

126932

Triveni

Oct. 14

no. 6



DIGITIZED

JL

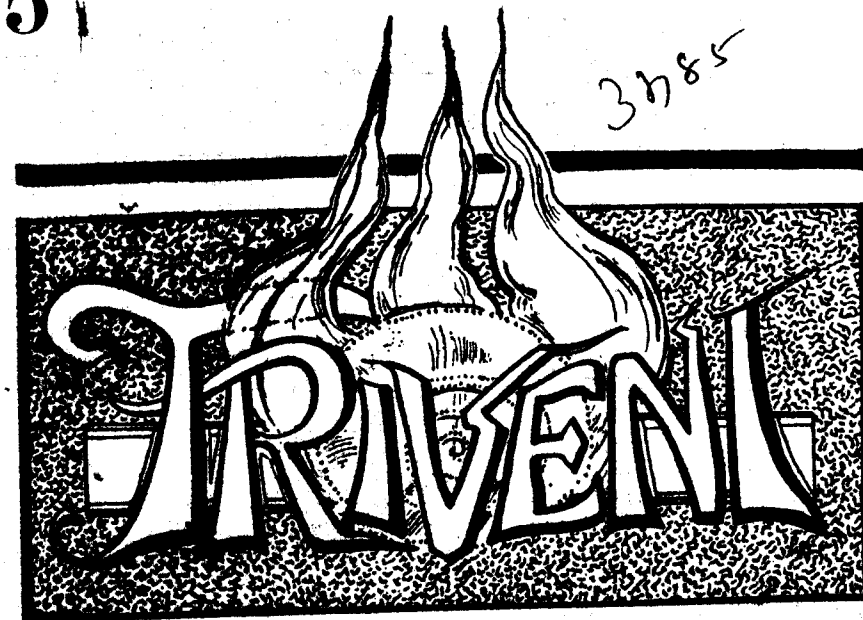
2m N28J

N31.4.6

26932

355

3785



JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

EDITOR

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAO

10 - JUN 1931

*Adore enthusiasm, the dreams of the virgin soul,
and the visions of early youth, for they are a
perfume of Paradise which the soul retains in
issuing from the hands of its Creator.*

MAZZINI

Si- Issues A Year

Vol. IV, No. 6

JL
V2M1N28T
W31.4.6.

Nov. - Dec. 1931

126932.

TRIVENI

Triveni is devoted to Art, Literature and History. Its main function is to interpret the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects.

Triveni seeks to draw together cultured men and women in all lands and establish a fellowship of the elect. All movements that make for Idealism, in India as well as elsewhere, receive particular attention in these columns. We count upon the willing and joyous co-operation of all lovers of the Beautiful and the True.

May this votive offering prove acceptable to Him who is the source of the 'Triveni'—the triple stream of Love, Wisdom and Power!

THE EDITOR

*... he that laboureth right for loss of Me
Shall finally attain! But, if in this
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure!*

THE SONG CELESTIAL

INFORMATION ABOUT 'TRIVENI'

1. **'Triveni'** is published **Six Times** a year, on the 15th of February, April, June, August, October and December. Subscription may commence from any number, but no enlistments will be made for periods of less than one year.

2. **Subscription rates.** Indian: Rs. 6 (post free).
Foreign: 12s. or 3\$ (post free).

Single copy. Indian: Re. 1-4 (postage extra, 4 As.)
Foreign: 3s. or 75c. (post free).

3. **Intending Subscribers** are requested to remit the annual subscription in advance. A specimen copy of the current number can always be had on payment of Re. 1-8 (post free), and, on enlistment, the balance of Rs. 4-8 only need be paid to make up the subscription for one year.

4. **Change of Address** should be intimated to the office at least a fortnight before the date of publication of the Journal. If, however, the change of address is only temporary, arrangements may be made by the subscriber with the local post office.

5. **Back Volumes.** A few complete sets of 'Triveni' Vol. I (1928) and Vol. III (1930) are available for sale at Rs. 6 each, (post free). Bound Volumes, Rs. 8 each, (post free).

**Address All Communications to: The Manager, 'Triveni' Office,
Y. M. I. A. Buildings, 9, Armenian St., G.T., Madras**

10 - JUN 1932

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The present number completes the Fourth Volume of TRIVENI. We deeply regret that the final number for 1931 is being published so late as May 1932. The patience of our readers must have been tried severely. We can only plead that we have sought to do our best. These are hard times for all cultural enterprises, and more particularly for TRIVENI which is slowly winning its way against tremendous odds.

To enable us to regulate the publication of TRIVENI and avoid further tiresome delays, we propose hereafter to publish our six numbers from JULY TO JUNE every year instead of from January to December. The first number of Vol. V (July-August 1932) will appear on the 31st of July next, and the subsequent numbers at regular intervals of two months. Incidentally, this will afford the Editor a few weeks of rest which he needs imperatively, after the ceaseless strain of four long years.

Please note that:

(a) OLD SUBSCRIBERS whose subscription expires with the present number (Nov-Dec 1931), will renew their subscriptions as from July 1932.

(b) NEW SUBSCRIBERS will similarly enlist for a period of one year from July 1932.

(c) OTHERS who were enlisted in the course of the year 1931, will receive as many numbers of Vol. V as will make up the six numbers to which they are entitled.

We are thankful for the support hitherto extended to us. We fervently appeal to our subscribers to continue their patronage and also to interest their friends in TRIVENI.

Madras,
10th May 1932

Manjeri S. Isvaran,
Asst. Editor, TRIVENI

3285
TRIVENI

JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

(With which is incorporated 'THE NEW ERA')

EDITOR

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

ADVISORY BOARD

C. JINARAJADASA, M.A. (CANTAB)
DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA
V. GOVINDARAJACHARI, B.A., B.L.

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN, D.LITT.
K. T. SHAH, M.A., BAR-AT-LAW.
M. S. CHELAPATI, M.A., B.L.

Annual Subscription

Rs. 6/-, 12 sh. or 3 \$

9, Armenian St.
Madras, (India)

Vol. IV, No. 6
Nov.-Dec. 1931

ROYAL PATRON

His Highness

Sri Sri Sri Krishna Rajendra Wadiyar Bahadur
Maharajah of Mysore



OUR LIFE - SUBSCRIBERS

The permanent Life-subscription for 'Triveni' is Rs. 100/-.
The following is the further list of those who have enlisted themselves since the publication of the last number. The Editor's grateful thanks are due to them.

M.R.Ry. Vissa Appa Rao Pantulu Garu, M.A.,
Professor, Presidency College, Madras.

„ K. Venkata Subbiah Naidu Garu,
Auditor & Accountant, Royapettah, Madras.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Personal Religion	1
Prof. V. Saranathan, M.A. ...	
A Mission of Indian Culture	4
Dr. P. Guha-Thakurta, M.A., Ph.D. ...	
The Kathakali of Malabar	7
N. K. Venkateswaran ...	
Folk-Songs in the Karnataka	12
Masthi Venkatesa Iyengar, M.A. ...	
The Iconography of Prajnaparamita	17
T. N. Ramachandran M.A. ...	
Ragini Devi and Indian Dance	26
K. V. Ramachandran ...	
Current Topics ...	29
Kautilya Passes (An one-act play)	33
E. Narayanan ...	
Jago Patel (From Gujarati Folk-lore)	57
N. M. Shah, M.Sc. ...	
Am Epistle to a Martian	61
C. L. R. Sastri, B.Sc. ...	
Theatre Architecture in Ancient India	69
V. Raghavan, B.A. (Hons) ...	
Literature and Democracy	78
G. V. Subbaramayya, M.A. (Hons) ...	
How I Played—Desdemona	94
S. Narasimham, B.A., B.L. ...	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Collective Man of Ancient India	
<i>S. Raman Kutty Menon</i>	101
" Saffron and Gold " (A poem)	
<i>Manjeri S. Isvaran</i>	105
Reviews 	106

ILLUSTRATION

Prajnaparamita

Frontispiece



Prajnaparamita
Leiden Museum (From Singasari, East Java)
(1220-1227 A.D.)

Personal Religion

By PROF. V. SARANATHAN M.A.

(Principal, The National College, Trichinopoly)

There are two principles in a man's personal life, both related to the ardours and the exquisite labours of his mind, bringing him the joy of an intellectual peace in the end. These may be called Materialism and Spiritual Life respectively. Gains, loves, riches, antipathies, complacencies,—these affect a man both materially and spiritually. The comforts of the body, and the hundred cries and alarms and longings of the mind require an active mental life, a process of fashioning personality, out of which what is called personal religion arises.

A man, however commonplace, may hope to find some truth that bears relation to the mind among the ardours and pleasures of his life, in the pursuit of fame, in the obscure desire of beauty, and even in some humble, self-sustaining duty to which his days and hours are devoted. "His heart forebodes a mystery, He names the name Eternity." This is idealism, "some yearning toward the lamps of night," the origin of spiritual life in him. Though the gifts of this world are precious to Man, because he is of the stuff of which they are made, yet in the core of his mind is the denial of the power of Matter, the denial to oneself, with a grave consistency of spirit, of possessions, sensual enjoyments, exquisite impressions, and "the service to the flesh" generally. The mind selects objects of pleasure or interest in that mood in which it sets less importance on things, possessions and so on, than on attitudes and glimpses of the Universal Life. The life of the appetites is no doubt very strong in a healthy man, but he has to carry out simultaneously the dictates of a materialism concerned with the appetites, and of an enlightened mind which cultivates tastes and is attuned to the spiritual life.

There is an art of living as well as of education which enables our soul to paint its outward walls so costly gay, but also

thrive in fidelity, modesty, truth, law, happiness. Marcus Aurelius aspired to such an understanding inward and outward; and self-culture like this is the theme of every great scripture, is at the heart of the poet's cry, and is the principle of what unity a man may achieve in his own life.

The youthful poet, Milton, stressing the need of Temperance for one who striveth for mastery, said

"To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good which leads the nearest way."

Milton's religion in youth, a thing like some warm, animated Love, helped him to achieve an exquisite valour of spirit and also clearness. In every age, however, there have been men who without the help of religious faith, achieved the unity of their outward and inward lives, as the result of humane studies and also of a certain happiness of constitution, a kind of bodily luck, sometimes. But every cultivated man should keep before himself the ideal which Sir Joshua Reynolds made popular in Art, "Beauty is the medium (the middle or the golden mean) of form." To keep proportion in the activities of one's life, in rest as in endeavour, in possession and in self-denial, in mental indulgence and in the habit of moral recovery, "dwelling within the walls of a city as in a shepherd's fold on a mountain,"—this is the moral crown, the intellectual peace which the humanist looks for, pursuing Life as Art, as a personal craft of soul, incommunicable except when one is a gifted writer.

But, within himself, he is content to rule, and achieve the golden life, trimming the lamp of endeavour and soothing the Spirit of Night at the close of each short day. Those interests which lie apart from the pursuit of success, the personal morality made up of light and cloud inherent in a creature with a mind, the clatter of arms and weapons within the stronghold of one's personality as well as elemental things like hunger and sex, need to be realised and understood by oneself, if one is to have the gift of the golden life. The mystical attitude to oneself arises just in this way,—the mood of a free religion which brings inward music. But

the seeker of intellectual peace may also go to the spirit of Irony for a teacher; his mind learns to disenchant itself and not be fascinated or be thrown into ecstasy. W. B. Yeats writes that Synge once said to him, "We should unite stoicism, asceticism, and ecstasy. Two of them have come together, but the three never." The man who seeks to live the golden life unites all the three, occasionally, but comes by Irony always; and, I guess, Plato made a beautiful thing of the last, an element of harmony.

The essence of the golden life, intellectual peace with an element of irony, is not inconsistent with the appreciation of the beauty of the material world, even with a mild rapture in "the impressions through the senses and the service to the flesh" which we call existence. Indeed, has not every worldly thing strong toils of grace for the modern kinds of men that they are not to blame if they worship it with beauty of their minds and strength and skill? There is a golden materialism also in the life and thought of a people, which admits of "tasks in hours of insight will'd" and enterprises of great pitch and moment, and heard melodies and those unheard which are sweeter.

A Mission of Indian Culture

By DR. P. GUHA-THAKURTA, M.A., Ph.D.

I could not help feeling rather depressed the moment I noticed it announced in a Bombay newspaper about the last week of January that Mr. Edward Thompson, lecturer in Bengali at Oxford, had come on a visit to India on a mission of Indian culture. For, I felt that my friend, Mr. Thompson, had chosen a most inopportune moment for his mission. India is passing through a crisis in her relations with Britain, political as well as intellectual. This can be regarded as hardly a suitable occasion for even such a fair-minded and sincere intellectual friend of India as Mr. Thompson to undertake, and far less to succeed in, an effort to promote cultural co-operation between English and Indian literature. I wrote him a letter telling him all my misgivings. Although in reply he did not admit in so many words that he also felt just as I did, his letter was none too cheerful. Then he was good enough to pay me a visit when he came to Delhi. I referred to the point again. From all that he said during nearly two hours he was with me, I could easily gather that he was disappointed with the poor response he had received from the intellectual centres he had so far visited. He told me with genuine regret that he had decided to cut short his originally-planned period of stay in India. That Mr. Thompson went back to England a much sadder man than when he came here, was obvious from the interview he gave to a press representative on the eve of his departure from Calcutta. But I wished that he had told us something about his impressions of the Indian Renaissance movement, instead of giving his views on the defects of the Gandhi-Irwin pact or Mahatma Gandhi's mistakes at the Round Table Conference. Did he or did he not, in the course of his brief stay in this country, discover any possibilities of establishing new intellectual contact between India and the West? I understood that he had undertaken the tour purely on his own initiative, possibly with

A MISSION OF INDIAN CULTURE

5

a view to making a report to the Rhodes Trustees if any such intellectual co-operation was feasible. Did Mr. Thompson come across any modern Indian writer of outstanding qualities in any of the half-a-dozen active and efflorescent Indian vernaculars who, in his opinion at least, should receive recognition in the West? This is the question that Mr. Thompson ought to have dealt with to our satisfaction as well as his own, before he left India.

I believe that, in spite of all sorts of political and racial antipathies and antagonisms now so rampant, there is still in India a considerable number of people who are keenly anxious to bridge the gulf between England and India by a mutual exchange of each other's intellectual and cultural achievements. Mr. Thompson must have found in such literary periodicals as the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, the *Orient* and the *Triveni* clear manifestations of precisely the same objects and ideals as he had at heart. These magazines, among several others, have been consistently endeavouring to encourage the vernaculars by publishing, from time to time, English translations of various forms of literary compositions of writers in the original vernaculars, and thereby promoting the cause of intellectual co-operation between India and England in a very practical manner. I do not know how far it was possible for Mr. Thompson, while visiting the different intellectual centres, to get into touch with the real cultural leaders of the Indian Renaissance, and especially, with the younger schools of promising poets, novelists, playwrights or critical essayists in the different vernaculars. In any case, this was the only channel through which Mr. Thompson could have touched the roots of modern Indian culture and intellectual activity.

I will never doubt Mr. Thompson's fitness for the mission with which he came. For, he is no stranger to intellectual circles in India. His works on the life and writings of Tagore have considerably added to the knowledge and proper appreciation of the Poet among English-speaking nations. He himself has written several novels, depicting contemporary Indian life and its problems. All this certainly bears testimony to his abiding love and admiration for Indian culture. Mr. Thompson is a poet of no mean order, and

consequently, his intellectual affiliations with the characteristically lyric flowering in Indian literature are but natural. I do not think his acquaintance with other creative Indian vernaculars is as intimate and thorough as with Bengali. Nevertheless, I know him to possess a full and capacious mind which ought to have enabled him, even through the medium of English, to recognise the possibilities of the other modern Indian vernaculars with which he might not be as deeply conversant as Bengali. But I have a slight fear that Mr. Thompson's mind, although inclined much more India-ward than that of the average intelligent Britisher, is not quite free from political bias. He will himself recognise, however, that the lack of recognition of India's political equality by Great Britain has so far been the greatest stumbling-block to co-operation as co-equals in the intellectual sphere. To this, of course, must be added a certain spirit of cynical indifference, born of ignorance, and often, a very decided prejudice, among a certain class of Britishers in India, against her intellectual attainments in the past as well as in modern times. This is most tragic, especially when one remembers that modern India had welcomed English literature and arts with an ardour, perhaps unparalleled in any other land touched by Western civilisation. It should, therefore, have been a part of Mr. Thompson's mission of Indian culture to attempt to clear the misconceptions and prejudices of the Britishers in India regarding India's culture and literature. A mission such as Mr. Thompson had in mind, will never succeed with a mere veneer of affection and respect for Indian culture.

The Kathakali of Malabar

By N. K. VENKATESWARAN

The *Kathakali* is the hoary, purely indigenous, pantomimic dramatic art of Malabar, and makes an unforgettable impression on the mind with its original and extraordinary technique. The *Kathakali* is a compound art and its predominant dramatic character is vividly reinforced with Dance, Music, Poetry and Painting.

Malabar or Kerala, the land of the Malayalam-speaking people, and consisting today of the political divisions of British Malabar and the twin States of Cochin and Travancore, is distinguished by its many and unique attractions giving it an individuality all its own. While the country is profusely beautiful with evergreen wooded hills and sparkling streams and palm-fringed lagoons, its customs and manners, its laws and usages, are such as are found in few other parts of India and give its cleanly native inhabitants a character hardly less alluring than distinctive. Nowhere else in India do women so habitually cherish their beauty and are so simply and gracefully attired or enjoy an equal freedom. In the domain of property, the most jealously-guarded monopoly of man through the ages, among the Nairs who constitute the main body of the original people of Malabar, women universally took precedence of men till very recent times when modern legislative councils, generally unembarrassed by feminine voice and excitedly imbued with new-fangled notions of what ought to be, began to strike at the ancient privilege.

In ancient times Malabar was ruled by oligarchies of its indigenous Brahmins called Nambudiris, a wonderful people justly famed for their love of quiet simplicity, dry humour and sumptuous amusement.

The *Kathakali* undoubtedly owes its origin to these endearing and steadfast Brahmins of Malabar who, many centuries ago, left no stone unturned to honour their religion and to increase their enjoy-

ment of life at the same time. In fact, there is hardly any other community in the world in whom we find a genuine religious enthusiasm so happily and strikingly coupled with such wholesome flowing abundance of life.

The stories enacted in the pantomimic play are mostly the legends and *Puranas* common to the whole of India, and the drama was evidently born in a pious desire to glorify the gods and divine heroes. The life-events of Rama and Krishna formed the earliest dramatisations, and the *Kathakali* literature which has ceased to grow only in recent times gradually included the whole gamut of the major Hindu myths. Most of the plays are moral in texture and on the *Kathakali* stage the one running theme is war, war between good and evil, between gods and demons, between the great universal moralities and the great universal temptations.

The literature of the plays consists of vernacular songs and Sanskrit verses succinctly outlining the subject-matter selected for enactment. The *Kathakali* orchestra is chiefly made of singers, drummers and cymbal-strikers, who stand immediately behind the actors. The singers render the songs and verses and the actors enact their contents by means of gestures and poses, by intricate language of eyes and delicate concatenation of face expressions. The song and verse that briefly narrate the story played are not meant for the audience but only for the actors who carefully translate them into the language of pictorial gesture. The alphabet of the hand-poses contains sixty-four signs which, with their numerous combinations, cover a wide extent of communication. The alphabet of eye and face is chiefly employed for the expression of the emotions. In the *Kathakali*, the face is literally the loud and eloquent index of the heart and mind. Courage, wonder, fear, pity, tenderness, anger, love and almost all other emotional qualities of the mind have each its visible signature, lightly and cunningly displayed in some part or other of the living canvas of the face. How astonishingly well does the gifted actor project his feelings! The eyeballs unroll evanescent miracles. The dark eyebrows utter the hidden secrets of the heart. Contending

feelings speak with a brace of tongues in each eye, and even the same eye delivers opposite moods at the same time. The face becomes the open drama in which the story is drawn in successive shades and touches of lineament. And then there is the dance. The great and gifted actor dances to the measure of the melodies that surge within himself in his total absorption with the character he represents, and the tide ebbs and swells while the drums, cymbals and songs allure his efforts with tender loyalty. In fact, in his best form he is more a dance than anything else; the poses, gestures, indications and movements are all blended together into one supreme rhythmic picture that tells a story and shows a cosmic glimpse at the same time. There are many and various kinds of dances in Malabar, and each represents a vision or a dream. In the *Kathakali*, the dance rises to beautiful versatility and comprehends the music and meaning of different things. It is psychological, rhetorical and allegorical, and its rhythmic excellence has not perhaps been exceeded by any other kind of dance in India. The gamut of movement often rises from gentle lingering notes of tranquillity to sound and speed like a sudden burst of thunder and lightning on a calm sky spangled with slumbering stars, and often the evolution is almost instantaneous so that the extremes are blended in one wild sweep of art. The singer pours out his verses in unflagging stream. The drums and the cymbals beat to the measure of dance and symbol. The blazing brass-lamp fed by a congregation of wicks, and radiating fantastic arms of shadow and light, enhances the heightening allegory. The story goes forward and thickens and the audience seated on mats and under the open sky is all agape.

Perhaps the most interesting thing in the *Kathakali* is the elaborate, exquisite or extravagant facial make-up of the *dramatis personæ*. In some characters, the painted face with its fluttering border-lines and fences nearly approaches a work of art. The facial make-up with head-gear and body-garments covers a large variety. The idea underlying the making-up of the characters is to portray them as fully as possible in accordance with their natures. In the *Kathakali* one may never "smile and smile and yet be a villain."

Here is a candid world in which the sheep and goats proclaim themselves.

This tell-tale make-up of the characters, achieved at the expense of much time and pains, provides the chief reason why the tongue is denied its office. Should the characters be allowed freedom of speech they cannot preserve their subtle facial embellishments beyond a few minutes. The impartial observer must concede that the highly suggestive and arresting make-up of each character more than compensates for the loss of verbal utterance. The *Kathakali* represents an altogether different world from ours and the vehicle of expression is also accordingly different, how refreshingly different we have seen. But even then, certain characters such as savage giants, demons and Amazonian women, are permitted a little sound. It is some elementary cry varying in note from character to character. For instance, if one screams another simply just makes a hooting or whistling sound. It is noteworthy that these cries also tend in the direction of self-revelation. Without exceeding skill and long experience, it is difficult for a character to indulge his 'voice' without upsetting some of his figure, and sometimes one comes across an actor on the stage with face in ruins showing thereby that he could not deliver his speech without injury to his looks.

How and when we do not know, but the *Kathakali* of Malabar has travelled across the sea to the island of Java and there it flourishes today in its full vigour, while in the country of its birth, it is hardly any longer a living art. The inrush of the Tamil drama into the country, with its expressive speech and song and erotic appeal, dealt the first blow and when the cinema came a little later, the *Kathakali* easily went into its last gasp. Attempts are being frequently made in Cochin and Travancore to snatch this fantastic and fascinating art from the jaws of death. The Maharaja of Travancore still maintains a standing troupe of mimes and it continues to evoke the wonder and admiration of even the most sophisticated folks from abroad. The present Agent to the Governor-General for the South Indian States, Lt.-Col. H.R.N. Pritchard, is known to be a lover of the art and sparing no efforts to encourage its practitioners.

All the same the art is dying. There are practically no new troupes coming up. It requires a long and arduous course of training besides much inborn talent to become a good *Kathakali* actor, and the game is not worth the candle in an age that looks upon the artist with amused antiquarian interest. The curtain is coming down on this old, old drama of Malabar. . . .

But even today, in remote villages, one often hears at sunset that peculiar quick rhythmic blare of drums and cymbals that announces a *Kathakali* in the night and the villagers rejoice.¹

¹ Vallathol, the poet of Kerala, has rescued the 'national art' of his country from oblivion. Under the auspices of the 'Kerala Kala Mandalam,' he has established a training school for *Kathakali* actors, and recruited to the profession young men of culture and social status. Vallathol is the leader of an intellectual and artistic Renaissance in Malabar.—Editor, *Triveni*.

