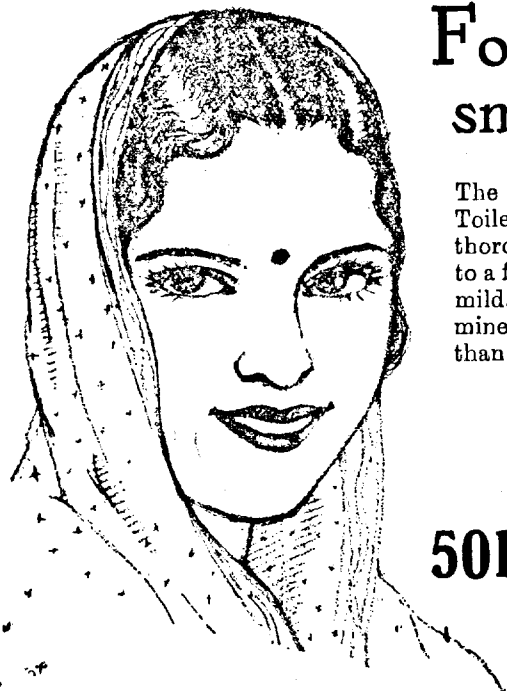




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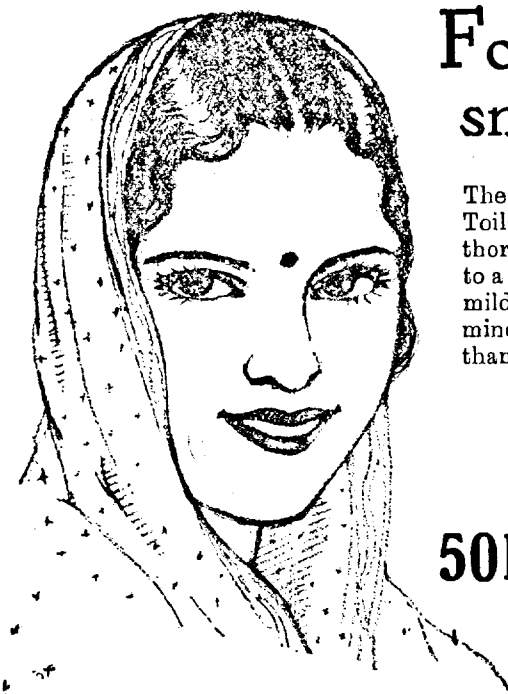
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*[We have been obliged, owing to want of space, to omit
 the Editorial Notes and the Reviews this time.]*



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JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

Editor: K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAO

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

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

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

Vol. VII, No. 2

Sep-Oct. 1934

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. . . he that laboureth right for love of Me
Shall finally attain! But, if in this
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure!
—The Song Celestial

‘East and West in Religion’

By T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI, C.I.E.

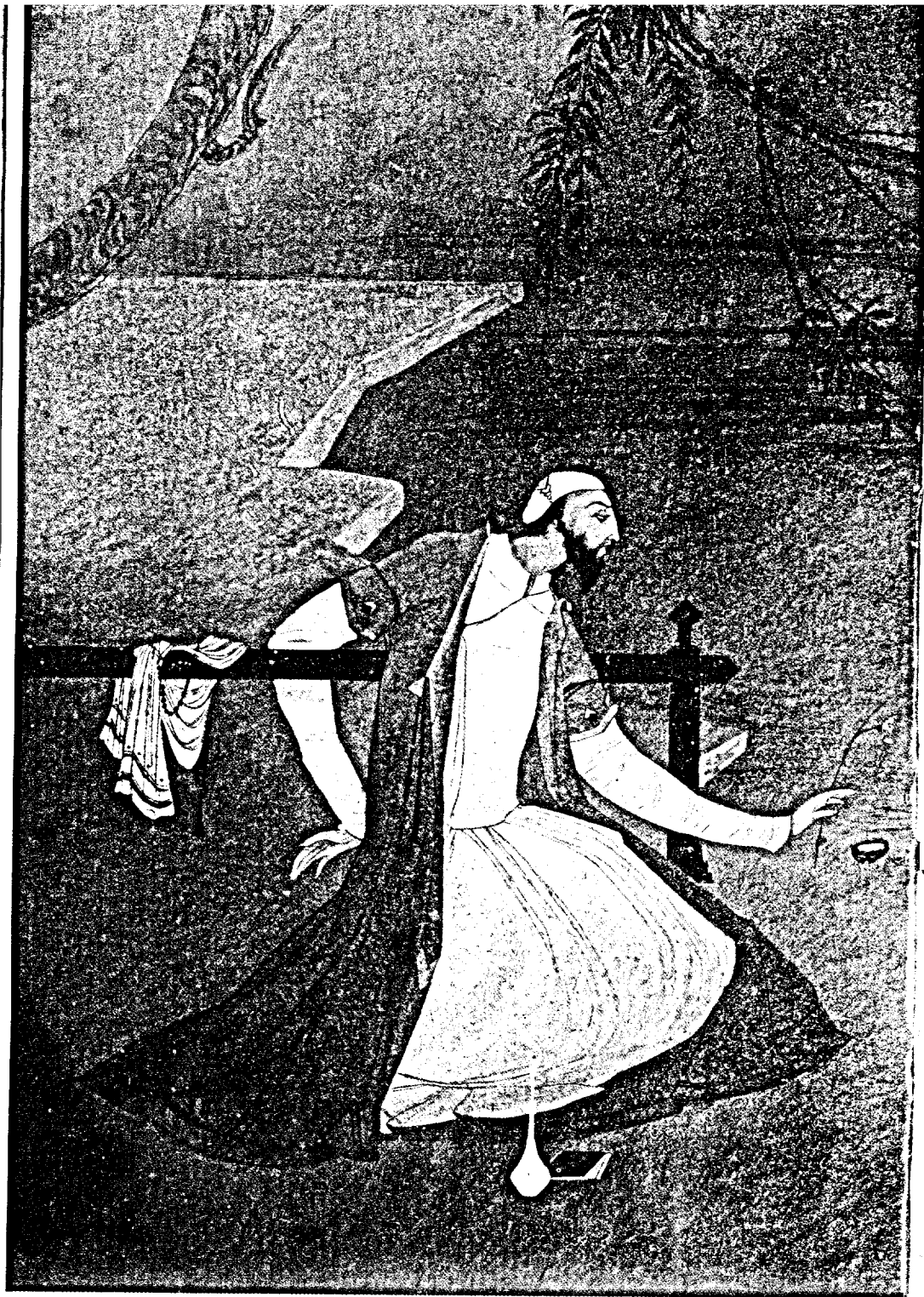
The volume before us is a collection of addresses by our illustrious countryman, Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan.¹ All except the last were delivered to Western audiences and yet they are as full of lessons for the East as for the West. They touch on a variety of topics. They are in the free flowing style which we have learnt to associate with the author's written and *extempore* discourses to popular audiences. No student interested in the study of religion and its many phases in the East and in the West should miss or overlook it.

The first topic is comparative religion. Comparative religion is a profitable study. It is not however for all. It is not for the ardent devotee of any one religion. It may interest scientific minds that view religion from outside as a sociological phenomenon. It may even interest deeply religious minds of a certain type. It cannot interest those to whom the final truth is given by their own religion and there can be nothing gained by a study of the various forms in which the religious mind has expressed itself in different parts of the world. That there may be many approaches to truth and that what may be missed in one might have found expression in another will not be allowed by those who rest on final and infallible revelations, to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away.

Those who can allow the value of comparative religion in the interests of religion itself must be able to say to themselves :

‘Truth is one. Truth is infinite and has many facets. Not all of it can be seen in all its bearings by any one of woman born. The age and clime in which a

¹ ‘East and West in Religion’ by S. Radhakrishnan, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London).



From Omer Khyam

THE FRONTISPIECE BY MR. A. R. CHUGHTAI ILLUSTRATES
THE FOLLOWING QUATRAIN:

*Into this Universe, and why not knowing,
Nor whence, like Water willy nilly flowing ;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.*

KHAYYAM

TRIVENI

person is born, the country and community to which he belongs and his own inner equipment and calibre set limits to the facets of truth that he can see. Even the mystics who claim to see the Truth, whole and entire, show a variety in their vision. Humility and wisdom alike enforce a due sense of our limitations in the perception of truth.'

This sense and the tolerance of temper which it enforces towards those who differ are not easy to persons who are deeply attached to their own religion as the final expression of religious truth. The thoroughly organised, aggressive, propagandising monotheistic religions have little room for tolerance. They were, in the not very distant past, so anxious to save the souls of men from the hell fires of the next world that they saw nothing wrong in flaying them alive in this. But even in these days when 'our spiritual good manners' have been vastly improved, the intolerance is carefully kept out of sight but is not wholly absent. The aggressive propaganda of the past has yielded place to what is described as the sharing of the good message with others less fortunately circumstanced. Occasionally, very occasionally, is impatience allowed to be seen. The desire to uplift the heathen is still there. In their minds it is all giving and no receiving. They have everything to teach and nothing to learn.

Two recent experiences brought it clearly to my mind. In the International Fellowship there was a suggestion, by an Indian Christian secretary, of a 'federation of religions.' However imperfectly expressed, the idea was clear that the higher minds of all religions should unite and put forth their combined effort in working for definite ends. The assertion of equality involved in the suggestion and the implication of mutual influence immediately roused opposition. At another concourse of friends, a missionary asserted that there was an idea that all religions at bottom were one and had a common source, but to his mind, speaking wholly impartially, it seemed impossible to sustain it. (It reminded me of the mild ironical satire of Kalidasa in making the dancing master say

'EAST AND WEST IN RELIGION'

that it was natural that each man should think highly of his own *vidya*, but was he in that category when he claimed for dancing a premier place among arts?) But with great urbanity he stopped all controversy by adding that so it seemed to him and it was not his desire to discuss or raise a controversy.

It is possible to maintain that East and West are different in their ways. It is possible to show parallelisms in matters of religion in East and West and maintain that, despite apparent differences, they are essentially alike and under stress of similar circumstances have produced similar conceptions and solutions. It is possible nevertheless to contrast them. Religion in the East largely is the cultivation of inner life. Religion in the West is connected with life in the community, with churches and congregations. Neither statement is intended to be taken as literally and wholly true. But in a rough manner of speaking it is intended to express the idea that the East and the West lay more stress on the individual and the social aspect of religion. For some time, and more vividly since I read this volume, it is increasingly borne in upon me that

*andham tamah pravrisanti
ye vidyam upasate
Tato bhuya iva te tamo
ya u vidyayam ratah
Anyadevahur vidyaya
(a) nyadahur avidyaya
Iti Susruma dhiranam
Ye nastad vichachakshire
Vidyam chavidyam cha
yastad vedobhayam saha
Avidyaya Mrityum tirtwa
Vidyayamritam asnute.*

'Blind darkness enter they that do homage to *Avidya*. Even greater darkness enter they that are attached to *Vidya*. From *Vidya* one result flows and from *Avidya* another. So

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we hear from the wise who expounded it to us. Whoso knows *Vidya* and *Avidya* together, he crosses death by *Avidya* and wins the immortal by *Vidya*.'

Vidya is knowledge, the inner realisation of the truth. *Avidya* is, by contrast, activity. *Vidya* belongs to the world of the inner spirit. *Avidya* belongs to the world of action, life in the community. Without *Vidya*, action lacks informing purpose, and is ill-directed and ineffective. *Vidya* without action is worse. Action uninspired by true aim may yet achieve something if not very much. Knowledge of true aim can achieve nothing without action under its guidance. Ignorance may have its excuses. Knowledge has responsibility and no excuse for its deficiencies in the ordering of life. Knowledge and action yoked together will win the highest. Apart, they fail of effect.

You close your eyes and try to realise what the ideal means to you. You open your eyes and look at the world around. You do not find it the embodiment of your dream. You speak to the stranger and ask him for his dreams. He explains. You tell yourself that dreamer's world must be a poor thing at the best, at any rate far inferior to your own. You go into his world and find it is not so bad; in fact it is better in some, in many, respects. The world of the active social worker is not perfect but the world of the pure idealist is even less perfect. With more active endeavour in the one case and with greater insight in the other, far greater results may be reached.

It is possible to have an excess of a good quality or rather it is possible to misapply a good principle. It is possible to have too much patience, too much tolerance. A little impatience, a little intolerance, not with men but with abuses, may be useful. If steady unremitting effort to remove them is impatience and intolerance, much impatience and intolerance is required. In the name of tolerance we have left ignorance alone. We have left superstition alone; we have left squalor and misery and uncleanness alone; we have made no effort to eradicate them. We have avoided dissemination of correct ideas

'EAST AND WEST IN RELIGION'

as a possible source of disturbance to the internal and external peace of men and society. We quote in defence '*Na buddhi-bhedam janayet*' etc. It was not always thus that we thought. We carried our message and our light even into other countries, not indeed on the point of the bayonet, but in the full faith that it is inherent in the quality of light that it should sooner or later attract all human minds towards itself. Intolerance has to be avoided, but is there no escape from 'the doubtful result that all sorts of foreign cults and superstitious beliefs are to be found within the pale of our religion'? 'Doubtful result' is a mild description of the chaos we allow without any effort to check it. That some of our best men should not only not put their religious household in order but, in what they conceive to be defence of true Hinduism, be driven to maintain that a large section of the Hindu population is not Hindu at all in religion, is the measure of our toleration and acquiescence in this doubtful result.

We have become suspicious of reason. We must not think, we must not reason. We must simply obey. All the thinking has been done long ago and crystallised into texts. The wisdom of the ages is there. We must only interpret and obey them. And the orthodox custodians of the science and art of exegesis should in each generation find confirmation for their practices and prejudices, however they might vary from generation to generation. You need fresh thought and intense effort to realise it.

That which distinguishes man from the brute is his capacity 'to look before and after and pine for what is not.' It is not pining and languishing and dying, but pining and therefore working for and creating what is not, that the poet has in mind. The *Tapas*, intense creative effort, is in the old stories described as generating heat invading the three worlds and disturbing even the gods out of their repose.

Throughout the book there are striking thoughts strikingly expressed. They do not deal merely with religious topics in the abstract; they deal with topics of everyday life and

TRIVENI

with present day problems, and with facts and results of deep varied human experience.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is a master in the art of presenting even familiar facts in such striking language that they acquire a new significance and power of moving the human mind. The mind of the Hindu community has to be moved, and the faith that moves mountains and overcomes all obstacles has to be generated. Thinkers of the author's type have a part in the creation of this new faith. There is ample evidence in the recent utterances and activities of Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan that he is not oblivious of his duty in this respect.

Nature-Sketch

An orange warmth of after-sunset floods
The darkening hills, and then the twilight-swoon
Comes gathering in with eve's unnumbered buds
Dimly-pulsating to the blossomed moon.

The after-silence of the last lone bird
Which twitters a pale drop of note and stops
The whole night long, is like a depth of word
Which from some lonely poet's being drops

Into an after-life of hush complete,
Or like a burning star of sound which comes
Out of the aeons like a twinkled beat
Drowned in the depths of dark milleniums.

Out of the silvern dark the ocean rolls :
Its billows to my visioned soul respond
How like a giant rhythm-roll of souls
Met at a festival of diamond.

There is a brooding silence in the air
Welled from the wingéd Farness on whose rim
Dawn-colours all invisibly prepare
Bright pinioned majesties of seraphim.

One cloud moves slowly yonder like a blotch
Of silver-edgéd gloom which seeks and seeks.
Here from my plot of earth I sit and watch
The night, the motherhood of glows and streaks.

How mighty is the universe ;—the sky,
The cloud, the star, the water and the night !
But mightier than each of these am I
Who do contain in me both dark and light.

H. CHATTOPADHYAYA

Agony

'Tis agony
 To hear a clock
Dripping out hours
Into Eternity,
Remorselessly
Killing Youth's flowers !

I am so young
 And yet Time's cold
And iron tongue
 Tells me I shall be old

If every shriek
 Killed in my brain
Abroad was hurled
Upon the world,
All men, aghast, would seek
 The secret of my pain

Man is no flower,
 Simply to live,
Die in an hour,
 But a weak fugitive

'Tis agony
 To hear a clock
Dripping out hours
Into Eternity,
Remorselessly
Killing Youth's flowers

SANKARA KRISHNA CHETTUR

A Decade of Indian Politics

By M. CHALAPATHI RAU, M.A., B.L.

Edwin Samuel Montagu laboured like a mountain and produced the Montford reforms. He, like everybody else, knew that Diarchy died the day it was born, though the *post mortem* examination was carried on for nearly ten years, till Coroner Simon delivered the verdict that death was due to natural causes. But between them Chelmsford who was all vague and blue about the reforms, and Montagu who had the manners of a Hebrew conjurer, rallied and organised the Moderates, who in their turn discarded Morley and adopted Montagu as their latest hero. Lord Reading with his shrewdness touched these Moderate leaders of public opinion and turned them into shapes of statesmen ; they crowded into the Councils and became Ministers, Executive Councillors, and members of minor commissions. The Congress, however, stuck to Gandhi and his experiments with truth ; and it was not until C. R. Das made a bold bid for power and divided the Congress at Gaya that the Swarajists entered the legislatures. The death of C. R. Das in the summer of 1925 was a first-rate national tragedy, for he had charmed his countrymen by his dash and animation, his soulful idealism, and his ruthless self-sacrifices. His patriotism was highly poetic and heroic, and his brilliant record as leader is yet unbeaten.

It was left for Motilal Nehru to dominate the best part of the decade. He was a prince among politicians ; and though he had not the almost coercive charm and power of Das, he had a charm of his own and political astuteness of a high order. He had wrought a remarkable revolution in his life, exchanging the luxury of epicureanism for the luxury of stoic suffering. It was he that had helped Das in driving out Gandhi into the wilderness, and it was he that dragged him out again. He had qualities which contradicted one another. He could be amiable and autocratic, charming

TRIVENI

and ferocious, could win over a wavering ally or kick out a recalcitrant follower with equal ease. He was at times bad tempered and Byronic, unable to brook opposition, and like most other leaders of the people, democratic in opinion but aristocratic by temperament. His affection for his family was proverbial; he had varied tastes; he loved pomp and hospitality; his pride was princely. It was as Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly that he shone at his brightest. He united brilliant social gifts with an iridescent intellect. The rare and delicate dignity, the elaborately enacted cynicism, the restraint and elegance and resistless logic, the power of illustrating argument with picturesque anecdotes or adorning it with brilliant epigrams, all captivated men with the least belief in that mockery of a legislature and secured for that bastard constitutionalism its fullest trial. That he was not more effectual did not matter to him or to his countrymen; he invested the Assembly with his own pomp and majesty and imparted a touch of drama to the dullest of debates. Nor did he lack in striking attitudes; he made history by moving the National Demand in 1924, a heroic gesture which could have been heroically answered. But Sir Malcolm Hailey, the clever and eloquent Home Member, preferred to parry and quibble; and the glorious opportunity of gaining the confidence of the people's representatives was lost for ever.

Pandit Motilal Nehru showed generalship for the first time in the history of the Congress. The Simon Commission boycott and the All-Parties Conference were engineered with conspicuous skill and success. Under the most thrilling circumstances he made the Assembly fling the Commission in the face of Parliament. He co-operated admirably with Sapru and Jinnah who felt their self-respect had been outraged, for Birkenhead had ignored them, not as the Buddhists ignore God but as the biting dog ignores the fleas on its back. The Nehru Report drawn up by the All Parties Conference was an unparalleled success. It outlined a constitution, appealing in its simplicity and comprehensiveness.

