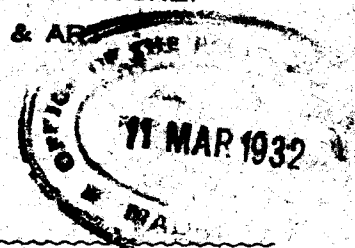


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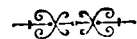
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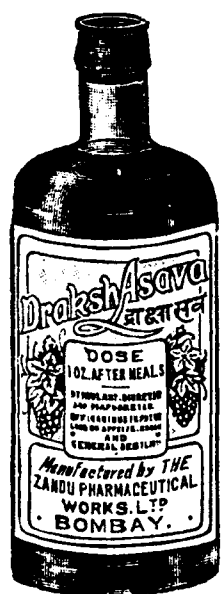
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VOL. VII

FEBRUARY

No. 5

The Bolshevic Adventure.

I

Russian Communism.

By N. Mahadeva Iyer, M. A., L. T., D. Econ.



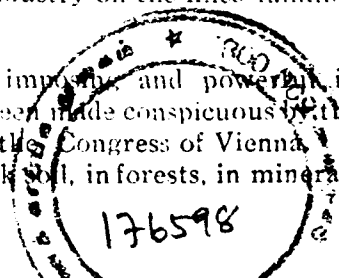
THE commencement of the nineteenth century saw Russia as a vast undeveloped conglomerate Empire, with a Government modelled on the principles of oriental despotism, and a people conservative and non-European, and largely incapable of assimilating occidental ideals. But as a heavy contrast to this primitive polity, there stood in 1914 a national monarchy, surrounded by an Imperial Duma and provincial Zemstvos, and wielding an Empire full of actual and latent culture, ready to take a prominent rank among the great Powers of the world. This wonderful shift of view is in part an explanation of the gradual progress that the Government, social and economic institutions of Russian lands had attained in the latter half of the last century. An appreciation of the extent and character of this wonderful change would indeed facilitate the study of the great possibilities of the present democratic workman's communism or Bolshevic adventure in Russia.

To begin with, prior to the eleventh century, the Slavic folk had concentrated in walled towns, and their typical form of

political unit was the fortified trading city, presided over by a local chieftain. They still retained nomadic freaks and engaged themselves principally in the primitive art of merchandise in commodities, such as could easily be gathered from the neighbouring forests for wax and honey. The incursions of the Tartars turned the Slavic population in the twelfth century, perforce, towards the permanent habitations on the Upper Volga and its tributaries. In the middle of the fifteenth century systematic exploitation of the heavy clay soils of the regions of Moscow by means of free peasant labour was carried out under the princes of the appanages of the Upper Volga. The primitive trading classes were impoverished, and economic necessity threw them more and more into agriculture. During the great agrarian age, several petty principalities endeavoured to combine into federations under the leadership of Moscow in the Russian State. The last vestiges of Tartar political domination were cast aside and the economic development of the black soil regions synchronised with the ascendancy of the Tsar, of boyar military class. This political revolution encroached upon the freedom of the peasant, and paved the way for the consolidation of large domains, and for the medieval communism in all its feudal manifestations. The fundamental outlook of Russian land tenure, as well as the essentials of serfdom, were immediately brought into widespread operation. The gradual subjection to land bondage was accomplished long before the seventeenth century, when the Romanov dynasty worked its way to the rank of an European power. The authority of the Russian potentate was extended over the vast Russian plains, and the widely scattered elements of Slavic nationality were unified and strengthened, but the economic and political status of the free peasant was undermined by the reduction of the great majority of them to the condition of serfs of the State or of the individual. From the middle of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of the World War, Russian monarchy passed through a stage of incipient political liberations of growing discontent, and recurring crises, of revolution and of intermittent reform. It was illuminated by the large-scale exploitation of the mineral forests and agricultural resources of Siberia, and by the formal emancipation of the bonded proletariat or the Russian helots, and finally by the importation of foreign capital to be employed to transform the conditions of her industry on the lines familiar in western lands.

The Empire had become very important and powerful in European politics, and this fact had been made conspicuous by the ascendancy of Russian diplomacy at the Congress of Vienna. It was rich in natural resources, in black soil, in forests, in minerals

and in rivers suitable to facilitate water transport. Over two thirds of her extensive plains climate imposed no limitations upon settlement and productive enterprise. With an area of two million square miles, filled with fifty millions of population, the Empire was organically knit together by common religion, language, and tradition. But this wealth of resources and external prestige were unluckily offset by adverse political and social environment that had been established by centuries of conservatism. The administration had assumed the form, in theory and practice, of an unconditional dictatorship, while both agriculture and industry had not emerged out of the primitive simplicity of the nomadic tribes. Russian economic development in modern times really takes its origin from her agrarian system which shaped her land tenure and the consequent cleavage of classes, especially of the Mir. The capital feature concerning Russian population was that the intelligent bourgeoisie never existed anywhere in the Empires until quite recent times. Full nine tenths of the arable land was owned by the crown, the royal princes and the nobility. It was held in ownership, in large estates and cultivated by the peasants who were down-trodden slaves attached to the soil, with no hope of extricating themselves out of this fated condition. The great estates were divided in two, one of which was reserved for the immediate use of the lord, the other being allotted to the families of serfs. The latter lived in small village communities known as Mirs, and each village regulated the cultivation of the land assigned to its inhabitants, paying the landlord a stipulated amount as a collective obligation of the village group. The serfs were not granted any proprietary rights in the soil, and were subject to the operation of the corvée, which demanded them to work in the demesne lands. The nobleman wielded powers of discipline and punishment, which nominally determined by statute, were practically unlimited. The serf was nothing better than a chattel, capable of being sold and purchased, as part of the soil, in public auction at the great land-market of the Empire. So stood the Russian peasant, toiling ceaselessly beyond all prudential motives to solve his economic thralldom.



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(Concluded from our last issue.)

Ibsen:—Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian dramatist—'poet of doubt' takes up the problem of self-realisation in his *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*. The hero of the former is Pastor Brand, a young Norwegian clergyman, devoted wholly to the service of God, who imitates Christ in every possible way for truth realisation. As he was a man of no half measures or compromises, he scorned witheringly Sunday religion and made no terms with its followers who did not give their all to God. He that loves anything else more than God is not worthy of Him. On his way to give the pastor's assurance of pardon to a dying soul, he was helped to cross the raging sea by a woman, Agnes, whom he married. She became a help-mate, friend and follower all in one in his life. Then comes his trial. His covetous mother, who scraped money all her life, did not give her all for others in her death-bed. So he did not administer the sacrament of forgiveness to his dying mother. Their only baby upon whom they bestowed their wealth of affection became pale, waned and slowly ebbed away. The baby's death shocked their home, specially it twisted and broke the mother's heart, of which she died. Then he erected one church with his mother's wealth to preach a religion of living sacrifice, but had to part with it. He was finally deserted, stoned and cursed by all his followers. At last a massed bank of snow avalanche buried him dead on a mountain. Ibsen tried in his *Brand* to know if human will weighs a grain in the scale of salvation. *Brand* vividly pictures the conflict of protesting, enduring and suffering individual will with the world-will or Faith—the fight of principle with experience, suavity and opportunism in moral and religious lives. The lesson of *Brand* is: Be true to thyself, that way lies your salvation. Freedom of thought and speech is worth dying for. That is what the 'salts of the earth' actually did, though their own age stoned them. And after generations garnished their tomb. "Don't temporise, for compromise is Devil's breath, and tends to bring insincerity and selfishness, but beware of the futile fanatic extremes," for that is the cover of egoistic will and power which can only be moderated by the light of love which is God. Men must have the courage of their own convictions instead of keeping up appearances. This, of course, may bring strife and struggle, but they are the inevitable conditions of progress both in life and society, for their prevention from sinking into spiritual degeneration. But in

practical life, both daily and communal, we have to take them where they stand and "thence give them a lift". That means, of course, palliation with evil and imperfection. But the life of man and society is an evident compromise—a process of continual adaptation and re-adjustment of inner strength to outer forces. And in order to win the kingdom of heaven, we must be like the children of simplicity, sincerity and love and enter into the "Church of Life with green earth as its floor and heaven as spanning vault". For he is the God of Love.

Peer Gynt is a character of Norseland folklore. Peer, a strong youth of twenty, was telling his mother, Asa, an old folk-story of a ride he had on a mountain glacier in his romantic tongue with so much verisimilitude that she is almost persuaded to believe. With an eccentric strain of heredity, which he inherited from his father, he declared to her that he would be a king or Kaiser against her scolding for his loose habits. He first made love to a farmer's daughter; he went next to a betrothal feast as an uninvited neighbour, persuaded the bride, Ingrid to elope with him, spent the night with her and finally left her, as he again set his heart on a little peasant girl, Solveig. For his crime against Ingrid he was outlawed, banned to the forest where he built a wooden cottage for himself. Solveig stands by him in his fantastic trials in the forest. He went to see his mother in death-bed and notwithstanding her beguiling, he left his jack-in-office airs and with qualms of conscience prayed to God for her forgiveness. After his mother's death he became a merchant prince entertaining friends in a royal fashion. Now by amazing and amusing adventures he was stranded alone, bereft of fortune in a desert, where again with the help of a band of desert brigands and their booty, he was there hailed as a chief and then as a prophet in the realm of the mad—crowned with the garland of straw in an Asylum. On his way home, he was shipwrecked in a stormy vessel and escaped with his life by thrusting a fellow-passenger off the spar to which he was clinging for life. He came home heart-stricken and began to see light at the loving voice of the now aged Solveig. Death at last comes to put him into the "waste-box". Terrified he ran to the white-haired saint Solveig, who like his mother hid him in her lap of love where death crossed his worn face. Peer's whole conception of life and universe revolves round his egoistic soul. There is something of Peer in each one of us, as he represents the besetting limitations of human life. The motto of Brand the saint was 'all for God' and that of Gynt the sinner was 'all for self'. With the philosophy of self-sufficiency and the doctrine of self-hood our civilization and religion have been commercialised. For the doctrine

of egoism is a false, shallow philosophy of life. We forget that the self grows, absorbs and assimilates spiritual nutrition and develops through social millennium all around us and Nature. "To be oneself is only to slay oneself." In self-seeking we miss the kingdom of love which is Heaven. If the soul cuts itself aloof it dies. We are members of one another. To be one's best and highest we must stand forth everywhere to divine the Divine purpose with broader vision and wider outlook. One must express and commit oneself and face facts to enlarge his horizon of head and heart—that is religion. Ibsen emphasises the influence of heredity on Personality with almost the saying: Man is a quotation from his ancestors.

Tolstoy:—Tolstoy in his play, *The Power of Darkness*, lays emphasis on the part of environment in his philosophy and religion of life. He portrays the surrounding spiritual darkness that envelopes the majority. The hero of the *Power of Darkness* is a farm labourer, who, in order to gratify his egoistic and sexual impulses, falls in love with his mistress, Anisya, the second wife of his master Peter, whom he poisons to death with the help of his cunning mother, Matriyona and marries Anisya. "Sin begets sin, fastens on sin and drags on sin." He takes to drinking, is involved in a love affair with Akonlina, his wife's step-daughter, his own step-sister, and another neighbouring woman, Marina, whom he deserted. His old father, Akim, of a deeply religious nature, warns him against his life of sin in vain. He has a baby by his daughter, Akonlina, but he had to crush it to death and bury it in the cellar with his own hand with a spade. The whining and whimpering of this infant dazes him and changes his life. Remorse of smothering the baby tells upon him. He wants to drown his terror in drink in vain; he then tried to end everything by hanging himself, but is delayed in his purpose by Mitrich, an old ex-soldier and his labourer and Anisya's child Nan. He refuses to go to the betrothal feast of Akonlina to give his blessing to the bride and the bridegroom as the head of the house. Mitrich's persuasions and chance remark: 'Don't fear man' strikes home. He goes to the festive assembly, which was hushed to awe when he on his knee made a confession to God and the Christian commune of his sin against his Akonlina and her father; only his religious father supports him there against the protest of all; the police officer arrests and binds Nikita. Tolstoy in his *Fruits of Culture* and *The Light That Shines in Darkness* shows the superficiality of so-called intellectual life, in which it is impossible to practise the simple life of God. The character of Nikita in the *Power of Darkness*; of Levin in *Anna Kerinina*; of Nekhludof in *Resurrection*; and of Pamphidius in *Work While Ye*

Have the Light, are exact transcripts of his own life's experience. In order to overcome the darkness of ignorance that envelopes human life and society, we must turn to light "the divine spark within," for out of this grave of egotism, evil desire and selfishness will resurrect the spirit of "light that lighteth every man". He shows in Nikita the contention of Nature and Nurture. Quoting Pascal he says: "Man is but man—but thinking man." So the higher consciousness of feeling and thinking must be cultivated and developed "to lay a hold on the Life Eternal"—to live for truth and God. For, that is the life of Peace, Bliss, Love and is Light to himself and to others, and that is the goal of human life.