Folk-Songs in the Karnataka

By MASTHI VENKATESA IYENGAR, M. A.

(Census Superintendent in Mysore, Bangalore)

One of the most important directions in which literary work is going on in the Karnataka is the collection and publication of the folk-song of the country. A group of workers in Dharwar has, within the past year, published a valuable collection of three-line pieces sung generally by women grinding corn in the northern parts of the country. These pieces are perfect specimens of folk-poetry. Their words are simple, their imagery is natural, their thought pure and innocent. There is hardly one mood of woman's heart which does not find easy and graceful expression in one or another of these pieces. Translations of selected pieces are given below to give readers of *Triveni* an idea of this folk-poetry. Comment has been deliberately kept at a minimum in order that the reader may dwell over the pieces for himself.

The following pieces invoke God at the beginning :

1. Mahadeva, I have no other God but you ; nor do I think that it is myself that shall do this and that ; O Strong One, do Thou conduct everything.

2. I desire no other and have no wealth. O Kariranga of Kallolli, O Venoba, I greatly desire you all the moments of my life.

The following piece shows a daughter making up a quarrel with her mother :

3. Who will settle a dispute between mother and daughter ? Has the pearl become heavy to the ear-ring, my mother ? And O my mother, who bore me, do you think I meant what I said ?

A daughter describes how she enjoyed her visit to her mother's house :

4. I went to my mother's house and ate all that tongue desired. I ate of the dishes all I wanted. I saw my mother's face and, in doing so, drank, as it were, her breastmilk again as when a child.

The following verse compares the mother's and mother-in-law's houses :

FOLK-SONGS IN THE KARNATAKA

13

5. Even if you drink only gruel, the husband's house is the proper place. Even if you are in a palanquin with servants holding whisks on left and right, do not stay in the obligation of the mother's house.

The mother's house is no good without the mother :

6. Go not to the mother's house, my Heart, when the mother is not there ; as the calf comes to a tank in which there is no water and turns back, so will you feel the pain of it.

The simile is beautiful ; so too is the affectionate reverence for the mother expressed in this piece :

7. Why do you want so many days to go to Benares ? My mother's house is an hour's way ; and there sits my Benares—my mother who gave me birth.

The great pride of a sister in her brother is expressed in these pieces :

8. I was feeling I had no one of my own ; then I learnt that, like the young moon of the bright fortnight, a brother to me was born—Sunny Child.

9. When that Sardar my brother comes, the jasmine blossoms drop on him. The ears of cardamom bend down to my prince-like brother and sprinkle their juice on him.

The daughter's longing for her mother's house is expressed here :

10. It is six months since I came to my mother-in-law's house and the moonlight had become to me as the sun ; and now my strong young brother has come to take me.

A brother's sorrow in sending away a sister whom he has brought up, is described here :

11. He has sent away his sister and is standing on the mound looking where she is going. My brother is wiping his eyes with the end of his coat and saying, " My sister from today belongs to others."

A mother speaks on a similar occasion :

12. My daughter, I send you away and go up to the roof of the house. Presently the mango tree hides you, my child, and you are no longer ours but belong to others.

The daughter of the house finds that her brother's wife makes it no home for her :

13. I came running up thinking my mother was there ; but hearing within the voice of my brother's wife, I turned back near the door.

14. Are the eyes and the nose strangers to each other, sister-in-law ?

Are my brother and I strangers? O my brothers's wife! it is because of you that my brother has become a stranger to me.

A girl is accosted:

15. Whose daughter are you, O my pretty doll with the eyes of a gazelle? My sister with the curling hair and of fine teeth, whose daughter are you, O good one?

A present of some fruits is sent for a friend:

16. Large bore fruit had come for sale in the market. Brother going to the village, pray take some of this for my friend in the neighbour's house who will soon be a mother.

Life in the mother-in-law's house is described in these pieces:

17. When my husband abuses, I shed no tears; but when his brother abuses, it is as if it rained without any clouds at all.

18. A husband like a prince, a brother-in-law who is earning and a mother-in-law who bears with me; what difficulty is there in looking after this household?

A young woman's self-respect finds expression in these pieces:

19. I am not a disgrace to my father who begat me. I have not stood in a crowd and laughed, nor brought a bad name to my relatives.

20. The Sardar my brother called me and said to me, "Do not enter neighbours' houses, my sister; otherwise, people will gossip and spoil our name."

This is her pride in her husband:

21. How does it matter if he works for wages or carries packages? My husband is not cheap to me. I feel as if we had a weight of gold in our house.

22. As my husband went out, I looked at his gait. That Lotus, his heel, was prettier than the evening moon.

The following pieces describe the love of husband and wife:

23. The wife is not moving about the kitchen. The food is not good to the tongue. Mother, the wife has gone to her father's house.

24. The quarrel of husband and wife is as rubbing sandalwood, as pouring water on the image of God, and as the swift flow of the river.

The woman asks the husband who is going on a journey:

25. When will you come back, my sweet-scented lover? My lover with the head-dress so full of fragrance, tell me, my lover, when you are returning.

He replies:

26. O lotus! I cannot live without seeing you, nor, O jasmine! can I get free of your witchery. My pure petal, I cannot stay away from you.

A husband beats the wife for wishing to go to her father's house:

27. He beat the wife and was sorry at heart and, when alone with her, took hold of her cloth and asked: "Am I more to you or is your mother's house more?"

A wife remonstrates when the husband proposes to marry again:

28. Is it good, my husband, to wear coat over coat? When one wife is alive, if another wife comes, and then another, will there be good in the household, my husband?

The mother's love for her child is described in the following pieces:

29. When the child is crying, his lips are as the tendril of coral, his eye-brows as the long leaf of the margosa, and his eyes shine with the sheen of the falchion in Shiva's hand.

30. Let him cry if he likes, sister, but let me have the child. It matters not if the work of the household is spoilt. Let my house be full of children like this.

31. Cry not, O little one, cry not, my sweet jasmine. Do not cry, my wealth of gold, my boy heavy as gold to carry.

32. Go to your play and come back, my child, and I shall wash your feet. I shall take the clear water of the cocoanut and wash your dear face that shines like gold.

33. A pillow the height of my arm, and a bed the length of my body, and the jewel, my boy, sleeping before me; why, after this, shall I trouble about my husband?

The familiar feeling that a girl is less desirable than a boy, comes out here:

34. Do not send word that a girl has been born. He will dislike to hear that it is a girl. My daughter, it is no girl to us but a piece of gold.

35. I have no care for the King and his men, for in my house is my son who brings the half share from any king and men of them all.

A daughter-in-law is welcomed:

36. Let the flower that my bright son has worn rise high in people's eyes! May the flower which my brave son has brought drop into my lap!

A son who has been provoked is addressed:

37. Eyes like Cupid and eyebrows like Hercules, and a waist that is slim as Apollo's, my son, who provoked you, O Lion?

A childless woman is described:

38. What kind of life is the childless woman's life? It is like the

hired bullock's labouring and labouring and, when it has laboured, lying down one day and dying.

Children make all sorrow bearable:

39. The daughter of the Emperor, to swing her children, tied the cradle in the wilds. Royal Sita swung her children in the woods and spent her exile smiling.

Love of Nature and of other Life comes out in the following pieces:

40. The millet is ripening white in the field in the valley. Eat without noise, O parrot; and, my brother, the stone will come, go aside.

41. One tree is beautiful among all trees—the mango tree. The parrot is beautiful among birds and, among stars in the sky, the moon is most beautiful.

The following pieces record a conversation:

42. O you with the ear-rings of gold, cutting fodder for your cattle, have you no care whatever? Your husband was smiling with another woman there!

43. Let him smile if he will, my mother, the smiling Kedige. The fragrant flower which I own and wear, let her see for a moment.

The following piece gives expression to the thought of many a poor mother when she is told that she has too many children:

44. Mine be poverty and mine many children and, in addition, my God's Grace; and my God, be yours the thought of my poverty.

A man with a handsome wife casting eyes on a dark beauty is addressed:

45. Gallant of the dark eyebrows, casting your eyes on the crow, with the mango in the house why are you gazing at the jambolan?

Unequal marriage is thus condemned:

46. Like mixing *dhall* in mud is giving a young girl to an old man. Shameless are the parents that do this.

This is a piece with which the grinding closes:

47. Our grain is finished but not our song. We do not want your mill-stone any longer, mother. It wears the rings on our fingers.

The quiet humour of the complaint about the mill-stone is worth noting.

All lovers of Literature should be grateful to the workers of the *Geleyara Gumpu* (Association of Friends) of Dharwar who, under their leader, Mr. D. R. Bendre, have brought their poetry of the sitters in the sun out to a larger world.

Prajnaparamita in Buddhist Iconography

By T. N. RAMACHANDRAN, 'M.A.

With the *parinirvana* of Sakyamuni Buddha, dissensions crept into the Buddhist camp, and at Vaisali, it was divided sharply into two, that of the Elders and that of the Youngers. Those who stuck to ethics and moral discipline, were called the *Theravadins* and those who trifled with these two but stuck to metaphysical and altruistic doctrines were called the *Mahasanghikas*. One of the *Theravadin* sects, the *Vibhajyavadins* or the analytical sect was, we are told, much patronised by Asoka, but later on it deteriorated and lost its prestige, owing to the persecuting zeal of Pushyamitra and his successors. Consequently, it fled to the South and made Ceylon its home. The Youngers, i.e., the *Mahasanghikas* made fast friends with the new settlers of India, the Sakas, the Yavanas, the Pahlavas and the Kushanas. They seem to have made headway particularly at the time of Kanishka, and in the council held in his time made a commentary on the sayings of the Buddha called 'Vibhasha.' In that council the *Theravadins* were feebly represented while the *Vibhajyavadins* were not in evidence.

At the same council there was also a small but pushing sect called the *Ma hayana* which did not however count in the council, but made great headway two generations later under Nagarjuna and his disciple Aryadeva, both of whom were *Sunyavadins*. "All speculations beyond Arhatship, Buddha discouraged as of no use. But bolder spirits after him could not resist the temptation of speculating, and their speculations ended in the time of Nagarjuna in *Sunyavada*." But in a short time *Sunyavada* was found to be unsatisfactory and Maitreyanatha, one or two generations after Nagarjuna, added *vijnana* to it and founded the *vijnanavada* or what developed later on as the *Yogachara* system.

The controversy between the *Sunyavadins* and the *Vijnanavadins* raged for several centuries. *Vijnanavada* was also found unsatisfactory and in the 8th century another element was added on to it which was called *Mahasukhavada*, so that "after ordinary *nirvana* there were three elements, *Sunya*, *Vijnana*, and *Mahasukha*." It is from this *Mahasukhavada* that *Vajrayana* originated, and *Vajrayana* is the system rich in iconographical ideas.

In Buddhist philosophy there are four theories or schools that have to be adjusted within the three *Yanas* or ways. The schools are *Vaibhashika*, *Sautrantika*, *Yogachara*, and *Madhyamika*, and the *Yanas* are *Sravakayana*, *Pratyekayana*, both being also called *Hinayana*, and *Mahayana*. *Sravakayana* and *Pratyekayana* are explained by the theory of the *Vaibhashikas*. *Mahayana* is of two kinds, *Paramitanaya* and *Mantranaya*. *Paramitas* are explained by the theories either of *Sautrantika*, *Yogachara* or *Madhyamika*; *Mantranaya* is explained by the theories of *Yogachara* and *Madhyamika* only¹ and begins with the abstruse theories of *Sunya* and *Vijnana*.

The Hinayanist is selfish inasmuch as he strives for his own *nirvana*, while the Mahayanist makes compassion (*karuna*) his motto and works for the uplift of mankind. We may remember that *Mahasukha*, from which *Vajrayana* originated later on, is not possible to attain without the aid of *Sakti*, the embodiment of compassion (*karuna*). To the Hinayanist the Buddha is the Promulgator of the Law, a superman with extraordinary intellect, and the order in which he would worship the Buddhist *Triad* is as Buddha, Dharma and Sangha i.e., the Promulgator of the Law first, the Law second, and the Sangha or the congregation last, while to the Mahayanist the Buddha is an eternal being coming to earth only to liberate the beings tortured by Mara, the Satan of Buddhism, and the order in which he would offer worship to the *Triad* is as Dharma, Buddha, and Sangha, attributing the highest place to the Law and the next higher place to the Promulgator of the Law. The Mahayanist calls Dharma also as *Prajna* and speaks of it as eternal and the highest object in Buddhism, while Buddha is to him

¹ Advayavajra, *Tattvaratnavali*, fol. 9.

only the means of obtaining that *prajna*, which is diffused into the masses through him. And "it took a considerable time, though we cannot definitely say how much, for the idea of *prajna* and *upaya* to evolve from Dharma and Buddha".¹

On the question whether *nirvana* meant *sunya* (emptiness) or *vijnana* (consciousness) the Mahayanists were divided. The exponents of the *Yogachara* were not prepared to believe that all the efforts of sentient beings should only end in *sunya* or nothing. They, with their chief Maitreyanatha, held that even in *sunya*, *vijnana* or consciousness remained; hence they were also called *Vijnanavadins*. The *Madhyamikas* were of opinion that *sunya* did not mean void or emptiness but only meant "a transcendental state (not annihilation), about which neither existence, nor non-existence, nor a combination of the two, nor a negation of the two, can be predicated."²

The entire iconography of the Buddhists proceeds from a correct understanding of the doctrine of *Sunya*. The creation of *Vajrayana*, viz., the various forms of gods in union with their *Saktis*, or as the Tibetans describe it, in *Yab-yum*, was an outcome of the dual conceptions of *Sunya* and *Karuna* or compassion, 'both of which were conceived and represented, but which ultimately proved to be one and the same'. As Buddhism was intended to become a mass religion it was too much for the propounders of the *Mahayana* to expect the mass to understand the philosophical import of *Prajna* or Dharma, *Upaya* or Buddha and *Nirvana*. To drive home their significance these ideas were reduced to the form of icons of worship. And to *Prajna*, which was treated as one of the *paramitas* or perfections that a Bodhisattva must needs practise, the term *paramita* was tacked on, the whole standing for 'Perfection of Wisdom' or 'Divine Wisdom' and representing the *summum bonum* of Buddhist philosophy. And the legend grew that *Prajnaparamita* is the embodiment of the scripture of *Bodhisattvayana*, another name for *Mahayana*, that this scripture was also known as *Prajnaparamita*, that it was first dictated by the Buddha himself and committed to

¹ Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. xv.

² Bhattacharya, *ibid*, p. xvi.

the care of the Nagas in the nether regions, as in his time men had not attained sufficient wisdom to comprehend the doctrines embodied in it, and, that when the time was ripe, Nagarjuna restored it from the nether regions in the second century A. D. This Book of 'Transcendental knowledge,' this *Prainaparamita*, became an object of worship among the Mahayanists particularly, and became the standard work of the two main sects of the *Mahayana*, the *Sunya-vadins* and the *Vijnanavadins*. That of the *Sunya-vadins* was divided into 32 chapters and was called *Ashtasahasrika Prainaparamita*; and the same work as modified by the ideas of Maitreyanatha became the *Panchavimsatisahasrika Prajnaramita* (divided into 8 chapters) of the *Vijnanavadins*.

Before describing the iconography of this *Prajnaparamita*, we shall examine the philosophical and metaphysical significance of the term, as such an examination is apt to lead to a correct understanding of the former (i.e., iconography). The term can be divided into *prajna* and *paramita*. A Bodhisattva must practise six or ten *paramitas* (perfections). The term *paramita* is derived from *parama* and as such means 'highest condition, point or state, perfection,' complete attainment, transcendental virtue. "The *paramitas* are so called, because they are acquired during a long period of time (*paramena kalena samudagatah*) and are supremely pure in their nature. They also transcend the virtues or qualities of the *Sravakas* and the *Pratyeka-Buddhas* and lead to the highest result (*paramam cha phalam anuprayachchhanti*)¹. The *paramitas* are extolled to the skies in Buddhist literature as 'a Bodhisattva's best friends,' 'the Teacher, the Way and the Light, 'the Father and Mother to all,' even the Buddhas being their children, 'sublime, disinterested, supremely important and imperishable,' 'lead to welfare, happy rebirths—successful concentration and the highest Knowledge.² Greatest importance is attached to the *paramitas* because they tend to distinguish the Bodhisattvas from the inferior *Arhats* and the *Pratyeka-Buddhas* who are regarded as representing merely negative ethical ideals, while the Bodhisattvas attain a high state

¹ Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, p. 166.
² Har Dayal, *ibid*, p. 171.

of positive moral development with the aid of these *paramitas*. The *paramitas* were not new, but the new method of juxtaposition was the work of *Mahayana*, as it was felt that the 37 *bodhi-pakshya-dharmas* of *Hinayana* were 'too monastic and anti-social in their scope and tendency.' The practice of these *paramitas* is of the highest degree when they are acquired by the Bodhisattvas for the liberation of all beings.

Six *paramitas* alone were considered to be the chief ones as being the primary factors in a Bodhisattva's discipline, while four more were occasionally added to them as being merely supplementary in nature. While six of these alone are mentioned and discussed in almost all works on Buddhism in Sanskrit, the four additional ones are mentioned only in a few passages without being explained in detail. The six *paramitas* are:

1. *Dana-paramita*, (liberality, generosity), 2. *Sila-paramita* (morality), 3. *Kshanti-paramita* (patience, forbearance), 4. *Virya-paramita* (energy), 5. *Dhyana-paramita* (rapt musing), 6. *Prajna-paramita* (the perfection of Wisdom). The four supplementary *paramitas* are: 7. *Upaya* or *Upaya-kausalya* (skill in the choice or adaptation of means for succour), *Pranidhana* (aspiration or resolution), 9. *Bala* (strength), 10. *Jnana* (knowledge).

The *Madhyamikas* declare that the *Prajna-paramita* 'is the mother of all the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas,' 'is greater than all the other *paramitas* as the moon is greater than the stars' and that all other *paramitas* should be transmuted into it as it includes them all. In short, they declare that 'the other *paramitas*, without *prajna*, lead to the lower stage of the *Hinayana*, while this *prajna-paramita* is the essence of the *Mahayana* and is even sufficient by itself without the other Perfections' and that it 'produces, maintains and promotes them all.'¹ It is equated with *Sunyata* (void), a term which they explain in two ways, as 'Conditioned Existence' and as 'Non-existence'. They invoke it as if it were a substitute for the *Triratna*, the Dharma, the Buddha and the Sangha, and apply to it the epithets, *arya* (noble) and *bhagavati* (worshipful). The *Vijnanavadins* on the other hand explain it in a positive manner as 'the knowledge

¹ Har Dayal, *ibid*, p. 287.

of the supreme Good or the supreme Truth' or simply as 'Knowledge' and identify *prajna* with perfect knowledge, regarding it as 'insight into Reality (*tathata*).¹ Both are agreed in saying that *prajna* is the source of a Bodhisattva's moral strength, who after acquiring it, is not attached to anything and is perfect and flawless in character. "He loves rapt Musing, and cannot be shaken or conquered by the hosts of Mara. . . . He is animated by deep and great Love and Mercy (*adhimatra-karuna*). He acquires all the *dhyanas*, *samadhis* (modes of concentration) and *samapattis* (Attainments) of a Buddha."²

The crowning achievement of Indian art is indeed the spiritual creation of Sarasvati—Divine Wisdom—or *Prajnaparamita*, her Buddhist counterpart, as a concrete expression or material manifestation of the power of the Spirit—its virtue or *Sakti*. This *Sakti* is more often contemplated as the consort of the *Adi-Buddha* and as the Mother of the Universe who acts in unison with *Adi-Buddha* and becomes an abstraction of nature's manifestations "as well as the progenitor of all the Tathagatas and the mother of all the Bodhisattvas, *Pratyeka-Buddhas* and Disciples."

Who is *Adi-Buddha*? He is a creation of *Vajrayana*, the Primordial Buddha from whom even the five *Dhyani Buddhas*³ are said to have taken their origin. When represented in human form *Adi-Buddha* is called *Vajradhara* and is conceived in two forms, single and *yab-yum*. When represented in *yab-yum*, he should be embraced in *yab-yum* by his *Sakti*, whose name is *Prajnaparamita*⁴ and who besides being richly decorated with all ornaments should

¹ Har Dayal, *ibid*, p. 237.

² Har Dayal, *ibid*, p. 247.

³ The first thing that *Vajrayana* created was the five *Dhyani Buddhas* and their *Saktis* along with a number of deities as emanating from them. The *Dhyani Buddhas* or the Divine Buddhas as they are also called, are *Vairochana*, *Akshobhya*, *Ratnasambhava*, *Amitabha* and *Amoghasiddhi*. They are a peculiar kind of Buddhas being exempted from undergoing the stages of a Bodhisattva, and restrain themselves from any activity, being always engaged in meditation. They do not create, for they assign that function to their own emanations, the Divine Bodhisattvas. Their number is strictly five though a sixth, *Vajrasattva* is sometimes added who is regarded as the priest of these *Dhyani Buddhas*. For details see Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, Ch. I.

⁴ Bhattacharya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. xxviii, pl. VI, a, b.

hold the *kartri* in the right hand and the *kapala* in the left. The conception of *Adi-Buddha* originated at the Nalanda monastery in the beginning of the 10th century A. D., while there is no mention of the five *Dhyani Buddhas* in the *Mahayana* literature prior to the time of Indrabhuti (700-750 A.D.). But however, as Havell has pointed out, the conception of *Prajnaparamita*, as the *Logos* or "Divine Wisdom" is much older.

The worship of *Prajnaparamita* was so popular that Asanga of the sixth century composed a *sadhana* for her worship that could confer on her devotees wisdom. Owing to her antiquity, she could not be assigned to any particular *Dhyani Buddha* like the other deities, as the conception of the *Dhyani Buddhas* itself was not in existence when Nagarjuna brought the *Prajnaparamita* scripture from the nether regions. The *Sadhanamala* contains nine *sadhanas* relating to her worship, two of which assign her to the cult of *Akshobhya*, one of the *Dhyani Buddhas*. As an emanation from a combination of the five *Dhyani Buddhas*, she is ranked with *Kurukulla*, *Sitatara* and *Vajratara*. She is of golden colour and bears the images of the five *Dhyani Buddhas* on her crown. Her hands exhibit the *Dharmachakra mudra* while from under her right and left armpits issue two lotuses bearing the *Prajnaparamita* book. A stone image in the Indian Museum¹ answers this variety.

We have now to deal with *Prajnaparamita* as an emanation of *Akshobhya* from whom eleven goddesses, most of them fierce in nature, emanate. *Prajnaparamita* is however one of his peaceful forms, and two *sadhanas* relate to two of her varieties, one white (*sita*) and the other yellow (*pita*), the former called *Sitaprajnaparamita* and the latter *Pitaprajnaparamita*. *Sitaprajnaparamita* is two-armed, bears the effigy of *Akshobhya* on the crown, sits in the *vajraparyanka* pose (*asana*) on a white lotus, with a red lotus in her right hand and the *Prajnaparamita* scripture in her left. She is white in colour, should be decorated with all sorts of ornaments and should have a beautiful appearance. Much similar to this variety is the other, *Pitaprajnaparamita*, who is, however, yellow in colour and

¹ Bhattacharya, *Ibid*, pl. xxxvi, c.

displays the *vyakhyana* pose (exposition) in her two hands while on a lotus to her left rests the scripture *Prajnaparamita*.