A DECADE OF INDIAN POLITICS

It proved by figures that the Muslims had nothing to fear from general electorates in the Punjab and Bengal. For the first time the problem of the Princes was dealt with frankly and courageously. Nehru and his associates drew up a report which was, unlike other reports, readable; that was why educated men could grasp and understand, remember and discuss it. It was a model report; the analysis of things masterly; the statistics relevant and to the point; and it was, as far as the people were concerned, a better seller than the Simon Report. Nehru became a slogan, his report a nation's poster; and for a time there was a country-wide unity. But soon there were dissensions and a reaction against the dominance of Nehru. The situation seethed with fatal incongruities. One saw the curious spectacle of Mr. Satyamurti, the stentor of the Congress, loudly welcoming the Report one moment and as loudly repudiating it the next. Mr. Jinnah preferred to be wagged by his party and was indifferent from the beginning. Mahomed Ali with his streak of mysticism, and Shaukat Ali who talked as if he were the heavy-weight champion of politics, were vehemently against it. The Viceroy's attitude was somnolent and exasperating. There was nothing left for the Congress but to drift towards vigorous agitation and even direct action; it delivered its ultimatum at Calcutta, and entered the battlefield at Lahore. Motilal Nehru had to give up his constitutionalism after a desperate trial. He had seen the Government sanction repressive legislation in the teeth of the bitterest opposition, unwanted commissions and committees tour the country at the behest of the Secretary of State and at great cost to the tax-payer, the opinion of the Assembly flouted again and again and its resolutions treated with utter disdain. He had moved the National Demand with moderation but without success. He had met the Government half-way without any response. He was disillusioned and could not stand against the combined disillusionment of his followers. He had now to choose more dangerous but more reliable weapons. He could not have lagged behind his followers a

TRIVENI

moment longer, and it was evident that India loves All-Parties conferences as little as England loves Coalitions.

History held out the prospect of something more heroic than mere reforms, and Coatman becomes as readable as Rushbrook Williams. It was rather fashionable at one time, even for Congressmen, to praise the shilly-shallying somnambulist statesmanship of Lord Irwin. They must all be wiser now. Lord Irwin had no doubt the episcopal earnestness of the model curate, but it was neither powerful nor convincing enough; and it is not high moral grandeur to spill milk and then have the courage to cry over it. If he had not the pomposity of Curzon nor the coldness of Reading, he neither showed the thorough mastery of the one nor the unbending will of the other. He time and again vacillated when he ought to have decided and acted; and, given the same conviction and purpose, Reading would have more successfully conducted the peace negotiations. We are also impelled to think that India and Indian nationalism have gained more from first-class brains like Curzon who gave life to a soulless administration, or Reading who imparted vigour and toughness to the bureaucracy, than the moral geniuses like Ripon who gave a bit of municipal reform or Irwin who gave the parson touch to the politician's business. The virtues which distinguished Irwin from other Viceroys were that he added sermons to his ordinances, avoided unnecessary ceremony, and allowed himself to be fascinated by the strange personality of Mahatma Gandhi; but India will always mournfully associate his Viceroyalty with what Mr. Guedella would call 'the Rain of Law.'

Congressmen refused to 'render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.' They attacked the salt tax, the least sinister of taxes, but the most harassing to the sentiment of the people. Irwin consented to play the part of a minor Nero. The Congress was broken up. The Press was gagged. The public were asked not to picket. Men were afraid of talking politics together, of wearing khaddar caps, of sulking about shops. A docile Assembly approved all that the

A DECADE OF INDIAN POLITICS

Viceroy decreed. Mr. Robert Bernays who 'approached India without any previous convictions' and who, catching the fever of the moment, wrote that Motilal Nehru was 'extremely handsome, almost beautiful, with his long white beard' and that the 'Hindu Mahasabha is a revolutionary youth movement from Madras,' watched lathi charges from the lawns of the Bombay Gymkhana club, drinking cocktails. We are much indebted to him for his contemporary record that the lathi was 'a bamboo stick, thick enough to inflict serious injuries': the description is as good as a definition. The Congress has been prepared for jails and gun-shots but not for this cold-blooded wood, which wounded without killing. The situation was Hogarthian. There were comic interludes. Some magistrates constituted themselves the Mussolinis of their districts and tried to suppress even caps. Provincial Governments imitated the ineptitude of the Central Government. The national agitation wavered between climax and anticlimax. Lord Irwin sat fiddling whenever he was not issuing ordinances. Petty officers distinguished themselves by their excesses behind the backs of protective Home Members. Repression reigned in the guise of law and order. Martial law reached its limits in Sholapur. At Borsad women were said to have been forcibly dispersed, seized by their hair and kicked by boots. The country was bubbling and in high spirits. But the situation was called a stalemate and there were hurried negotiations. The 'half-naked fakir' and the unostentatious Christian gentleman entered into one of the most ambiguous and pragmatic of pacts. Sarojini Devi, the Madame de Stael of the Congress, who had given up her glamorous poetry for gorgeous patriotic prose, described them as 'the two Mahatmas.' The heroic suffering of an year was nullified, and Irwin went home with the reputation of a statesmen. The death of Motilal Nehru on the eve of the Pact was a disaster to Britain and India; for he would have gone to the second Round Table Conference and helped it to come to sensible and lasting conclusions. Gandhi as usual behaved like the Pope of

politics and issued his powerful encyclicals. The conference was a tragic waste of time and energy; and it was for the Congress the biggest tactical blunder when the country was precipitated into civil disobedience for the second time.

The White Paper has been torn to pieces; it only remains to burn it; but it sums up the achievements of the Round Table Conferences. We must here celebrate for a while the remarkable astuteness of Sir T. B. Saprú. He showed, at a critical time, something of the political sagacity of Cavour, though it was unfortunate that he did not possess Cavour's phenomenal craft or courage. All the delegates, the pink and cream of moderatism, the politicians with prefixes and suffixes, went to London and flopped about like Gullivers in Brobdingnag, but none of them had a mind of his own. The one politician who had thought out the whole problem saw himself and the other delegates in the roles of Alexander Hamilton and his fellow federalists. The flies all walked into Saprú's parlour. It was a threefold trap. Saprú and his associates wanted provincial autonomy and some kind of responsibility at the centre; the Princes, still smarting under the Butler Report, saw a chance of getting rid of the tyranny of political agents on one hand and agitators on the other; the British Government was prepared to concede a certain quantum of responsibility at the centre with the Princes as bulwarks of Imperialism. That was the pathology of the process, apart from the ethics of it. Mr. Vijayaraghavachari and Mr. Jinnah have opposed the idea of Federation from the beginning, but they were voices in the wilderness and could not stand against the almost carnal obsession for Constitutions with 'unrealised preambles' and mammoth schedules. Mr. Sastri gave up the conviction of a life-time and meekly surrendered. Under the strong wing of the Empire, they thought, they could experiment and concoct a mixture. None of them could have ignored all the implications of such a scheme, a federation between autonomies to be created by statute and autocracies hedged in by treaties, with a heritage of legalism, formalism, and conservatism.

The first Round Table Conference was like the grand premiere of a musical comedy; the second was a costly show; the third was a benefit performance. Ramsay MacDonald lent the services of his platitudinous gestures and sugary sentiment. Winston Churchill, still 'on the waiting list of England's Mussolinis,' has described the proceedings with his deadly wit; though, luckily for all, his bombastic impertinences have bored an audience which does not appreciate rhetoric that scintillates but does not persuade and convince. Mr. Jinnah, the most baronial of our politicians, promised to blow up the whole show, but he had chosen the role of a prophet, and except for suggesting the classic grace and pomp of George Arliss, he did nothing. And retired pro-consuls like Craddock pranced about and grew fussy. The whole scheme so far is a mule with 'no pride of ancestry and no hope of posterity'; but if it becomes an accomplished fact we shall have to celebrate for ages the wisdom and folly of Hoare, Saprú, and Bikanir. Its most brilliant advocates used the now hackneyed annas simile; they say it gives us twelve annas out of the rupee of responsibility and the chance to fight for the remaining four annas; which all looks suspiciously like the 'half a loaf' philosophy in another form. What must be clear to all is that the Native States will be the pocket boroughs and the communal electorates the rotten boroughs which will return a surplus of reactionaries, so that it will be well-nigh impossible even to move this Car of Juggernaut. The Viceroy and the Governors, at least in theory, will be autocrats without the benevolence of the Tudors or the magnificence of the Moghuls. There will be conflicts between industrial Provinces and agricultural Provinces, Hindu Provinces and Moslem Provinces. The United States of India will pull against each other like the States of the Balkan Peninsula; and a Balkanized India will be a source of satisfaction to many. It will be divided against itself; it will invite interference. The one possible answer to these charges is that there is no easier way out of the *impasse*, with a reactionary party in power and a Congress beaten to the

knees, and above all our geography which reminds us we are a sub-continent, not a country, our history which reads like a wearisome doggerel, and the vast and baffling anachronism of the Princes.

The constitution of the Chamber of Princes was one of the most historic and significant events in the history of the Empire as well as the world; for the first time autocrats and demi-autocrats amounting to a big crowd had an organisation and a House of their own and could meet and discuss together. It focussed attention on the age-old demand for a share of the Customs and a tribunal to decide justiceable disputes between the Princes and the paramount power, a demand for the minimum of equity but against the trend of constitutional practice as crystallized in the acts of paramountcy exercised by the Government. Sir Leslie Scott overloaded his plea with all the available powder, but the Butler Report blew up their hopes. Nor could they accept the faultless logic of the Nehru Report that the future government of India will succeed to the paramountcy when the country will have attained Dominion Status. They would be only too willing to join in any scheme if they are allowed a voice in the affairs of all-India, but they are not prepared to give all-India a voice in their affairs. Viceroys from Curzon to Willingdon have flattered them in the choicest language as links in a chain, as partners in a great task, as pillars in a great edifice. They have, however, their own fears, their doubts, and their forebodings. There is an open unrest even among them. The history of the present is too hazy, too slow, too unsettled, and it is yet too early to say whether the future of the Princes will be one-tenth as long as their past.

It is desirable to assess the political philosophy of some of the parties. 'Like other idealisms patriotism varies from noble devotion to moral lunacy,' says Dean Inge; and all the variations are to be found in our country. Some frankly do not believe in having such an encumbrance as a philosophy; they believe in the potency of the purse as long as there is money in it, and parties crop up on the eve of elections and

reforms, leaders are hired, and fictitious followings created at a moment's notice. The communalists, whether organised or disorganised, are always a powerful factor, and make use of thundering mouthpieces, though there is more rhyme than reason in their politics and they change their colours oftener than a chameleon. There are the landowners, the millowners, and other influential commercial communities, European and Indian, who have been no less vocal in an era of eloquent noises; they have planned their policy in the belief that economics and not politics will always decide Britain's dealings with India; and they know too well that there is nothing so formidable as a vested interest pretending to be an intellectual conviction or principle.

Apart from these shifting interests and parties that rise and die like mushrooms, we have the Liberals and other Moderates on one side, and the Congress on the other. The Liberal leaders are charming statesmen. They parley with the Government one moment and with the Congress the next. They have chalked out a programme of perpetual vacillation and made an ideal of worm-eaten policies. Politics is the art of the possible, said Lord Morley, one of their apostles; and the world without the British Empire is to them simply impossible. Like Lord Halifax of the time of Charles II, they are boastful of their trimming, and we have the vile antithesis of a set of people living in a state of civilized slavery talking like free men. They enlighten nobody by their periodical discourses on the present discontents. This is a time when every party in the State must account for its existence; and taking all that the Liberals have said and done, it is unfortunate that this is a time when the Liberals, as Liberals, have no business to exist. Their political philosophy is summed up in the wise words of Sapru: 'I fight as a subject of King George, for a place in his houselold, and I will not be content with a place in his stables,' a lordly ambition recently answered with a place in the Privy Council, which may be kindly described as the curio-room of the British Empire.

Unfortunately for the country, there are a considerable number of people who are driven to embrace Communism a little prematurely and get entangled in conspiracy cases, while others have recourse to the courage of despair and, like Homer's heroes, seem to prefer unnatural deaths. The Congress, on the other hand, sets up high ideals, passes brave resolutions, and wages a dilly-dallying war. The Civil Disobedience movement would have been wholly heroic if some lukewarm leaders had not been dragged into it like Don Quixotes to tilt at windmills. But everything has been overshadowed by the spirituality of Mahatma Gandhi, his endless patience and energy, and the intense incandescence of his spiritual suffering. He mirrors in his personality the utter distortion of all sorrow, the agony of crucifixion which transfigured the Son of Man into the Son of God. With his rise, leaders like Tilak became minor figures in the country's fight for freedom, and the past a prelude to his gigantic experiments; and as the situation grew intenser his personality sparkled the more intensely, and he caught the imagination of a highly intuitive people as the man of the times, keen-sighted, humorous, fanatical, a lawyer and a mystic, as frank as a child, and as inscrutable as a sphinx. He, more than any Round Table Conferences or earthquakes, has drawn worldwide attention and sympathy for the Indian problem; raised such an apparently harmless act as boycott to the dignity of a weapon of warfare, and even spread the belief that if the British were to withdraw tomorrow all the virgins and rupees would be quite safe. There is no more pride in aping English manners and accent. The bureaucracy, once suffering from a severe superiority complex, now feels almost boorish. Patriots are not pompous but humble. He has created a new technique for dealing with superior powers while throwing the blame on them; and, more than anything else, he has made suffering fashionable as surely as Bernard Shaw has made self-conceit fashionable. The Congress has been endowed with a measure of his own fervour and noble endeavour. That is why Congressmen cannot think of a

better guide or philosopher. His spiritual grandeur overwhelms them. They remember only too well that it was Gandhi who rescued a farce and rewrote it into a Passion Play of tremendous power and pathos.

Gandhi is retiring but he has blessed Council-entry. It is ominous for the Congress as well as the Government. The entire people are suffering from nausea at the sight of a Congress burdened with too many cares and anxieties, and a Government stupid and soulless to the core. The most ignorant of them know that it is easier for a rich man to enter the gates of heaven than for an Indian to become a citizen in the Dominions; they know that they are Indianizing the Army and other Services at the pace of a snail. The country is dangerously at the cross-roads of socialism and capitalism, constitutionalism and anarchy, reaction and progress. Socialism is inescapable sooner or later for a country like India, and the ponderous fact remains that we must plan or perish. There is no more trust in the British Labour Party, which when it had power acted as though it had read and misunderstood Morley on Compromise. Everyone, including the diehard, knows that the discontent is divine and simmering, and that there is too much law and too little order; but with the Congress blotted out for a while the Government could be sympathetic or sinister at will. It is but natural that youth should cry to youth and blood answer blood, but the bright young people of England develop a righteous indignation against oppression of every kind, while they seem to be ignorant of even the existence of India. It is clear that the country must fall back on its own resources. The Congress has decided to repeat itself. We can understand this decision either as a revival of spontaneous affection for Council work or as a tactical move to fight on the only available front; though the sight of khadi-clad patriots puffing out their police-beaten chests and crowding into the legislatures might induce elegant speakers of the type of Mr. Jinnah to go on strike. Very few people, however, seem to think of the dangers that had overwhelmed men of better calibre. This time Gandhi

and the Congress consent to have a grip over the Swarajist section and keep it inspired and obedient to the inner voice of the people. It is safer to consider possible developments. At their best the Swarajist councillors cannot do better than what Das did in Bengal; they might also hold a watching brief for detenus or secure butter-milk for C class prisoners; they might safely utter sentiments which would be considered seditious outside the Councils. One other possible way of adding momentum to their force is to adopt unadulterated Parnellism, obstructing and opposing every step, using every weapon of insolence and invective; but this in a powerless Parliament is not doing much. They might even accept office and wreck the bureaucracy from within. It is a vicious circle, vicious enough to demoralise the best of incorruptibles. Those who watched the Swarajists last time can easily recollect how some mouths watered for ministerships; how men like Tambe had the courage of their convictions and became Executive Councillors; how others in Madras tried to be minister-makers and made a mess of things. Some of the more youthful of them defied party commands and attended the 'socials' given by the wives of Members of the Government. Those questions will crop up again. The best that they could do is to revive the Nehru Report or the best part of it, instead of wasting time over All Parties Conferences and Constituent Assemblies.

We need not speak only as Congressmen or non-Congressmen; or believe that patriotism is the monopoly of the Congress and sanity the monopoly of the Moderates. There are a large number of intellectual men, young and old, who have been mere pawns in the game, who have suffered directly in the spirit and indirectly in the flesh, and are now looking for a real leader and a real party. Jawaharlal Nehru speaks for them when he says: 'Our religion is one of the kitchen, of what to touch and what not to touch, of baths and top-knots, of all manner of marks, and fasts and ceremonies that have lost all meaning; our very gods are manufactured in the factories of England or Japan.' He is a leader after the

country's heart, excitable, sententious, dogmatic. He is as intellectual as Tilak, as sincere and downright as Gandhi, as cold-blooded and logical as his father, with his own individual outlook and temper. Ready in action, vehement in speech, he represents, more than Gandhi, the youth and other popular elements in the country; and his mere existence is enough to inflame public opinion and endanger the safety of the Government. He is perhaps too heroic for the present day lumbering doggerel history. But as long as he is alive, he stands as a portent of illimitable power. There has been no such effective leader since the death of the great Desabandhu Das. But the leaders who stampeded the country into civil chaos are now panic-stricken and propose to stampede it into the councils. That the Congress should do this might seem a cowardly act. If the Congress cannot do anything else, it might at least take effective steps to kill this hydra-headed monstrosity, this patchwork constitution of a mob of Princes and motley Provinces, with self-government on the circumference and safeguards at the centre. If the Congress is not able to shape the circumstances even that much, it would be pitiable in the eyes of the public. It must be hoped that this time at least the Congress will not be led by the nose, and that a combination of circumstances and the emergence of a real leader will drive the old gang into the wilderness, so that at this time of unparalleled disillusionment nothing will stand between the people and their real representatives.

It will be interesting to see whether Bhulabhai Desai will succeed where Pandit Motilal Nehru failed. There is one hopeful factor: Desai will lead a compact host of tried warriors while Nehru led a mongrel crowd of responsivists, sanatanists, and lotus-eaters. The coming Assembly will not be as spectacular as the Third Assembly which was a splendid tournament of words, dominated by Nehru and presided over by Patel, but the Swarajists should be able to put up some solid opposition, if they will not indulge in mere sword-play. The Government may be left to supple-

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ment its sinister dual policy of doling out repression with one hand and reform with the other. It may or may not change its heart, for the State is said to be a corporation without a soul, and the ex-parte Government of Lord Willingdon is one of the most soulless of Governments. Lord Willingdon, it is clear, is not a namby-pamby statesman like Lord Irwin. He has issued ordinances with wooden precision. He has declared his sympathies with less than usual vagueness. In his shrewdness and diplomacy, as in his appearance, he resembles not a little Richelieu and other Cardinal statesmen of the eighteenth century. He has for the moment succeeded; and *The Times* of London has recently written: 'No one is better equipped to deal with this sort of situation, and it would be a fitting climax to an Indian career of unprecedented length and variety that Lord Willingdon should be the Viceroy to start the new machine.' But it must take at least two years more to say whether Lord Willingdon will have been the first of the new 'constitutional' Viceroys or only the last of the Bourbons.

The Man of Culture

By M. K. CHAKRAVARTI, M.A., B.L.

It has been finely said that culture is the residue of knowledge which is left behind after most of the details have been forgotten. The residual knowledge is superior to the gross knowledge, in that it is tested by experience and criticism, and mellowed by reflection. In this view culture might seem to be almost a synonym of wisdom. Yet it is not so; for wisdom is rather the essential product of culture. Figuratively speaking, culture is the rich solution from which the tasteless, colourless, and odourless fluid of wisdom is distilled by some mysterious process of intellectual chemistry. The cultured man is therefore nearer our hearts than the wise man; we love the one but only revere the other.