Bernard Shaw:—Bernard Shaw in his short comedy, *Androcles and the Lion*, handles the problem of Christianity versus Militarism. He uses the old fable of Androcles and the lion for the setting of the play. Androcles, a Christian convert and his wife, while journeying in a wood suddenly comes across a lion groaning with pain. Androcles examines his foot, extracts a large thorn from it, for which the lion remains grateful to him for ever. On his way to Rome, he is arrested with a body of imprisoned Christians under Roman guard, being carried to the Coliseum, the great Amphitheatre of Rome, to fight with gladiators or lions, in order to be torn limb from limb to amuse a fashionable Roman crowd. Ferrovius, a giantlike Christian athlete, speedily disposed of six gladiators with a sword. With the injunction of "love thine enemies and turn the other cheek to the smiter," the reluctant Androcles was made by the threatening of 'whip and hot iron' to fight with a lion who rushes at him with an appalling roar and knocks over him, but fortunately it was the former grateful lion. So it only licked his face. Androcles on the lion waltzes round the arena, when the Emperor with fear grants a free pardon to all the Christian prisoners. Evidently it is Shaw's attempt in this play to kill militaristic and imperialistic impasse, frightful to man, by the most scorching irony and satire. With Bishop Gore, Shaw declares that the professed Christianity and 'Churchianity' are only skin-deep and not really Christian. As Oscar Wilde said: "There was only one Christian before Christ, but since Christ there is none." Men are tired of Sunday professions which directly contradict our week-day practices. *Androcles and the Lion* educates better than sermons. What we want at any cost is a higher type of gentleman. There is something in the spirit of man, specially of youth, which responds to the highest, and when they are properly trained in the gospel of love and service, peace and friendship, they will become true citizens of the world. As Anatole France said, just before his death, to an

Association of teachers: "We must banish from our schools all that may induce children to love war. We must teach hatred of hatred and hatred of war, for war means hatred. The teacher must train the child to love Peace and the arts of Peace." Shaw did much for the economic and political education of democracy, but he changed his ideal later on to the education of biology and creative evolution. In his *Man and Superman*, *Back to Methuselah*, *Heart-Break House* and *Misalliance*, he preaches this doctrine and calls them 'metabiological plays' (and not metaphysical be it noted) or 'Bible of Creative Evolution'. He decries the modern education of insufficiency and sham and says that the educated man is a greater nuisance than the uneducated one. Mankind cannot be saved from without but only from within—by creative evolution—by breeding a better and worthier type of humanity. We bestow immense pains and labour and wealth in breeding best types and specimens of plants and animals, but allow the human type to breed anyhow. His *Man and Superman* is a scathing satire and invective against modern civilization which he condemns as "an inferno and a palace of lies". Cain, the hero of the play, a warrior, thinks himself a superman and taunts the ordinary type as mud and clay. He scourges the militarist doctrine that war is a biological necessity. Modern civilization bestows honours and worships warriors as supermen. He exhorts us to create a new race of men and women, with the wisdom to know how to turn life's gifts to higher and creative purposes, for that alone can out-distance the modern state of society. His doctrine has some affinity with that of Nietzsche "the will to power" of his "Superman". He bitterly satires the European civilization that rushes down the steep incline to ruin and forces home his philosophy of life to the modern mind which he summarises thus: My life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is a privilege for me to do whatsoever I can for it. I want to be thoroughly used up for it when I die."

Shaw's *Saint Joan* is another masterpiece of drama. The legend is that of the well-known saint, Joan of Arc, the martyr of France. She was a village peasant girl born in 1412. As a child she was very modest, simple and devout. She became clairvoyant and had mystic visions and heard voices. At 17 by a divine command from above she made up her mind to help the King of France and drive the English army from Orleans and lead the throne-claimant, Charles Dauphin, to be crowned at Rheims. Hers was a holy war based on the discipline of religion. Like General Gordon, she killed no one, and when she won the decisive battle, she knelt weeping and praying for the souls of the enemies. Orleans was delivered and Charles became king. But she herself

was captured at Rouen and tried in the Court of Holy Inquisition by the ecclesiastical authorities, led by the English Chaplain de Stogumber, and was burned as a witch "infected with the leprosy of heresy". Shaw condemns the cynical intolerance of Church and State, the makers of modern civilization, and advises them to recognise tolerance on which all improvement is based. For, this law of evolution is essentially a law of change. They must make it a point of honour to privilege heresy to the last bearable degree, on the simple ground that all evolution in thought and conduct must at first appear as heresy and misconduct. It is a wonder that, during the last Great War, one of the most enlightened Governments of the World—the U. S. A.—prohibited the circulation of the "Sermon on the Mount" through the mail and hanged a school-master at Tennessee for teaching evolution to students against the Biblical theory of Creation. The British Government too in India prohibited the circulation of one of the masterpieces of ancient wisdom—Plato's *Apology* and *Death of Socrates* translated by Gandhi. The plays show that world-forces expressed through human wills conflict with the will of God, but that the divine will triumphs ultimately. Shaw says that Church and State are on the verge of ruin if they do not cleanse and purify, and they will die. Civilization must be founded on a spiritual basis, otherwise it is in danger. Said Swami Vivekananda: "God is the soul of civilization" and not Mammon. The Hindu view-point is that, as the individual life is the expression of God, so also civilization must be the collective expression of the Divine.

Galsworthy :—Galsworthy with gentle satire lays his finger on the weaknesses of social life and civilization. He is grave, impartial and has no biting irony. During the War his indignation leapt into flame, and he launched the scathing indictment against churches. "No creed can stand against such subversion of its foundations," he said. "When this War is over and reason begins its sway, our dogmas will be found scored there for ever." He depicts in his *Forest* the financial side of Empire-building and modern civilization. A British financier, Adrian Bastaph, well-known for his munificent charities, advances money to John Strood to build the British Empire in the "Forest" of East Africa. The real object of the promoters is to introduce indentured coolly labour for the exploitation of the territory in the name of suppression of slave trade there. The money was collected in the name of religion and philanthropy through the mediary of churches in England. Though the ill-fated expedition was a failure, Bastaph made a fortune by selling shares of a South African concession company of lies and intrigues.

His *Justice* is a simple play. A young man, Folder, a poor neurotic clerk, fell in love with a married woman, named Ruth Honey-Will. He commits forgery to give her money, is discovered, committed for trial and is sentenced to penal servitude for three years. The loneliness of solitary confinement tells upon his weak nerves. He is free on a ticket of leave for good behaviour, gets no job and is dismissed at every office as a jail-bird, and finally goes to his old farm. The head of the farm is sympathetic and is moved by his appeals, when all on a sudden a detective comes and arrests him on a charge of forged reference. The Police marches him out of the office but he wrenches himself free from the detective, jumping down from the balcony to the street below and dies. Ruth, his wife, stands over the dead body as though turned to stone. Galsworthy exclaims: Such is the justice of the blundering ass—law which, like an adamant with its blind stupidity, drives man to despair and death. "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye meet it, it shall be measured unto you." Galsworthy in his *Forest* battles against the principalities and powers and the world-rulers of this darkness. In his play *The Skin-Game* he brings the moral issue poignantly to the light of day, as every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral.

Thomas Hardy:— *The Dynasts* of Thomas Hardy is an immortal drama but very big, complete in three volumes and composed of 19 Acts and 130 scenes. It is a European scene of Napoleonic wars. A little child of an obscure little town of Corsica becomes Emperor of France and King of Italy and shakes Empires. At the battle of Trafalger he defeats the English Army, where Admiral Nelson is struck down, finally "homed to where there is no more sea". But Napoleon is defeated at Rennes, where the French Admiral, Villeneuve, stabs himself to death for his disgrace of defeat. The Emperor again strikes them counter-blows from the vantage-ground of Bivouac at Austerlitz. Sir John Moore dies in this battle; Pitt, the British Prime Minister, is worn out by his cares and duties and dies at the early age of 47, having been appointed Prime Minister at 25. Napoleon unscrupulously divorces his innocent wife, Josephine, and marries the Arch-duchess, Marie-Louise of Austria, in order to strengthen his alliance. Napoleon ploughs his way to Empire through flesh and blood, through scenes of carnage which will "murder sleep". Next he invades Russia and goes on the Hill of Salutation at Moscow, and just as he is about to conquer it the "Plan Predestinate nulled the mortal state," and he is overwhelmed by the wily Rostopchin—the Russian Governor. The vast French Army was scattered and butchered like meat-slices and "souls passed to

where History knows no page". The conqueror became a fugitive and travelled incognito to Paris. "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step," yet he explains to Marie Lousie, the Empress, that "he was subdued by elements and not by Russia"—the God's sky had conquered him. He quickly raises another Army to save the nation-life at stake, but at the battle of Liepzig he is again crushed. Napoleon, again a fugitive, reduced to despair, attempts suicide but the stomach refuses to retain the poison. "Fate has resolved what men could not." Ex-Empress Josephine dies, and Napoleon is exiled to Elba as a captive, but escapes under cover of darkness and regains the royal palace. But at the historic battle of Waterloo (Spanish penunsila) he is checked by the English Admiral, Wellington. Even there he spreads a lying report to nerve the drooping and exhausted spirit of the soldiers, by promising that the rear rank would come to their help in the nick of time. Napoleon is finally captured and banished for life to St. Helena to die an ordinary death. Hardy says that the Immanent Will that pulsates through the universe disposes everything otherwise, and the above short sketch of the historical drama exemplifies this lesson. Though Hardy is a pessimist and an agnostic and does not admit or affirm any "Beyond," his *Dynasts* is vibrant with ethical purpose. Here he wrestles with the dark world-problem of suffering and evil, which the great game and tragedy of life plays always. We manikins are pawns in the hands of irrevocable and mighty Fate, though we imagine we are free makers of our destiny. "The realms, laws, peoples and dynasties are churning to a pulp within the maw of empire-building lust and personal game." Yet we must not be touched with human Fate, as no sigh can null it. It is Fate who hurls the 'dynasts' from the throne and shakes the strong and shields the frail. Yet he is moved by the sense of pity for the woes of mankind, and wrings a deeper note of deep determination "to build a fairer and better world by developing a human consciousness as an instrument of a world-consciousness which shall fashion all things fair". In *The Dynasts* of Thomas Hardy we see the ethical and spiritual motive at work much more deeply and strongly than in formal, crude or Church ceremonial.

To conclude: The message of the Drama is not the last word on the intellectual and spiritual evolution of humanity. It is rather the first chapter of the vast story of life. It reveals only one of the many facets of the life, whose ways are as many as those of Providence itself. The Hindu says every man has a religion of his own and so for 330 millions of Indians it conceived as many gods, on the principle that every man should have a god for

himself. All men cannot be straight-jacketed by one universal way of religion or philosophy, though the goal may be the same for all. If we watch the history and philosophy of Drama through the ages, we find that it rises through struggle to nobler and higher conceptions of the supreme and its relation to man with the gradual growth of philosophy and religion. Nor should we fail to note its ever-heightening appeal to man. Drama enables us to play our part in the struggles of battle and life with courage and dignity. In the words of Viscount Morley: "Drama leads man with 'death-sweat dank on his forehead' into inner moods of settled peace to touch the depth and calm the tumult of the soul and gives quietness, strength and steadfastness of purpose, whether to do or to endure." Dr. Macniel Dixon says that "drama helps us to acquire the identity of self-consciousness with Wisdom" and it broadcasts and popularises the abstruse truths of religion and philosophy to all in their own tongue.

Note:-- This article is mainly based on *The Ethical and Religious Values of Drama* by the Rev. Ramsden Balmforth, author of several other books of the same kind, published by Messrs. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. The author is a Protestant missionary of the Unitarian Church at Cape Town, South Africa, and is thoroughly acquainted with modern Indian thought, of, for instance, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath. He has the moral courage to criticise even the church and the religion he professes, which is very rarely found in the case of English missionaries. His *Ethical and Religious Values of Drama* (complete in 250 pages, price 7 sh. 6 d) is a very beautiful book with elegant, lucid thought and language worth reading by all lovers of literature.

The Beauty Stone.

By F. H. Aldhouse, M. A.



MICHAEL BYRN and Sons, Coal, Coke and Turf Merchants, Arran Quay, Dublin, were prosperous persons in a steady way of business. They were an old-established firm of sound reputation.

Their typist, in the head office, was Miss Bedalia Baffy, a young woman who was described by her well-wishers as 'homely and a good girl'. She was in fact extremely plain and looked both dull and stupid, but her face did her injustice, for she had an excellent brain. She had had no difficulty in obtaining the job of stenographer with Michael Byrn and Sons.

Old Mr. Byrn, the third of that name, who had just taken his morning dram and was, therefore, both frank and talkative, remarked in his chatty way to her when she came and answered his advertisement: "I've lost a power of typists by matrimony, Miss Baffy, but I'm certain if we part it won't be that that will be the cause. So I'll engage ye".

Miss Bedalia had grinned a sour smile to the old man's uncouth pleasantries. She had accepted the appointment and had held it four years. There was every reason to suppose, if she was content with the very moderate salary Messrs. Byrn & Sons paid, she would hold it till old age overwhelmed her, for she gave perfect satisfaction to the firm. As for admirers, she had never had one and had as much chance of getting one as she had of possessing a white elephant. But though Bedalia Baffy was well aware of this and had no intention of either asking for a rise of salary (she knew Messrs Byrn & Sons would not give it) or resigning, still her active mind was constantly playing with the idea of some change, some happiness.

The deadly dull round in the Coal Establishment, the duller existence in the lodgings she called her 'digs', or the occasional visit to the 'Talkies' of an evening and without a companion of either sex did not satisfy her.

