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The Theosophical College Magazine.

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EDITORIAL

OWING to unavoidable circumstances the publication of this number has been delayed; but we hope that the delay has not been so great as to extinguish our reader's interest in the journal. The last issue, we believe, was quite a success; at any rate it is encouraging to know that it was not entirely like "a scroll within the tomb, unread for ever". The response from the students this time, as the contents will show, has been very poor—in quantity we mean—and even after three months of waiting, we received only about half a dozen contributions from them which we have all published in this number. We trust that the students will muster strong in the pages of the next number which we hope to publish on the 15th of March.

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The present number should have been published on Dr. Arundale's birthday on the 1st of December, a day which is celebrated here annually as the Teachers' Day. Dr. Arundale embodies the highest gifts a teacher ought to possess. Dr. and Mrs. Arundale have just returned to India after a lengthy tour in Europe and are staying at Adyar. We publish his photograph as a frontispiece to this number and also his reply to the message of good wishes that the School and College sent to him on his birthday. We are again thankful to the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, for kindly printing the photograph for us.

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We trust that this number will provide interesting reading matter. Mr. S. R. Ranganathan of the Madras University Library has been good enough to contribute a highly interesting article on "The Library Movement and Democracy". Mrs. Hilda Wood is another contributor and she has written a very excellent article on "What is Greatness?". Mr. C. Subba Rao of the Theosophical High School has also kindly contributed a short and interesting article on "Geography and its Place in Education". Tirunavakkarasu's (III Class) two ink sketches on "Sartorial Fashions" and "Progress of Manners" are the most striking features of this number, and he wins the Editor's prize of a Kodak Pocket Camera for the best illustration or photograph. Among the literary contributions by the students, B. Muthuswamy Pillay's (II Class) essay on Thomas Hardy will be read with very great interest.

B. Ramachandran (I Class) has written a charming little essay on "My Village". R. Ramamurthy (II Class) has given a very vivid criticism of the Indian Stage in his article and K. M. Pillay (III Class) writes a timely article on the advantages of Shorthand and Typewriting.

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The members of the staff have also kindly contributed a few articles to this number. Our readers, we are sure, will greatly enjoy reading Mr. K. T. Krishnaswamy's Article where he has given a very charming picture of South Indian village life. We eagerly look forward to the publication of Mr. Iyengar's book of which the present article forms a chapter. Mr. B. Lakshmana Rao writes a highly instructive article on "Colloids and Health".

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The promise held out in the last issue of the Magazine regarding the Telugu section could not be fulfilled owing mainly to lack of contributions. A few articles that were offered came too late to be printed in this number and hence we were unable to revive the Telugu section. Our new Telugu Lecturer Mr. D. V. Krishnamuthy, M. A. to whom we offer a cordial welcome in our midst, has kindly consented to take charge of the Telugu section, and we hope to publish a liberal number of Telugu contributions in the next number.

We have also ventured to publish a very interesting article on "India's Educational Rebellion" by Dr. James H. Cousins. The article appeared sometime ago in the *Current History*, New York, and deals with the "Madanapalle Spirit" as it was in those earlier years. The spirit that inspired the founders and workers of the College in those days and which Dr. Cousins so vividly describes, has gone through many vicissitudes and is now, perhaps, burning with a dimmer light than it did then. We say *perhaps*,—but something tells us that that spirit cannot be extinguished and though its lustre to-day may be dimmed, it will flame brighter and brighter in the future and radiate its influence throughout the length and breadth of the country, just as it did in the days about which Dr. Cousins writes so vividly.

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It is our hope that this number will be in the hands of the readers on Principal Trilokekar's birthday, January 7th. Mr. Trilokekar, taking him all in all, is the best embodiment of that "Madanapalle Spirit" for which our College has always stood through thick and thin. We take this opportunity to wish Mr. Trilokekar a long and useful life and many many returns of this happy day.

Library Movement and Democracy.

By S. R. Ranganathan, M.A., L.T., F. L. A.,

(University Librarian, Madras.)

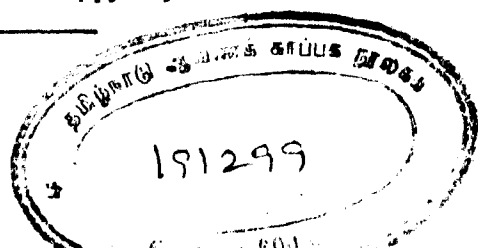
PERHAPS, it will be convenient if we spend the first few lines in fixing the meaning of the terms in the title. Interpreting 'Library Movement' as the movement for the establishment of an increasing number of libraries, the chief terms in the title reduce themselves to "Library" and "Democracy". We shall start with a provisional definition of Library. That provisional definition may be taken from the *Oxford Dictionary*. It is as follows:—

A Library is a public institution entrusted with the care of a collection of books and the duty of rendering the books accessible to those who require the use of them.

With this provisional definition of the first term in mind, let us pass on to examine the second term in our theme, viz, 'Democracy'. This term, 'Democracy,' is much more elusive than the other term. It is used in more than one sense, and its connotation is ever in a state of flux. Under such conditions there are two methods available to fix the meaning of that term. One method is to examine the sense in which that term is used by leaders of thought and to derive its connotation from such usage. Another method will be to draw directly from the definition given in an authoritative Dictionary. I propose to adopt the latter method, and I propose to take the definition given in the big *Oxford Dictionary*. The big *Oxford Dictionary* records four different usages for the term 'Democracy'. Of these four different usages we shall have nothing to do with the fourth, as it is too localised. Now let us take the other three. The first usage is 'Democracy is a form of government in which the Sovereign power is vested in the people as a whole.' The second meaning is "Democracy is a community in which the Sovereign power is vested in the people as a whole," and the third usage is "Democracy is that class of people which has no hereditary or special rank or privilege—the common people." Now let us take up each one of these usages of the term 'Democracy' and examine its relation with the term 'Library'.

To begin with, Democracy is a form of government in which the Sovereign power rests in the people as a whole. The importance of libraries to Democracy in this sense can be realised if we reflect for a while on the phrase "Sovereign power resting in the people as a whole". We may not find much of a relation between libraries and Democracy if, as it often happens in young Democracies, the content of the high sounding phrase 'Sovereign power' is exhausted by the periodical putting of a cross against one or two names in the ballot

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paper. The democratic form of government may not find much use for the libraries and may not realise the need for the spread of the Library Movement, if the people as a whole should flatter themselves as exercising sovereign power by simply enjoying the *thamasha* of the electoral campaign once in three years or five years, as the case may be. Under such conditions, Democracy quickly degenerates into an Oligarchy and the *de facto* Sovereign power rests not in the people as a whole but in a small clique—of clever men who form the inner circle of government, who do not care a rap for the sovereign power resting in the people, who entrench themselves in every possible way and turn everything to their selfish ends. In this sense, the greatest foe of a democratic government is not from outside but from inside. To save Democracy from this internal foe it has to be buttressed in several ways.

A study of what obtains in one of the oldest Democracies may throw some light on this problem. The United States of America tries to minimise the chances for such cliques to flourish at the cost of the people by providing for the people as a whole ample facilities to inform themselves constantly of the happenings at the seat of government. To this end it has provided every one of its Cities and every one of its countries with public libraries which serve them with information on every conceivable subject. And a more curious provision is this. Every member of the Congress of the United States is entitled, at a nominal cost, to any number of copies of off-prints of any portion of the proceedings of the Congress for free distribution amongst his constituency. The constituency generally insist upon their representative exercising his right, and this constant vigilance on the part of the constituency makes the work of a legislator in the United States much more arduous. He has to be very careful in his statements in the Congress; he has to verify all facts and figures before expressing them. This he can do only if, in his turn, he has access to a well-equipped, well-organised library at his disposal.