The above is an attempt to describe culture, but not to define it. From the very nature of the thing, culture is too subtle and complex an idea to be properly defined. We can only suggest the rareness of its quality by parallels. It may sometimes strike us as the subtle fragrance of a great lady's gown folded and stowed away in the wardrobe for years, to be worn again at a grand reception. Or, to suggest a more academic parallel, perhaps culture is like the faint smell of faded rose-petals placed between the leaves of a favourite school-book, which is accidentally reopened after many years. Or, to take another illustration, culture is perhaps like the subdued colours and the softened feel of a costly Persian carpet or Kashmere shawl which has been used fairly long by a nobleman of taste. Nothing like it is to be found in the market even for thrice its price. Or perhaps culture is like the music of an old violin, once the property of an Italian or Polish artist, and now sold at a fancy price at an artistic auction sale. Violins of a better make and workmanship may perhaps be had in the market, louder, richer and clearer in timbre; but not another yielding equally

mellowed tones. To take one last simile to complete the gamut of the senses, a cultured man may sometimes remind one of the flavour of the old wine of Burgundy or Portugal, preserved in the 'deep delved earth' for the life-time of a generation, at length to be served in honour of a distinguished guest. Like Shelley's 'Skylark' we know not what culture is, we can but suggest what things are most like it.

Culture is a rare thing; a rich gift by a fairy godmother. Thrice blessed is he on whom it is bestowed. Such a man will radiate joy, not necessarily for every one; but certainly for the 'sympathetic' few.

'We are the heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time' says Tennyson. But the cultured man is not one who laboriously prepares an intellectual inventory of this great inheritance. That is the work of the dull historian or scholar of the race—the careful steward of the royal household; not of the prince royal, the heir to the throne. The truly cultured man is he who moves about with the easy grace and unconscious pride of owning the whole palace. There is something indefinable in his countenance and manners, even in his dress and movement, which clearly marks him off from all others. We somehow feel the presence of royalty in his person, although we cannot explain why.

We can see the luminosity of intellectual culture in every kind of master-craftsman; and it glows the warmer and brighter, the higher and more refined his medium of work, until we see it glow like a live-coal in a dark room in the spiritually cultured man, every part of whose being has, as it were, caught fire and become incandescent. Yet in every case it is inward radiance and not outward reflection. The opacity of the flesh is no bar to it, for it easily glows through a man's face. If we have the eye to see it, we shall see this glow of intellectual culture more or less in the face of the master-builder, the master-artisan or the master-goldsmith, as well as in the master-musician, painter, and scholar; in fact, of every person who has passed a certain stage in the struggle of the mind with matter.

It is not necessary that this translucency of spirit should appear simultaneously in all the faculties of our mind and will. Sometimes it is confined to the one faculty which has been sufficiently exercised, *e.g.*, a man's sense of humour; love of truth; sense of the beautiful; sense of the pathos of life; sense of values. It is rarely that the whole mass of man's mind is aglow with the light of culture.

The cultured man is so much like, yet so different from, others. It is this elusive quality of mind that makes him so interesting. He is not necessarily a towering personality like a mountain peak, at which we cannot look without our hats falling off. No, he is in many cases just an ordinary person like most of us. He is like one of those gods who had come to the *Swayamvara* of Damayanti, and looked for all the world like Nala. It required the observation of Damayanti to note the subtle difference between a man and a god, *viz.*, that a god casts no shadow. Even so the cultured man seems to cast no shadow. His least little acts seem to be gems of a finer 'water' than the ordinary. His way of looking at things is just a little different from ours. Not that he takes a high line in every matter, which is a dangerous habit of mind breeding prigs and pedants. The man of true culture knows the boundary line between the material and the spiritual and has no temptation to confuse the two. He is prepared to 'render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's.' He sacrifices at all the shrines of life with offerings appropriate to each, because he has a correct valuation of the deities. He is in no danger of casting pearls before swine. The lines apply to him:

'A little more, and how much it is,
And a little less, what worlds away!'

We can see the distinctiveness of his tastes in little things: the colour and cut of his clothes; the look of his bound volumes; the shade of the stucco or paper on the walls of his drawing-room and library. There seems to be a tone of distinction about everything belonging to the truly

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cultured man. Not that he is more expensive than others. But there is a touch, as of a fairy-hand, that makes things possess new charm. There is no gaudiness; no gushing; no parade; no self-advertisement, crude or subtle. On the other hand, there is sobriety, moderation, reticence, modesty and a dignified reserve in his word, action and taste.

There is similar distinction in his choice of furniture and house-decoration; both in shape, colour, and quality. There is an aroma of natural superiority about him and every thing associated with him; yet he is in no sense a 'superior' person. The lay-out of his garden, the selection of flowers and fruits, also furnish illustration of this distinction of taste. His garden may not be richer or larger than his neighbour's; but it is in a subtle way superior. The reason is that his taste has some originality; while his rich neighbour only got his bigger garden laid out on the lines recommended by gardening experts. Similar distinction of taste is displayed in the selection of paintings, prints, and drawings for the walls and mantel-pieces of his house. The untrained eye may not find any special beauty in them, but they have a charm for the art-critic and connoisseur.

The same difference and distinction will be observed in his library. You can know his tastes at a glance over the book-shelves. He has not collected books haphazardly; not by the sets and series strung together by the publishers, but each book according to his own judgment and predilection. You may miss in his collection many of the 'Hundred best books of the world' as selected by Lord Avebury or somebody else, but he will not be the least ashamed of the omission. He may not go into explanation, but if necessary he can give convincing and consistent reasons for the presence or absence of any great book in his collection.

The cultured scholar's library is not a mere mass of books lumped together to satisfy a future desire to study; nor like the Lady's Library described by Addison, intended to get a name for culture, refinement or taste. If you ask your cultured friend on what principles he has collected his books

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he will perhaps say, 'Oh, it is a matter of hobby!' But if you are attentive you will observe a method in the apparent madness, a consistent personal taste stringing the books together like the flowers of a multi-coloured garland. Whether the books were obtained consciously or unconsciously, they all agree with what he loves. It is almost impossible therefore that any of his books will be found with uncut pages. He will only receive as friend an author he knows thoroughly, and put a book on his shelf when he has read it and found its worth. Charles Lamb had such a collection, and Leigh Hunt possessed such a library, poor men both but cultured.

It is not necessary for a man of culture to be a jack of all trades, whether he is or is not master of one. The man whose tastes have been developed in one direction has by that very fact become qualified to appreciate, at least enjoy, whatever is good and beautiful in another direction. The cultured man need not actually be a musician but will show genuine appreciation of good music, and will hold his own opinion about various styles of music which is worthy of the consideration even of a trained musician. Like the intelligent onlooker of a game, he may see farther and clearer than the artist himself. Every art and profession has its horizon, beyond which the ordinary artist cannot see. The cultured man is he who can bring together the flowers of various seasons and horizons in one place, and assess their comparative values.

There is nothing showy about the truly cultured man. You will never catch him making an exaggerated claim to anything. On the other hand, he is rather shy and prefers to understate his case. But if you can draw him out sympathetically, he will genially yield to the topic or humour of the moment and then you can see the range, quality, richness, and variety of his mental stock. He does not carry his best points on his shirt sleeve. Rather the finest fancy work of his mind becomes visible when he has sufficiently unrolled his mental robe, like a specially made Benares *Sari* that does not bear its best on the borders,

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but in the very centre of the fabric. And how wonderful that best is, only the sympathetic critic can judge.

The best scholarship is a product of great culture. It is wide and deep; accurate but not technical; massive and yet lightly carried. It is broad at the base like a mountain peak, and diminishes upwards in order to rise above the clouds. The pyramid is its type, not the mill chimney. The true scholar need not be encyclopædic or carry a whole library in his mind; but he is not at the same time a catalogue or an index volume, so to say, to his library and no more.

Cultured scholarship does not care for intellectual gymnastics, unnecessary hair-splitting, or what may be called 'flea-hunting' in the old wardrobe of the authors. That is the work of perverted ingenuity and book-worm assiduity; but the true scholar will forego his bed and dinner and burn many midnight candles on the keen scent of some quarry of a recondite allusion or elusive quotation. He will have no rest until he has run the game to earth. I knew of a scholar who had read the whole of American topical literature of the 19th century to teach Holmes' *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* to his senior students. The man who refuses to do this is a poor hunter in the forest of scholarship, however eminent he may otherwise be.

There is an expansiveness and restfulness about the cultured man. This is not to be confused with the good humour that follows a good breakfast. His mind has ample elbowroom to sit back and be at ease. He is not bound in the strait-jacket of narrow etiquette and formality. The true gentlemanliness of his mind raises him much above the 'gentleman' of the copy-book. He is no slave of rules laid down by others, but sets up new standards in the high walks of life. He is a law unto himself, for he is growing in the true line of evolution. His life is an organic whole, and not a many-coloured patch-work. He is not a 'tailor-made' man in any sense.

Culture implies refinement of sensibility. However great the cultured man's self-restraint and tolerance may be,

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he is strangely affected by the coarse and the vulgar. Hogarth's painting of the musician outraged by a passing street-band is a pictorial representation of the cultured artistic temperament. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's leaving a 'Kavi Sammelan' or Poets' symposium, with his pocket handkerchief tightly clasped to his nose, during the recital of some rankly piquant verses, is still remembered by Bengal as evidence of a finely cultured sensibility. The truly cultured man is a brave man who will not stop to smell a gutter, either from a false sense of decorum or under the pretence of catholicity of taste. He knows that poison and filth can never be good for anybody, catholic or otherwise.

There are many marks by which we shall know the man of true culture. One of these is contained in the beautiful Sanskrit proverb:

*'Satyam bruyat priyam bruyat,
Na bruyat Satyamapriyam.'*

'Say what is true; say what is pleasant; but do not tell an unpleasant truth.' Yet blunt and even painful things have to be told sometimes in the interest of truth and honesty. But we must be careful that we do not tell the unpleasant truth at the cost of others, whom we either dislike or wish to hurt in a pique of anger and revenge. Even the moralist may not indulge in this kind of truthfulness at the cost of others. R. L. Stevenson, that unique moralist who never hurt to teach, says that there is such a thing as 'inverted pleasure' in condemning with fervour things that we, perhaps unconsciously, desire or covet or grudge another's enjoying. Here is a great temptation for the moralist. Emerson said that no performance is worth the loss of geniality. Even truth is no excuse for giving avoidable pain to others. This is the finer side of *Ahimsa*. It is said of Sultan Nasiruddin of Delhi, a famous Persian poet, that he used to correct his verses at the suggestion of his friends to whom he read them. It was done just to please them, for the royal poet restored his original words afterwards, as he knew that they

were the right words. This is perhaps an extreme instance of cultured suavity; but the tendency is unmistakable.

The mind of the truly cultured scholar is a storehouse of beautiful thoughts, images and sentiments. If he happens to possess a good memory he will be able to quote the poets by the hour. Even if his memory is weak, you will hear him quote beautiful scraps and fragments round which his thought and experience have gathered, and his fancy loves to play like the March wind round the flowers. These have all been curiously unified in his mind, forming wonderful patterns to which his independent thought supplies the embroidered framework. The jewel of a thought culled from the classics will sometimes be found beautifully set against the golden background of his own thought, in the very best manner of the artistic jeweller. The subtle aroma of a sandal-wood jewel casket is all about his thoughts. Whatever the subject of conversation may be, he will be able to illustrate his observation by quotations from the great poets and thinkers of the world. If he has an original mind, he will derive illustrations from his own observation, experience, and reflection. If he is so minded he will tell you a rattling fine story, which you have not heard before or heard told so well. There are no air-tight compartments in his mind; his thought easily passes from one subject to another; from literature to philosophy, and from philosophy to practical experience. He will not say, 'Let us now change the topic', for if he wants he can imperceptibly lead the conversation from cabbages to kings and *vice versa*.

Such a person naturally gathers a circle of sympathetic and appreciative admirers and critics around him. He unconsciously becomes the focus of a cultural group.

But culture is from its nature a late-flowering plant of the garden of life. It is a middle-age virtue, and sorts with iron-tawny hair better than with a jet-black head. The passions of youth have now become largely tamed; the fire of life burns low, and throws quaint patterns of light and shadow on the surrounding walls. This is the time of taking stock of the

past and forecasting the future, in other words, of preparing a balance-sheet of life's losses and gains. Meditation steals into the mind, and fancy plays with us and shows us curious faces in the glowing embers. It is the hour of musing.

You cannot hope to see the fresh beauty of spring in the cultured man; that you may perhaps find in the young poet. But your cultured friend has all the beauty of the autumn season. There is in him the restfulness and repose of the farmer after the labours of tilling and sowing; and the peaceful contemplation of the ripening crops. He thinks more of the coming harvest than of the preceding toil, and even when his mind reverts to it, it is in thankfulness rather than regret. He sings with Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra, 'Grow old along with me: The best is yet to be.'

The season of his life has changed from the roasting and seething days of summer to the cool evenings of autumn with their beautiful sunsets. The paths of life are now free from the dirt and mire of clammy desire. There is a deeper green in the leaves and a brighter gold in the fields. The poet has rightly called it the season of 'mellow fruitfulness'. The cultured trees of his mind are bent with the weight of the mellowing fruits. There is a golden quality in the sunlight that imparts a new charm to whatever it touches, and is more tender than in summer. The temperature has become enjoyable and one sometimes feels in the morning and evening just the exhilarating sensation of a nip in the air, a gentle admonition of the coming winter as it were. The twittering swallows of thought have begun to gather in the mind.

The idealism of youth has been sobered and moderated by experience of the world. The intellect, so much tied to the service of the heart, has been emancipated and has begun to function independently. The man has begun to think, probably for the first time in his life.

Perchance he has forgotten the best part of what he had read with so much labour and thought for thirty years. But he finds that the river of thought and experience has left in

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him a deposit of fine silt, the fittest mould for the growth of the flowers of culture. There is a subtle change even in his face, the muscles of which have at last set in a permanent expression of serenity, nay beauty. In brief, physically and mentally the man is at last attuned to the music of life.

Love, that all-engrossing passion of youth and its concomitant, and lust of conquest, have moderated, perhaps become transmuted to a higher value. The love that was originally centered in one person has now spread over a whole family; unselfishness has become an unconscious habit by daily practice; charity has begun to soften the rigour of the sense of justice. The uncompromising fighter for principles has at last become an indulgent friend of the frail human being. This is the natural course of the evolution of culture, but like a law of nature it takes orders from nobody. It will come, if ever it comes, in its own good time; we can only wait for it prayerfully.

Tagore has expressed this beautifully:

'None of you shall ever make the flowers open. However much you exert yourselves and apply artificial stimulus to the stems, you never can make the buds blossom.'

The Unknown Lover

(A Story)

By PROF. N. S. PHADKE, M.A.

(The Rajaram College, Kolhapur)

Menaka started.

There was a knock at the door.

She hastened to wipe her tears, and to thrust in her pocket the letter that had made her so miserable.

Then picking up one of the books that lay in a neglected heap on the table, and holding it as if she had been reading it, she summoned a cheerful voice to ask, 'Who's that?'

'It's me—Leela.'

'Come in.'

Leela entered in a flutter, and instantly started her rebuke. 'What do you mean by thus staying away? Everybody else is there. Everything is ready. Even the camera is set. They are all regretting and wondering at your absence. At last they sent me to fetch you. Come.....'

'Please don't.....' pleaded Menaka.

'Don't be silly. We'll soon take our degrees, and scatter away—perhaps never to meet again. Didn't we intend this photograph as a sort of parting function? What charm can it have without you—the cleverest girl in our class, and the pride of everybody? Come now.....'

She brushed the book from Menaka's hand, and made a smile even more convincing than her urgent words. She expected Menaka to smile in return, and get up.

But Menaka neither moved nor smiled. She only whispered, 'You'll have to excuse me, Leela. I can't join the photograph.....'

'But why?' with great surprise.

Leela gazed at her friend, and thought there were traces

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seriously ill. It was a case of cancer, and doctors advised immediate operation. This meant huge expenses, and Menaka's sister had not a penny to spare. She wrote:

'I must ask for your help, though I know it's a shame to do so. Being your elder sister I should have helped you all along. But I'm not fortunate enough to be able to fulfil that duty. We're already in debt upto the neck, having had to run a home for a big family on a miserable income. This operation is the only thing that can save my husband. And it can't be done unless I get ready hundred and fifty rupees at the least. So I've no recourse left but to beg for your assistance. Please send me as much as you can.'

Leela finished the letter, and looked at Menaka.

'Now look at this', said Menaka, giving her a Bank Book.

Leela stared. There were Rs. 63-6-9 standing to Menaka's account.

Menaka asked, 'Do you now understand why I decided not to fill up the examination form?'

'You're a great girl, Menaka' clapping her on the shoulder.

'O, no. I'm simply doing my plain duty.'

'Well, I don't know. You were terribly impatient to get through this examination. Your last fence to clear, you always said. Didn't you? The hour had arrived when your long labour would be rewarded. But now.'

'But isn't this too a fine reward to be able to help my sister?', Menaka exclaimed, and made a captivating smile.

It was a false smile, Leela knew.

* * * *

Leela kept thinking of poor, unlucky Menaka, and that made her restless. Nothing interested her. Friends were boring, and books positively hateful. At last in the evening she decided to try a chat with her cousin, Manohar, and left the hostel.

Manohar was a bank clerk, and lived in bachelor rooms in one of the suburbs of Bombay. A very likeable fellow,

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his friends described him. Leela thoroughly agreed with this view. Manohar was a convincing proof, she always told people, that you could always keep smiling inspite of the pinch of poverty. Whenever she ran out of her cheerfulness, she would run down to him for a fresh stock.

She found him in his rooms thumbing the pages of a few illustrated catalogues of musical instruments.

She laughed. 'Shall I compliment you on the profound literature in your hands?'

Manohar waved the catalogues at her. 'These are really very profound books, Leela. Too deep for me to fathom. For every company shouts at me that its products are the best and the cheapest in the market, so that having looked into all these amusing books I've lost my head, and can't decide which company to trust. Don't you pity me?'

'But why solicit pity? Do you really seriously intend a purchase?'

'Yes. I've so often dreamt of sitting on a window sill on a moon-lit night, and playing on a mandolin! Our Bank is giving me tomorrow a small bonus long overdue. So I thought.....'

'I can't admire your spendthrift plans. You rather ought to save money and think of getting married. When will you bring a wife for yourself?'

Manohar was in a jesting mood. 'Believe me, a mandolin is far better to have than a wife. Would never quarrel. Would always entertain. And, when you want to be alone, would lie mute in its box as a wife never will.....'

'Shut up. I can't listen to such blasphemy of my sex!'

'But isn't there sound logic in it?'

'Well, I don't know. Tell me, when do you intend purchasing the mandolin?'

'Tomorrow. I'll get my bonus in the afternoon. And the moment I get it I'll be off to the musical stores. You must come again tomorrow evening. We'll celebrate the arrival of the mandolin with a coffee party.'

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of tears on her beautiful cheeks. She moved forward, and framing Menaka's lovely face with her hands, asked, 'You were crying?'

'Who?.....What an idea?' Menaka laughed feebly.

But Leela was not to be deceived. She persisted, 'Tell me the truth.'

'But I'm really all right.'

'You aren't, I know. Swear on my heart, and tell me. Weren't you crying when I knocked?'

Menaka had then to confess the truth with a nod.

'What's wrong?' asked Leela.

'It's no use telling.' Menaka bit her lip.

'Even me?' Leela drew her close to her bosom.

Menaka made no reply. Only her eye-lashes flickered under the weight of tears.

Leela mopped her eyes with her own handkerchief. 'Please, let me know what's troubling you. Won't you? Are you angry with me?'

'Don't be a fool.'

'Then tell me.'

'Nothing much. Only I've to decide not to appear for the examination. I won't fill up my form. And that's why I can't join the photograph.'

'What do you mean?' with utter surprise.