Of all the images of *Prajnaparamita* we have singled out one, easily the best (frontispiece), for reproduction here as it is the most exquisite specimen of the Indo-Javanese school of sculpture answering well the description of *Pitaprajnaparamita* given above.¹ This statuette which has gone down as 'the masterpiece of Buddhist sculpture from Java' was found in a wood near Malang and in the neighbourhood of Singasari, East Java, as early as 1819 A.D. and is now exhibited, we are told, in the Leiden Museum. Seated in a state of complete abstraction on a lotus flower, the symbol of purity and divine birth, in the fixed pose of a *yogini*, the goddess performs with her hands the divine *mudra* or sign of spiritual instruction, while her charming face has "that ineffable expression of heavenly grace which Giovanni Bellini, above all other Italian masters, gave to his Madonnas."² The head-dress, ornaments and dress, with which the goddess is provided are exquisitely and elaborately worked. The scripture is placed on a lotus flower to her left, the stalk of which is twined round her left arm. Judged from any standard, we have no hesitation in acclaiming with Havell that this wonderful specimen is "worthy to rank as one of the most spiritual creations of any art, Eastern or Western,"³ though Gangoly and Coomaraswamy dismiss it as 'somewhat weak and superficially attractive'⁴ and 'superficially lovely and exquisitely ornamented but without vitality.'⁵

As regards the date of this sculpture Havell had conjectured rightly in 1908, judging from the style of its execution, that it must belong to the later period of Buddhist art in Java, for it follows in the main the classic 'Indian style of Central Java'. Today we have so

¹ My friend, Mr. Ajit Ghosh tells me that there is one, a beautiful image, of this variety, in his private collection.

² Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, p. 51.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Gangoly, *The Art of Java*, pp. 38-9.

⁵ Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 208.

much research done on the history of Java by Dutch scholars and Indian scholars such as Dr. B. R. Chatterji and Mr. Gangoly that we are able to date this statuette almost precisely. The history of Java is gleaned from two *Kavi* chronicles, the *Nagara Kretagama* and the *Pararaton* which cover the Singasari (1280-1292 A.D.) and the Majapahit (1294-1478 A.D.) periods in the history of East Java. The former stops with 1365 A.D. while the latter goes on till 1478 A.D., up to the end of the Hindu period of Javanese history. According to the *Pararaton*, Ken Arok, the ancestor of the Singasari and Majapahit lines, was a son of Brahma, an *avatar* of Vishnu and a relation of Siva, and was guilty of heinous crimes, such as theft murder, etc. A Brahmin from India came to know from supernatural sources that Vishnu had incarnated himself in Java in the person of Ken Arok. He came to Java and entered the service of Ken Arok whom he helped easily to get into the service of the Singasari prince who was himself a feudal of Kediri. "Then he (Ken Arok) falls in love with the wife of the prince, Dedes, the most beautiful woman in Java, of whom had been foretold that her husband would be a Chakravarti (monarch). After a series of disreputable adventures, the Kediri prince is disposed of by means of a dagger which is destined to prove fatal to Ken Arok and his descendants down to the 7th generation. Ken Arok ascended the throne of Singasari in 1220, and married Queen Dedes. He assumed the title of *Rajasa Sang Amurvabhumi* and had succeeded in consolidating his conquests before he was murdered in 1227."¹ Our image is ascribed to his reign (1220-27 A.D.) and is believed to represent the features of his queen Dedes who furnished the model.

¹ B. R. Chatterji, *Indian Culture in Java and Sumatra*, pp. 6-7.

Ragini Devi and Indian Dance

By K. V. RAMACHANDRAN

Inspired partly by the naught and partly by the glimpses of classic Dance which Indian Art has preserved, attempts have been made in recent years to recover the lost art of *Nritya*. Many are the connoisseurs that attempt a new orientation in Dance and every shade of preference is represented among them, from the aggressive Europeanism of 'Menaka' to the eclecticism of Uday Shankar and the provincialism of Tagore, who harks back to the idiom of folk-art. It is too soon to appraise the merits of the various exponents, but generally the performances do not rise very much above the journalese of Art, though here and there artists have shown themselves capable of efforts of sustained æsthetic quality by way of exception. Ragini Devi belongs to the class of exceptions: she has all the spiritual qualities necessary for the pioneer; humility, patience, imagination and above all, enthusiasm similar to that which originally created the art. Art to her is no mere hobby or pastime, but is a passion—a religion almost, sacred and ceremonious. Though a native of America and brought up on entirely different conceptions of Art, she has sensed that India's message to the world lay in her Music and Dance—Music with all the colorfulness of painting, and Dance with all the plasticity of sculpture, but with an added dimension of movement; and has taken it upon herself to understand and interpret it, because India was 'thinking of something else.'

In pioneering work of the kind Ragini Devi has undertaken, what matters most is not knowledge or perseverance, invaluable as these are in the revival of forgotten art, but the spiritual background, the attitude of mind which the pioneer brings to bear on the investigation, an imaginative sympathy capable of overcoming any barrier without which knowledge itself is of no avail. This essential requisite is what many eminent Orientalists lack, in spite of their great erudition and industry, and which Ragini Devi pos-

sesses almost without her being conscious of it; and the success of her expositions is in a great measure due to this. The other requisites of the pioneer are acquirable, and there is not the least doubt that she will acquire them in due course.

European students of Indian Music and Dance find to their dismay, with the first lesson, that what looked simple and spontaneous is really the result of arduous and highly sophisticated discipline and that, of all languages, the language of Art is the most difficult to comprehend. Artistic Europe has never understood artistic Asia, and misunderstanding is greatest in the art of Music where prepossessions and predilections alike prohibit mutual intercourse: Europe craves for a harmonic perspective for every melodic utterance, while Asia finds, in that very perspective, an irritating distraction. It is nothing short of a feat if Ragini Devi obliterates her European personality to the point of Indianising dances in professedly European style, and assumes another pair of ears, so to speak, and another attitude and sings *Bageshri* as if to the music born, and reveals a flexibility of fingers and feet which not many among the trained artists can boast of. She effectively demonstrated that Dance is but song made visible, because the term *Sangita* denoted not Music alone but instrumental symphonies as well, no less than Dance; she stirred hopes in some of us of staging Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa in the very manner in which they were staged thousands of years ago. Ragini Devi has music in her soul; people like her are not to be met with every day.

Radha and Krishna are themes eternally favoured by Indian Art and Literature. At the sound of the flute, the Tamil poet sings, the cowherdesses clustered round the Dark One like flowers in a garland; and as, fingers cunningly plying, eye squinting, mouth pouting, brow upraised and thoughtful, Govinda played on the flute, the tribe of birds left their haunts and circled round Him and stood motionless like felled trees, and the tribe of cows with folded head, shook not even their ears lest they miss a particle of the song. Or, as the *Prem Sagar* recounts, "a cowherdess blending her voice with the sound of His flute, was singing in treble key; and when a cowherdess having stopped the sound of the flute, was bringing

from her throat its entire note in exact agreement, then Krishna remained fascinated with delight as a child beholding its image in the mirror stands rivetted." Ragini Devi is happy in themes which Art has endeared, and she brings to bear on them a technique based on no negligible discipline and a fluency of gesture and command over Indian rhythms, truly astounding. In *Paniharin*, she described the pranks of Krishna. In 'Radha's Response,' it was the shy, hesitant but ecstatic surrender. Her executive skill was no less marked when interpreting the 'Boat Song.' She indicated twilight and dawn and the breeze bearing the boat down the river, and by graceful undulations of shoulders and arms, recaptured the rhythm of the flowing waters; and by a lightning change of facial expression and gesture, she denoted renunciation. The rhythm of youth embodied the surging emotions of girlhood—full and overflowing as a jar of water. Interpretations such as these to the accompaniment of choice music of the kind Azeez Khan and his talented assistants provided, and punctuated by the most captivating melodies of the North, leave memories that abide ever.

Of proper height and form, and with a face transparently innocent and Madonna-like, vibrant with mood and reverie, and a voice that imparts new significance to Music, she has all the essentials that an exponent of Dance should have. She is thoroughly conversant with Hindu achievement in the sphere of the fine arts and is interested in bringing together the various traditions of Art with a view to weave them into the fabric of the Dance of the future. Her ambition is to spiritualise the art by rescuing it from the banalities of the professional dancing girl, with whom it is largely a feat of memory practised for the end of gain. She intends further to revive the forgotten dances of *Tandava*, *Lasya*, etc., by a study of the available literary and art material and, as a first step, to start a centre for the study of Dance where respectable girls may take lessons. No one need doubt her gifts of mind and heart which make her eminently competent for the work.

Current 'Topics'¹

THE IMPASSE

When the Editor of a bi-monthly journal begins to comment on current topics, he invariably finds that most topics have ceased to be current. And in the case of the *Triveni* whose delays have become more vexatious than the Law's delays, the comments must necessarily relate to events that happened many months ago. Since December last, the relations between India and England have undergone a tragic change. The era of goodwill ushered in by the Gandhi-Irwin pact came to a sudden close when the present Viceroy refused to discuss the Ordinances with Gandhiji. All these months, the atmosphere has been surcharged with suspicion and distrust. There is, apparently, no near prospect of a return to normal conditions. We are passing through a crisis of the first magnitude—the gravest since 1857. If, as is rumoured, the Conservatives asked for just a couple of months to crush the Congress, their calculations have gone all wrong. Their time-table has proved as illusory as that of the British Government when the Boer War was declared, or that of the Kaiser during the German advance on Paris at the commencement of the Great War. With the full support of the 'National' Government, the authorities in India, Central and Provincial, armed themselves with the widest powers to combat the Congress. They called upon the law-abiding sections of the public to rally round the cause of ordered constitutional progress. But curiously enough, these sections have not taken the arena kept clear for them. By this time, it must be obvious that either they have not the prestige and the following that the Government credits them with, or the very measures taken by the Government and the way they administered them have alienated these sober and staid advocates of constitutional methods. You cannot in the same breath inaugurate an Ordinance regime and invite the co-operation of men who are fundamentally opposed to

¹ 9th May 1932.

all extra-constitutional action, whether by the Congress or the Government.

As always happens, the non-combatants who advocate peace are at a disadvantage. Their number, however, is steadily growing, and in the coming months, their influence may begin to be felt. The Ordinances are due to expire; the Round Table Committees will soon finish their labours; nobody believes that any constitution can be worked without the support of the Congress. The opinion is slowly gaining ground that now is the time to 'reverse the engines' and enter into parleys. Government must either crush the Congress or conciliate it. It does not look as if they have crushed it, Government Communiques and Parliamentary pronouncements notwithstanding: an organisation that is crushed does not stage an open session at Imperial Delhi. The only alternative is to conciliate the leaders who have admittedly the largest and the most effective following. Now, if ever, the path of peace is the path of honour.

THE 'POLITICAL OBSESSION.'

Englishmen, as a rule, fail to understand why the political problem in India should assume such oppressive prominence as to colour the outlook of even those Indians who are primarily poets and artists. "Indian writers today suffer from the political obsession," complains the leader writer of *The Times Literary Supplement*, an obsession which, according to him, "mars even the fine quarterly *Triveni* . . . which, in general, is a model of catholic editing." While we appreciate the compliment implied in the closing words, we must reply very briefly to the charge levelled against Indian writers in general and the Editor of the *Triveni* in particular.

The comment betrays a plentiful lack of imagination. Art and Letters are never divorced from life. A writer always reacts to his environment, though in a certain measure he shapes it himself. The outstanding fact in Modern India is the many-sided upheaval we are witnessing; we might even call it a rebirth or a Renaissance. The phenomenal growth of a new type of literature

in the various Indian languages is one sign of it. The revival of painting, sculpture and dance is yet another. But these and many more are inevitably subservient to the greatest need of the Nation—the winning of political freedom. Foreigners can have no conception of the intensity of the Indian hunger and thirst for liberty. We are in the flood-tide; we are caught in it; we are swayed by it. And, what is more to the point, we are glad that we are so swayed, because, in this process, the fine arts acquire the power that enriches them and brings them into vital contact with the main currents of national life.

Swaraj, in our view, is *not* the crown and fulfilment of the Indian Renaissance. It is but the beginning of nobler achievement in the realm of the spirit. But Swaraj will create the atmosphere in which the arts will blossom and bear fruit; it will lead us into the spacious sphere of unfettered play of the mind and the emotions. Every intelligent Indian senses this almost intuitively. If Rabindranath Tagore throws up his knighthood for political reasons, and Sarojini Devi raids Darasana, the same impulse finds expression in young Kanu Desai's noble picture of Gandhiji—'In Search of Truth'—or Venkataramani's 'Kandan, the Patriot.' Thus the leading intellectuals in every province are either behind the prison bars or expressing their hearts' longings in line and colour, in story and song. It is futile to seek to interpret the India of today without realizing all that this means. The political problem is like a running sore. When it is healed, every activity will fall into its right place. Meanwhile it is up to the best amongst Indians and Englishmen to hasten the cure.

"THE DAWN OF INDIAN FREEDOM."

In this connection, extraordinary interest attaches to the book by Messrs Elwin and Winslow of the Christa Seva Sangha, Poona, published a little prior to the resumption of hostilities between the Government and the Congress. Christians and worshippers of Truth, they perceive in Satyagraha the promise of a splendid victory for the cause of peace and goodwill among men. To them, Gandhiji is not simply an Indian patriot seeking to free his nation,

but the harbinger of a new era in human history. Beginning with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, they trace the course of events backwards, and give a vivid account of the struggle of 1930 and the idealism that informed it. It is marvellous how the authors have entered into the workings of the Indian mind, and transformed themselves so completely as to think and feel like Indians. But to those that are filled with God-vision, this must be comparatively easy. With so much of anti-Indian propaganda by foreign correspondents and adventurers, a book of this nature is most welcome. We particularly commend the portions on the future of the Indian Church and the attitude of Christians to the nationalist movement in India.¹

A LITERARY HERCULES

When a great literary undertaking is completed after strenuous endeavours extending over a quarter of a century, the nation that profits by it has reason to rejoice. If, in addition, the individual that planned it is happily alive, to receive the grateful homage of his countrymen, the work is doubly blessed. Such indeed is the colossal translation of the *Mahabharata* into Tamil prose by Pandit M. V. Ramanujacharya, assisted by a galaxy of eminent scholars. The Samskrita Academy of Madras honoured itself by presenting a congratulatory address to the Pandit and conferring on him the title of *Bhasha Bharata Dhurandhara*, in recognition of his valuable services to the cause of learning. As one witnessed the proceedings of that memorable evening, it was not merely a sigh of relief that escaped, but one of sadness that these are not the days of Mahendravarman, the Pallava, or of Raja Raja Chola. For, who in our day, can adequately reward a truly Herculean task of this kind? The cultured aristocracy of South India might at least enable Mr. Ramanujacharya to rest in affluence after the labours of a lifetime.

¹ *The Dawn of Indian Freedom*, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London).

Kautilya Passes

(AN ONE-ACT PLAY)

By E. NARAYANAN

(Sub-Editor, 'The Hindustan Times', Delhi)

SCENE I

[One of the Court-rooms in Pataliputra. It is built of wood and richly decorated with carvings. Though there is broad daylight outside, the room looks dark, shuttered and dimly lit. All along the wall are low desks covered with files of State documents. A thin but well-built man of about fifty-five or sixty is seen pacing up and down the room. He has a dignified mien and fine features, and from his appearance, may be a Pandit or a Minister. He goes to the window, opens it, takes up a metal document, reads it, frowns, puts it back and reclines on his seat of cushions before a desk, and is lost in thought. It is Kautilya: Pandit, Courtier, King-maker and Minister.]

KAUTILYA

So, that is the end!

To yield up all my dreams, to fortify myself with unnatural content, to say, "Let all be as you wish"—to whom?—not to the King's imperial self—not to the rising tide of popular demand which I have prophesied will overtake each State, not to a conqueror such as Sikander.¹ That would be natural. But nothing is to be natural in this most unnatural life of mine. To smile and to bow, to greet with reverence, to whisper and to nod—to whom?—that shaven priest who prates of *nirvana* and *sushupti*, of ordained law that transcends all created rules, who shivers at the mention of my code, and blanches at the record of my life—whom, if twenty years ago he had dared to interpose betwixt me and the King, I would have annihilated as the river Ganga does the creeping cottages of the poor upon her flooded banks. To such an one I yield my place. My place—not mine! For mine is not the place

¹ Alexander, the Great.

beside a senile man. I stand behind the King, the abstract, most imperial lord—the *man* is nought to me. But—Oh Chandragupta!—

[Enter Messenger—bows low and stands looking at the ground.]

Speak! I am in no mood for ceremonies. I have no time to go through all the formulas, that I myself created.

THE MESSENGER: [Bows again, joins his palms on his breast.]

“May the most learned master of all arts, he who is the ear and eye to the Lord of all this wide domain, the——.”

KAUTILYA

Enough, you mud-souled parrot. I say, enough; out with what thou wert commissioned to convey. Drop all the prefixes.

MESSENGER

My supreme Lord the King would speak to you.

KAUTILYA

Yes?

[The Messenger looks surprised and bewildered. Bowing and stepping backwards, he goes out of the room.]

KAUTILYA

He would speak to me. But what has he to speak to me? To me who always was the first to speak! Perhaps he wants me to stay on, to wean his son to Royalty, to begin yet again where I began with him—and by slow degrees to teach the boy the great fact that power and love are poles asunder, that the King is opposed to the Man, that there is neither reward, regret nor recompense to him who acts, that being conscious of the action is the only drop of heaven vouchsafed to supermen, while all the nameless millions of mankind can have their sleep, their loves and hates, and rhapsodies. Aye, to teach all this, and when his spirit breaks beneath the weight of will, to let the son go, take his father's course and follow cattle-like some single-visioned maniac. Let him ask me that—and I shall show him that even Vishnugupta can refuse the wandering *chela* of a monk. Why is it that I feel like this? Am

I too on the road to vile decay? I—I am Kautilya—and I must fight. Fight for the King against the Man. I will not yield without a word. [Exit]

SCENE II

[The palace. On either side of a door, a watchman stands impassive. It is the door of Chandragupta's private chamber. The Messenger comes. He makes to enter the chamber.]

FIRST GUARD

Whither so fast, my friend? What is the great news?

MESSENGER

I know not. The King smiles on me, asks me what my name is, how much I get for my services, says “Will you do this?” or “Will you go there?” as if asking a kindness of me—and then Chanakya bursts upon me like an anger-laden thunder cloud, shouts at me to haste, to drop all prefixes, and after hearing my message, asks “Yes?” so coyly and so hesitant as would a bride upon the first night summoned to her lord's bedside.

SECOND GUARD

But what was the message that got this wonderful reply?

MESSENGER

It was nothing; day in, day out, I carry such to all the ministers, and never once in all this thirteen years has His sweet Majesty once upon me smiled—nor ever has that marble-faced Minister lost once his placid temper and bid me haste.

FIRST GUARD

The message?

MESSENGER

I tell it was nothing more than this—“Go, ask Kautilya if he can attend on me awhile,” said my Lord the King.

GUARDS

Ha—Ha—and on this you built up all this tale. We thought some second conqueror had come across the Sindhu—[They laugh]

[Messenger gently pushes open the door and goes in. The guards again become immobile and stand like statues. (Perfect silence). Kautilya approaches in haste. The guards join their palms and bow reverently. Kautilya passes into the room; the door closes.]

FIRST GUARD

He is in haste.

SECOND

True. The sweat drops stood upon his brow. His eyes did sparkle like red cinders. What does this cool man's ire portend?

FIRST

Nothing good for such as we.

[A dancing girl dressed in silks passes through the corridor, two small pages on either side of her.]

FIRST GUARD

She is going to the Prince.

SECOND

But I heard she was not in favour with him.

FIRST

Oh! That was because she wanted him to bring the boy up far away from Court.

SECOND

Lest he should know how his mother earns her livelihood?

FIRST

And it seems the Prince so likes him that he cannot part with him a day.

SECOND

That boy looks more a prince than Bindusara himself.

FIRST

Harlot's children always are the best.

SCENE III

[Within Chandragupta's chamber. Kautilya stands near a pillar. The King walks up and down, looking at times through the windows, and stops suddenly before Kautilya as he passes him.]

But even in your wonderful chariot, will not the central axle once get worn? And when the outer wheel begins to slow, would you not rather change it? And to prove your own theory, will you not see if this same perfect chariot would go with another axle?

KAUTILYA

Yes. If I do have the running of the chariot, as you so graciously say I have, I would pluck out the age-worn part without compunction. Be it the central axle or the veriest spoke in any little wheel, I would not hesitate. The dead and dying are not, and will never be, interesting to me.

CHANDRAGUPTA

Who else should know the axle is decaying than the axle's very self? Ah, me!

[Kautilya loses his lassitude, takes a step nearer. His voice rises.]

Oh King—and this from you, and that unnecessary sigh! I tell you it is not decay. It is but the dirt that gathers round the axle and makes slow the revolutions, and I am here to brush away the dirt.

CHANDRAGUPTA

Chanakya, this is the truth: It is not the priest alone that has made the resolve. I feel—I feel—

KAUTILYA

Don't *feel*—that is left for your innumerable slaves. *Do*, do as Sikander did! Don't you remember that cold winter day when Taxila bent low as, from the West, sun-like, resplendent in his vital strength—dispensing punishment and justice without thought—he came? The mightiest man of Time that has been yet! And our own kith and kin—our loud-spoken Porus, and that wonder-bag of learn-

ing and humility, that long-forgotten king of Taxila,—begged favours and crept cur-like, with gold and wine, and softly-breathed praise—crept to his very heel. And you?—that stood by me in that vast throng that saw the Yavan going like the sun, preceded by the dawn-flush of his own bright glory into the heaven where, but a moment gone, a thousand stars had scintillated! Are you the same who turned to me with shaded eyes and said,—your breath all gone with suppressed ambition—, “I will go West as he is coming East.” And how far have you gone West? Not further than that slow-witted Nikator’s, your father-in-law’s, harem. The West is not Iran! It is past that and far away, and with such as you the East will never lay its hand upon the West. You and yours will ever bend to Time’s decaying touch and yield what you have accomplished, when but the final touch is wanted, when the last effort alone remains for completion. Would I had been a Greek and had that man for master! I would have kneaded all this your petty empire as so much dough and mixed it with the glory of fast-breaking Grèce! Oh! Rebel, my King, rebel against this onset of your weakness—say, “I will not yield to stupor.” Organise, as once you did. Tear up my hard-created constitutions, stamp upon your treaties as if they were poisonous worms, don’t let your person’s habits, and the customs of the Government, and the traditions, sit on your bright imperial mind. Act once more. There to the East lie all the warring millions of China. Or to the West unnumbered millions of Barbarians, who await but your approach to become nations. Have vision. Aye, do anything. I promise to withdraw my codes to write a thousand new ones. If you will but act. Be Chandragupta once again—the man who, looking on the glaciers of the North, that smiled in unsurpassable height, and at his famished followers, said, “My friends, what glory! Better to die upon those peaks of frozen white, than weep here and be buried.” Be the King again—Kautilya’s master, your own dear peerless self.

CHANDRAGUPTA

You indefatigable old man! Your Chandragupta, as you call him, will be where you are. I, the weakling, go. I leave behind me

my own blood. And if Bindusara is my son, he cannot but flame up, as often I have done, at your supreme eloquence. Stay on. Forget me. Make him greater than I was.

KAUTILYA

Is that your final word?

CHANDRAGUPTA

It is.

SCENE IV

CHAMBER OF THE PRINCE

[*Bindusara reclining on a cushioned seat. Indulekha, the dancing girl, stands near a window. She looks very earnest. She has just stopped speaking and looks intently at the Prince for his answer. The Prince seems to hesitate.*]

BINDUSARA

But I too love him, Indu.

INDULEKHA

You do. Then do you earnestly want him to grow up in this cloying wilderness of intrigue, lovelessness, and falsehood? Do you want his slowly wakening mind to see that she whose breast fed him to strength is but a harlot? Do you want him to see me ply my wiles to collect deep secrets of State from enemies? Do you want him, least of all, to see my unhallowed love for you? No! No father worth the name would like his child to curse the womb that bore him.

BINDUSARA

But when the King has given me the State, and Kautilya has been pensioned off, you shall lead your life as you would wish. You need not act the spy. Your only care shall be to bring him up, our child. He need not know that you are anything but my chosen consort, which indeed you shall be. And I promise you by his sweet self, he shall be the Emperor of a greater empire than I now inherit. Bear with me awhile—a little while, my Indu, and I shall wash this Court of all its dross, and make it chaste enough for

our own love and our love's child. What say you? Yet doubting! Yet hesitant! Do you not know your Bindusara, Love!

