the later portion of his proposals, the throbbing pulse and the mental agony that he must have had in trying to compromise his scientific convictions with foregone conclusions, compromise what may be called financial unitarianism with political federalism. A student of public finance feels genuinely sorry that an economist of the eminence of Layton was not given the opportunity to write on a clean slate. The result, however, is that in the end the glory of the financial adviser to the Simon Commission stands enhanced. The fame that sometimes men win in life, more on account of their incapacity to come out of conflicting interests without insulting objective factors than to their bare theoretical originality of conception, falls to the enviable lot of Layton.

To grasp the significance of the above generalisations, it must be understood that the financial expert had to harmonise three conflicting factors—firstly, the unscientific distribution

of finances between the centre and the Provinces as it obtains today; secondly, the attempt to evolve a federal financial organisation out of that unscientific distribution, without at the same time going counter to the wishes of the members of the Commission who were anxious to find in federalism an effective brake on further constitutional progress of this country, at least for the present; and lastly, his own strong prejudice in favour of a healthy centralised finance. It is extremely gratifying and, at the same time, pathetic to note the emphasis he lays on the essential economic unity of this country and the ardent yearning he feels for a highly centralised Constitution in order to effectively and rapidly develop the nation-building services. As if these obstacles were not enough, he has several other factors to contend with, such as the increasing desire on the part of the Provinces to acquire more if not complete autonomy, the utter inadequacy of present provincial financial resources for beneficent productive concerns, the meagre annual surpluses of the Central Government—mainly the result of their own actions,—the bad incidence of the present-day Indian tax system, etc. In view of all these unfavourable data to begin with, the scheme of a Provincial Fund that he has sketched may easily be reckoned as a feat of scientific skill. Without in any way compromising the ambition of the Provinces to secure complete internal freedom, it places at their disposal a fruitful and growing source of income which can be utilised for purposes which hereafter will be conducive to their economic betterment. The scheme has another great advantage in that it tries to help the less prosperous Provinces to a greater extent, so that the promised and prophesied progress may not be an eye-wash, as it actually was before and after the Meston award. Before, however, the plan ripens into fruitful maturity, there are certain very important pre-requisites, namely the willingness of the richer classes to be taxed more than at present, and the purposeful cutting down by the Central Government of certain extravagant items like the expenditure on the military department. To lay a flattering unction to the souls of those conscientious objectors who are up against the least kind of central interference in the Provinces,

there is to be an inter-provincial Council of Finance Members which will work in co-operation with the Finance Member of the Central Government, in administering this Fund. The Lower House of the Federal Legislature is not given any great power to interfere with the day-to-day administration of this fund, though it is given the right of voting on vital matters affecting its constitution, even for which a previous absolute majority of the Provincial Government is required.

II

At the first glance, the scheme looks like going back to the very early days of financial decentralisation when the Central Government was giving out meagre and restricted doles to the Provincial Governments to be applied to useful works of development. But it should be noted that the money from the Provincial Fund accrues to the Provinces over and above the actual provincial finances, over which the Local Governments have absolute powers of raising and spending. Other things being equal, *i.e.*, giving room for a diminution of revenue from opium, a falling off of income from protective customs tariff, the cutting down of the military expenditure and several other such factors, Layton is not over-sanguine in expecting an increase of hundred crores of rupees of income to the Central Government. In this expectation is also envisaged the idea that more finance will flow on account of tapping new sources of taxation, like the super-tax, taking away the exemption of agricultural incomes from income-tax, imposition of death duties, excise on articles of luxurious consumption like tobacco and common things like matches for which the demand is inelastic either on account of addiction or on account of bare necessity, terminal taxes, etc. The tax on salt too is suggested to be transferred to the Provinces for expenditure, as, though centrally collected, its incidence is on provincial consumers. Thus, in the new order of things, there will be four kinds of taxes:—

1. Those collected and spent by the Central Government.
2. Those collected and spent by the Provincial Governments.

3. Those collected by the Central Government and distributed to the Province of origin. 4. Those collected by the Central Government and distributed to the Provinces on the basis of population.

Under the first come taxes like customs, income-tax pure and simple, *i.e.*, minus half of personal income-tax remitted to the Provinces, commercial stamps, railway income etc. Under the second come all present provincial taxes estimated at 78 crores of rupees. Added to this they will also get a surcharge on personal income-tax and the proceeds of the terminal tax. Under the third category come half of personal income-tax transferred from the centre, the agricultural income-tax and death duties.

Those that come under the last head constitute the Provincial Fund as such. At the end of a decade the total income on account of new sources to the Provinces is estimated to rise to 114 crores of rupees.

Out of this, 14 crores will accrue on account of the Provincial Fund, which gets into it the revenue from excise, tobacco, matches, and salt when the Central Government finds it convenient to transfer it to the Provincial Governments. The Provincial Fund is thus neither a dole given in compassion or for cringing; nor is it a contribution which savours of the centre having sacrificed something. It also in no way interferes with provincial autonomy to any great extent, except that the tax-collecting agency is central.

There is however some real difficulty when the question of distributing the Provincial Fund is to be undertaken. The proceeds of a tax may be claimed by any Local Government on one of two bases: the place of origin or the real needs of a Province. On the face of it the first sounds quite just and proper. In fact some taxes, like the agricultural income-tax, are based on that principle. But in a country where there is economic unity, where the Provinces are not good fiscal units and where the prosperity of a Province may be due to good conditions elsewhere, the principle of origin takes on an unscientific complexion. It cannot therefore be applied to the distribution of the Provincial Fund, which is intended to be used for economic progress. The criterion of need is quite humanitarian and charitable. If the Provinces which yield

revenue can be made to part with a portion of their income for the betterment of their ill-fated sisters, it becomes a provincial contribution to another Province, instead of to the centre. The only solution therefore seems to be a distribution of the Provincial Fund on the basis of population. It does not mean that this has no flaws. It is quite possible that a comparatively sparsely populated tract like Sindh stands in greater need of development than a Province like Madras or Bengal. Again, tracts like the North-West Frontier Province may require more funds on account of their infertility and strategic importance. It is not claimed, therefore, that the basis of population is invulnerable. It is only a case of selecting the principle that has the least number of objections. More than all, it involves the democratic ideal of the greatest good of the greatest number and it must be taken for what it is worth.

III

Some ardent admirers of Federalism may object to this new scheme as interfering too much with the federal nature of the future Constitution of India. It must be however understood that Layton tried to mitigate the unfederal character of his plan as well as he could. Whereas in some cases he cannot satisfy too scrupulous critics, other expedients are sure to cause dissatisfaction bordering on insult. There is no finality or perfection in human affairs and institutions. That which comes best and serves best for the time being must be taken as good enough. Even in full-blown democratic federations, elsewhere in the world, the actual division of functions differs with differing circumstances. Where constitutional and administrative functions are divided, there are bound to be financial divisions too. But in either case the divisions need not stand in the way of progress. So long as the essential conditions of federal finance are satisfied, some kind of overlapping is to be tolerated in the interests of national progress.

Sittannavasal Frescoes—III

BY M. S. SUNDARA SARMA, B.A.¹

Now to the subject-matter of the paintings:

First let us take up the two dancing figures which face one when standing in front of the cave before entering it.

"This charming dancing girl," writes Prof. Dubreuil in his leaflet about the paintings in the cave, "is a *devadasi* of the temple, for in the VII century the Jains and the Buddhists had come to terms with God in regard to the introduction of dancing girls into their austere religion."

There you have a typical example of the only ridiculous way in which alien Christian writers on Indian Art could speak without knowing exactly what they are talking about! To think and say that a nation which has contributed to the world the greatest of the living philosophies, would have thought of a simple portrayal of *devadasis* for the sake of portrayal in their paintings is thoughtless, to say the least. Besides unconsciously superimposing the corruption of modern *devadasis* on these dancing figures, the Professor has entirely ignored the symbolic nature and the spiritual content of Art in India. Indian Art, real Indian Art, has ever been transcendental and has always tried to suggest conceptions which could not be ordinarily perceived. The philosophy of life which had saturated the minds of the people in India showed itself out both in their art and literature. The two ran on parallel grooves instead of the one illustrating the other as in other countries. The form of a woman has ever stood in Indian Art as a symbol of Mula-Prakriti or primordial matter. The Supreme

¹This is the last of the writer's interesting series of articles on the Sittannavasal frescoes, which he was among the earliest to copy. The first and second articles were published in Vol. II, No. 6 and Vol. III, No. 1 of *Triveni* respectively. We regret the long delay in giving to our readers the concluding portion of Mr. Sarma's thesis. But by a fortunate coincidence, we are enabled to publish simultaneously his note on the newly-discovered frescoes at Kanchipuram.—
Editor, *TRIVENI*.

Mother-Nature is indicated thereby. Creation and the consequent Evolutionary process are conceived of as but a dance of this Prakriti at the sight of the Supreme Purusha or spirit. It is this dance of Prakriti that is suggested by the dancing figures in this cave as elsewhere. The two dancing figures, looking out of the cave and facing the visitor, really speak to us the true outlook of the Rishi-artists who had painted and lived in the cave here. Besides indicating to us this perpetual dance of Prakriti which was and is the Evolutionary outlook of India, these two figures tell us something more about that process. It will be observed that the right hand of both the dancing figures is held in what is called the *Abhaya Hasta*, which simply means the hand that says 'fear not'. This amounts to saying that in the Evolutionary process there is nothing to fear, indicating thereby the optimistic attitude towards life of the ancient Indians. The left hand of one of the dancing figures is held in what is termed the *Danda Hasta*, which means the rod-hand. The rod is not the rod of jurisprudence which is behind all man-made laws but is that magnetic rod of power which holds in sway the members of the visible Universe both in space and time; which keeps, for example, the Earth pointing towards the same direction; which keeps in order every single visible or invisible atom. *Danda Hasta* is the hand that indicates to us the firm conviction of the ancients of this land in the justice and truth of the inner government of this world. It is the certainty of this inner rule that made the people of this land so optimistic in their attitude towards life. Such an inner rule or government is indicated by this *Danda Hasta*. The left hand of the other figure is held in what is called the *Gaja Hasta*, or the hand or proboscis of an elephant. Those that have witnessed, especially in the west coast of India, how the hand of an elephant is used to lift up huge burdens will at once realise how that hand is pre-eminently a hand that lifts up. *Gaja Hasta* simply stands for the hand that lifts one up. In the Evolutionary process there is always a hand that lifts one up. That hand may be visible or invisible; it may be the hand of your friend, foe or neighbour, or one whom you least expected. There is always that hand to lift one up; but that hand is not to be sought after

nor will it come at one's bidding. It is there and it knows best as to when and how to help. Such is the *Gaja Hasta* and that is what the other dancing figure stands for. So that the two figures together tell us about the Dance of Creation in which we are to be optimistic because of the certainty of the justice of the inner government and because of the ever-ready invisible hand which unfailingly lifts us up in cases of real need. That indeed was the outlook of the master painters of this cave at Sittannavasal.