As a result of this the Congress of the United States is maintaining a Library which is a model library of the World. I doubt very much whether the Library of Congress would be what it is but for the safeguarded democratic form of government which the Congress represents. One has only to compare the library of one of our Legislative Councils with the Library of Congress to realise the great intimacy that exists between Library and Democracy as a form of government. The Library of Congress has 4 million volumes. Has our Legislative Council Library 40,000 volumes, I ask? The Library of Congress adds 200,000 volumes a year. Does our Legislative Council Library add 2,000 volumes a year, I ask? The Library of Congress has an annual budget of one crore of rupees. Are we voting at least 10,000 rupees for our Legislative Council Library? The Library of Congress is manned

by a staff 1,000 strong to serve the legislators and the constituencies of America. Does our Legislative Council Library maintain a staff of 5 to serve at least their Ministers and Secretaries? The Library of Congress has a reading room that can accommodate 900 readers and 100 research workers at a time. Can the reading room of our Legislative Council Library accommodate 50 readers at a time? The Library of Congress is housed in a building which has cost 2 crores of rupees. Has at least a sum of rupees 20,000 been spent in building our Legislative Council Library? If the democratic form of government is to function efficiently, if the form of government implies that the sovereign power is to rest with the people as a whole in reality and not merely in name, it is impossible to get away from the library standards set by the United States of America.

Passing now to the second definition, i.e., "Democracy is a community in which the Sovereign power rests with the people as a whole," I shall simply state a few facts. Every community which was converted into a Democracy in recent years has found it essential and inevitable to place the spread of the Library Movement as one of the foremost items in their programme. Take Mexico. It became a Democracy in 1910; by 1917, it found that it could not progress without establishing a Department of Libraries in its Ministry of Education. Take Czecho-Slovakia. It became a Democracy in 1919 and in the October of that very year it placed in its Statute Book a far reaching Library Act which made it obligatory for every commune with a population of 400 or over to establish a public library of its own before 1929. This library programme has been worked out to the very letter by that Democracy, and with an area equal to that of Tamil Nadu it has now got 16,000 public libraries. Poland became an independent Democracy after the Great War, and in spite of its distractions and handicaps, the Government of Poland is taking upon its own shoulders the spread of the Library Movement and has on its legislative anvil a comprehensive Public Library Act. So it is with Finland, and so it is with the so-called Monarchies of Western Europe which are *de facto* Democracies, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and England. One and all of these countries are working a Library Act which provides every town and every country with a library, because they are convinced that a country-wide net-work of libraries is absolutely necessary to make Democracy safe.

Before we take leave of this usage of the term 'Democracy,' we cannot help reflecting a while on the near prospect that we seem to have to become a Democracy. As has been already said, Democracies are subject to many different dangers in their infancy, and may we appeal to our Minister of Education, to reduce that period of danger, to minimise its *Balarishtam*, so to speak, by providing for the country-wide institution of that sure remedy, the Public Library, in time, so

that it may begin to function in a healthy and effective way by the time we become a Democracy?

In this connection, perhaps, I may also make a reference to the efforts of the Council of the Madras Library Association to promote a Public Library Bill for our Province. In commending that Bill to official care, perhaps I may disclose one of its weak points, which I hope the Government will set right with the influence that is at its command but which the Association cannot claim. It is like this. When we were at College, a Professor of ours gave us a piece of advice, which he considered as very sound although we hated it heartily. In writing composition, while revising it, he advised us to strike out ruthlessly just those sentences which we considered best. By a queer irony of fate, we had to adopt this disgusting advice in drafting this Bill. The first draft was made in December last. When we revised it last month, the best that we did was to delete from it what we considered the most important clauses—the Financial clause and the Compulsory clause. This we had to do to save the Bill as a whole. It was argued—it is better to succeed with a weak Bill rather than to fail with an ideal Bill. We were afraid of the Government on the one hand and of the taxpayer on the other. We said to ourselves, "Let this harmless and mutilated Bill first find its way to the Statute Book." It may not be difficult to improve on it later on. We have been strengthened in this view by the history of Library legislation in some of the older Democracies like England. In England, the first Library Act was as bad as not to permit library funds to be invested on books, although it permitted them to be invested on buildings and furniture. But our Bill is not so hopeless as that. The first Bill was passed with a narrow majority of nine. But the latest amending Bill, which gives unlimited power of taxation to the local bodies, was passed without a single division and without a single dissentient voice.

If the libraries have a definite service to render to a Democracy in the first two senses, the libraries themselves have gained not a little by associating themselves with Democracy in the third sense. Democracy in the third sense means "that class of the people which has no hereditary or special rank or privilege—the common people." Till recent years libraries did not associate themselves with the common people. Libraries, like learning, were the privilege of the chosen few, and were denied to the many. As somebody said, the three 'R's' were bounded by the two 'R's'. The privilege of reading, writing, and reckoning were restricted by religion and riches. But the wave of Democracy that was set on by the Great War has washed out this boundary and the exclusiveness of libraries. The outlook of libraries has now been democratised beyond recognition. The implications of this democratisation are many. Libraries are for the use of the common people. Common people is a very complex entity which includes the

men and the women, the city folk and the country folk, the rich and the poor, the lettered and the unlettered, the sick and the healthy, the blind and the sighted, the prisoner and the freeman, the sailor and the landman, the manual labourer and the intellectual worker. To serve a Democracy of this type libraries have to undergo a radical change.

First, let us consider their contents. When libraries allied themselves with the Aristocracies alone, they had to include in their collection only books of a high-brow type—high class literature, obtruse philosophy, recondite religion, unreadable mathematics, and so on. But to-day to serve the common people, libraries have to go in for books of all sorts; books on the arts and the crafts, books on weaving, books on masonry, books on cabinet making, books on shoe-making, books on laundry work, books on packing, and books on salesmanship. They have to get not only books but even magazines, monthlies and weeklies, on all such vocational subjects if they have to serve the Democracy.

Again take the library hours. So long as the libraries were for the leisured aristocracy, it was sufficient if they were kept open in the middle of the day, but if they are to serve the common people, the Democracy, they have to be kept open till late in the night, so that the workmen may turn to them after their day's toil is over.

Again take their location. So long as it was only the privileged classes that were to be served, and so long as the common people were kept out, it was natural to locate libraries far away from the "maddening crowd" but within the reach of the motored gentlemen. But the moment the right of the Democracies for the libraries was recognised, the library had to be brought to the very heart of the town—down the market-place.

But a more revolutionary change is to be found in the attitude of the library staff. They no longer sit at the counter waiting for the occasional visitor, but they have begun to function as active canvassers. They distribute leaflets, address public meetings, they harness even the radio to attract the Democracy to the Library. They leave no country fair unattended, they even undertake street survey and house to house canvassing. They go to even more desperate lengths. They thrust boxes of books on the most popular men in a street, so that their visitors may have a chance to be attracted by those books. In a word, as a result of the alliance with Democracy in the third sense, the very definition of Library has to be changed. We started with a provisional definition of that term, which is "a public institution entrusted with the care of a collection of books and the duty of rendering the book accessible to those who require the use of these." That is the latest definition of a library given by the Big Oxford Dictionary. Here

at least the big *Oxford Dictionary* has already become out of date. In its next revision, it will be found to include a post-War definition of the term 'library' in somewhat the following terms:

A Library is a Public Institution entrusted with the care of a collection of books, the duty of rendering the books accessible to those who require the use of them, and the task of finding a reader for every book, and the business of converting every citizen into a reader.

But let us not wait till the *Oxford Dictionary* is revised. Let us hope and pray that the Democracy of India may ere long be blessed with the same facilities as the Democracies of other countries, and let us hope and pray also that the Madras Library Association may be crowned with success in its efforts to place the Democracy of India on a par with the Democracy elsewhere in the matter of books.

My Village Folk.*

By K. T. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, M.A.

A world within the world is the village. It is a veritable microcosm of life and civilization and holds within its wide embrace all the diverse castes and creeds, their several occupations and interests. The followers of Vishnu, the protector of the world, hold allegiance to the Perumal temple and the devotees of Siva, the lord of final destiny, to the Iswara temple of the village. Yet the two deities are one, the wise ones know according to the common folk-saying 'Hari and Siva are one, and dust in his mouth who knows it not'. Besides these two major ones are the innumerable minor village gods for the populace. To all these gods the village looks up for counsel and protection. Their several names bespeak their relations to the people and their benefactions. They are the givers of rain and corn, healers of diseases, averters of pestilence and protectors of cattle and men. They have their rounds of festivals in the proper seasons when all the village is merged in one mighty fellowship of mirth and devotion.