Bedalia was religious in a mild, inherited kind of way, but it played no real part in her life. She went to Church on Sunday, but it awakened no enthusiasm in her breast, and that was what she wanted. "Something to love, something to dote upon" as the song says, and she couldn't find it. She didn't even keep a pet as she had to be out all day, and would be compelled to neglect it.

She was constantly suffering from what she called 'feeling flat' in consequence.

One day Miss Baffy had gone through the usual routine, opened the letters, typed replies, done some personal letters for old Mr. Byrn, seen he took his medicine and finally helped him on with his coat, as he remarked: "Well, Miss Baffy, I'll be toddling now. Look after the office, talk to any clients, and take their orders. And don't run away with any young man," he added, shaking a stumpy finger at her and with his usual alcoholic chuckle stumped downstairs.

Miss Baffy had answered: "Yes, Mr. Byrn, of course," as in duty bound; and she added as the scuffling sounded out on the street below: "I would, ye bald-headed, boozy old babbler. If I could find the young man, I'd run to Cape Clear with him, but there's no such luck for poor Bedalia Baffy. Och! poor Bedalia Baffy!" and a red tinge of indignation mottled her muddy complexion.

Miss Baffy did not settle down; she left the office as soon as the hour struck, and walked back to her digs with a kind of hurried desperation. After her tea, she opened the *Evening Herald* and began studying each page with her usual pertinacity. She read everything, advertisements and all with equal attention. Suddenly she paused; an advertisement had caught her eye:

Beauty Parlour; Madam Rachel begs to inform her numerous lady patrons that her famous 'beautiful for ever' treatment can now be obtained by special arrangement at Messrs. Dearys, Mc. Neil Street, Dublin (opposite the Monument) where Members of the Nobility, &c., will find every aid to charm and fascination.

Miss Baffy was a saving soul, she counted every ha'penny she spent and she knew the treatment would cost money--much money. "But no matter, I'll do it," she exclaimed. In fact, Miss Baffy was desperate and had become reckless.

Next day she duly called during her Saturday half holiday and was conducted by a fluffy page of obvious feminine gender (despite 'his' boyish accoutrements) to the vestibule of the room where (to quote Lord Byron), 'the deformed, transformed' might be accomplished. A lady in a white overall asked "Can I do anything for you, Modom?"

"Sure you can," replied Bedalia, "I come according to your advertisement in the papers." (She produced the *Herald*). "I want you to make me beautiful for ever!"

A spasm passed over the white robed priestess' face, her whole person shook. She had never had such difficulty in her life to prevent bursting into a scream of laughter at the absurdity of the request. With a supreme, heroic effort she managed to turn it into a cough, but she had to drink some water before she could command herself and answer, "Yes, Modom. I think what Modom needs is a special facial manipulation of her countenance, and then there would be the hair and complexion to attend to. But the face needs attention to begin with. I could not judge till it had been under alteration and what we might call 'repair' exactly what colour of hair would suit Modom best. The present colour needs changing. Yes, most decidedly--excuse my cough, please--and the complexion would require to be lifted up, so to say. It's not--well, it needs altering. We haven't the right operator now, we've only just opened, to deal with Modom's face. We might have him next month. I'll write and tell you when he arrives if you'll leave your address, Modom. I couldn't do anything to the complexion and hair till the face was transmogrified, as we call it."

"How much do ye think it would cost?" asked Bedalia in a faint voice.

"Oh, a mere trifle, Modom," replied the Beauty Specialist. "A couple of hundred or something about that."

"Thank ye, I'll call again," Bedalia answered, and she tottered out of Messrs. Dearys'.

"Come quick, Pauline," tittered the Beauty Specialist to someone in the parlour. She'll be gone if you don't hurry. If never I saw the Perfect Cure, I saw her now, just look!"

"The dowdy fright!" cried Pauline, who bounced up to the window.

Poor Bedalia, she heard it all, so did the fluffy page, who made no attempt to conceal 'his' hilarious amusement. Bedalia was for once thoroughly roused; she rushed back driving the feminine page in terror before her, she shook her fist in the specialist's face, who blanched beneath her powder de riz.

"Ye fraud, ye profiteering humbug. I'll teach ye to laugh at me. If I wasn't a perfect lady I'd wipe the floor with ye. To blazes with the likes of ye," and Bedalia left the Parlour in a jumpy step, leaving no amusement behind her this time.

As she walked home with clenched fists and teeth, it was clear an idea was taking shape in her mind.

"I'll do it," she said with a kind of quiet fury. The door of her 'digs' banged behind her as she reached retirement.

Bedalia was home for a fortnight's holiday, which she had obtained after an ultimatum to the firm, who knowing she would be hard to replace, had yielded without grace or goodwill. She was now in her native town of Ballyhirdleford and was sitting in the private room of Mr. Biddle Hulahan, the famous Fairy Man and horse doctor.

On a table of polished mahogany lay a common white plate, and it was piled with golden sovereigns—fifteen in all. It was her present to the Fairy world representative, and he had accepted it. Mr. Hulahan looked rather like a retired jockey; the only striking feature in this magus, dressed in frieze, being the extraordinary vivacity and size of his black eyes. The money was duly placed in Mr. Hulahan's purse.

"What can I do for you, Mam?" he asked, and Bedalia told him everything—her longing for love and life.

Mr. Hulahan pondered and after a minute reflected.

And then it flew over sea and land
It went over land and sea.
Who owns it has beauty at command,
But it always comes back to me.

"I will let you see your real face," he added and handed her a piece of highly polished granite, bright almost as a mirror and round like a hand-glass.

"Bedalia looked. Yes, it was her familiar face, but how changed! The fire of her soul shone through the earthly mask, the eager, childlike, avid wish for happiness was there, the great eyes, the lips wanting love. She was not pretty but piquant, attractive, appealing".

"Am I really like that?" she asked.

"Yes," replied Mr. Hulahan, "the soul is real, the Spirit is Reality, the body changes daily. You have seen your soul through the changing flesh, and the Spirit is reflected there. What you now know yourself to be, others too will know. I give you the Beauty Stone, but be careful, do not lose it. The verse I quoted was the very words of Queen Mave, the Fairy Sovereign. Should you lose the stone it will return to her and your reflected beauty with it.

Bedalia's dull and apparently stupid aspect was never seen now. She soon was regarded as a most attractive girl. She left the coal firm on promotion. But alas the desire for admiration

gratified, the courtship of young men led to her developing a vain and fickle character. She delighted to show off, and cut out others girls who once thought her superiors in charm.

The delight she had in the Beauty Stone declined, for it showed her with the awful truth of Faerie her growing ugliness of Soul.

Prosperity is too often the ruin of the so-called fortunate.

One day after Bedalia had been particularly unpleasant, she was in her bedroom overlooking the liffy, and she looked in the polished surface of the magic mirror.

The Stone showed her eyes were narrowing, her lips cruel, her expression catlike. "Ah! bad luck to you for a lying stone," she said and cast it with a dash on the dressing table. Round and flat it spun across the table, it fell on the surface of the river, skimming for a couple of jumps over the yellow water, and it was gone.

Bedalia Baffy is now an old maid, she has resumed her drudgery at the Coal office, and finds young Michael Byrn a more unpleasant tyrant than his old, whiskyfied father now.

Her face, in addition to its old dullness, has lines of peevishness and ill temper, which she dare not show to her employers. The Beauty Stone is back in the hands of the Sidhe.

The Stone reflects the inner things,
Man's eyes can never see.
Ignore it, it will soon find wings,
And with it Joy must flee.

The Choice of an Ideal.

By A. V. Ramaswami, B.A.



AN ideal is an idea, developed on the materialising plane for the purpose of achieving something which the doer considers good. It also means that the doer is possessed of a will to stand by his ideal. It is by his or her capacity to stand by the ideal that an idealist is judged. A realist is one who has a complete grasp of the difficulties of the practical world and wants to take as much advantage as possible of the little good things of the world; he is out to make the best of a bad job, as the phrase goes. An idealist, if carried to the logical extreme, becomes an unpractical, unmeaning heap of theories; he is not useful to the world, then. A story is told of an idealist of this type. A Vedantin,—it is the Vedantin who comes in for this sort of ridicule,—got into a train with a ticket for himself and a half-ticket for his son, who was under age. At twelve o'clock that night, his son had completed twelve years of age. He at once called the ticket examiner, explained to him how it was not fair that his son travelled with the half ticket after midnight that day and offered to give him the rest of the fare. The ticket examiner blessed him with idiocy and went his way. Not stopping with that, our friend got down in a midway station with his son. Why? he was asked. He said that it was robbery to travel more miles in the train than was allowed for by the fare; and as the train had then to back to meet a coming train on the platform, it would have journeyed more miles, and so, in all solemnity, he affirmed his intention not to inflict any unnecessary loss on the Railway Company. Evidently our gentleman is a stupid fool. Those who have read the exposition of Vedantism by Swami Vivekananda know how Vedantism is much more practical than this Vedantin made it to be. On the other hand, a realist, if he carries his ideas to the furthest end, becomes a mere Epicurean, seeking the pleasures of the world, unable to do anything which at first sight appears difficult, and shirking all the nobler duties and responsibilities of man. The Emperor Jehangir is said to have told that Nur Jehan was clever enough to look after the State, but that he wanted a piece of meat and a cup of wine to keep himself merry. Men like Jehangir belong to the latter set. We want neither of these two types of men, neither the falsely called Vedantin nor the Imperial pleasure-hunter. We want men of character and learning, who have subordinated their body and mind to a strict control and who can use their accomplishments

and attainments in the causes which will ultimately promote the moral and material progress of humanity.

There are difficulties in the way of a practical idealist. There are many men with different ideals, rather ideas,—people mistake the one for the other. The ideas are conflicting; the men confuse us with their learning and eloquence. Let me give you an example. Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, that all-too-praiseworthy champion of Hindu widows, was a profound Sanskrit scholar; he showed that there is a Shastraic sanction for the remarriage of Hindu child-widows. But he had a host of learned scholars, who placed before him a mass of literature in Sanskrit in favour of the contrary position. Clear-headed and clear-hearted as Vidyasagar was, he did not miss his great vocation in life. Posterity will cherish with love and reverence the doings of this unwearied worker in the cause of humanity. In that series of remarkable Kamala lectures, which the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri delivered to the Calcutta University, he refers to the imperative need for the proper evaluation and appraisal of a practical ideal:

Pray do not consider that it is irrelevant or unprofitable to study the ideals that shape the evolution of a people; it is of course possible to stress the ideal and dwell upon it all the time, so that the immediate steps seem pitifully small and the would-be reformer is paralysed by the thought of the vast undone. I have known even the smallest innovations in our religious and social practices resisted with all the resources of dialectic and antiquarian lore by those who brought conflicting ideals before your puzzled mind and called upon you to make a choice between them before you ventured to question the existing order. *But merely because a clever man may confound you with a variety of ideals, you must not lose sight of a clearly grasped and ennobling ideal. In fact, in this world of ceaseless flux, an ideal is the only fixed object, the only reality.* Without a reference to it, no comparison is possible, no due appraisal, no taking stock of where exactly we stand. (Italics are mine).

And then ideals are there not merely to be felt or to be preached but to be put into action. Students of recent Indian History know that the late Keshub Chunder Sen lost his reputation to a large extent by the marriage of his daughter as a child to the Maharajah of Cooch-Bihar, while he had all along been thundering against child marriage. Practice must follow precept; otherwise the ideal is of no value.

The case for an ideal is now clear. Its necessity cannot be questioned, if we must justify our existence as human beings. The question of choice then comes in. It is not difficult to make it. It is a misapplication of the word to call a man after wealth or power or fame an idealist. Truth, love, chastity, service and sacrifice are some of the ideals, in realising which we can spend our lives. Service and sacrifice, which are two sides of the same

coin, are the ideals that we must set before us ; rather service is the ideal and sacrifice is the method. Most of our young men have no ideal. Their ideal seems to be, if that is to be dignified by that name, to pass their examinations creditably, to get into some money giving machine, spend all their brains, energies and capacities in grinding them to nothingness, get wealth and power and seek the material pleasures. One of the truest English friends of India, the late Professor Alfred Marshall, once remarked that in his Indian students at Cambridge he did not find that desire to serve their country which he found in the Japanese students. That is why Japan is where she is and we are where we are. An ideal of service must catch hold of us, must possess us, so to say. There are various ways of performing service. Everything is service when conceived and done in the right spirit. Service entails sacrifice. We in India associate sacrifice with *Sannyasa*. We think that to sacrifice is to give up all and to run away to the forest. But Swami Vivekananda has said that even a *Sannyasin* should not take to the forest but strain every nerve of his to serve humanity. And the *Bhagavad Gita* enjoins *Karma* on all of us ; and sacrifice is the renunciation of the fruit of action but not of the action itself, *Karmapala tyaga*, and not *Karma tyaga*. The concept of sacrifice can be expanded to embrace everything. As Professor D. Subrahmanya Sarma says : " A life of self-control is a sacrifice, a life of disinterested scholarship is a sacrifice, and even a simple exercise in breath control, done for the purification of the mind, is a sacrifice in its own way." Sir C. V. Raman's throwing off his lucrative post in the Finance Department to take up scientific research was a sacrifice. Albert Schweitzer's resigning his Chair of Philosophy at Strasbourg to take up humanitarian work in the dark woods of Africa was an admirable instance of sacrifice. Mahatma Gandhi is the most perfect example of what sacrifice can be and service can do.