The painting on the ceiling is in fact a bird's-eye view of a lotus tank or pool in blossom wherein fishes, birds, animals and men wade through, gathering lotus flowers. The lotus leaves are beautifully disposed of to form, as it were, a halo round the heads of birds, animals and men depicted in the picture. Besides, they are also made to be at the background of every blossoming flower. Two bulls and three elephants are to be seen along with three men, two of whom are together, while one of them is apart. All of them are holding the stem of lotus flowers. The way in which the water is indicated is more conventional but the other things are natural, beautiful and yet simple. The fishes and geese play about the pool here and there, and the happy way in which the geese with outspread wings are placed side by side with the blossoming lotus flowers shows the close relationship of the two kingdoms of nature indicating clearly how the one merges into the other and illustrating the multiple unity in the single being of life.

To understand well the full significance of this picture of the lotus pool one should have thorough understanding of the Indian conception of the Universe. Professor Dubreuil, however, dismisses the panel with a surmise that it may be a Jain story which he is not aware of, not realising that such guesses from a responsible professor like him pass off into assertions in the hands of less worthy men.

Three sentences from the chapter on Creation in the *Vishnu Purana* will here be quoted, thereby giving a glimpse of the Indian conception of the Universe. Says the *Vishnu Purana*:

"Thus eulogised by Earth, that graceful one, the holder thereof, began to roar in *Sama* accents. Then heaving up the Earth

with his razors from the deep, the mighty Boar, *having eyes that resembled blown lotuses and himself like unto lotus leaves*, rose up like a gigantic dark blue mountain."

Again we have :

"Sananda and others with delighted hearts and *with heads bent*, hymned the holder of the Universe."

Yet again we have :

"Raised on thy razor ends all this Earth, O! Lord, seemeth *like a lotus leaf besmeared with mud on the tusk of an elephant that hath plunged into a pool of lotuses*."

The italics are mine and the careful reader will note how in these three sentences we have the idea of the picture shown on the ceiling. The lotus pool, the men with their heads bent down, the elephant heaving up the lotus leaves and flowers, and the lotus flowers themselves are all there. It was no wonder that the ancients in India thought of the Universe in terms of a lotus pool. If one can imagine the visible Universe from somewhere in space one can easily get at that picture. Just think and picture to yourself the Universe from our knowledge of the present-day astronomy. Every star being a sun, will be in the centre of concentric orbits of its own planetary system; if then every star be a lotus flower its surrounding system will form the lotus leaf. If you place these stars with their systems side by side, as indeed you have it, you have really the picture shown on the ceiling of the cave at Sittannavasal.

Thus did the master-painters of this cave conceive and depict their notions of the Universe. They had it over in the ceiling so that such a conception was really floating over their heads during their moments of deep contemplation in the secluded cave.

With such notions about the visible Universe, and with such outlook on life as depicted by the two dancing figures, the Rishi-painters of Sittannavasal have handed down to us their pictorial conceptions of them in this unique cave.

The other portions of the paintings, that are lost to us for ever, might have given us some more details about these conceptions. But what we have is enough to show us the fundamental concep-

tions of the artists who have carved and painted in this ancient cave.

Now a word about the *five* seated figures carved on the walls of the cave may not be out of place here. All the five alike are in the immemorial seated *yogic* pose thereby indicating to us that the real goal of human life is to be realised only through such deep contemplation in quiet surroundings. The number five has a reference to the number of times humanity had, so far, to do so till now. It has reference to the five races of humanity that have passed so far; we Aryans being the fifth. The three later races are represented by the three carvings inside the cell, while the two that preceded the three are depicted outside by the two figures placed on either side of the cave.

Thus, it would be seen that the cave at Sittannavasal contains really a wonderful and unique record of Indian Art. The sculptural and pictorial technique is superb, handing down to us a worthy record of a worthy past in the history of the country. We have no certain clue as to the date of the cave or its paintings. Surrounding lithic records point to a date not later than the sixth or the seventh century A. D. There is nothing to show that it may not be earlier. The paintings are truly Indian both in conception and technique and prove to us beyond doubt how widespread the art had been in this ancient country. They enable us to imagine what the *chitra salas* or picture galleries should have been like, in this old land. The art of painting must have gone through at least some centuries of previous handling before it could have flowered into the mature and definite style of the Sittannavasal frescoes. These paintings in fact open a new page in the history of painting in India and efficiently put an end to all that is being talked about foreign influences on the art of Indian painting. Here in this cave we have an example of a purely indigenous Indian painting which should go a long way to really help the true revival of the art of painting in this country.

Sittannavasal is indeed a sacred spot to us moderns, well worthy of receiving the homage of every true lover of India and its art.

Newly-discovered Frescoes at Kanchipuram

BY M. S. SUNDARA SARMA, B.A.

Culture, like a crystal, has its axes of growth. If one is stunted the result is a deformity which not only vitiates the whole but takes away the beauty and value of it all. The symmetrical development of all the faces enhances the beauty and value to a very marked extent. Modern Indian culture, whatever that may be, is utterly lacking in æsthetic taste and creative imagination generally. In spite of all tall talk snobbishness only is fully rampant. Whether that is the result or cause of the present political unrest depends upon the angle of vision. No country in the world attained to self-eminence which had not Art as one of the vital forces that prompted its growth and civilisation. The glorious culture of ancient India is nowhere more apparent than in what can be gleaned from the few relics of her ancient treasures handed down to the present times.

Even the few priceless relics found here and there would have perished into oblivion but for the enthusiasm and sincere admiration of especially those for whom this country was not a land of birth. Eleven years ago the beautiful frescoes at Sittannavasal were discovered by Mr. Gopinatha Rao, casually, and public attention to the same was drawn by Prof. Dubreuil of Pondicherry. To the *Madras Mail* should be given the credit of being the first journal to reproduce and publish in colours one of the dancing figures from these frescoes. But what has the country been doing all along? Excepting a few enthusiastic individuals who can be counted on one's fingers, how has the country benefited itself by the discovery? What about the very cave in which the priceless treasure is located? With regard to the very facet of the pillar wherein is located the dancing figure that was reproduced by the *Mail Annual*, the delicate brush lines of the master-artist have been marred ruthlessly by the crude brush, probably of the census enumerator whose only paint is



Fig. II.



Fig. I.

black tar, with the result that you find there, in hideous prominence, the figure 165 with something more added on to it! Such is the real taste or call it what you will, of the present-day educated people of India. What do people who glory in adorning their walls with calendar pictures or cheap tenth-rate oleographs know or care for the real masterpieces of Art?

And now, Prof. Dubreuil of Pondicherry, to whom this time the credit of the real discovery is undoubtedly due, has literally exposed and brought to our notice the existence of really old and equally good frescoes at Kanchipuram. With my intimacy with every hair-breadth of the Sittannavasal frescoes, I flew to the scene of this new discovery recently, to have *darsanam* of the frescoes. The thick coats of plaster, evidently due to the misguided restoration of the Archaeological Department, which the enthusiastic French historian of the Pallavas had removed in order to render visible the underlying frescoes, were lying about in the very place in which they had been thrown out by the Professor. Though it comes under the Public Monuments Protection Act, the Kailasanatha temple is a neglected one, where moth and rust have been allowed to corrupt. The paintings exposed are sure to suffer a good deal if neglected even for a short time; because unlike at Sittannavasal, they are in the vicinity of one of the chief centres of South Indian pilgrimage. These pictures are marvellous and are executed in the very identical and definite style in which the Sittannavasal frescoes are executed. The technical similarity is such that we may safely infer and presume an oneness of hand in both the places. Much more lies buried under the heartless coats of white washing which has to be removed very very carefully to render what is hidden visible. The temptation of further discovery, aping the sincere and honest efforts of the French Professor, may prove really dangerous as well as disastrous and should be forthwith guarded against by those responsible. What has been already exposed is very little; only five heads of which only one is whole, the right half of a masculine torso, a fore-arm and three fingers of a hand. A panel with two *chombus* or vases may also be seen. Besides there are many undecipherable portions belonging to drapery or figure

here and there. In other places you find traces of crude brush lines evidently of far later date, out which nothing could be made.

In the real frescoes that are visible, unlike at Sittannavasal, the lines are clear and sharp and the colouring bright and rich. The linear draughtsmanship has attained a masterly perfection wherein lines flow in gentle curves apparently without any effort. All the heads seen are masculine but have charm, grace and dignity. One of them, (Fig. I) the biggest and perhaps the best, is half eaten away. The left eye therein sits charmingly over the left cheek and is full of pathos and feeling revealing a whole world of its own. The three more pairs of eyes are all living, enhancing the facial expression in each case. Joy, contemplation and depth are severally and beautifully expressed even in the very few examples we have at present.

I am no 'historian' and my concern is not with dates or names and hence I do not care to try to fit these frescoes into any category. No doubt the French Professor's idea that these frescoes are Hindu is evidently because they are found in a temple in the central shrine of which you have a huge Manushya Lingam! Otherwise these frescoes would have been classified as either those of the Jains or the Buddhists as is the wont in such cases! But may I venture to ask as to who *truly knows* whether the Lingam is really Hindu in origin?

Of course I have had my personal longing satisfied in seeing these frescoes immediately after discovery and copying them, and as I write these few lines they are hanging round me on the walls along with my copies of the frescoes at Sittannavasal. But what is the country going to do with this new discovery? Will the old monument at Kanchipuram be cherished and preserved from further ruin and neglect or vandalism? Who is going to come forward to take real interest and care regarding these precious South Indian finds and make them more known so that they may inspire all those who can be inspired? Will the Ministers of Education or the Universities that have Fine Arts in their curricula take the necessary initiative, so that each school and college in the country may have its blank and uninspiring walls changed into panels of inspiration by revealing the glory of ancient India with the help of copies of these real old frescoes?

Some Aspects of Hindu Music

BY SRIMATHI RAGINI DEVI

The art ideals of India in the past reached a stage of excellence far above present world standards. Especially is this true in the art of music which ancient India considered the life and soul of religion.

According to the shastras, the first manifestation of Divine Energy in the cosmos was in the form of sound or Nada. Before the creation of the universe it existed as the all-pervading sound of OM ringing through space. The art of music is said to have been revealed by Brahma, the Creator, who entered into meditation and from the depths of Divine thought brought forth the arts for the joy of the universe.

The music of India has always had a living power because it is one with Creative Nature. To the ancient Aryans the musical order was but a reflection of the Divine order, and the ancient hymns and incantations of the Rishis were an expression of the divine relationship between the Cosmos and Man in terms of sound and rhythm.

The history of Hindu music is woven into a mystical and ancient past, and owes its unusual and highly-involved rhythms and complex sruti scale to those ancient progenitors of art—the Rishis. The spiritual relations of the regions and quarters and the seasons to the attainment of the soul's salvation was the mystical conception of these Vedic poets, who harmonized the cyclic phases of the human soul with the cyclic phases of Nature.

The ancient hymns and mantras composed by them were far from being primitive musical adventures. They indicate a remarkable knowledge of the nature and potency of sound and its influence on human life.

Being endowed with an inner mathematical sense and having a divine insight into the operation of universal laws, these ancient sages evolved a doctrine of mathematical symbols to explain the

manifold nature of the cosmos and its ruling principles. Vedic music was an exalted interpretation of these principles. It is our belief that archaic scales and gramas were originally musical symbols of sacrificial mysteries, mathematically related to various cosmic principles in much the same manner as the chief metres such as Gayatri, Trishtubh, etc.

The sacred "three-fold" Vedas are said to have sprung from the mystic Sacrifice of Purusha. From this sacred rite, were born the Rig Hymns and the Samans.