On the outskirts of the village dwell the lowliest and the last, God's own poor, from whose race sprang Nanda like the lotus from the miry pool. Truly has the poet sung: "Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest and lowliest and lost". The Lord Siva himself came with his consort and attendants in the manner and shape of these lowly ones to complete the *yaga* of a high-born devotee who prayed for a vision of God's form. The tradition is still renewed every year in a South Indian village of the coming of the Ganga in honour of a brahmin devotee's offer of drink to a thirsty outcast. And among the Lord's greatest devotees are not some of the choicest pearls from this community? These lowly ones are God's humble fellow-workers providing *amman* for all His creatures on earth. These are the ancients of the land whose antique instruments of music are typical of their ancient race and culture. What slow and silent processions of civilizations and cultures do they not quicken into life by their strange sounds and harmonies? The uncanny beats and rhythms of the *tom-toms* have in them still the weird crescendos of some funeral or bloody sacrificial orgies of a remote primitive race, while the shrill notes of the winding bugle echo perhaps the rallying yells or war cries of wild marching hordes under the flare of torches at night. What legends of the fury of the old gods haunt the memory still when the *tom-toms* are sounded! What awful announcements of doom and pestilence do the bugles re-echo in the attentive ear! Hence the romance of these pipes, the bugles and the *tom-toms* when they now

* A chapter from "Sketches of South Indian Life" to be published shortly.

sound in the village calling people to work and to worship or announcing the perils of flood or fire.

Nearer still are the hamlets of the ordinary professionals of the village, the barber and the dhoby, the carpenter and the smith, the potter and the oilman, the toddy drawer and the shepherd, the trader and the serf. The village is like a clock, wheels within wheels inside, all moving and co-operating, pushing on the hand of Life on the wonderful dial of Time. In the village no man or trade is mean, however humble or low. Each fulfils his or its *dharma* in the grand economy of God's kingdom.

Samu, the chatty old barber and physician by the tank, is the first of the brood of village professionals. The *iluppai* tope where he and his relations thrive is the news-shop of the village where the tempting wares of gossip and scandal are retailed and sold for consideration other than money. But Samu, with his characteristic salutation, is the envy of many in the village in respect of his devotion to his own *dharma*. In his advancing age, he has turned a *vanaprastha* going on pilgrimage to Tirupati in the north and to Rameswaram in the south and ending it all with *kambaserodi* among his own kith and kin. Though his hand shakes at this time of his age, it has not lost its healing charm. It can still feel the feeble pulse and search the baffling devil of disease. Samu's good sons are the reputed pipers and drummers whose performances delight the villages in times of festival and marriage.

Close to Samu in space and piety is Mekkan, the dhoby, with his peculiar stoop, the impress of his profession. He is honest but not now efficient. Hence perhaps the saying "seek an old barber but a new dhoby". Mekkan loves his toiling wife dearly, and she loves the donkey that bears all the clothes so patiently. Out of the circuit of their love and work flows the current of village cleanliness. Mekkan supplies rags for torches and clothes for *pandal* decorations of the temple and the home. He is also the unofficial soothsayer of the villager. On him descends Kali at the annual festival in her honour. The whole village hangs on his lips in awe and silence for the predictions of this terrible Guardian of the soil.

Not far from Mekkan does Velan, the potter, in his loin cloth ply his humble work all day long, from morn to dewy eve. With his back arched like that of the elephant he makes for the Ayyanar temple. Velan makes bricks, barns, pots, lamps, horses and idols. He has his share of village reputation as a doctor for fractures and swellings. For certain skin diseases his clay smearings or 'writings' are of wondrous efficacy. Though skilful of hand, poor Velu is not exempted from the proverbial stupidity attributed to his race. Yet there was Thirumilakanta, one of the Lord's chosen, in this race of potters.

Velan's only rival on this doubtful score is Rama Konan, the shepherd and veterinary surgeon, whose intelligence, people humorously say, rests on his limpish nape. For it was a shepherd who once went to hear the street *katha* and came home with a different story altogether from the rest. The cowherds and shepherds whom Raman represents are a very useful class well versed in the art of breeding and training cows and bulls. Raman is their headman and he is called in the village by the honorific *konare*.

Velan's neighbours are Kasi Chetty and Kunji Rowthan. Kasi Chetty is the amiable oilman whose brain, one supposes is as oily as his body and raiment. Daily in the early hours of the morning he yokes his bulls to the oil-mill, whose cracking and squeaking start the busy housewives of the village on their daily rounds of labour in the homes. The toiling women in their scolding moods compare themselves to Kasi's bulls which go round and round wearily turning the pestle and churning the oil seeds. Kasi Chetty's wife is a clever hand at business unlike her husband who, when off duty, will stand with vacant looks in wide-mouthed admiration at her clever sales from a half spoon of oil to a potful for grain or for money. Kunji Rowthan is the Muhammadan jack-of-all-trades with his double inheritance of religion and manners. He is half Hindu and half Muhammadan. He is a cultivator, money-lender, broker and wholesale vendor of grains and chillies in their proper seasons. Kunji is the only link in the village with foreign parts across the seas. His son Batcha has gone to Rangoon for trade in accordance with the saying of Auvvai, the village poetess: "Seek wealth even by traversing the stormy seas". Batcha sends money regularly to his father, and occasionally came mats, shoes, umbrellas and trinkets to their brahmin landlord. People often point to Kunji as an ideal husbandman of thrift and industry.

Kunji's financial adviser is Samanna, the dreaded village teacher, with his big round sandal paste and *kunkumam* on the forehead. He is a connoisseur in snuff, and while the children attribute all his anger to the damned brown powder in his snuff-box, the older folk look to it as the replenisher of their needy noses. Sometimes he strikes terror into the simple village people by his meticulous white stripes of ash on his arms and stomach and by the big *rudhraksham* in his neck. He is a man of many livings, being a bit of an astrologer, doctor, and exorcist, in addition to his occasional duties as a relieving manager of the village choultry or *pujari* of the little Ganesh temple of the Corner Lane.

Under the spreading banyan tree toils Shanmugam, the village blacksmith, forging plough shares, nails, bolts and nuts and making sickles, knives, spades, crowbars and wheel-rims. His work makes his body charcoal dark, and he merrily plays the *puchandi* to children in the evening while sitting at his betel. But his colleague, the carpenter,

yonder is neither so terrible nor so hard working. He is Torachami the Unready, well known among the villages far and near as the maker of fine toys for children and of big wooden elephants and horses for temple festivals. The huge car he designed for the Krishna Temple of yonder town is a marvel of skill and workmanship. He is abreast of the times and makes also wheels and carts of the newest Pondicherry patterns.

All these people meet by chance at the village shop owned by Supparayalu, the village postman, but managed by Ponni, his shrewish wife. Every afternoon Supparayalu will act for his wife at the stall, strangely enough reading the songs of Tayumanavar and Pattinatar, the minister and the merchant who renounced the world and became wandering mendicants. Supparayalu's good neighbours and friends are Somu and Ponnu Battan, the rival village goldsmiths, honest only as far as goldsmiths can possibly be. The village dames say—"Though mother's gold, goldsmiths will steal just a little for the nonce." For their profession's sake, perhaps! But Kovalu or Gopal, the mason, is a clever and honest fellow of his trade. He is the architect of the village who knows the shastras for his art. He can give you the plan for a house or town without reference to book or paper. They are all in his mind. He it is who put up the *sumai tangi* (burden rest), the stone-seats and the water-troughs on the trunk road for charity.

The little palm-leafed hut in the secluded cocoanut tope is the dwelling place of Muniyan, the toddy drawer, with his bag and belt indispensable for his tree-climbing and toddy-drawing. He is sinewy and dark, and agile of body. He climbs up the palm-trees like a monkey. Muniyan's wife Valli is the mistress of the toddy-shop, where at sunset the humble village celebrates the mighty armistice of their lives' daily battle for bread. Valli can well control a whole herd of head-turned drunkards with her stout and boisterous tongue. Muniyan and Valli are very useful to the villagers in the rainy season with the leaf overcoats they supply for a trifling half pence. They also make roofs for houses and pandals with the palmyra or cocoanut fronds.