It may then be legitimately asked ; is it possible for every one to serve and to sacrifice ? There can be only one answer to this question. A teacher, for instance, can easily do that if only he does not translate his duties as a teacher in terms of money and injects into his mind the idea of love and service. So also the doctor. Some of our ablest doctors are also the most exacting in their fees. There is no other profession in which there is a greater opportunity for service than in the medical profession ; yet how little do they realise it ? When a man is suffering from any disease or a wound on the body, what could give him greater happiness than to be cured ? Give him a kingdom, he would not want it ; present him with the treasures

of *Kubera*, he would treat it with scorn. Even the most eloquent preachings of the wonderful truths of religion and philosophy are the least welcome to him at that moment. Placed in the most enviable profession in the world, from the point of view of a man who wants to serve, how much our doctors make *money* and *not service* their ideals ? Nor have all of our politicians and statesmen availed themselves of the boundless opportunities of service offered to them. The religious preacher, the secular teacher, the doctor and the politician can become excellent servants of humanity, if only they take to their callings in a spirit of love and service. " No love is love which has not spent itself out in service ; no service is service unless it is inspired by love. Love and service go together. I love and therefore I serve ; I serve because I love," said Ananda Mohan Bose. Noble words, nobly uttered.

Swami Vivekananda had been dinning into our ears times out of count that the national ideals of India are *renunciation* and *service*. It is gratifying to note that luckily for us we are living in an age of great sacrifices. The sublime sacrifice of a Gandhi or a Das or a Motilal has won golden pages in history. Yet the example has not been followed on an extensive scale. Our educated young men are yet to prove to the world that they are not oases in a desert. From the Prime Minister down to the Municipal scavenger, the one increasing purpose that should run through all is to serve and to sacrifice, each according to his capacity.

Auspicious Widowhood.

By An Incognito M. A.

I STILL remember those happy days when I played with my sister Sarada. She was then a mere thing of beauty, and the beloved of all the village. She was graceful and innocent; and ages of culture shone through her bright face. She was a standing refutation of the belief of the agnostics that our life begins with this birth and ends with the death of this body. For, her eyes bespoke long ages of inner growth. Her deep soul was visible through them. And those who saw her smiles and her glances could not help believing that she had gone on accumulating lustre and light in her soul, in distant times and lands. To me she was everything. She taught me to read, to sing, to play. I do not remember to have had any other interest in childhood than to hang on Sarada.

But nothing that is good or sweet or pretty in Nature lasts for any long time. Rapidly our childhood passed away, and with it the golden period of pleasant dreams and sweet fancies, where there is neither the care for the morrow nor the remorse for past misdeeds. And the world demanded of us adherence to its conventions and its laws. Laws of society are made for the commonplace; and 'extraordinary' souls ought to be exempted from them. But coats that are made for children are given to adults; and the result is that their limbs wither away and tragedies follow in quick succession. Our parents set about canvassing for a suitable bridegroom to wed Sarada. Horoscopes were sent to distant astrologers—men whose fame rested on no paper advertisements, but on the merit of genuine learning. One sunny morn Sarada was married. I was then ten or eleven, and she a year older. But somehow my boyish nature rebelled against the wedding. I was really selfish, and felt jealous to see another youth holding Sarada by the hand. It broke my heart to see that in Sarada's scheme of things I was to have no important place thereafter. In the hurry of the marriage festivities, I was not much cared for. I felt almost hatred towards the new visitor that robbed all our attention. They could surely have waited some time till Sarada grew older, I thought. But not many care for the silent miseries of a boy, and things went on, whether I liked them or no. Fortunately, God has bestowed on man great adaptability. Otherwise life on earth will become unbearable. The wedding was soon a forgotten affair, and life fell to its old rut. Only, on days sacred to virgins, Sarada was ornamented.

beautified and honoured, and I could not participate in the function. I felt at times a growing distance between brother and sister. Sarada was no more a mere sister; she was something else.

The passing days brought me relief. Subsequent to the wedding, Sarada's husband never came to us. He was employed somewhere in the United Provinces, and often wrote to us. Four years after the wedding—I was then a grown-up boy devoid of many a childish fancy—we were expecting Sarada's husband to come to us to take her with him. Sarada was then in luxuriant growth; and her grace and learning had increased a hundred-fold.

It was again a sunny day—as sunny and bright as was Sarada's wedding day. Sarada was playing at her veena. I was at my study doing some light reading. The telegraph peon called at our house. The news came that Sarada's husband was no more. He had succumbed to an attack of typhoid.

The same sun that shone over Sarada's childish sports and over her wedding ceremony shone that day. The same breezes were blowing. The same sky was spreading over earth. There was the same chatter of birds and the joyous rustling of leaves. Only on Sarada's innocent soul was cast a dark cloud.

Man is little respected by the elements. His misery is of no concern to them.

Weeping and wailing were over, and the murmur of mantrams and the feasting of the manes. Sarada was literally 'floored' by the sudden outburst of misery on her slender being. But she bore it with calm and resignation. I was at war with very Providence for the most cruel stroke ever delivered on human beings.

A month after the terrible happening I was talking to my sister in the quiet of an evening, beneath a star-lit sky.

"Sister, God has been most cruel to you," I began gently.

"No, brother," she replied, "we always blame God for our misfortunes. God is ever a kind father. It is our own misdeeds that bring on us misfortunes. Probably in the ages gone by, I have made mistakes and transgressed divine laws, to the end that such unhappy occurrences may fall to my lot in this birth. Now that it has come, let us take it as a gift from the Lord, and profit by its lesson."

Her voice was solemn. Her manner was rather serious. The old childish mirth had given place to a divine melancholy.

"You talk like a true Hindu, sister. But in moments of misfortune, I do quarrel with God's ways. Why should there be this misery on earth, I never understand. You talk of prenatal influences. I have not known many in misery philosophising about them. Nor do those arguments convince me. If ever a soul is made to suffer endless agony, to me it seems sufficient reason to damn God's creation."

"You talk like an ignorant boy. Why do you take it that joy and happiness alone are from God, and not misery and sorrow? Life is a compound of both. Let us hug both with equal affection. That will solve the problem of life."

"No, sister. Don't you think that the infliction of life-long widowhood on a poor girl is an act of grave injustice? Rather I shall not blame God. My anger is against the society that sanctions such wrongs."

"Again, brother, you miss sight of the fact that social laws are the expression of the particular genius of the race, and reflect the peculiar ideal that the race has set before itself."

"Sister, you always get the better of me in argument. I shall no more talk of social laws and institutions. In your own case, don't you think you can marry again? My heart breaks to think of the long barren waste of a widow's life. I have no great respect for man-made laws, and I do not think that a virgin widow remarrying offends any of God's laws."

"I am grateful for your deep concern for me, brother. But the suggestion does not commend itself to me. I shall make a solemn confession of faith to you. On principle I am not against the remarriage of virgin widows. But the genius of the Hindu race is such that nine out of every ten virgin widows will refuse to remarry. It may be difficult for you to understand the mind of a virgin. Ever since her wedding, she concentrates her thoughts on the one to whom she has been dedicated, and the world has meaning for her only in and through him. It is not his physical entity that matters much; it is an idealised being that she adores, to which her husband's physical form is merely a basis. Having for years loved such a being, it is not possible for us to change affections and become the beloved of a stranger. Always remember, we, girls, are of a more impressionable nature. Our remarrying is nothing like the manner of some widowers who continue taking wife after wife without any concern. In certain cases, of course, remarriage is not bad, and is even most necessary. But as for myself, I shall continue single all through life. You called a widow's life a barren waste. It is no more barren than the life of a Sannyasin. Great things are indeed possible of a householder's

life; but an ascetic's life or a widow's life is equally rich in possibilities; it is equally fertile. I have decided to choose the path of single blessedness."

"I agree, sister. But will you not at least take up some job, some office, just to kill the monotony of the heavy days? It will give you some interest in life, and save you from the lot of perpetually mourning over your sad state."

"I am sorry I cannot agree to that suggestion, either. I am not anxious about earning my livelihood, having you as brother. As for the matter of acquiring relief from mourning, I can do that in a thousand ways. The so-called narrow confinement within home will be a most congenial ground for me. It is not in the mad laughter of the multitude that I can ever find my joy. It is in the quiet of a solitary life that I grow. I see in solitude all the charms that sages have seen in its face. Do not worry, therefore, about my future. God-willing, everything will fit in well."

"You beat me every time, sister. But I have one more request which you shall not refuse. Do, for my sake, retain those beautiful tresses of yours. It will break my heart to see you take on yourself the deformities of conventional widowhood."

Sarada pondered a little while, and then said: "Be it as you wish. I do not see why the retention of the locks of hair should interfere with the realisation of my ideals."

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Years have passed away. Sarada is still living in my house. She spends her mornings in ablutions and meditations and in studying the holy epics. She spins for an hour every day. She is clad in Khadi. In the afternoons she holds classes for the ladies of the villages. The enormity of the work she does, and the variety of it, are really astonishing. She imparts to them all kinds of learning. She reads the newspapers to them, educates them in the political developments in the country. Domestic economy, dairying, hygiene, bringing up of children, personal hygiene—all aspects of life receive due attention. Thanks to her efforts the village has become enlightened. Everyone has immense regard for her. Her knowledge of philosophy will do credit to a University professor. Children flock to her in the evenings to listen to stories. It is an age-long experience that widowed sisters are the enemies of domestic peace; but she refutes that experience every day. I can never imagine what my home would be without her living presence. Widows coming on the roads are generally regarded as inauspicious omens; but Sarada is considered the most auspicious omen. She is to me the nearest approach to the fulfilment of Indian womanhood. I now see the purpose behind

the ancient ideal of widowhood as set forth by our forefathers. And to the young enthusiasts of my village, who are fresh from college, I keep telling that, whereas the agitation for the remarriage of young widows is perfectly reasonable, we must take care to see that the remedy is not worse than the disease, and that the possibilities for sacrifice and renunciation that lie in the quiet life of a widow are in no way jeopardised.

Coming events do cast their shadows before. I often think of my days of childhood when Sarada was to me my everything, and of the misery I felt at the prospect of losing her after her marriage, and with pardonable selfishness, I feel thankful to Providence that it has been made possible for her to remain with me for ever.

Indian Labour Movement.

By Mr. V. Venkateswara Sastrulu,

(Member, All-India Trade Union Unity Committee, Madras.)



HERE was, if at all, very little of Trade Unionism in India before the World War of 1914-18. The wave of democratic consciousness and industrial unrest that swept the world after the conclusion, and primarily as a result, of the War, gave an impetus to Trade Unionism in India. The Revolution in Russia in particular had its repercussions. The fight for Swaraj also helped the growth of Trade Unionism; but, as the Report of the Whitley Commission points out :

The influence of Nationalist politics on the movement had mixed results. It added intensity, but it also tended to increase bitterness and to introduce in the minds of many employers a hostile bias against the movement. This, in its turn, tended to obscure the justice of many of the demands made and the fact that the movement was based on genuine and pressing needs.

The "hostile bias" the Commission speaks about, was mainly due to the fact that most of the leaders of Labour often betrayed a dangerous inclination to use Labour for political purposes; for instance, the workers who had rallied under the banner of Mr. B. P. Wadia were often found forming the preponderating part of the "Home Rule" demonstrations in the City of Madras. Indian employers were not willing to give such workers a sympathetic hearing, while European employers, who looked upon the Home Rule agitation as a subversive movement, distrusted and disliked such workers. The workers were not then in a position to judge for themselves, as they are now, comparatively speaking. Had they but chosen as their leaders able men, albeit outsiders, but quite unconnected with any political organisations, there should have been no "hostile bias" on the part of employers, especially Europeans; rather, the employers would have viewed with sympathy, and might have even accorded active encouragement, to the efforts of employees to organise themselves for the purpose of making united representations to employers for redress of all grievances. My experiences in the Labour movement in Madras have strengthened my belief, and this has grown into a conviction, that politicians as such should not be Labour leaders. However, I do recognise that, so long as Labour is not educated and experienced enough to take care of itself, it must look to outsiders for advice and guidance; but my point is that such outsiders should not be politicians as well. The time is not far off when Labour need not look to outsiders for leadership.

Employers were willing to treat with Unions led by employees, themselves and not by outsiders ; also the attitude of the Government towards Unions of their servants was the same ; but in 1920, the Government of India conceded the principle of the right to employ outsiders, with the result, eventually other employers also have had to recognise outsiders. Before 1920, Trade Unions did not flourish as well as they have subsequently, because the workers had not realised the need and appreciated the value of Unions on a permanent basis for carrying on sustained work. Whenever there was need, some sort of Union was improvised, and when the need was no longer felt, the Union disappeared. The All-India Trade Union Congress was brought into existence in 1920. It has grown into a powerful body, with the importance attached to Labour by Government, in that they sent to the International Conferences at Geneva representatives of Indian Labour and also gave seats in the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Councils to nominated representatives of Labour. At the Indian Round Table Conference there have been three representatives of Labour, Messrs N. M. Joshi, V. V. Giri and B. Shiva Rao, so that now Labour is an important political factor. The status thus accorded to Labour has been a spontaneous gift from the Government in just recognition of the importance of Labour, and cannot be said to have been wrung by the solidarity of the workers from unwilling hands. The Government of India have quite deservedly earned a reputation for progressiveness in the matter of Labour Legislation, implementing International Conventions. The Indian Trade Union Act was passed in 1926. This Act has strengthened Trade Unionism ; its emphasis is on registration. Registration has enhanced the importance of the Unions. The "hostile bias" of employers, which was so pronounced prior to 1920, has almost disappeared, and the Labour Unions have been doing good work.

