

THE SCHOLAR

(PALGHAT)



APRIL 1931.

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To Our Readers

The Madras Provincial Educational Conference will hold its 23rd session at Palghat on May 21st and the subsequent days. On this occasion, the May issue of *The Scholar* will be published on the 20th May as a Special Number, which will be sent free to all our subscribers. It will be a sumptuous production, containing as it will several articles from distinguished educationists besides the usual features. In addition it will be illustrated with art pictures and pictures of the recent Congress at Karachi, about which there will also be descriptive accounts.

In view of the necessity of bringing out the Special Number much in advance of the usual time, the April issue is now sent out, a bit early but with some of our features left out, for which lapse we plead the forgiveness of our generous readers.

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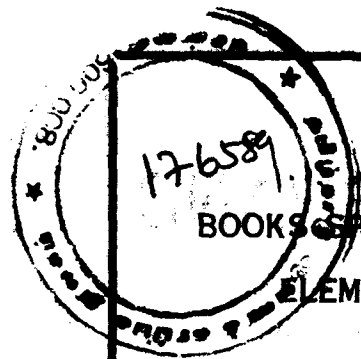
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XXIII Provincial Educational Conference, PALGHAT

The 23rd Provincial Educational Conference will be held in the Government Victoria College Buildings, Palghat on the 21st, 22nd. and 23rd. May.

M. R. Ry. M. Venkatarangayya Avl., M. A., Principal, V. R. College, Nellore has been elected to preside over the Conference.

The Hon. S. Kumaraswami Reddiar, Minister for Education to the Government of Madras has kindly consented to open the Conference and the Exhibition.

It has been arranged to hold a Refresher Course for Elementary School teachers along with the Conference. M. R. Ry. S. Jaganadham Avl., of the Teachers' College, Saidapet will deliver the course of lectures which will begin on the 14th. of May and end on the 19th.

Tournaments will also be held at the time of the Conference in Foot-ball, Tennis &c. The Tournaments are open only to teachers.

Another feature of the Conference will be entertainments like Kathakali (Dumb-Show), Ottam Thullal etc. peculiar to Malabar.

The Secretaries of Teachers' Associations and Guilds are informed that every affiliated association is free to send as many delegates to the Conference as possible from among its own members. The delegation fee for each delegate is annas four only.

All teachers and those who are interested in Education are requested to attend the Conference and make it a success.

E. H. Parameswaran,

General Secretary.

THE SCHOLAR

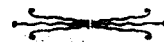
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VOL. VI

APRIL 1931

No. 7

ARNOLD BENNET

BY B. V. RAMAN



well-known literary critic once called Arnold Bennet "a conossieur and a card" and now, the conossieur is dead, leaving behind 'The Card' to immortalise him for ever in the glorious Valhalla of English Literature. The report of his death, would have come as a rude shock to many lovers of contemporary English Literature and Fiction, who, familiar with the remorseless and unceasing output of his books, had come to look upon him rather as an institution, than a personality. For in truth, Arnold Bennet in himself is an institution, an unerring guide and mentor, in the present perplexing and ever changing currents of modern literature, and his death removes from the field one of the most outstanding literary personalities of contemporary Britain. He has established for himself a special and almost peculiar place in the literature of our time, and is the cynosure of all aspiring young novelists. He is not, like Shaw or Wells, a profound thinker to whom an idea is the very pith of life; neither has he got their dynamic creative energy and force. We may not find in him the immense fertility of Wells, nor the

fiery force of imagination as in Chesterton, but he has the higher gift, which Wells or Chesterton lacks, of making the most of his gifts, which, in short, connotes the better artist. He is the most versatile of them all, and it is exactly this versatility of his in this age of narrow specialisation, that has bewildered many of the supercilious literary critics of his time. What was said of Goldsmith can with truth and greater force, be applied to Arnold Bennet, for "he touched nothing which he did not adorn; and in all the varied forms of literature which he tried and expressed himself—in Fiction, Drama, Essay or Journal—we find invariably the Bennet Touch, the characteristic insight, which notes with the delicacy of genius, the psychological anatomy of any person he comes into contact, whether it be the barber in Italy or the artist in Paris.

Born in 1867 in Hanley, one of the Five Towns that he has often depicted with the native fondness of minute detail, his early years were spent in the sordid and matter of fact surroundings of a Solicitor's Office until his success in a short story competition turned his thoughts to a literary life. After a few years, as a successful editor of *Woman* he retired into the country with a definite plan to write out stories and novels. Hence-forward, almost up till his death, each day's labour was meticulously planned to yield a regular tribute of words, and an amazing output of books followed—from *Pot-Boilers* that make Polonius up to date and short stories that embrace Blackpool Pier and the Football League to great novels like *The Old Wives' Tale* and *Anna of Five Towns*, which were to immortalise his name and establish for him a place in the British Hierarchy of Letters.

The outstanding qualities of Arnold Bennet's writings are sincerity and candour, an unsophisticated frankness and cocksureness, rare among modern writers, and whether it be the idiosyncracies of barbers in Italy or the secret of his own trade—the craft of Letters—he takes the reader into his full confidence and never makes a secret of what he thinks and feels. Concerning his own work he is never secretive; probably no writer since Trollope has been more

frank about it, and in one of his latest works, *Arnold Bennet's Journal*, in describing the performance of an opera in Moscow which he witnessed, he confesses frankly, how he saw in it, a clear way to the writing of a novel that had been worrying him for long. In all his writings he never consciously strikes an attitude nor beguiles himself with self deception, but recognises the truth about himself and expresses it so frankly that the sting is taken out of the air of self-sufficiency that would otherwise be repulsive. He never hesitates to express his opinion on all that he sees around him and in *Things that have Interested Me* he gives us tips about Literature, Politics, Painting, Music and Manners and Morals, not only with an air of knowing them, but letting you know that he knows them well. He never wearied in studying all the wheels of contemporary life—even the smallest wheel—at work and learning the secrets of the machine, and he enjoyed the exercise of that sharp though superficial observation of men and things, which fill page after page of his works with an almost vivid reproduction of physical reality. Nothing is too trivial or sordid for him, and in all he observes, he sees a deep meaning and a beauty, and is equally at home in his observations on the dressing table and the latest modes of millinery, as in his criticism of the higher arts of music, painting and literature. Indeed, one of the special charms of Bennet as a writer is that he "talks about painters and barbers, about champagne and short stories, in exactly the same tone and with the same seriousness and measures them, so far as one can see, by the same method." He is the man of genius as tipster, and gives one the impression of a man with a passion for button-holing experts in every line—an expert footballer, an expert painter, or an expert washerwoman.

This generalising habit with its thorough detachment its deliberate simplicity and its suppression of the narrator, has certain affinities with the typical French mind, and, in industry and method as in his artistic outlook, he resembles Balzac to whom he gave the worship of his early study. It is this early French influence in his life that partly accounts for his writing Fiction, as an admirer of those naturalistic

novelists who made so much of realism in literature, and it is just possible that it was this contact with French life and art that sharpened his sense of the dramatic and imparted a certain crispness and lightness in his handling of a scene or character. His lighter novels such as the *Grand Babylon* and *The Card*, show him exploiting these qualities with all the provincial humour of his own district, while his handling of grim and sordid themes in *Riceman's Steps* resembles Shakespeare's in *Macbeth*, for its combination of sheer horror and uncanny beauty. All the qualities of the typical French mind of the realistic school—lightness and humour, an unbounding inquisitiveness, and an aggressive self-confidence—he carries on to a higher level, almost to perfection, in his more serious works such as *The Old Wives' Tale* and *The Clayhanger*. *The Old Wives' Tale*, classed by some critics, as one of the Five greatest novels of the English language, is really a massive work of art, a prose epic which, in novel form, seeks to affirm and pass judgment on the tendencies of contemporary mind and manners. His short stories and journal reveal the same qualities of acute observation and candid treatment and constitute a sort "of poetry, of streets, hotels and emporiums." It is this serene detachment and truthfulness to detail combined with humour and sympathy, that mark him out at once as the realist and the philosopher among the tallest of contemporary writers, and in the words of J. B. Priestley "Arnold Bennet is at once the Historian, the Philosopher and the troubadour of our ordinary urban life" and his attitude to literature partakes something of that brisk Victorian efficiency of the older school.

THE INDIAN STUDENT

BY H. SUNDER RAO, M.A.