But the cocoanut tope has an uncanny reputation as being the rendezvous of village thieves and *komavarthans* or cattle lifters, who cannot do without toddy, the favourite too of their gods. These 'gentlemen of the shade and minions of the moon' ply their trade as if by immemorial right and under divine charter. They boast themselves to be the surviving representations of an ancient and useful art which, they say, was a means to promote vigilance and courage on the one hand and check inhuman avarice or aggression on the other. 'Even the art of thieving, one should learn and then forget' says the Indian proverb. The village suffers little from these professional thieves and is even proud of the heroics of Osan, their leader. These are a sort of

Reserve Police maintained by annual subsidies on the well-founded political principle, 'set a thief to catch a thief.' They, at any rate, add to the romance of village life. Akin to this semi-suspicious fraternity are the few *kuravars* who live on the barest of the barren tracts away from all other human dwelling. They seem to bear on their foreheads some immemorial curse. They need little of earth's nourishing things or of humanity's tender gifts of love and charity. They thrive, poor wretches, tough and bare like the date or the palm in the desert. The men hunt squirrels and foxes and the women make baskets and mats of bamboo splints or date leaves. They are an idle and savage race, the remnants of an arrested species of very primitive humanity.

All these vagrants are under the surveillance of Kandan, the wily Talaiyari, the village beadle. He is the Detective Officer of the village with his big regulation lathi, insignia of his office. He is a scout by day and sentinel by night, watching every vagrant man or beast. Kandan himself is under the control of the *maniyam* or the village munsiff and the *karnam*, his auxiliary, both powerful in the village, one administering civil justice and the other looking after the land and revenue.

There now passes before the mind's eye a motely band of village farmers and labourers, the tenders of cattle and tillers of land—Annamalal and his hard-working sons, Avadai and his silent wife, Murugan and his pair of patient bulls and others of this humble trail without number. Because of them, their honesty and their old world virtues, the skies still rain in due season and because of their industry and care, earth still yields her plenty. They are the guardians of Lakshmi, for they are the producers of real wealth. The gods and goddesses are their god-fathers and god-mothers. Does not Venkatesa, the lord of the seven hills, still carry the wound on his forehead for having helped a pregnant woman by carrying her share of earth on his head? Was not Nanda assisted by the Siva's host in digging the tank at Tiruppangur? There is nothing the gods will not do for their devoted children whoever they may be.

Their comrade in spirit is Unchuvarti Simhachar of the brahmin street, who like these humble folk does his God-allotted duties in their turn and time. "Even the sun may fail in his duties but not this man in his" say the village people. His life may seem a hard rock of routine and tradition but few know the artesian-like spring of good will and prayer that flows unseen and unheard from his heart quietly irrigating the collective mind of the village. An early riser can hear him go to the tank before cock-crow, in fair weather or foul, reciting slokas or chanting hymns. Everything from the washing of his teeth to his worshipping at the temple is done in a most perfect and charming manner. There is art, poetry and religion in all his life of thought, word and deed. Though poor for himself, he is rich for the village.

The renovation of the temple and the stone-paved steps for the village tank are his work. He is never idle. The little garden by the tank and temple is his. He grows *tulasi*, *husa grass*, flowers and cotton. Between him and his old widowed sister, they manage all the flowers for worship and adornment at the temple. It is a sight to see him, whether sitting on the tank bund in morning or evening meditation or going in the street with his begging vessel at noon. He is the Open Door to that Inner Land where God Himself is sun and moon, earth and stars. Like Kuchela of old, but with the vision of mansion and riches only in another world than this, Simhachari's life moves quietly on in the peace and plenty of the contented heart.

Of all the village folk the most interesting is Visiam the wise in the *agraharam* and the most pitiable is Lechumi the desolate in the Sudra quarters. Of Visiam in some other place. Lechumi is the ironical god-child of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Fortune. The most pathetic, no, no, the most heroic though destitute is this one fumbling along the streets with the stick. It is years since her only surviving son ran away, nobody knows where. With neither husband nor son in her age to lean on, there is no complaining or cursing in her sore heart. With eyes that once saw, daily she looks to the sky—for that is still her temple—and lifts her heart ever burning with the mother's love to Lord Surya, the Wanderer in the three worlds and implores him to bring back her strayed one. When she comes along in the streets the women folk pause in wonder at her resolution and independence and gladly listen to her prayerful answer, "The one who planted, will He not also water the plant?" They freely give their mite and earn the blessings of this blind old Lechumi who sings:

- Joy that gives joy
To the ignorant and the learned,
- Eye that gives sight
To the blind and the seeing,
- Boon that blesses
The able and infirm
- Intelligence that illumines
The foolish and the wise,
- Justice that deals evenly
With the good and the bad.
- Bliss that dances
Before all the universe!

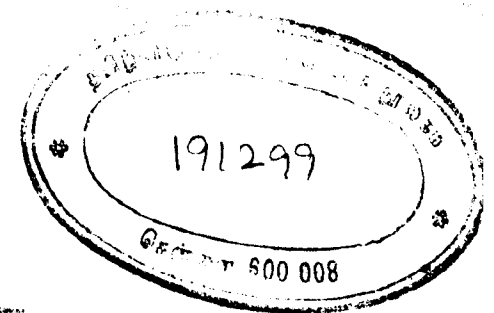
from the songs of Swami Ramalinga, the renowned Saint of the Tamil Land.

The village is God's own land and the village folk are God's own people. Their life has the elemental simplicity and grandeur of God's Nature. Riches and poverty rest side by side as life's necessary complements which set love and service in motion. The seasons in their delightful round bring to the village their varied charms wearing

many a beautiful pattern of Life in the loom of Time. The harvest season in particular is a time of rejoicing for all, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field included. For on the threshing floor it is God who measures out unto all. Even the ants come for their share of Earth's plenty, or *svatantram* and return in joy. There is only one other season in the life of the village when all differences are merged in a sea of freedom and joy. That is the annual temple festival with its crowning Car Day. The huge temple car imprints itself on the mind and heart of the village as the symbol of life in its wondrous variety and complexity. The wooden charioteer at the helm and the four wooden horses leaping under his whip are there not to make the car run but to complete the symbolism of life. When the deity rides in the car, the brahmin and the pariah down below are united in one bond of common devotion and mutual love. "Men may fight and men may wrangle, but I come down in your midst to make you love Me and thus love one another" is the silent whisper in the devoted heart amidst the moving shouts of men and the rumbling roll of the car, while in the mind of the devout dreamer fall the strains:

* "Here, to-day, behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, standing in one in My body, O Gudakesa, with aught else thou desirest to see."

But verily thou art not able to behold Me with these thine eyes; the divine eye I give unto thee. Behold My sovereign Yoga."



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Religion and Superstition.

By H. S. Rao.

ALMOST every one, who has a religion, takes his own religion for granted, and he very rarely bothers about its rationality or its adequacy to satisfy the wider intellectual horizons which are opening out before us in the changing modern world. The world to-day would be a happier place, if religion or what passes for it, had progressed side by side with man's progress in other fields of human activity. The modern age is an age of science, and it is good for humanity that religion all over the world is undergoing that cleansing process which is necessary for all human institutions, for religion like human behaviour and civilisation itself, is made and not born. The most hopeful sign of modern times is perhaps the growing conviction among the world's thinkers that religion is not a creed, a belief or a dogma, but as Dean Inge puts it, "the true religion for each of us is the most spiritual view of reality that we are able to realise and live by". One need not go to the extent of denying the central or basic dogmas of religion, such as God and belief in immortality, to realise the vastness of the changes that are taking place before our eyes, as a result of scientific discoveries. I wonder whether even these would remain, after some time; for even now for a large body of thinking men and women these dogmas lie outside the region of even probable knowledge.

We all know that to a vast majority of men, both among the so-called civilised and the savage races, religion means the observance of certain ceremonials, and these ceremonies vary in accordance with the social environment of the race and its intellectual and moral development. But in essence all religious observances are the same the world over—I mean the human psychology behind is the same. The superstition of the civilised is a religious belief and the religious belief of the savage is a superstition; so the difference lies in the degree of culture a race has attained. The weird sacrifices of the Hottentot are a savage superstition; but the Communion of the Catholic Church is a religious act of very great sanctity. But to an impartial observer the line between the two is neither sharp nor immutable, if we look at them from the wider standpoint of human nature which has not changed very much in the course of our long history. It is good to shudder at human sacrifices of the Vedda's and the Todas—for it is pleasant to feel that we are good and our neighbours wicked—but it is infinitely better to realise that our daily 'Puja' of fruits and flowers to the gods is a dull imitation of the exciting human sacrifices of our savage fellowmen.