I am hopeful of exploiters of Labour for party or personal ends being eliminated on the Whitley recommendations being implemented. Of these the proposed Industrial Councils is one of the best. Says the Report :

In the framework of the future constitution, provision should be made for an organisation (the Industrial Council) which would enable representatives of employers of Labour and of Government to meet regularly in conference to discuss Labour measures and Labour policy. The Council should be sufficiently representative, but not too large. The representatives of Labour should be elected by registered Trade Unions, and where there are no registered Trade Unions of any size, they should be nominated by Government. The Employers' representatives should also be elected by Associations of Employers, whose voting power should be approximately proportionate to the number of workers which their members employ. The Council should meet annually and its president should be elected at each annual

session. The Secretary of the Council should be a permanent official responsible to it for the current business throughout the year. Functions of the Council: (1) to examine proposals for Labour Legislation referred to it and also to initiate such proposals, (2) to promote a spirit of co-operation and understanding among those concerned with Labour policy, and to provide an opportunity for an interchange of information regarding experiments in Labour matters, (3) to advise the Central and Provincial Governments on the framing of rules and regulations, (4) to advise regarding the collection of Labour statistics and the co-ordination and development of economic research.

Industrial Councils constituted on the above lines are bound to bring Capital and Labour together in friendship ; to keep Unions continuously at work ; to turn out exploiters from the field. No time should be lost in constituting such Councils. Especially in Madras, the need for such a Council is imperative and urgent.

The origin of the Labour movement in this Presidency was thus described by me in the course of an address at the Madras Rotary Club on 22nd May 1931 :

It is not possible to find anything like a definite or organised attempt to consolidate the workers of this Presidency into a Trade Union movement before the year 1913. Probably, the very first Labour organisation in the whole of India was that started in Madras in 1918 by Mr. B. P. Wadia of the Theosophical Society. The Madras Labour Union, consisting of workers of the three Textile Mills in the City, became a powerful body and was rapidly followed by a succession of Unions formed throughout India. No doubt, several of these Unions were temporary bodies brought into existence for organising strikes ; and they ceased to function immediately the immediate purpose was over. But all the same, the Trade Union movement caught on, and the post-War period, involving as it did widespread economic discontent and general unsettled political conditions, facilitated the growth of Labour Unions. We had also the first international organisation, which sought to place on an international basis all questions relating to the position of Labour in the different countries of the world. But it is only certain classes of labourers that have readily appreciated the value of organisation and decided to form Unions. The miners, for example, did not take to it at all, while Railwaymen and postal employees were the foremost in the field of Labour organisation. By the year 1920, we had so many Labour Unions in the City that the necessity was felt for some sort of a Central Board to co-ordinate their activities, with a view to enable them to function effectively and harmoniously. In 1920, a Central Labour Board was started in Madras with the following objects :- 1. To establish and promote Labour Unions in this Presidency 2. To endeavour to raise the wages of the workmen ; and 3. To do such other things as would raise the status of the workmen. It must be confessed that this Labour Board has not been a very successful institution. Apart from a general appreciation of the need for the workers to have some kind of a general body, this Central Labour Board could not function as a real cementing force. A real federation should primarily be a federation of allied Industrial Unions.

Out of about 19 Unions registered under the Trade Union Act in the Madras Presidency as per Government's Report for 1930-31,

only a few have joined the Board, and even these do not appear to have taken keen interest in the affairs of the Board. The representatives of these "affiliated" Unions do not seem to evince any sustained interest in the Board. The idea of a Central Labour Board was originally conceived by Mr. B. Shiva Rao, for the purpose of promoting a housing scheme for labourers in Madras and for consolidating the work of various Trade Unions in the City. The objects are no doubt splendid, and mightily ambitious, but the housing scheme will not work in Madras, because the workers here come mostly from the agricultural classes, and they would not leave their homes and the environment in which they had grown. Most of the industrial workers in Bombay come from the mofussil and have necessarily to reside in the metropolis; in their case, a housing scheme is a necessity. The conditions in Madras are different; most of the industrial workers here belong to the City itself, owning small houses or huts of their own, to which they would cling. As an instance, it may be mentioned that some workmen are unwilling to avail themselves of the housing facilities provided by the Corporation of Madras in Bhogipalayam. A housing scheme for industrial labourers as such is not necessary. The Corporation of Madras is already doing useful work in this direction. Even if a housing scheme were necessary, it is idle to expect an inept body like the Central Board to handle it effectively. A body which claims to represent a number of Unions and to work for objects common to all has not cared to study even the Whitley Commission Report and to form and formulate its considered opinion for the guidance of the public.

That the Industrial Councils proposed by the Whitley Commission are the best means whereby co-operation between Capital and Labour can be ensured goes without saying. Such a Council would bring the three parties together—employers, employees and the Government; it will invigorate the existing Unions and render difficult the improvisation of Unions that die out soon or linger on through mal-administration; it will eliminate the exploiter seeking personal benefit or party advantage; and in one word, it will purify and establish Trade Unionism on a firm basis. The sooner an Industrial Council is established in this Presidency, the better for all concerned.

Namagiri of Managiripet.

By T. B. Krishnaswami.



THE most conspicuous and outstanding feature of Namakal in the Salem District is the Rock-Fort. A bald rock wears a crown of battlements, even as Caesar, Caius Julius, wore a wreath of laurels to hide the baldness of his head. So crowned, the rock is most impressive and yet what gives it its sanctity, its importance, is the group of shrines at its foot. On one side is the shrine of Sri Ranganatha accessible over a flight of steps and on the other are the shrines of Narasimha and Namagiri on ground level, with a colossal brick-work statue of Hanuman in front. According to a time-honoured Hindu practice, most of the Namakal boys are called Narasimha and most of the Namakal girls are called Namagiri.

My story is of one of the Namagiri's of Namakal, who is said to have lent her name to the hamlet of Namagiripet. Plutarch records how a town was named after a horse, after the famous Bucephalus, Alexander's steed, and another after his favourite dog, Peritas. Plutarch's authority and so ours is Potamon of Lesbos.

Namagiri came of a house noted for its extensive charities, but falling on evil days, the members thereof scattered far and wide, and Namagiri herself, unable to live amid surroundings full of painful associations, left for an open country with a few miserable huts, where amid the general obscurity, she hoped to live and die unknown.

The malarial reigon at the foot of the Kollis, takes a frightful toll of human lives, and medical relief in those areas is the noblest and most essential form of social service. But in the far-off days of long ago of which I write, medical relief of the kind we now know of did not exist. Competing with the village barber who was the village surgeon and his wife who was the village mid-wife and maternity doctor, were quacks and sanyasis, who functioned as physicians, some relying on old-time specifics and empiric remedies, others on mere religious merit, on personal magnetism and psychic and other occult powers. Namagiri was one of those who, without any pretensions to scientific accomplishments, got pitch-forked into being and becoming doctors.

Namagiri was of the kindest disposition, with a look soft and tender and a word for every one, mild and courteous, so much so that her evident sympathy in many cases effected a cure. In

other cases, a little care and caution in nursing, brought about a miraculous cure. An old woman tumbled into the village pond was given first aid and restored to life. Colic pain was relieved by a plentiful administration of cold water with *thulsi* leaves (*Ocimum Sanctum*) and her reputation spread. Without intending it, she achieved a great reputation. Thousands flocked to Namagiripet, and settled down as in a sanatorium, until Kavandanpatti that was became Namagiripet that we know of.

In very recent days at Salem, we know what a sensation was caused when a fraud of a sanyasi from Nambuthalai, in the Ramnad District, came over and dispensed holy water, and all manner of men, including many that ought to know better, flocked to him for a remedy. We have heard how a lady took some magnetised water for curing a child suffering from *Infantile Paraplegia* or Little's Disease; how her husband expressed a doubt as to the efficacy of the water and the water forthwith turned into ink; how both the penitent and unhappy parents prostrated themselves before the sanyasi and took a fresh supply of the precious liquid; how before the regulation number of doses could be administered the sanyasi disappeared, leaving the parents disconsolate and the child without a remedy. Namagiri was no fraud. She lived on, growing in virtue in every sense of the expression and her reputation built up the Namagiripet that we see to-day.

How shall I describe Namagiri? How shall I communicate to you an adequate idea and make you realise something of the charm and fascination she exercised over all those who came within the circle of her influence? A domed head, religious and reverential, with a high forehead, marked by clear drawn parallel lines of thinking, very much like what you see in pictures of Lowell prefixed to his collected poems; then a long face with a long slender nose of domesticity, with lips ripe and ruddy such as Wilde spoke of, as being made for "the luring and the love of man". But oh! the best description won't bring anything to your mind, unless you have seen her or the like of her; therefore, instead of constructing a figure out of the details in an inventory, think of all the beautiful people you have seen, men, women, children, recall all the charms that have charmed you by way of lovely forehead, shapely nose, luscious lips, dimpled chin and cheeks, and all the loveliness that is Unique, you have before you the Namagiri of my story. She was not a dazzling beauty, but she charmed everyone with a sweetness that comes of comely features, a kindly disposition, a simple and sincere life.

Now Beauty provoketh a thief sooner than gold, and some people felt Namagiri's beauty rather provocative. Such was the

feeling of some hill-men of Korangunad on the Kollis. As they came week after week to the shandy at the foot of the hills, to sell guavas and other hill-fruits, or to pay their debts in paddy and the produce of their fields, they heard of and experienced the magical cures wrought by Namagiri, and resolved to carry her away to their own *nadu*. They gave her makali roots and prize-size oranges, and oftenest pomegranates of which she was desparately fond. They spoke of a great wild country where climbing a-top you could let your eye range over an infinite variety of scenes; over fields of mustard, yellow with blossoms, bright as those on a printed page; over paddy-flats green and glorious; over plantain groves that looked dark and secretive; over verdurous mountain-slopes radiant with water-falls, that stood straight like pillars of adamant, gleaming in the bright sunshine and soft moon-light; over level ground cut up by cool runnels that carried limpid water, that rolled softly over slippery slopes and roared in little water-falls, but moved noiselessly under large drifts of fallen leaves; over dense growths of calladium bearing flowers like Arum lilies. They spoke of cobra plants that bore coral berries in a blazing bunch; of large sheets of water that nestled under the shade of jack and tamarind trees, reflecting the sky in their cool and clear depths; of rose-bushes and pomegranates that bore flower and fruit in plenty; and of everything the heart could desire, of the beauty and the bounty of Nature.

Namagiri listened with the fascination with which the Duchess in Browning listened to the Gipsy; and having heard of Arapaliswaran temple, famed in song for its sanctity and beauty of situation, agreed to be taken to that temple.

Manius Curius, who had driven Pyrrhus out of Italy and been carried thrice in triumph, rejected the gold of the Samnite Ambassadors, declaring that it was more honourable to conquer those who possessed the gold than to possess the gold itself. A similar thought possessed the Korangu *nadu* men, who not laying much claim to beauty themselves, thought it very good to possess one who possessed beauty. Under pretence of taking Namagiri to Arapaliswaran temple, they wanted to carry her off to their own *nadu*.

Meanwhile, Pattabiramiah of Namagiripet, grateful to Namagiri for relief from severe pain, such as Saint Tiru-navukarasu, one of the four great teachers of Saivism, suffered from and sang about, and finally found relief for at Athigai Virattanam on the banks of the Gadila, made up his mind, like some other people in a similar situation, to offer marriage to his nurse-doctor. In every case of true love, the lover so much under-estimates

himself, that he believes himself unworthy of his beloved, unless he could break a lance in a tourney as in the old-days of chivalry, or do something extraordinary. Pattabiram was prepared to die for her, but there was no need, and indeed there was no opportunity for such sacrifice. He wanted to sell away all he had and lay the treasure at her feet along with his heart for her to tread on if she were so inclined; but soon a little reflection brought home to him the ridiculous nature of the proposal, and he feared how all the villagers will laugh at him and he would gain nothing by it and might in consequence fall low in the estimation of the lady herself. Thus between ecstasy of love and the steadying influence of a little reflection and commonsense, he halted and hesitated, but loving Namagiri quite desperately at a distance found much business to transact in the street in which she lived; passed and re-passed her house-front many times over, particularly at evening time to catch a glimpse of her behind her lighted window, without himself being seen or suspected of seeing. He heard of Namagiri's going to the Kollis, and accompanied her without her knowledge and at such a respectful distance, that ere long he fairly lost his way. He saw everything double; looking at the twinkling stars saw two arudhras. Presently a sudden and unexpected burst of rain swelled every mountain stream into a roaring torrent. Hours passed before the smaller runnels could become fordable, and days passed before one could safely set forth on his way again. In chagrin and in sheer despair, he rinsed his wet clothes and wept, and then got wet, with more rain, rinsed his clothes again and wept again. A patient and painstaking mathematician says he did so eight times, but of this we can't be sure, as the man was not with him and as it might possibly have been oftener.