[Rises and goes to her—takes her hands in his.]

Would I have taken you from where Kautilya's victim had cast you, and held you to my breast, if I had not intended, even then, to cherish you?

INDULEKHA

No—No—my lord, remind me not of that. I may go mad even yet. Allow me but this. Let him be brought up, till the time you talk of comes, in some removed place. Let him breathe awhile unpolluted air, where courtesans will not kill his childish mind with their poison-breath;—where envy will not follow him, nor slander, nor this politics. Yield only this once to my wish, my Prince; and your Indulekha shall be ever grateful—ever.

[The door slowly opens. The Prince and the dancing girl glance towards it. Enter Kautilya. He closes the door, turns and sees them both. He stands silently looking at them. They fall apart. A moment of strained silence.]

KAUTILYA: *[Looking at the Prince]*

I have been to the King's chamber.

BINDUSARA

Is he still stubborn?

KAUTILYA

That quality alone is left in him of my old master.

BINDUSARA

So he is renouncing?

KAUTILYA: *[Looks hard at the dancing girl who slowly moves towards the door]*

Yes. He is renouncing.

BINDUSARA

Stay, dear one! I and Vishnugupta have no secrets that you may not hear. *(To Kautilya)* Has the priest come?

KAUTILYA

I have no interest in priests. They, like the words on their lips, are superstitions. I am a fact and I care only for facts. Prince!

BINDUSARA

Why not sit, Vishnugupta—and you too, my love; come near me. Here is our man of facts, and there is no need to hide the truth from him. Our love is a fact; is it not?

[He sits down. Indulekha comes nearer and sits down at his feet. He takes one of her hands in his]

KAUTILYA: *[Sits down]*

Your father is renouncing his kingdom. He tells me he is weary of it. He has taken for his master a stray madman from amongst those lunatics who ever prate of *nirvana* and knowledge. He is leaving in a day or two with this same madman on an endless pilgrimage. Has he told you all his plans?

BINDUSARA

Yes. Last night he called me to his bed-chamber and we talked far into the night. He recounted to me the troubles that he took to mould this State to what it is today. He talked of you and your inexorable will. He told me that he would leave me to you and you to me. He—

KAUTILYA

Leave me to you! When did I indeed become a thing to be left, a chattel to be handed over by sweet, renouncing, sentimental father to the young hopeful son? Listen, I have told him and I tell you—I am not a retainer—a flunkey to be paid well and pensioned off when sucked work-dry. I might die—my person might disintegrate. But I—the real I—am Fact. I have no sentiment. I am the Spirit of the State. I encompass the People, the Government and the King. I am not to be passed on with thanks and gratitude. I am the essence of the sense of nationhood—I have no separate existence from the organisation that has grown

around me. People grow tired of me. They fly from me. Some dread me. But I assert. I am not some vile inanimate lovable toy to be shifted from owner to owner. When a king rejects me, he is no more a king. I—

[The dancing girl rises up, looks half frightened at the two men, goes up hastily to the door, opens it and goes out.]

KAUTILYA: *[Continues as soon as the door closes]*

I and your father made this kingdom. You raise your brows at my want of modesty. I assume modesty only with those I want to win over to my side. Your father and I met when he was a landless young marauder and I was but a stripling full of garnered old-world lore. But I had even then in me the vision of an empire,—the premonition of a scheme to weld the various peoples of our land into a nation. We met. He was ambitious. He was strong and brave. He was honest. I perceived in him the ideal First Ruler for a State,—the man who can with but a little effort be a God to men. We worked. We wrought this kingdom. And now he tells me he is tired, that he wants some calm before his death. I have told myself and him that it is not yet time for him to go away. Our foundations for an empire are strong. But the super-structure has not yet had the final touch. He tells me that I can remain and touch it up. And I will stay and touch it up if you will consent.

BINDUSARA

Most gladly I do consent.

KAUTILYA

Consent to what, my Prince?

BINDUSARA

To your remaining at Court, to your being what you all along have been—the main and central prop of our dynasty and our crown, the chiefest counsellor, and the dearest friend.

KAUTILYA

Aye, all that and something more, my Prince.

BINDUSARA

What more?

KAUTILYA

Your father and I, Prince, grew together. I modified him and he in turn might have affected my own growth. We complemented each the other till the two of us were but one single whole—the State. Now he goes and you step in. You in your youth, and your want of experience, will not complement me. I must mould you into what your father is. I must wean you from yourself, must take away your self and instead graft on you a mighty kingdom. Till I succeed in doing that, I must be free to be both parts of the whole, what your father and I have been. Do you consent to this?

BINDUSARA

I do not comprehend you. You talk in abstractions.

KAUTILYA

I was never fond of generalisations. I work in detail. It is only when I have achieved that I draw broad conclusions. So, then, if you want to know what my conditions are—well, listen. You must entrust yourself to me—not as heretofore, the pupil to the teacher,—but the King-to-be to the King-maker. You must give up your pleasures, your company, your personal happiness even.

BINDUSARA

My pleasures, my company, my happiness even! Oh God! When had I happiness? You and my father wilted my childhood and buried my youth in arid reasoning and ambition. Pleasures? What pleasures have I had between you two? I never played with flowers or children as others do. I never quarrelled, never laughed, and when my manhood was awaking in me, I never looked at women who were not in our pay. What pleasures then have I to give up? What company and what happiness?

KAUTILYA

Repining and sloth are the pleasures of weak kings. You must give these up—and more—I again assert you must give up your present company.

You mean—
 BINDUSARA

KAUTILYA
 Yes, I mean the dancing girl who was here but now.

BINDUSARA
 Indulekha?

KAUTILYA
 Yes, Indulekha.

BINDUSARA
 But I love her. She is the mother of my child.

KAUTILYA
 My King cannot find time to love or indulge in selfish fatherhood.

BINDUSARA
 What would you do with her and me then?

KAUTILYA
 I would have her back at her destined work—dancing and singing, sleeping with those I want to crush, thieving dear secrets from their close-guarded minds—and—

BINDUSARA: [*Springs up*]
 Listen, man, I will not have you talk so. I love her—I, the King-to-be—

KAUTILYA: [*Without minding the interruption*]
 And you—Prince, King-to-be, I would have you work. I will take you from your ease and sentiment, your leisure and your repinings for lost pleasures. I will take you with me into the ugly intricacies of statecraft, show you the workings of human ambition and greed, teach you to curb rebellion with subtlety and spurn friendship with force. I shall have you work with me day and night, and, when you have looked long enough behind the scenes, to know that personal comfort is not the thing for which kings spend their lives. I shall let you be King again and no more Man!

BINDUSARA

Vain man, you forget you are a man—your limitations in your affected abstractions—that encompassing your constitution is a greater constitution, one of love—that to it each one of us must, nay, will submit, as has my father, your complement, and even you, some day.

KAUTILYA

Ah! Love—love—and meek religiosity—how long am I to bear with this? I who *will* not understand this prattle of weak fools?

BINDUSARA

Aye you *will*—you will and a very short while hence, my friend! You shall have some taste of this greater law. You shall see me make this kingdom greater than you ever did, and still remain a man, and love and weep, and glory in my 'selfish' fatherhood. You shall see the 'scenes behind,' with which you threaten me, swept off, and in their place true scenes, most open scenes established!

KAUTILYA

[*Gets up from the seat, slowly advances towards the Prince, and very intently*]

You mean?

BINDUSARA

I mean that you will see me reign and yet be man. I mean the woman whom you cast to the horrors of political harlotry and espionage grown into her womanhood and truth, and reign with me. I mean that the dear flower of our love, my child, succeed me to a purer throne, if God vouchsafe you a length enough of existence.

KAUTILYA

The flower of *your* love! *Your* child! *Her* womanhood! What I shall tell you now, I tell you not out of any sense of personal triumph or hatred. I speak because I want to break the coils of petty selfishness that bind you. Do you remember how you came upon this woman whom you love—who bore *your* child?

BINDUSARA

I do, and I do know who brought her to the place from which I dragged her.

KAUTILYA

I—was it not?

BINDUSARA

Yes, you—and you shall pay for it.

KAUTILYA

Now, now, let us not quarrel and get angry.

There is time enough for that. Do you know how I brought her to that place?

BINDUSARA

How should I know? My mind is clean and cannot ever think of all the vile persuasion you might have used—and she has ever been silent upon it.

KAUTILYA

She has cause to be—

BINDUSARA

What do you insinuate?

KAUTILYA

I don't. I merely recollect aloud. She was even more beautiful than she is now, and she was the most intelligent of all our girls. She could sing like the early wind in the bamboo grove. She danced like sun-beams on the ripples of the lake. And I had need of her, dire need. We were hard pressed—check-mated as it were. A vile man had the secrets I wanted—vital secrets—and I was resolved to have them. I tried him all my ways and he was obdurate. At last I resolved to try this girl. And I bought her. . . .

BINDUSARA

Enough—don't gloat over your sinister triumph. I knew too well you bought her,—poor misguided miserable poverty-stricken thing she was!

KAUTILYA

You err, my Prince. She was not miserable. She was not poor. She might have been misguided. I did not pay my price in money. I bought her with my manhood.

BINDUSARA

What?

KAUTILYA

I bought her services with the yielding up of my celibacy. She wanted that—nothing more, nothing less. She loved me. From very early days she had loved me. She wanted me. I was her God. And when she would have no other price, I gave what she wanted. I am the father of her child—not you, nor that poor dupe who parted with his secrets. I do not excuse myself. I don't defend my action. There was no other course—and in a way she was beautiful. Her mind, which I had trained, was the fruit I had hoped it would be.

BINDUSARA: [*Springs up and catches hold of Kautilya by the shoulders*]

You—you—I have borne with you enough. Swear that what you said now is a lie; or, by all that's true, I will kill you, for even you can be killed.

KAUTILYA: [*Quietly*]

No, my Prince, I *cannot* be killed. I am Fact—and I never tell an untruth but to my enemy or my tool, and you are neither yet. Instead, I assert the child you thought was yours is mine. Now let me sit here for a while. You must think over it.

BINDUSARA: [*Returns to his seat and sinks down.*

He shuts his eyes. Prolonged pause.]

It is getting late, my Prince. The sun is almost down. I want your decision. I must see the King once more before that cursed priest comes back.

BINDUSARA: [*Does not answer. Silence again. From far away a song is heard—of girls and boys singing together.*]

Love, Sweet Love!

All-pervading, all-compassing,
 Spirit of Life—breath of God,
 Love, Sweet Love!
 Scent of the flower, Light of the Star,
 Sweetness of honey, Music of song,
 Love, sweet Love!

KAUTILYA

Ah me!—There it goes again. Love—love—love—fantasy—
 humbug. When will Fact be sung to like that? Knowledge—
 precision—never, by the throbbing flesh of man—Oh, never!
 Prince!

BINDUSARA

Yes?

KAUTILYA

Have you decided?

BINDUSARA

Yes.

KAUTILYA

And what is your decision? Are you cured of your senti-
 ment? Ready for the Kingship?

BINDUSARA

Yes, cured of my selfish jealousy. Ready for my Kingdom.
 Proud of my love for that poor woman and her child. Decided.
 Yes, decided that I shall yet give her happiness, and this maltreated
 country of mine a breath of truth, and honesty, and leisure
 to love. That is my decision. You go, unless you bend to my way
 of looking at things.

KAUTILYA

Is that so? But I will not go so easily, my Prince, I tell you.
 I will see the woman again, will put forth all my power to wean her
 away from you—aye, even claim my child. Not to thwart you and
 take revenge, but because I care for this State more than I do for
 all the kings on this earth.

BINDUSARA

And if you fail?

KAUTILYA

When a fact is proved a failure or a lie, it ceases to be. That
 is all.

BINDUSARA

God will it be so!

KAUTILYA

Aye, God! How easily these words leap to the mouths of men
 when they are helpless in their impotence. God—Love—Justice—
 Truth—poor maltreated words, deified to soothe unreasoning human
 littleness. Aye, God will it so, when you with your littleness have
 not the magnitude to will it as you want. You are not King
 enough for me, my Prince. Even your father who is now courting
 bald-headed priests never called on God when he was of your age.

BINDUSARA

Poor, misguided man!

KAUTILYA

Misguided indeed, in not being guided by you. I go to see the
 woman—the mother of my child. *[Exit]*

SCENE V

*[The dancing girl's room. Kautilya reclining on a couch. The even-
 ing sun shines in. The dancing girl stands with her back to a pillar, look-
 ing at Kautilya. Kautilya looks intently at her face.]*

KAUTILYA

So, you believe you love him.

INDULEKHA

Why believe?—I know.

KAUTILYA

So did you say about me, when you thirsted for my kisses.

INDULEKHA [*Flinching*]

If you are a man you will not remind me of it!

KAUTILYA

Because I *am* a man, I remind you of it. I have begun to want you. I even love you.

INDULEKHA

Don't abuse that sweet word. I don't know what you want with me. Is it again some poor wretch to be cheated?

KAUTILYA

No. I tell you I want you. I want to take you away from this Court and give you and our child a quiet life where he will grow into a good man.

INDULEKHA

Our child?

KAUTILYA

My child, then. I am getting old and I must have rest. The King is going away. So be kind to me. Come with me.

INDULEKHA

But how can you leave the Court?

KAUTILYA

Oh, if they want me I shall be available, but I must from now have a private life of my own. Do you consent?

INDULEKHA

How *could* I consent? I tell you I love the Prince. He loves me. I have had my day of passion and now want only sweet love. So I cannot come with you. And as for my child, I shall trust a thousand-fanged snake before I trust you.

KAUTILYA

He is not yours alone. He is mine too—and if the Prince knows that, will he be as fond of him as he is?

INDULEKHA

God knows! But be assured, if you force me to it, I will even tell him the truth and trust to his sweet clemency.

KAUTILYA

I can be as sweet and kind as he.

INDULEKHA

Aye, to your dupes.

KAUTILYA

(*Rises and goes near her*) Indu, my love, listen to me. I might have been a chariot. But do you know how tired a chariot grows? Perpetual work, with no thought of reward—do you know how weary it looks after a time? Is it for my own pleasure that I have denied myself till I am almost marble-hearted? Yow know you loved me once—loved with a passion that even I could not obstruct—and do you think such love evokes no response? I tell you from the day I held you in my arms, full of cynical triumphant abandonment, you have been part of me. And see, dear, the future; you with your matchless beauty and I with my brain can make our child the greatest of all men. Think of it, don't—

INDULEKHA

Don't force me. I may have to tell the Prince all my dark story. I shall, before you try to take away my child. And he is so kind!

KAUTILYA

Try his kindness then and I shall try Chandragupta's sense of justice.

INDULEKHA

You call that justice, you—

KAUTILYA

I have no time. I must be with the King ere that bald-pate has him in his snare. [*Goes out.*]

SCENE VI

[Chandragupta's chamber. The King reclining on a couch—Kautilya sitting at the foot on a cushioned seat. Two girls fanning the King on either side.]

KAUTILYA

But my terms are these,—the Prince should give up his pleasures—should be at my disposal absolutely—obey me in every respect till I find he is fit to think for himself as a King.

CHANDRA

He is very tractable, Vishnugupta. He never yet has defied me.

KAUTILYA

Too tractable and prone to yield to his sentiments. He must assert himself or, rather, the King in him should assert himself over the Man. He must deny his lesser self.

CHANDRA

Have we not all along taught him to do that?

KAUTILYA

Teaching is one thing, learning is another. No teaching ever has effect till the pupil *wills* to be taught.

CHANDRA

Does he feel he was compelled?

KAUTILYA

He does. He says we killed his boyhood and maltreated his adolescence with our codes and rules.

CHANDRA

Oh God, forgive me! But what is this particular instance where you differed with him?

KAUTILYA

Your Majesty must be alone before I speak of that.

[The King signs to the attendants to withdraw. The girls lay down the fans, join their palms, bow down and retire.]

CHANDRA

What is it?

KAUTILYA

The Prince, your Majesty knows, loves particularly a dancing girl of the Court. He believes or rather believed he was the father of her child. He wants them near him. They are not averse to that either. In fact the woman too says she loves him, refuses to part from him. But they must part before the Prince thinks seriously of Kingship.

CHANDRA

Indulekha?

KAUTILYA

Yes.

CHANDRA

She is a sweet girl. I like her child too. Is he not Bindu-sara's?

KAUTILYA

No.

CHANDRA

Still he wants him?

KAUTILYA

I believe so.

CHANDRA

And the girl too loves him, loves him very much. Once I saw them together, and the light in her eyes was like the setting sun seen through a bank of lacy clouds.

KAUTILYA

Your Majesty has turned poet.

CHANDRA

I am getting old.

KAUTILYA

I realise it.

CHANDRA

What do you propose?

KAUTILYA

That your Majesty order him to give them up, and tell the girl to quit the Court with her bastard.

CHANDRA

But how can I? I am seeing things as I never thought I would see them, as *you* will never see them.

KAUTILYA

Don't pity me, Sire. I am content with my shortsightedness. So you will not interfere.

CHANDRA

Not that I will not—I *cannot*.

KAUTILYA

Why?

CHANDRA

I have lost the power. I know the mightiness of love. There is no warring against it. Love's way is the straightest.

KAUTILYA

Love again! I will not trouble myself or 'you with dissertations. I will put the case in another way. That child is mine.

CHANDRA

That child is yours!

KAUTILYA

Yes, I am the bastard's father. I begat it.

CHANDRA

How do you mean?

KAUTILYA

I mean that woman once was my mistress. The child is mine. I claim a father's rights. I want the mother too. Will you now

separate them? Will you send them out of the Court, tell the Prince that kings are not to take the leavings of other people? You cannot refuse me.

CHANDRA : [*Rises up*]

At last! Oh Vishnugupta, you are human after all. So you loved once. You yielded to weakness once. You were a man!

KAUTILYA

No! I never was so stupid. I gave in conditionally. I bought her services with a child. I shall not speak of it.

CHANDRA

And now she says she loves my son. And it is a question of rivalry between the Prince of the realm and the Prime Minister. My God, I could laugh myself to death. But yours is the prior claim. I shall investigate. I shall decide.

[*The door opens, and the Prince and the dancing girl come in. She prostrates herself at the King's feet and gets up. He stands looking at Kautilya with laughter in his eyes.*]

INDULEKHA

I am a suppliant, your Majesty. I come to plead. A mother, and a woman in love. I do not know what is right. I will let everything rest in your Majesty's hands. I shall abide by your decision.

CHANDRA

My daughter, I know the story. I was acting the judge even while you came in. Whom do you love? The child, Vishnugupta, or my son?

INDULEKHA

I love my child—which woman will not? I love my lord the Prince—Oh—so much that if it is right that I must go away, I simply shall—and I

[The door opens again. Many voices speaking. Two attendants usher in an old priest with a child in his arms—the Priest walks up to the King, sits down on the floor with the child in his lap, his clothes all blood-stained.]

THE PRIEST

He is dead. Poor lovely one. I ran with him in my arms. But I am too late. He is dead. *[The dancing girl springs towards the priest, takes the child and sinks down.]*

My child—my child—my love—Oh God!

[Bindusara hastens to her and stands silent. Kautilya gets up and stands staring at the group. Chandragupta cries out, "What is it? How did it happen? Is it the child?"]

THE PRIEST

I was coming into the Court of the Palms when a chariot driven by soldiers dashed in, the horses uncontrollable. The child with his friends was playing there. It was too quick. I jumped but was too late. The horses trampled him. The wheels went over him. My God, the pity of it! Sweet little thing! Is it her child?

BINDUSARA: *[To Kautilya]*

[With the unconscious form of the dancing girl in his arms]

You can go.

KAUTILYA

Yes, I am going. *[Walks away.]*

CHANDRAGUPTA

Kautilya—Kautilya—listen!

[Kautilya does not turn back. He goes out and closes the door.]

[Curtain]

Jago Patel

(From Gujarati Folk-lore)

By N. M. SHAH, M.Sc.

(1)

The Dipavali holidays sent a thrill of joy into every heart. The rains were satisfactory: it was a 'bumper' harvest. The villagers were busy with various harvesting operations. The women-folk moved merrily, helping their men. Round about the village of Vadod were seen heaps of new corn. It was a scene of happiness and joy. The farmers were delighted to see the fruits of their hard labour; the women were full of joy at the prospect of getting new clothes and ornaments. Jago Patel's whole family was working hard and sharing in the merriment.

It was a fine winter morning. The beautiful heap of new millet was shining in the sun. An aroma peculiar to new corn was filling the atmosphere. Jago Patel was meditating over his affairs. His eyes were fixed on his heap of millet. Just then, the devil entered his mind: "Ah! we toiled and . . . toiled hard; this whole heap is . . . the produce . . . of our sweat . . . hard labour . . . We laboured day and night . . . oh! . . . in and out of season . . . And this Durbar will take away his share without any trouble. . . ." He paused a moment, his big eyes still steadily fixed on the heap. Again the devil began, "If I can take away one cart from the heap, so much will be mine, it will be saved from the clutches of the Durbar. . . ."

* * * *

(2)

It was past midnight. The whole village was plunged in deep slumber, when the Patel with the help of his brother and a servant, filled his cart with millet. Like the Brahmins who

are never careful about their stomachs when invited for a dinner, the miser in Jago Patel worked and filled the cart much beyond its capacity. The party started home with the Patel in front and the Patel's brother behind; the servant was driving the cart.

As the party reached the boundary of the village, the axle of the cart came out of its position and the wheel stopped. The Patel with his companions tried his utmost to replace it, but they could not lift the cart on account of the excessive load. It was a very critical moment for the Patel. He dared not approach anyone for help, lest he be detected. Neither could he go back since the distance that way was long, nor could the cart be emptied there. The Patel was in a fix. What to do? As time passed on, his guilty conscience began to weigh heavily on him: the fear of being caught red-handed overtook him. And the idea of public censure made him more nervous. In such a bewildered state of mind, Jago Patel had to wait there for help from a chance passer-by if any happened to come that side.

Gajabhai Gohil—that was the name of the village Durbar—had stirred out early in the morn, as was his wont, for his morning ablutions with a jug of water in hand. To protect himself from the winter cold, the Durbar had covered his face, and his eyes only could be seen. The Patel, as he saw him coming, thought, in a frenzy of fear, "This man being a traveller, cannot know the secret." And as the Durbar was passing by the cart, he hastily accosted him, "Aye! just help me in setting this cart right." In the darkness and confusion, the Patel could not recognise the Durbar on account of the covering on his face; but the shrewd Durbar at once recognised his Patel, and his long experience revealed the nature of the secret. He said to himself, "The Patel is carting away his corn to evade the payment of revenue." "If," he said to himself on second thoughts, "I am recognised, the Patel will be in an awkward position—a man of Jago's type will be ashamed to death." So the Durbar, looking downwards to conceal his identity, helped the party, and the Patel setting the cart right drove home delighted. The Durbar also went his way thinking, "All right, let it go; what's there? . . . The poor

fellows toil and toil . . . and if they try to take away a little . . . what does it matter? . . . After all they are my ryots . . . they are like my children . . ."

(3)

Six months passed. The incident was nearly forgotten.

Gajabhai had some some guests. The *havaladar* went to Jago Patel's to ask for some cots and bedding. The Patel hesitated to give them, so the *havaladar* exchanged some hot words. The Patel lost his temper and said, "I do not want to stay in such a Durbar's place."

"Who prevents you from leaving? Can't you get a living elsewhere? Be quick," replied the haughty *havaladar*.

This added fuel to the fire. The Patel was all anger. He acted up to his words. At night he prepared to leave the place. The Durbar was quite ignorant of the affair. Next day, the Patel with his family and cartloads of luggage, passed by the Durbar's palace. The simple villagers tried to dissuade the Patel but he became all the more resolute to leave. The whole affair reached the ears of the Durbar, who came down and tried to calm the Patel, asking the reason of this step.

"Durbar! Whatever we have got, we place at your disposal. We keep for ourselves only torn bedding even in this winter; yet your worthless *havaladar* harasses us. We can't tolerate it." The Patel spoke out his heart in an angry voice.