WE hear these days a great deal about the youth in this country. For one thing we have the lurid picture of the Indian under-graduate "anaemic and narrow-chested" given by Miss Mayo. A less malicious, but equally harmful, picture of the Indian student we very often get in the works of a certain section among Western authors, and a remarkable example of this is the caricature of the Indian graduate, Hurree Chunder Mukerjee in Kipling's *Kim*. Here we have an attitude distinctly hostile to the Indian educated youth, and we need not say how dangerous this is from the wider standpoint of inter-racial harmony. At the same time, there has been growing in recent times a certain wrong attitude towards youth, particularly among the youth themselves and a few older men also, and this attitude is generally one of flattery and exaggerated worship of what are vaguely known as the Ideals of Youth. Many of us who indulge in this kind of talk will be hard put to it to define exactly what we mean by this term. To many it simply means an unlimited charter of freedom; but, as all sensible people know, unlimited freedom has its own pitfalls, and is even dangerous, for life cannot function, much less grow, in the void, and though life in a void may seem temporarily to offer freedom, it soon proves ineffective and unsatisfying. To judge the youth in this country or elsewhere, by standards that are at once false and illusory is futile. The young in India, as elsewhere in the world, differ from each other in creed and interests in many ways, and it is dangerous to generalise. It is a fashion with some Englishmen and Anglo-Indians to speak of the Indian youth as though he is a potential revolutionary longing to give a decent burial to the British Empire in India, and hence a great deal of unnecessary fuss is being made about students and politics in India to-day. To those who have had opportunities to come into closer contact with the Indian student, all this seems to be simple rubbish. The

Indian student is not such an explosive substance, either gas or dynamite, as some panicky old men would have us believe. At the same time, it is sheer stupidity not to recognise the new awakening that is sweeping across the country from one end to the other. No doubt this awakened national consciousness is expressing itself in some ways that are undesirable, but in most cases, the sense of patriotism among our students has been a tremendous influence for good by making them more active, less self-centred and more self-respecting. The greatest need to-day is for an enormous effort on the part of the State, the parents and the teachers to direct this potential energy of the youth to constructive efforts for the good of the country.

At the present moment, this task is rendered difficult, not because the Indian youth is abnormal and stupid but just because, being absolutely as normal as any other human being in other parts of the world, he responds just normally to his environment. It is not that there is anything bad or wicked in him, but that the whole environment in which he finds himself is false, unreal, incomprehensible and extremely depressing; it is this which makes us so laughable, and sometimes so contemptible to foreigners. The average youth in our educational institutions is undoubtedly a curious creature. Like a vast majority of Indians of all classes and creeds, he is the inheritor of certain marked racial qualities, peculiar virtues and vices, not necessarily found among the youth of the West. The education which he receives opens his mind to a great deal about life which he finds difficult to comprehend. The social environment in which he lives is so different from what he gathers from his study of the foreign literature and history. His own culture, with its roots deep down in a hazy past, fails to satisfy his intellectual and social aspirations. The freer institutions of the West have, no doubt, a certain fascination for him; but he lacks the necessary environment, both at home and outside, for self-expression. In his own home, he is under the subtle tyranny of the elders, who look with misgiving, if not active dislike, on the new attitude to life which he is attempting to develop

for himself. He is himself convinced, perhaps deeply, of the inherent injustices of many of the social practices and customs around him; but he is compelled to be a passive abettor of those very practices which he is the first to condemn in theory. He likes to play a more active part in making his home happier and brighter by making it more free. He wants his sisters and brothers to be his companions, his parents to sympathise with his ideals; but in most cases he receives nothing but silent contempt and even active opposition. I have found that this gulf between the boys and their elders is doing a great deal of harm, and the result is a terrible mal-adjustment among our brighter and more intelligent boys. This repression has also resulted in a sullen spirit of rebellion on the part of our students against their elders. I have, therefore, no hesitation whatever to attribute the general inefficiency and lack of character among our youth to the uncongenial and even hostile environment in which we live to-day.

All this may suggest that there is a line of cleavage between youth and age, much more widespread than I have indicated; also that the average Indian student is a highly strung individual, with his nervous system at high tension. I do not mean anything of the sort. I merely point out the general disparity between the outlook on life which we develop through our contact with Western ideas and the conservative mediaeval atmosphere of our homes. Things, we must admit, are changing at a very rapid pace, and possibly the average Indian student to-day lives in a freer atmosphere, both at home and school; but my point is that nowhere in the world is the gulf between education and life so wide as it is in India. It is this disparity which accounts for much that is ridiculous and funny among our youth.

Let me come to the point and try to give a picture of the Indian student as I know him. I have always felt that if there is one quality that more or less correctly describes him, it is humility, a humility which is far more Christ-like than the so-called Christian humility of our rulers. The Indian student is far more docile than is good for him, and

his obedience to elders and teachers is proverbial. His capacity to suffer any amount of hardship is one of the most admirable traits in him, though even here this virtue sometimes proves to be a severe handicap to him in the inexorable struggle for existence. He is extremely timid before strangers, and is painfully conscious of his real or imaginary defects. Psycho-analysts may like to call this as 'inferiority-complex,' and perhaps they are right. This sense of inferiority, as psychologists tell us, expresses itself in many curious ways, and one of these is an annoying 'bumptiousness,' which makes him an exasperating individual. His mind always works at a furious pace, and this rapid thinking combined with an innate sense of inferiority makes him extremely 'touchy' and sensitive to what he regards as insults. I believe this touchiness is a national weakness with us, and probably accounts for a large part of our national discontent. Many Westerners have charged the Indian student with not possessing what they call 'a sense of humour'. I think they are both right and wrong. If humour means a keen sense of the laughable, the incongruous and the ridiculous, our students possess this quality in abundant degree, and the Englishman is wrong. But humour is something more than that. It is a gift, an attitude of mind, arising out of a sensible tolerance of life, with all its absurdities, its contradictions and inconsistencies. No fanatic can thus be said to have a sense of humour, and no man whose view of life is narrow, and who is furiously earnest in living it, can be 'humourous'. This attitude of goodhumoured tolerance is very much lacking in us, and that is why we very often betray a disproportionate warmth even in arguing trivial subjects. In fact this tendency to argue, to subject everything to the cold light of the intellect, is a disease with us.

The Indian student is not without any sense of humour; but humour in the sense in which an Englishman understands the term is a very rare quality with us. The slightest deviation from conventional manners or modes of behaviour is likely to offend our boys where no offence is meant. This trait is particularly annoying in the classroom.

Our boys ordinarily behave with considerable propriety; but there are occasions when the slightest whisper of criticism, however good-humoured and well-meant, is apt to exasperate them, and then the Indian student is a very "devil incarnate". He loses all sense of proportion and exaggerates the trivial incident into a mighty grievance. It requires considerable tact, knowledge of his psychology and patience to regain his friendship afterwards; but once you make him your friend, he stands "four-square to all the winds that blow," and this is one of the greatest rewards of the teacher. Of course, there are good teachers, bad teachers and stupid teachers in India as elsewhere; but the work of the teacher here is particularly difficult because of the unreal system of education which it is his job to impart. It is Bret Harte who says somewhere of a plan to carry water from a place where it is not found to a place where it is not wanted. Our system of education is very much like that.

An English friend of mine once remarked that the Indian student is an artist in the field of examinations. I am very much inclined to agree with this view, for to our boys, both at school and college, examinations are of the very salt of academic life. I know of nothing more harmful to education than this pre-occupation with examinations. It encourages the bad habit of cramming which is one of the tragedies of our educational system. I pay my tribute to the wonderful capacity of our boys to cram anything without understanding much about it, which makes it possible for the more intelligent among them to pass any examination from the much-abused S. S. L. C. to the highest competitive examination in the State without correspondingly widening their outlook on life. Many foreigners have expressed their admiration for the Indian student's wonderful capacity to quote, though considering the nature of education he gets in our schools and colleges, it is "just enough knowledge to misquote." A student cynically remarked to me one day that it did not matter much whether he knew the subject or not, provided he read enough to hood-wink the examiner. This is not an isolated instance but very

typical of the average Indian student's attitude towards the system of education that is imparted to him. No wonder that our graduates, when they leave the university, have an intellectual equipment far below the standard of university students in other advanced countries of the world, and when foreign writers caricature the inefficiency of our graduates, let them remember that even the finest material has no chance of any creative effort when made to pass through the grinding mill of an unreal educational system.

The Indian student's attitude towards games and sports is very much to be criticised, and is born of a very wrong tradition that obtains in our homes, however enlightened and cultured they may be in other respects. The average parent is extremely suspicious of games and exercises, and he very often regards them as obstacles to their sons' academic success in universities. Things are no doubt changing, and it is a good augury of the times that our play-fields are full. But our boys have yet to learn more of that spirit of "give and take," which ought to obtain in a play-field. To learn to take defeat cheerfully is one of the highest qualities of a gentleman and to appreciate the merits of your opponent, whether on the hockey field or the tennis court or in public life, is one of the greatest needs of Indian life to-day. Much of the bitterness in our public life is undoubtedly due to the lack of this spirit.