* * *

Leela was hugely surprised, and in addition to it she became deeply perplexed when Menaka refused to divulge the cause of her decision not to go up for the examination. She made a hundred wild guesses but to no purpose. She simply couldn't understand it. Menaka was the best scholar in the class. It was therefore impossible that she was not well prepared for the examination. Nor was Menaka a daughter of rich parents who could afford to treat the examination as a luxury to enjoy at leisure. On the contrary, it was imperative for her to take the degree this year. An orphan brought up on charity, Menaka had careered through the school and the college on the strength of the scholarships

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she won. And during the last two years, when she had given herself the benefit of hostel life, she had worked extra hard giving tuitions to earn enough for the hostel expenses. She had nobody in this wide world except an elder sister. It was obvious, therefore, that Menaka must be impatient to grab the graduation degree, and step into independent life. In fact she had always said so.....

Why had she then decided not to fill up the form?.....

Leela couldn't see. And though she tried all her wiles, she couldn't induce Menaka to tell her secret.

At last on the third day Leela used the most infallible feminine trick. With tears in the eyes, and a sob in the throat, she said to Menaka, 'All right, don't tell me. Why should you if you don't care for me.'

On which Menaka put her arms round her neck. 'Sh! You mustn't talk such non-sense.'

Leela inwardly chuckled to find her trick working. But she showed no sign of her delight. On the contrary, she put a greater tremor in her voice as she said, 'I *will* talk non-sense. I know you haven't an atom of love for me. I love you so. But I'm a fool to do so when you don't care for my feelings.....'

Here she had to stop. For Menaka put her hand on her lips, saying, 'O how *could* you ever say this.....'

Leela waited for Menaka to withdraw her hand. Then she asked, 'Tell me then. Why have you decided not to appear for the exam?'

'All right, I'll tell you. But you must make a promise.'

'Let's know.'

'You mustn't give out to anybody what I'll tell you.'

'O, trust me.'

Menaka took a letter from the drawer, and handed it to Leela. 'From my sister. Read it.'

It was a sad letter, containing the news of a sudden calamity on Menaka's sister. The poor woman's husband, who was a common schoolmaster in a small district town, lay

'Does that mean you'll send me back without my usual coffee cup now?'

'Ah, what a dreadful charge. Don't you worry. You'll get your coffee all right, greedy woman.'

Leela burst into laughter, and got up to assist him in getting things ready for the coffee.

Her cheerfulness waned a little, however, as they both sat at the coffee. Thoughts of Menaka came back to her, and, with a pang, she wondered if it was right for her to be thus happy when her friend Menaka was probably brooding over her own sorrow.

Manohar noticed a shadow cross her face. 'What's worrying you?'

'Something very sad is about to happen,' muttered Leela as if to herself.

'Yes?'

'Very sad. You'll also curse it if you know.'

'Tell me.'

Leela hesitated for a moment. 'You know my friend Menaka.....'

'Well, what about her?'

'The finest girl in our class. She would surely have obtained a first class.....in the exam.....'

'Why "would have"?'

'Yes, it's now a case of 'would have been.' She can't appear for the exam.....'

Manohar appeared quite shocked. Setting aside his coffee he asked, 'But why? Is she ill?'

'No. It's rather like this. Listen.' And in spite of the promise she had made to Menaka, Leela narrated everything to Manohar.

* * * *

Manohar succeeded in concealing his own feelings as Leela spoke to him of Menaka's misfortune. But when she was gone, he crumpled in a chair with a heavy heart, and lay there like a stricken child, how long he did not notice. Night fell, and the street-lamps dutifully blazed outside. But he did

not get up to switch on the light in his room. Nor did he think of going out to the hotel for his supper, though the usual hour came, and passed.

He kept thinking of Menaka. For, though while listening to Leela he had pretended as though Menaka meant to him nothing beyond the mere name of his cousin's friend, in his heart of hearts he had kept telling himself, 'This is about Menaka—the girl whom you adore and love!'

So, as he lay in the chair after Leela's departure, he frantically searched for a way to help his beloved girl. And as he did so, his mind again and again conjured up the memories of his various meetings with her.

Funny acquaintance it had been, both in its beginning and development.

He had first noticed her in the Bank. She had an account there, and since Manohar did duty at the 'Savings' window, she had to deal with him whenever she visited the Bank. Manohar had experienced a thrill of sympathy and admiration the very first time he had seen her. She was not extra beautiful. But she was pretty, prim, and precise; and her face glowed with intelligence, and her big dark eyes held a delicious frankness in them. She walked with such graceful, firm steps that you knew from them that she was a self-made woman. She walked like a queen, thought Manohar. There was a certain amount of poetic glamour round the figure of this young, brave, wide-eyed maiden, earning her own living, and keeping a small account of her own at the bank!

Who was she, he had always wondered, and never hoped to know.

But he had unexpectedly known it one day.

For she had come to the bank on that day with Leela. She was obviously Leela's friend, he had guessed; and then he had lost no time in asking Leela a hundred things about the 'glamorous girl,' without seeming curious.

And whatever he had learnt from Leela had made him even more fond of Menaka. He had then begun exchanging

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a word or two with her whenever she came to the bank. And his mind would linger on whatever replies she made.

And then a queer thing had happened one day.

He had been to the Pathe for the Matinee show. He was a bit late, and as the attendant guided him with a torch-light through a row of chairs he took the first vacant seat against which he stumbled in the darkness.

When the interval came, and the lights went up, he found himself sitting next to Menaka! 'Good Lord' he thought, as he noticed that she was alone.

He greeted her, and thought she smiled one of her sweetest smiles. Feeling encouraged he asked, 'Won't you like to come out a little?'

She nodded her dissent.

'But really let's go', he urged, 'You get such fine drinks at the Soda-fountain here.'

'I don't need a drink.'

'But what harm if you have one? You mustn't say no. Come...'

'How dare you be so free with me when we don't know each other much?' with a positive frown.

'True,' he smiled, 'We don't know each other much. But how can we ever, if you don't let ourselves?'

'I don't see why I should.'

'If you do, there is every chance of your liking me, and my liberties.'

At this Menaka had got up from her seat, and left the theatre in a huff.

She knew that Manohar, who had taken liberties with her, was Leela's cousin. But she had thought it prudent not to talk to her of the incident.

She had come to the bank a few days after this, and Manohar had taken a daring step. After having made the necessary entries in her pass book he had returned it to her, with a letter enclosed.

He had written:

'I love you, and I can't see any crime in expressing

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my love. Why should you get annoyed with me? If you don't return my love, you have every right and freedom to tell me so. But why this show of offence and annoyance? You can't treat me as sinner for simply telling you what I feel for you! Please do believe me. I bear to you a great love, and no amount of reproof can ever check it.....'

Menaka had torn the letter to pieces, and returned them in an envelope along with her pass book the next time she had called at the bank.

* * * *

It was not only Manohar in whose memory these incidents lingered. Menaka, too, often remembered them. And every time that she thought of Manohar and tried to explain to herself his behaviour, she would have to conclude with the stereotyped utterance 'Strange!' And the fun of it all was that though she outwardly showed a strong disapproval of Manohar's advances, she could never decide if she was not inwardly immensely pleased with him.

With the result that she always kept thinking of the young man in spite of herself.

She thought of him now as she went to the bank to draw all her money to send to her sister. And that made her considerably nervous. Her visits to the bank used to make her nervous since the day she had returned the pieces of his letter. Her reason advised her to be stern and haughty to Manohar, but it cut her heart sorely to assume a stiff coldness towards this ever-smiling, honey-worded young man. She almost hated going to the bank.

But this would be her last visit, she told herself.

She went to the 'Savings' window as usual.

What wonder! Manohar was not there! There was another clerk, doing duty in his place.

'This is good in a way,' she thought.

But she couldn't help asking the new man, 'Where's the usual gentleman? ...er.....I mean.....'

'He is on leave.'

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'Has he gone out of Bombay?', she heard herself asking, and wondered why she asked the anxious question when she professed not to care for 'the usual gentleman.'

She filled up and signed the necessary form, and handed it over along with her pass book across the window, saying, 'I want to close down my account. My balance is sixty-three rupees, and some odd annas and pies. Is that right?.....Let me have the whole amount.'

The clerk looked into the pass book, and then cast a very strange glance at Menaka. He then proceeded to consult two or three big ledgers, looked again with curious, unbelieving eyes first at her and then at her book, and at last seemed to suppress a smile, why Menaka could not guess.

'What's your balance you said?' he asked.

'Sixty-three rupees and.....'

'O, never.....'

Menaka felt a stab in her heart. With a tremulous voice she asked, 'Why? There isn't even that much?'

'No. Lots more.'

'What?'

'Yes. One hundred and sixty three rupees and.....'

'Oh! Impossible.'

'That's the truth. Only yesterday one hundred rupees have been deposited to your account.'

'Strange. I never paid them.'

'Somebody else seems to have.'

'But who? I must know his name. Tell me.'

'Sorry, but I can't. There's no signature on record.'

'But how did the bank accept the money without asking for the man's signature? Tch! Curious ways you bank people seem to have.'

'You may call them curious. But there they are. And you can't help them. We make no end of inquiries if you come and ask for money from us. But if you come to pay money we quietly receive it without asking a single question. Funny. But that's our rule.'

'Hang your rules,' thought Menaka. She flung a

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challenging glance at the clerk. 'Look here. I don't know about your rules. I only know that I must get to know the man who made the payment to my account.'

The clerk shrugged his shoulders. 'That can never be done.'

'I'll see the manager.'

'You may see the Prime-Minister of England if you like. But it would be no good.'

Menaka fumed and fretted at her helplessness. She even thought of drawing only sixty-three rupees from the bank, and let the inexplicable hundred remain to rust. But would it not be wiser, she asked herself, to take advantage of the windfall? She would then be able to help her sister with a bigger amount than she intended to send, and also to pay her own examination fees. She wavered for a moment between two impulses—the impulse to satisfy her sense of dignity by throwing aside the anonymous gift, and the impulse to warmly clutch the hand of a friendly fate.

The latter impulse proved the stronger in the end. What harm was there, she argued, if she accepted the help that had come her way unasked? True, the friend who helped was today unknown. But he would be found out sooner or later. And then she could repay his debt.

She therefore drew one hundred and sixty rupees, sent one hundred to her sister, and also filled up her examination form.

When she met Leela in the evening, she couldn't help telling her everything. Leela was so overjoyed at the news that her dear friend *was* going up for the examination, that she never troubled herself with guessing who the secret friend of Menaka could be.

* * * *

A fortnight later Leela called on Manohar.

'Very nice of you indeed, showing up after a whole fortnight! One would think you were lost into the blue!'

Leela made a winning smile. 'But don't tell me I've forfeited my claim on the usual coffee cup for that reason.'

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Where's your mandolin by the bye? Let's have a look at you strumming its strings.'

Manohar shrugged his shoulders, and threw up his hands. 'No mandolin, Madam. Didn't buy any.'

'You don't mean it! You were awfully bent on buying one.'

'Yes. But I got sober later on, and realised the folly of wasting money over a mandolin.'

A very strange guess flashed across Leela's mind. She got up, and, moving to his table, picked up his diary.

Manohar protested. 'What's the idea? If ladies peer into men's diaries, they do so at their own grave risk, don't you know!'

Leela waved her hand. 'Ah, I know everything all right. I must find out where your bonus has gone.'

She fluttered the pages of the diary until she found the date she wanted to look up. One look at the entries on that page was enough. She had made the right guess.

Turning to Manohar with a radiant smile she clapped his hand with great warmth. 'So *you* helped Menaka? You did the sweetest thing. But don't you think I must be angry with you? You loved her all these days, and never let me have a hint of it! I'll never forgive you!'

* * * *

It was not long before Leela revealed to Menaka the identity of her secret friend. On learning it Menaka deeply regretted the way she had behaved with Manohar. She had never been able to understand exactly the nature of her feelings towards him. But now she felt certain that in her heart of hearts she had always loved the young man. Even her stiffness and coldness had been, she now thought, but a part of a lover's technique.

On the evening when the examination was over, she went with Leela to Manohar's rooms.

He welcomed them with his usual cheerfulness, and asked, 'What about your papers? Good?'

Leela nodded. 'Yes, fairly good. Menaka has come

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specially to thank you for your secret help, which alone made it possible for her to sit for the examination.'

Manohar looked embarrassed. But he smiled. 'O, I see.'

Menaka looked at him. 'I can of course never repay your debt fully. But I'll at least pay back the tangible part of it. I've decided to do extra tuitions, now that I would be free, and I hope to pay back.....'

Manohar cut in, 'O, no, no, no. I can't take back the money.'

'That'd be too cruel on me,' Menaka entreated, 'You must let me return your money. I'll feel humiliated if you don't.'

Manohar gazed at her with a hint of smile. There was mischief in his eyes as he said, 'All right. I'll take the money on one condition.'

Menaka was too simple-minded to scent mischief. She said, 'All right. I agree to your condition, whatever it is. Tell me.'

Manohar smiled at her. 'I must have not only the money, but also your hand along with it.'

This was too sudden. Menaka felt smothered by the rush of a strange embarrassment. Her cheeks flushed. She hung down her head.

Leela shot a significant glance at Manohar. 'O, you are the limit, my dear cousin! Actually proposing to my friend in my presence! There never was a more shameless young man!'

That made everybody laugh.

* * * *

Within a few days' time Leela found Manohar's rooms decorated with a wonderful wife, and also a beautiful new mandolin!

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee

By ABANI NATH ROY

The advent of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee in the field of Bengali literature was rather unexpected. In the nineteenth century, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was the undisputed monarch in the realm of Bengali literature. Bankim Chandra was a very learned man and wrote, besides novels, many religious discourses and essays. His place in Bengali literature as the pioneer of fiction is still very high. But his novels suffered from a religious or moral bias. He followed, in the treatment of his novels, the long loved dictum of punishing sin and applauding virtue. The inevitable result was that his characters did not develop on human lines. The reason is not far to seek. He had to satisfy orthodox society which was always watchful that no wrong ideal entered into society through literature. This was something like the tradition of eighteenth century Classicism in English literature.

Close upon Bankim came Rabindranath Tagore. He composed innumerable poems and wrote songs, essays, novels, and short stories. He brought lyricism into Bengali poetry; his poems breathed a freshness, an elegance and beauty which were hitherto unknown in Bengali literature. Tagore is admittedly a greater poet than a novelist, though as a writer of short stories he has hardly an equal. To Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, however, Bengali literature owes the beginnings of the realistic novel. It was left to Sarat Chandra to humanise Bengali fiction or, in other words, to introduce such characters into fiction as are more human and real than idealistic. Several years before he began writing, Sarat Chandra had left Bengal and was employed in the Rangoon Secretariat. He had outwardly no touch with Bengali literature. People in Bengal did not know him. He had written a short story in the annual number of the

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Kuntalin magazine in the name of his elder sister Anila Devi and obtained the first prize. But when all of a sudden, he wrote the story, 'The Child of Bindu,' in the monthly magazine *Jamuna*, the reading public were surprised. There were many who took it to be a composition of Rabindranath under a pen-name. But the instalments of the story continued and Rabindranath denied its authorship. 'The Child of Bindu' was followed by 'Charitraheen,' half of which was published in *Jamuna* but not completed. The writings had the stamp of a man of real power who wielded his pen with great facility. The people had, however, no opportunity of knowing anything about the development of Sarat Chandra's art; he took everybody by storm. The output was mature and the standpoint definite.

'The Child of Bindu' deals with the love of a barren woman for her sister's son and her desire to bring the boy up as her own, and the various complications that this desire led to in a joint Hindu family. The theme was not a bit new, but the treatment of the relations of the woman with her husband's elder brother, his wife, and other members of the family is very original and fine. An out-and-out native of the soil, Sarat Chandra chose a theme which was essentially Bengali in outlook.

In 'Charitraheen' ('Characterless') Sarat Chandra treated the theme of love from an entirely new angle, showing supreme indifference to conventional morality, and the effect of this book on the Bengali public was shocking. The novel deals with a love-episode between an educated young man of middle-class family and a maid servant in a boarding house where the young man used to live. No other Bengali writer had up till then dared portray the character of a 'low-class' woman from this standpoint. Bankim Chandra in his famous novel, 'Krishnakanta's Will,' had dealt with the love of a handsome Zamindar youth for a beautiful widow, but the story ends in the murder of the woman in vindication of conventional morality. But in Sarat Chandraji's story there was no suggestion of punishment or obloquy to the lovers

concerned. At once there was a hue and cry from all quarters. The magazine which was publishing the novel serially, stopped publishing it as soon as some of its subscribers intimated their desire to discontinue subscription if the novel continued to appear.

But Sarat Chandra was not to be daunted. He continued to write. In his next novel 'Devadas,' a youth is found to be led astray by the failure of his early love, taking to wine and women. Parbati, the object of the love of Devadas, did not forget him even after she had been married to another man. Such affairs exist in real life, but their portrayal in literature was forbidden until Sarat Chandra broke this law. It was impossible to find fault with his work simply on account of his attitude of all-pervading sympathy with the fallen, all social victims or rebels. People read his books for his style, if for nothing else.

His novel 'Pallisamaj' (Village Society) attracted a great deal of notice. It gave a true and vivid account of life in the villages, with its petty jealousies and ignorance, superstitions and sillinesses. The great artist Sarat Chandra spun a love-drama around two beautiful souls against the background of village cruelty. Ramesh, the hero, was a bachelor, but Rama, the heroine, was a widow, although she had almost no memory of the man to whom she was married. But Hindu society has no solution for this apparent maladjustment, for widow-remarriage is not the general custom. The impulses of sex are allowed to go underground and thrive on people's sufferance. Sarat Chandra attacked the fabric of this moribund Hindu society and attacked powerfully. This want of a solution for the Ramesh-Rama affair and its consequent loss to society of normal, orderly life, rich in every sense of human progress, moved all readers of the book to thinking. It was claimed to be one of the best productions in Bengali literature and, naturally, ran into many editions like most of his other works.

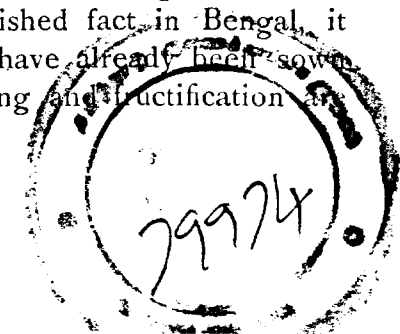
But Sarat Chandra is at his best in his masterpiece, 'Sreekantha.' Many consider it to be his autobiography, but

it is a peculiar combination of biography and fiction. I heard him remark on one occasion that the writing of this book did not tire him. On the contrary, whenever he felt tired and spent up, he found pleasure in writing one or two chapters of this book. It was just like the valve of a running engine, designed to let in fresh air and fresh light. The book is really marvellous and it would be difficult to give its complete picture within a narrow compass. I hear that it has been translated into French and selling in the streets of Paris. I do not know if it has been translated into any other language of the Continent.

The book is written in the first person. Four volumes of the book have already appeared, but the story has not ended or, in other words, the career of Sreekantha has not attained a finality. From this, it seems probable that the author will take it up when he finds himself in a reminiscent mood again. We have so far got in the book three love-episodes, viz. that of Rajlakshmi, Abhaya, and Kamalata, all exquisitely beautiful in delicacy, tenderness and depth. All are the accounts of girls whom society regards as fallen or undesirable, whom society has given no status. Abhaya is rather a bold type for Hindu society; ill-treated by her husband, she left him and went to live with one Rohini who loved her but to whom she was not given in marriage. It is needless to say that no society will subscribe to such anti-social ideas, for it abhors its own dismemberment. But the truth must be told that men have so long laid great stress on society and its moral laws alone and neglected the natural promptings of the human heart. The result has been, as might have been anticipated, that men were thrown under the wheels of a cruel and insensate society and powdered to dust.

Sarat Chandra belongs to the same society but deals with its maladjustments with a sympathy and pathos that is hard to surpass, and though it cannot be said that the regeneration of a new social order is an accomplished fact in Bengal, it is apparent that the seeds thereof have already been sown by Sarat Chandra and their ripening and fructification is only a question of time.