The Durbar calmly understood the position. He was very much pained, and punished the impudent *havaladar*.

He told the Patel, "Well, now return and forget the past." But the Patel persisted. He could not be prevailed upon. "Patel, go as you will. But find such a Durbar as will help you in lifting the cart of millet in darkness," the Durbar whispered in the Patel's ear and went away to his palace.

The Patel could not utter a word. A cold tremor passed over him. He murmured to himself, "It was the Durbar in reality. He helped me to steal his own share; to save my prestige, he forgave me. What a generous heart! Never uttered a word of rebuke even in

private! Ah! Can I find such a Durbar elsewhere? What magnanimity of mind!"

The Patel, full of gratitude to the Durbar and shame for himself, turned back the carts.¹

¹ Jago Patel's descendants live even today in the same village. This incident occurred within living memory, about seventy-five years ago. But it is only one among many. A similar incident is also related about Bha Kumbhaji, the Durbar of Gondal.

An Epistle to a Martian

By C. L. R. SASTRI, B.Sc.

"Human life has become a world-wide thing, but governments remain cramped and partial things. More and more people are coming to realise this. Yet none of us know clearly how to change over to a more comprehensive and securer way of running the world. . . . And it is no good mincing matters when it comes to saying why we have not this universal well-being at the present time. Most of our rulers and directors are, to put it plainly, narrow-minded, self-centred, mentally indolent, pompous and pretentious creatures of the past. They are unwilling to put their minds through the humble and strenuous mental toil needed to raise the standard of their work, and we others are fools enough to tolerate the mismanagement. These ruling and controlling people have got enough for themselves, they stick to the controls like barnacles, they live in relative comfort and immense dignity, *chiefly engaged in the defence of their own conceit*, and they do not care a rap what happens to the mass of us, and the mass of us lacks the spirit, will and understanding to call them to account. A thousand million human beings are leading lives of want, limitation, humiliation, and toil; scores of millions are in immediate danger of the futile tortures of war, and these dull, self-protective folk, at the head of things and in control of things, do nothing of what they might do, and pose for our respect and admiration with infinite self-complacency."—Mr. H. G. Wells, in his article, "The World Fifty Years Hence," in *John O'London's Weekly* of October 17, 1931 (pp. 61-62).

My Dear Friend,

It is only recently that we have come to know of you; that is to say, not of you exactly, for we have not yet located you, but of the conditions of your planet, from which we naturally infer that you also exist. It would be a fine thing if you did: for then we could correspond with one another and compare notes in regard to our different worlds. As it is, we know very little of yours, and you, provided always that you are a living entity, and not merely a conjectural phantom, much less of ours; for it stands to reason that if you knew anything of your brethren down here, you would long ago have made known the fact. Taking things as they are, however, it

pains me to think that you evince so little interest in our affairs, while we are simply dying to know as much of yours as we possibly can. Whereas you are as mute as a statue, we are literally panting to shed a ray, for your behoof, on matters of this world. Not that we have no business of our own to attend to. But our nature is altruistic, and we wouldn't keep you in utter darkness if, by any chance, we could flood the chambers of your mind with light. We have our own affairs to mind, it is true, but we have just enough time on our hands to cleanse the Augean stables of your ignorance. Of course, we have abundance of fun going on all around us; but we want *you* to share it with us. Adventure is in our blood; and though we have come into a vast inheritance, we want to explore 'fresh woods and pastures new.' We have not yet sat, like the mythological gentleman, so long upon a rock that we have grown to it: our limbs are still capable of movement, and we itch to stir ourselves to some great achievement.

I

Our earth is a curious planet, all things considered; and I advise you strongly to cultivate an interest in it. Your time, I assure you, will not be thrown away. You will find it more instructive than your own paltry world. Excuse my irreverence, but, compared to ours, your world cannot be but paltry. And that in more ways than one. I do not here speak of bulk. There is no virtue in mere bulk. There may be no solidity in bulk at all: it may contain only a half-penny worth of bread to an intolerable deal of sack. I mean that our world is an extremely lively place. Liveliness is its principal feature. We are so constituted that we cannot, for the lives of us, put up with the least dulness: like Falstaff, we forswear thin potations. We abjure dulness, as Christ abjured the devil, to get behind us. We crave for fun, even at the risk of our lives; we thrive on it, as the malarial parasite thrives on human blood. It is all very well for a certain class of men to hold the mirror up to a course of plain living and high thinking. Let them lead such a life that have a taste for it: *we* have recourse to other ways. Like Sydney Smith's onion in the

bowl of salad, excitement forms the chief ingredient in ours lives. We are made of the stuff that deplores the cankers of a calm world and a long peace. "If I had been born a corsair or a pirate," thought Mr. Tappetit, "I should have been alright." Most of us think so, too.

This craving for excitement, indeed, has become almost a disease with us. We want to be in the thick of the crowd: the more we jostle and are jostled, the more we like it. We would not, if we could, miss even the least bit of fun: with us, it is 'very stuff o' the conscience.' The speed with which we are rushed is simply incredible; yet there are those who complain that it is very slow. The truth of the matter is that our nervous organization is in a state of utter derangement. That is why we want to drink in excitement at every pore of our beings.

II

Recently, we had a war on. The peculiarity of it was that, though originating only in the West, it 'broke,' as it were, 'its birth's invidious bar,' and spread, *more suo*, to almost all the nooks and corners of the earth. This war, it need hardly be pointed out, was in a class by itself: as Cowley said of Pindar, it formed 'a vast species alone.' For folly and for frightfulness it had not its equal in the innumerable wars that preceded it. Indeed, before it, the latter were not wars at all; they were the merest playthings, the veriest trifles. This particular war, on the other hand, was a war all through, a war from top to bottom, a war that could not possibly have any 'damned nonsense' about it. It allowed of no 'asides,' of no interregnum, of no 'unbending' whatever, but was one pitiless thing from beginning to end; in the immortal words of old Mrs. Sarah Battle, it consisted entirely of 'the rigours of the game,' and of nothing else. Moreover, it was a war that was fought—at least on one side—for righteousness, and for righteousness alone. The 'mailed fist' was used, it is true, but it was used for no other purpose than that of mercy. Ferocity there undoubtedly was, but only for the greater enforcement of kindness and charity among the nations of the world. In short, it was, not to put too fine a point

upon it, a war to *end* war. It was the *last* of its kind. It was just the black cloud that presaged eternal sunshine. It was, if you will, the storm that, for ever afterwards, foreshadowed the rainbow in the sky. As the politicians phrased it, it was to have made the world 'safe for democracy': it was to have brought about the long-expected Millennium, it was to have made possible another Eden on earth.

Those of us that, with any regularity, followed the newspapers during the four years of the war were simply amazed, were literally flabbergasted, at the marvellous moral purpose of England and France. The 'Entente,' as they were called, were, truth to tell, overflowing with the milk and cream of human kindness. They were righteous to their fingertips. They wore the white flower of a blameless life. They—especially England—were actuated by no mercenary motives, were prompted by no considerations of empire-building. They joined the war—at least England did—just to succour Belgium and the other 'small' nationalities, just to prevent the Huns—as the Germans were labelled, no doubt from an excess of politeness—from overrunning an innocent and peace-loving world. None could be more moral, none more saintly, none more self-abnegating, than England and France seemed. Never, in short, was there such a rage for right-living, for fair-play, and for all the rest of the human virtues: the atmosphere was surcharged with their good qualities. To adapt the words that Emerson used with regard to Burns' songs,

"the wind whispered them, the birds whistled them, the corn, barley, and bulrushes hoarsely rustled them, nay, the music-boxes at Geneva were framed and toothed to play them; the hand-organs of the Savoyards in all cities repeated them, and the chimes of bells rang them in the spires."

Everything and everybody connived at spreading the gospel according to England and France—the avowed pillars of the world. We were almost persuaded that the angels were on their side, if not actually participating with them on the battlefield; and some, no doubt, could even point to circumstantial evidence in support of it. Cherubim and Seraphim were hovering over their lands closely scanning the daily situation as it unfolded itself; while Jove was

ready with his thunderbolts to extinguish, to annihilate, Germany the moment the chances of war seemed to swing to her side. All things, then, in heaven and earth, promised well—for the 'Entente'; and the actual end, though disappointing in the sense that—for all this extravagant display of righteousness—it robbed the saviour nations of a 'winged' victory, in the sense that it brought forth no brilliant *dénouement*, was still in favour of them—certainly not in favour of Germany. And one did think that the Millennium which the war was to usher in, would actually dawn sooner or later, sooner rather than later: that, in the poet's words, a new Jerusalem would be built, not only 'in England's green and pleasant land,' but in every land—whether 'green and pleasant,' or not. The world was led by England and France, and no one had the temerity to doubt their sincerity.

III

The world, in short, was in a fair way of being disappointed: it put itself right in front of deception. Human nature is not metamorphosed suddenly, is not transformed beyond recognition, merely at the listening of a few well-turned phrases, a few rounded periods: it remains itself, no matter what happens, or fails to happen. We should not judge men—or nations, either—as they reveal themselves in a crisis: they obviously rise beyond themselves, but only just for a moment or so: to sink back again, fathoms deep, in the mire of their original, humdrum nature, so soon as the crisis passes, so soon as the great event subsides. As that eminent writer on foreign affairs, especially French affairs, Mr. Sisley Huddleston, puts it:

"We do not judge the sentiments and morals of a community by its behaviour in the evangelical camp; we judge them by its conduct in everyday life."¹

In *Rabelais* we have a fine couplet:

"The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be:
The Devil was well, the Devil a monk was he!"

¹ "The Hague Conference and After," by Mr. Sisley Huddleston. *The Contemporary Review*, October, 1929, p. 418.

IV

By the way, have you the breed of politicians among you? Is the soil of Mars congenial to their growth? You see, we are strangely ignorant of the conditions that obtain there. You must have wars, no doubt; just by way of recreation, if for nothing else. We regard Mars as the god of war; and you would be lacking in a sense of humour if you were deficient in the chief article of your own produce. But, of course, stranger things have happened. Coming back to my question, have you the race of politicians on your circumambient heights? If you have not, you have missed a rare treat. Down here, they are more or less the staple food upon which we thrive. You may, in case you do not stock the commodity, require some sort of description of them. Well, tasks have to be faced; and though I am not a politician myself, and cannot speak from inside knowledge, I shall try to convey to you as accurate an impression of them as is humanly possible.

Politicians are neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring: they do not come under any exact definition. They are neither black, white, nor chocolate. They are not distinguishable by race, colour, or creed. Several species of men (not much resembling one another) are classed under politicians,—as mongrels, curs, shoughs, water-rugs, and demiwolves are all clept by the name of dogs. Every country possesses them, to a greater or lesser extent. Their essential characteristics are the same everywhere and at all times. "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale" their infinite variety. Without them life would become, in Hamlet's words, "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable." They have some common traits; they are the devil's finger in the cauldron of affairs, stirring up strife between nations. Wars owe their existence mainly to them. Of course, they are full of soft words. In fact, if you are to believe them, they are the very milk and cream of human kindness; and, if they had their way, they would transform the whole world into a paradise. The pity of it is that, according to them, the rest of the world is not actuated by the same generous motives. Unfortunately, however, the shores of men's minds are nowadays washed by an unceasing tide of scepticism; and nobody's

words, least of all the politician's, are taken at their face-value. Time was when they were regarded as sacred: you doubted them at your own soul's peril. But the well of people's faith has completely dried up. They had given the politicians a very extensive rope. But the politicians failed, and failed most miserably, in the hour of their trial. When they wanted the people's help, they paraded an interminable string of noble sentiments. The moment that help was given, there was an end to their eloquence; something, apparently, had stuck in their throats. It proved, in the end, to be only a put-up job; and the truth slowly dawned upon the people's minds. The politicians had once again played their immemorial trick—and had succeeded. It was now the people's turn.

The much-boomed war ended—as wars have always ended. It did not, as promised, pave the way to eternal peace. If anything, it paved the way to even greater wars in the future. The wheel had come full circle; and things remained just where they were—much worse than they were. The wound was not healed: it was intensified.

If you want me to sum up, in one word, the exact nature of the world's mind just now, it is this: 'Disenchantment.' We have lost all illusions: the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. There is no believing in anything or in anybody. The war has knocked the bottom out of all Utopias. In the shifting sands of men's minds, no structure of the human imagination stands firmly. The centre of gravity has shifted—from intense belief to even more intense *disbelief*. To the average man of today, things are simply *not*.

Well, it has ever been so. We always feel that we have done a mighty fine thing, and then, lo! the truth of it flashes upon us just when our exultation is at its height. Something or other pricks the bubble of our vanity—and everything is reduced to mere soap and water. Do you fancy that our world has progressed much since, first, it was sent rotating on its axis? Of progress in the real sense there has been none. We have been groping in the dark ever since the first man was created, or, as the evolutionists would have it,

ever since the first man *emerged* from an anthropoid ape. Our feet do not rest on any solid bottom. For a few days, a certain 'epoch-making' discovery holds its sway, and then, like a fired rocket, falls to the ground in many-coloured particles.

"Our little systems have their day:
They have their day, and cease to be."

They make a slight sensation, and then disappear altogether. They are like the bird that flies out of the dark void into the lighted banqueting hall and out into the void once more. In fact, most of our so-called discoveries are nothing; sometimes they are even contrary to the truth. Finally, we come back to the point from which we originally started. We are like the revellers in Mr. Chesterton's poem, who "went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head," and in the end did not get to Birmingham.

You will have gathered from all this that we of this earth live in a world of make-believe. Down here, in Longfellow's word, "All things are *not* what they seem." We are all like masked figures in a pantomime: our real selves are hidden from view. He succeeds most who pretends most: all that is needed is to talk loud and push your goods in front of you in a big enough barrow. Of course, there are some that loathe this pretence. But they cannot help practising it themselves: else, they would go under. "Were it not better done as others use?" And so, even the still, small band of good fellows amongst us mingle their waters in the broad stream of human vanity.

Such is our world; I can but hope that yours is much better. I hope also that you exist and that all these words have not been addressed to the void. Do not, however, be under the impression that I have exhausted all information relative to our orb.

"But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale."

Yours inter-planetary,
"HOMO SAPIENS."

Theatre Architecture in Ancient India

By V. RAGHAVAN, B. A. (HONS)

Mr. G. Venkatachalam says in his article on "Theatre Architecture" (Vol. I., No. 2. of the *Theatre*, page, 109): "Books are silent as to the nature of theatre crafts in Ancient India. The assumption is that Dramas and Musical Plays were enacted on temporarily constructed stages amidst quiet cool groves or by the side of village shrines. Though the names *rangabhumi* or *natakasala* connote some sort of architectural structures, there is so far no evidence to show the type and the details of constructive features. It is possible that like in Ancient Greece theatres in India were mere open-air theatres with no permanent stage fittings or specially constructed buildings. Village dramas of today may give us some idea of the stage craft in olden days." Then on page 112, he again says: "As noticed in the beginning of this article we are not certain today of the nature of Indian stages in olden days, except the bare information that like Greek theatres, they were open-air theatres amidst sylvan surroundings or near village shrines."

These remarks are painful to one who has some acquaintance with the Sanskrit texts on Dramaturgy. The author above referred to evidently knows no sources of knowledge on "Theatre Architecture" in Ancient India other than the *therukkuttus*—street-dramas of the villages where benches serve as the platform and wooden mortars (*ural*) serve as chairs, and the *kuttambalam* of the temples, as for instance in Malabar. Books are *not* silent as to the nature of the theatre crafts in Ancient India. There is ample evidence to show that the names *rangabhumi* and *natakasala* connote not 'some sort of architectural structures,' but well-planned, well-built, decorated, beautiful theatres. The types and the details of constructive features of the Indian theatres in olden times may be known by a reference

to the Sanskrit sources. This article proposes to examine the available Sanskrit texts on Theatre Architecture.

Dance and Music were highly-evolved Court arts in Ancient India. They were not the folk-art to be shown on the streets or near the village shrines. The palaces contained separate halls for *Natya*. The *Malavika Agnimitra* of Kalidasa furnishes us the information that the palace of the King had a *chitrasala* (painting hall) and a *prekshagara* (a hall for witnessing *Natya*). It is in this *prekshagara* that Malavika's dance is presented. There can be no mistaking this place to be a mere hall or 'some sort of architectural structure.' It is a perfect *natyasala*, there being mention of the green-room and the curtain. In act V of the *Sakuntala* it is said that Hamsapadika, the King's quondam sweetheart is singing in the *sangitasala*. Saradatanaya in his work on Dramaturgy, *Bhava-prakasa*, describes three types of theatres in the palace of the king, each for the presenting of a different kind of dance. At the beginning of his work he says that he wrote the book on seeing thirty different kinds of dramas presented by a proprietor named Divakara from whom he learnt the *natyaveda*. This Saradatanaya is assigned to A. D. 1175-1250. Narada's *Sangita-makaranda*, a very old work on Music, describes one type of theatre, giving its measurements, etc. The *Vishnudharmottara* describes two types of theatres. Lastly we have Bharata's *Natyasastra*, the earliest work on Drama, devoting one whole chapter to Theatre Architecture. Chapter 2. of the *Natyasastra*, gives three types of theatres, each again divided into three kinds according to their size and gives also measurement, etc., for each of these.

The verses in Chapter II, of the *Natyasastra* are confusing in some places. The great commentary on the *Natyasastra* by Acharya Abhinavagupta helps us a good deal in understanding Bharata. Dr. Keith's *Sanskrit Drama*, towards the end, contains a small section on stage architecture according to Bharata, but the account there is very meagre and sometimes mistaken also. Miss Godavari V. Ketkar has produced a study of the *Natyasastra*, the use of which book, however, is little to those who do not know Marathi in which it is written. Still those who want to have an idea of the types of

theatres in Ancient India may derive much benefit by referring to the very useful diagrams of Bharata's theatres given by Miss Ketkar in her book.

The sages request Bharata to speak of the theatre, it being the first requisite in *Natya*. Bharata says that the learned Visvakarman devised three types of theatres according to the *Sastras*, viz., *vikrashta*, i.e., rectangular, *chaturasra*, i.e., square, and *tryasra*, i.e., triangular. Dr. Keith does not say what the *vikrashta* means and wrongly translates *chaturasra* as 'rectangular.' Each of these three again falls into three kinds according to size: *jyeshtha*, i.e., biggest, *madhyama*, i.e., middle-sized, and *kaniyas*, i.e., small. Dr. Keith misses this second classification. Of these three, i.e., biggest, middle-sized, and small, Bharata for the sake of good acoustic effect asks us to choose the middle-sized. A reading of the verses here would give the idea that the biggest is for the *Devas*, the middle-sized for kings, and the small for the people. Bharata asks us not to vie with the *Devas* and their very big theatres, because we mortals must build with great trouble while they do things by mere wish. So Bharata recommends the middle-sized theatre to us. Abhinava's commentary here gives original interpretation. We are unable to decide whether that is Bharata's idea, but Abhinava gives us additional information, namely, that if Bharata assigns the biggest theatre to the *Devas*, it means that we should resort to the biggest to enact such kinds of dramas as the *Dima* in which occur fights between the *Devas* and the *asuras* and consequently much space is wanted. If we have to enact the romances of a king's private life, the middle-sized theatre is enough for our purpose. We must go to the small theatre when we intend staging such plays as the monologue, *Bhana* plays in which ordinary men and women are characters.

The biggest measures 108 *hastas* or 54 yards; the middle-sized 64 h or 32 yds., and the small 32 h or 16 yds. These may be of the shape of a rectangle or square or triangle. Bharata then picks out the middle-sized which he has already praised as the best from all points of view and gives its dimensions, dividing it into three according to shape, namely, rectangular, square, and triangular. The rectangular should be 64 h. long,

32 wide. This space should be divided into two, giving two squares, 32×32 . The front square should be made into the audience-hall. The other square should again be divided into two halves of 16×32 each. Of these two portions, the front half 16×32 should be made into two halves measuring 8×32 each. An eight-hastas square at the centre of the back half of these two portions should be made into the *rangasirsha*. The front half 8×32 should have at the centre the *rangapitha*, i.e., the stage proper, measuring 8×16 leaving at both the sides two verandahs of 8 h. squire. The portion measuring 16×32 remaining at the back of the *rangasirsha* should be made into the *nepathyagriha*, the green-room with two doorways. The bewildering nature of this part of the *natyasastra* is plain when we see Abhinava giving numerous and differing views all over the chapter. Here especially he gives three other opinions of other scholars describing the measurements of the green-room, the *rangasirsha* and the *rangapitha* in three different ways. Abhinava himself bewilders us by giving a measurement of 64×64 h, which will mean a square theatre, though Bharata is speaking here of a rectangular theatre, 64×32 h. There should be two doorways to the green-room. The *rangasirsha* is to be a little higher, and here it is that the actors make offerings and *puja* before the drama begins and wait during the drama when they have dressed themselves up. Abhinava says that if the stage is imagined as a man lying on his back, this space called 'the head of the stage' will look like his head.

The *chaturasra* measures 32 h, on both sides. In this type the *rangapitha* is smaller naturally. The entrance to the green-room should be only one. In other respects, the construction of this type should follow the instructions given as regards the rectangular. Just as in the rectangular type, the stage proper is also rectangular, in the square type the stage proper is square.

Then Bharata describes a *trysra*—triangular theatre. The speciality to be noted in its construction is that the *rangapitha* here is triangular and has an entrance into the green-room at its back angle.

As regards the entrance gates to the audience-hall, Abhinava

says that they may be three, perhaps one on each side. In the rectangular 'the head of the stage' is a little higher than the 'stage proper' while, in the square, both are on the same level.

As regards the size and measurement and types of theatres in general, Abhinava says that altogether eighteen kinds of theatres are possible as spoken of in the *Sastras*. Bharata himself says at the end of this chapter that there are many types of theatres and that other types must be constructed by learned men applying the instructions given above.

In a further chapter, Bharata says that we should resort to a rectangular stage to present dances involving much to-and-fro movements—*gata-agata prachara*, which are impossible on a stage of smaller width. He also says that in the square and the triangular stages the *chaturasra gati* only is possible.

There is also elaborate treatment of the number of pillars in the various portions of the theatre in each type, how and where they should be raised and what auspicious ceremonies should attend this *stambhasthapana*. Bharata dedicates four main pillars to the four castes even as portions of the whole theatre to the various gods for the sake of protection. There is absolutely no warrant for Dr. Keith to read here the idea that the dedication of the four main pillars also apportions those four places in the audience-hall for the four castes in the audience. Bharata speaks first that a good plot of ground should be chosen and cleared of all grass, shrubs, bones, skulls, etc. Music, *puja* and feast should attend the measurement-ceremony. The erection of the walls is then described. The whole hall must be richly decorated with wood-work, representing creepers, birds, animals, etc. The walls must be decorated with beautiful paintings of pictures of pleasure, of men and women and of creepers and trees, after the walls have been made smooth and white with *chunam*.

As regards the seating arrangements also, Bharata's theatre was perfect. He says that the seating arrangements should be in the form of a gallery—*sopanakriti*. The seats should be either of brick or of wood. They should be one and a half feet high above the ground, to give a good view of the *rangapitha*. The surface

of the *rangapitha* should not be like the *kurmapristha* (high at the centre and sloping on all sides like the back of a tortoise); or the *matsyapristha* (high along the centre and sloping on both sides like the back of a fish). It should be smooth like the surface of a mirror. Bharata says that the house shall be *dvibhumi*. This term is interpreted variously. We may be tempted to take that the house had two storeys and that thus box-seats were also provided for in the ancient theatre. But Abhinava, after giving the opinions of other scholars, quotes his own teacher's view and says that what Bharata means by that word is that the seats should be in gallery form, rising from the pit to the height of the *rangapitha*. But the real import of that term seems to be that the house contains two *bhumis*, the raised platform for the stage and the pit for the audience. Bharata paid due attention to the acoustic properties of the theatre also. He says that 64×32 h. is the maximum size for a theatre and that one should not exceed that measurement. He praises the middle-sized alone among the three kinds of houses. The reason he gives is this: "Constructors should not build a theatre of a greater size, for the *Natya* would become indistinct. If the hall should be very big, the actor's voice would either become indistinct or bad on account of the necessity for the actors to shout out. The colour of the face or the tune of the varying *rasa* and *bhava* would become indistinct owing to the largeness of the house. Therefore, of all halls, the middle-sized is the best, for here the instruments and songs would be heard beautifully well." Again he says that the stage should be like a cave in a mountain without very large windows, so that there might be a clear and audible sound effect. Even the windows should be fitted with apertured doors so that there might not be too much air. In this connection we may observe that Dr. Keith's connecting this dictum of Bharata that the hall should look like a cave with the Ramgah Hill Cave once used for recitation, etc., is pointless.