Meanwhile, the Korangunad men, passing a tiger-trap and hearing the howl both of the tiger and of distant thunder, and like the Romans believing in the inauspicious character of such an omen as portending evil for their evil design, dropped the *Dholi* or chair in which they carried Namagiri and fled. The trap is a sort of a hollow cairn, with a narrow passage and enclosing a deep pit. The tiger is tempted into it by a bait in the shape of a lamb or a kid and then beaten with sticks, and killed. At such a spot Namagiri was dropped by the Korangunad men, who in this case were victims more of fear and superstition, than of the mischievous instinct characteristic of their *nadu*.

Fancy now, a soft and gentle lady, in the midst of a deep and dark forest, in rainy weather with every leaf dripping with drops of biting cold water; her bearers and companions gone, herself alone in a strange and unknown spot in the vicinity of a howling

tiger; with dank and decaying leaves emitting a rank and miasmic smell and stench; with noise of water everywhere and insects crawling uncomfortably up and down; not to talk of leeches that sucked blood! Och! The thing was not worth the trouble. Mountain life was savage and brutal, scarcely safe and certainly fraught with every peril and danger. The very *dholi* was filled with water, dripping from the umbrella and dripping at the head and foot and collecting in the centre, not a *dholi* but a bath-tub: and even that gone now. The men were brutes, but even brutish company was better than none. Solitude has its charms as a relief from society and not in and by itself. Certainly not at night in the depth of a dark forest at a time of rain and thunder!

Day dawned; the korangunadu men were nowhere to be found, but with them all of Namagiri's miseries were also gone. The tiger when entering the trap had dislodged a stone which fell on it heavily and crushed its bones. The howl marked the last protest that life made against death, that the tiger made against "the deep damnation of his taking off".

Malayali coolies pass down every day to the plain, and some of them carried Namagiri to Arapaliswaran Temple after all.

The weather was remarkably fine; birds sang on every bough, and the mist rolling off revealed the glory of mountain and forest. Tall trees with tendrils twisted round the scarlet flowers blazing on them, stood up like pillars to the sky. The leaves rain-washed sparkled bright and beautiful with the pendulous pearls of rain-drops. The blossoms that opened at early dawn sent forth a sweet aroma, which was bracing and refreshing to inhale.

And the way to Arapaliswaran Kovil went undulating over hill and dale across little channels fringed with ferns and skirted by tall and stately trees. At each turn of the road, new prospects, new scenes of beauty broke upon the view and the occasional appearance of human dwellings was most re-assuring. A broad river wound its way between two hillocks and the oranges that hung plentifully on the branches were of a bright colour that gave variety to the scene. So too the plantains. Where human habitations were not, wild flowers, violet and crimson and blue, lent beauty to the landscape. The water in the wells was milky. In some places there were holes fresh dug over-night by bears digging in the soil for ants. The claws were clearly at work also at jack fruits and the possibility of meeting a bear was exciting. Without any accident of the kind the party reached Arapaliswaran Kovil.

On a mild elevation skirted round and washed by the purifying waters of a torrent that leaps down in cataract after cataract to the plains scooping its way down the hill-sides, on a grassy lawn that marks the arch and bend of a horse-shoe, over-looking a deep valley that reaches out into the neighbouring district of Trichinopoly, rises in solitary splendour the ancient shrine of Arapaliswaran. A solitary cocoanut tree is a conspicuous landmark from the Chulavandu side. On such a height, as on a height intellectual, one takes a broad view, takes vast stretches of landscape at one glance. From here, one beholds the sun rise up and bathe the world in light. The air blows fresh and free. The tidal waves of that ocean of air "into our inmost being flow and lift us unawares out of all meaner cares". That is why temples are located on beauty-spots and that too is what makes for sanctity. An atmosphere of holiness invests such spots and raising man above mere mundane considerations, links him with whatever is stately and sublime, with whatever is superb and supreme.

And what a pleasure to lave your feet in the cool mountain stream, watch the shoals of black-backed fish rise and flow towards you for offerings of food: How they roll over each other, splash the water with their tails and keep up a pretty commotion until all the rice is eaten up and there is nothing left to fight for. Oh! such sights are an adequate compensation for any troubles endured, any difficulties undergone.

Pattabiraman's sufferings also ceased with dawn. He was taken to a Malayali hut and fed on whatever the poor owner thereof could provide. But he was impatient to be gone, and indignantly demanded of every one he met, including stone images of village deities, the whereabouts of Namagiri. When he could not get an answer, he rudely assaulted the Gods, and the Malayalis taking him to be daft, left him alone to his own devices, by which cause and circumstance, he never reached Arapaliswaran temple at all. Lady Dorothy Neville tells us of her father's temper, and gives us an instance of the inconvenience it caused him. She tells us how he stormed at coachmen violently, so much so that once on the Continent a frightened coachman took his horses away, leaving his lordship the luxury of storming at vacancy in the depths of a wood on a dark night. A similar fate befell Pattabiraman, and he went down the steep Pulianchilai road into the Trichinopoly District, more indignant than Arnold's Tyrian Trader at sight of the Grecian Conster. He grew red in the face and hoarse in the throat and developed a sort of apoplexy from which he was finally recovered by a Unani doctor who gave him the "Fat of the Rocks," the dew gathered from a hillside and kept as per advice of ancient writers, in an ass's hoof because

of its exceeding piercing cold. Plutarch in his life of Alexander speaks of this distillation of the rocks, as a deadly poison and attributes the death of Alexander to the administration thereof. But it is a well-known specific in Unani therapeutics, and a Hakim gave it the other day to Ahmed, Ahmed Hussin, and Raha-muttullah, all of whom became in consequence fat as elephants, fierce as lions, and fruitful as the vine.

Namagiri, quite oblivious of what befell Pattabiraman, stayed on the Kollis admiring the scenery and practising austerities. The tiger was stripped of its coat and claws and teeth. It is said that the sight of the tiger-skin it was that suggested to Namagiri the idea of starting off on a new career, that of an ascetic! She changed her name and garb, assumed the yellow robe and called herself Yogananda and thus unsexed herself also. As further confirming herself in the course she had adopted, she took a vow of silence for a year. How silence adds to sanctity may not be clear, but any kind of discipline is bound to result in an access of strength to the will and thereby make easy the conquest of one's lower self.

Months later, after many wanderings, Pattabiraman went to the Kollis, to the temple of Arapaliswaran, but failed to recognise in the silent sanyasi his lost Love. Time had cooled the ardour of his passion, or perhaps his sufferings strengthened his will and sharpened his commonsense. He used to say indeed that that Namagiri could be found out by her inordinate love of pomegranates and by the two dazzling nose-screws that she had a feminine failing for. You may look out for any man with the holes on the sides of the nose if you like and tempt him with pomegranates particularly if he be good-looking, but it will be a futile, if not a foolish task, certainly not worth your while, as all this took place long, long ago. Even Pattabiraman gave up the quest, content to lament in Wordsworthian verse:

She lived unknown and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be,
But she is in her grave and Oh,
The difference to me!

Satyagraha.

By P. S. N.

THERE was utter incompatibility in the views of Ramu and his wife, with regard to some matters, which were tending to disturb the quiet of their domestic life. For one thing, Ramu was a life-long devotee of Bacchus, and Kamala who was steeped to her finger tips in Gandhian philosophy was resolved upon weaning him from this nasty habit. She tried persuasion and entreaties. She poured forth her full soul and prayed on bended knees that her husband should not drink any more. For the moment, and especially when his brains had warmed under the influence of alcohol, Ramu was only too ready to grant any prayer his wife might think fit to ask, to be retracted the moment he became sober. Finding overtures unavailing, Kamala thought the next best course would be to remove the materials of mischief out of the way of Ramu. As regularly as the bottle of whisky was left by Ramu in his private almirah, with equal regularity Kamala managed to force it open and fritter away the contents of the bottle into thin air. Ramu was very much vexed, not so much at the additional expenditure which it involved, as at the bitter disappointment which he had to endure, at finding the almirah always empty when his thirst for liquor was at its highest. He could endure it no longer. He resolved upon taking more drastic action. His wife was indeed transgressing the limits of legitimate authority. So long as it stopped with prayers and entreaties, it all looked very well. Every man thinks that he is a demi-god to his wife, and it is in the fitness of things that she should pray to him. It enhanced his prestige, and impressed him very much with the sense of his own superiority. But from prayers to descend to subterfuges, and to give room to the impression that he was a mere milk-sop was scarcely to Ramu's taste.

"Kamala, I can't endure this any longer. The next time I find the bottle missing, I propose to deal very severely with you."

"Oh! It sounds quite like a Viceregal Ordinance."

"Thank you for the idea," added Ramu, "and the least disobedience will result in a lathi charge."

"That will indeed be a splendid opportunity to test whether brute force or soul force will ultimately triumph. You have thrown your challenge and I mine."

Ramu was infuriated beyond bounds. This was scarcely the language to be used by a wife. Was the world going to the dogs? What was to become of obedience, duty, fidelity and the thousand and one things which every wife owes to her husband? He owed it to himself and to every son of man, to assert and secure the divine right of husbands to dominate the household. But too much of talking was not in Ramu's line. He was essentially a man of action. Without another word, he pounced out of the house to the nearest shop, and asked for a cane. Canes of varying lengths and thickness were displayed before Ramu. The shop-keeper praised the virtues of each. This one was just the size to kill a cobra with, that one a very effective weapon of defence against a whole army of robbers, and so on. Ramu cut him short by saying that it was not his wish to kill a cobra or a robber, though he was ashamed in all conscience to avow his real purpose. Finally he chose one, whose only virtue was that it was the cheapest of the lot, and ran home, and very conspicuously hung it in front of the almirah. Kamala just then entered.

"Here is the lathi which you have been longing for," began Ramu.

"What a nice little cane! I wish to kiss it," replied Kamala, and suiting the action to the word fell to kissing the cane.

"Do you mean to make the cane less mischievous by kissing it?" snorted Ramu.

"No. No. It is my God, my Guardian Angel; it would be foolish to call it a mere cane. It is a magic wand. What I, with all my sense and intelligence, have not been able to accomplish all these years, this fragile cane is going to achieve in a single day." To Ramu's muddled brains, all this sounded like mere drivel, but he kept his temper and went away.

Ramu came according to time for his whisky bottle and opened the almirah. The bottle was not there. Kamala was standing near beaming with smiles. Ramu instantly snatched at the cane, and Kamala the same moment held out her hand. This was not what Ramu expected. Some bit of resistance, which might put him in greater rage was what he wanted. Instead, he found instant readiness to receive punishment. The cane which was lifted up with great energy hung in Ramu's hand, limp and lifeless. "Why does it not fall?" demanded Kamala.

"I warn you this time. If you repeat this trick of yours, things will go hard with you. Take care." With this admonition Ramu took his departure.

The first man he met on the way was Sundaram, who was a guide, philosopher and friend to Ramu. Ramu unbosomed himself of all his domestic troubles and asked for his advice.

"You are a fool, Ramu. You have not an ounce of tact. Should you necessarily resort to the cane to gain your end? You have only to say that you are penitent and will reform yourself and your missus will be mightily pleased with the assurance, and behind her back or away from her, you can indulge your taste for liquor to your heart's content."

"Indeed, Sundram, it is a capital idea. I wonder how I ever came to miss it." Without waiting for further comments or reply, Ramu ran home.

"Kamala! Kamala! I am going to be a good boy for the future. There will be no more whisky for me."

"I am indeed very glad to hear it. Only this promise of reform coming with such suddenness makes me a little suspicious."

"What do you suspect?"

"You left the house just five minutes ago in a mighty rage against me, and now you return in the sweetest of tempers promising reform; I am just trying to unfathom the meaning underlying this sudden transformation."

"Oh! Don't be an ass. I met Sundaram on the way, and told him everything. He said that your point of view was quite right, and that I was a fool not to heed your words."

"Oh! You met Sundaram of all people?"

"Yes. What if? What is the matter with him?"

"Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Sundaram is a very worthy man, and a very worthy friend of yours. Far be it from me to cast any aspersions on him. I hope you are sincere in your promise of reform."

"Absolutely sincere."

"Then where is the key of the iron-safe?"

"What do you want it for?"

"I will regulate the household expenditure, and see that every legitimate want of yours is satisfied."

"Do you want me to be receiving doles from you? You seem to forget that I am the master of this house."

"By all means, you are welcome to continue to be the master. I do not propose to deprive you of any bit of your status or dignity. You are and ever will be my Lord, my Master, and my dearest husband. What more do you want?"

"I fear, you are throwing unnecessary obstacles in the way of our reconciliation. If we disagree, it will be for no fault of mine. But it is settled that I am not going to hand over the key to you."

"Then are all your promises mere hollow pretensions?"

"Call it what you will. Tell me once for all, whether it is war that you want. If so, you shall have it to your heart's content."

"What a silly question to put to a woman like me. Do I look like waging war, and that on my own husband? Sufference is the badge of all our tribe, and I am ready to suffer, till my house is purged of all its evils."

Ramu opened the campaign by purchasing a bottle of whisky and placing it in the almirah. Kamala, as was to be expected, threw it away. The cane fell on the delicate shoulders of Kamala, but she would not even wince. She received the blows with the greatest composure. Ramu, immensely satisfied with his performance, went away.