The Aryans were doubtless the first race to perfect the vocal art and to realize in their sacred chants the highest fulfilment of the true art of singing. There is abundant evidence of the high attainment of vocal art in the records of ancient wisdom.

Vocal music has always been of first importance in India because the human voice was considered a divine instrument, having the energizing motive force of soul-fire. The Hindus called the body the divine lute made by the gods, the lute made by man being an imitation of it.

The fact that vocal music was of first importance in ancient India does not necessarily indicate that instrumental music was not also highly developed. In the Vedas harps with a hundred strings and numerous ceremonial drums are mentioned which indicate a high development of instrumental music.

There is very little to guide us concerning Vedic scales and the various physical and metaphysical meanings of tones, gramas etc. However the ancient names of the notes indicate that Vedic music was descending, which view is supported by authority.

The descending trend of Vedic scales and gramas has a definite relation to universal laws governing the scientific manifestation of sound. In order to understand what descending music really is, we must realize that there are two kinds of natural sound progression,—one descending and the other ascending. Jean Philip Rameau, a French musician of the seventeenth century, has named these two kinds of progression the arithmetic and harmonic series respectively.

The arithmetic progression is a descending harmonic series

characterized by regularly increasing lengths of vibrating string. That is, each tone corresponds to a number of fixed units of measurement, the sounds produced being progressively lower and lower in pitch, as the length of the string is regularly increased.

The harmonic series is the natural series of overtones produced from a musical wire, which vibrates first as a whole, secondly in two segments, thirdly in three segments, etc. The tone given by the whole string is the lowest in sound, and is called the fundamental or prime. The tones given by the successive segments of the wire are known as overtones or harmonics, which become progressively higher and higher in pitch, as the initial unit (number of frequencies of the prime) adds itself to itself.

Archaic Vedic music (like most ancient music that we know about) was evolved from the descending arithmetic progression. The Sata-tantri Vina doubtless owes its origin to the arithmetically-divided monochord of many strings, regularly increasing in length. That is, stringed instruments designed to produce descending scales used a fixed unit of measurement and a sliding bridge or fret for ascertaining the proper places of the scale notes or srutis. Thus every tone could be simply and accurately obtained by moving the bridge to the required division point. If twenty-two wires were attached to a monochord, the whole sruti sequence could be produced, in descending order.

Systematic music probably had its origin in Vedic India from whence it spread its influence throughout the ancient world. Since then the music of India has followed a consistent course of development—first as descending music or the Gandhara grama based upon the descending harmonic series, and later as ascending music, based upon the ascending series of overtones. Thus Indian music has always a natural and scientific foundation.

Modern India has forgotten the great fundamental truths of music and the meaning of symbols relating to the arts. Accounts of the origin of music, of the twenty-two srutis and their spiritual and emotional associations and functions, are generally dismissed as fanciful legends worthy of only antiquarian interest.

But the true scientific system which the ancient masters

perfected is not entirely gone. Even though Indian musicologists are denying the practical existence of the twenty-two srutis, the srutis are actually being sung and played by some first-class musicians at least who, perhaps fortunately, know little or nothing about the physics of sound, intervals, vibrations, etc. They simply carry on the oral traditions and intonations bequeathed to them.

Owing to the melodic nature of Hindu music, the fundamental or tonic drone *SA* is required to be fixed in the consciousness of the musician. Against this sustained keynote, all the fine gradations of tone are clearly discernible and accuracy of pitch is assured. By moving his frets a little this way or that, the Indian instrumentalist is able to select the tones which best satisfy his musical sensibilities.

Another aid to accuracy of pitch is the use of *mend* or rhythmic glissando as an essential element in the melodic scheme. The Indian musician sings or plays the interval as much as he does the 'note', and in thus gliding between 'notes' he maintains a continuous musical flow to the accompaniment of the resonant drone.

The Hindu musician is really endowed by Nature with an inner sruti sense, for the human ear readily attunes itself to a natural melodic progression of sounds. The fundamental law which operates in the natural harmonic series also rules our musical sensibilities.

The efforts of modern theoreticians to explain the Hindu musical scale in terms of twelve semi-tones, or any other artificial divisions of the octave, can have no real significance in the true Hindu musical system as originally based on the natural order of sound.

Western musical theory offers no solution to the sruti problem. It is only from Nature and from the ancients who alone understood her that India can once more discover the truth of music—the eternal law of modes.

“The Lost Friend”

BY KRISHNA KUMARA KALLUR

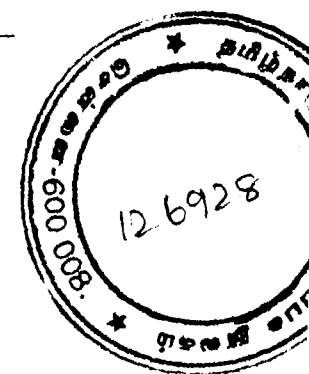
(Translated from KANNADA)

One morn when I sat with down-cast eyes
And my back was turned upon thee,
—When I was drowned deep in my own musings—
Then fell thy shadow upon my limbs
And I felt a light touch of thy presence.

Like a proud woman that would not listen
To the entreaties of her lover,
I hugged my pride and made a show that
I never cared for thee; but still, within my heart
There was yearning for thee and thee alone.

The curtain was raised—
To my utter shame our eyes met and lingered.
There arose a thrill of hope and a tremor of joy,
While thy hand lay upon my heart, kindling
An eager desire to fly to thy side.

Still I feigned to cast indifference at thee;
But, perchance, my heart did greet thee!
Is the light of love come upon me?
Shall I meet thee face to face once again, that
I might offer my pride to thee in one eternal devotion?



Kaikeyee!

O hapless Queen! Ill-fated child of Fame!
 Thy husband's love, his dotage-born obsession,
 How well thy life illumines the dreadful lesson
 That flesh-bound love is one consuming flame!
 O dauntless soul in woman's fragile frame,
 In days of yore thy love for lord did burn
 Thine inborn fears, thy sex to ashes turn
 The while thy daring snatched the gods from shame
 Of dire defeat; anew thy love for son,
 Thy love to see him all Ayodhya's king,
 Did burn the queen the wife in thee! How brief
 Is joy in earth-bound love! How fraught with grief
 This luring flame, this soul consuming thing!
 How grave its toll! How dire the reward won!

A righteous monarch's death of broken heart,
 A woman's anguish lorn of lord and child,
 A kingdom's mourn and yearn for heir exil'd,
 All these thou wrought! And yet were these no par
 Of plan of thy devise! The ruthless art
 That rained red ruin o'er the Raghu land
 Was work of Fate, whose woeful vengeful hand
 Sent e'en thy dream to crown thy son athwart!
 Thy wiles brought gall to all and joy to none!
 Misguided queen! Ambition's thoughtless fool!
 The hunch, thy mentor, hell's vile minion
 That fanned a mother's 'spiring spark to flame,
 That fiend in guise and guile, thy friend in name
 Was imp of Fate, none else! And thou, her tool!

Relentless Fate when she did turn her face
 In wrath upon the Raghu clan and land,

KAIKEYEE!

Her blackest look she cast, her gravest hand
 She laid on him, thy son, whose prowess, grace
 And wisdom marked him noblest of his race;
 Ador'd of parent, brother, kin and spouse,
 Admir'd of friend, afeard of foe, his house
 Ne'er gender'd greater son! Yet fast apace
 Did Fate's dire darts descend his sinless head!
 Fate's feminine freaks, alack, were ever so:
 The guilty left unscathed, the guileless bled
 Of heart or burnt of soul! At one fell blow
 Was he bereft of sire and kin! And thou
 His best loved mother loos'd this flood of woe!

Calamity's a touchstone to assay
 True worth of human kind. Whilst craven hearts
 Will rage and rave, the brave their nobler parts
 Convoke and calmly brunt their woe. The sway
 Of grief or vengeful ire unveils the way
 Of churls! The son, had he been base of breed
 Or faint of heart or mean of soul, thy deed
 Had surely charg'd his reeling brain to slay,
 Nay tear thee limb from limb, to vent his ire,
 And venge a widowed mother's broken heart,
 A people's grief and death of godly sire!
 But e'en a madden'd woman's monster crime
 Could scarcely ruffle his soul serene, sublime!
 Sore Pity 'twas replac'd Revenge's part.

In Pity's light it is that God doth view
 All human sins; and Pity's light doth shed
 No purple rays of Pride; nor Ire's blood-red
 Nor Envy's green nor Fear's jaundiced hue
 Mars Pity's flame whose lambent limpid blue
 Reveals the God in man! The Burden grave
 Prince Bharata in pity bore to save
 His mother's burning soul in kindly dew

TRIVENI

Of great Kausalya's forgiveness, did start
 A wail of woe for all eternity !
 And cleft in twain to con thy life, my heart,
 Like Marg'ret yawns athirst for Swathi's rain,
 Did gasp agape and froze my tears of pain
 Into this song of soul-deep sympathy.

KAILASAM

Our Forum

THE THEATRE OF THE HINDUS

SIR,

I read with great interest the short note on the Theatre of the Hindus in the September-October issue of 'Triveni'. It is quite an appreciative note and the author has rightly pointed out why the West cannot adequately appreciate our dramas. I may, however, be permitted to express one or two sentiments regarding the writer's explanation of how our theatre was a Palace of Art and where we have now to look for the lost art of the *Nata*.

Regarding the first of these, I can easily agree with him when he says that our theatre, as Bharata conceived it, was intended to be a Palace of Art. But this remained only an ideal. The real theatre of the Hindus is what can be reconstructed from the references from the masterpieces of our great dramatists, like Sudraka Kalidasa, Harsha, Bhavabhuti and a Bhasa; and this reconstructed theatre does not justify the assumption that the ancient Hindu theatre was a Palace of Art. The writer will be doing a real service if he will substantiate his glowing picture by positive references to the works of our dramatists.

The living theatre of ancient India, built on the model of Bharata, has probably survived only in Kerala in what is known as the *Kuttambalam*. But even there, this temple theatre does not satisfy the artistic expectations that are engendered in us by Bharata.

Coming to the second point, the writer has implied that one has to seek for the ancient art of the *Nata* in Greater India. This may be true; but I may point out that the art of the *Nata*, as elaborated by Bharata, is cultivated in an intensive degree in India and one can meet with the same in its living form in the acting of the *Cakyar* and the *Kathakalikkaran* even today in that little corner in the south-west of India, I mean Kerala, which has

conserved for us much of our ancient Hindu cultural heredity and tradition and which, therefore, forms the repository of many things that India elsewhere has lost.

Much, indeed, may be done by ourselves here, if we have the requisite interest and if we keep our eyes and ears open. We have still with us lots of things in every department of our cultural antiquities which await systematic documentation, careful scrutiny and scientific study at our hands. And it behoves every cultured individual who takes pride in his ancient heredity and tradition to spend at least a portion of his learned leisure in the direction of the elucidation of our glorious past.

K. R. PISHAROTI,
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REPLY

SIR,

The theatre was called a Palace of Art because in the theatre, as in the temple, all the arts united in a common service. The *Ranga Mandapa* arose in the imagination of the master-builder and carver; no less important was the role of the painter. There was also the art of the mask-maker who gave plastic shape to the refinements of facial expression, not to mention such minor arts as that of the armourer or jeweller. It was therefore suggested that in the theatre these diverse but beautiful arts blended in a common symphony.