As regards permanent fittings, if we go through the further chapters of the *Natyasastra*, we see that in this respect also the Ancient Indian theatre was remarkably equipped. The 23rd Chapter deals elaborately with dress, masks, ornamented decorations, paint-

ing and shading of faces, beards, etc. The introduction of birds and animals according to the situation technically called *Sanjiva* is described. Clothes, arms, and all sorts of accessories made of stiffened cloth, wood, metal, mud and wax are then described. Chapter 35 towards the end deals with the workmen, craftsmen, artisans and artists attached permanently to a theatre or a dramatic troupe. The garlander, goldsmith, painter, carpenter, washerman and others are here mentioned.

The *Vishnudharmottara* mentions only two types of theatres. It says: "The *Natya* should be presented only in a theatre, and a theatre might be of two kinds, rectangular or square. The square should be 16×16 yds. The theatre should not be too small or too big, for there would be congestion in a small one and the show would become indistinct in a big one." The measurement given here for a rectangular theatre is not clear, the text being corrupt. This work does not mention the triangular theatre.

Narada's *Sangitamakaranda* mentions only the square theatre. It gives a new measurement, that this square theatre should be 48×48 yds. Thus according to Bharata this will perhaps be a *jyestha* type. Narada then adds that the *natyasala* must be richly painted with the eighty-four *bandhas* mentioned in the *Kamasutra*, or more likely the dance *bandhas* of the *Natyasastra*, inlaid with innumerable gems of diverse colours and decorated with chowries, flags and festoons. He gives the house four gates. In the centre there should be a raised platform, beautiful and perfumed, a twelve-yard square, in the middle of which the king's seat should be arranged.

Chapter X of Saradatanaya's *Bhavaprakasa* says that the palace of a king should have three kinds of theatres. This writer omits the rectangular type and has in its place the *vritta*, circular theatre. He opines that the king should have all the three types in his palace, each for a particular kind of dance and audience. He assigns to the circular theatre only the *chitra* variety of the *misra* dance i.e., the style in which both *marga* and *desi* are mixed. The audience in this theatre should be only males, consisting, besides the king, of proprietors of other theatres—*para-mantapikas*, and the

chief citizens. In the square type the audience consist of the king, courtezans, ministers, merchants, commander of the army, friends and the king's sons. Here all sorts of *misra* dance and music could be conducted. In the triangular, the audience with the king include the sacrificial priests, the preceptors, the king's harem and the chief queen. The dance conducted in this theatre should be of the *marga* style only.

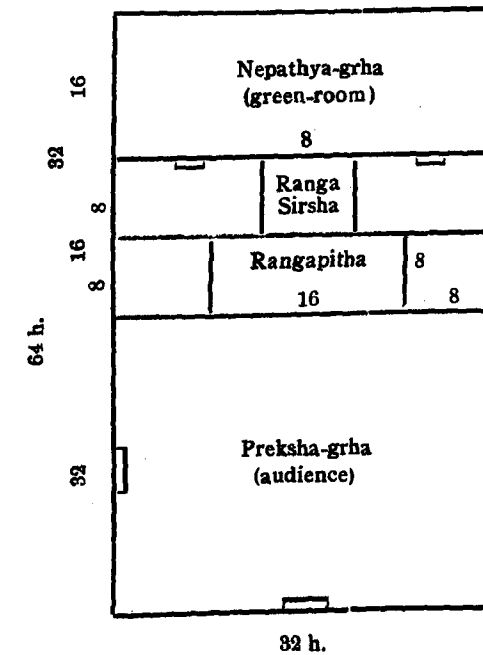
The *Sivatattvaratnakara* of Basavaraja says that King Venkatappa built a theatre at Ikkeri. It describes the grandeur of that theatre, worked in ivory and sandal and inlaid with precious stones, having a garden around it, receiving enough light where it was wanted and with special artificial lighting arrangements in the darker portions. The whole house was beautified with paintings of various themes on the walls that looked like mirror.

The *Sangitachudamani*, an unpublished work on Music, seems to have dealt with the theatre. We have two verses from it describing *yavanika* (curtain) quoted in another available work on Poetics. The verses say that there should be a thick and beautiful curtain in front. Behind it, there should be two very thin and beautiful curtains looking just like thin mist. The first curtain is the front 'drop' which is removed as soon as the show begins. Behind the mist-like curtain, the *danseuse* performs the dance called *lasya*.

Thus an examination of the Sanskrit works on Drama, Dance and Music, gives us the certain idea that the words *natyasala* and *rangabhumi*, far from being merely imaginary or representing anything crude, represented beautiful theatres of various types, scientifically planned and richly decorated. It is wrong to assume that the *rasikas* and royal savants of old thronged by the highway tree and squatted on the street to witness the Sanskrit dramas of Kalidasa, Sudraka, and Bhavabhuthi, or to enjoy the graceful art of *abhinaya* and *sangita*, the science of which has been perfected in a vast literature.¹

¹ The *Silappadikaram* (Tamil classic) describes a small stage intended for dance, more or less square in shape. Three curtains are mentioned and measurements are also given. We shall deal with it in a further article.

ONE KIND OF VIKRASHTA—RECTANGULAR THEATRE



Literature and Democracy

By G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA, M.A. (HONS.)

(Lecturer, V. R. College, Nellore)

I

When we remember Ruskin's warning against the mischief of 'masked words' which chameleon-like change their hue to suit the whim and fancy of each individual, no apology will, I believe, be needed for explaining the terms Literature and Democracy though they are so familiar and widely current. 'Literature' is here used in the usual restricted sense of 'elegant literature' or 'belles-lettres,' a body of writing "that has claim to consideration on the ground of beauty of form or emotional effect." 'Democracy' possesses here the same comprehensive meaning which Mazzini gave it when he defined it as "the progress of all, through all, under the leading of the best and the wisest." The term is here used as being applicable to the whole community that observes the principle of equality between man and man in the matter of all essential rights, out of which follow as a corollary the democratic State with the ultimate sovereignty vested in the community as a whole, and the democratic Government meaning "the Government of the people, by the people, for the people." It necessarily implies on the negative side the abolition of all special rights and privileges, the removal of all artificial barriers between man and man, and on the positive side the emancipation of the poor, submerged humanity.

It may be at once conceded that Literature in the past has flourished mainly under the patronage of kings and nobles. Whatever drawbacks may be pointed out in the ancient institution of Monarchy, its one redeeming merit has been this spontaneous homage always paid by kings to poets and scholars. Queen Elizabeth of England and King Louis XIV of France, to mention but two striking instances, have eternally endeared themselves to mankind by their literary patronage. In our own country, there

has been no royal Court without one or more poets adorning it. The kings and nobility in India vied with each other in honouring men of letters, and especially the names of King Bhoja and Sri Krishnadevaraya whose Courts held respectively the 'nine gems' and the 'eight cordinal elephants'—as the poets were called—are for ever gratefully remembered by all lovers of literature. Nursed and nourished by royal favour, literature had naturally an aristocratic outlook. Every poem of note was dedicated to some noble patron; and to an exaggerated praise of his person and pedigree went many pages. Even in the body of the work, the poet sought to please the sovereign by throwing hints that the semi-divine hero of the mythical story was but a magnified prototype of his patron. The very episode chosen was made to appear but a thinly-veiled glorification of some incident in the royal patron's life. *The Faerie Queene* of Spenser was but a grand eulogy of Queen Elizabeth; the life and loves depicted in the classical plays in Sanskrit, in the Restoration Drama in English, and in the *Prabandhic* poetry in Telugu are but idealised pictures of the life and loves in the Court and the harem. One famous *Prabandham* for instance, written by Thimmana, a prominent Court-poet of Sri Krishnadevaraya, while ostensibly narrating the episode of Lord Krishna coaxing his favourite consort Satya out of her jealous wrath, seeks, it is said, to argue Sri Krishnadevaraya himself out of an amatory quarrel with his queen. The 'cloud-capped towers,' the seven-storeyed garden palaces, the gorgeous domes and glittering minarets, the melting moonstone pavements beside the meandering rivulets, the celestial gardens in which the flowers and fruits of all seasons are found together and the breeze is ever gentle, ever wooing the coy creepers, and ever stealing and wafting their fragrance, the chattering parrots, and chirping pigeons, the strutting swans and dancing peacocks, of whose descriptions our old plays and poems are so full, were all, we may be sure, only the poetical transfigurations of aristocratic life in its varied phases of prosperity and happiness.

It would not however be correct to say that literature, even aristocratic literature, neglected wholly the democratic view-point. Even while treating of kings and Courts, the poets by harping on

sentiments and emotions, by concentrating on the eternal verities that confront all beings and by glorifying the basic principles of human nature may be said to have laid 'well and truly' the foundations of Democracy. Such stories as King Cophetua begging the hand of a beggar-maid, or the aged King Santanu allowing himself to be rowed by a boat-maid into the Ganges of Love, or King Dushyanta casually meeting an orphan-girl in a hermitage, falling in love with her at first sight, marrying her then and there in Gretna Green fashion and making her his queen-consort, could have but one effect, that of minimising the distinctions of rank and wealth and emphasising "universal human equality in respect of the profound underlying essentials of man's common nature" upon which Democracy is ultimately based. There were, moreover, poets even in ancient times, who more directly helped the democratic movement by espousing the cause of the poor man. A Japanese poet of the eighth century thus bewails the woes of poverty :

" Heaven and earth are wide, but for me they have become narrow ;
The sun and moon are bright, but for me they yield no radiance.
Is it so with all men or with me alone ?
Born a man by the rarest of chances,
I am made in human shape like another,
Yet on my shoulders I wear a cloak void of padding
Which hangs down in tatters like sea-weed—
A mere mass of rags.
Within my hut, twisted out of shape,
Straw is strewn on the bare floor of earth.

* * * *

To crown all—cutting off the end, as the proverb has it,
Of a thing that is too short already—
Comes the headman of the village with his rod,
His summons (to forced labour) penetrates to my sleeping place.
Such helpless misery is but the way of the world. "

Here are three ancient Chinese poems anticipating the care-free exultant vein of Robert Burns, the two former of which glorify the lot of the poor labourer while the last one eulogises the proverbially impecunious scholar. I give their English rendering in order, below :

THE HUSBANDMAN'S SONG

" Work, work ;—from the rising sun
Till sunset comes and the day is done
I plough the sod
And harrow the clod,
And meat and drink come both to me.
So what care I for the powers that be ? "

THE POOR MAN

" No scarlet-tasselled hat of state
Can vie with soft repose :
Grand mansions do not taste the joys
That the poor man's cabin knows. "

THE SCHOLAR

" A scholar lives on yonder hill
His clothes are rarely whole to view,
Nine times a month he eats his fill,
Once in ten years his hat is new.
O wretched lot !—and yet the while
He ever wears a sunny smile. "

Even Shakespeare, who is said to be too aristocratic, pays to the poor but honest labourer the following tribute which is all the more striking since it is put into the mouth of a king :

" No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
Who with a body filled and vacant mind
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread ;
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,
But like a lackey, from the rise to set
Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium ; next day after dawn,
Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,
And follows so the ever-running year
With profitable labour to his grave. "

We should also recognise that the race of the Court-poets was not wholly unrelieved by independent democratic authors like Milton and Johnson in England, and Bhartruhari and Bammara Potana in

our own country who openly raised their voice against the tyranny of kings and nobles, and who would never sell their sacred Muse for any consideration and never bend their knee to the mightiest potentate. Both by their writings and by their personal example, they undoubtedly accelerated the pace of Democracy.

Moreover, if we trace the aristocratic literature to its origins, we find it taking its rise in a mass of folk-lore, primitive ballads, crude songs etc., floating loosely among the general community and floating down across Time without beginning. The most ancient classics in the West, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, are now regarded on all hands as but artistic compilations of numerous stories in prose and verse handed down by hoary tradition, popularised by wandering minstrels and mendicants, and widely prevalent among the people at that time. I venture to think that the most ancient Indian epics, the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, the *Mahabharata* of Vyasa and the *Bhagavata* of Suka, are also of like nature. These varieties of popular literature have not at all been superseded by their off-spring, the 'belles-lettres,' but have persisted alongside of the latter down to our time. Indeed while the elegant literature has been accessible only to the cultured few, these have given solace and inspiration to the multitude. The ballads and *kirtans* recited by our wandering minstrels, and some of the ditties sung by our women-folk in marriages and other festive occasions bear on them evident signs of their being as old as the language or the race. It is a wonder how oral tradition has preserved them so long.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Literature, aristocratic as well as popular, and Democracy have been inextricably intertwined and mutually helpful from their very origin. Even confining 'Democracy' to politics, one will not be far wrong in asserting that literature and men of letters have on the whole exercised a profound influence in the direction of political democracy. The most striking instance in this connection is the influence of English literature on India. How much to the spread of this literature the democratic movement in India is indebted, even the extreme nationalist will, I believe, readily acknowledge.

Milton, Burns, Shelley, Byron, Swinburne, Carpenter, Shaw and Wells are names to conjure with among all protagonists of the Indian democratic movement. That men of letters have often wielded great power in the State is amply illustrated in history. Demosthenes and Ciero had the most potent voice in the governance of Greece and Rome during their life-time; Milton was the confidant of Cromwell; Ibn Al Mutazz, a famous ninth-century poet of Arabia, was the son and Secretary of Caliph Al Mutazz; Han Yu, a Chinese poet of about the same period, was a statesman of the first rank; the famous trio in Japanese literature of the eighteenth century, Haku Seki, Kiuso and Motoori were, it is well-known, constantly consulted by the Government; to crown all, two great poets in India, Bhoja and Krishnadevaraya, were themselves kings. It can be further proved that great movements towards national emancipation, of which political democracy is but a part, owed their inspiration chiefly to men of letters.

Martin Luther, the great German writer and translator of the Bible, was the founder of Protestantism; Rousseau was the prophet of the French Revolution; Montesquieu, though erroneously representing the English Constitution, got the United States to accept his plan of separation of the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive; Tolstoy by his teachings paved the way for Bolshevism; a Burmese author U. Awbatha by his fine translations, from the Pali, of the great *Jatakas* of Gauthama has revolutionised the life and thought of people and made the race what it is today; and our poet Tagore, every one will agree, is the father of the modern Indian Renaissance.

Besides the work of individual authors, there was one event in the realm of authorship that made for Democracy. It was the discovery of the art of printing. This at once made it possible for any number of copies being brought out with incredible ease and rapidity and broadcasted among the public. This wide dissemination of knowledge instilled new taste and kindled new aspirations in the common people. It thoroughly woke them out of their 'pathetic contentment' and made them intensely dissatisfied with their existing lot; it revealed to them their high destiny and their

inherent strength to achieve it. The inevitable drift of it all could only be towards Democracy.

Now let us consider how in its turn the movement towards Democracy affected Literature and its votaries. One common feature of the earliest literature in all countries is its metrical form. Nay, even purely non-literary subjects such as the positive sciences and law were written in verse. In pre-Islamic Arabia, for instance, while the poet was the wise man, magician and tribal oracle, while poetry was all in all, prose was never written and was indeed not held to be of sufficient importance to merit such an honour. In Ancient India, all sciences and arts, not to speak of literary works, were composed exclusively in verse. The later emergence of prose is directly traceable to the democratic influence. The verse-form that satisfied the small section comprising priestly scholars, and even helped to keep up their exclusiveness, would not do for the growing circle of lay public who had not proceeded much further than the 'three R's' but wanted an intellectual pabulum suited to their tastes. They naturally demanded an easier and less cumbersome medium which came nearer to oral speech, and the result was the evolution of Prose. Moreover, the privileged few in Courts, academies or monasteries could afford leisurely flights in the fairy realms of Romance or supra-mundane sphere of Epic or Tragedy. But to create interest in the busy multitude, the author had to treat of themes not far removed from the scene of their daily labours, and thus arose Fiction.

Another craze of the literate public was for news of all kinds and for articles handling in a popular way matters of current interest. This resulted in the birth of Journalism.

While thus the impact of Democracy upon the world of letters has given prominence to Prose, Fiction and Journalism, the great classics of antiquity have gradually fallen into disuse. Still they adorn the book-shelves and their names are uttered with reverence. But they have ceased to be studied and appreciated by the public. They are no longer a live force in the modern world. The reason is not far to seek. The average reader today is so much engrossed in problems of the moment that he has no eye for the immaculate

form, and elaborate technique, the subtle suggestion and high imagination of the classics. He is so utterly lost in the trees that he cannot see the wood. He readily hugs the 'literature of the hour' in preference to the 'literature for all time.'

The problems created by Democracy have so much dominated the minds of men that they could not but have profound reactions on Literature. To some one of these problems every literary piece, like everything else in the world, has perforce to be connected, and its value as literature is just in proportion to its success in solving the particular problem. The solution it proposes is its 'message' and art is meaningless without this 'message.' Bernard Shaw once characteristically declared himself superior to Shakespeare on the ground that he had a clear-cut explicit message to the world while Shakespeare had none. This strikingly brings out the change in literary values wrought by problem-breeding and problem-hunting Democracy. Pure idealism and disinterested art count for nothing; instead, only realistic propagandist literature pays. It is not open propaganda either, for even today men refuse to be lectured to and sermonised in literature. So the modern author seeks to achieve his object by a show of relaxation and amusement.

The advent of Democracy has had its effect also on the literary style. The formal beauties such as choice diction and rhetorical flourishes have lost their attraction and on the other hand a plain, familiar, matter-of-fact expression is now quite satisfying.

The worst evil of uncultured Democracy seeking to assert itself in literature has been a morbid love of sensation. Sensation today carries the palm over quiet beauty; for every single reader of Homer or Shakespeare or Tagore there are, I fancy, a thousand readers of Miss Mayo. There was a time when reading from some classic formed part of the day's routine for an educated person. But today, with true Democracy, the mania is for the newspaper, the detective novel or the sentimental short story. It is no wonder that those accustomed to the strong wine of sensational literature, should have no stomach for the mild draughts of pure classics.

Now with regard to the literary profession, the first effect of Democracy has been a complete break-up of the old order. Along

with the regime of kings and nobility, their patronage of letters also came to an end; and there was no ready substitute to make up for the loss. Authors were thrown upon their own resources and for a while endured stark misery until the place of the noble patrons was taken by the literary public. The woes of authors during this *interregnum* are strikingly illustrated by the plight of the 'Grubstreet scribblers' so unkindly exposed in Pope's *Dunciad*. This twilight of transition we in India, and especially in our Andhra Desa, do not seem to have yet passed. Here we have no cultured public worth the name hungering for literary fare, and the only literary patrons of today, barring a very few anachronisms of old-fashioned aristocracy, seem to be our Text-book Committee and Boards of Studies! Democracy, in other words, has yet to vindicate its cultural pretensions in this land.

The way in which Demos treated authors has been sometimes curious and even baffling. No doubt instances are not altogether lacking in which it gave immediate recognition and all due encouragement to deserving merit, and its evaluation has been upheld by Time. The *Poems* of Tennyson and the *Gitanjali* of Tagore, for instance, were fortunate in winning from the literary public instant recognition for their authors as poetic stars of the first magnitude. But such instances have been few and far between. Too often has Demos perversely worshipped false gods, and rejected the true. In either case, Time has vindicated Truth and set right the popular judgment. Alexander Pope was regarded by the public of his age as the greatest poet of all time, even greater than Shakespeare! But Wordsworth was greeted with, "This will never do!" In the realm of Fiction, Sterne was admired in his day as the most original genius while George Eliot in her time was slighted as a laboured writer. Too often Demos began by ignoring or decrying a great genius but gradually allowed itself to be wheedled or compelled into admiration. From Milton to Bernard Shaw, we find a host of writers like Grey, Wordsworth, Keats, Browning, etc., for whom early popular negligence or disfavour was ultimately transformed into adoration. Swift in the eighteenth century, Carlyle in the nineteenth century, and Bernard Shaw in our own time are three

curious instances of great writers whose utter disregard of popular favour and open chastisement of Demos, gradually won for them esteem and admiration from that very Demos. How one can by patient and assiduous courtship wear out popular prejudice and win due recognition is proved by the instance of a recent writer, W. H. Davies. His *magnum opus*, a tragedy in blank verse, was rejected by one publisher after another; then by going out on tramping expeditions, he gathered enough money to get his first poems printed. But the journals to which they were sent for review paid no heed to them. Now taking the matter into his own hands, he went about with copies of his poems in hand making personal appeals, which not only brought him money but secured reviews in the leading papers and his literary position was at once established. At times public opinion was also diametrically opposed to the critical and scholarly estimate. For instance *The Sight That Failed* of Kipling failed indeed with the critics but was warmly applauded by the public. On the other hand, while the critics gave George Gissing high praise as a literary artist, the public gave him the cold shoulder.

It will not, on the whole, be far wrong to conclude that while Literature both directly and indirectly contributed to the consummation of Democracy, the latter though it has occasionally shown sound sense and judgment in discovering and appreciating literary genius, has yet to prove itself an infallible guide in estimating true worth, especially in original writers.

II

Having so far outlined the historical relationship between Literature and Democracy, I shall now deal with their present position and future prospect, relative to each other. There are those who take a pessimistic view and say that at present they both are drifting apart and must sooner or later come to grief. According to them, Literature is now a spent-up force; it has lost its vigour and freshness; its high pretensions have been completely discredited; it no longer pays; its soft flageolet is scarcely audible in the deafening roar of Industrialism; it has almost ceased to

count in the work-a-day world; it is a relic of the sentimental past and should seem a piece of anachronism in modern life.

I completely dissent from the above view. While it is a fact that one kind of literature, the classics, has almost fallen into disuse, it is not at all true that all literature is now losing ground. Especially the essay, the short story, the novel, the drama and even occasional verse are far from being underrated. Making allowance for temporary aberrations of popular whim and caprice, the great public nowadays are not slow to appreciate achievements in the above fields; and when once a writer becomes a *persona grata* with the modern public, the royal patronage of old is as nothing before the golden harvest of modern popular authorship. This is amply illustrated by the amazing fortunes of Kipling, Shaw, Wells, Edgar Wallace, Conan Doyle and other popular idols of Western Democracies.

Far from being crowded out by the political and economic problems of Democracy and threatened with extinction, Literature is being more and more looked to for a solution of these very problems. "The future of Poetry," declared Mathew Arnold, "is immense because, in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay." This claim he might have as well extended to other forms of literature equally worthy. The truth of his prophetic utterance is being made clearer as time passes. As modern Democracy is tightening its political and economic coils round every nation, we are learning the utter futility of all the make-shifts and stop-gaps of short-sighted selfish diplomacy, and are realising that the only salvation lies in co-operative action springing from broad-based sympathy and humanity, so eloquently voiced by the best writers of all ages and climes. Men bankrupt of other resources are falling upon the reserve-fund of collective wisdom of the greatest writers, past and present. Now, more than ever before, is heeded the cry of oppressed humanity which Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Shylock in these words: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons,

subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?" Now, if ever, is being burnt into our souls the truth of Burns's song, "A Man's a man for a' that" and especially his saying:

"Rank is but the guinea-stamp
Man is the gowd for a' that."

The war-weary democracies of today fed up with aggressive nationalism and economic exploitation, and finding themselves between the devil of Dictatorship and the deep sea of Communism, are turning not to the harangues of politicians nor to the fallacies of economists but to the pages of Tolstoy and Thoreau, of Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland. Shelley was content to claim that "poets are unacknowledged legislators"; but one may now assert that they are no longer unacknowledged in that capacity.