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Sarat Chandra is also noted for his easy and fluid modes of expression. His all-embracing sympathy for men and dumb animals, even in their weaknesses, overwhelms the reader. After Sarat Chandra, it is difficult to mention the name of any other novelist of the same order and range of interest. Sarat Chandra writes with great restraint, understanding and caution, and transforms his subject matter into art. His imitators, if they can be called so, have, on the other hand, failed to translate their subject matter into art. Sarat Chandra shows signs of drift towards barren intellectualism in his later compositions, of which 'Sesh Prashna' (The Last Question) and 'Bipradash' are the best illustrations. But he still holds a sway over the Bengali public, not for his intellect but for his breadth of mind and humanism. He is far and away the finest Bengali novelist of the modern generation; indeed, he is our first realist.

The Message of Omar Khayyam¹

By PROF. T. VIRABHADRU, M.A.

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Omar the great Persian poet has often been misread and misinterpreted by his readers. As a poet he is excessively fond of wine, woman and song, and for that reason he has been condemned by people with a religious and moral bias as an Epicurean and Free-thinker. The verse given below is often quoted as being typical of his outlook on life :

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

These critics argue that, though his songs are very interesting, their spirit is demoralizing and is sure to exercise a most unwholesome influence upon immature minds, and the great popularity of the *Rubaiyat*² is proved by the fact that 'Omar just now is a cult, and seems to be the only religion of many.' This criticism of the learned and orthodox can be supported from any stanzas taken at random from the collection. According to Omar a whole empire can be sacrificed for a delicious cup of wine !

One draught of wine is better than the Empire of Kawus,³
And is better than the Throne of Kobad and the Empire of Tus.

¹ Omar Khayyam of Naishpur in Khorassan lived in the latter half of the 11th Century A.D. and died in 1123. In this essay all questions relating to his biography, the text of the *Rubaiyat* and the translations, and the influence or otherwise of Vedic scholars and Buddhist philosophers on the Persian Poet, which had engaged the attention of distinguished Orientalists for a long time, are omitted. The extracts given are generally from Fitzgerald's poetical translation which is very popular, especially with students of English literature. Quotations from Whinfield's famous edition and Heron—Allen's literal translation are also adopted wherever necessary.

² Quatrains.

³ Heron—Allen's Tr.

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That he does not hesitate to wound the feelings of his orthodox brethren who are scrupulous about their religious rites and ceremonies can be proved from the following :

What time is this for devotions ? Be silent, O Saki,
Let be the traditions, and drink to the dregs, O Saki.¹
How much more wilt thou chide, absurd divine,
Because I drink or am a libertine ?
Keep all thy tedious beads and pious show !
Leave me my jolly mistress and my wine !²

The poet's enthusiasm for wine is so great that he is not satisfied with its companionship during his life. Their association should not be forgotten even after his death :

When I am dead wash me with wine,
Say my funeral service with pure wine :³

If you want to know where he is on the resurrection-day, seek him 'in the earth of the tavern threshold !' There is no wonder that verses such as these have shocked the religious sense of many of his readers who conclude that this is but the reflection of a life of weakness and sin. Some have even styled him 'an Oriental Falstaff ready for any adventure, braggadacio and sack.' It cannot also be denied that Omar has a large class of admirers who put an allegorical interpretation on his sayings and see in them deep philosophy and wisdom. Thus like Vemana of Telugu literature he has the misfortune of being considered a wise sage by some and a reckless libertine by others. His critic has however to keep two things in mind. All the songs now associated with his name may not have been his.⁴ Secondly the songs are expressions of his lyrical moods and one might be disappointed if one always looked for consistency or strict logical

¹ Heron-Allen's Tr.

² Whinfield.

³ Heron-Allen.

⁴ 'The number of Quatrains seems to increase in proportion to the modernness of the Ms.'

P. xv. Quatrains of Omar Khayyam—Whinfield.

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sequence in them. But that his words are not always to be literally taken, the lines cited below give a warning to us :

To drain a gallon beaker I design,
Yea, two great beakers, brimmed with richest wine ;
Old faith and reason thrice will I divorce,
Then take to wife the daughter of the Vine.¹

The ideal placed before humanity by Omar is that, since life is very short, we must make the best of it. Be happy while you are here, and enjoy life, for

It is but a day we sojourn here below.²

In another place he asks

Of all who go, did ever one return ?³

This kind of exhortation that we must enjoy life heartily is opposed to that of many poets whose message has been that the soul is more precious than the clayey substance, our body, and that our pleasures on earth are insignificant as compared with those in store for us in heaven. Our faith in the Great Beyond is the one thing which elevates man from the level of the beast and so we have to sacrifice our worldly joys for the ethereal bliss we get after death. After all, it is as clear as daylight that the Infinite is greater than the Finite. But Omar believes that since the future is uncertain and the past is of no use, the only way left to us is to enjoy the present. He would say,

Nor earthly cash for heavenly credit sell.⁴

This view is a contrast to that of poets like Browning who thinks that men are fools when they are 'greedy for quick returns of profit.' He is angry with those who say

But time escapes,—
Live now or never !

for his sincere belief is that 'Man has Forever.' Among human

¹ Whinfield.

² & ³ Whinfield.

⁴ Whinfield.

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beings some have loved the pleasures of the body for their own sake and some have discovered in them a means to an end, that which gives full scope for the development of the soul. There are no doubt many who can put up with any kind of misery now, because they are hoping for Tomorrow. There are also those who, however great or rich they may be, are not satisfied with what they have, but are asking for more. They expect they will be happy when they get that *more*, and once it is realised, they are unhappy because they have not got *more*. There is really no limit to man's ambitions and hopes. As an English poet has put it, 'Man never is but always to be blest.' The Persian poet pleads for another point of view regarding life. He exclaims,

Unborn Tomorrow, and dead Yesterday,
Why fret about them if Today be sweet!

That this advice is not after all useless can be verified with reference to life. Our troubles in life are generally of two kinds: memory of past affliction, or fear of future suffering. Supposing a man is celebrating the marriage of his son,— marriage is the happiest occasion in the life of a family— while everybody is cheerful, all on a sudden the parents of the bridegroom become gloomy and are plunged in sorrow. The memory of a son who died years ago is enough to make them depressed during the whole feast; or should a thought—a prophecy made by some good or bad astrologer—cross their mind, they become quite unhappy anticipating some future misery, notwithstanding the merriment they are surrounded by. Omar declares emphatically that the only way to be happy is to think of the present moment. He says people often talk of his achievements in science, for, did he not reform the calendar? Yes, he did prepare the calendar but he took care to omit two days: the day yet to come and the day that is gone! Those that look for Tomorrow may come to grief, since that Tomorrow may never come, or, by the time it comes,

I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years!

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Man is after all mortal and our ideals or attainments cannot prevent us from succumbing to the Inevitable. For instance, we love some people and are deeply attached to them. So far as we are concerned, our love is a reality, it is an indissoluble tie. But it eventually proves to be a mirage, for, after a brief stay, 'One by one our friends creep silently to Rest.' That it is the lot of the great as well as of the small is certain, because kings and potentates who can control the destinies of millions cannot control their own! Note

How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

That nature does not make any distinction between the prince and the beggar is clear, for, what is the fate of royal palaces which were once the glory of their monarchs?

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep.

However great the human being may be, once his term is over, he passes into the Limbo of Oblivion. He is only 'one of the Pawns on the Chess-Board' and will soon be thrown into the 'Box of Non-Existence!'¹ Stories are told of people in ancient times who buried their jewels and their treasure underneath the earth. It was quite safe in the earth and could be picked up again when there was need. But the case of the human being is entirely different, and 'once buried, we are not dug up again.' Nature tells the same tale, though we do not benefit by the lesson. See how,

The tulips that are withered, will never bloom again:*

The sum total of the poet's wisdom is this:

One thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;

This granted, what should we human beings do?

Drink wine and fling not life to the winds;

¹Heron-Allen's Tr.

²Heron-Allen's Tr.

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Forget the past, worry not about the future, live in the present, love life, and all will be well.

It is possible to argue that this attitude to life tinged with pessimism is only a kind of medieval superstition not worthy of men of light and learning. The problem of human destiny has been discussed by eminent philosophers and sages in every epoch and they have tried to give illumination to mankind otherwise groping in the dark. Omar's opinion is that metaphysics and science are of no use to any one in this matter. He says he visited 'Doctor and Saint' but to no purpose. It is true he studied much and under eminent scholars and either discussed this subject with them or heard it discussed by them. We are also told that his own Guru was one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was himself well-versed in many branches of knowledge. Unfortunately he was not any the wiser for it. It is true he 'heard great Argument about it and about,' but the result was this :

But evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.

After travelling laboriously for several days, you feel you are not an inch farther than the place at which you started! Thus, notwithstanding our intellectual discussions, the question remains ever the same. Life is a mystery. With the help of our science or logic we may explain away several things of the Universe, their causes and effects, but in our unsophisticated moments, the heart is exactly in the same condition as before. It loses itself in wonder at the mysterious nature of God's acts and the puzzle remains the same at all times. For instance, this eternal question has three parts :

The Why—The Whence—The Whither :

Why have I come into this world? Where have I come from? Where shall I go to after my death? Are there not people in the world who some time or other in their lives pass through this experience? A person with a contemplative turn of mind when he is alone—away not only from the din

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and bustle, but also temporarily cut off from the interests of life—is likely to fall into such a mood and the chain of ideas finally leads him to this question. He will be convinced in the end that Providence is inscrutable and all our knowledge and philosophy is helpless in the face of the Divine Mystery. Thus the problem,

The purpose of this coming, and going, and being,¹
is a puzzle. Khayyam cries out in despair

I know the questions but hear no replies.²

Sages no doubt there are, but are they in any way better than we? They also must die, nor can their wisdom exempt them from death. True, many of these learned men have preached great things. But they share the same fate as others, for,

Their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

Take his own case. For a long time 'he stitched the Tents of Science,'³ but at last.

The shears of Fate have cut the tent-ropes of his life.

It might be pointed out that the fact of their death is no argument against their wisdom and eminence. Setting aside for a moment the idea of their death which is not in their power, are they during their life better than average human beings? Dr. Johnson narrates the story of a great philosopher who by his scholarship and character extorted the admiration of all. His knowledge and saintly appearance were such that Prince Rasselas took him for the happiest man on earth. One who is not swayed by passion or who is not moved by sorrow, is he not the greatest man? But this very same philosopher was found later in a semi-dark room weeping and sobbing over the death of his only daughter! Rasselas was shocked but Johnson's explanation is interesting :

They (Teachers of morality) discourse like
angels, but they live like men.

¹Heron-Allen's Tr.

²Whinfield.

³Khayyam=Tent-maker

Thus no man has succeeded in his contention against nature. The knot of human death and destiny is still unravelling. All that the great poet knows about himself and the world is this :

From earth I came, and like the wind I go!¹

Confession of ignorance is the beginning of wisdom, and in Omar Khayyam the reader finds one of the wise men of the world.

Omar Khayyam's view of life seems to have been based on what may be called Fatalism. It is not possible for any one to find a suitable explanation for most of the things that happen in the world. There is a Fate presiding over our lives and it is unwise to protest against its decree. You may doubt the propriety of many events in life, you may be surprised at the misery of several pious people and the triumph of wicked creatures in the world. You may pray and pray but the matter has all been settled already and you must accept the Inevitable. This belief in Pre-destination is likely to be challenged by many people of the present day. The controversy between Free-will and Destiny is acute and we cannot easily come to any decision. Khayyam's opinion is that we must bow to Destiny. It has been written on the tablet already, our success or failure. The Hindus call it *Lalata Likhitam* (Writing on the forehead). Our prayers 'cannot cancel half a line' nor can 'all our tears wash out a word of it.' In our helpless condition we sometimes appeal to the heavens above but the poet says that the sky

Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

He asks us to remember the case of the Ball which does not consider 'Ayes and Noes' but goes right or left according as the player strikes it. But has the Ball any voice in it?

And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
He knows about it all—He knows—He knows!

In other words we are not the persons to say who ought to be rewarded and who not. The whole thing is wrapped up

¹Whinfield.

in mystery and there is only one Being that knows the *Why* of everything. People of modern times cannot easily reconcile themselves to the idea of meekly submitting to Fate but how can we explain the case of pious and God-fearing people often plunged in suffering? So far as their careers in this life are concerned, none of their acts deserves this kind of mortification. Romeo and Juliet are a young couple full of love, and love is a divine quality. Their motives are pure and their love is ethereal. Their characters are so sweet that, had they lived on, their conjugal relations would have been ideal and they would have showered bliss on all those that chanced to see them. But they were cut off from tasting that melody which was so richly offered to them. When we ponder over these questions, we can come to one of two conclusions. Either there is no law of moral order in the Universe and thus we are utterly helpless with regard to our worldly happiness, or, man here reaps the consequences of his past actions, *i.e.*, foolish or wicked acts performed in a previous birth. (The Hindu Doctrine of Karma.) The literary critic of Shakespeare is satisfied with the idea that Shakespeare is an artist and that his aim is to give pictures of life. Such curious events we meet with in life, and Shakespeare shows his remarkable psychology by giving them their proper place in his drama. The pious devotee would believe in God's justice and His mercy and would not be so heterodox as to question the right or wrong of these occurrences. He is convinced that God is essentially merciful and that He is ever ready to show his generosity to mankind. But Omar on the other hand, is worried by a doubt, a very important one, in this connection. If God in his abundance of mercy created Man and placed him in Eden, why did he 'devise the snake'? This problem—the origin of sin—is a very difficult one. You create a weak creature and place him in circumstances where he is likely to be victimised by Evil, and still say he is a sinner! The question thus is: 'Who is responsible for our sins?' The Persian poet's opinion is that all these are foolish and impertinent questions. He is

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full of irony whenever he refers to these questions and doubts. He says, 'God knew on the Day of Creation that I should drink wine; if I do not drink wine God's knowledge would be ignorance.'¹ He knew it, which means that I have obtained His permission. If he thought it bad, he ought to have taken care to prevent it! Thus he points out how foolish we are in arguing against sinners. Here is a very interesting question:

What man here below has not sinned, canst thou say?
And how could he have lived, had he not done sin, canst thou say?
So if I do wrong and thou punishest me wrongly,
What difference between Thee and me, canst thou say?²

In a modern Telugu Social Drama,³ the hero is an interesting fellow. He leads a dissipated life and is a rogue, but he has a relieving sense of humour. When one of his friends threatened him with condign punishment at the hands of the Almighty for all his immoralities here, his reply was this. On the Judgment Day, he would put this question straight to his Master: 'Did you create me as your dependent or as independent of you? If I am your dependent, *you* are to blame for my sins; if I am independent, it is beyond your jurisdiction, my case!' Khayyam's advice is this: 'Do not raise these foolish questions. Have faith in Him and all will be well.'

One very interesting section of the *Rubaiyat* is the group of verses in which the Episode of the Pots is given. The poet says that he one day went into the market-place and stood in the Potter's workshop when he overheard a very amusing but highly instructive discussion going on among the 'Clay Population.' While the Potter was pounding or thumping his clay, one of the Pots murmured, 'Gently, Brother, gently, pray!' Another remarked: 'The potter took me from the common Earth only to stamp me back to common Earth again.' Immediately another member of this confer-

¹Heron-Allen's Tr.

²Whinfield.

³*Kanyasulkam* by G. V. Appa Rao.

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ence rose up and contradicted the previous speaker by pointing out,

Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy.

Having created an object which was the result of his fancy, would he be so foolish as to destroy it soon after? Another speaker was worried because

They sneer at me for leaning all awry.

What can be the reason for 'my ungainly make?' 'Did the Hand then of the Potter shake at that time?' A somewhat elderly member of this great fraternity stated that it was a mistake to attribute their differences—in size, shape *etc.*—to any evil motives on the part of their Master. No doubt some talk of a 'strict testing' but

He is a good Fellow, and 'twill all be well.

While this sort of conversation was going on in all seriousness among the Earthen Lot regarding their origin and growth and end, one very ingenious member, with a view to set at rest this silly controversy, struck at the root of the matter by impatiently crying out

Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?

The meaning of this allegorical episode seems to be this. The Potter is the Supreme Creator and the Pots are the various classes of human beings. The questions raised by the several pots at their conference represent several points of view regarding human life in relation to its Creator. For instance, we are occasionally puzzled by this question: Is man's life and career on earth of any value to the Supreme Being, for he comes out of dust and goes back to dust? When we prize a thing highly and want it to endure for ever, we take care to select the best material, spend our best attention on it, shield it as much as possible from destruction, and if, in spite of all vigilance, it should be lost, our sorrow would be deep and long-lasting. If God cared for man, He

would have made him more happy and would have given him a longer period of existence. Evil, misery, and death would not be, in that case, so powerful as they are now. It is just like this. In some parts of our country, at the time of a certain festival,¹ the people construct an effigy and decorate it nicely during the day, but when night comes, every member of the community—man, woman and child—will throw a stone at it and reduce it to ashes, almost in the twinkling of an eye. To men who hold that human life is not precious in the eyes of God, a reply is given in the following way. Even a foolish child will not, after making a little toy to please its fancy, shatter it to the ground in rage. If God did not attach any importance to the human being, why should he create him at all? It is ridiculous that in a freak you should invent some new thing and dash it to pieces immediately after. Only a lunatic or eccentric fellow is capable of such sudden fits of temper. The Creator of the Universe, whose wisdom and judgment are perfect, is not likely to have such an attitude to human life. For Omar Khayyam this question is always a riddle. He reveals his helplessness when he asks

For love of whom did he make them—for hate
of whom did he break them?²

Again there is a third question: Why should there be an ugly pot 'leaning all awry?' If God is kind to all creatures—He is our father and mother—, why should some of us be good and some bad, some lovely and others awkward, some strong and some weak? Can it be that these differences exist because of His desire to test our abilities and work? A strict teacher judges students according to their work and distributes rewards and punishments in proportion to their intelligence and industry or want of it. But to compare the All-Merciful Father to a strict teacher is a bad comparison. The teacher—the bad teacher—may be anything, but the father divides his love equally among all his children.

¹Holi.

²Heron-Allen's Tr.

Sometimes when the father's estate is to be distributed among the sons, the weaker boy gets a double share for the reason that he is incapable. So God's mercy is intended for sinners and they are safe! Thus there are several points of view regarding man and his position in the world, but the great mystic tells us how foolish we are in raising these questions when we miss the fundamental question: Potter and Pot, who are they? Creator and Created, are they two distinct entities which are always separate? Are they not two phases of the same Force? The Poet says that there is one thing which can never be clearly explained.

Who makes-Who buys-Who sells-Who is the Pot?¹

We little minds treat things in a little way. We distinguish between Seer and Seen, Giver and Taker and so forth. To the great poet that looks from on high,

Thou art both the real thing seen and the spectator.

Omar says you distinguish between Thee and Me but he exposes its hollowness by advising you to recognise

The Me within Thee Blind!

We also talk of pious people and sinners, and of heaven and hell and of a Fate writing something on the tablet. To the *Advaitic* philosopher that Omar Khayyam was,

Tablet and Pen, and heaven and hell, are within thyself.²

Animate and Inanimate are our distinctions. But to the mystic, Potter and Pot are made of one substance. The Pot points out, 'Treat me, brother, well; I am of the same stuff as you are.' The essence of the poet's wisdom is contained in this:

My Heart said to me: 'I have a longing for inspired knowledge,

'Teach me if thou art able.'

I said the Alif. My heart said: 'Say no more.

'If one is in the house, one letter is enough.'³

¹Heron-Allen's Tr.

²Heron-Allen's Tr.

³Heron-Allen's Tr.