In what I have said so far, I have not damned the Indian student with faint praise while cynically dissecting his weaknesses. The Indian student is the product of many forces and currents that have been working for centuries, and he is the inheritor of certain peculiar racial qualities for which he is not responsible any more than he is for the colour of his skin. I recognise his undoubted virtues, which are to me not mere ideas vague and undefined, but living realities. It is this knowledge, that we have in this country as fine material as in any other, that reconciles me and a host of others, to our profession as teachers. The new awakening which we see in our youth to-day is the most inspiring guarantee of the future of our

country. The Indian student, with all his faults, is a fine type of youth. His capacity for obedience, his amenability to discipline provided it is reasonable, his sense of the abiding values of life, his earnestness, fellow feeling, kindness of heart and sweetness of manners, his courage and intellectual gifts are well-known. But they require to be harnessed in a proper way to the needs of the new national life that we witness everywhere to-day. The Indian youth is palpitating with a new life, and is determined to change the state of affairs in our country. Short-sighted tyranny and an unsympathetic attitude towards his aspirations will hereafter create a dangerous situation for any Government present or future, to reckon with. To meet the greater demands of our growing national life, we require stronger minds, stouter hearts and keener intellects. It is to the creation of this new character among our young men and women that all our educational effort should be directed. As it is, our youth is yet plastic, lacking in some qualities of head and heart necessary for an abundant life. aimless, and frivolous, timid and indulging in empty noise, callously insensitive to the higher demands of national life, fond of petty factions, and rigidly bound by traditions that hamper growth and which they find unable to overcome. The teacher, the parent and the State have all a graver responsibility to-day than ever to direct the youth to the service of the country with the least amount of wastage of their energies.

The Ray of Hope.

There's a break in the clouds, there's a gleam in
the sky,
There's a beautiful star, brightly shining on high,
That heralds the dawn of a long-promised day,
When right shall be might and shall flourish for aye—
When man in the strength of his manhood shall stand,
To enjoy and possess and replenish the land.

—Charles Mackay.

CONGRESS AND SOCIALISM

BY B. SHIVA RAO, M. A.



THE last resolution passed by the Congress at Karachi, laying down the programme for the future marks a turning point in its development. Gandhiji himself undertook the responsibility of sponsoring it in the open session, with the object, he stated, of removing the fears of men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, that the Swaraj to be inaugurated in India may mean the transference of political power from a foreign bureaucracy to a combination of landlords and capitalists. This resolution of the Congress is intended, in the terms of the preamble, "to enable the masses to realise what Swaraj as conceived by the Congress will mean to them". Certain fundamental rights of citizenship are guaranteed, such as freedom of association, freedom of speech and writing, freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion, the protection of the culture, languages and scripts of minorities, equality of rights and of obligations of all citizens, without any distinctions of religion, caste, creed or sex, whether in regard to public employment, office or power or honour, or in the matter of access to, and the use of public wells, public roads and all places of public resort. There are also guaranteed the liberty of the individual and the sanctity of his dwelling and property, religious neutrality on the part of the State and the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations.

It is a matter of profound satisfaction to those like myself who have been urging that Swaraj should not only mean Self-Government, but good government, for the masses; and that certain fundamental rights for labour, on which Mr. Joshi and I laid great stress at the Round Table Conference, have also been incorporated into the Congress resolution. If effect is given to it, it will mean a living wage for industrial workers (though why only industrial I fail to see); limited hours of labour, which Gandhiji

explained in his speech to mean eight per day, healthy conditions of work and provision for old age, sickness and employment. There is also an important clause which assures Labour of release from conditions of actual serfdom or those bordering thereon. At the present moment, we have particularly in many of the Indian States, forced labour which is analogous to slavery; the conditions of workers on the plantations, who number nearly a million, would also seem to come under this particular clause. The claims of women workers are not neglected, and specific mention is made of adequate provision for maternity. The right of Labour to form Unions, with suitable machinery for the settlement of dispute by arbitration, will also form an essential part of the new Constitution. As regards agricultural workers, there is a promise of substantial reduction in land revenue and agricultural rent, and a possibility indicated of total exemption from rent for a temporary period in the case of uneconomical holdings. Adult suffrage and free primary education are not new items in the programme; nor is one surprised at Gandhiji's inclusion of the protection of indigenous cloth by the exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country, the total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs, the abolition of the duty on salt, after his recent discussions with the Viceroy. The reduction of military expenditure by at least one half and the curtailment of salaries in the civil departments to a maximum of Rs. 500 per month are radical remedies suggested for the extravagance of the present administration.

Two of the most contentious items in the programme will undoubtedly be the proposal to impose a progressive scale of income-tax on agricultural incomes above a certain limit and a graduated inheritance tax. The need for both these resources of revenue to the State has been obvious to those who have felt that the existing burden of taxation, while resting iniquitously on the shoulders of the poor does not impose a sufficiently heavy obligation on the rich. There is also in the resolution a suggestion for the control by the State of key industries and mineral resources and of usury,

direct or indirect. With regard to this latter point, Gandhiji has observed that six to eight per cent. should be the maximum rate of interest on loans.

This elaborate programme of the Congress, in spite of certain obvious omissions and defects, is an unmistakable indication of the Socialistic trend of its policy. Mr. Satyamurthi was quite right in his observation that the resolution sought to establish at once a Socialistic State in India. Critics pointed out in the course of the debate, that the effect of this resolution would be to alienate the richer classes from adherence to the Congress: but as Mr. Sen Gupta said, it was necessary to tell the masses at once what was the kind of Swaraj which the Congress had in mind.

From the point of view of industrial Labour, while the resolution meets the demands which Mr. Joshi and I made at the Round Table Conference in several important respects, it fails to take into account the necessity of including Labour legislation in the list of Federal subjects. The Indian Princes, although they represent India at every session of the League of Nations, have so far evaded their obligations to the International Labour Organisation at Geneva. The last session of the Congress at Karachi did not, one notes, adopt any resolution on the rights of Indian States subjects. Gandhiji seems to have expressed the view that any insistence of claims on the part of the States subjects would be a violation of the sovereign rights of the Princes. The question, however, of the inclusion of Labour legislation among Federal subjects does not concern only the workers in the Indian States. Mr. R. K. Shanmugham Chetty declared at the International Conference in Geneva in 1929, on behalf of Indian employers, that until the Indian States come into line with British India in the matter of Labour legislation, employers' organisations in this country were bound to oppose any further additions to the Statute book. The Whitley Commission on Labour has submitted its report with, I have no doubt, recommendations on many of the questions which are dealt with in the resolution of the Congress, such as hours of work, insurance against

sickness, unemployment and the like. In order to carry out these premises, the Congress is bound to consider the point of view of the employers in British India, who naturally complain against the disparity of conditions created by a growing code of Labour legislation in British India with practical stagnation in the States. A corollary to this point is the right of implementing international obligations being made a concern of the Federal Government. It is necessary, both in the interests of Labour and of the people in general, that in India's international relations there should only be one voice, speaking authoritatively on behalf of the whole country.

Some of the items in the Congress resolution, such as the control over exchange policy, the drastic curtailment of salaries, the reduction of military expenditure, will need far more careful thought than was bestowed on the draft; but it is stated that the All-India Congress Committee will have the right to revise, amend or add to the resolution. An important question which cannot be left out of account in any Socialistic programme for India is the vexed question of the nationalisation of land and of all natural resources. The principle has already been accepted of State control over Railways, and there is no reason why it should not be extended to all means of transport, including shipping.

Nevertheless, the resolution of the Congress represents the first considered move in the direction of Socialism. So far, the Congress has been representative of all interests and sections. It is but right that with the realities of political power looming on the horizon, the Congress should now convert itself into an organisation standing definitely for a programme of Socialism. Those who are opposed to it will have to organise themselves outside its ranks, and the differences will hereafter be not on questions of the ultimate goal of India, but on a practical programme to be followed from day to day under Self-Government.

UNITY IN ASIATIC LITERATURE *

BY PROF. JOYGOPAL BANNERJEA
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I

 claim on behalf of Asia a fundamental unity, unity in literary activities, which represents the cultural unity of Asia. There is a good deal of misconception with regard to the idea of unity. Unity is not the same thing as homogeneity. Unity presupposes a previous stage of differentiation. As in the progressive growth of humanity evolution tells us that we start in the march of civilisation and culture from the stage of thesis, and then pass into the stage of antithesis before it is possible for us to achieve anything like synthesis, so unity which means the same thing as harmony, presupposes a good deal of differentiation without which no progressive growth is possible for humanity in any department of life. We do not, therefore, claim that there is any such thing as an all Asiatic homogeneity.