Religion is, therefore, a body of thoughts, beliefs, observances, judgments and acts which are regulated in most cases by certain fundamental human instincts, which are as true of the civilised as of the savage races. Human life is largely 'instinctive,' in the sense that all our thoughts, feelings and actions have a subtle, but very intimate relation to such basic instincts as hunger, sex, fear, etc. Man's religious life on this planet illustrates this truth very remarkably. I am not having in mind just now Ruskin's famous definition of religion "as the performances of church ceremonies and preaching of soporific truths (or untruths) to keep the mob quietly at work while we amuse ourselves"; but I refer to the central dogma of almost all the religions of the world, viz. the belief in an everlasting God. "Fear," says Mr. Bertrand Russell, "is the basis of religious dogma". The Aryan religion and the Jewish religion, the two most ancient of organised religious beliefs, are essentially based on a certain kind of fear of the unknown forces of nature. The hymns of the Rig Veda are to a large extent propitiatory in character to overcome this fear. This fear of nature, by that very natural power of the human mind to "give a local habitation and a name to forms of things unknown" came to be embodied in concrete forms and worshipped as gods and goddesses. Prayer is thus not a spiritual link between us and God, (it may be so for most good people for aught I know), but a kind of survival or development of our ancestor's practical transaction with God in a matter of daily welfare. If God controls the world, he must be moved by prayer. There is a curious custom among the aboriginal communities of the west coast of India which illustrates this point. If a person falls ill, the relatives of the man offer something as a sacrifice to the deity, usually a "spirit". If the person recovers, the sacrifice is offered; but if he does not, the whole tribe joins in burning the effigy of the deity. The savage has an extraordinary sense of social justice.

Let us take the world-wide belief in immortality. The most sensible explanation of this was one given by an educated gentleman, who was rather a failure in life. "The only proof of a better life hereafter is the absolute wretchedness of life here," he said, and I believe he was nearly right. Bertrand Russell has said, "people who believe that when they die they will inherit eternal bliss may be expected to view death without horror". Whether it is true or not, a belief in immortality partly reconciles us to the mysterious uncertainties of the 'inevitable hour'. This fear of the unknown and a human longing to overcome it are at the basis of most of our religious beliefs and superstitions. There is nothing more characteristic of Hindu superstition than its fear of the unknown. The various religious taboos are derived from this fear, for example, the prohibition against sea-voyage. The religious taboo against eating on certain days, on an eclipse day, is another instance. Even the worship of the spirits is largely a manifestation of this mysterious fear of the unknown forces of nature.

One can easily understand the origin of the worship of spirits from the mysterious fear which oppresses the most sceptic of us when alone in a dense tropical forest. In moments like those our instinct for self-preservation is roused to its utmost, and probably this instinct was responsible for many precautions which even the most civilised of us indulge in. The worship of the snake is an instance. I have seen several of the lower castes in Mysore—a land of dense forests—worshipping figures of wild beasts. This is very closely related to the veneration of the "Totem" among some savage races. The birth of animism is a later phenomenon, and it came with the assumption of a spirit living in nature, in animals, plants, trees and rocks. The worship of certain plants in Hinduism, like the Tulasi and the Peepul, I suspect, must have originated in this manner, whatever spiritual or symbolic character the worship may have for us to-day. The fact is the idea behind all these 'superstitions' touches human nature closely. Wordsworth has a very fine illustration of this in his autobiographical poem, "Prelude". At times, says the poet, he became conscious of a life about him not his own; the very stones and trees and waters seemed to have something to say to him; the huge peak

As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head.

Most of us have felt the same unknown influence during some terrible convulsion of nature, such as an earthquake or a storm, when the whole fury of Nature seems to be let loose on us. The mental and physical shaking which we experience in the 20th century goes back to the horror or dismay of our savage ancestors out of which 'animism' grew. The fact is that human nature is not an isolated entity in this vast universe. Whatever Coleridge meant when he wrote

We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone doth Nature live.

it is true that our emotions, feelings and moods are capable of subtle reactions to the influences of nature around us and out of these reactions have religious beliefs been born.

Most civilised men and women to-day believe in mascots or certain animal emblems. These 'mascots' go back to the savage 'Totems' such as the Red Indians still venerate to-day. Birds are specially chosen as emblems and many royal families in India venerate them. The worship of the eagle is very common in India. The special apprehensions and fears underlying the worship of these emblems have been the same since man began to think. The behaviour, moods, and emotions of the civilised man to-day tend as much to Totemism, Animism and supernatural fear as those of the savages in the infancy of our civilisation. Who has not heard of "favourite days"? The Hindu of to-day, even of the most sceptical turn of mind, clings to astrology which directs and regulates almost everything of any

importance in his social life, birth, marriage, and death. Certain days are held to be inauspicious—the orthodox Hindu will not begin anything of importance on a Saturday. The question, apart from its psychological significance, has a close relation to the elements which we have discussed.

Such is also the question of the dead. The modern mourning for the dead in the West is really the same as the ceremony of savages who paint themselves black after a person's death. We are told that many classes of people in the West not only not speak ill of the dead—which is quite reasonable—but not speak at all of them. The superstition is easily explained. The spirit of the dead man in all religions, is regarded as a concrete, real thing which though without a body has still desires and feelings of the living. Hence any reference to the dead is prohibited and is regarded with fear, lest his spirit may return. There is a curious instance in Shakespeare in 'Macbeth'. Macbeth's wish that Banquo were present at the feast is a challenge to Banquo who has been murdered, and he comes, because he is called. Speak of the Devil and he will appear. The universal aversion against naming the dead has, therefore, a quite definite cause and a practical basis. The elaborate ritual of the Hindus in memory of the dead illustrates this belief in spirits. The "Shraddha" ceremony is both a form of ancestor-worship common in many eastern countries, as well as a propitiatory ceremony for the spirits of the dead who were held in horror by our ancestors. Nothing illustrates the human tendency to believe in the supernatural better than the fact that the supernatural plays a very important part in the art and literature of the civilised world.

I now come to the most important and interesting of all the moods of religion which is closely related to what is known in religious literature as "mysticism". The East has evolved this mood in an intense, obsessive form. I am not here concerned with the deep, spiritual significance of this mental or emotional state. My interest is confined to the startling psychological similarity that one discovers in all the stages of what one may call "mystic experiences". Many elements enter into this question, the most important of which is sex. The modern psychologist will explain these phenomena by resorting to hysteria and sex-repression; but it is not so simple as that. And any one acquainted with the East will tell us of the marvellous feats of our religious men. There are instances of men doing feats which seem to be almost miracles—men walking on fire, rolling in religious frenzy down rocks and hills, etc. Whatever the explanation, in most cases this state is brought about by what psychologists call "self-hypnosis"—a state of mind and body in which the outer faculties are all deadened by an overwhelming will-power working through 'suggestion'. The case of the Pythian priestess in Delphi is the same as that

of the Indian devil-dancer who works himself into a frenzy before he delivers his 'oracles'. These phenomena are common to all religions and in their cruder forms are survivals of the savage idea that man can commune with God by artificial intoxication. The Soma juice of the Aryan was probably an aid to mystic experience, in the same way as the Bhang and the Ganja are the indispensable aids to mystic contemplation among our Sadhus. The dreams of excited individuals have been very often taken to be divine revelations and this is the most widely spread superstition in India.

It is from primitive beginnings, from ignorance, fear, self-preservation, hunger and sex, that modern scientists and psychologists believe that the higher and the nobler conceptions of the immortal soul, of one supreme God, of heaven and salvation, in fact everything that makes for religious belief of the civilised man of today, must inevitably have originated. I do not find it difficult to believe this, for all religions have in essence grown out of the savage mind. This process of "syncretism" is very interesting to study, and the study of religion in this new setting will be of enormous benefit to civilised humanity, for when we realise that our most cherished notions of religion are the common property of the human race in one form or other, there will be no room for religious fanaticism or any fanaticism. Santayana was right when he said that religion was poetry mistaken for truth, and St. Paul spoke the wisest thing when he said, "The invisible things of God are to be understood through the things that are made", and these things 'that are made' are the outer garments of religion, the universal superstitions of our race in its tortuous attempts to understand the meaning and mystery of life.

What is Greatness?

By Hilda Wood.