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Our religious men generally miss this, and they are immersed in doctrines, creeds, forms and rules ; but he would say

O Fools ! the Road is neither here nor there.¹

We are all eager to attain salvation but Khayyam's advice to us is quite simple :

A hundred Ka'bas equal not one heart,
Seek not the Ka'ba, rather seek a heart!²

There is only one thing which lifts man to the level of the divine, love of humanity, and we have Khayyam's assurance for it :

And never injure one nor yet abuse,
I guarantee you heaven, and now some wine!³

By loving his fellow creatures, the human being will make others happy and will enjoy happiness himself. That this is superior to every other kind of piety or religion is revealed in the poet's exhortation to mankind :

Yea, drink and even rob, but, oh ! be kind!⁴

Sympathy for man and belief in the Supreme Being are the only things that lead man to Heaven, and the poet's prayer is this :

What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin ?
Thou'rt all we need, the rest is vanity.⁵

In the Hindu *Bhagavatam*, the story of Sri Krishna and the *Gopis* is exactly similar to this point of view. The milkmaids were quite innocent. They were not learned. They were engaged in no *tapas* (severe penance). Great pandits and sages recited the *Vedas*, performed religious sacrifices, went through austere discipline, meditated and meditated. They could not meet Krishna and He was not accessible to them. If one wanted to find Him, one had to go to the cottages of the shepherd lasses where He could be seen playing in the

¹ Heron-Allen's Tr.
² Whinfield.
³ Whinfield.

⁴ Whinfield.
⁵ Whinfield.

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sand in front of their houses, or stealing away their clothes or singing or dancing with them. Scholarship is not knowledge. Real knowledge is Love.

In conclusion, it may be said that Omar's poetry is not so Epicurean in its philosophy as superficial observers often make it out to be. The wine, woman, and song which he so warmly praises stand really for three important factors in life on which the happiness of man depends. One is that Nature or Providence has placed innumerable good things before us, and we are expected to be happy 'by sharing the joys of living.' Love of life is the one thing a human being is essentially in need of. Without it he will fall into despair and create a hell into which he throws not only himself but all those that surround him. The second factor in human life is *Love*. Woman is the embodiment of love and she has inspired most of the great poets of the world. To these two things must be added the pleasures of song, culture and art. It must be remembered that Omar was a great lover of beauty in nature, in man, and in culture. The question whether he is a philosopher can be answered in this way. He is as much a philosopher as any poet can be. He is not a philosopher in the sense that any particular school of thought or system of conduct or code of principles was founded or preached by him consistently or logically. He was a lyrist and poet, but one who took interest in human life and gave expression to his doubts and longings and dealt poetically with questions relating to the Ultimate Reality. That he was a most cultured man and that he reached the summits of scientific knowledge at the time needs no saying.¹ That he is one of the greatest lyrists of the world is also admitted. How far he was fond of wine in actual life is a question on which opinion is divided. That he is sincere in his utterance is true, for, he never flatters the public or the scholars by quoting their authority; on the other hand, he deliberately outrages their feelings. If he is pessimistic occasionally, it is because a human being is liable to such moods.

¹ P 12-13—Umar Khayyam—Otto Rothfield.

TRIVENI

He only voices forth the vague fears and melancholy thoughts that take possession of the human heart now and then. In his poetry we find a wonderfully poetical and epigrammatic expression given to the Eternal Doubts about human life and destiny which find an echo in every heart but which most people cannot, or will not, express. His songs make a direct appeal to the heart and his message to humanity is this:

Your stay is brief: make the best of life: be content:
accept things as they are: rebel not against Fate: learn
the lesson of Love: never misread One for Two and you
are blest.

Chitrasalas: Ancient Indian Art Galleries

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INTRODUCTORY

Indian art is characterised by spontaneity; the beauty lavished and the dexterity of workmanship displayed on comparatively insignificant articles of use—articles of luxury are quite a different matter—are sufficient proof of the veracity of the statement. The fantastic curves that shape the quaint parrots on the borders of clothes of wear or on vessels of use, the swans that adorn the tops of lamps or the peacocks that hold the *pan* in different parts of their body, the metal fishes that sway to and fro on their fragile scales, and the queerly shaped tortoise that holds the conch of the Lord are all creations of the genuine art-brain of India.

Indian art, though possessing all the charm of a woman and all her grace and gaiety, has never been seen huddling in a harem—I mean a single and separated compartment or, as we style it today, a watertight division—unlike the sinew-loving masculine Western art that confines itself to galleries and academies. There has been no artificial taste in India. All that it possesses is natural. Art has been part of her life. The *vibhramavilasas* of Indian women are an example. Even the *tilaka* applied to the forehead speaks of the artistic taste of its wearers—the *ardhachandratilaka* that Sri Harsha praises the *kasturitolaka* of Sri Krishna that Lilasuka sings of.

A nation with its women drawing flowing patterns in line and colour over every possible surface in their homes for mere pleasure, and because of decorative instinct, cannot be asked to show any reservoir of art—any special school of art. It is not individualistic in India but general, not confined but universal. And the universality and all-pervasiveness of

aesthetic beauty and appreciation in India accounts for the dearth of galleries and museums as separate and isolated institutions; but as parts of a larger whole we have them in plenty. Just as the Divine Spirit which is immanent is more manifest in some places than in others, we have the *Chitrasalas* and other *Kautukagrihas* as more profusely decorated and picturesque parts of mansions and houses decorated all over in a general way. It is also to be noted in this connection that our temples, as storehouses of picture and sculpture, served to educate the masses in the appreciation of beauty and a knowledge of anecdote in such an unequivocal way that the full purpose of the *Chitrasala* was realised in these sacred precincts.

But on this account it cannot be held that *Chitrasalas* as separate institutions were totally absent. The pink of perfection of the artists' craft was preserved by the king in special art galleries in the royal palace, the public art-houses and such other institutions. The grandees and other enlightened citizens of the kingdom took pleasure in collecting art treasures to decorate their private *Chitragaras*. Even as late as the 16th century we have the *Chitrasala* of Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri, where he used to receive his guests, mentioned in the *Hirasaubhagya*.¹

TYPES OF CHITRASALAS

Thus we have three distinct types of *Chitragaras*, those of the royal palace, the public art-galleries and the private ones. Of the *Chitragaras* of the palace it should be noted that there were separate ones for the harem² and very often every individual queen and princess possessed

1. अथ प्रदेशीव स केशिनामुना विधातुकामः सुकृतस्य संकथाम् ।
इदं महीन्दुर्मुनिचन्द्रमब्रवीत् पुनन्तु पूज्या मम चित्रशालिकाम् ॥ XIX. 1.
Akbar receives the Jain monk Hirasūri in his Citra-
śālā.
2. अधिरुह्यन्तःपुरप्रासादमिममस्याश्चित्रशालिकायाः प्राङ्गणवितर्दिकोपविष्टां
समाश्लिष्य देवी... Tilakamañjari, p. 24.

her own picture chamber which generally happened to be her sleeping apartment also. We come across three references to such a *Sayana Chitrasala* in the *Tilakamañjari*.³ Auspiciousness being important in India, people believed in *Suprabhata* by getting up in the morning with beautiful pictures around them to meet their eyes as soon as they woke to the sound of the lute. It is this mark of auspiciousness that accounts for picture decorations of bathing apartments⁴ which on that account formed minor *Chitrasalas* of the *jalamandapa*.⁵

Of the third type of *Chitragriha*—the private one—the finest, perhaps, was the one to be seen in the house of the *Panyangana* (courtesan). Of the wealth and refinement of the courtesan of ancient India, the *Mricchakatika* is perhaps one of the very best books that present a most graphic picture. The mansions of the hetaira, of which there is a beautiful description in the *Padataditaka*, are adorned by so

3. रणितमणिना भूषणचक्रवालेन वाचालयन्ती चित्रशालिकां शय्याममुञ्चत् ।
Ibid. p. 238.
...प्रविश्य बन्धुसुन्दरीद्वितीया शयनचित्रशालाम् ...
Ibid. p. 246.
आरोप्य च शयनचित्रशालिकायामवलम्बितगतिस्तत्कालमेव गत्वा...
Ibid. p. 266.
cf. विचित्रचित्रशालिनि...शय्यागृहे Nalacampū, p. 83.
Royal citraśālās in the palace are mentioned as situated in the Rākṣasa or Naiṛta dik according to the Maya-mata.
राक्षसे नागवासं च चित्रशिल्पादिसौधकम् ॥
Mayamata Chap. 29 sl. 58.
4. चित्रद्विपाः पद्मवनावतीर्णाः करेणुभिर्देत्तमृणालभङ्गाः ।
नखाङ्कुशाघातविभिन्नकुम्भाः संरब्धसिंहप्रहृतं वहन्ति ॥
Raghuvamśa, XVI, 16.
5. अतिविचित्रानेकचित्रशालं जलमण्डपमगच्छत् ।
Tilakamañjari, p. 88.
cf. शाला वा ह्यभिषेका सर्वविचित्रान्विता सभा तत्र ॥
Mayamata Ch, 29 sl 101.

many *Chitrasalas*⁶ and, as the *Dhūrtavitasamvāda* informs us, painting seems to have been practised very much in the *Vesyaagrihas* to the extent of influencing those that frequented them.⁷ How far the art of painting was helpful to the hetaira is best understood by us when we read the *Mricchakatika* wherein is presented the activity of *vitās*, *dhūrtas* and *chetis*—experts in bringing together the harlots and libidinous *nagarakas*—loitering about the stately mansion of the *vara-vilasini*, Vasantasena, with pictures of both (of *vesyas* and *vesyakamukas*) in bright and gay colours.⁸ But the motive for practising this pleasing art of painting as well as others of the fine-art group, music, dancing etc. is, as Ganapalita says to his friend, condemning the conduct of harlots, not for their own pleasure (*vinoda*), but merely to wheedle into their snare weak-minded victims by an exhibition of their special capabilities in the arts.⁹

TYPES OF PICTURES IN CHITRASALAS

Nothing special need be said about the theme for a picture. The *Viṣṇudharmottara*, and following it the *Silparatna*, states that subjects from the three worlds form suitable

6. ...लितिलिखितसूक्ष्मस्थूलविविक्तरूपशतनिबद्धानि बन्धसन्धिद्वारगवाक्ष-
वितर्दिसंजवनवीथीनिर्व्यूहकानि...चित्रशालालंकृतानि
भवनवरावतंसकानि वारमुख्यानाम् ।
Pādatāḍitaka (Caturbhāṇī) p. 12.
7. प्रागल्भ्यं स्थानशैर्यं वचननिपुणतां सौष्टवं सत्त्वदीप्तिं
चित्रज्ञानं प्रमोदं सुरतगुणविधिं रक्तनारीनिवृत्तिम् ।
चित्रादीनां कलानामधिगमनमथो सौख्यमग्र्यं च कामी
प्राप्नोत्याश्रित्य वेशं यदि कथमयशस्तस्य लोको ब्रवीति ॥
Dhūrtavitasamvāda (Caturbhāṇī) p. 27.
8. विदूषकः—...इमे चापरे मदनसन्धिविग्रहचतुरा विविधवर्णिकावलित-
चित्रफलकाग्रहस्ता इतस्ततः परिभ्रमन्ति गणिका वृद्धविटाश्च ।
Mricchakatika, Act IV.
9. मांसरसाभ्यवहारः पुरुषादतिपीडया न तु स्पृहया ।
आलेख्यादौ व्यसनं वैदग्ध्यख्यातये न तु विनोदाय ॥
Kuṭṭinimata, śl. 307.

picture themes.¹⁰ Thus it would be nothing too difficult for us to guess what would be found in a *Chitrasala*. But there is specific injunction in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* that only certain pictures—those representing *sringara*, *hasya* and *santa*—ought to be kept in private houses and the king's residence.¹¹ Pictures representing all other *rasas* are confined to *Deva vesmas*, temples and the like, and the audience chamber of the royal palace. In every other place we have pictures of all types. So it goes without saying that private *Chitrasalas* and the *Chitrasalas* of the royal harem have only a limited scope. But the public galleries ought to have possessed all sorts of pictures. Of course, there appears to have been a special

10. यथा नाट्ये तथा चित्रे त्रैलोक्यानुकृतिः स्मृता ।
Citraśūtra of Viṣṇudharmottara.
जङ्गमा वा स्थावरा वा ये सन्ति सुवन्नत्रये ।
तत्तत्स्वभावतस्तेषां करणं चित्रमुच्यते ॥ Silparatna.
11. भृङ्गारहास्यशाल्याख्या लेखनीया गृहेषु ते ।
परशेषा न कर्तव्या कदाचिदपि कस्याचित् ।
देववेश्मनि कर्तव्या रसाः सर्वे नृपालये ॥
राजवेश्मनि नो कार्यं राज्ञां वासगृहेषु ते ।
सभावेश्मसु कर्तव्या राज्ञां सर्वरसा गृहे ॥
वर्जयित्वा सभां राज्ञो देववेश्म तथैव च ।
युद्धमशानकरुणामृतदुःखार्तकुत्सितान् ॥
अमङ्गल्यांश्च न लिखेत् कदाचिदपि वेदमंसु ।
Viṣṇudharmottara.
Though scenes of battle and bloodshed were forbidden in private houses we have evidences of these having been painted in public art galleries, public halls, temples and the like. As an example can be cited the famous and majestic Tripurāntakamūrti painted on the walls of the inner shrine of Bhadrīśvara in Tanjore. Haricandra suggests pictures of battlemen in the lines.
.....करलाववशेनालक्ष्यशरसंधानमोक्षणकालेषु सदा समारोपितशर-
सनतयालेख्यलिखितोच्चैर्धनुष्केषु पदगगनतलचराचरकरालकरवाल-
खण्डितमस्तकनिकरेष्वतिदूरमुत्पत्य गगनजलधिरातपवशङ्काकरेषु
Jivandharacampū p. 28.

attachment to *Mangalyalekha* and we should have had more of them than any other.

Now to go more into details, we have life histories—important incidents in one's life—painted to adorn the *Chitrasala* and we have an instance of it in the *Uttararamacarita*¹² that bases itself in this particular instance on the *sloka* of the *Raghuvamsa* for this idea.¹³ Scenes from Damayanti's life are painted similarly in Kundinapura.¹⁴ Though not in the *Chitrasala*, we have a similar painting of life incidents in the pictures of Parasurama executed on the *Vimana* of Indra.¹⁵ In the *Gathasaptasati* of Hala we have a *sloka* telling us of incidents from Rama's life painted in private *Chitrasalas* (on the walls

12. लक्ष्मणः—आर्य ! अर्जुनेन चित्रकरेणास्मदुपदिष्टमार्यस्य चरितमस्यां वीर्यामभिलिखितम् । तत्पश्यत्वार्यः ।
रामः—जानासि बत्स, दुर्मनायमानां देवीं विनोदयितुम् ।
Uttarāramacarita, Act I.
13. तयोर्व्याप्रापितमिन्द्रियार्थानामेदुषोः सङ्गमु चित्रवत्सु ।
प्राप्तानि दुःखान्यपि दण्डकेषु संचिन्त्यमानानि सुखान्यभूवन् ॥
Raghuvamśa,
14. ते तत्र भैरवाश्चरितानि चित्रे चित्राणि पौरैः पुरि लेखितानि ।
निरीक्ष्य निन्युर्दिषसं निशां च तत्त्वप्रसंगमोगकलाविलसैः ॥
Naiṣadha, X, 35.
15. दशरथः—तन्मनुचिर्यदनसारथे ! कथय स भगवान् पौलोमीवल्लभो भृगुपतिचरितानि बहु मन्यन्ते न वा ?
मातलिः—किं नाम बहु मन्यन्ते न वेति शृणु ; श्रावयामि—
आस्थानसङ्घानि विलासगृहे विमाने
जैत्रे रथे च सततं सुरचक्रवर्ती ।
रामस्य चित्रलिखितानि कुतूहलेन
वीरो विलोकयति पूर्वविचेष्टितानि ॥
यदस्यैव पुनरस्यन्दनस्य चतुर्दिशं मत्तवर्णीवक्त्रकेषु रामचित्रं
लिखितम् । (अङ्गुल्या निर्दिशन्) तत्तावदितो दीपतां दृष्टिः ।
Then comes an exhaustive list of choice pictures depicting
the important incidents in Paraśurāma's life.
Balarāmāyana, Act IV.

of private houses) serving a very useful purpose.¹⁶ We are told in the *Kathasaritsagara* that Vasavadatta consoles herself by looking at pictures of Rama's life painted on the walls.¹⁷

Of ordinary group pictures—especially of the queens and princesses with their attendants—we have an instance in the *Malavikāgnimitra*¹⁸ and also in the *Viddhasalabhanjika*.¹⁹ But these and similar ones are more frequently found in the *Chitrasalas* of the harem.

General *Sringara* pictures that are to be found in any *Chitrasala*, be it public, private, or royal, are described at length in the *Naishadhiyacharita* wherein Sri Harsha states the love of sages and their amours with celestial damsels as the subjects of exquisite pictures adorning the *Chitrasala* of

16. दिअस्स असुद्धमणस्स कुलवह्णिअअकुडुलिहि आइ ।
दिअहं कहेइ रामाणुल्लगसोमिच्चिरिआइ ॥
(देवरस्याशुद्धमनसः कुलवधूनिजकुड्यलिखितानि ।
दिवसं कथयति रामानुल्लमसौमिच्चिरितानि ॥)
Gāthasaptasati, I. 35.
17. तत्र वासवदत्ता च प्रविष्टा चित्रभित्तिषु ।
पश्यन्ती रामचरिते सीतां सेहे निजव्यथाम् ॥
K. S. S. Lamb III Taranga II. 17.
18. ततश्चोपचारानन्तरमेकासनोपविष्टेन भर्त्रा चित्रगताया देव्याः परिजनं
मध्यगतामासन्नतरां(चरां) तां प्रेक्ष्य देवी पृष्टा
Mālavikāgnimitra, Act I.
19. विदूषकः—इतस्तावल्ललितस्फटिकगर्भमवनभित्तिचित्रसंस्थेषु कर्मसु
निवेश्यतां दृष्टिः । एष तावदेवो देव्या समं पाशकाभिनिवेशी
आलिखितः, एषापि ताम्बूलकरण्डवाहिनी नागवल्ली ।
एषा चामरग्राहिणी प्रभञ्जनिका । एष रत्नकरण्डको नाम
वामनकः । एष पुनर्मन्दुरमर्कटः टप्परकणो नाम ।
राजा—सखे त्वमेषोऽभिलिखितः ।
Viddhasalabhanjikā, Act I.

the imperial palace of Nala.²⁰ This description of *Sringara Chitras* is, as we have noted already, in accordance with the dictum of the *Vishnudharmottara*. Pictures of Kamadeva were kept in bedrooms and were painted in other places too,²¹ and there being no restriction and the theme being a popular one, it might have been a popular picture of the *Chitrasala*. At any rate, it should have been the principal picture of the minor *Chitrasala* of the harem going by the name of *Sayana-chitrasala*.