Not only did the plays begin with song and dance but opportunities were found for their deft introduction in the body of the plays themselves, as in the pictorial dance of *Malavika* or the *Apabhramsa* songs of *Vikramorvasiam*. The minute directions in the text of the plays to the *Nata* in his own terminology indicate that *Abhinaya* was always the principal means of expression. The painter's art was remembered in the frescoes of *Uttararamacharita* or the portraits of *Malatimadhava* or the group in the picture gallery where *Agnimitra* first recognised *Malavika*. The sculptor's art furnished the theme in *Pratima Nataka*. Even the jeweller's art was slyly worked in, in the

ornaments presented by the sylvan goddesses to *Sakuntala*. It was the wonderful beauty-sense of the playwright which recognised the æsthetic appeal of the arts and worked every one of them into the texture of his composition for the end of making beauty more beautiful.

Invaluable as the art traditions of Kerala are for reconstructing the classic stage, there are similar and sometimes richer traditions in Greater India, and Java remembers much that even Kerala has forgotten. I did omit *Kathakali*; so did I omit the much-maligned nautch which embodies the bulk of *Angikabhinaya*, the *Ras Lila* impersonations of the North, the open-air drama which has survived in every part of India, etc.—all ultimately based on *Natya*, for this reason that I intended to suggest rather than exhaust, and that I wrote not a thesis but just a *Note*.

K. V. RAMACHANDRAN.

Romain Rolland's "Ramakrishna"¹

BY DR. R. VAIDYANATHASWAMY, M.A., D.Sc., Ph.D.

The very greatest saints and prophets of all climes have a message which carries beyond their immediate surroundings and exerts, through many devious ways, its formative action on the evolving human spirit. But it is not given to every one to receive directly and transmit their message. Prejudices, racial and religious, unowned preferences lodged deep down in our organic nature, repugnance to unusual habits or unfamiliar forms of thought, raise a powerful barrier against that sympathetic rapprochement which must lead the way to understanding and fruitful acceptance. It is only the rare representative souls who, nurtured on all that is best and finest in their age, can still think beyond it and reach the Universal in man, that can bridge this chasm and lead down the River of Life into the byeways and valleys.

The spirit of Romain Rolland is of this order. A true modern, and a son of the West which is so much pre-occupied with the fringes of the Realm of Knowledge, he is yet closest kin of India in his intuition of spiritual values, and is the symbol of Europe, shaken by the Great War, turning to ancient fountains for inspiration and guidance. He has been profoundly interested and moved by the phenomenon of the Indian Renaissance in which ancient Indian ideals have appeared again on the stage in modern setting, and proved their perennial vitality. In his work on Mahatma Gandhi he was concerned with the spiritual make-up of the most extraordinary man of action in ancient or modern times. Difficult as this must have been to write, the present study of Ramakrishna (as well as the future one on Vivekananda, which he promises) is incomparably more so to the European mind. For here we are

¹Published by the Advaita Ashram, 182-A, Muktarum Babu Street, Calcutta.

much nearer the core of the divine mystery, the Holy of Holies, and to appraise and understand Ramakrishna and his many-sided divine realisation, one has to shed all littleness of mind, all narrowness and prejudice, to purify one's intellect and become humble, as in a sanctuary. It would have required very little—nothing more, for instance, than a trace of the well-known repugnance of the civilised European to the Kali image, to spoil the book completely. It is a great tribute to the author's discrimination and breadth of sympathy that there is nothing here to hurt the Indian reader; there is displayed, on the other hand, a rare perspective in seizing the personality of Ramakrishna in its central and essential features, and conveying its living impression to the reader.

We fail to get here, it is true, the atmosphere of a close personal devotion to the Master. But we have what more than makes up for it, a certain breadth of view, a synthetic fervour which honours all the great religious personalities as parts of one divine stream, and hails Ramakrishna as a brother of Christ, combined with a detachment and a critical poise which refreshes the reader like a gust of cool air. By dint of careful and painstaking research, not only has the personality of the Master been reconstructed for us in vivid detail, but his whole spiritual background, the stage in which he acted has been brought into the picture—the contemporary religious streams, and their dominant personalities, the Brahmo Samaj and Ram Mohun Roy, the Tagores and Keshub Chunder Sen, the Arya Samaj and Dayanand. The result is a variegated composite picture, a mosaic of the living religious elements of modern India, surmounted by the supreme figure of Ramakrishna. From the wide scope of interesting material covered by the book, we must content ourselves with selecting one or two topics for discussion here.

We may notice particularly the careful and scientific attitude with which the author has traced Ramakrishna's spiritual evolution. The author's acquaintance with the mystical experiences of Christian saints lends the book a perspective which is lacking in Indian accounts of Ramakrishna, and renders it instructive to European and Indian readers alike.

The great fact established by Ramakrishna's life in this land of Yogins and Bhaktas, is that the citadel of the higher divine consciousness *can* be stormed in a single leap of passion, though at great peril to the physical body.¹ He did not practise any systematic yogic discipline. Illumination came on him in a violent flood after six months' agony of passion, prayer and weeping. Romain Rolland quotes the Master's own account of the experience:

"One day I was torn with intolerable anguish. My heart seemed to be wrung as a damp cloth might be wrung. . . . I was racked with pain. A terrible frenzy seized me at the thought that I might never be granted the blessing of this divine vision. I thought if that were so, then enough of this life! A sword was hanging in the sanctuary of Kâli. My eyes fell upon it and an idea flashed through my brain like a flash of lightning. 'The sword! It will help me to end it.' I rushed up to it and seized it like a mad man. . . . And lo! the whole scene, doors, windows, the temple itself vanished. . . . It seemed as if nothing existed anymore. Instead I saw an ocean of the spirit, boundless, dazzling. In whatever direction I turned, great luminous waves were rising. They bore down upon me with a loud roar, as if to swallow me up. In an instant they were upon me. They broke over me, they engulfed me. I was suffocated. I lost all natural consciousness and I fell. . . ."

Thereafter he was in a state bordering on delirium. He beheld continually the living radiant form of the Mother. His ideas translated themselves immediately into vivid forms, while he saw people only through a dim mist. This state continued till he was initiated into regular yogic discipline by Bhairavi Brahmani. Later he realised the Formless Brahman of the Vedanta under the guidance of Tota Puri, and taught him in turn the identity of

¹A saying is attributed to Ramakrishna to the effect that in Kali Yuga, the passions ought not to be destroyed, but turned on God; thus *anger* should be directed on God for not manifesting himself, and so on. This has evident reference to his own personal history. Ramakrishna's entrance into higher consciousness is thus in violent contrast to that of Chaitanya, who, if we may believe tradition, simply *flowered* into illumination, by a process of gradual unfoldment, through reading about and meditating on the Lord.

Brahman and Maya. Finally his mission as a spiritual teacher was revealed to him.

These experiences correspond apparently to the higher 'worlds' or spiritual levels of which the Sastras speak. The experience of waters in his first illumination is an usual feature as is seen from the parallel cases of St. Theresa and others mentioned by the author. It recalls to us, on the one hand, the mystic doctrine that water is the ultimate constituent of all things, and on the other, the 'waters' and 'Varuna' of the Veda, as well as the Vedic cosmological order, "From Akasa came Vayu; from Vayu, Agni; from Agni, waters; and from waters, earth," with the reverse order in Pralaya. The levels of experience in which emotions and ideas automatically create their own forms are the Bhuva and Suvarloka of the Veda, which are the habitations of the Devas, and correspond to the astral and mental planes of the Theosophist. But Ramakrishna not only saw objectively the forms of gods and goddesses, but by an unflinching instinct ended by *absorbing* them in himself—evidently, a gesture to realise them *as* himself. This type of experience does not appear to belong to the lower worlds¹ proper, but to point definitely to the higher worlds, in which the characteristic feature of experience is the realisation of the self in everything, and everything in the self. A comparative study of the experiences of Ramakrishna and Swedenborg would appear to be instructive in this connection. For a space of twenty years Swedenborg was in constant communion with the Angels of Heaven. From his careful accounts of his experiences, it would appear that they belong to the lower worlds. The difference in spiritual equipment and heritage, as well as in spiritual direction, between the Hindu and European genius is very striking. Swedenborg's mental horizon was filled entirely by the Christian faith; for him, other faiths were not. He could never divest himself of the Christian tradition, and of the Christian theology and cosmology. His experiences therefore never rose above the plane of ethical and philosophic dualism. In his

¹Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Suvarloka are the three lower worlds; Janoloka, Thapaloka, Satyaloka, the three higher worlds; and Maharloka, the intermediate or transitional world, according to the Veda.

description of Heaven he speaks of a mystic unity between God and the Angels, on account of which they were felt as One-Many¹; and this raises the question whether some at least of his experiences did not belong to the higher worlds. I think the answer must be in the negative, since we do not hear of *his* own self being in everything else, and everything else in his self, as a fact revealed in his immediate experience. That no other answer is possible is confirmed by the fact that the dualism between Angels and Devils, Heaven and Hell, God and the World, Righteousness and Sin, are permanent features of his revelations. The One-Many relation between God and the Angels which he so happily describes, must therefore be an intelligent inference, that is to say, a fact of *mediate objective* experience. While the spirit of the Hindu, shot by its own inner momentum, goes straight as an arrow to its mark, conquering the highest spiritual realisations one after another, the defective spiritual heritage constitutes in the case of Swedenborg an intangible barrier to his progress beyond a certain point. While the inner guide, the selective and discriminative principle in Swedenborg's evolution was furnished by the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, the norm by which Ramakrishna's course was steered, was the certainty of Advaita—the non-difference between Jeeva and Brahman, and therefore, also between Jeeva and Jeeva; a certainty which was instinctively and obscurely present in him from the very beginning. The moral that can be safely drawn from this comparison is that there is a long stretch between the first entry into the portals of the higher consciousness and the highest conceivable perfection; that only those who have traversed the entire stretch can be world-teachers in the highest sense; that none can traverse the whole way who do not surrender themselves to the talisman of Advaita, who do not *will* Advaita with all their might and main; that dualism in the form of limitation of the field of love and sympathy to anything short of the universal, or attachment to particular grooves of thought, will bar the aspirant's progress half-way. It was the knowledge that dualism is at the root of all sin

¹ Swedenborg's accounts of his experiences are not all in the first person; they have often to be inferred from his description of Heaven.

and imperfection that made Ramakrishna throw himself with such passion on the Sadhanas of other faiths, and similar advaitic disciplines. That Evil and Sin are simply dualism, the negation of Advaita, is again the central element in the message of Vivekananda.

The second great feature of Ramakrishna which strikes one is his utter balance and sanity, his supreme comprehensiveness and catholicity of outlook and sympathetic understanding, making up a full-petalled roundedness of spiritual personality, such as we know of in no historic saint, past or present. This indeed was a corollary of his practical Advaita. As one who had seen all the gods face to face, who had realised the Divine both as Saguna and Nirguna, he was never puzzled by any intellectual riddles about the Ultimate, but resolved them at one stroke by a pithy saying or a happy parable. He saw through all exaggerated attitudes which lead away from the living Divine, and cut them with the sword of his mother-wit and practical commonsense. He is the first person known to history who definitely proved to himself by actual experience that all religions lead to the same goal. He was very careful not to preach fixed dogmas, and warned his disciples—not very successfully in the light of the subsequent history—against developing a cult. The only awriness that one can discover in him is his insistence on celibacy¹. His original resolve of celibacy appears to have been dictated by a sense of sin². In his offer to his wife to live with her as *grihasta* if she chose, *even though that would draw him into the world of Maya*, the association between sin and sex is still present. He insisted on a vow of life-long Brahmacharya from his disciples, to protect them from the twin-demons of Maya, *Kamini* and *Kanchanam*. Romain Rolland prefers to look upon this choice of Ramakrishna merely as an instinctive conservation of physical energies for the purpose of ecstasy. Probably it became this, and was dissociated from any sense of sin in the later period when ecstasy was firmly established.