DR. Nicolas Murray Butler said: "Mankind consists of three groups. First, the very few who make things happen. Second, the reasonably large numbers of those who watch things happen, and thirdly the over-whelming majority of those who have no knowledge of what is happening." But I wish to contend this statement. It is true that men can be divided as above, but I do not agree with the general unthinking acceptance of the result of the classification. How often a man is regarded as a "baby soul," because he happens to be a villager, an Adi-Dravida, not of "our caste," whatever that may mean! Those people who are really in that first class have got there by disregarding the accepted standards. They are not made by following a leader, nor by silencing their own thoughts because others "know better". As a writer once aptly remarked: "Edison cannot be the leader of inventors, because there are other inventors, many of them having arisen in places where even he would have least expected them."

But now-a-days mankind has so developed, that "greatness" in any walk of life is really unknown, or rather it is so well known that it is unnoticed. I was talking to a good artist who told me that he could not at the age of his little son draw so well, and his son did not draw better than many of his little classmates. And I read only a few days ago of a violinist who said that to keep up to the mark he had to work very very hard as there were now a host of people who were treading on his heels, while at the commencement of his career there were only two or three.

And what is this "greatness" the world—that second class of people spoken of above—admires? Only, generally reputation gained, perhaps by a turn of the wheel of luck. This is well illustrated in the following examples along literary lines. Any other line of human endeavour has the same stories to tell.

There was printed a book called "The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion, in the Year 1764-65," which purported to be written by one Cleone Knox, and edited by her descendant, Alexander Blacker Kerr. This work was published in London at the end of 1925, and for many months it was accepted as a bona fide record of the period it claimed to represent. Indeed, it was thought to be a most valuable document. But this clever diary "of the eighteenth century" was the concoction of Miss Magdalen King-Hall, a twenty-year-old Irish girl. Even a mentality like Lord Darling's was deceived, for he wrote: "This diary must take its place beside that of Mr. Pepys." It sold at the rate of ten thousand copies a month, and the whole of literary London

allowed itself to be hoaxed. The majority of the best critics must have had a bad jolt when the truth came out! But the point is, it was as good as any written in that period and as valuable, but if the "world" had not been fooled, it would not have sold as it did. What's in a name?

You must know of the famous young poet Chatterton, who died by his own hand at the age of eighteen. The Rowley forgeries were a work of genius. The public interest in this hoax lasted for eighty years and the great Horace Walpole did not see through it. A famous farmer's boy named James Macpherson led the world to believe that his own poems were from the pen of a mythical Gaelic hero. Coleridge, Byron, Napoleon, and Goethe all admired Macpherson's poems and mistook them for translations of Ossian. Would they have done so if he had signed them plain James Macpherson?

What does this all mean? "Greatness" is all around us, as the sun's rays are falling all over the earth, and are not concentrated in those few individuals that the world regards as "great". And I would go so far as to say that even where a person has acquired exceptional skill of body or mind the attribution of greatness and leadership to them on that account is a great mistake, because it is generally directed to abnormalities which are not the true business of life, and do not necessarily produce the good qualities of life. Read over the names on the tombstones with Grey and find with him the names of insignificant farmers, "yet some mute inglorious Hampden there may rest, some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood." The juggler can balance six balls on his nose, or a man can recite all the Vedas by heart, or another can lift a thousand pounds weight or is a brilliant orator, or if you like, the conger eel can come into this class, for she can give birth to one hundred and fifty million offspring at once—yet they are not thereby superior to anybody else. There is a certain middle path in which human nature is sweet and good and sufficiently intelligent for all practical purposes, which is the best and greatest and most beneficial thing in the world both for the person concerned and for all whom he may come into contact with. These are the people who really cause things to be done because their human qualities are infectious and they benefit the families and communities to which they belong.

If therefore we wish to be men of character it is not for us to dull our vision by moulding our lives on another's pattern, or by spending our time and energies in admiration of what are often excesses produced by ambitious pride, but to attend to those qualities of character which overflow from us in our ordinary life, raising the level of human contact wherever we may be. Shri Krishna truly said that by attending to his own work and his own duty a man attains the perfection of human life.

Thomas Hardy and His Tragedies.

By B. Muthuswami, (II Class).

DURING the last half-a-century the strain and stress of life have been rather heavy and exacting, and works of fiction have come into greater prominence than ever; for they lessen the pressing burden of actual life by leading the reader into a realm of imagination. And in this great age of fiction the most notable figure is that of Thomas Hardy, the pre-eminent novelist who was held in high esteem by all people and upon whom the exalted insignia of the Order of Merit was also conferred. His Wessex Novels form a unique set in the whole range of English fiction, for they are not merely intended to be a remedy for severe hours, but have in them something which makes the readers pause and think; Hardy's novels are full of what critics would term the 'metaphysical power of art'. The tragic apprehension of the world is a profound characteristic of Hardy's mind as will be clearly found from his great novels, all of which are tragedies. But his tragic characters are not mere puppets of a malicious fate, which enjoys its leisure by deliberately wrecking human happiness; nor does he display in his books any childish anxiety for the dispensation of poetic justice which trims mortal affairs to the prescribed symmetry. Hardy had a 'sight for the trouble of existence and an ear for the still sad music of humanity'. He was one with De Quincey about the deep tragedy of human life. Tess, Henchard and Jude, the outstanding characters in the Wessex Novels, who endure the most pitiless destiny, are not entirely under an external pressure. The ruthless stream of tendency is not only around the characters but also within them. They have in them some pardonable points of weakness which inevitably become the chance for the power of the world to assert itself against them. That is the basic conception of Hardy's tragedy.

But though Hardy had an eye for the deep tragedy of life he was never a pessimist. No man with such an abundant love for the world as Hardy had could ever be a pessimist. Swift who saw man as a mean, too low, degraded thing and who felt life too hideous could be put down as a pessimist; but not Hardy. He would, on the other hand, like the great Poet of Persia, say

Ah love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire
Would not we shatter it to bits--and then
Remould it nearer to the hearts' desire?

But of course that is impossible; and Hardy would ask us to make the best of good spirits. Indeed, his love for humanity and his belief in its beauty and power of endurance would entitle him to be ranked as one of the foremost of optimists.

His outlook on life is temperamentally one of pity. When poor Tess who was 'to love and Fate an equal sacrifice' is victimised, he flings his taunt into the very face of the injurious God and exclaims: "Justice was done and the President of the immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess." (And one gentleman, it is told, 'turned Christian for half an hour the better to express his grief over that disrespectful phrase.') His love even for animals is profound. In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, a happy landscape of English life, full of pathos, Fanny Robin is helped to a place of safety, when in a very pitiful condition, by a dog. When she got back to her senses she asks: 'Where is the dog? He helped me.' A man standing by, unknowing, said 'I stoned him away.' There is the irony and sadness of life which will make any heart ache. Our sympathy in tragic fiction is keener, and the pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself.

No great writer can do without a metaphysic; but it need not necessarily be always explicit. Creative literature may be divided into two kinds, that in which a metaphysic is fitted to experience, and that in which experience is fitted to metaphysic. The two kinds have been typified in Shakespeare and Milton; the one judges life instinctively and the other intellectually; the one is a dramatic and the other epic. Hardy has among his novels both the dramatic and the epic. It must be borne in mind throughout that even his comedies are brimful of grim tragedy and both his dramatic and epic novels are tragedies. *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Woodlanders* come under the dramatic form, whereas *Tess of the Durbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* fall into the epic form. In the former group the action is a woven intricacy of many curving and recurving lines, carrying the threaded lives of several persons through a single complicated pattern of destiny. It is the history of the relationship in a group of individuals. But the latter concerns with the history of a single individual around whom the whole fabric of the story is most beautifully and pathetically woven. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, though in form comes under the former category, is still in its theme a partial anticipation of the epic set.

There is a great similarity in the character of the three remaining novels of the dramatic form. In each story the interest of the reader centres around a set of four persons, two men and two women. Gabriel Oak, Higgory Venn and Giles Winterborne are shaped of the same ingredients. Their 'plain heroic magnitude of mind' could bear any amount of personal disappointment and still could stand steadfast and unswerving by the women they loved. Troy, Wildeve, and Firzpiers 'of sharp intellects, inflammable faithless passions, shallow good nature and flashy disdain for rusticity' are set up against Oak, Venn and Winterborne. The women characters also arrange themselves

into similar opposing groups; but unlike in the case of men in whom Hardy had to show off the generous qualities of his faithful characters by making their opponents a little contemptible, the one set of women is commanding, whereas the other is only simple and feeble. Bathsheba, Eustacia and Grace Melbury are unquestionably more commanding in their capricious, passionate, self-conscious nature than Fanny, Thomasin and Marty, in whom patience, simplicity and humility are the most shining qualities. In all these three books there is nothing as a central figure—the central subject being only the emotional relationship which combines all these persons. In all these books the processes of Nature are carefully and vividly mingled into the very substance of the stories, and they bear an obvious symbolic purport in them. One cannot abstract the art of Hardy's fiction into plots and analysis. How his characters bear their cross could be understood only by a study of the stories.