There is we admit further a good deal of difference between one part of Asia and another part of Asia, politically and socially, morally, and in religion, but in spite of all these differences, it is possible for a thinking man to discover some elements, by reason of which one may legitimately claim that there is, indeed, such a thing as a fundamental unity in the whole of Asia. Religious, social, even political unity, not to speak of racial or linguistic unity is comparatively difficult to establish over a vast Continent, but literary unity is more feasible and, when achieved, more lasting, because in this realm disruptive influences do not operate with equal vigour or violence. Again literature is an interpretation, an expression of life; and life in its totality seeks to be reflected in the literary activities of a country, however vast. If, therefore, it is possible for us to discover anything like fundamental unity in the like of the whole of

* Substance of a paper read at the recent All-Asia Educational Conference held in Benares in December last year.

II

Asia it follows logically as a corollary that there is bound to be in the literature of Asia also a reflexion of that unity.

There are some elements of unity that it is possible to discover in the literature of Asia. The first thing that strikes me in this literature, as contrasted with the literature of Europe and America, is that our literature seeks to represent that aspect of human life which penetrates through the mere shadow-shows of things into the abiding reality within, which tries to penetrate through the mere outer shell into the kernel within. It is this inner vision which marks her from the rest of the world. Asia has, of course, never forgotten the elementary fact that it is necessary for a man for the purpose of biological existence to master the forces of nature, to harness them into man's service, or better still, to bring about a sort of adjustment if not harmony, between man and nature. Yet nature in Asia, particularly in India, which is the centre of Asia, has been considered to be after all, a mere impermanent shadow-show beyond which, when you lift the veil, you can discover an abiding permanent reality. It is this quest of the changeless which for ever is in the midst of things that pass away,—it is this which forms the central thing in the life of the Asiatics, and it is this which pre-eminently finds its reflexion in the literature of Asia. We in the East, stupidly condemned as immobile, do not worship mere change mistaking it for progress, nor make a fetish of progress either. I do not forget the fact that spiritual life can never be the monopoly of any continent, however vast it may be. I do not forget the fact that you can find in Western literature such spiritual life as they in the West desire, but I cannot say however, with the same force and vigour, as I can do with regard to the literature of Asia, that there are the same 'Significant' characteristics in any of those literature of Asia.

That great critic of to-day, the Italian philosopher—critic Croce, reminds us in his *Aesthetics* that even characteristics do not always sufficiently characterise things and

therefore, it is necessary for us to distinguish between characteristics. To use a common parlance, there are characteristics and characteristics; and unless you are capable of discovering from many of these different kinds of characteristics those characteristics which may be called the most 'significant' you are in vain trying to find out the ultimate principle underlying anything complex. It seems to me that we Asiatics have a right to claim that this deeper vision, this intuitive way of looking at things, is the 'significant' characteristic of Asiatic life reflected in Asiatic literature. I claim further that, as India is certainly the geographical centre of Asia, so from India has been carried to the different parts of Asia the torch of the highest kind of light—as, for example, through the medium of Buddhism, all that is deep in our Vedic literature, or the philosophy of the Upanishads, or the poetry of India as represented in the *Mahabarat* and *Ramayana*, in the plays of Kalidasa, in the beautiful lyrics that we have got in his *Meghaduta* or finally the celebrated poetry of India by the poet of all poets, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. So, whether it is in philosophy, considered as literature, or in poetry considered as literature, we find that the one note by which the centre of the whole of Asia tries to impress the whole Asiatic world is the note of representing to the world through literature this kind of truth namely, the "Akhandā," indivisible, undivided one, a whole. And unless you see that, the whole of your life is a futile effort in the search for reality. This is the reason why some Rishis have told us that goodness is the same as truth, truth is another name for beauty, again for joy, and joy for love—all different faces of one and the same shining light, different types of manifestation of one unity, different names for one reality—Goodness, Truth, Joy, Beauty, Love. This is why in India there was an over emphasis on love as 'ahimsa' from the era of Jaina and Buddhist supremacy to even our own. It is erroneous to trace, for example Mahatma Gandhi's creed even in Indian political life to-day to the influence of Tolstoy or Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, where the hero's character is remodelled on this ideal of spiritual resistance

combined with physical non-violence. Hence Asia never had, like the West, anything like a whole literature of war based on the cult of aggressiveness or aggrandisement, far less of exploitation of weaker groups of men. The *Mahabharat* is not merely an epic of war. The *Ramayana* is based on altogether a highly ethical foundation of the ideal of its hero's character and achievements. The East has always laid greater stress on amity, harmony, and assimilation instead of extirpation, on ideas of national or racial superiority, on mutual co-operation and fellowship than on individualistic competition, on duties more than on privileges, on responsibilities than on rights.

The much-misrepresented and more-reviled Brahmanism organisation was its spiritual leader and guide and the benefactor of the community as a whole but seldom stressed his rights and privileges, self-sacrifice, self-control, and a rigid process of ethical and religious discipline having always been made his guiding principle in life. Our social organisation, so suitable to our environment, had for its real end the ideal of orderly progressiveness through harmony and not conflict of interests and, therefore, undue prominence was never given to militant class-consciousness, which unfortunately is to-day disturbing our peaceful growth on account of the importation into the East of the ideas and conditions of a purely commercial and industrial civilisation of the West. This Eastern social harmony is a reflection of the philosophical ideal of the harmony of truth, beauty, goodness, love and joy. It is only in days of lowered social vitality that our flexible class divisions degenerated into rigid castes, but even then we were free from any disorganising if not devastating, class-war, far less had we anything so horrible and hideous as Western colour prejudice and irrational claim of racial superiority. The East has never known any lawless lynching law, so disgraceful and so abominable. Westerners try to make capital of the Nordic type but I may tell you what I had from my friend, Professor Radhakrishnan, who, while speaking once recently in London on something connected with biological and social factors, told his audience with his brilliant humour that the

Creator in the act of creating men at first underbaked men and women and gave the world the white races, and in his hurry to correct his blunder went next to the other extreme of over-blackening and gave us the Negro races, but, finally, growing wiser through trial by error, struck the golden mean and eventually filled the rest of the earth with the brown races!

The transcendental one is the indescribable one; and constituted as our fragmentary minds are, words fail there and imagery fails there in our attempt to represent the whole in all its aspects. That is the reason why in literature in all countries, but particularly in the East, great writers have taken shelter in parables, myths, legends and through such contrivances, tried to represent that which passeth all common understanding. Thus the literature of Asia was the earliest in having devised means of popular presentation to the huge multitude of her highest realisation of life's meaning in forms calculated to appeal to the imagination of the masses, and capable of giving satisfaction to the emotional side of human nature, more or less in an unsophisticated condition of growth. Though the result of this process is to diversify literary activity by giving it different forms, yet there is, in consequence, no blurring of the fundamental note. This is the one great note by which the whole of Asia is united, and it is the one note by which Asia in her unity stands for ever distinguished from the rest of the world, incapable of being at all confounded in her individuality.

III.

The second note that strikes me is the note of concentration, of condensation. You will at once think of the style used in our 'darshanas' for the purpose of representing the highest kind of truth. We have, therefore, our very condensed, terse 'sutras,' which are not introduced into our literature merely for the purpose of helping the memory. It is true, no doubt, that at the time of the 'sutra' ages men had not the opportunities of printed encyclopaedias as to-day. The 'sutra' literature had to be memorised, but it took that form not for that one purpose.

Western critics of Chinese literature and Chinese painting invariably recognise that concentration is a well-known characteristic of the Sung period of Chinese art. It is this which makes Japanese poetry more suggestive in its style and manner than exhaustively descriptive, and we all know that in Japanese painting fidelity to actual reality is seldom insisted upon, at any rate, in the way it is done in Western realistic literature and art. It is a well-known principle in aesthetics, for instance, that all types of beauty have their corresponding forms. In reality, you can no more separate the length of a thing from its breadth. In mathematics you, no doubt, postulate that there is such a thing as a straight line which has length without breadth. But, after all, it is only a logical abstraction, a postulate. In reality, is it possible for us to separate from any object its length alone, giving the go-by to its breadth, even when we think of only two dimensions? And to-day Einstein tells us that it is not enough to think in three or four dimensions, and in filling in the contents in such cases, this inter-relation will necessarily become more complex. In thought, far more in Art, you cannot separate form from substance. They refuse to be thus sundered or divorced. Wherever there is any ideal of beauty, there is surely a corresponding form connected with it, and he is the right type of an artist who knows spontaneously and naturally what particular form is appropriate to a particular kind of thought or idea to be presented in terms of beauty. This is the reason for instance, why Shakespeare chose for his literary representation of life the dramatic form. The passion in Shelley was indomitable and irresistible and though sometimes raw yet oftener than not etherealised; and it is embodied in a kind of poetry of beautiful short lyrics which sometimes, like so many rockets, suddenly shoot up from the earth into the sky above. You see that you are in the presence of iridescence of the brightest light of etherealised passion, which is also another name for the highest truth. Similarly, in our country, we find in the different ages of literary activities, from the Vedic times down to the present day that poet-artists have naturally been successful in finding

the appropriate type of form for the representation of their specialised thought movement. This special feature of Indian literature and art dominates, more or less, the whole of Asiatic literature giving it a real unity.