There are also pessimists who hold that Democracy has been tried and found wanting, that it is fast crumbling under the problems of its own making, that being tied to the wheels of economic Industrialism, it is cutting itself adrift from cultural influences, and that sooner or later it must give place to Dictatorship or Communism, either of which is essentially undemocratic. Democracy runs counter to the old-world conception of the fitness of things. Like the Prince of Tagore's story, it has entered our 'Kingdom of Cards' and is shaking us upside down and outside in. The right to err and to suffer in consequence is implicit in Democracy, though not of course intended by it. But if we believe in the truth of our organic existence as human society, we must needs have faith in Democracy. For, as Prof. John Dewey observes, "Democracy approaches most nearly to the ideal of all social organisation, *viz.*, that in which the individual and the society are organic to each other. The individual embodies and realises within himself the spirit and will of the whole organism. The individual is the society concentrated; he is the localised manifestation of its life."

Is the gulf really widening between Democracy and Literature? It has been already shown how Democracy is in the last resort seeking and finding proper guidance in Literature. In its turn,

Democracy is also giving a new orientation to Literature by persuading it to leave off its old moorings, to come out of its 'splendid isolation.' The world of letters is no longer a fool's paradise, nor are the men of letters mere epicureans of delicious fancy. Its old aristocratic trappings Literature has long outworn. And Democracy has taught Literature that it will not do for the Muse to be merely 'riding the Pegasus,' or angel-like 'beating in the void her luminous wings in vain.' She must come down to the hard earth, and play the guardian angel for the whole of mankind. She must prove herself the 'friend, philosopher and guide' to even the lowliest and the lost. She must cease to be the Court-maiden toying with kings and hanging on their favours, but must turn to the forlorn suffering humanity and bring to them the salvation which she alone can. Literature that is purely 'aery-faery', that is merely 'sound and fury signifying nothing' or that is simply a weaver of pretty fancies, a dresser of dainty sentiments, a juggler of jingling sounds, is certainly at a discount today; it is not wanted; it has no place in the economy of Democracy. On the other hand, the crying need of the day is a literature that fills the dried-up channels of modern existence with the flood-tide of a new life, a literature that brings home to the bosoms and businesses of men the beauty and utility of Faith, Hope and Love, literature that riding on 'the coursers of the air' clears it of all mistrust and misunderstanding by proclaiming everywhere the message of 'peace on earth and goodwill among men,' a literature that by raising the minds of even the humblest out of their mean surroundings and making them dwell, for a time at least, on the grand or lovely aspects of Nature and Truth, makes their lot less insufferable. To perform this function Literature must undergo a great change. By its simplicity and ease of manner it must make itself accessible to all. By its transparent sincerity and disinterestedness, it must inspire universal confidence. By its sweetness and beneficence, it must endear itself to everyone. Like a limpid irrigation-channel, the current of Literature must be 'of the earth, earthy' and at the same time wear the hues of heaven; it must not only feast the mind but help to fill the belly. In a most practical manner, it must stead humanity of to-

day in all their vital necessities. In short, Literature must breathe the democratic spirit through and through; it must become the very soul of Democracy.

Indeed the liaison that is fast developing between Literature and Democracy is the most hopeful sign of the times. The leading writers of today such as Tagore, Romain Rolland, Yeats, 'A. E.,' Wells, Shaw and Masfield, are all ardent democrats and humanitarians. On the other hand, the present-day leaders of democratic movements in the world such as Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Kemal Pasha, Macdonald, etc., are themselves the finest products of literary culture and fervent worshippers at the shrine of the Muse. Democracy is opening up 'fresh fields and pastures new' for Literature. The material thus furnished is most promising, for it lends itself best to original imaginative treatment. Democratic life today is throwing up real tragedies and comedies, real epics and romances compared with which the tragedies and comedies, the epics and romances of old Literature almost sound insipid. 'Orestes' and 'Hamlet' can hardly match the colossal tragedy of poverty and unemployment at the present day. The 'Alchemist' and 'Volpone' are not half so comical as the peace-pacts and disarmament conferences of today. Coming nearer home, which comedy or tragi-comedy can overwhelm us with so much humour and irony as the tidal wave of 'Sarada marriages' that overtook us a year or two ago? 'Iliad' and 'Paradise Lost' must pant in vain for the 'high seriousness' of the present-day struggle between Man and Machine. 'Orlando Furioso' and the 'Faerie Queene' must indeed blush with modesty before the romance of our radio and aeroplane. With such themes as these Literature need not suffer because kings grow scarce. Authors who have grasped this truth, who have learned to shed the old-world mythology and grapple instead with this new material, need have no misgivings about their success; indeed they are the best guarantee for the future of both Literature and Democracy.

No one need wonder that the two are nowadays approaching each other for mutual inspiration and support. This is as it ought to be. For, in the first place, they both own a common origin, namely, faith in the essential goodness of human nature and in the

equality, if not identity, of the soul in all human beings. Secondly they are bred on the same fare—the milk of human kindness, and the honey of idealism. Thirdly, they are, alike in most respects, mutually inseparable and indispensable. If there is anything in creation that is truly democratic, it is Literature. The world of letters has been aptly styled a republic. Worldly rank and privilege have no place here; only

“Sense and worth, o’er a’ this earth
Bear the gree and a’ that.”

Here is no monopoly for any caste or creed, for any class or community. It is the common possession of all.

Literature breaks through all barriers of nationality and language and fulfils itself by appealing to the best in all men. Nay, one touch of true Literature makes all humanity kin. On the other hand, if there is anything that forms the *raison d’être* for Literature, it is Democracy. It constitutes the Millennium consciously or unconsciously aimed at by all men of letters; it provides the most favourable conditions for the realisation of the highest ideals set forth in Literature.

Without the vital breath and dynamic impulse of democratic ‘motif,’ Literature would become anæmic and soon die of inanition. On the other hand, without the humanising influence and harmonising ‘soul-force’ of Literature, Democracy would soon degenerate into a cock-pit of class-warfare and perish, involving the whole mass of mankind in its ruin. So the want of either will mean disaster to the other and to humanity.

Born of the same Mother, bred on the same diet, possessing the same features, these twins, Literature and Democracy, have been for too long straying from each other, the one in the vacuum of Unreality and the other in the quagmire of Materialism. In their mutual alliance and co-ordination lie the well-being of each and the salvation of humanity. “The love of Literature,” says Beeton, “is one of the most marked characteristics of advanced civilisation, and it exercises an important influence on practical life, on the destiny of nations, and on the progress of ages. As civilisation becomes

diffused, the Literature of a country comes more and more into sympathy with ordinary life. Nor does Literature lose anything by being thus brought into contact with common life. For those works are ever the best and most useful which speak to the feelings and sympathies of the great mass of the people. Too frequently and too long have Literature and Life been completely alienated from each other, like two distinct worlds having no interests, no sympathies in common, to the great injury of both. Literature has been despised in the eyes of the world, and the world has been too much overlooked by men of letters.” This divorce between Demos and Letters is also deplored by Fred Schlegel. “The isolation of the learned as a distinct body,” says he, “from the great mass of people is the most formidable obstacle in the way of national civilisation. The various innate inclinations, nay the very conditions and circumstances of men should, to a certain extent, co-operate, if the productions of the mind are to be perfected or appreciated.”

May Literature and Democracy, celestial twins as they are, enter arm in arm into their common inheritance, this God’s earth, and bind all humanity in silken cords of love! May they together reign here in everlasting glory as the universal Father reigneth in Heaven!

How I Played—Desdemona

By S. NARASIMHAM, B.A., B.L.¹

The title no doubt seems to be presumptuous but presumption has been ever the weakness of man. The novelty of my attempt will however serve as an excuse for any flaws in my sentiments or expression. It has long been my earnest desire to write on acting and its interpretation of the play acted. I am not here like the hypercritic to carp and criticise the author piecemeal: whether or not he conforms to the sacred Unities or whether his words have Icelandic or outlandish derivation. It is my endeavour to bring out how I interpreted the different roles and what acting has brought to me and to my understanding of the author. It need hardly be said that the actor is more in tune with the author than the scholar emerging from a closet, and their relationship is more intense and devotional. Now let me pass on to say how I interpreted Desdemona.

Desdemona has not many lines to her part. She has a few scrappy sentences here and there. Yet how vividly we visualise her form, figure and character! You have to learn about Desdemona, less from herself and more from others. Brabantio introduces us to her, even in his excitement, with a beautiful description of

"A maiden never bold
Of Spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
blushed at herself."

and Othello gives an 'unvarnished tale' of the whole course of his wooing and how he won her. The whole future of Desdemona is built upon this fabric of conceit. One has known her thoroughly when she enters the Council Chamber. The few words that she utters here and there are the full expressions of her soul laden with her traits in every letter. How surcharged with her simplicity,

¹The writer is a talented South Indian actor, whose interpretations of Shakespeare are of great interest.—*The Editor*

HOW I PLAYED—DESDEMONA

95

sweetness and innocence are the seemingly meagre lines of, "I hope my noble lord esteems me honest," and "Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?" And one always feels a thrill while acting

"No, as I am a Christian
If to preserve this vessel for my Lord
From any other foul unlawful touch
Be, not to be a strumpet, I am none."

Such is Shakespeare's delineation of the lovable character of Desdemona. Her very name has an aroma and a softness about it. It is just like the master-painter, bringing out his subject in clear relief, with a few strokes of his brush here and there, and where we expect them, with no strokes at all, which suggest however far more than the strokes themselves.

Just as it is the art of the dramatist to introduce his heroine in an arresting situation, it is as well the art of the actor to think out his first entrance before the footlights. The first stroke is said to be half the battle, and the actor who thinks out the situation and makes capital out of it, will have always a prepossession in his favour to start with.

Well, the situation yields to such an entrance for Desdemona. To digress a little, but not without purpose, I have seen many actors and actresses impersonate this character both on the normal stage and on the screen, but I have never yet found one who appeared, from the outset, with the fatal handkerchief. She is, as we all know, married and when you read the lines of Othello in Act III, Scene 4,

"That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give
.....
I did so and take heed on it."

and read them not alone but along with Emilia's in Act III, Scene 3,

"This was her first remembrance from the Moor
.....
That she reserves it ever more about her
to kiss and talk to."

the only way of interpreting the character seems to me that Desdemona always has with her the fatal handkerchief, till she loses it in Act III, Scene 3. Else, what is the meaning of her bringing it in that scene just for the purpose of losing it? It looks so artificial and unnatural.

To resume, Iago is asked to fetch Desdemona to the Council-hall. We are not told by any references in the play that she is informed of the cause of her summons. It is but natural for Desdemona to be surprised at first at the scene that confronts her on arrival, though she could have half suspected it. She takes in at a glance the situation and nerves herself up to brave it through. She is tossed about by a wave of conflicting emotions. She must first try to reconcile her old father, with a parallelism and a plea, but the old man, as old men are, is obdurate and will not budge. He will not even allow his only daughter to live with him during Othello's absence when he goes to the Turkish wars. So Desdemona, 'hitherto his daughter,' cannot but renounce her father and take to the home of her lord, casting aside all thoughts of her father's roof and kindness, in future. In fact, Brabantio drops out altogether after that scene, save for casual and 'casualty' references to him in Act. IV, Scene 2, and Act V, Scene 2. Evidently, he never accepts the olive branch but he will die of grief all the same. So Desdemona takes her last look at her father in that scene, with an anguish known only to daughters, hoping never more to cross her father's threshold and throwing in her lot with Othello for ever. Her heart becomes subdued to the very quality of her lord.

Desdemona's love is of a very peculiar order and Othello's of an equal strangeness. It is not the ordinary passion of a runaway girl, but it is like that of a tendril twining round a big tree in ecstasy and admiration.

"She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
and I loved her that she did pity them."

She rejoices to hear of Othello's expedition against the Turks and pleads for her following him. She breaks her filial bonds with-

out a second thought and avows in open Council and before her father

"That I did love the Moor

.....

Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate."

That these incidents were, however, common and not out of the ordinary run of things, is apparent from the fact that the Duke and others take the matter rather very coolly and in fact approve of her choice.

"Othello is far more fair than black."

From that time forth, her life becomes entirely subdued to the very passions of her lord. Othello is a Moor after all, changeable in his wills and inclinations, and African jealousy is a by-word for its cruelty. She becomes the unconscious and the hapless victim of the jealous hand of her lord.

I have to say a few words regarding a certain plan in the art of Shakespeare. One always finds in his plays words strewn here and there, either with a double meaning or suggesting the very opposite, and sentences auguring the future, albeit they are used by the characters unconsciously. Such evidence we find in plenty in this play. For instance in Act III, Scene 3, where Desdemona pleads for Cassio describing him as

"One that truly loves him (Othello)

That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,"

she is only unconsciously drawing a picture of contrast between Cassio and Iago and it almost seems she even turns to Iago for approval of her correct judgment. We see the first Senator saying in Act I, Scene 3, itself "Adieu, brave Moor, use Desdemona well," and Brabantio, with a "judgment most maimed and imperfect" saying

"Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see,

She has deceived her father and may thee."

We see Iago himself expound to Othello, the very keynote of the play, "As men in rage strike those whom they wish best." But more than these, which are but faint, we see Desdemona herself

in Act III, Scene 3, sealing her doom in an unwitting speech, "For thy solicitor shall rather die than give thy cause away." How the words uttered with laughter in carelessness turn later into a terrible truth! We have again in Act IV, Scene 2,

"Prithee, tonight
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets remember."
"Unkindness may do much
And his unkindness may defeat my life
But never taint my love."

and there is the willow song.

The word 'sheets' is ominous and a reiteration of that by the actor or actress will add to it. One really need not wait to the last, to learn the end of the play.

The scenes that follow, save the last, I have not much to say upon, for it would be a weary task to take up every line of the play and discourse upon it, as to its potentialities for acting. That depends upon the imagination and virility of the impersonator, to portray the passion displayed in all its intensity and naturalness. But one thing I can say and that is this. The more Othello suspects the fidelity of his wife, the more importunate is Desdemona's pleading for Cassio. The pleading however is in all simplicity and artlessness. It is as vehement as it is sincere. Then only the course and the end of the play will be justified. The strangling of Desdemona is a sacrifice and no murder, and things must lead to it. The vehement pleading clears away the little doubts that lurk in Othello's breast and he hastens without pause to the bedchamber, to 'put out the light' of Desdemona for ever.

Let me come to the last scene, which opens with sweet repose and quiet and ends with a terrible tragedy too much to endure. The sleep is symbolic of the purity of Desdemona. There is nothing to perturb her. The transient sleep is soon to be transmuted into the eternal. There is a lingering smile on her lips even while she sleeps, for she sleeps the sleep of the innocent. But Othello enters the scene writhing in jealousy and quivering with passion. Look at the mental juxtaposition of the better and the

worser halves. Desdemona has gone to bed having done her night's prayer like a true Christian. Obviously, she has not renounced her religion, as she renounced her father. She wakes up at the silent approach of Othello. It may not be a wild conjecture that her good fairy whispered to her in her sleep that danger is standing ahead of her. "She feels, she fears." Her frame quakes with an unknown tremor. She wakes up with a start and calls "Who is there?" But she finds her lord with folded arms standing at a distance. In the dimness of the night, nay light, she is not able to perceive the surging passions within his breast. The start softens into a sweet address, and an invitation to her bed. How soon should she be disillusioned? She is bewildered and past her wits when she hears

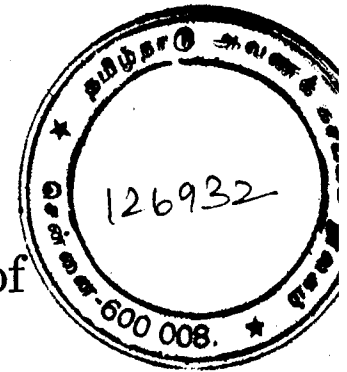
"If you bethink yourself of any crime,
.....
Solicit for it straight."

Her mind is apoplexed and her tongue paralysed when she hears, "I would not kill thy soul." She does not find her tongue easily to exclaim, "Talk you of killing?" She stumbles and stammers through it, but she realises her situation and the helplessness of her lot. She becomes alive to the fierceness of Othello and his unrelenting character. Yet the dying woman will clutch at a straw. She tries to plead and ask for the cause. There are no witnesses to prove her innocence. She appeals to Heaven and the heavenly powers. The heavens do not come down to us on such occasions. She is denied even the last wish of a condemned soul, that of saying her last prayer. She is smothered to death when she ought to be smothered with kisses.

Life is often an irony and oft a sacrifice. It has been so with Desdemona. But she is unblemished even in her death-bed. She will not quit this world with the sin of even an unkindly thought in her mind. She dies a willing and a most peaceful death. The innocents are not afraid of 'it. Her only prayer, that was hushed ere it was born, was that posterity should judge of her rightly, and that her lord should realise at some time or other that she was innocent. She would not betray her lord even then but say "Nobody, I myself," and take the crime

upon herself. Such is her glorious end. Her last lines, "Nobody, I myself, farewell, commend me to my kind lord, Oh, farewell," as all last words are, are tremendous in their import and significance. The whole thing seems to be addressed to Emilia, as the lines are printed, generally interpreted, and acted. But to me, they are capable of greater refinement and interpretation. Her final leave-taking must be with her lord, and in such a way as to bring home to him her spotlessness. He must reflect upon this at some later time and chafe himself for his rash act. So, as she is addressing Emilia, with a death-like paleness and stare, "Nobody, I myself, farewell,—commend me to . . ." her eyes turn round and she beholds Othello standing before her, immaculate and implacable. She puts out her hands in pathetic appeal and mumbles out to him, "My kind lord," intending to convey to him his 'unkindness' and that he has not after all proceeded upon just grounds, as was his vain boast, and with a choke and a cry she sinks into her bed, with her last "Oh, farewell," to her lord, a lifeless figure pale as her smock, and cold as her chastity, reminding her lord of his own beautiful sentiment, some-time ago expressed in

"If she be false, O, then
Heaven mocks itself."



The Collective Man of Ancient India

(A Theory of the Production of Indian Art)

By S. RAMAN KUTTY MENON

Across the rivers and seas all over the world huge bridges have been built. A bridge is much more than what it looks above the surface of water. It has its foundations hundreds of feet below the mud of the river bottom. Huge granite stones in countless number or thousands of sand bags are deposited underneath, to satisfy the hunger of the mobile mud. On their back rest the artistically laid out pillars and girders. But these stones are once for all buried and forgotten in the chilly blackness of the earth. Even so do the great architects, sculptors and painters of India live in their native land. They work and suffer and glide off the face of the earth, without leaving behind a name. But to them we owe all our visible glory.

Centuries of accumulated wisdom had taught our forefathers that the highest satisfaction of the soul could be attained only through self-effacing suffering and sacrifice for the sake of the common good, which they called the performance of *Dharma*. The individuals that comprise a Nation have varying degrees of success, fortune and happiness in life. But the Nation possesses properties which the individual does not retain. The culture, the character, the thought-structure, nay the heart, the mind and the soul of the Nation remain constant entities, unaffected by the chaos of individual idiosyncrasies. The paradox is that although the Nation is built of individuals, the Nation thinks and acts independently of individuals. Thus Slocombe's description of Gandhi as 'incarnating the very soul of India' is not merely an emotional utterance but a grim scientific truth.

If the Nation has got an individuality, then will not this indi-

JL
V2m N287 N31.4.6.

viduality express itself in thoughts and actions? The Nation which is better called 'the collective man,' existed in Ancient India and today exists in Soviet Russia. The German Nation has always shown a marked individuality. The huge rock architecture of India and the Hindu religion itself are striking creations of the collective man of India. Not one man built or conceived our rock temples; not one man founded the Hindu religion. They are the work of the collective giant.

Under the service of the collective man of Ancient India, our artists voluntarily gave up their individuality and catered to his tastes. The collective man was their earthly God, and service of him was the execution of *Dharma*. Such implicit obedience to the collective man, harnessed to the superb qualities of self-denial, self-sacrifice and self-immolation on the part of the individual, made our collective man a very formidable giant. He built up a religion embracing all the Universe and all natural phenomena. His giant imagination could easily conceive of a *Brahman* without beginning or end, without joy or sorrow.

Even this highly religious collective giant could not escape the vital principle governing the Universe, viz., the passion for creation. "Creation itself is both an act of homage and a reflection of the Divine origin of the Universe." Creative energy can be given vent to either by procreation or by creative thought. The history of Sankara or Faraday clearly indicates how creative energy can be completely diverted along an intellectual channel. Faraday is said to have exclaimed that he forgot to marry. For our collective man, procreation was out of question, since that business was conducted by the individuals. He, therefore, created things of the imagination that stagger intelligent humanity; but not satisfied with weightless things he tried his hand on the weighty things of the earth. He became an architect, a great temple-builder. But being a giant, he was not satisfied with a few pieces of granite and several cubic feet of lumber for his building, as we are wont to, but from solid hill-sides he carved whole temples. He was not exasperated by our conceptions of Time. For a century or two, he could afford going on building the same thing. Thus arose the great cave-temples of

India, the Ellora caves, the Elephanta Caves, the rock-temples at Trichinopoly and a thousand others. None but the collective man could have built them; the individual is incapable of even conceiving them. Even granting that the individual could conceive of such giant dimensions, a realisation of his own limitations—his short period of life, his crude implements and tools, and the feeling of non-possession and non-enjoyment of the thing he creates—would make him drop any idea of its execution. Again it is psychologically impossible for a man to work if he feels that he cannot even see the fruits of his labour. Hence the conclusion that the collective man alone could have built our giant architecture and sculpture. Our historians say that they were built by kings. That will carry no conviction since the limitations mentioned with regard to the individual apply to kings also. The simple unsophisticated people of the localities where these temples stand, tell us that they were created by Gods. That really carries the spirit of the truth.

. When the collective man determined to build a giant architecture, he summoned wholesale the artisans of the land. Summoned by duty, they all flocked together to execute the will of the giant. Each artisan sat, gnawed and withered on a chink of the giant excavations. Generations of artisans poured in before the structure could be completed. Such was the will of the collective man. Individuality being an unwanted commodity, any one individual could be succeeded by another or his progeny without bringing detriment to the work. Thus the collective man built his caves.

What must have been the structure of the society that could have so whole-heartedly responded to the will of the collective man? This is the crucial and most important question to be solved. Did that society or nation possess unity? Absolute and harmonious unity must have existed in Ancient India between the various castes, communities, and religious sects. This is substantially proved by our architecture and sculpture. That a higher kind of unity was prevalent in the India of those days is proved by our sculpture. Look at the stone images of the Buddha found all over India. All these images, it must be noted, have identical shape and convey the same idea. At the same time, the creators of these

images lived in different parts of the country—thousands of miles separating them—without any possible means of communication between one another. Even now the Panjabi seldom collides with the Malayalee, and, if the Panjabi and the Malayalee produce the same identical *symbolic* images, then it means that there is unity of thought, ideas and emotions between the two. The word 'symbolic' is important since the stone image of a *real* cow created by an Indian sculptor will certainly resemble that created by a Peruvian, and yet there may not be any unity of thought or idea between them. The observation with respect to the image of the Buddha applies equally to other images, of Siva for example. Hence, there was a fundamental unity of thought in Ancient India. And everybody will admit that the supremest unity is the unity of thoughts, ideas and emotions. This is the crowning achievement of a Nation, and it may justly be claimed for India that she did achieve this.

“Saffron and Gold”

He had no kith or kin,
He had no home or hearth,
Disease and dire famine
His comrades were on earth.

They said he had some gold,
And that he soon must change,
And so his dear life hold;
He didn't; strange! passing strange!

He fell in wakeless sleep,
They shed soft sorrowing tears,
And said in tones hushed deep,
“He killed, he killed his years!”