¹ The present reviewer is against insistence on celibacy as a fixed rule of conduct, though of course its adoption as a temporary element in Sadhana may be quite justified and necessary.

² Compare the vision recounted in page 47.

As a teacher Ramakrishna appears to be essentially modern, in his full acceptance of spiritual democracy. The democratic element in modern thought connotes a great development of Ahankara, and a refusal to yield to externally imposed regulations of thought or conduct. Where the ancient Indian would submit as a matter of course, the modern would stiffen his back and refuse to yield. The traditional spiritual gurus of India are not free as a class from the subtlest and most dangerous species of Ahankara, the Sattvic, and have not been able to adapt themselves to the spirit of the times, in this respect. In the case of Ramakrishna, however, his egoism was so little, his love was so great, and his instinct accorded so well with the demand for spiritual freedom. With his protean personality he made the most extraordinary guru known to the annals of Indian spiritual history; he was at once the child, the lover, the elder brother, the comrade, the preacher, the spiritual and Yogic guide, and the Divine incarnation, or rather all of these rolled into an ineffable combination. By no feat of imagination is it possible to think of a Guru of the old school mimicking a Kirtani for the edification of his disciples, as related by Romain Rolland. Nor is it possible to imagine the proud and fiery Vivekananda as a disciple of any other than Ramakrishna. The secret of his vast range is again the advaitic ardour, the power, perfected by incessant Sadhana, of seeing God in man, of entering into, and fusing himself with every human being.

It is claimed that Ramakrishna was an Avatar. Romain Rolland is careful to say in the Introduction that he loves Ramakrishna as a man, and does not believe that he is a Divine incarnation. At the same time, referring to the admission of Ramakrishna that he was an Avatar, he remarks in a foot-note¹: "His conviction (of Avatarhood) lay in an inward act, a secret light, which he never paraded. I would ask my Western readers a question that may shock them—whether the passionate conviction of a mission imposing thought and action on our great men is not vaguely akin to exactly some such intuition, some fullness of Being, transcending the limits of personality? What does it matter by what name it is called?" This would appear to be a popular

¹ Page 196.

dilution of the Avatar-concept, which is used in a very precise sense in Hindu religion. According to the admissible usage of the term, we may distinguish two types of Avatar.¹ The Avatar proper is the one personal God who is born of his own choice as a human being, without the loss of his Divine Self-knowledge. We are taught that in the case of such Avatars, the Self-knowledge is never clouded even for an instant, but shines like a steady light from the moment of their first birth within the human womb, throughout all their subsequent activity, waking or sleeping. The Ramayana does not make it self-evident that Rama conformed to this test, and tradition has compromised by reckoning Rama as a fractional Avatar. There is no doubt that the Avatar theory and its elaboration are the grandest flight of the Hindu spirit, and the very pinnacle of its achievement in its long search after the Divine. It was probably suggested by the figure of Lord Krishna who is also its unique exemplar. Modern Rationalistic opinion does not favour the theory of the descent of God in all His integrality into the human form; on the other hand, belief in such descent is a logical implication of any Advaita which does not content itself with the Formless and Indefinable Brahman as the last word in realisation. To understand the Avatara theory, one must have surrendered one's self to Krishna, become permeated by Him; and to understand and receive Krishna is to penetrate to the core of Indian thought, for is not Krishna India's challenge to the world?

The other type of Avatar (which is the one relevant in the case of Ramakrishna) refers to a forcing of the descent of Godhead by a preliminary Yogic ascent of the human consciousness. In the beginning the realisation of one's self as the Supreme Divine comes only occasionally in moments of ecstasy. But gradually it comes to be well-established, and it becomes possible to convert, at a moment's notice, the logical conjunction 'I am the Lord' into a realised fact of sense-perception. The sense of identity with the One Divine becomes the constant background and the governing certainty of the mind, and the whole human personality is taken up

¹ For a discussion of the Avatar theory, see Sri Aurobindo's "Introduction to the Gita," Vol. I.

and transformed into an instrument of Divine perfection in Knowledge, Action and Love. In any case of this kind it is *ultra vires* on our part to demand if such and such an individual *can be* God. The only authority for identity with Godhead lies in inner self-certainty, with its associated expression in vastly increased powers of Knowledge, Action and Love; where such certainty exists, it will be idle on our part to attempt to resolve our doubts by argument. It is only a like experience which can ever resolve the doubt, if it has not already been resolved by faith. What however we can insist on, is an objective standard to determine whether a particular individual is or is not an Avatar. And the objective standard is *the presence of a continuous, assured, and unclouded self-knowledge* (i.e., knowledge of one's self as the Supreme Divine). Where all available evidence points to this state of consciousness, the Avatarhood must be accepted. Chaitanya is the classical example of this type of Avatar, and Buddha and Sankara probably also belong to the same class. In the case of Ramakrishna, we have his own admission, which he made on more than one occasion, of being an Avatar; and knowing him as we do, we cannot but accept the statement. One is, however, curious to have more evidence bearing on this point (for instance, about the nature of his sleep-consciousness).

"The March Morn"

BY SRIMATHI S. K. RAJAMMAL

Thus the Mahatma, on a fair March Morn,
Set forth what time the blushing dawn
Spread her tinted wings o'er Sabarmathi,
O'er the world and the dwelling of Gandhi;
From the Ashram there emerged the figure
Familiar, leading a band of vigour,
Of hope and faith, all so eager and glad
To follow their great leader humbly clad.
The surging crowd without then raised a cheer
That rent the silent air; 'twas loud and clear.
Lovingly for a moment the crowd he eyed,
His heart went forth to them—he sadly sighed,
As once again on them he cast his eyes,
Then raised them with a prayer to the skies—
Waiting as though to receive from above
Blessings of Him whom he does so much love,
Then said he, "With freedom won here I'll be,
Or else my body shall float in the sea."
Arose a murmur from the saddened crowd,
The women wept; men all silently bowed
In sadness for a while; then shouted, "Nay,
Victory shall be thine—Gandhi-ki-jai."

We publish with pleasure this fragment of a poem by a 16-year old Tamil girl of Colombo (Ceylon) commemorating the historic morning on which Mahatma Gandhi emerged from his Ashram, resolved to "conquer or die".
Editor, TRIVENI

Reviews

[We shall be glad to review books in all Indian languages and in English, French and German. Books for Review should reach the office at least SIX WEEKS in advance of the day of publication of the Journal.]

The Bengali Drama (Trubner's Oriental Series) By P. Guha Thakurta, M.A. (Harvard), Ph.D. (London). [Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., London. Price 10sh. 6d.]

The full title of the book is "The Bengali Drama; Its Origin and Development." This is, as the author remarks, substantially a thesis which he submitted for his Ph. D. Degree of the London University for original research in 1926. The very fact that it was accepted for the Ph.D. Degree by the London University and also that it was published in the Trubner's Oriental Series is enough recommendation for its merit as a work of original investigation and scholarly thoroughness. It is original in a far wider sense, in that there are no authoritative works of the sort available for scholars and for laymen. There are some books dealing with Sanskrit Literature. But Sanskrit has long ago ceased to be a living language. The genius of India reveals itself, not merely in modern times but also for some long time past, through the medium of the modern spoken languages. There are many literary works in all the major languages of India which can stand comparison with the best in modern European languages, and some that far surpass any there. Yet it is regrettable that there are no authoritative books from which one can have a fair idea of the origin, growth and development of literature in its various aspects in the many major languages of India. The present work is a pioneer in the field, and it is quite fitting that it should have appeared in Trubner's Oriental Series, which has to its credit many valuable books dealing with India.

The work is divided into six main sections. In the first or introductory section, the author deals with the *Jatras* or the folk-theatres in Bengal. The author is very much handicapped in dealing with this subject by the lack of material. All the *Jatras* that are available date from about the beginning of the last century; one can well understand the difficulty in making out a connected account of the origin of the folk-theatre in Bengal. The *Jatras* as now found in Bengal are mostly of a Vaishnavaita nature. There must have been some kind of theatre in ancient Bengal, which must have become very corrupt and the theatre

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must have been revived through the Vaishnavaita influence. There is no record of the theatre in its original condition. If I may venture a suggestion, *Jatra* does not mean a theatre but only a procession. The chief feature in temple festivities is the procession of the Deity. On the occasions of such festivals, not in accompaniment of the actual procession, dramatic performances were conducted. Some kinds of drama, very much akin to the *Jatras* of Bengal, still continue in other parts of India also, especially in Malabar.

Even from the earliest times, there must have been two currents in Indian religion. One is associated with ritualism, found in the Vedas. Side by side with this ritualism there must have been image-worship also, and the theatre is closely allied to the image-worship in temples. This side of Hindu religion came into great prominence as Buddhism and Jainism, and the Buddhistic touch in Indian Drama, especially in its presentation on the stage, is quite manifest. The Deity was worshipped in the temple through the idol, and also through the dramatic representation of stories connected with the Deity by trained actors. Even from the earliest times, there must have been various aspects of this dramatic representation. (1) A person, with some kind of theatrical get-up, narrated the story to the audience, with no characters actually appearing on the stage. (2) Trained actors represented the story through gestures to the accompaniment of songs from behind. (3) The actors presented the story through conversation and also acting. (4) Side by side with such dramatic representation by professional actors, who perhaps formed a caste by themselves, there must have been professional and non-professional actors outside the caste, who also represented stories, divine, symbolical and purely secular, for popular audiences. Some of these latter may have been of a very low type in point of art both in presentation and literature. There are evidences for all these kinds of dramas in India. A thorough investigation into the conditions of the theatre in other parts of India, especially those parts with which Bengal was in most intimate cultural contact, will reveal many points that will be of help in tracing the development of the *Jatras* of Bengal. This section of the book is a very small one, and there is still much scope for original research work in this field.

The second section deals with the "Beginnings of the modern Bengali Drama." Here the author is on surer ground and he has much material to work on. He deals with the influence of English theatres in Calcutta. The Bengalis began to act English dramas. I quote the words of the author in describing the influence of the contact of Bengal with the English. "The first effect of this impact of a new and alien civilization was almost paralysing. Upon this there followed a tendency to blind imi-

tation of Western models." But there was still a change for healthier conditions. A new era came in. The chief features of this new era are, to quote again the author, "first, a revival of classical studies and a return to older traditions, and second, a steady assimilation of European thoughts and ideas, both under the direct influence of English education." Sanskrit plays were acted by Bengalis. Sanskrit plays were translated and presented in Bengali theatres. This was the ground on which the real modern Bengali dramas were to be produced.