In *Tess of the Durbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy expresses his intellectual conception of life and the primal discord between what is natural and what is conventional. Even in the *Mayor of Casterbridge*, the story of a man of character, we find Hardy restive under restriction and often on the point of indignantly bursting forth in protest against the injustice of Henchard's fate. In these two books, however, the artist appears more eased in conscience, because they contain an emotional as well as an intellectual judgment of life. The form of these two novels develops a single theme unlike those of the dramatic form. *Jude the Obscure*, in its profound and unfathomable depths of gloom and greatness, is one of the best books in English literature; and *Tess of the Durbervilles* is equally great. Indeed his eyes must be made of horn who could read the two books without a mist obstructing his vision at some place or other in the stories.

Jude the Obscure earned the distinction of being burnt by a bishop in his despair of the rebellious conduct of Hardy's creation. One lady, it would appear, mistook it for anti-marriage propaganda. Several critics made violent reviews. But they have all gone down into silence and there is not one man who is left unimpressed by the greatness of *Jude, the Obscure*.

Tess of the Durbervilles is developed with a singular intensity of personal feeling. The whole story is pervaded by a conflict of two forces "the inherent will to enjoy and the circumstantial will against enjoyment." This conflict between the personal and the impersonal is carried forward in the relentless march. And in the end she establishes that chastity is in the purity of thought and not of flesh. Jude and Tess are the masculine and feminine counter-parts of one similar idea of surpassing grandeur. Hardy's creations are immortals, and the world should be ever thankful to him for having given them such exalting creations.

Colloids and Health.

By B. Lakshmana Rao.

IN ancient Egypt, the land where chemistry originated,—the word Chemistry is derived from "Chemi" (Egypt)—the priests were both chemists and physicians and experimented with simple chemicals in the treatment of diseases. Most ancient scientists likewise, as well as those who flourished during the Dark and Middle Ages, were chemists as well as physicians and applied their chemical knowledge to the cure of various human afflictions. But this close relationship between chemistry and medicine did not endure, and it has been only recently that it has been recognised that chemistry could render great aid to the physician and the physiologist. The progress that has been made up to the present time since the physiological chemist began to occupy himself with the treatment of disease reveals new possibilities in the treatment and cure of many of the so-called incurable diseases.

It is evident that chemistry and medicine are closely allied sciences. The human body is but a chemical machine in which various chemical reactions are performed, such as the digestion of food as it passes through the alimentary tract, or the absorption of oxygen by the blood, or the combination of the odour-producing agents in the perfume with the odour-detecting units in the mucous membrane of the nose to produce the sensation of smell. If anything goes wrong with us—for example if our digestion is bad and we have dyspepsia—it is because that something has happened to disturb the smooth course of the chemical action of digestion. In a chemical plant if a process goes out of order, the chemist is called in to correct it; the chemist can render important aid to the physician in correcting a deranged chemical process in the human organism.

So any important development in chemistry will have its significance in the treatment of disease. In recent years colloid chemistry has assumed very great importance in this branch of science. The significance of colloid chemistry in the economy of the human body is not, however, a new thing. Its importance was known even in ancient times. The universal principle involved in this branch of science is simple. Sugar will dissolve in water and will give a clear solution; so will salt. Sand or dust or finely pulverised coal will remain suspended in water, but easily separable therefrom by filtration. The colloid stands somewhere between. It is neither a solution like the first nor a suspension like the second. The particles of the colloid are so fine that they will pass through the ordinary filtering medium. Many industrial products are colloidal in nature, such as rubber, milk, glue, gelatine, etc.

Even at the very start, Graham, the formulator of the fundamental principles of the science of colloid chemistry, saw the importance of colloids to living matter. He stated that the "colloidal state may be looked upon as the probable primary source of the force appearing in the phenomenon of vitality." To-day it is generally accepted that all life processes take place in a colloidal system. This is a very important conception, and the results that have been obtained in the treatment of disease based upon this principle, seem to indicate that the great future of chemistry in aiding the physician to cure human ailments is along colloidal chemical lines.

We all know how easily milk will sour due to the formation in it of lactic acid from the decomposition of the milk sugar, lactose. The same effect can be produced instantly by introducing a drop of acid into the milk. Coagulation takes place, the albumin in the milk is precipitated. The state of the milk is destroyed. The same thing can be done with any colloidal solution. Examination of various fluids of the body has shown that they are all colloidal. A drop of acid in the blood will cause the albuminous matter held in suspension therein to coagulate; in fact the blood will coagulate when exposed to the air, a fact to which we owe the stopping of blood from a cut—otherwise we would bleed to death from every scratch. If we eat something that is unwholesome, acid is formed and when it gets into the blood, it produces a mild disturbance which makes us ill. If we inject acid into our veins, we will die, for then complete coagulation takes place. Even so innocent a substance as ordinary white of egg has this effect, and it is substantially in this way that the deadly snake venoms do their work.

In as much as all the fluids in the body are colloidal in nature, it is evident that anything that will impair their colloidal condition must be looked upon as a source of injury to us. In the handling of colloidal solutions in the chemical plant care must be taken to guard against the introduction of electrolytes, that is, substances which conduct electric current into the process, as these substances will destroy the colloid by bringing about coagulation. To remove these substances, other substances known as "protective colloids" are added. In the human body the colloidal condition is the natural condition of good health. Bad health and death are caused by the formation of products within the body due to disease germs and other causes. These germs and other things are detrimental to the maintenance of the healthy colloidal condition of the various fluids on which life depends. The proper treatment to get rid of these injurious substances is to use drugs which will produce the colloidal state and bring it back to its original condition, and this is doubtless the way in which most drugs work.

Probably the most familiar of all metallic drugs, whether in colloidal or other forms, is colloidal silver. Almost every household

must have to-day in its medicine closet a bottle of Argyrol, a colloidal silver albuminoid. Colloidal silver itself is a cherry-red liquid. It has been used as a drug with marked success, so it is claimed, in the treatment of tonsilitis, acne (pimply face and body), various skin diseases and eruptions on the body. It has been injected in the veins of persons suffering from bronchial troubles and pneumonia. Dysentery and other intestinal troubles have yielded to treatment with this drug. The eye doctors have used it in treating various diseases of the eye, infectious conditions of the eye, burns and even wounds in the cornea. Quite contrary to the ordinary silver drugs, it does not cause pain or discolouration of the skin. It does not irritate but soothes. It will cause the inflammation to subside and can be used very effectively in removing warts. It has replaced Silver Nitrate in ocular medicine to a large extent. Tests that have been made with this drug have proved it to be very effective against disease germs and bacteria, possessing about the same potency as corrosive sublimate, but with no toxic effect on the patient. A certain preparation of colloidal silver, which is opaque to the X-Rays has been found very useful in the diagnosis of certain diseases.

Colloidal mercury is also a well-known drug. The various salts of mercury that are used as medicine are very peculiar in their action. When they are very soluble in the fluids of the body, they are extremely poisonous; when they are not rapidly soluble they have a slow action. The best example of this is Calomel, which is only the insoluble mercury chloride. Corrosive sublimate is the soluble mercury chloride, and it is extremely toxic. The toxic chloride is well-known for its antiseptic properties. Colloidal mercury is very quick in its action, but its toxicity is so low that two tea-spoonfuls of a 1 in 2,000 solution can be taken twice daily without any bad effects. The drug has been used with great success in the treatment of relapsing malaria and syphilis.