Bana gives us some idea of the pictures kept in public galleries. Demigods like Nagas, Suras, Asuras, Yakshas, Kinnaras, Gandharvas and so forth appear to have been prominently represented in picture.²² Designs of lovely creepers and such other decorative foliage in divers hues

20. भित्तिचित्रलिखिताखिलक्रमा यत्र तस्थुरितिहाससंकथाः ।
पद्मनन्दनसुतारिरंसुतामन्दसाहसहसन्मनोभुवः ॥
पुष्पकाण्डजयडिण्डिमयितं यत्र गौतमकलत्रकामिनः ।
पारदारिकविलाससाहसं देवभर्तुर्दृढाङ्गि भित्तिषु ॥
नीतमेव करलभ्यपारंतामप्रतीर्य मुनयस्तपोऽर्णवम् ।
अप्सरःकुचघटावलम्बनात् स्थायिना कचन यत्र चित्रिताः ॥
Naiṣadha, XVIII. 20, 21, 26.
21. वासभवने मे शिरोभागनिहितः कामदेवपटः पाटनीयः
Kādambarī, p. 536.
प्रविवेश च द्वारपक्षलिखितरतिप्रीतिदैवतम् । Harṣacarita, p. 148.
एकदेशलिखितस्तवकितरक्ताशोकतरुतलभाजाधिज्यचापेन तिर्यक्कूणित-
नेत्रत्रिभागेन शरमृजु कुर्वता कामदेवेनाधिष्ठितम् Ibid. p. 148.
सौधस्यरोसि मन्मथप्रतिकृतिः प्रासादपृष्ठे शशी
क्रीडाकाननवेदिकासु च पिकस्तदीर्घिकायां मरुत् ।
इत्थं त्वद्विरहेऽधुना कृतान्तोः शय्यासमासादन-
व्यग्राणामितरेतरं मधुसुखे तस्याः सखीनां मिथः ॥
Sringāradhanadaśataka, śl. 53.
22. सुरासुरसिद्धगन्धर्वविद्याधरोरगाध्यासिताभिश्चित्रशालाभिरविरतोत्सवप्रमदा-
वलोकनकुतूहलादभ्रतरलादवतीर्णाभिर्दिव्यविमानपङ्क्तिभिरिवालंकृता ।
Kādambarī, p. 99.

seem to have added to the collections of the picture house.²³ Subjects of the three worlds as comprising picture themes are specifically stated by him.²⁴

Subjects of a general nature seem to have had their own place in the *Chitrasala*. Gay scenes like *jalakrida*, *panagosthi*, *rasalila* and the like cannot be considered too impossible as themes when we have Padmagupta specially talking of hunting scenes as adorning the walls of the picture gallery.²⁵ In the *Sahridayananda* too there is a mention made by Krishna-nanda to paintings of hunters.²⁶

Apart from these, animal and bird studies appear to have been a distinct feature in the art houses as is evidenced by the *Raghuvamsa*²⁷ the *Vikramankadevacharita*²⁸ and the *Kadambari*,²⁹ and elephants were favourite subjects with the artists.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHITRASALA

Before we consider the structure of the *Chitrasala* according to the *Narada-silpa* and try to make head or tail

23. आलेख्यागृहैरिव बहुवर्णचित्रपत्रशकुनिशतसंशोभितैः Ibid. p. 241.
24. चित्रलेखादर्शितविचित्रसकलीत्रभुवनाकाराम् Ibid. p. 176.
25. कदाचिल्लोचनातिथ्यंमातेनालेख्यवेदमनि ।
सं मृगव्याविनोदेन पशुशो पार्थिवो हृदि ॥
Navasāhasānkacarita, II. 1.
26. चित्रार्पितेभ्योऽपि विभेषि पूर्वं वनेचरेभ्यो दमयन्ति येभ्यः !
तैरेव सार्धं विहरिष्यसि त्वं कथं पुलिन्दीवं वनस्थलीषु ॥
Sahridayānanda, IX. 31.
27. चित्रद्विपाः पद्मवर्णावतीर्णाः करेणुभिर्दत्तमृगालम्बिताः ।
नखाङ्कुशाघातविभिन्नाकुम्भाः संरब्धसिंहप्रहृतं वहन्ति ॥
Raghuvamśa, XVI. 16.
28. आक्रान्तरिपुचकेण चक्रकोटपतेः परम् ।
लिखिताश्चित्रशालासु तेनामुच्यन्त दन्तिनः ॥
Vikramānkadevacarita, IV. 30.
29. आलेख्यगृहैरिव बहुवर्णचित्रपत्रशकुनिशतसंशोभितैः
Kādambarī, p. 241.
दिवसावसानेषु विश्लेषभीता मृगालसूत्रैश्चित्रभित्तिविलिखितानि चक्रवाक-
मिशुनानि संघटयति । Ibid. p. 446.

out of the cumbrous and corrupt text which fortunately is preserved for us at least in that form, we shall try to see what idea of a picture house we can get through references to it in Sanskrit literature. The very earliest reference to the *Chitrasala* is perhaps in the *Ramayana*. The picturesque and gorgeous description of the mighty city Lanka with its towers and temples, mansions and palaces, gardens and bowers, gateways and ramparts, fortresses and citadels, pools and ponds, lakelets and lotuses—in all, one of the very best of exquisite poetic composition and fancy in the vast realm of Sanskrit literature, and it would not be too much to say in the world's literature too—enumerates the *Chitrasala* amongst other pleasure-houses of the imperial palace and Pushpaka of Ravana.³⁰ But unfortunately we are not given anything about the structure of the picture house in particular.

So then, we turn to other avenues for information. Bana describes the *Chitrasala* as built in the style of a *Vimana*³¹ quite in conformity with the text of the *Narada-silpa* that gives the building as ornamented by a small *gopura* in the front and having *sikhara-kalasa*s etc., thus satisfying the *lakshana* of a *vimana*. The word *vithi*³² used by Bhavabhuti is the exact word for gallery and is striking and suggestive of the long and spacious nature of the picture hall. We have it stated in

30. लतागृहाणि चित्राणि चित्रशालागृहाणि च ॥
क्रीडागृहाणि चान्यानि दारुपर्वतकानपि ।
कामस्य गृहकं रम्यं दिवागृहकमेव च ॥
ददर्श राक्षसेन्द्रस्य रावणस्य निवेशने ।
Sundarakāṇḍa, Sarga VI, 36-37-38.
31. सुरासुरसिद्धगन्धर्वविद्याधरोरगाध्यासिताभिश्चित्रशालाभिरविरतोत्सवप्रमदा-
वलोकनकुतूहलादम्बरतलादवतीर्णाभिर्दिव्यवमानपङ्क्तिभिरिवालङ्कृता ।
Kādambari, p. 99.
32. लक्ष्मणः—आर्य ! अर्जुनेन चित्रकरेणास्मदुपरिष्ठमार्यस्य चरितमस्यां
वीक्ष्यामभिलिखितम् । तत्पश्यत्वार्यः । Uttararāmacarita, Act I.

the *Uttararamacharita* that the *Chitrasala* has windows.³³ Surely light and pure air are the two essentials for any living creature and the lack of these in any building would rank it with a dungeon; and a dearth of windows in a chamber of joy and beauty would be quite unworthy of its grace. The *Udayasundarikatha* tells us that the *Chitrasala* has big massy pillars to support it.³⁴ From the *Ratnavali* we gather that the *torana* or the ornamental doorway and the *valabhi*, the top-most part of the building, are all worked and decorated in ivory;³⁵ that the *Dantavalabhika* is painted with pictures on ivory is information given by the *Tilakamanjari*.³⁶ The *Vrishabhānuja* talks of the *angana* or verandah of the *Chitrasala* as being ornamented.³⁷ Thus putting all this together we have the idea of a *Chitrasala*, a long and spacious building built in the *Vimana* style with big massive pillars supporting it, windows for ventilation, the main entrance ornamented

33. रामः—प्रिये, वातायनोपकण्ठे संविष्टा भव ।
Uttararāmacarita, Act I.
Sītā is fatigued after looking at all the pictures in the citraśālā and is advised by Rāma to take rest near the windows of the picture-house and enjoy fresh air.
34. ऊरुस्तम्भवती चित्रशालिकामिव रतिनिवासाय कल्पिताम् ।
Udayasundarikathā, p. 133.
35. काञ्चनेमालां—(परिक्रम्यावलोक्य) कथमत्रैष खलु भर्तास्वस्थता-
मिषेण मर्दनावस्थां प्रच्छादयन्ततोरणवलभ्या उपर्युपविष्टिष्ठति ।
तदेहि एनं वृत्तान्तं भर्तृन् निवेदयामः । Ratnavālī, Act III.
36. अश्रान्तकालागुरुधूपधूमभयपलायमानदन्तवलभिकाभित्तिचित्रानिव वि-
चित्रमयूखजालकमुचो माणिक्यजालकान् कलयद्भिरद्भुताकारैरनेक-
भूमिकाभ्राजिष्णुभिः सौधैः प्रवर्तिताविरतचन्द्रोदया ... अयोध्येति
यथार्थाभिधाना नगरी । Tilakamañjarī, p. 7.
37. सखि ! विहङ्गिके ! किमभिहिता तदा चित्रशालिकाङ्गणमलंकुर्वत्या
देव्या त्वम् । Vṛṣabhānujā, Act IV.
'Alamkurvatyā' might mean both 'adorning the place by her presence' and 'adorning the place by means of Raṅgoli etc'.

with ivory work, with its top all worked in painted ivory and with a big verandah about the hall.

We shall now see what the *Narada-silpa* gives us.³⁸ In the heart of the city or in a building situated where four main roads meet, opposite a temple or royal palace, to the east of rich mansions or in the centre of the king's highway, is to be erected the *Chitrasala*. A suitable spot of five, six, seven, eight or sometimes ten and even twelve *sutras* should be selected for the *Chitrasala* of either the king or the people. It may be built in the shape of *Mandala* (drum) or might be circular. It should have, besides one main entrance, some other doorways. The verandah about it should be double-

38. अथ पुनश्चित्रशालानिर्माणक्रममुदाहरिष्याम इत्याह भगवान् नारदः—
नगराणां मध्यमे भागे चतुष्पथकवास्तुभागे क्वचिदथो प्रासादनिकां
पुरोभागे भवनानां बाहो पूर्वभवनिकामथो राजवीथीमध्यभागे
चित्रशालां स्थापयेयुरिति होशीनरः । क्षात्राणां बाहो प्राजापत्यानां
सूत्राणां पञ्चकं बाहो षट्कं सप्तकमष्टकमथो क्वचित् दशकं द्वादशकमिति
क्रमात् नीत्वा स्वीकृत्य स्थलमुत्तमं व्यासं व्यासहीनकं बाहो मर्दलाकारं
माण्डलिकमिह वै द्वारोपद्वारकमेकानेकाननं द्विदिभागाङ्गणमुपशाला-
लिन्दकमूर्ध्वभागप्रवेशनं मध्यतिर्यङ्मध्यशालाक्षेपणकं दण्डिकाकृतिकं
वा प्रपाकृतिकं द्वात्रिंशत्पादकमथो विंशतिपादकमथो षोडशाङ्गिकं
मध्यशालावेदिकाप्रवेशनकसोपानवंशद्वारकं मध्यशालावेदिकाप्रवेशनक-
सोपानवंशद्वारकं वैशेषिकशालां काल्पनिकं वा पूर्वभागे दाण्डिकरूपं
वा सहवातायनचित्रवितानं नानालंकारभासुरं नानालिन्दकाल्पनिकं
शिखरशालायाः नानामाल्यकं सर्वत्र उपशालावृतं क्वचित् समाश्रं
क्वचिन्निषण्णवेदिकं नानासनयुक्तं सहशिखरकलशचित्रप्रस्तरयुतमथो
क्वचित् पार्श्वसोपानकं क्वचित् मुखभद्रकप्रतिमुखभद्रकमूर्ध्वकूटकमूर्ध्व-
शालाकं बाहो क्वचिदन्तः स्थले पृथुवारान्तिके बाहो महावारान्तिके
महामुकुरस्थापनाङ्गणरेखिकं सर्वतुष्टिकरकाल्पनिकं नानादीपस्तम्भकं
पुरोभागे प्राथमिके क्वचित् क्षुद्रगोपुरोद्भासुरं स्थापयेयुर्नानारूप-
चित्रकमनोहरं देवगन्धर्वकिन्नरमुखानां नानासमयविहारिकाणां
महिमवतामन्येषां वै क्वचित् यथामानं बहुवर्णभासुरं सौवर्णादि-
विभूषिताङ्गमित्याह भगवान् नारदः ॥

Nārada Śilpa, Pāṭha 66, Citraśālākṣaṇakathana.

sized and there should be a smaller hall, a square terrace at its door with a flight of steps leading up to the upper storey, with a main centre-hall and side-halls. It might be clubshaped or shaped after a drinking hall, and should possess sixteen, twenty or thirty-two pillars, with a staircase ending near a doorway leading to the centre-hall with a large seat thereabouts. It should have an artificial clubshaped special hall towards the east. It should further possess windows and be ornamented by a highly picturesque canopy; should have many square terraces about its entrances, many smaller halls, many seats (for seating visitors) and stairs sideways leading up. It should further be beautified by an ornamented roofing and ceiling and have *Sikhara-kalāsas* at the top (in the form of a *Vimāna*). In its upper hall, in an inner spot or near the main door, a big mirror is to be placed and highly pleasing artificial chandeliers should illumine the hall. The main building should be ornamented by a small *Gopura* and in the hall should be kept different pleasing patterns of pictures of such Demigods as Devas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and so forth, and also pictures of mighty men that made a mark in different fields of action, all worked in proper proportions and coloured variously and luminously with jewels all in gold. Thus spake Bhagavan Narada.

This in main is the cumbrous description of a *Chitrasala* that we get from the *Narada-silpa*. The main features to be noticed here are the sidesteps and a main flight of stairs all leading up to a centre hall wherein the picture-gallery is arranged. There are some sidehalls and other minor halls. Apart from the main entrance we have some doorways and a lot of squares opposite. The main building has a *gopura* and *Sikhara-kalāsas*. It rests on sixteen, twenty, or thirty-two pillars and has fairly large verandahs about it. The main hall is beautified with a big mirror placed in the inner recess directly opposite the main entrance or near the main door itself. Numbers of chandeliers light up the chamber and comfort is afforded the visitors by an arrangement of the *Vitardi* or the seats. The *Chitrasala* may be of various shapes,

Danda, Prapa, Mandala, Mandalika and so on. This is in fact the whole of the cumbrous details in a nutshell. It is left to the reader to compare the information on the *Chitrasala* given in the *Narada-silpa* with that got from general literature. The verandah, steps, entrance, hall, windows, pillars are all there. The only thing is we have a more elaborate description in the *silpa* text.

GENERAL REMARKS

It is now time enough for us to consider some general points of interest. The *Tilakamanjari* tells us that the *Chitrasala* was generally highly perfumed to spread an aroma about the chamber and to add to the joyous atmosphere.³⁹ From the *Karpuramanjari* we know that the picture galleries (those of the palace) were opened in the evenings.⁴⁰ The commentary gives us that *Abhisarikas* and the hetaira—this is suggested by the word *adi* in *Abhisarikadi*—gathered there at dusk, the latter perhaps to exhibit the movement of their agile limbs in dance before the king.⁴¹ From a verse in the *Nalachampu* of Trivikrama we gather that inhabitants of cities with an aesthetic taste resorted to *Chitrasalas* in the

39. चित्रशालास्वसंपाद्यमानहरिचन्दनपङ्कोपलेपनम् ।
Tilakamañjarī, p. 34.
40. उग्धाडीअन्ति.लीलामणिमअवलहीचित्तिभितीणिवेशा
पलङ्का किंकरीहिं रिदुसमअमुहा वित्थरिजन्ति ज्ञप्ति ।
सेरन्धीलोलहस्तङ्गुलिचलणवसा पट्टणादी पउट्टो
हुंकारो मण्डपेषुं विलसदि मधुरो रुटुटुङ्गणाम् ॥
(उद्वाह्यन्ते लीलामणिमयवलभीचित्राभित्तिनिवेशाः
पर्यङ्काः किंकरीभिः ऋतुसमयमुखा विस्तार्यन्ते ज्ञप्ति ।
सैरन्धीलोलहस्ताङ्गुलिचलनवाशात् पट्टनादः प्रवृत्तो
हुंकारो मण्डपेषु विलसति मधुरो रुटुटुङ्गणानाम् ॥
Karpūramañjarī, p. 37.
41. चित्रभित्तिनिवेशाश्चित्रगृहाः । ते उद्वाह्यन्ते । अभिसारिकाद्यभिसारणार्थम् ।
etc.,

company of their women in the *Sarat* season.⁴² From this it appears that autumn was part of the year chosen for spending time gaily in witnessing pictures in art galleries in India.

So far we have been talking of stationary art galleries. We have now to consider another type of the same, but peripathetic. The *Nalachampu* talks of travelling art galleries.⁴³ This was perhaps to exhibit the best works of the artists of one country in another, thus to keep up a constant intercourse and mutual exchange of ideas. The itinerant nature of buildings like the *Chitrasalas* is warranted by other writings talking of moving houses and we have Rajasekhara speaking of a travelling bed-chamber.⁴⁴ Any way the idea of a moving *Chitrasala* in ancient India can be nothing so strange to us when we are accustomed to the notion of travelling libraries in our modern life.

In conclusion it must be stated, however, that the *Chitrasala* was only the building where art was concentrated, so to say. It does not mean that other apartments and buildings were bereft of pictures and decoration. The *Gadyachinta-*

42. धन्याः शरदि सेवन्ते प्रोलसच्चित्रशालिकान् ।
प्रासादान् स्त्रीसखाः पौराः केदारांश्च कृषीवलाः ॥
Nalachampū, p. 40.
- Cf. स कदाचिच्छरत्काले सोष्मण्युन्मदवारणे ।
राजहंसपरीवारे सोत्सवानन्दितप्रजे ॥
आत्मतुल्यगुणे रन्तुं चित्रप्रासादमाविशत् ।
आकृष्टकमलामोदवहन्मारुतशीतलम् ॥
Kathāsaritsāgara, Lambaka 9, Tarāṅga 5, Śls. 33, 34.
43. तत्क्षणादुत्तमिभैः प्रेङ्खत्यकापटपल्लवविराजितैः प्रयाणयोग्ययन्त्र-
चित्रशालागृहैः संचारिणि गन्धर्वनगर इव रमणीये.....जाते.....
शिविरसंनिवेशे
Nalachampū, p. 195.
44. कारुमिः कारितं तेन कृत्रिमं स्वप्नहेतवे ।
सुषिरस्तम्भसञ्चारं नृपतेर्वासमन्दिरम् ॥
तदहमपि सुषिरस्तम्भसञ्चारं वासगृहं निर्मितवतां तथाविधां च रत्नवतीं
चतुष्किं कविभ्यतां शिल्पवतां मन्त्रिसमादिष्टं दापयितुं महाभाण्डागारं
प्रति यास्यामि ।
Viddhasālabhañjikā, Act I.

mani mentions Saraswati's picture as adorning the library hall⁴⁵ and the *Vidyamandapa* as filled with pictures of *Yama-loka*;⁴⁶ the *Kadambari* talks of pictures of the *Sutikagriha*⁴⁷ and we have other apartments all filled with pictures. The *Natyasastra* of Bharata, the *Abhilashitarthachintamani* and the *Sivatattvaratnakara* speak of the *Natyasala* as profusely decorated with pictures.⁴⁸ The chapter on *chitra* in the

45. दुग्धजलधिफेनधवलवितानविभ्राजनि विराजमानसरस्वतीप्रतिमाञ्चित-
चित्रपटे सञ्चितसकलग्रन्थकोशे....महति विद्यामण्डपे....
Gadyacintāmaṇi, p. 35.
46. भित्तिलिखितचित्रदर्शितमुकुतेतरपरिपाकफलभवप्रबन्धप्रचुरभक्तिप्रेरितभूव्य-
सार्थप्रस्तूयमानसंस्तवकलकलमुखरितवियति महति विद्या-
मण्डपे....
Ibid. p. 34.
47. ...प्रत्यग्रलिखितमङ्गल्यालेख्योज्ज्वलितभित्तिभागमनोहारिणि....
Kādambārī, p. 136.
48. भित्तिष्वथ विलिप्तासु परिमृष्टासु सर्वतः ।
सभासु जातशोभासु चित्रकर्म प्रयोजयेत् ॥
चित्रकर्मणि चालेख्याः पुरुषाः स्त्रीजनास्तथा ।
लताबन्धाश्च कर्तव्याश्चरितं चात्मभोगजम् ॥
एवं विकृष्टं कर्तव्यं नाट्यवेश्म प्रयोक्तृभिः ।
Nāṭyaśāstra Chap. II, Śls. 88, 89, 90.
Explaining लताबन्ध Abhinavagupta adds this comment.
लताबन्धा द्रमिडाभिनयसन्निवेशा वा मालात्यदिलतागता वातोद्य-
वेष्टनवैचित्र्यप्रकारा वा वक्ष्यमाणपिण्डीबन्धप्रकाराश्च ।
ब्रुवे नाटकशालाया निर्माणस्य क्रमं शृणु ।
सुधाधवलितं रम्यं वास्तुलक्षणसंयुतम् ॥
जालमार्गकृतोद्यानं कापि सर्वप्रकाशकम् ।
कापि संतमसोपेतं मणिदीपप्रकाशितम् ॥
दन्तिदन्तविनिर्माणमत्तवारणशोभितम् ।
सौवर्णस्तम्भरुचिरं चन्दनस्तम्भगन्धितम् ॥
रत्नस्तम्भकृतावासं प्रवालस्तम्भरञ्जितम् ।
काचकुट्टिमरोचिष्णु स्फटिकोज्ज्वलकुट्टिमम् ॥
सुधाकुट्टिमकोपतं स्फुटद्वर्णकुट्टिमम् ।
स्फाटिकोपलविन्यासदर्पणाकारभित्तिम् ॥

Abhilashitarthachintamani finds a place in that book, as a section dealing with an essential beautifying factor of the *Natyasala*. The case is the same even in the *Sivatattvaratnakara* which bases itself on the text of the *Abhilashitarthachintamani*. After all it cannot be denied that India was saturated with art and it would be idle to contend that the very existence of a *Chitrasala* accounts for the restriction of art to it. It was more particularly to be found in the *Chitragara* and generally found in a lesser degree everywhere else. Anyway the value of the *Chitragriha* as a *Vinodasthan* was fully recognised by our ancients and it was given its own place in the life of an aesthetic citizen, *Nagaraka*.