There are four stages in the development of this modern Bengali theatre. The first is associated with the Belgacchia theatre. An adaptation from the Sanskrit *Ratnavali* was staged before a very distinguished audience including many Europeans. Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt, the great poet of Bengal in the middle of the last century, was very prominent in the development of this theatre. He wrote a drama, *Sarmishtha*, for this theatre and it is this drama that brought his name into prominence. Then he wrote *Padmavati* and *Krishnakumari*. These are his serious plays. He wrote many comedies also. His drama was a real break from the tradition of the Sanskrit dramas with their fixed canons. His dramas reveal his European training. The Belgacchia theatre was not long to remain lonely in the field of Bengali theatres. Its rivals made their appearance soon. The chief among them was the Bowbazar Theatre. And the name of the great Bengali dramatist Mano Mohan Basu is mainly associated with this Theatre.

The next stage in Bengali drama is associated with the names of Girish Chandra Ghosh and Dina Bandhu Mitra. Their plays were shown at the National Theatre. Both of them have written many dramas. About Girish Chandra Ghosh, the author says, "Like Shakespeare and Moliere, Girish Chandra Ghosh belongs to that very sensitive type of theatrical worker called 'player' and is also one of the few great players who have won distinction in the field of serious scholarship. He did not always write with his eye on the stage. He was quite often indifferent to the technical demands of the theatre." He had an excessive fondness for introducing songs and comic interludes. He was also a very voluminous writer.

Dina Bandhu Mitra was a very acute and shrewd observer of social manners and of everything else that he happened to see around him. He was a born humourist, but his humour was rather of a peculiar kind. It was coarse and even indecent at times. Thus his comedies were not a great success. They sink to the level of crude farce. They bored the playgoers and the National Theatre was compelled to reject his plays and go in for other plays.

Girish Chandra Ghosh was a great influence in moulding the modern

Bengali Theatre. Those who came before him had seen only a vision of the birth of the new drama in Bengal. It was he who brought this vision to fruition by the hard, patient labour of years. For upwards of two decades from the time when he became producer on his own account, he was responsible for all the changes and new lines of activity which contributed to the establishment of drama as an art in Bengal.

The next great figure is Dvijendra Lal Roy. He was deeply stirred by the Swadeshi movement. But he knew that not everything in Hinduism was wholesome and good and that nationalism by itself was not enough to uplift India. His great drama is *Rana Pratap*. Earlier in his career he had written some light comedies. He has contributed many serious dramas to the Bengali Literature. Mention may be made of *Durga Das*, *Nurjahan*, *Mewad Patan*, *Shahjahan* and *Chandra Gupta*. He wrote also one social play *Para Pare*, which is a class in itself in Bengali Literature. Dvijendra Lal started by idealising the characters of past history, and later began to subordinate incident to the study of character from the psychological side. He had no respect for conventions in drama. He was a great influence in the national awakening in Bengal and his contribution to Bengali life is immense.

Closely following the author, I have traced the chief stages in the development of modern Bengali drama; its first birth through contact with European civilization, its association with the Sanskrit dramas and then its emergence as an independent literature with an individuality of its own. The author deals with the dramas of Tagore. They are translated into many of the languages in the world and they are very well-known. So I do not attempt to give a summary of what the author says about these dramas.

The author is an impartial critic, keen and thorough in his observations. He is not a sentimental patriot. He knows the flaws of the modern Bengali theatre. I must here add that the book is not merely a history of dramatic literature; it deals with the stage also. About the modern stage in Bengal he says: "I cannot help criticising the modern Bengali stage for its lack of realism in production as well as technique. But this is not so serious as the preponderance of talk over action. Movement and action are not merely accessories to the text, but vital factors. I cannot emphasise this point too strongly on Bengali playwrights."

The book is excellently written. The title of the book ought to have been "The Modern Bengali Drama." In a work on Bengali drama, we have a right to expect more about the earlier stages of the drama in Bengal. Practically the book deals with only the nineteenth-century drama. Were there Bengali dramas in earlier times? Or were there only theatres

in which dramas written for the time being were produced, dramas which never had a pretention to being literature? On this very important problem, practically little light is thrown by the author. The work is a very clear exposition of the modern Bengali genius. It is very necessary that similar works should be written for the other major languages of India.

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University of Madras.

Women's Rights under the Hindu Law—A review of the Mysore Report.

The Government of Mysore must be congratulated upon the promptitude and enterprise with which they accepted the suggestion of their legislature and appointed a committee for the purpose of examining the position of women in Hindu Law and of suggesting desirable changes to bring Hindu Law into consonance with the spirit of the times; and the Committee which was presided over by that able judicial officer, Diwan Bahadur K. S. Chandrasekhara Aiyar, must also be congratulated upon the speedy and successful termination of their labours and on the report which they submitted to His Highness's Government—a report which is characterised by a thorough grasp of the defects and shortcomings of Hindu Law of the present day, by a progressive outlook especially in the matter of women's rights, and by a practicalness which is not satisfied with mere generalities but formulates in accurate legal language the particular changes that are recommended.

The Introduction to the Report deals with several subjects of considerable interest, some of them raising controversial issues, but limitations of space forbid us from entering into any elaborate discussion of these topics. After dealing with the several sources of Hindu Law, the learned authors refer to the part played by British Indian courts in "retarding the natural growth of Hindu Law." One may perhaps doubt whether British Indian courts have not also played a really useful part in preserving and conserving Hindu Law very such as they found it, till a representative legislature should take upon itself the task of reshaping or remodelling an ancient system of jurisprudence to suit the needs and conditions of modern society. Then the learned authors point out that "Dharma in the Hindu conception is not something immutable" and that Hindu Law has undergone and must undergo changes if it is to be suitable to the needs and conditions of the times. The arguments that are usually advanced against legislative interference are next refuted. The relative merits of codification and piecemeal legislation are examined and it is indicated that

the inclination of the authors is distinctly in favour of the former. Here again it may be asked whether any attempt at codification would not stir up popular prejudice and opposition at what may be described as an interference with Hindu religion and religious customs and usages without having any countervailing advantages, and whether it is not more advisable that there should be legislation on matters of particular urgency, leaving the comprehensive enactment of a Hindu code to a future and more opportune occasion.

Chapters ii to vi of the Report deal with inheritance and maintenance, women's full estate and limited estate and joint family incidents and adoption, while Chapter vii incorporates in the form of a bill the legislative changes necessary to carry out the conclusions arrived at in the course of the discussion in the preceding five chapters. This method of treatment has obvious advantages, in that pointed attention is drawn to what exactly are the changes contemplated, and the legislature will have before it something definite and tangible to work upon instead of having itself to attempt the extremely difficult and delicate task of putting its conclusions into the proper legal form and mould.

It may not be necessary to deal in detail with the historical portions of the several chapters. There are copious quotations from the Smritis and from the writings of well-known jurists on each of the subjects with which the learned authors of the Report are dealing. The treatment shows considerable scholarship and erudition and has the further merit of being brief without being terse or turgid. But what interests us most are the conclusions arrived at, the defects that are pointed out in the Hindu Law of the present day and the remedies that are suggested.

As the learned authors themselves observe in the Introduction, "every proposal for change must be jealously scrutinised and examined on its own merits, without prepossession and without prejudice" and so venerable an edifice "as Hindu Law should not be altered needlessly or in the spirit of iconoclasm or with the aim of producing something quite new that may look or work better." That is the test clearly and correctly laid down and the question is how far the changes suggested in the Report stand that scrutiny and that test.

Any amendment of the law of inheritance must concern itself with two questions:

- (i) Who are the persons who are not now included in the category of heirs but who should be brought within that category.
- (ii) Changes in the order in which the heirs should succeed, or in other words, the question of preference or priority.

On both points the Report suggests sweeping alterations. According to the Madras School of Hindu Law, one's widow and daughter come

immediately after the son, grandson and great-grandson, while one's mother, grandmother and great-grandmother come in respectively before the father, the grandfather and the great-grandfather.

The only females who are entitled to succeed as bandhus are the following seven:—(1) Sister. (2) Half-sister, (3) Son's daughter, (4) Daughter's daughter, (5) Brother's daughter. (6) Sister's daughter (7) Father's sister. The only female relation by marriage who is entitled to succeed is, therefore, one's wife, while the number of female blood relations who are entitled to succeed is extremely limited. The authors recommend the conferment of heritable right upon female blood relations and upon the widows of agnatic male relations.

Whether they desire that this heritable right should be conferred upon female blood relations up to the fifth degree and upon the widows of gotraja sapindas up to the fourteenth degree, or whether they recommend the restriction of the heritable right to four degrees in either case, as clauses 6 and 7 seem to suggest, is by no means clear. The conferment of heritable right on women is sought to be affected by clauses 4 and 5 which are expressed in negative language and which merely declare that sex or the absence of an enabling text of law should not stand in the way of female relations succeeding to the property of a deceased Hindu. It may be doubted whether clauses 4 and 5 would be sufficient or effective in achieving the desired purpose. For though the Madras High Court has recognised the heritable right of certain female relations who are not named in any express text, there has been no general recognition of the heritable right of all female relations within five degrees on the ground that they are bhinna gotra sapindas or bandhus. Again, the Madras school has not found it possible to bring in the widows of gotraja sapindas as heirs and even the claims of the step-mother have distinctly been negatived. In this state of the authorities, therefore, it may be necessary to pass an act conferring in affirmative language heritable right on those classes of female relations on whom it is contemplated that such rights should be conferred. An enactment negatively worded as if an existing disability is sought to be removed, and proceeding on the assumption that, had it not been for such a disability, female relations would be entitled to succeed as much as males, may hardly be enough. At any rate, when legislation is contemplated, there is no point in keeping the law doubtful or uncertain or in leaving room for controversy.

Dealing with the merits of the proposals, there does not seem to be very much of justification or necessity for the wholesale importation of Bombay law in the matter of the rights of inheritance of the widows of gotraja sapindas. A step-mother or a daughter-in-law or the widow of a grandson or of a great-grandson should certainly

be provided for and should further be given a high place among one's heirs. But it is idle to suggest that there is anything like a widespread desire that a grand-uncle's grand-son's widow should be ranked among the heritable relations. It is obvious that this proposal to bring in the widows of gotraja sapindas is due to some vague feeling of chivalry or an impression that it is a necessary step in the emancipation of women. But one perhaps may pertinently ask whether if a brother's wife should succeed to a man's property, a sister's husband should not have corresponding rights of succession to a woman's property. The object or intention of any law of succession is to provide for the devolution of one's property on persons who, by reason of their near relationship by blood or marriage, have a claim on his affections or expectations in regard to his property. To the extent that the present Hindu Law of inheritance is defective in that respect, it certainly has to be amended. But there is neither necessity nor justification for conferring heritable rights upon the widow of an agnate of the 14th degree, because her husband is a heritable relation under a system of law which has come down to us from the ancient past. There can be no serious objection to the creation of heritable rights in favour of female relations up to the fourth degree nor to clauses 6 and 7 which lay down the order in which the male and female relations up to the fourth degree should succeed. The authors have taken considerable pains to reconcile the existing state of things with the claims of the persons who are newly admitted to rights of inheritance, and they have also succeeded in giving near cognate male relations their proper and legitimate place in the scheme of inheritance instead of postponing them as under the existing law to Samanodakas of the 14th degree.