The news got about in the locality that Ramu and his wife had quarrelled, in which the latter was beaten, and all for a bottle of whisky. There were conflicting opinions about the propriety of Ramu's act. There were some who were upholders of the authority of husbands, and others who cried themselves hoarse over the supremacy of men over women. Some others took a middle view, that though Ramu's act may be justified on principle, still because she was such a good lady, actuated by purest of motives, she should have been spared the rod. Gopal, who was not quite an adept in the ways of the world, suggested that they should interfere, to bring about amicable feelings between husband and wife.

"Tush! Tush!" exclaimed Vamban, one of the elders of the village. "It is no business of ours to interfere in the domestic concerns of any man. They must settle their differences themselves."

"But, I fear, Ramu might push it to extremes," put in Gopal.

"God's will be done," and with this pious exclamation on his lips, Vamban rose to depart.

The succeeding day Kamala fared worse. She was beaten black and blue, till she became unconscious. Every one of the neighbours came, felt her pulse, and pronounced her still alive. But they did not trouble themselves any further. The dinner time approached. Ramu felt hungry. He went to the kitchen and nothing was there. He ransacked every nook and corner of the household. There was not a morsel to eat anywhere. Ramu grew despondent and stared into the face of each of those who had assembled there.

"What is the trouble?" asked Vamban.

"I am hungry," replied Ramu.

"Is there nothing to eat?"

"My wife has not cooked for me."

"She is still alive. Why don't you ask her to get up and prepare your dinner?"

"I fear she is unconscious."

"Then eat her up. We can't help you," and Vamban took a hasty departure, with the rest close on his heels.

The succeeding days were days of trial for Ramu. There was no one to feed him. What with starving and what with guilt preying upon his conscience that he had nearly killed his wife, for what was a legitimate protest on her part, Ramu was reduced to a skeleton.

At last Kamala woke up from her stupor. She got up, and smiled upon her husband, and began to attend to her household duties, as if nothing had happened.

Ramu watched everything. She too was starving like him, in addition to being beaten. What magic was it that she was not in the least shaken for all that?

"How is it, you are so lean and haggard?" asked Kamala.

"Don't you know, I had nothing to eat all these days. You were lying there unconscious, and no one would offer me even a morsel."

"Was I really unconscious? I thought I had gone to sleep. I don't know what made me unconscious."

Ramu was ashamed to speak further. Tears trickled down his eyes, half in penitence for his own rashness, and half in admiration for his wife's largeness of heart, which would not allow the least vindictiveness to lodge in it. He fell at her feet. "Tell me, Kamala, the secret of it all, I implore you."

"My dear husband, there is no other secret behind it. I live on the strength of my soul, and you on the toughness of your flesh. Cultivate your soul, which is now over-grown with rank weeds."

"I acknowledge you are my master. Forgive me for my sins."

"Forgiveness is with God. You are my husband, and you will be that for ever and always. But—don't think of whisky any more."

Songs of Sri Ram Prasad.

By Swami Jagadiswarananda.

IX

O mind, repeat the name of Kali always. If you wish to be liberated then meditate on Her and drink Her Namamrita (nectar of her name). When inexorable Death comes brothers, sisters, friends and no other worldly relations will help you except Her Gracious Feet. Take the name of Durga, for Her name is the only wealth of your earthly sojourn. This infinite world is Anitya and everything here is transitory. The Kala (time) of our life is passed and Kala the eternal auditor of our life-accounts is at the door. Prasad says: O mind, repeat the name of Kali, for this will relieve you of your pangs of separation and Death.

X

Mother, you puzzle all human understanding. Tell me finally whether you will obey the Agamas and the Nigamas—the words of Shiva. You prefer cremation-ground to palace adorned with jewels. And like you, mother, father Shiva cannot give up his habit of preparing Siddhi.⁽¹⁾ But whomsoever you favour with your benign grace, amazing becomes his appearance. He ties a pair of coupin round his waist, besmears the body with sacred ashes and grows Jata (matted hair) on the head. Like the blacksmith you hammer me cruelly on the anvil of the world. In the midst of all these adversities I call on you mother, thanks to my bravery. The rumour has spread on all sides that Prasad is the child of the Brahmamayi. Who else can protect the mystery of such dealing between a mother and her son?

XI

Who comes there? Are you mother? Come mother. Come, as I want to unbosom my heart to you. I will tell you the tales of my sorrows. After condemning me to years of torment if you have at all vouchsafed your grace

(1) Intoxicating herbs grown on the hills which the Sadhus are traditionally said to be very fond of.

to me, then being a mother do listen to your son's prayers like an affectionate mother. Stand on the lotus of my heart. I shall pluck flowers from the garden of my mind and sprinkling sandal paste of Bhakti over them. I shall worship you there and pay homage of such flowers to your holy feet. I shall kindle sacrificial fire there and do Homa in the Chit-Kunda of the heart. I shall sing Jai Kali (victory to Kali), Jai Kali and offer Purnahuti.⁽²⁾ Death is my Dakshina to you as you are all the fruits of action. Mother's child has now become a Premika to whom Kala (God of Death) stands with folded hands.

XII

Who wants to go on a pilgrimage to Gaya, the Ganges, Prayash, Kashi (Benares), Kanchi (Canjerceram) and other holy places if the mental rosary of Ajapa tells always the beads of Kali, Kali. He does not require any puja or Sandhya who sings the glory of Kali in three Sandhyas⁽³⁾. The Sandhya pursues him in vain for sandhi (Union). Who knows that the name of Kali has such latent powers? Mahadeva, the Primal God, cannot exhaust its glory in even five months. Yajna, Vrata and other rituals and ceremonies have no charm for me now. The rosy feet of the Anandamaji (all blissful) Kali is everything to me.

XIII

Oh, mother of the world, save me mother. Am I outside your creation that you liberate all except me? The day (of life) is gone and in the advent of night I want to sail across the sea of the world on sole dependence on Sri Durga. My bark is worn-out and is sinking. Oh, Kandari (helmsman) protect me. Prasad is at a loss to think that you being the mother send me, your son away to other house. Where have you learnt such Dharma that you wish to forsake your only dependent child?

(2) Purna = full. Ahuti = offering. Purnahuti is the last offering (of the worshipper) consisting of himself and his all, both external and internal.

(3) Morning, noon and evening.

In Tagore-Land.

II

Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj.

By N. Lakshmanan.



Unofficial secretary to one of the members of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, I got the facility for gaining a synthetic view of the manifold and complex problems of rural India. The present all-India tour proved to be another pilgrimage—"a pilgrimage of Indian farming". It was a rare joy to re-visit *Bungla-Desh* after an interval of about fifteen years. By a happy coincidence I stayed on long enough to witness the Magh Utsav as well as Poet Tagore's latest drama at Calcutta and, a week later, the celebration of the anniversary of Sri-Niketan at the village of Surul, near Santi-Niketan. The value of all these precious events was simply enhanced by Rabindranath's dynamic and towering personality. Yes; "a poet's help is needed at the time of awakening."

The Magh Utsav is the great annual festival of the Brahmo Samaj and was, as usual, celebrated at Tagore's Jorasanko house and elsewhere. The elite of Calcutta, nay of Bengal, congregated to listen to the inspiring sermons of Rabindranath and his affectionate colleague, Professor Kshiti Mohun Sen of the Visva-Bharati. There is nothing anywhere else in India to compare with this spiritual Prayag.

One heard some years ago that the people of Bengal lacked "the commemorative instinct"—the gratitude and the will to celebrate national *Sarthas*. This allegation is not fully borne out by facts and, at any rate, is not applicable to contemporary life, as far as one can see. A significant incident shows the trend of events. And it is this. The Brahmo Samaj was founded in 1828, and so the Brahmos began to celebrate the centenary of Brahmoism from the month of August 1928. As the first Brahmo house of worship (known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj Mandir) was erected in 1830, some Brahmos held that the centenary should be celebrated in 1930. So, by way of reconciling both the views, the centenary celebrations continued in different ways and in different places till January 1930! The Editor of the *Modern Review* records this fact without a word of comment. Bengal truly knows the value of festivals in enriching national life.

The Brahmo Samaj is a Hindu Protestant Movement and its prophetic founder was a Hindu to the core of his being. As his devoted English biographer says:

Ram Mohun's awakened life was one of continuous transition. From the time when he left his father's house in revolt against conventional Hinduism to the last days in Stapleton Grove, his mind was moving on. x x x European Unitarianism left little room for the development of his warm-blooded Oriental passion for religion. x x x He was a genuine outgrowth of the old Hindu stock; in a soil watered by new influences, and in an atmosphere charged with unwonted forcing power, but still a true scion of the old stock. *

The Trust Deed of the Brahmo Samaj is a veritable charter of religious freedom and religious toleration. And yet orthodoxy opposed him with the usual slogan: "Religion in Danger." † In his monumental *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, Pandit Sivanath Sastri gives a lively picture of the furious party contests between the *Dharma Sabha* and the *Brahmo Sabha*. The sequel shows that the socio-religious conflict was only a passing phase. For, there are now in India more Brahmos outside the Samaj than inside it. And this is a further proof of the peculiar "assimilative power" of Hinduism. After all, as my esteemed chief, Mr. K. Natarajan, says with insight and catholicity, Hindu orthodoxy is the most educable orthodoxy in the world. Such is the considered opinion of a life-long social reformer.

The century-old "radicalism" of the Brahmo Samaj has become the accepted creed of to-day. M. Romain Rolland, with the vision of a true historian, traces the broad outline of the picture of the renaissance of Modern India. He says:

Raja Ram Mohun Roy founded the community of the Brahmo Samaj, uniting all the religions of the world into a religious system based on *faith in one God without a second*. Such an idea was necessarily confined at first within a group of *elite* and gradually ever since roused profound echoes in the souls of the great mystics of Bengal and through them it is permeating, little by little, the masses of India. ‡

Such is also the testimony of those who intimately know India and her people. The Brahmo Samaj has "profoundly affected the mass of the people, who are being rapidly leavened with the new ideals". §

* Miss S. D. Collet: *Life and Letters of Raja Ram Mohun Roy*, P. 235 seq.

† "Nothing indeed was done by the new society to which Hindu orthodoxy of the present day would have seriously objected. But we must not forget that one hundred years ago Hindu orthodoxy was far more uncompromising in its rigidity and far less tolerant than it is now; and the reformers, cautious as they were, incurred no small odium by attempting to do away with the practice of image worship." Sukumar Halder: *Ram Mohun Roy and Hinduism*, p. 4.

‡ Tolstoy centenary number of "Europe"; translation by Dr. Kalidas Nag: "Modern Review" for September, 1928, p. 372.

§ Hem Chandra Sarkar's Introduction to Collet's *Life of Ram Mohun*.

The root of the Raja's life was religion. His biographers emphasise this point. Prof. Dhirendranath Chowdhuri Vedantavagis has clearly indicated the source from which the Raja's greatness springs. The source is Ram Mohun's *Brahmo Sadhana*. Above all, the Raja was a *Sadhaka*, a *Bhakta*, a Psalmist.

In his early life the Raja was eager to adopt *sannyasa* from taking which step he was prevented by his mother. In his early boyhood he prepared bricks with the mystic syllable (*om*) imprinted on them and built a *vedi* (Platform) with them on which he sat hours together practising spiritual exercises. x x x Ram Mohun denied himself the luxury of the reputation of a medieval saint, though his *sadhana* was none the less exacting. x x x Ram Mohun found room for *Samadhi* even in the midst of multifarious distractions of a supremely active life *

The God-Consciousness of this "Erasmus of India" was only equalled by his insatiable thirst for serving suffering humanity. Rev. Hem Chandra Sarkar has recorded a touching anecdote. In England, while at church, Ram Mohun was often found to shed tears, though there was nothing in the sermon to occasion it. Once a friend asked him what made him weep. The Raja replied that the remembrance of his poor countrymen gave him no rest. † This is characteristic of the Father of New India who in his "communications" on the Revenue Systems championed, just one hundred years ago, the cause of the poor peasantry of India. This is also characteristic of the all-round reformer and humanitarian worker who said that he would be free or not be at all.

* Ram Mohun Roy, the Devotee: *Modern Review* Oct. 1928.

† Similar versions are recorded about Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha Swamis in America.

Book Reviews.

The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel: By Romain Rolland. Translated from the original French by E. F. Malcolm Smith, M.A., Ph.D., (Cantab) and Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, 1931. Price Rs. 3.

Although one would unhesitatingly endorse the observation that only a Vivekananda can fully understand a Vivekananda, one cannot expect to get a Vivekananda to interpret the life and work of Swami Vivekananda. And as long as one has to content oneself with the estimates formed by inferior intellects, one would heartily welcome a work of the kind under consideration. The biography of Swami Vivekananda, written by his disciples and published by the Advaita Ashrama, is diffuse and cumbersome. Sister Nivedita has, unfortunately, left us only some snatches of the great life of her Master. There has been a real need for an impartial and reasoned estimate, and a concise and able exposition of the life, philosophy and work of the great Indian Prophet of the Modern Age. The work of Romain Rolland goes a long way to meet the demand.