IV

There is in Asiatic literary activity, as there is in Asiatic thought and philosophy, an extraordinary 'purity' as contrasted with the West. I challenge any one to find in our Upanishadic literature in Sheik Sadi's works, or in the poetry of the Chinese, anything suggestive of the least indecency, far less anything that is immoral. Dr. Giles generously and with admiration bears testimony to the remarkable and extraordinary purity of Chinese literature, which contains nothing that can give offence to the most sensitive critic in matters of decency and delicacy. Who does not know that the ancient Iranian, or better, Zoroastrian, ideal of purity, both of body and mind was imperative for man in the culture and civilisation of that part of the East? Zoroastrian literature reflects this characteristic far too emphatically for me to emphasise it. This is, again, a note for which we Asiatics stand out before the whole world with our heads aloft in that meekness and humility which becometh the land of Confucius, Zoroaster, the Vedic Rishis,—of Buddha, Shankaracharya, Chaitanya, Tukaram, Nanak, and Dayanand. We always have learnt the lesson of humility and we always have realised the importance of modesty. Our women in the past, particularly of Rajputana, have shown to the whole world with what devotion it was possible for them to become consecrated to the ideal of chastity *i. e.* the highest possible virtue of purity in man or woman. They faced death with smiling faces and with deliberate cool courage. Theirs was not the heroism of the common soldier, the mercenary fighter, who marches to the sound of the beating of the drum for the purpose of bayoneting his enemies. This intense love of purity is largely responsible for Oriental regard and respect for asceticism, reflected particularly in the literature of India and China of which the inner significance is missed by Western critics of

our life and letters. Our literature, before its unwholesome contact with that of Western countries, never stressed what is called the sex-duel. Even to-day we do not find our cultured women-folk fancying the existence of a day when Eve, delved and Adam, span. They are yet free from the antics of the new woman of the West.

V

Let me proceed next to deal with some points of differentiation. There are many books in which we necessarily find mention of Arabic literature, Persian literature, Sanskrit literature,—of Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Canarese, Urdu, Hindi literatures—of Chinese and Japanese literatures. And you have a plausible reason to say that Asiatic literature is the sum total of all these different literatures, and that it is a plurality. But I still stick to my original phrase, the literature of Asia, as distinguished from the literatures of Asia. Different races or peoples inhabiting a vast continent like Asia have no doubt different 'types' of thought, idea, sentiment and emotion. These different 'types,' however, do not destroy the quality of the genus, as all know who have the least knowledge of biology. There may, again, be innumerable types belonging to a single species. The character of the species, however, is not at all destroyed by the fact that it contains innumerable individual types, any more than the character of the genus is effected by the fact that it comprises within its limits innumerable species. On the contrary, such varieties lend force to the fundamental idea that the species is there in spite of individuals and that the genus is there in spite of the species. I look upon the literature of Arabia, of Persia and of India, of China and Japan, as representing various aspects of one and the same unity, of which I have indicated the significant characteristics. Taking first of all the case of India, Indian literature may be distinguished from Persian literature, or from Arabic literature, or from Chinese literature, or from the literature of Japan in one or two particular ways. In India there has always been the supremacy of the spirit over the flesh, and in this supremacy the ethical note has not always been "sufficiently" emphasised except

in one period, namely, in the literature of the Buddhistic period. In other words, we in India have not given the same amount of emphasis and stress on the ethical aspects of life in our literature except in the Buddhistic period. We have not similarly stressed, to the same extent as the Muhammadans have done, the idea of the unity of God as represented in our literature except when in the Upanishadic stage philosophical speculation soared high into the realm the One. We are essentially as much monotheistic as any country in the world. But I must confess that our monotheism has become, if not eclipsed, considerably overclouded in the Puranic period. Consequently, the masses do not realise as thoroughly this conception of one God as you find, for example, in the case of the Muhammadans, or even some sects of the Christians. This is entirely due to the fact that at a later period in the history of the literature of India, the desire was to reach a lower and lower level of intellectual appreciation so that the masses might never be completely neglected. We find, again, for instance, in the Persian literature from the 6th to the 11th century, in the Sufi writers particularly, the presentation of the One, not however through the medium of thought but through the medium of emotion. This is a mystic note, and Persia shares it with India. The essence of mysticism lies in personal realisation of a communion between the individual and the universal through the medium not of reflexion but through an emotional merging of the individual into the universal *chaitanya*. It is in a way the emotional exaltation of the whole self of man. It is exaltation, not merely of one part of man; it does not dismiss the intellect altogether, but it is the assimilation of the intellect into the emotional side of man's existence, which enables, for example, Vaishnavism to represent the highest conception of reality in and through feeling alone. That is also the reason why music was made to play such an important part in this new kind of presentation of the ancient idea of unity between man and God. Later on, this Vaishnavism in the hands of the great Bengali poets took a new form,—the form, namely, of adding on to this communion between the

living soul of the individual man and the source of all eternal love, God, a new conception of beauty, which is decidedly different from the Westerner's sensuous appreciation of beauty in woman. In other words, aesthetics began to be added to philosophical emotionalism, and far richer became the contents of literature, because literature is always bound to be the highest expression of life in its totality as life keeps pace with a progressively changing environment. Those who have any knowledge of Saadi or Hafiz, especially of Jalaluddin Rumi in the original, may be able to speak with regard to this particular aspect of the literature of Persia; but even through the medium of translations it becomes possible for us to realise this new way of presenting beauty and love in and through poetry, as we find particularly done in one epoch of the literature of Persia or of India and of China.

Turning towards Japan we find another thing added on to that, namely, the beauty of nature, the beauty of landscape. This element is not wanting in Arabic, Persian or Indian poetry, but in these it is not a 'significant' characteristic, whereas it is a notably significant characteristic of Japanese art and literature. It is the suggestiveness of Japanese literature and art which is a marked feature of the history and the development of art as well as of the philosophy of thought in that far-eastern Nippon which means the land of the rising sun.

Yea, we Asiatics are men belonging to the land of the rising sun, of that Orient which has given to the world a Confucius, a Buddha, a Chaitanya, a Zoroaster, a Mahomed, nay to Christendom its Christ. Whoever has heard of the rising of the sun in the west? If light ever shines first, it does in the east. Let us hope that in the fulness of God's time and when the right moment does arrive, Indian civilisation and Indian culture, forming the core of an Asian civilisation and All-Asian culture, will not only form the most important element for progressive humanity but also be capable also of giving guidance to the progressive march of humanity through the rich legacy left to us as literature by our great sages and seers.

176589.



ON NOTHING

BY SHRIMATI K. SAVITRI

I sat the other day to write something for the *Scholar*. When I say this you would probably think that writing is as easy and natural to me as breathing is to all living beings on earth. As if I have merely to snatch the pen into my hands, and go on straight filling the sheets with matter of any interest and never stint either for thought or for language! A mechanical process is that, with neither the sweet excitement of having gone in for the proper ideas and expressions and found them, nor the painful and humiliating consciousness of having produced scarcely anything after hours of mental labour. It is only people like A. G. Gardiner who could say something on anything, and that the very best things too. He does not strike you as entering the vast field with a good plough-share and a pair of robust arms and legs. On the contrary he seems to trip in gaily with the least consciousness of the work, and there the fields smile around him clothed in the most pleasing verdure.

Give Mr. Gardiner the trivialest subject in the world on which you can say nothing clear or interesting any more than you can form a definite conclusion on the most abstract of human problems, and he will present it in the best felicitous way imaginable. He comes out with whatever goes into his head in that cheerful and light vein of his, rather than take literature seriously and pour forth great, heavy thoughts for the benefit of an enlightened public. His genial expressions and delightful humour tickle you out of your gloomy mood, and you cannot help enjoying the clever turn given to mere airy nothing. Yet there are his observations too, whose profoundness strikes you not a little, throwing you into an admiring silence for the true depth and validity of his remarks.