The further devolution of the property after the several classes of heirs enumerated in clause 6 are exhausted is presumably left untouched with all the obscurity and uncertainty which still surrounds the law of succession in the case of bandhus. It would have been much better if the authors had clearly stated their views as regards the rights of inheritance of sapindas and samanodakas up to the 14th degree and their widows, and of bhinnagotra sapindas male and female up to the 5th degree, and of the order in which such heirs should succeed. The best solution would perhaps have been to disinherit all relations beyond the 4th degree and leave the property to escheat to the State, because we cannot conceive of any claims which a man's relations of the 5th degree and beyond can possibly have on his property. This may no doubt be regarded as too drastic, and the next best solution would therefore be to bring in all near relations and give them their proper place in the list of heirs, leaving the remoter devolution to be regulated by a few simple and intelligible rules for the determination of preference.

Part II is devoted to the law of separate property and adoption. Clause 8 deals with self-acquisitions or gains of science or learning very much on the lines of the Bill introduced by Sir V. Bhashyam Iyengar in the Madras Legislative Council and the Act recently passed by the Imperial legislature. The language of clause 8 is perhaps even more comprehensive than the language of the Indian enactment. There can be no difference of opinion as to the necessity and desirability of a provision of this kind. But the giving of shares to certain females like the widow, the mother, the unmarried daughter and the unmarried sister at a partition is not likely to commend itself to general acceptance. Adequate and ample provision for the maintenance and marriage expenses of such relations may be insisted on, but the giving of shares to such relations would, besides rendering the law of partition cumbrous and complicated, lead to undue fragmentation of family property, and it may be doubted whether the making of a proper and even generous provision for maintenance and marriage expenses would not adequately fulfil the purpose which the framers had in view in providing for the giving of shares to such female relations in clause 10. Clause 11 lays down that a widow shall be presumed to have her husband's authority to make an adoption. This introduces a highly salutary provision and approximates the position of a Hindu widow in the Madras Presidency in this respect to that of a Hindu widow in the Bombay Presidency. It puts an end to the necessity for the consent of sapindas which is an unfortunate if peculiar development of the Dravida school of Hindu Law; Sub-Cl. 3 of Clause 11 deals with what are usually described as ante-adoption agreements and seeks to state the law much in the same way in which it was understood in the Madras Presidency prior to the Privy Council decision in *Krishnamurti Iyer Versus Krishnamurti Iyer*, 50 Mad., 500. (P. C.)

The authors deserve every congratulation on the manner in which they have dealt with the law of "stridhana" which has always been regarded as a bugbear by lawyers. The definition of stridhana in para 12 is simple and comprehensive and the authors have done well in doing away with the several species into which stridhana is subdivided, each with its own table of heirs and its own peculiar devolution. Clause 14 regulates the succession to stridhana and has rendered as clear as could possibly be done a branch of law which has been notorious for its obscurity. The illogical distinction between married and unmarried daughters, widowed and barren daughters and so on as in the matter of succession has been rightly done away with. Clause 15 confers absolute rights on females succeeding to stridhana property and this is no doubt a desirable change. Clauses 16 and 17 which state that gifts or bequests in favour of females shall have, even when made without words of limitation, the same effect in all res-

pects as gifts or bequests in favour of males, merely state rules of construction which are now established beyond all doubt by a series of Privy Council decisions and seem rather out of place in an enactment amending certain branches of the substantive law.

The subject of women's estate which is dealt with in part IV raises some controversial issues. In the matter of the quantum of the estate which a woman inherits from a male relation, a distinction is drawn between a widow or mother or a female relation by blood on the one hand, and the remaining female relations on the other. The former are to take a full estate while the latter are to take the limited estate which is popularly described as a "widow's estate" and which is sought to be defined in clauses 19 and 20. Those clauses practically state the law relating to limited estates as it is and no objection need be taken to a statutory enunciation of that kind.

The attempt to confer an absolute estate on a widow or a mother would however create a complication where there is a daughter or daughter's son of the propositus. Take especially the case where a man leaves a second wife and a daughter by a predeceased wife. The widow would almost certainly convey the property to her own relations depriving the daughter of her rights of inheritance in her father's property. And if we are to imagine to ourselves what the deceased person would have desired in the matter of the devolution of his property, we may perhaps say with confidence that, in the great majority of cases, a Hindu desires that his property should go after his widows' death to his daughter's son. If however absolute rights are to be conferred on widows and daughters, it may have to be considered whether a widow and a daughter should not be enabled to succeed simultaneously and whether any rights of representation should be recognised in favour of daughters' sons by a predeceased daughter. The proviso to Clause 18 whereby it is sought to enable a limited estate holder to acquire full estate by obtaining a release from the next reversioner is opposed to the fundamental principle that a reversioner has a mere *spes successionis* and therefore nothing to convey or to release. Clause 21 again deals with the doctrine of surrender in a peculiar way. Partial surrender is sought to be legalised as also surrenders made with the avowed object or purpose of benefiting the widow herself. Or in other words the two essential conditions of a valid surrender are abrogated and one is at a loss to understand why the transactions contemplated by clause 21 should still be described as 'surrender,' when the legislature could avoid this circumlocutory method and boldly declare that all dealings with the estate between a limited estate holder and the next reversioner shall be valid and binding, whether by way of a gift or by way of an alienation for consideration. The

presumption raised in clause 22 that all purchases and investments made by a limited estate holder out of her income shall be deemed to be her stridhana until the contrary is proved, has long been recognised and acted upon in Madras and there can be no objection to its being statutorily declared.

The chapter on maintenance is quite unexceptionable. Clause 24 merely declares the existing law as to the personal and proprietary liability of a Hindu in the matter of the maintenance of his female relatives. Clause 25 which deals with a wife's right to separate maintenance confers on a wife a right to separate maintenance in certain cases in which she does not now possess such a right, as for instance where her husband marries a second wife or where he "habitually treats her with such lack of consideration as to make her life unhappy." But there is no doubt that the changes, such as they are, are in consonance with the progressive views of the times and with enlightened public opinion, though the vagueness involved in such phrases as 'lack of consideration' may perhaps be avoided. How the amount of maintenance is to be determined is laid down in clause 27 which does not very much differ from the method pursued by courts of law nowadays in the fixation of maintenance. Sub-clause 3 of clause 27 defines 'reasonable wants' which term *inter alia* comprises, and no doubt properly, "reasonable provision for educational and cultural needs." Clause 28 which makes maintenance a charge upon the entire family property is perhaps too drastic, and though it is stated in sub-clause 3 that such a charge could be confined to a specific portion of the property by agreement or by decree of court, one may be permitted to doubt whether the result would not be to compel managers to file suits against maintenance holders for confining the maintenance charge to a particular portion of the family property.

Whatever might be said about individual recommendations, there is no doubt that the Report is substantially in agreement with the progressive outlook of the times and that it would be of considerable help in focussing public opinion on the several changes which may have, in the near future, to be made in Hindu Law.

V. GOVINDARAJACHARI,
Advocate, High Court, Madras.

'Songs and Rose leaves' and 'The Lama's tale and other poems'.—BY
M. KRISHNAMURTHI, Rishikula Asram, Lal Bag Road, Bangalore.

Sjt. M. Krishnamurthi is one of those young poetic souls who have chosen English as their medium of expression. Of late there has been a tendency to discourage efforts like those of Krishnamurthi on grounds of

their being de-nationalising and untrue to the soil. But we must point out that under the peculiar circumstances of an individual's life, growth and education, it is possible he might have found his best through English and hence gives out his best through it. After all the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And in Krishnamurthi's poems there is a spontaneity of sentiment which is simple and refreshing and his expression, true to his inspiration is simple, direct and chaste. One can see through his poems the purity of his soul as of the sparkling dew drop of dawn touched by the first morning ray. He sings of the delight of life, of the simple but great things like the warm sunlight, like a glimpse of the "blue unutterable sky which is abundant wage for all his pain."

"Each morning dawns and brings you gifts untold :
Sunshine and warmth, and smiling skies of gold,
Song of glad birds, and color of green trees
Laughter of dew-wet flowers in the breeze,
And light, and love, and health and wholesome mirth
And all that makes a heaven of this earth."

He has a keen sense of life's ills too and tries to understand and interpret them in terms of life and truth. But primarily he is a poet who gives out his impressions of life as they come to him, without trying to interpret them to the world. Real poetry has no purpose to serve, but exists by the right of its inherent beauty like a flower or a beautiful song-bird. It breathes out a refreshing air of beauty and calm and therein is it fulfilled. Krishnamurthi's poetry is this type, simple and beautiful like the flower, the star and the dawn he sings of. In his poetry stands revealed a soul of great refinement and simplicity. He is one of those sweet flowers of the field, stumbled into human form, on its onward course to Truth. In a beautiful hymn he sings thus:—

God ! which has planted within my breast
The purple fire-bud of song
And fed it with the honey-light of Thy dreams,
I pray Thee break it into its flowered fulness with Thy breath,
That within its full-petalled altar
I might kindle the fire of my heart's worship
And lift it high to Thy feet.

D. RAGHUTAM ACHARYA.

"Seven Portraits" of some South Indian Celebrities.—BY K. RAM MOHANA SASTRI (The Modern Book Mart, 118, Armenian Street, Madras. Price Rs. 2 or 5sh.)

These exquisite pencil sketches from life by a talented South Indian artist are a welcome contribution to present-day Indian Art. While such studies from actual life are fashionable in the West, they have yet to become so in India. From the earliest times, the Indian artists have not taken kindly to the portrayal of individual man and woman in stone, metal, or more perishable material. And even in the few instances where the artist turned to such subjects, it was not the individual lineaments that were sought to be portrayed but the *type*—the devotee, the seer or the valiant warrior. Recent Indian portraits in oil colours have usually attempted to be merely photographic, but a photograph differs from a portrait even as a note in "Who is Who" differs from a sketch by Mr. A. G. Gardiner. The inward grace, the predominant mood of the individual portrayed, in a word, the *character* is not often apparent. It was, we believe, Rothenstein's sketches of the Poet Rabindranath Tagore that first revealed to Indian artists the possibilities of this kind of pencil portraiture. Young Ram Mohana Sastri, in addition to being a painter and etcher of note, has in these sketches distinguished himself as a portraitist. The volume contains seven studies—Dewan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao, Messrs. C. R. Reddy and S. Radhakrishnan, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Sastri, Dr. Annie Besant, Sir B. N. Sarma and Sir C. V. Raman—and in every case the artist as well as the subject have autographed the sketch. Interesting biographical notes are appended.

There is bound to be great divergence of opinion regarding the comparative merits of the sketches. But the ultimate test is not the mere faithfulness to actuality but the successful delineation of individual character. The artist spent long hours with each eminent person concerned, studied the features, gestures, temper and outlook on life, and reproduced what he conceived to be the dominant characteristics. In some instances it is the profile that is taken; in others, the frontal view. Every one of them is good, but if a choice has got to be made, we should vote for the sketches of Sir C. V. Raman and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Sastri. The strength of the former and the serenity of the latter have captivated us.

The book has been well printed and got-up by the Huxley Press and excellent reprints of the pictures supplied by the Indian Photo-Engraving Company, Calcutta. In every respect, it is a remarkable production. We commend it to all art-lovers.

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAO.

The Round Table Conference.—(G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, Price Rs. 2.)