Ah surprise! sight sacred!
When they his palm unfold
It is a saffroned thread
Whence gleams a plate of gold.¹

O sighs, choke not the breath!
O tears, crowd not the eyes!
Borne on the wings of Death
Two souls in Paradise

Have met; wedded again
Wedded as star to star;
In Love's celestial fane
Their lamps undying are.

MANJERI S. ISVARAN
Asst. Editor, 'Triveni'

¹ The  a symbol of wifehood.

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].

SANSKRIT

The Mahabharata, Southern Recension.—[Critically edited by P.P.S. Sastri, B. A. (Oxon); Vols. I & II, *Adi Parvan*; Price Rs. 6/ per set or Rs. 4/ per volume; published by Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, Esplanade, Madras.]

Indologists have been aware for some time now of more than one recension of the *Mahabharata*. Dr. Burnell and following him Prof. Winternitz had called attention to the Southern recension even as early as 1898. No apology is therefore needed for this publication of a critical and definitive text of that recension. We hasten to congratulate the enterprising publishers as much for their commendable venture as for their discriminating choice of an editor. Professor Sastri discusses in detail the available manuscript material and the outstanding features of the Southern recension. So far as the *Adi Parvan* is concerned, he would appear to be on firm ground in making out over half-a-dozen distinctive characteristics of that recension. These are the omission of the Brahma-Ganesa Episode, the enumeration of chapters, of stanzas and verses definitely varying from that of the Northern version, the transposition of the Yayati and Sakuntala Episodes, the omission of the *Nalayaniyopakhyaṇa*, the inclusion of the incidents of the *antar-dvipa-prakarana*, and so on. The distinctive features are fully supported by the representative manuscripts so carefully chosen by the editor for the constitution of his text. Not even a quarter of a verse, it is claimed, has been added without the sanction of the available manuscript material.

The text thus constituted will, we have no doubt, prove authentic and consequently valuable to scholars in their assessment of the critical edition of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute. Further, we find, corresponds in its general features, more closely to the text constituted in the Southern recension.

The South has contributed not a little both to the development and to the preservation of Sanskrit Literature and it would be extremely probable that the much fuller Southern recension of the *Mahabharata* is also the more authentic one. The usual prejudice of criticism is

REVIEWS

against longer recensions, but both textual and historical considerations impel us in the opposite direction in the present case. The Southern recension does not always sin by inclusion, the omission already mentioned of the Ganesa Episode is significant; that it has a greater sense of logical sequence in the arrangement of its episodes is not evidence of a later dawning of the logical sequence; other things being equal, it is *prima facie* evidence of authenticity. There is fuller support both for its enumeration of verses, etc., and its episodes, from such early writers as Nannayya of the eleventh century, the translator of the *Mahabharata* into Telugu. Dion Chrysostom is reported to have referred as early as the first century A.D. to the hundred thousand verses of this epic. In the epic itself there is unmistakable reference to this number of verses in more than one place. The only legitimate conclusion would seem to be that drawn by the able editor, that the original *Mahabharata* must have approximated to the 1,00,000 verses than to any lesser number. The value of the Southern recension will thus be patent.

In the constitution of the text, a single manuscript which appeared on all considerations to be most trustworthy, has been scrupulously adhered to throughout. The footnotes contain variant readings but are not cumbered with them, only such readings being chosen as can be of value to the critical scholar, because of their greater charm or intelligibility. The very elaborate tables of contents and indices will prove of inestimable value to the scholar, while the handy and attractive get-up will commend the volumes to all who venerate the *Mahabharata*. The quick succession in which the first two volumes have come out, holds out a very reasonable assurance of the work being completed at no distant date. It is to be hoped that the publishers will meet with the encouragement they so richly deserve.

S. S. S.

ENGLISH

The Problem of Federalism—Two volumes: By Sobei Mogi. [With a preface by H. J. Laski, pp. 1144. Price 36 sh., the set. Allen and Unwin.]

Mr. Sobei Mogi's two volumes on *The Problem of Federalism* are a timely publication for us in India. Here we have an exhaustive and accurate survey of the growth of the doctrine of federalism from the earliest times to the present day. Mr. Mogi takes up every thinker who has made any contribution to federal theory, and states his views with completeness and clarity. In all the recent discussions of this very important subject in India, one notices an alarming tendency to neglect the theory of federalism altogether. We are told that theories and precedents are no use when the 'peculiar conditions' of India require institutions which are not

the less desirable because they run counter to them. The latest report of the Federal Structure Committee really goes much further and denounces any attempt to criticise its proposals in the light of theory. With very great respect to the talented and wise lawyers and statesmen who assisted in the formulation of the Round Table Conference Scheme, it is submitted that the only test of the soundness of institutions must be their essential validity in relation to ascertained human experience which alone ripens into canons of political science, in due time.

The idea of a composite state has a history which reaches back into classical times. We are however very much more concerned with the particular form of composite state known as the Federal State, and the most distinguishing characteristic of this type of state is that it is based upon Law strictly so called. Almost every writer whose views Mr. Mogi has collected in his tomes is agreed about this. When the Indian Princes, for instance, say that they would safeguard their sovereignty by reserving the right to re-enact national laws so as to make them applicable within their territories, they are suggesting something which is essentially outside the doctrine of federalism. And a careful study of the views of German thinkers, particularly of those who advocated the *Genossenschaftstheorie*, would reveal the great difficulties that exist in reconciling the orthodox notions of sovereignty with the facts of modern federalism. Is it true to say that the component states of a modern federal state are sovereign in the real sense of that term? Is even the national government sovereign? It is said that there is a division of sovereignty. But a strictly logical analysis, based upon well-accepted canons of law would show that neither the states nor the national government are possessed of sovereignty in a federal state. This confusion arises because the distinction between sovereignty and the exercise of sovereign powers is overlooked. The highest authority in the state, whose will knows no superior, is the sovereign. And in modern democratic states, it is the people who are acknowledged to possess this power. It needs no logic nor law to understand that sovereignty in this view really rests with whoever has the amending power in the state. The constitution is the expression of the will of the sovereign, and has to be confirmed to by the national and state governments. It is thus futile to claim the preservation of sovereignty under a federal system for the component parts thereof: the very fact of federal integration consumes individual sovereignties so as to create a single all-embracing sovereignty. What is left for state and national governments to do is to administer the powers of sovereignty under the authority conferred by the constitution. There is no real discussion of this important theoretical aspect of the question in the proceedings of the Indian Round Table Conference. On the other hand,

these and several other very important questions were the first to demand the attention of the wise men who sat in Weimar to determine the destinies of Republican Germany.

We recommend Mr. Mogi's able and interesting survey confidently to students and publicists. In India particularly, we repeat, we stand to gain by a study of this book. It will smooth the work of Round Tablers, who flounder because they do not, dare not, base their attitude upon proven, sound theory. Politics is a difficult science, and great men have laboured to give it perfection as Mr. Mogi's marvel of industry has shown. It were unwise to reject their testimony.

N. D. V.

The Kadamba Kula.—By George M. Moraes, M.A. [With a Preface by the Rev. H. Heras, S.J., Bombay. B.X. Furtado and Sons. 1931. Price Rs. 15.]

This is a valuable contribution to the study of one of the least known dynasties of South India. The Kadambas, who were little more than a name a few years ago, before they were actually noticed by Drs. Fleet and Dubreuil (see Fleet, *Dynasties of the Kanarese Districts*; Dubreuil, *Ancient History of the Deccan*) have been studied thoroughly and systematically by the author. Consequently his task was not merely a study of a family that had received till now only slight notice in the general history of South India, but one involving the preparation of a complete history of Western Karnataka (called *Kuntala* in ancient Sanskrit literature) from the beginning of the fourth century A. D. down to the middle of the fourteenth century, i.e. roughly for a period of 1000 years.

The Kadambas were in their own days an influential dynasty that played an important part in the history of the Dekkhan. Mayurasharma or Mayuravarman, as he is also called, the founder of this royal line, emerges from the mist of the early centuries of the Christian era as a vigorous personality, and appears to have availed himself of the confusion caused by the southern expedition of Samudragupta to carve out for himself an independent kingdom and to throw off the Pallava yoke slowly. He was followed by a succession of capable rulers who strengthened and consolidated this principality and augmented the influence of the family. In course of time, however, this family split up into a number of branches, which ruled in various parts of the Dekkhan and of the Konkan till the middle of the 14th century, when these different Kadamba kingdoms were absorbed in the newly founded Vijayanagara Empire.

The work is divided into 8 parts, an arrangement which has much in its favour, being most suited to the nature of the subject. In the I part the author outlines the pre-Kadamba history as a necessary background to view Kadamba history in its true perspective. He passes in rapid

review all the dynasties that held sway in the Dekkhan from the beginning of historic times down to the rise into power of the Kadamba family. This is followed by an illuminating discussion on the origin of the Kadambas which leads him to conclude that they were an indigenous dynasty. Part II deals with the history of the early Kadambas, the Kadambas of Banavasi as they are more popularly styled, to which is appended a note on Kadamba chronology. This part is crowded with an interesting account of Kadamba glory ranging from 345 to 607 A. D. It is rather unfortunate that the author has not incorporated the evidence furnished by the newly discovered rock-inscription of Mayurasarma, known as the 'Chandravalli inscription' edited by Dr. M. H. Krishna of the Mysore Archaeological Department in the latest *Mysore Archaeological Report*, which, though not interfering in any way with the chronology adopted by him, would have gone a long way in confirming his hypothesis. It may be observed in this connection that the period assigned to the Chandravalli inscription (250 A. D.) by Dr. Krishna would mark only its inner limit while its upper limit would extend to 350 A. D. or even later than that. In fact 250 A. D. may apply to the first two lines of the inscription while the last line exhibits palæographical features indicating a later age, say a 100 years later. After all one cannot be sure of precise dating in the realm of palæography. There is hardly anything preventing us from accepting the author's starting date for Mayurasarma, viz., 345 A. D., and other chronological details that the author discusses herein seem to support this.

The III part is concerned with a blank period in the history of the Kadambas lasting for almost 250 years (607-974 A.D.) when Kadamba glory suffered a temporary 'eclipse' and Banavasi, their capital, changed many hands. At first it was captured in about 607 A.D. by the Chalukya Pulakesin II and remained for about 150 years under Chalukyan domination. In about 754 A.D. the Chalukyas surrendered it to the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta who retained it for nearly 220 years, after which period it fell into the hands of the Chalukya Taila in 974 A.D. who counted among his supporters Irivabedanga-deva, the founder of one of the Kadamba branches, known as the Kadambas of Hangal. Part IV deals with the history of the Kadambas of Hangal. The author postulates the theory that the Kadambas joined the Chalukyas in their opposition to the rule of the Rashtrakutas and were rewarded for their help by Chalukya Taila with the restoration of their kingdom that they had lost in 607 A.D.—a plausible conjecture indeed. The history of the Hangal Kadambas ranges from 967 to 1347 A.D. The last king in this line was Purandara-raya who was defeated by Marapa and his territory seized by Harihara I, the founder of the Vijayanagara Empire. Part V deals with the Kadambas of Goa who

started about the same time as the Kadambas of Hangal. Their sway came to an end in 1340 A.D.

Part VI speaks of a few minor Kadamba dynasties that were scions of the main Kadamba line. They are:—(1) the Kadambas of Bayalnad that come to power in the 11th century; (2) the Kadambas of Belur, also 11th century. These people had frequent connections with the Gangas; (3) the Kadambas of Bankapur connected with the Hangal Kadambas, also coming to power in the 11th century; (4) the Kadambas of Ucchangi, who claim direct descent from Mayurasarma himself. Their sway ranges from the 10th to the 12th century; (5) the Kadambas of Nagarkhanda, also claiming direct descent from Mayurasarma and holding sway from the 11th to the 15th centuries; (6) the Kadambas of Kalinga that are heard of in the present Mandasa Zamindari (*panchapatra vishaya*) in the 11th and 12th centuries as vassals of the Eastern Gangas. Parts VII and VIII are devoted to Kadamba internal history and geography. Three appendices, one on the Kadamba lion, another on Kadamba numismatics and the third on some unpublished Kadamba inscriptions, add to the value of the work.

It is not correct to say that the Kadamba lion, granting it was their dynastic symbol, was borrowed from the Pallavas (p. 377), for we do not know if the lion was their dynastic symbol at all; what we know is that the Pallavas employed the lion as a *motif* of architectural ornamentation in which form it has continued down to the present day. Judging however from the Pallava copper-plate grants we find that it is a bull that is often figured in their seals and consequently it is easy to say that the bull was the Pallava dynastic symbol. Again the author's statement about the Pallava *gopuram* (p. 305) needs revision as we do not know of a *gopuram* in the time of the Pallavas. The author's intention becomes clear if instead of the term *gopuram* he uses the word 'vimana,' a term which he has used correctly elsewhere (p. 309).

The work is well got-up with plans and other illustrations quite helpful for its study, the letter-press being indeed a credit to Messrs. Furtado & Sons, its publishers.

T. N. RAMACHANDRAN

Kaladarshan—A Picture Album [Printed and published by B Rawal, Ahmedabad. Price Re. 1-4-0].

An interesting collection of pictures that calls for indulgence rather than criticism; the authors are pioneers of modern Gujarati art and are to be judged by the promise rather than their actual performance. Amidst much that is immature and diffident, is an unmistakable sincerity moved to intimate, if imperfect expression. Here and there, the classicism of early Indian pictorial art obtrudes itself in subjects where one would least

expect them, but the bulk of the pictures are inspired by the Rajput 'primitives' whose naive artlessness they share; the music is that of the double-flute and not that of the *Satatantrica*. The inequality of talent and performance is in some measure retrieved by the magnificent background of 'Ajanta Darshan' by Mr. R. M. Raval and the dainty silhouette of 'Abhimanyu and Uttara' by Kanu Desai. The last in particular is a very creditable piece of work which the young artist has good reason to be proud of.

K. V. RAMACHANDRAN

Venkataramani: Writer and Thinker—By Manjeri S. Isvaran. [Printed and published by the People's Printing and Publishing House, Ltd. Triplicane, Madras, Price Re. 1].

I read this clever book with great interest because it represents, to my mind, a very successful adventure in literary criticism, the subject of which, Mr. Venkataramani is, in Mr. C. R. Reddy's words "one of the most brilliant writers of English in all-India." Mr. Isvaran in the opening pages of his book deals at some length with *Paper Boats*, a collection of essays which has deservedly earned high praise from English literary critics and it may be interesting to note what is Mr. Isvaran's considered opinion of the book. He says, "The title *Paper Boats* may be misleading in that it is fanciful and figurative, when the sketches the book contains are not fragile as flowers or evanescent as dreams but real portraits of South Indian life and character in their serious and vivacious, humane and humorous aspects. . . . The *Paper Boats* floated awhile on their native waters absorbing the delicate odours of jasmine and lotus, then skimmed over the rough tides of the Anglo-Saxon sea, and when they reached the distant ports of England and the Englishmen 'undid the corded bales' they found not strange and fragile flowers but gleaming cameos of Indian life and character." The author, later on, subjects *Murugan, The Tiller* to a very searching analysis and his assessment of the characters, Meenakshi, Sita, and Kedari is particularly brilliant. His evaluation of *Kandan, The Patriot* is done with discrimination and I quite agree with him when he says that this novel is a distinct advance on *Murugan, The Tiller*. In the second part of the book, the writer refers in very appreciative terms to Mr. Venkataramani's ideas regarding the decentralisation of the functions of the government and the revival of the village life in all its ancient glory and splendour. But how far these mystic theories are practicable in this mechanised world, Mr. Isvaran does not discuss.

What adds greatly to the charm of the book, is the highly well-informed mind that Mr. Isvaran has brought to bear on his subject. His style

is lambent and bright; his literary sense sharp and never at any time fanciful or extravagant; his analysis extremely careful, judicious and exhaustive; and while I was reading this book, the feeling was growing upon me that the book was by one who had read very, very widely in general, and particularly in English literature. I sincerely congratulate Mr. Isvaran on his bold bid for a place in the front rank of Indian literary critics, which he has actually secured and I hope he will follow this up with other successes. My tip to the Indian reading public is, "Hereafter you must watch him!"

A. D. MANI

And All That—By K. Iswara Dutt, Assistant Editor, *The Leader*, Allahabad, [Published by the author—Price As. 12.]

In his preface to *Sparks and Fumes*, the author concludes with this cheerful assurance: "I hope ere long to greet the public with a book of this kind or a book of another kind." True to his words he has come out now with a book, indeed of another kind. Here in this slender volume with its quaint title, is gathered all that has struck Mr. Dutt's fancy and sense of humour. Like the inimitable Mr. A. G. Gardiner whom perhaps he has taken for his model, he contrives to present his subjects studied from singular, fresh points of view. His essay on the 'Pleasures of Unemployment,' delightfully free from seriousness, is yet not without a touch of truth. It is a fact which goes home when the writer well-nigh deplores that we in India cherish no love for hobbies. The value of this remark, we can hardly exaggerate. He goes on to observe in this vein, "to the average Indian whose seriousness is staggering, the Mahatma's taking a hand in a game of cards when he has a slice of leisure from the proceedings of the Round Table Conference, would seem like Nero's fiddling while Rome is burning."

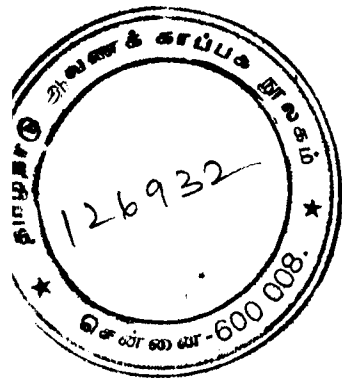
Something may be said, however, by way of criticism. In taking the English language for a medium the author has probably deemed it best to allude chiefly to English places and events. Thus perhaps he brings in Ludgate Hill and Monte Blanc, which may well be given up for more familiar names in India. The writer asks quite confidently in one of his essays, "who that knows Mr. Baldwin will doubt that he prefers his pipe to his Premiership?" It is rather amusing that he so readily takes it for granted that all the world must be aware of Mr. Baldwin's being a notorious smoker. But, the outstanding merits of the sketches ought surely to drive, whatever imperfections there may be, to the background.

Mr. Iswara Dutt, we may say, wields rather a satirical than a humorous pen. His essay 'On a Tuft of Hair' shows him the master of

pungent observation, that he is. His censure is like a smart steel blade, whose cut is as sure as it is sharp.

We welcome this frail but brave 'flotilla,' as the writer calls it, with pleasure. The volume is picturesquely got-up.

K. SAVITRI



JL
V 2m N28T
N3 1.4.6

Opinion of

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

Editor, "TRIVENI"

TRIVENI OFFICE

117, ARHMAN STREET,
MADRAS 8.2.1929

I have very great pleasure in stating that the bicolor and half-tone blocks prepared for 'Triveni' by the Indian Photo-Engraving Company, Calcutta, are of first-rate quality. For excellence of workmanship and promptness in executing orders, the Company are unequalled in India. I am always delighted to deal with them.

K. Ramakotiswara Rao
Editor 'Triveni'

THE INDIAN PHOTO ENGRAVING CO.

Process Engravers & Colour Printers

217, CORNWALLIS STREET

CALCUTTA

Telegrams: "DUOTYPE," CALCUTTA

NEW INDIA WEEKLY

(Edited by Annie Besant, D.L.)

NEW INDIA stands for India's political freedom and progress in every direction.

NEW INDIA is the medium for Dr. Besant's writings on current topics; it also contains articles and letters explaining the affairs of other nations.

It sounds a note of practical idealism in every department of life.

Its comments are made without fear or favour.

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION

	Inland	Foreign
Yearly ...	Rs. 6 12 0	£ 1 0 0
Half-yearly ...	.. 3 6 0	.. 0 10 0

For Advertisement rates, apply to:

THE MANAGER, New India Weekly,
ADYAR, MADRAS. S.

MRS. ANNA CHANDI, M.A., B.L.

Advocate and Editor of The "SREEMATHI,"
KOTTAYAM

Writes:

I used your LODHRA
and found it a sovereign
remedy for all menst-
rual troubles. Its sweet
taste and free diet add
to the pleasantness of
using it.

Ask your chemist,

or

KESARI KUTEERAM
INDIAN CHEMISTS & DRUGGISTS
EGMORE, MADRAS

NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED

Head Office:—National Insurance Building

7, Council House Street, Calcutta

New Policies Issued in 1931 for over	...	Rs. 1,32,33,000
Showing an increase over the New Business figure for 1930 of	...	16.54%
Claims paid up to end of 1931 over	...	Rs. 90,00,000
Invested Funds amount to over	...	Rs. 1,75,00,000

LOW RATES
NEW TABLES

LIBERAL CONDITIONS
NEW BENEFITS

For particulars and agencies please write to:

R. G. DAS & Co.

or

BRANCH SECRETARY

Managers

Madras Branch
113, Armenian St., Madras

FIRE & ACCIDENT RISKS

COVERED BY

National Fire & General Insurance Company, Ltd.

NATIONAL INSURANCE BUILDING

7, Council House Street, CALCUTTA

BRANCH SECRETARY

Madras Branch
113, Armenian St., Madras

R. G. DAS & Co.
Managers

Socialist Democracy for India is Advocated

BY THE

"SOCIALIST"

EDITED BY

S. P. SARMA

It stands for equal opportunities to all and for heredit-
ary privileges to none. It opposes exploitation of the many
poor by the rich few and promotes world peace by facilitating
mutual understanding.

Six Issues per year

Subscription Rs. 5 per annum

Apply to:—

THE MANAGER

THE "SOCIALIST"

Triplicane, MADRAS

VICE-CHANCELLOR

ANDHRA UNIVERSITY, WALTAIR

"I have used Kesari's Dental Cream for some days and I find it to be quite good. I have no doubt that in these days of Swadeshism, it would find a large sale."

Sir S. RADHAKRISHNAN

*Available at all Chemists
and*

KESARI KUTEERAM
INDIAN CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS
Egmore, MADRAS

Mons. Romain Rolland

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore

Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy

And a host of other artists and men of letters
in India and abroad

CONTRIBUTE TO

THE ORIENT

Herr. Rene Fulop Miller, Vienna, writes:

I believe, indeed, that the Editor has succeeded in composing a review of really high standard and very characteristic of modern cultural life in India, what we call in German a "Querschnite," that is, a section through everything worth being noticed.

Yearly Subscription: Rs. 4. (Postage extra)

Sample copy sent free on application to—

The Manager, THE ORIENT,
No. 5, Military Square,
Fort, BOMBAY.

STAR BULLETIN

Talks, Writings, Poems

by Krishnamurti

The Star Bulletin, published monthly in Ommen, Holland, is the only periodical in which Krishnamurti's teaching regularly appears.

Subscription Price for one year is Five shillings or Three Rupees, twelve annas, post free.

*Address: The Manager, Star Office,
Adyar, Madras.*

THE THEOSOPHIST

AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF BROTHERHOOD,
PHILOSOPHY, OCCULTISM, LITERATURE & ART.

EDITED BY ANNIE BESANT, D.L.,
President, Theosophical Society.

THE THEOSOPHIST is the international organ of the President of the Theosophical Society and is published every month at Adyar, Madras, India.

Dr. Annie Besant with her staff of co-workers, Bishop C. W. Leadbeater, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, Bishop G. S. Arundale, will contribute regularly articles of fascinating interest relating to Occultism, Mysticism and all general problems dealing with the advance of Humanity.

The Magazine holds a unique position as the premier Theosophical journal for, besides articles on Philosophy, Art, Literature, Science, Occultism and Social Service, it contains the comments of the President on current events of world-wide interest, and keeps the readers in personal touch with her activities and opinions concerning many significant movements and situations.

THE THEOSOPHIST contains 128 pages besides supplement, devoted to a summary of Theosophical as well as of world news, correspondence and reviews of valuable books on modern thought and occultism, and all the best class of literature, including our latest publications.

The Annual subscription will be Rs. 9/- in India, Burma and Ceylon; 18 Shillings or 4.50 cents for foreign countries; Single copy As. 14 or 1 Sh. 8d. or 45 cents, post free.

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE,
ADYAR, MADRAS, S. INDIA.