Mr. Gardiner indeed loves the freshest way of telling things; for he will not look at anything in the good old manner as we all do. If you can give the correctest and

intelligible ideas on tidiness, he will highly divert you with his quaint and delightful views on "Being Untidy".

But to revert to my subject—I sat down to write. It was my first attempt—a thing I have cherished in my dreams and hardly ever hoped to see it an accomplished fact in real life. But then I must own, I had not wanted either the fine atmosphere so favourable to my ambitions, or those inspiring moods which could carry me to the distant fairy realms of imagination, and there instal me in the blessed vein of a litterateur. I used often to forget myself of an evening with the true fit upon me that was so promising. But the smiling sunny clouds, amidst which I sailed on airy wings, would suddenly break away from me, leaving me dull and cold in the dreary void around. Then I discover to my great mortification that the most tangible ideas I have secured could hardly bear a definite relation to any subject under heaven. My thoughts, as diffusive and desultory as can be, get utterly shapeless by the time my blessed mood forsakes me and I am left staring at the blank sheet of paper before me. I sigh with despair and envy as I think of the marvellous facility with which hundreds of pages are written, engaging and enlivening the mind at all hours. By the side of those clear brains and rich imaginations, the extreme poverty of my own fills me with the heartiest contempt for myself.

But—I rather fear my readers yawn over the flat page somewhat wondering at the development of such a beginning. "Surely, my dear madam," they may ask, "you have written something, have you not? All your reflections are quite noteworthy no doubt. But let us have the article by all means before you acquaint us irrelevantly with your literary experiences. Out with it soon, and let there be no more digressions."

I find a mistake here, which however makes me hang down my head in shame. If, by stating that I sat down to write, I have given an impression that I have actually achieved anything, I clearly owe an apology to my readers for imposing on them and appropriating their indulgence for a few precious moments.

GHOSTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

BY K. KRISHNAMURTI

SOME people have a weakness for ghost stories," said Mr. Higgins. "And it is the perpetual task of the Press to supply them with mystical sensations. Who but a bally ass can believe such rubbish, pooh."

"If there are people foolish enough to 'hear' and 'see' spooks, you can't help believing them," said Ram Das, stretching himself drowsily.

"They say 'Truth is stranger than fiction'," said Mr. Higgins vaguely. "Perhaps that is what attracts 'em. I don't know when it was that I got my last yarn," he added, regretfully.

"Yes. Life's unduly hard on some of us. I suppose it won't do to manufacture one?" asked Das sympathetically.

Mr. Higgins was horrified.

"Manufacture! My dear fellow, and if somebody got wind of the fact, what would happen? The *Loud Speaker* would be ruined. Never," stated the Englishman warmly.

"All right, Mr. Higgins. You needn't feel so shocked. I was only making a suggestion. Ghosts do not come and go at our command. Therefore you may get the ghost idea off your chest for ever."

"Even if I had no news at all, I would prefer keeping to the truth. In these matters, young man, you can't be too careful."

"Just so," agreed Das. And straightway, he took leave of the good-natured Editor of the *Loud Speaker*.

* * * * *

Rao Bahadur Sir Sambasiva Chettiar was a big man—in more senses than one. His palatial bungalow in Saidapet had special 'over-size' doors. And if he wanted a seat on a bus, all the seated but two had to be removed from

GHOSTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY 429

that particular row. Once he had ridden the same seat as three others. At the end of fifteen minutes, two of the three (they were elderly) had fainted. The conscious one, who was also the mildest of the trio, had threatened to prosecute him for "voluntarily causing grievous hurt." (It might be said in parenthesis, that the gentleman was a lawyer). Yet this fifteen-stone giant had a big heart as well. He loved babies and cats, and read Edgar Wallace every other day.

One fine morning in May, found an army of reporters outside his grounds, all of whom had to be contented with what meagre information was obtained from a vigilant gatekeeper, who kept strictly to his motto: "Silence is golden." The Police Inspector was inside, and admission was politely but firmly denied to the representatives of the Press.

A certain young man, who rejoiced under the nickname, 'The Cat Sage', by reason of his cat-like expression, saw the dejected reporters quitting one by one. He came forward briskly to the gates and showed into the indignant porter's face, apparently oblivious of the latter's loud protests.

"Look here, you fool, it's an urgent matter. See this card? I come from Mr. Higgins. I want to fix an appointment with your master. So let me in." There is magic in a white man's name, and Das was inside within the minute.

The card bore the name and modest address which Mr. William Higgins enjoyed in private life. It had been unwittingly supplied by that gentleman, who never knew that Das had relieved his pocket of two or three of these. Ram Das was a firm believer in that excellent watchword: "You never know when a thing might come in handy."

"A thoroughly detestable fellow," remarked a jealous pressman, as soon as Das was out of earshot.

"And he called me fool," muttered the porter, bitterly.

Once inside, Das was all optimism. Already he seemed to fancy a big "scoop"—"Burglary solved by Brilliant journalist." He strode along at express speed, looking neither to the right nor to the left. "And whither may you

be going, my friend?" said a soft voice near him. Das started, looked round, and smiled awkwardly at a gentle old man, who was regarding him with a quizzical expression.

"I was just going to see Mr. Chettiar about last night's burglary," he stammered.

The tall, thin, grey-haired man, in the plain suit shook his finger at Das in mock anger. "Press not admitted, mind you," but his benevolent smile gave the lie to his words. "Now, you seem to be a pretty shrewd fellow, for you have managed to pass our porter, eh?" He added: "I've a soft heart and I know it. For once, I shall disobey my employer. By the way, I am Mr. Chettiar's secretary. You may accompany me."

The 'Cat Sage' put on his best smile and asked: "May I trespass upon your kindness so far as to request you to give me some details?"

The other replied: "Well, just what I expected. You may. Last night at about one in the morning, I went out of my bed-room to sleep next to Mr. Chettiar's study to get a cup of hot water. I had a touch of fever," he explained. "Then it was that I saw a light in the study for a second and ran up. To put it short, the burglars bolted. I ran out after them, after giving the alarm, and pursued them. They were active young men, and I—" he paused and looked down upon his flabby arms and weak legs. "At the far end of the grounds they scaled the wall and got away. I came back to find the servants rushing about with several lanterns. And I found that a pearl necklace, costing something like 5000 rupees, had been stolen. A few minutes later, some of the servants were sent down on the off-chance that they had dropped it in their hurry. I went to get my hot water. It seems that the search-party saw a man (with a black mask over his face) prowling about the grounds and, at the sight of them, he ran away. That's all there is to tell."

Das was very interested, but by this time they had come up the house—a big three-storied building.

* * * *

An hour later, Das took leave of his kind friend and departed. When he had turned a sharp bend down the long drive, he cautiously turned back. Dropping on hands and knees, he went into the grass and circled back to the rear of the grounds which way the burglars had escaped the night before.

On the clear ground close to the wall, a few foot prints were to be seen. The boots of the Police Inspector, too, had left their mark, though less clearly. A little farther from the wall there were clumps of dwarf bushes. Suddenly Das's foot struck a small stout pole and he stumbled—fell. Angrily, he grasped the offender, plucked it and threw it away. And in the vertical slit thus revealed, reposed a dull pearl necklace. Stupidly, Das put it into his pocket and went out.

* * * *

It was nearing midnight. Sir Sambasiva Chettiar's grounds, especially the back portion, were in pitch darkness. The moon, very young as yet, was steeped among dark clouds. The whole place was still as death. The only sign of human habitation was a dim light or two burning steadily in the sleeping building, a hundred yards away. A slight figure knelt near the wall, crouching behind a tall bush. In its right hand, a small gun; its left was hidden under a dark sack-like cloth spread over the bush.

The watcher suddenly heard soft padded steps approaching. A few seconds later, a tall dark figure stood silhouetted against the lighter background of the building, a dozen feet away from him. His right hand rose, levelled itself at the figure and thumb curled on the trigger. Sh-sh-sh! Click! The blinding flash of magnesium, the click of a photographic shutter.

Before the petrified figure in black gown and mask could move, two police constables appeared from nowhere in particular and secured him. Ram Das, journalist, press photographer, and sometime crime specialist, rushed on him. Das pulled off his mask and flashed a torch on his face. "I see," said he as he looked up at the blinking Secretary.

His captive had lost his benevolent smile of old and snarled at Das.

* * * *

Later.