Collecting, with no small amount of pain and labour, all available information about the life and work of Swami Vivekananda, and sympathetically applying his mature understanding and critical acumen to the valuable materials collected, the great savant of the West has produced a work of high character and importance. The materials are collected by the author from authentic sources, and the incidents from the life of the hero are chosen with much care and judgment. The critical examination of the life and work of the hero, in the light of the life and philosophy of the saints of the West, makes the exposition piquant and enlightening. The book is a highly vivid composition, rich with quotations of the thrilling and illuminating words of the Divine Messenger. When one considers the difficulties in the path of the author, who does not know the language in which the Swami spoke and wrote and in which the whole literature about the Swami is written, one must say, that this great interpreter of the East to the West has, by his present brilliant piece of work, placed both the East and the West under an obligation, which cannot be easily discharged. While the author calls the attention of the West to the invaluable treasures of the East to rebuild the homes of Europe, he also opens the eyes of the East, now blinded by the glamour of the West. The work, with its first volume on

Shri Ramakrishna, makes a valuable contribution to the literature of the world.

The lion of Vedanta whose majestic roar, charged with divine power and grace, chased off the prowling jackals of superstition, bisons of bigotry, wolves of fanaticism and all their ravenous brood, and redeemed the whelps of humanity cowering in the dense, dingy corners of the wilderness of dreams and desires, passions and pettifoggery, and awakened them to their glorious divine heritage; such, in sooth, is Swami Vivekananda to Romain Rolland. The author sees in the Swami a giant intellect and a lion's heart, right royal in bearing, highly exalted in character, overpowering in strength, and all-embracing in scope. This "Warrior Prophet" of India is, to the author, the Messiah of the modern age, bearing on his forehead the imprimatur of Supreme Providence, the mighty Apostle of Freedom and Unity; of the glorious reality of Godhead and the peerless dignity of man; of the truth of all cults and creeds and religions, and the sumptuous doctrine of universal acceptance in contradistinction to the niggardly courtesy of toleration. The Swami was the living embodiment of the work he did and the philosophy he propounded. He was a consummate *Jnani*, an exalted *Yogi*, a selfless *Bhakta*, and a thorough *Karmi*, all in one. In Shri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, (they are one and inseparable in the eyes of Romain Rolland), the author finds the fulfilment of his life-long dream, and the Ideal for which the modern world pants.

The author points out the extraordinary qualities of the young Naren and traces the powerful forces that co-operate in his early life to make him the Prophet until the youthful monk rises like a radiant sun on the platform of the Parliament of Religions and delivers his elevating and illuminating message. He then narrates the stupendous work of the Master and how he confirms it all by founding the Shri Ramakrishna Math and Mission. This great prophet of the present day grasps the whole world and captivates it as much with his heart and hands as with his head and remorselessly sacrifices himself for it. The sharp-sighted author espies in all the life and work of the great hero the unmistakable divine hand operating for the fulfilment of the needs of modern times.

In the second part of the book the author examines and expounds the universal gospel of Swami Vivekananda. He critically examines the life and philosophy of the Swami in the light of modern science and advanced reason and culture, and gives a clear interpretation of what he understands by *Maya* and the "march of the human soul to freedom". He examines

the four paths of *Jnana*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga* and *Karma*, leading to the freedom of the soul and its real realisation of the Universal Self. He finds that a harmonious combination of all the four, as in the life and work of the Swami, is the inevitable need of the present age. The writer sees that the Advaita Vedanta is the culmination of philosophical thought. He notes how in India philosophy is never divorced from religion. To know is, to the Hindu, to do. The author marks the universality of the thoughts and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and shows how scientifically reasonable they are. He also catches the note of warning sounded by Swamiji to the followers of the highest system of philosophical thought, and says that no scientist or rationalist can be more alive to the dangers of dilettantism in such an exalted religio-philosophical system.

In the last chapter of the second part, the author expounds the universal importance of the philosophy and the work of Swami Vivekananda. He shows how the Swami is the heavenly-torch-bearer of the modern era, who brings to humanity a new light and strength and opens the eyes of man to his endless freedom and exalted dignity as a divine drop. He further points out the importance of the Shri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and how thoroughly in accordance with the highest culture and the secret thoughts and longings of the western world are the gospel and works of the Swami. If the present European civilization does not imbibe the spirit of Swami Vivekananda, it will end in a disastrous explosion. The author calls to the West to allay its high fever of frantic materialism and delirious self-conceit with the ambrosial waters of the holy Ganga flowing through Shri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

The author rightly attributes the cultural awakening of modern India to the life-giving touch of Swami Vivekananda. One is inclined to demur only when he says that, if the Swami had been alive to-day, he would have joined the present political upheaval in India. In the face of the express avowal of the Swami that God and soul are his only politics, and his unfailing prescription of man-making culture and realisation of the divinity of man as the panacea for all the ills of India and the Indians, and the wholesome doctrines of unity and universal acceptance, one seriously doubts the possibility of the prophet entering into a political struggle which, giving the go-by to the Swami's important lessons of man-making and spiritual culture, carries with it an internecine warfare of a religio-communal character and keeps as its vanguard a negative enterprise of non-co-operation and blind bolstering of disorder with the dangerous slogan of disobedience of law.

But, speaking generally, we freely admit that the author's views are impartial and his judgment thoroughly reasoned. It is significant and remarkable that a westerner so far removed from the hero and his country and its age-long culture, as Romain Rolland is from Swami Vivekananda and his way of life and thought, should be able to understand and interpret the life and work of Vivekananda so well and adequately as the author has done. The author's interpretation is extremely valuable and interesting, as being the product of deep thought and mature judgment of a great Western mind possessed of vast learning and experience, and profound knowledge of the world and keen insight into human nature.

The sketch of Hellenic-Christian Mysticism and the article on the scientific value of mystic introversion are valuable appendices to the book. These are not only informative but throw a flood of light on the life and character and philosophy of the modern Prophet of India; and also tell us of the rationale of the author's interpretation.

The original of the work is in French. What ineffable literary charms the original contains we are unable to know. But the translation in our hands—which, by the way, is a neatly printed, well illustrated and handsomely got up volume—is enough to give us an idea of the remarkable literary qualities of the original. A master craftsman of world-wide renown, the writer weilds his pen with conspicuous skill and grace, well deserving of the subject he handles, and arresting the attention of the reader in places.

P. M. Hari.

Revolt by Krishna Jus Roy. Published by the Delhi Publishing House, Nai Sarak, Delhi.

A small pamphlet containing twelve short epistles in which the author exhorts the reader in different moods to throw off the old bonds of formalism in life and religion and to lead a life of purity and love. The book opens with a small sketch of the life of J. Krishnamurthi, whose follower the author is, and contains his picture also. The book is neatly printed and got up.

The Spirit of Sufi Culture, by J. H. Jaisinghani. Akbar Ashram, Karachi. Tract No. 12.

This is a pamphlet which sets forth the Sufi cult in a clear and concise manner. Sufism is an ancient cult of the world, and, as the author says, is one of the many ways leading to the Highest. The writer shows how the principles of Sufism are essentially similar to those of Vedanta. The author shows what is implied in the different stages, Shariat, Tarikat, Marifat and Hakikat, of

the spiritual life of the Sufi, and how the last stage is attainment of complete freedom by the union of the Ruha (the individual self) with Haq (the Universal Self). Love, longing and fear are the important elements of human character that lead to the goal of life. The pamphlet gives, in simple language, a short exposition of Sufism. It will help to clear the mystery hanging over the honoured cult and misunderstanding created by the cloud over it. The tract is a welcome contribution.

P. M. H.

A School History of India by M. S. Ramaswamy Iyengar, M. A., and published by Messrs Srinivasa Varadachari & Co., Madras. Price Re. 1-12-0.

S. S. L. C. students are in a very unenviable position as regards their course of studies in History, Geography and Science. Apparently, the authorities intend the candidate for the S. S. L. C. to be a prodigy, containing in his head all the information and knowledge which Masters of Art have painfully acquired in a series of years by specialisation. And of these subjects, History is pre-eminently the object of scorn—dealing with the past, being useless from a utilitarian point of view and to be taken up only by those who have not the brains to tackle the difficulties encountered in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry or Botany. To add to this scorn, the Presidency average in History is always low. Is the student dull? Is the teacher a fool? Is the subject difficult? Are there no proper books? These questions have been asked frequently and are continued to be asked. At least, so far as books are concerned, we have them in any number prepared according to the S. S. L. C. syllabus—only no two books cover even approximately the same amount of detail. In this happy medley of books, we have recently the present book under review. School boys must really feel proud that a College Professor of long experience, great eminence and distinguished authorship, should have given them a helping hand through the pages of this valuable and cheap text-book, with information based upon up-to-date knowledge, and bringing the reader up to to-day. Let us hope that the Professor's dealing with the subject may have the approval of the examiner and that the subject-matter herein covered is what the authors of the S. S. L. C. syllabus had in view.

In these days when people are talking (Oh! they have been talking for years now) of vernacularisation, possibly a greater service may have been rendered by one of the Professor's standing if he had published an authoritative book in Tamil or Telugu, the language of the land of his birth or that of his domicile.

B. Rajagopal.

Comment and Criticism.

Kurup Guns in Tagore-Land.

Sir—I would not have entered the lists in this controversy but for my name having been drawn into it in an unexpected manner by my old friend, Mr. N. Lakshmanan's reference to me which led to Mr. Kurup making some remarks about me. Mr. Kurup is sure that Tagore has not yet found his true and impartial critic. Is he speaking with his tongue in his cheek? How can that statement be accurate when Tagore has got Mr. Kurup?

It is difficult to know how Mr. Kurup found out that to Europe and America Tagorean mysticism was the same as Tutenkhaman tapestry. The continents which produced Plato and Plotinus and the medieval Christian mystics and Swedenborg and Emerson, certainly knew mysticism, though the highest flights of mysticism—"the flights of the Alone to Alone," in the language of Plotinus—were certainly in India. Mr. Kurup must concede that Evelyn Underhill, who has written a fine book on mysticism and who wrote an admirable introduction to Tagore's translation of Kabir, knew at least something about mysticism. He must concede also that the Irish mystic poet, W. B. Yeats, who introduced *Gitanjali* to the Western world, knew what he was about when he wrote about "images of the heart turning to God" and "an innocence, a simplicity that one does not find elsewhere in literature" and when he says that "Mr. Tagore, like the Indian civilization itself, has been content to discover the soul and surrender himself to its spontaneity". To us modern mis-educated Indians, who have neither Indian nor European culture of the best type and who have no innocence or simplicity or spontaneity or soul-culture, mysticism will inevitably seem to be mere moonshine.

Mr. Kurup himself recognises these facts in a way. He is, however, angry that India should be called mystic. He says: "India is not, and never was, mystic in arts or science or philosophy". There could, of course, be no mysticism in science. But why should he get angry if India's Art or Philosophy or Religion is mystic, and is described so? A culture that prizes *yogic* vision and that dares to affirm the identity of soul and God and that affirms and prizes transcendental spiritual realisation need not be ashamed of being called a mystic culture.

All that is by the way. Somehow, Mr. Kurup is angry with Tagore. He says that "Tagore's poetry, rightly or wrongly

termed as mysticism, is nothing extraordinary to us in India". Who said that it was extraordinary? Mr. Kurup is raising a ghost and laying it. Tagore is only the last of a great line. The great merit of Tagore is that he has expressed his mystical intentions in supremely beautiful poetry. Mr. Kurup thinks that "from the highest standards of art these works of Tagore cannot be judged, and if judged they will not come up to the mark." What mark? Is it Mr. Kurup's mark?

Mr. Kurup blames Tagore for not rising to Homeric epic heights or Shakespearean dramatic heights. But who made the claim that he was a supreme epic poet, like Homer or Valmiki, or a supreme dramatist like Shakespeare? Mr. Kurup is demolishing unmade claims with rare power. He says; "After Wordsworth I do not know whether any really great writer has written so much trash as Tagore has done." He assures us that Tagore "would die away". All this is smart and epigrammatic writing, but it misses the essence and beauty of Tagore's art.

Mr. Kurup links me with Thomson—an honour which I do not deserve or accept—and says: "Frankly I do not consider Messrs. Thomson and Sastri authorities on Tagore's art". I bow to his judgment. But he goes further and says: "For that matter, the pronouncement of one critic is not binding on another." No *obiter dicta* are binding. But surely there are universal elements and standards and criteria in literary and artistic criticism as in literature and art, though there are individual and national elements as well. Mr. Kurup is facetious about blind admiration. Blind damning with faint praise and without true discernment a poet of the first magnitude is the very height of impropriety. He sneeringly speaks of Tagore's "combination of the virtue of brains with the *virtue of riches harnessed for the sole purpose* of winning fame". Did Tagore have the *sole purpose* of winning fame? Did Mr. Kurup come to know of it by any mystic vision (unconscious, of course) of his own? He sneers further and says: "The Nobel Committee decided in his favour; firstly because he was Eastern, and secondly because he was unquestionably the most high-thinking amongst a group of *unthinking second-rate poets that aspired to get nine thousand pounds sterling*". When the poets of Europe were expressing their soul in poesy at that time, ~~they were not~~ having their eyes on the Nobel money-bags. ~~Not were they~~ *unthinking second-rate poets*. Mr. Kurup is hurling his critical thunderbolts far and wide. Can it be that the whole world is wrong, and Mr. Kurup alone is right?

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