The publishers have in these pages given a full and accurate report of the speeches delivered at the London Conference by the delegates both at the opening and closing sessions. The announcement of His Majesty the King-Emperor and the historic statement of the Premier at the concluding session have also been embodied in this work. The proceedings of the Conference form a distinct landmark in the history of the relationship between Great Britain and India, for they throw light on some of the perplexing problems in Indian constitution. On the success of the Conference, it is yet too premature to pass judgment. The exclusion of the Congress was a great handicap to the delegation and it was believed that the Conference was a predestined failure. Thanks however to the co-operation of the Indian Princes and the remarkable advocacy of the Liberal leaders who spared no pains to rally round all forces and present an unanimous national demand, the outlook of the Britisher has changed, and as a result of persuasive argument he has shown some signs of yielding.

To say this is not to belittle the mighty force of the national movement and its reaction on world opinion, particularly that of Great Britain. The nation's travails for freedom from foreign domination have struck a responsive chord all over the world.

The discussions form a valuable contribution to the history of political thought in so far as they have focussed attention on the problem of the All-India Federation comprising the States and British India, which hitherto had been relegated to a remote future. A collection of the speeches in book form is thus of timely interest and will be found invaluable as a book of reference.

C. VISWANATHAM.

Co-operative Reader (in English and Telugu)—BY RAO SAHEB M. V. APPA RAO, Retired Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Berhampore (Ganjam Dt.)

Mr. M. V. Appa Rao has written the "Co-operative Reader" in English and Telugu for the use of young boys and girls in schools. Within a small compass he brings out the main principles and phases of the co-operative movement and explains, in easy language, its aims and objects. Through the medium of short stories and dialogues and illustrations, the author has successfully depicted the benefits an individual, whether ryot or weaver, gains by becoming a member of a co-operative

society. The English Reader mainly deals with the Co-operative movement as it obtains in the Agency division. The Telugu Reader is a small adapted translation made to fit in with the state of affairs in the plains. But chapters 23 and 24 written in Telugu, which are not to be found in the English Reader, must be re-written and brought up to date. We strongly recommend the 'Co-operative Reader' to the educational authorities, for use in schools.

K. L. NARASIMHARAO.

Meghasandesa of Kalidasa.—With notes BY VIDWAN G. J. SOMAYAJI, M.A., L.T. and text with the commentary of Mallinatha. (V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, Madras).

The author has taken pains to publish exhaustive and critical notes on the text. This edition is mainly intended for college students and unlike the other available English notes, it explains the meaning of every word in a *sloka* in prose order (*anvayakrama*). In addition to a literal translation appended to this edition, most of the words and passages are explained in the notes literally, though instances are not lacking where this procedure was not strictly adhered to. A thorough discussion of all the rhetorical and grammatical peculiarities in a *sloka* is another feature which is bound to make the edition highly useful to students. In the explanation of the *alamkaras* and in the interpretation of *slokas* the author has not only tried to give as many of the existing views as possible but also showed remarkable originality and boldly attacked some of the old commentators. This must commend it to the scholar of Kalidasa as well.

T. D. R.

“Vira-Swarga”: A Tribute to Pandit Motilal

BY N. KRISHNAMURTI, F. R. HIST. S.

At a meeting of the passengers on board the S. S. *Gange*, held in mid-Mediterranean on the evening of Monday, the 9th February, 1931, Mr. N. Krishnamurti speaking in support of the Resolution of sorrow at the demise of Pandit Motilal Nehru said:—

Distinguished men have spoken before me, men who knew the beloved Pandit, men who have seen the charm of his face, men who have known the splendour of his work, men who have enjoyed his princely hospitality, men who have heard his voice, men in a word who have come under the spell of his great personality. I am sorry it has not been my privilege and good fortune to have seen him so in the flesh. But I have had the good fortune to come under his spell in a different but in no less prized a fashion. It has fallen to me during the last ten days to visit some of the more important cities of Europe in the company of a friend whom I am not to name, and everywhere the dusky hue upon my face revealed my Indian nationality, and at once people everywhere, in the train or in the streets, asked me only two things—“Indiana, Gandhi”—. It was the name of him who is not the possession of India only but of all the world, civilised and uncivilised. Nehru was the colleague of him, and with him strove to raise my countrymen in the scale of nations. The two words, India, Gandhi, were at once my passport to the hearts and the admiration of everyone and I walked with proud head the proud cities Europe. Such has been his contribution to the credit and honour of his countrymen as the colleague of Gandhiji.

It is him we have lost. We want him most now. We are at the dawn of a new destiny; the new-risen sun of India is just visible above the horizon, shall I say it is about 7 in the morning, and we must steer several degrees of stellar space before we reach the meridian, and a charioteer of the first rank is lost to us. We

could ill spare him. But ours is not the choice. And for him, death has come when victory was in sight. Fighting with zeal and matchless courage, he has fallen at the moment of triumph. I am reminded of the thought of the poet that the most glorious death is that of the soldier at the moment of victory; so like a great Kshatriya has he been struck down, and he will pass into *Vira-Swarga*.

Current Topics¹

THE RETURN OF PEACE

We rejoice that, as a result of the prolonged conversations between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin, a general cessation of hostilities has been ordered. This is but the prelude to the convening of another Round Table Conference in which the Congress will participate and help to evolve a constitution for Swaraj India. The terms of truce indicate that each side has shown commendable anxiety to restore normal conditions, and settle down to constructive work. Despite the fears of a breakdown at one stage, the prayerful earnestness of two devout individuals and the untiring efforts of the trio of peace-makers have achieved a moral triumph rare in the world's history and absolutely unique as between a dominant and a dependent nation. Here it was not a victor that dictated terms to the vanquished, but the representatives of two great nations—good men and true—that discussed all problems in a friendly spirit and explored the avenues to peace. The spirit behind the agreement is thus of greater import than the terms.

For the first time in recent years, the Congress and the Government of India have been brought face to face, not as opposing powers claiming the nation's allegiance, but as the Governments of today and of tomorrow. The Congress is no longer a mere deliberative organisation 'ventilating grievances' and pressing for reforms, but the incarnation of the National Will—the one body which the Government of the day must satisfy and treat with. The discussions of Gandhiji with the Working Committee on the one hand, and of Lord Irwin with his Executive Council on the other, have taken on the character of deliberations of cabinets of equal rank, preparatory to the conclusion of an alliance of amity and friendship. This is an immense gain from the national point of view, even apart from what is yet to follow. The

¹8th March 1931.

new Round Table Conference will be a live body capable of not only deciding momentous issues but of carrying them into effect.

Mahatma Gandhi has once again demonstrated that he is essentially a man of peace. Where smaller men would gloat over their triumphs, he is filled with humility and calls upon his followers to be likewise. His success at the present moment is of happy augury not for India alone but for the world, for, has he not shown that in the strife between nations there is a power mightier than the sword? Verily is he the Prince of Peace, the harbinger of a new era in human history.

INDIA AND WORLD OPINION

Valuable evidence is pouring in from everywhere that the Indian struggle for freedom under the leadership of Gandhiji has created a splendid impression in other lands. Shri Rabindranath Tagore, who returned from abroad last month, speaks of this "new technique in the history of revolution, which is in keeping with the spiritual traditions of our country" and how, "the noble spirit of courage and sacrifice manifested" has won the admiration of Europe and America. Prof. N. G. Ranga, who represented, though unofficially, the Congress view-point to British audiences at the time of the Round Table Conference, was struck by the magic influence exerted by Gandhi's name. On his return journey he visited Italy, and on one occasion a number of Fascist soldiers accorded him a military salute, noticing that he was wearing a Gandhi cap; and they proceeded to explain, "This is our salute to Gandhi." Yet another friend, Mr. N. Krishnamurti—the Travancore Secretary to Mr. T. Raghaviah at the Conference—tells how he walked proudly "the proud cities of Europe" just because he was a compatriot of Gandhi. The number of foreign journalists besieging "Anand Bhavan" at Allahabad and Dr. Ansari's residence at Delhi affords another striking testimony to the interest aroused by India. The exchange of cables between Gandhiji and the Rev. J. H. Holmes of New York is significant. All this is to the good. The Indian issue has now become a world-problem, and peace in India is the best guarantee of world-peace.

PANDIT MOTILAL

The noblest of modern Indian statesmen has been snatched away just when the need for statesmanship is greatest. A halo of glory and romance surrounds the memory of this prince among men. At a critical moment in his country's fortunes, he, along with the late Desabandhu Das, came to the forefront in Indian politics, and for over a decade he went from victory to victory till, on the eve of the greatest victory of all, he laid down his precious life urging with his last breath that the fate of India must be settled in the historic 'Swaraj Bhavan.' It was the fond wish of everyone that with the establishment of Swaraj in India, Pandit Motilal should be our first Premier. But he was not fated to watch over the final fruition of the nation's hopes. One incident in his great career must have filled him with legitimate pride. The Presidentship of the Indian National Congress is one of the greatest elective offices on earth. He filled this office twice, and on the last occasion passed it on to his gifted son. We doubt if such a thing ever happened in any nation's history. If the younger Pitt had succeeded to be Premier-ship of Great Britain immediately after Chatham, or if young Maurice had been elected Stadtholder of the Netherlands in succession to William of Orange, there might have been a parallel. As it is, the Nehrus, father and son, have broken all record. The name of Motilal Nehru will be enshrined for ever in the nation's memory, and future ages will speak of him as another King Janaka of Mithila.

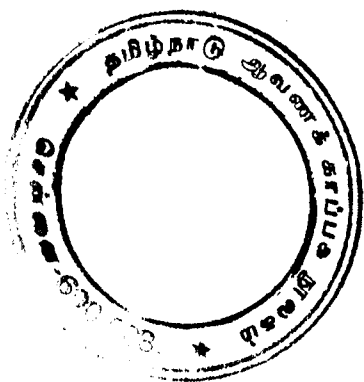
THE UNKNOWN VOLUNTEER

Immediately after his release from prison, President Jawaharlal paid an eloquent tribute to the services of the volunteers. During the Great War just praise was lavished on the young-men of Britain and of other warring nations for the magnificent part played by them. From Raymond Asquith, son of the Premier, down to the humblest private, they went forth to fight and risked their lives, that succeeding generations might enjoy the privileges of independent nationhood. But

infinitely greater is the heroism of the Indian volunteer who walked in processions *knowing* that the procession would be broken up by force, picketed foreign cloth shops *knowing* that he would be beaten mercilessly and dragged in the streets like a dog, knowing too that he would be condemned to the "C" Class and suffer untold humiliation. The soldier in armed warfare takes the chances of war. He may live or he may die. But with the non-violent Indian volunteer, it is the certainty of being beaten, coupled with the equally certain factor of absolute non-resistance on his side, that lifts the fight to an altogether higher plane and invests him with the glory that was Christ's. These are the flower of modern Indian chivalry, men and women who have made history. In song and in rhyme let their triumphs be sung. In the cities and in the villages, let a grateful nation erect memorials to the "Unknown Volunteer."

DR. RADHAKRISHNAN

The Andhra University deserves to be congratulated on the election of Dr. Radhakrishnan as Vice-Chancellor. At a time when large schemes are awaiting inauguration, the services of the new Vice-Chancellor will be simply invaluable. Our only regret is that the name of the revered scholar and saint of Andhra, Sir R. Venkataratnam, should have been dragged into this affair. We devoutly hope that the bitterness engendered by the election will be forgotten and that, at long last, the University may be given an opportunity to contribute to our cultural renaissance.



Opinion of

K. Ramakotiswara Rao, Esq., B.A., B.L.

Editor, "TRIVENI"

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