Said Das to Sir Sambasivan:

"The story of the burglars and all that was a pleasant fiction, invented for your special benefit. Your Secretary is an old hand at the game, and pearls are easy to dispose of. He was biding his time, all these months. Yesterday, he feigned an attack of fever. At night, he quietly burgled the safe and then dramatically gave a false alarm and started off in quest of the imaginary quarry. He was too confident in his own ability to have returned when he could have got away. He had prepared footprints on the wet soil (for it was a rainy evening) and prints were necessary to make his story credible. The absence of dirty footmarks on the top of the wall, (for they 'scaled' the wall) roused my suspicions. For, there have been no rains since, which could have washed them away. And when our friend went for his 'hot water', he was really putting on a mask and showing himself out in the grounds, as one of the 'burglars.' He had hidden the pearls in a hole and planted a pole over it. So that even if his room was searched, it would be safe. There I found it. To-night I knew he'd come to remove it to some safer place and lay in wait for him. And here's my bird." Without waiting for the knight's thanks he went away into the night.

* * * *

Next morning, Das laid a fat manuscript and a photo on Mr. Higgins' desk. The latter took up the photograph and Das said:

"Here's a ghost for you. A real live ghost which can be photographed."

"Why, it looks human," exclaimed the startled Editor.

"It is human," said Das grimly.

When the European unfolded the MS there it was: "A GHOST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY".

MEN I HAVE KNOWN

IV

Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathi

BY N. S. SRINIVASA AIYER, *Advocate*

[The next to be dealt with in this series will be
Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.]



OWARDS the end of July 1929 a score of manuscripts were placed in my hands with a peremptory mandate to deal with them within twenty-four hours. Mechanically I read one after another until my interest was roused by a particularly badly typed article. It was a copy of an address delivered at a students' gathering a week previous, at Kandy in Ceylon. The entire speech was an uncompromising indictment of our social and political conditions. It questioned the very foundations, the fundamental bases of the existing structure, and called on the youth of the land to make a clean sweep of it and obliterate the ancient landmarks. The promised land was to be reached, not by a weary, prolonged, journey with halts and stages, but by a quick, strident, single march. A note of naive self-assurance, and sincerity ran through the whole speech. The speaker's sentiments may be wrong, but there was little doubt that she was deadly in earnest. I was reminded of the youthful David going out to fight the Philistines and finish them in a single combat. The person who had delivered this message to the young men of Ceylon was Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathi, head of a youth organisation at Madras, and a graduate of the Madras University.

Personal acquaintance, however, gave an impression somewhat different from the stern, austere note indicated by the speech. While firm in her convictions, Mrs. Rukmani is no fanatic, obsessed by single ideas, impervious to other aspects of life, brooding over the wrongs of her country and

her sex. She does not belong to the aggressive type of emancipated womanhood, self-conscious of new-found freedom, defiant in the enjoyment of it. A homely woman, she prefers the quiet domestic hearth to the hectic life of parties and functions. But where public duties are involved, no sacrifice is too great for her to incur, no inconvenience too serious to be surmounted. She goes through her work with patience, serenity and unruffled calm and gets over difficult situations with tact and understanding.

It is undeniable that a sense of alarm had spread over portions of the country regarding the privileges granted to women. When, one after another the barriers of sex exclusiveness were removed, persons were not wanting to announce the crack of Doom at no distant moment. But at every turn women have justified themselves and left jeremiahs in the company of their dismal reflections. In India the victories of women have been of a rapid, decisive character. Where Englishwomen secured the right to vote after a bitter, prolonged contest involving considerable sacrifice and suffering, here the privilege was conferred almost as a matter of course. Four years before a woman was summoned to be a member of a Cabinet in England, an Indian lady had filled with distinction the Presidential Chair of the Indian National Congress. But prejudices are strong and die hard; and the idea of women undergoing courses of higher education and participating in public life has taken time to be even tolerated. Especially has the objection been raised that the ideals of Indian womanhood, enshrined in culture, poetry and tradition, will go into the melting pot while the intrusion of the new evangel of sex-equality will destroy the purity of our homes. Mrs. Rukmani is a standing refutation of these apprehensions, and she has shown that the new movement could evolve a synthesis, wherein all that has been permanent and abiding in the past blends itself in harmony with the most advanced ideals of the present day.

She has not been in public life long, but her record of work is thorough and above reproach, while as regards the future it can safely be predicted she will be a key-note. She

equipped herself for her task by study and wide-spread travel before she decided to participate in it. As Captain of the women volunteers at the Madras Congress of 1927, she played an useful role. She is one of the Secretaries of the International Fellowship and President of the Madras Youth League. The latter office is rather a trying one, but she is fully equal to it. She was summoned to the Presidential Chair of the Indian Women's Conference held at Lahore in 1929, while the University of Mysore has availed itself of her services regarding proposals and lectures for the advancement of women's education. In 1930 when the call of Gandhi came she responded to it immediately and plunged straight into the political fight.

Vedaranyam is a small sea-coast town in the district of Tanjore, where the Government prepare salt on a wide-spread scale. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari resolved that this should be the centre, wherein the movement of civil disobedience should be carried out. Starting from Trichinopoly, he, with a band of a hundred volunteers decided to march towards it. But prior to his arrival the ground had to be prepared, and thither Mrs. Rukmani, then elected as a member of the Working Committee of the Tamil Nadu Organisation, went at once. At the head of an able band of workers, she preached in and around that desolate region the message of Satyagraha. Every village was visited, official opposition surmounted and courage infused into the minds of the rustic inhabitants. By sheer pertinacity and industry she got over the difficulties of language and created a marvellous awakening. I happened to be present at one of the meetings she addressed. The effect was remarkable and instantaneous. The progress of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari was a triumph from day to day, and after he had been arrested and sentenced, Mrs. Rukmani continued the campaign with unremitting vigour. The local officials found themselves unable to stem the tide of popular enthusiasm and clamoured for her arrest. No action could, however, be taken as the embargo on the arrest of women had not been removed. When at last the ban was lifted and orders received she was immediately

marched to the Deputy Magistrate's Court and, after a trial of ten minutes' duration, awarded a sentence of one year. She was the first woman in India, in the course of the campaign to be sentenced, and when she was placed behind prison bars in Vellore, officialdom heaved a sigh of relief, while she herself fully appreciated the honour that was bestowed upon her.

But her task is not over; nor is an illustrious place in the hagiology of martyrs her sole claim to the gratitude of the country. Only one stage of the journey is over; there are others, perhaps, more difficult to traverse. Beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death lie the mountains of Beulah with their promise of eternal life. When the call comes again and her inner voice counsels her to respond to it, I have no doubt that Mrs. Rukmani will again be to the fore and lead the hosts to the steps of victory.

* * * * *

Perhaps, the impatient reader may ask how a sketch of Mrs. Rukmani Ammal is permissible in a series dealing with "Men I have known". To this I may point out that there is a rule of law, whereby all words referring to the masculine gender include women also and that this rule is *mutatis mutandis* applicable to other spheres as well.

In all the procession of centuries gone by not one was for humanity. From the very first tyranny has flourished, freedom has failed; the few have ruled, the many have served: the parasite has worn the purple of power, while honest industry has lived in poverty and died in despair. But the eternal years, the centuries yet to come, are for humanity, and out of the misery of the past will rise the civilisation of the future.

—E. V. Debs.

FROM THE WORLD'S TABLOID

BY A GALLOPPING GOSSIPER

Amazing revelations about the existence of commercialised slave Market and Trade—more sensational than the disclosures of Lady Simon a year ago—are made by Edden

Slavery in Mecca. Rutter, the only living Englishman to penetrate into the forbidden city of Holy Mecca and study at close quarters the conditions of slave traffic in Arabia. It is surprising and incredible to find that there still exists, in this

our twentieth century, a lucrative slave market, where slaves, both male and female, are displayed for sale on benches, like goods in a shop window. In the course of an interesting contribution to *Titbits*, Rutter states how he stayed in Mecca for almost a year, disguised as a Moslem pilgrim, studying at first hand the slave market there, which he terms as the strangest of all market places. In a narrow lane close to the Great Mosque, the market is situated, and there in the morning and afternoon, the slaves sit on long benches of stone, awaiting purchasers. The slaves are of all ages from nine to fifty, of both sexes, mostly Africans and the writer tells us that their prices varied according to youth, beauty, and efficiency in household duties. The slaves after purchase, become settled, sometimes for generations, in their masters' homes, where they are treated, on the whole, with kindness and generosity. They are employed as domestic servants, door-keepers, water-carriers, and grooms, and the stronger ones are made to plough and work at agriculture in the oases. The female slaves, when young, are invariably taken as concubines by their masters, and curiously, the child of the slave woman by the free man is not a slave but is born into freedom. In a household where several male and female slaves live, the master arranges marriages for them, in which case the children of their union become also slaves. The slaves work cheerfully under Mahomedan masters who

treat them generously, giving them the same food they themselves take and clothing them adequately. ~~With the~~ rise of the Progress Party in Constantinople, the Turks tried to abolish slavery in the Hedjaz, but they were unable to prevail against the opposition of the Sheriff of Mecca, the real ruler there with the result that slave trade goes on still today on a large scale. In the light of the strict injunctions in the *Quoran*, which forbid all slavery and enjoin on every true Moslem the duty of emancipating slaves, it is difficult to reconcile the fanatical opposition of Mecca to the abolition of slavery. It constitutes the darkest blot on contemporary civilisation and the sooner international opinion asserts itself to abolish and end it, the better.