When we are run down, pale in colour and worn out by work and worry, the physician generally prescribes some iron in the form of various tonics. The Haemoglobin of the blood contains iron which has the property of absorbing oxygen in the air, breathed into the lungs and forming with it a loosely combined bright red substance which quickly loses its oxygen and changes into a purplish red colour in the passage of the blood through the body and back to the lungs. The iron content of the healthy body is only 37 grains, but even a slight variation results in an anaemic condition. The strangest thing in the treatment of anaemia is the extreme difficulty of getting any iron into the blood. You can take large doses of iron salts, such as the carbonate or the hydroxide; but they undergo decomposition in the stomach and fail to reach their destination, that is, the blood, in a useful form. The same thing holds good of the various organic iron

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compounds. It has been found, however, that the colloidal iron drug will be absorbed into the blood very rapidly and really very good results have been obtained with it in the treatment of anaemia.

Though iodine and sulphur are not metals, mention may be made here about their uses. In recent years the alcoholic solution of iodine with the addition of a little potassium iodide to prevent the formation of iodic acid, has become very popular as an antiseptic. Used in this form, it stains the skin badly, as is well known, and when taken internally or applied to parts of the mouth cavity, it produces a nauseous sensation and is very liable to give rise to iodine poisoning. Colloidal iodine is used in three forms, that is, in oil solution, as a paste and as an ointment. Large doses of colloidal iodine may be administered with impunity and with no nauseous effects. When the colloidal iodine paste is applied to the skin, it does not stain. Rheumatism has been treated very effectively, it is claimed, by soaking a piece of flannel with colloidal iodine, attaching the same to the positive pole of a battery and applying as near as possible to the affected part. Nasal and bronchial inflammations can be alleviated very effectively by the treatment of colloidal iodine.

Colloidal sulphur has been used to replenish the impaired supply of sulphur in the body which is the cause of liver trouble. The stomach will not absorb ordinary sulphur at all. Colloidal sulphur baths have been of very great use in the treatment of rheumatism and skin affections. Colloidal aluminagel has been used as an astringent with excellent results in diarrhoea, being much less toxic than the bismuth compounds that are generally used for this purpose. Colloidal manganese was used with good results in the treatment of poisoning by mustard gas and other cases of sulphur poisoning. Colloidal copper is useful in the treatment of boils, while colloidal arsenic has been employed as a medicament in pernicious anaemia. Colloidal nickel has been used in meningitis and colloidal paladium oxide has been applied successfully in the treatment of obesity by injecting it hypodermically into the fatty areas. Colloidal calcium has been used with success in the case of patients suffering from calcium deficiency. More and more of these colloidal substances are being prepared, and it is not an exaggeration to say that many of the afflictions of the human body may find not only alleviation but permanent cure. This branch of chemistry has, therefore, a great future and will be of immense benefit to mankind in the treatment of obstinate and so-called incurable diseases.

My Village.

By B. Ramachandran. (I Class.)

WEARY after a busy term at College, I set out to my village for rest and recreation during the holidays. My village is a little isolated community of simple folk who work hard all through the year, tilling the fields and plying their homely trades in blissful ignorance of the stirring events that happen daily in the wider world. It is a pretty hamlet buried under groves of trees, and nestling cosily by the side of a long range of dusky hills. It was evening when I approached the village. Surrounded by fields of dusky corn and gardens of lovely flowers of varying hues, with the neighbouring hills silhouetted against the evening horizon, the village lay before me like a sleeping child, calm and serene and bathed in the mellow light of the setting sun. The western horizon had already acquired that unique gathering of colours that is inseparable from an Indian sunset; it was like the canvas of a great artist spread carelessly over with the tints of russet and crimson and gold. My heart gladdened within me as I saw the lovely spectacle spread before me, and I almost ran towards the village. I felt thankful that modern civilisation had not yet reached my village. The red sunset glow made everything look so lovely that I almost wept in an ecstasy of joy. The brilliant plumage of the birds, their sweet songs, the rhythmic murmur of the neighbouring stream, wreaths of blue smoke curling up from the humble cottages of the villagers, the green pastures and "the lowing herd winding slowly over the lea"—all these gave me a sense of peace and joy which I had never felt before. Returning from the noise and squalor of a town, I loved my village on that day as I had never loved it before. I felt like a wanderer returning home after a long absence, like a child returning to the bosom of its mother after a spell of naughtiness.

My village cannot boast of much that we usually associate with modern civilisation. It has only one building built on what may be called the modern style, and that is the school building. It is a bare, rectangular building furnished very meagrely and presided over by an old schoolmaster. The schoolmaster is a delightful old man, not at all like the traditional portrait of a schoolmaster that we know so well, harsh, surly and ignorant. There is something strikingly Bohemian in him that renders him extremely lovable. His head stored with all kinds of information, always ready with a smile and a soothing word, jovial and kind, the schoolmaster is one of the most popular figures in the village. You can always see him sitting at his desk in the school building chewing *pan*, with a pencil in one hand and a book in the other, and you hardly need any introduction to talk to him. He has a way of his own with strangers that puts them completely at ease.

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He is a great talker and his only grievance is that the younger generation is growing more and more rebellious; but being a kind and sympathetic man he bears with the changing times with more equanimity than many schoolmasters of his generation. He believes religiously in corporal punishment, but, as he himself says, it has to be used only in the last instance. He however points out that there are some boys who are, as it were, "born to the cane," and says that a sound thrashing, now and then, inflicted on them will do them more good than harm. Being fond of talking he usually conducts village meetings and speaks to the villagers on topics of general interest. But once he is on his feet, nothing can stop him till his audience gets thoroughly bored; but they tolerate his garrulity because of his age and learning and habitual kindness. His favourite mannerism is this; when he scents boredom among his audience, he says always, "One word more," but his audience knows by bitter experience that this is only a prelude to a complete and lengthy new development of his theme, and they wait to hear him through with looks of intense martyrdom on their faces.

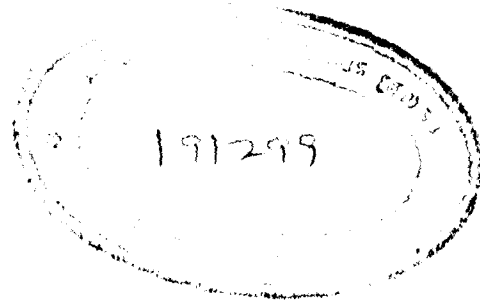
The most important person in the village, however, is the village munsiff. A man thoroughly conversant with rural politics and gifted with rich common sense, he is a power to be reckoned with for many miles around. A too frequent contact with petty squabbles of village life has rendered him a little cynical and pessimistic; but he is kind with a kindness that is really genuine and belongs to his nature. Nothing gives him more pleasure than a discussion on village politics, and as he is the only person in the village who can read an English newspaper intelligently, he is considered to be an authority on what happens in the outside world. He is slow in entering into a quarrel, but when once he enters into one, he is a relentless foe. He is the only person in the village who has visited the metropolis, and he takes very great pride in the fact that he was present when the Governor visited the Council. His contact with many aspects of life has given him an inexhaustible supply of incisive sayings, and one of its favourite sayings is: "If gold rusts, what shall iron do?" He has a fine sense of humour which saves him from any awkward situation. The village still remembers his devastating answer to the over-bumptious doctor who recommended him to take a walk on an empty stomach. "Whose?" enquired the village munsiff with mischievous twinkle.

My village looks like a paradise during a festival. The Pongal is a very big festival there and hundreds of people from the neighbouring hamlets gather in the market place and enjoy themselves. Every one will be dressed in his or her best. It is a festival of colour. In the evening, the villagers form a procession of the cattle—the beasts washed and decorated—and to the accompaniment of the village pipes, men, women and children march to the outskirts of the village and

celebrate the festival in great joy. My village knows no distinction of rank. A fine old-world equality prevails there and an old-world simplicity too. The common happiness of a festival unites them all in a wonderful brotherhood. After the procession and the fair, the villagers go back to the village, and you will see all over the chattering, contented crowd. The bells of the village shrine ring merrily at evening fall and the day closes with a bright illumination. The whole village, then, looks like a fairyland.

Such is life in my village—a life which, in spite of its apparent monotony, has a richness of its own. The village is a world in itself; it has its own joys and sorrows, its beauty and ugliness, its sacrifices and deceits, its quarrels and friendships. The transient excitements of town life are absent, its bustle and noise and its unending squalor. The simple village folk live fairly contented lives, except when famine or disease pay their periodical visits. I remember the poet Gray's lines whenever I think of my village and its people:

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.



Q. M. L. 4. 191295

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