Ever since the Armistice, after the 'War to end all wars,' world opinion has been steadily gathering force, toward the common objective of prevention of war and stabilisation of Peace, while international statesmen

How They have never been tired of repeating *ad nauseum*
Disarm the high sounding slogan of Disarmament, in the Press and on the Platform. In spite of conferences on Disarmament and Naval limitations, the solution is not nearer in sight and the problem remains where it stood ten years ago. A study of the statistics relating to the strength of world armaments and their expenditure, throws a lurid light on the situation today, and it is really illuminating to study the budget figures on Armaments of the several leading Powers of the West, in the light of the pious professions of statesmen who control their destinies. The statistics tell us facts and show clearly the wide gulf that lies between action and profession. Taking Great Britain, we find, that the expenditure on defence in 1913-14, during the year the War began, amounted to £77,098,723, while in 1930, twelve years after the armistice, the expenditure amounts to £110,764,200. During the six years, 1923-28, we find fifty seven million sterling worth of arms and amunitions exported from the arms manufacturing countries of the world and Great Britain happens to be, by far, the largest exporter. Italian exports have increased during the period from £120,000 in 1923 to £700,000 in 1928. These facts, more eloquent than anything, give us a different and, at the same time, a more reliable story altogether.

BOOK REVIEWS

Religion & Culture by T. L. Vaswani. Ganesh & Co., Madras.

This charming and well printed pocket book of a hundred pages embodies the full text of the thesis the author wrote as President of the Indian Culture Conference held on the occasion of the anniversary of the Gurukul Kangri in 1930. Acharya Vaswani with his characteristic lucidity and terseness of language points out that religion and culture understood in their essence are not rivals. Religion is that which offers us release from our cramping and often oppressive environment. It ought not to be confounded with customs, rituals, myths, legends, belief, institutions, or organisations, which have offered resistance to Truth. Diverse religions are not really isolated but are branches of the one Tree of life whose roots are in God. The author goes on to explain what is meant by Culture. Though the term was given to us by Bacon and though many western savants had understood the real import of the same, for a true philosophy of culture, we must go from Bacon to Krishna and Buddha, and the Rishis of humanity like Yagnavalkya and Kapila, Sankara and Nagrunj, Averroes and Al Ghazel, Kant and Goethe. Culture must not be confounded with Scholarship, nor specialisation, nor criticism nor the reading of European classics. A man of true culture is a man of inner liberation, a man of the free mind.

With a catholic perception the Acharya evaluates the influence of everyone of the living religions on Indian Culture and wonders why we may not regard the world's religions as Gates to the One Temple of the Spirit and why they cannot come together in the service of humanity. The author compares the different stages of vitality and decadence in the history of Hindu Culture to the four seasons of nature.

Incidentally the author bewails at the attitude of Soviet Russia towards religion and the blind echoing of that view by many young men in India. The dangers facing the world's civilisation by machines almost displacing mankind, and by the development of aggressive nationalism and imperialistic ethics of the "Whiteman's burden" are also discussed.

Sandford and Merton by Thomas Day. (Abridged and Retold) Published by B. G. Paul & Co., Madras. Price Ten Annas.

We make no apology for quoting the following from the Editor's preface to this nice little book. "It is an old boy's classic, one of the very few books that are frankly didactic.

Times and ideals and methods change, but there does not seem to be any likelihood of a change in the primary needs of humanity. So long as we value simplicity, honesty, manliness, self-reliance and goodness—qualities that let us hope shall always be in demand—and so long as we think that character-building is as much a necessity of education as any other part of its work, so long do we feel sure that such books, as Sandford and Merton, shall find a secure place in every school. For it is an aid to the teacher in his most important task and a narrative of interest to boys and girls." We fully endorse these remarks. The Editor of this abridged edition has retold the story in simple and idiomatic language. We can boldly recommend this book for Non-detailed study for students of Secondary Schools.

Kusumanjali (കുസുമാഞ്ജലി) by **Vidwan Sankaran Ezhuthachan**,
Board High School, Mannarghat. Price Annas 8

As its title indicates this is a collection of small poems, most of them in Dravida metres, composed by the author from time to time and published in various Malayalam journals. Sriman Ezhuthachan is not new to Malayalam Readers. This young poet evidently belongs to the New School of Malayalam poetry and as the Ullur Mahakavi himself remarks, is well acquainted with its technique. He is at home, whatever he is at, whether in the description of nature, or delineation of character or in the singing of devotional songs or telling of stories in verse. The pieces collected here exhibit fine poetical taste. They also are examples to show Sriman Ezhuthachan's mastery of chaste and faultless diction. We have no doubt that the author has a bright literary future before him.

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Copies can be had of the author: C. S. Venkataraman, Science Assistant, Kumaranellur, Ponani Taluk.

NOTES

The two days' session of the Indian National Congress, which met during the last week of March at Karachi, was remarkable in many respects. The proceedings were most business-like: the Presidential address of **The Karachi** Sirdar Vallabhai Patel permeated as it was **Congress** with shrewd commonsense and practical idealism, was the shortest ever delivered from the Congress platform: long-winded speeches were comparatively fewer than in previous sessions, indicating a welcome economy in the use of words, lungs and time. The desire to smoothen matters, and not hinder the progress and evolving of a permanent peace if possible, was evident throughout, and this averted the storm that was apprehended on account of the open disaffection of the left-wingers in the Congress, as represented by the youth of the country, fanned into a flame as it had been by the Lahore executions on the very eve of the session and against the prayers of a united nation. They saw clearly the evil consequences of splitting the Congress at this juncture and so playing into the hands of those who did not desire the constitutional development of the country and with a toleration and restraint most commendable desisted from weakening in any way Gandhiji's hands in efforts to secure the consummation which all alike desired.

Thus the Congress session has ended in a triumph for Gandhiji; and the resolution which enforces the Gandhi—Irwin Pact formally makes him the Nation's plene potentiary to the second Round Table Conference which he has all along been virtually. Certainly no better selection could have been made because no one but he can claim to speak for the masses of India and the educated classes as well. But though he has a greater following than any other person in India, he is not and would not be satisfied until he manages to secure the support of the entire body of his Muslim countrymen

(there are already several owing allegiance to him) ; towards this end he is trying to ~~compose~~ the differences between the Hindus and Muslims, and other minorities. Let us all wish God-speed to his efforts and hope that the success that attended him at the Congress may follow him here also.

Among the resolutions passed at the Congress is one which has given rise to a certain amount of alarm and hostile criticism. When Congress leaders refused to define at length what they meant by Swaraj, they

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For ourselves we do not feel nervous about the frankly Socialistic trend of the declaration. For we realise that there are doctrines more radical and dangerous than those of Socialism, of whose intrusion into this country we have had definite indications, from which we would be glad to know we are safe, if only we pay the price in the form of a moderated socialism. Like every other country in the world, we also cannot escape being affected by the changing times and if we have to move with the times, it is better we do so consciously and voluntarily than that we should be driven to do it by upheavals and revolutions which cause needless loss and suffering. An article on this subject, as seen by a leader of the Indian workers, appears elsewhere in this issue.

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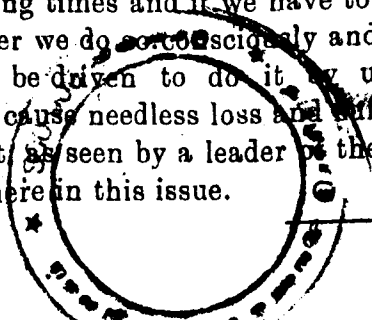
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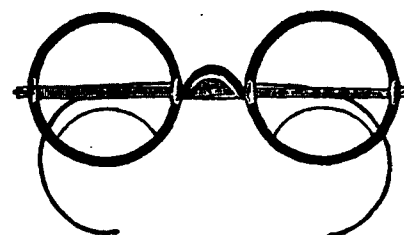
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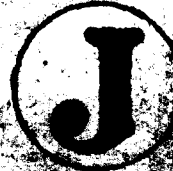
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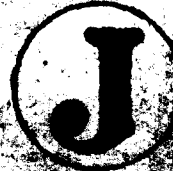
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