विचित्रचित्रसंयुक्तप्रमोदप्रदभित्तिम् ।
एवमाश्चर्यजनकं किञ्चिन्निर्माणयेद्गृहम् ॥
प्रगल्भैर्भावतत्त्वज्ञैः सूक्ष्मरेखाविशारदैः ।
विद्वद्भिर्मनकुशलैश्चित्रलेखनकोविदैः ॥
वर्णपूरणदक्षैश्च मिश्रणे च कृतश्रमैः ।
चित्रकैर्लेखयेच्चित्रं नानारससमुद्भवम् ॥

Abhilaṣitārthacintāmaṇi and Śivatattvaratnākara.

Yaksha Gana

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

To the vast indigenous theatre of India, the contribution of South Canara is the 'Yaksha Gana,' the Kannada cognate of the 'Kathakali' of Malabar, the 'Yaksha Gana', the street-play, and the 'Bhagavata-mela-nataka' of Tamilnad and Andhra; and outside, of the 'Lalita' of Maharashtra, the 'Bhavai' of Gujarat and the 'Yatra' of Bengal. The origin of these various provincial theatres of the people is not very clear. As we see them now, so far as the South Indian forms at least are concerned, they are completely cast in the mould and technique of the Sanskrit Natya and Sangitasastra. The Sanskrit drama was performed, as can be seen from Bharata's *Natya Sastra*, in an operatic manner with the added effects of music, dance, and gesture-representation. This can be seen also from a fortunate survival of the fourth act of Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiya* in certain recensions, which shows us the way in which classic Sanskrit dramas were handled by the artistes of the theatre when they were actually performed. In later times there arose a vast Sanskrit operatic dramatic literature in all parts of India which the Sanskrit dramaturgist would class among the 'Uparupakas.' In Mithila there was a crop of such dramas in Sanskrit in one act, and with songs in Prakrit all through. One such piece is the *Parijaltha-harana-nataka* of Poet Umapati who flourished under a king of Tirhut who ruled between A.D. 1304 and 1324.¹ The construction of this drama resembles that of the South Indian vernacular musical plays of 'Yaksha Gana' or 'Nataka' in Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. The Kashmerian Sanskrit poet Damodaragupta of a very much earlier age, the ninth century, speaks in his work *Kuttanimata* of a type of drama and of its actors which correspond closely to conditions available in

¹This play has been edited with English translation and notes by Sir George Grierson in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. III (1917), Part I.

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South India.¹ Very much later, similar Sanskrit musical plays were produced during the reign of the Telugu and the Mahratta rulers at Tanjore and these plays are preserved in the Tanjore Mss. library. This Sanskrit literature of musical plays is here referred to because the popular Tamil, Telugu, and Kanarese drama called 'Yaksha Gana' or 'Nataka' is mostly of the same nature.

The Yaksha Gana can be taken to be the common name of an old type of traditional, popular vernacular drama of South India, a name common to the three linguistic areas of Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada and absent only in Malayalam. In subsequent times the name Yaksha Gana gave place to the two names 'Nataka' and 'Vilasa,' in Tamilnad and Andhra, but it continued in South Canara. In the Madras and Tanjore Mss. libraries there are many Tamil and Telugu Yaksha Ganas, though none of them can be dated beyond the eighteenth century. Of its history in South Canara E. P. Rice says: 'A class of books very largely in demand consists of stories from the epics and puranas in a new literary form which sprang up in the eighteenth century and is called Yaksha Gana. It is a sort of dramatic composition suitable for recitation before rustic audiences by professional and amateur actors.'² The Yaksha Gana seems to be named after the form of music employed in it which is said to be originally called 'Yaksha Gana.' What this particular kind of music is I have not been able to know, though I asked Kanarese scholars and critics of music about it. I was informed that 'Yaksha Gana' is the older type of music and that in course of time later song-forms like 'Kirtana' as in the Tamil 'Natakas' came to be introduced. Though the name Yaksha Gana is Sanskrit, it is almost absent in the vast Sanskrit literature on 'Natya' and 'Sangita.' There is a single reference to it in an important Sanskrit music treatise of Tanjore, the *Sangita Sudha* of Govinda Dikshita

¹ *Kuttanimata*, Verse 800. See also Tanusukha Rama Sarma's Commentary, page 286 where he speaks of the Gujarathi *Bhavaiya*.

² Kanarese Literature, Heritage of India Series. (Page 100)

written about A. D. 1628, which says that an earlier treatise attributed to Anjaneya has taken into account the type of music sung by the Yakshas (*yakshaugha gitam api gana sailim*). The Tamil Natya literature having numberless odd names does not mention the word Yaksha Gana, though the Tamil lexicons say that Yakshas are semi-divine beings like Gandharvas and that they are players on the 'veena.' It is throwing wide open the floodgates of guess and imagination, if we suppose from this that the Yaksha Gana developed from minstrelsy songs sung to the accompaniment of the 'veenas.' As far as the Andhra is concerned, I am informed by Brahmasri Veturi Prabhakara Sastri, Telugu Pandit in the Madras Mss. Library, that round about Guntur there exists a community of people called 'Yakshas' or 'Zakkulu' devoted to the arts of music and dance, and it is suggested that this drama came to be called after the caste of the people playing it. The Pandit also says that the Yaksha Gana might have developed out of court panegyrics or the glorifying of the deity of the local temple and that the folk-songs 'Ela', 'Jhola,' (the Tamil 'Lali' or 'Oonjal' *i.e.*, the swing-song) 'Dhavala,' 'Sobhana,' 'Suval' (the paddy-husker's song) *etc.*, must have been utilised for the Yaksha Gana. On examination I found a Ms. Tamil Yaksha Gana also to contain 'Sobhana' songs. But most available specimens of Tamil and Telugu Yaksha Gana and 'Nataka' alike contain only uncharacterised and unnamed songs called generally 'darus' in various 'ragas' and 'talas.' Therefore there is no perceptible difference between an Yaksha Gana and a 'Nataka,' both of which are composed in the same style, in 'padas' (songs) in various 'ragas' and 'talas,' in 'padyas' (verses) in various metres, and in 'vachana' (prose), often short in nature. Mr. Prabhakara Sastri gave me also the only reference to the Yaksha Gana in Telugu works on Poetics. The *Appakaviyam* written about three hundred years ago says that the 'Ragada' metre, when cut at different stops at the end, fits in with different 'gatis' and 'talas' and that this is utilised for the songs in the Yaksha

Gana. The 'Ragada' (Kanarese: 'Ragale') is a huge and long metre having numerous feet from which is derived the popular usage of 'Ragalai' as a word meaning 'tumult.' This 'Ragada' is an old type of musical composition met with under the name Rahadi in the *Sangita Ratnakara* of Sarngadeva (A. D. 1210-1247.) where it is described as a multi-footed composition suited to 'Veera rasa.' Similarly the previously-mentioned songs 'Ela,' 'Dhavala' *etc.*, are also traceable in earlier Sanskrit music treatises.

There is a strange correspondence to this South Indian name of Yaksha Gana in Nepal where the vernacular drama of a similar nature is called by a very similar name, the 'Gandharva Gana.'¹ There is a Nepalese vernacular operatic dramatic literature in Nepal from the time of King Jagajjyotir-malla of Nepal (A.D. 1617—33.) who himself pioneered in the creation of this literature.

II

The Yaksha Gana belongs to South Canara in the Kannada area, where other forms of Natya like Nautch must have flourished in other places. For it is the Karnataka country that has named our South Indian music and dance as 'Karnatic.' In South Canara, the Yaksha Gana is one of the two most widespread popular dramatic entertainments, the other being the puppet-play, called as in Tamil by the name 'Bommallattam.' The vernacular name of the Yaksha Gana is 'Bayal Attam,' *i.e.*, open-air play, a name which corresponds to the Tamil 'Terukkoottu' and the Telugu 'Veethinataka' both of which mean street-play. The Yaksha Gana troupes are attached to particular shrines, even as at the villages of Oottukkadu *etc.*, in Tanjore district, where the 'Bhagavata' troupes play only at the temples.² As at the Andhra Kuchipudi and at the above-said Tamil

¹ See Parvatiya Udyaram Davral's Sanskrit Introduction to the Benares Edition of Vararuchi's Prakrit Grammar, (Page v) where he mentions as instances of vernacular dramatic literature the *Yatra* of Bengal, the *Gandharva Gana* of Nepal and the *Dance of Harischandra* *etc.*, of Kurmachala.

² See Kuttanimata, verse 800; *Kama Sutra* of Vatsyayana, I. iv. 28—32 and *Triveni*, Vol. V. No. 4., my article on Theatre Architecture—ii.

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villages, the actors of Yaksha Gana in South Canara are also called 'Bhagavatars' and a set and a performance by them is called a 'Mela.' Unlike the Tamil 'Bhagavatars' referred to, the Yaksha Gana players of South Canara travel from place to place and people even pray to their gods in times of distress that they will order an Yaksha Gana performance as offering. Last year two sets of South Canara Yaksha Gana players, the 'South Canara Yaksha Gana Dramatic Company' and the 'Sri Perudur Anantapadmanabha Swami Dasavataram Company,' visited Madras and this account of mine of Yaksha Gana is mainly based on the performances they gave in Madras.

III

The themes of all the dramas of Yaksha Gana are fights and warfare, stories of 'veera' and 'raudra' *rasas* from our puranic legends. In 'Girija Kalyana,' Parvati's wedding, the love-incident forms but the central event in a long drama beginning with the destruction of Daksha's sacrifice by the terrific Veerabhadra and ending with the boy-War-God Kumara annihilating demon Taraka and his hordes. 'Vali-nigraha,' 'Draupadi-pratapa,' 'Bhishma-Vijaya,' 'Virata-parva' or 'Keechaka-vadha,' 'Karna-Arjuna-yuddha,' 'Atikaya vadha,' are some of the other plays, all of which are stories of fight and war. In this respect the 'Yaksha Gana' differs from the Tamil and Telugu varieties which do not specialise in fights, but resembles the Kathakali of Malabar—which is also 'Tandavic' in the main. The actors roar and do robust dances in weird costumes. The drums are beaten loudly and 'veera' and 'raudra' *rasas* are portrayed most successfully. The make-up of the Rakshasas and other wild characters is in keeping with this atmosphere. In the play called 'Draupadi-pratapa,' it is a very effective, powerful and wonderful scene which forms the climax of the drama at its end. Chandi and Kali appear in terrific attire, roar, and upon a background of war-beats on a drum in the orchestra at the back, they wheel round in a hand-to-hand fight. It



GANAPATI PRABHU (leading male roles).



ANNAYYA.



KUSHTAPPA (wield roles).

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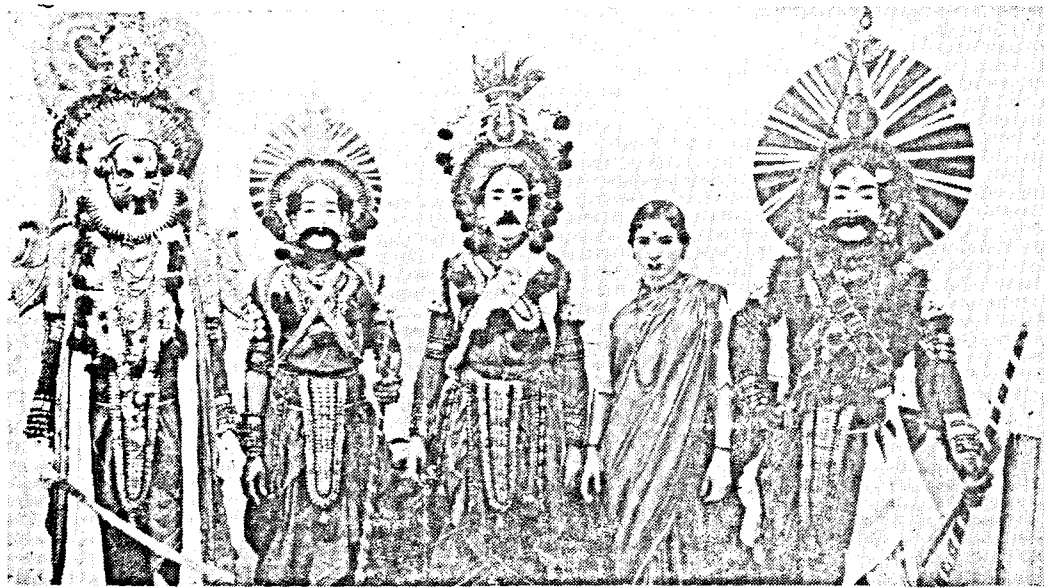
villain, Rakshasas, Asuras and God Yama appear in the most weird dress of the Yaksha Gana. Their 'Makuta' is bigger and is of wood studded with glass and somewhat resembles some of the Kathakali head-gears. King Salva in 'Bhishma-vijaya,' Mahishasura and Yama in 'Rukmangada,' and Ravana in 'Atikayavadha' appear in this dress. (Fig. 4). The face is masked; the lip hangs low and red; there are two carnivorous teeth; the nose is enlarged with some white matter; and long locks of hair hanging behind complete this male weird dress. There is a corresponding female weird dress; Chandi and Kali in 'Draupadi-pratapa,' and Surpanakha in 'Atikayavadha' appear in it. (Fig. 5). Lion's teeth, blood-red artificial tongue drawn-out and dangling, huge breasts and lengthy locks of hair at the back characterise this female weird make-up. All the actors wear trousers to enable them to dance and over them a 'saree' is tied in the form of a 'Kaccha' with girdle ornaments. The faces of kings and princes have a rosy paint; king Bali appears with a green face, Yama with a black one, and Krishna and Vishnu, blue. Hunters appear in some plays like the 'Rukmangada' and the 'Bhishma-vijaya' and they tie to their bodies some amount of green twigs to suggest that they are forest people; they first make a bonfire and dance round it before their action begins. All royal characters have a bow and arrow in their hands; Vishnu and Krishna bring a 'chakra' (disc), and Narada a bunch of peacock feathers. The costume of Narada has been modernised, and along with it that of the women characters also to a very large extent. In the midst of old picturesque make-up, the heroine now appears discordantly dressed up in modern make-up imitative of coquettish society women appearing on the modern stage. The old female make-up was full of old jewellery with 'Makuta' or 'Kirita' etc. resembling female figures in our sculpture. The make-up includes masks also. In 'Girija Kalyana,' Daksha appears after Veerabhadra's onslaught with a mask of a sheep's head. I am told that Jatayu, the great eagle appearing in the 'Ramayana' is similarly made up with

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an eagle-mask and huge feathers. Much of their elaborate make-up which they use in the performances in their own plays, the players did not bring to Madras. The colour scheme of the dress cannot be realised by seeing the photographs reproduced here. The dresses are mostly in red colour, dull as well as deep, with a lot of dazzling lace all over.

V

The traditional Sanskrit play and its vernacular representatives begin with some preliminary benedictory music and dance called in Sanskrit 'purva ranga.' As detailed by Bharata, not only its more variegated variety called the 'Chitra-purva-ranga' but also its more simple form called 'Suddha-purva-ranga' was very elaborate. It is well known that the Kathakali of Malabar has its own 'purva-ranga,' the 'Todayam,' 'Purappadu,' 'Melappadam' etc. A traditional Yaksha Gana starts something like a Tamil 'Terukkootu.' There is first the worship of God Vighnesvara, the remover of obstacles, within the green room itself, with a song on this God. The 'Karpura Nirajana' shown to the God is then 'taken' by the actors, the chorist and the drummers. After this 'Ganapati Prarthana,' the Chorist Bhagavatar, along with the player on the 'mridanga,' comes to the open space outside that enclosed for the green room. He takes his stand at the back end of the space and sings the praise of God Subrahmanya, brother of Ganapati. The next item is the entrance of two boys in typical male costume; they dance while certain 'vandana' slokas or benedictory verses from Sanskrit hymns are recited. Then two female characters appear and do some graceful dance ('Lasya'), first from within the curtain and then outside. They retire and the Bhagavatar (the musician) gives us the 'Kathapeethika,' the prologue to the coming story corresponding to the Sanskrit 'sthapana' which mentions the drama, opens it and introduces the first characters. The play then begins. Each actor enters dancing, exchanges a few words with a musician, who now



CANDAYYA.



KITTAPPA.

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shows how well the *rasas* could be evoked without all the realistic trappings of scenery *etc.*, of the modern stage. Similarly, in the 'Girija Kalyana,' the scene in which Siva gets angry, roars, strikes the earth and creates the terrible Veerabadra to destroy Daksha's sacrifice, is a thrilling show. But 'Lasya' is not absent in Yaksha Gana, for a theme has to be of varied interest. There is 'Lasya' in 'Bhishma-Vijaya' where the princesses bathe, and the 'Rukmangada' has some fine playing of 'Sringara,' or love between King Rukmangada and Mohini. But the prevailing atmosphere is the 'Arabhati Vritti,' the forceful manner. Even a play like 'Rukmangada,' whose *rasa* is the quietistic 'Santa,' is played in such a manner as to contain mostly fights, and this is done by the introduction of the conquest expeditions ('Digvijaya') of the crown prince, who defeats various kings, Asuras and God Yama. The clown has great liberty and he is responsible for too much *ex tempore* comic speech appearing often. In the themes that are mainly puranic, occasional inventions occur and the 'Draupadi-pratapa' is a fine specimen of an imaginative creation spun out of a puranic nucleus. On the whole, they play about fifty dramas: the whole of the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharata' done episode by episode, as also other plays.

IV

Surely, the Yaksha Gana make-up is as epic as its theme. It is decidedly more graceful, richer and more closely related to the ornamentation found in our sculpture than the Kathakali make-up. The chief male characters, the hero and his son, or the king and his minister or prince, have a fine 'Makuta,' and together with other characters belonging to the sublime type called 'Maha-purusha' and 'Dhirodatta,' have a uniform kind of exalted make-up with 'Bhujakirti,' 'Kataka,' 'Virakaccha etc.' (Fig. 1) The head-dress of the wild characters, the 'Dhiroddhata,' is of a different type, an arch-like head-dress which is prepared then and there on each occasion. (Figs. 2 and 3). The 'Prati Nayaka' or the

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and then talks with the actors and makes comments and asks every new character who he is; and the actors thus announce themselves, and whenever a new character entered a scene having other personalities, the habit was, in the days when there was no electric or gas light and the play was played on the paddy field or the street corner with two men standing at the two front ends with a blazing fire brand ('Tivatti') in their hands, that the old character on the scene came to one end, caught hold of the hand of the light-keeper, directed the light to the newly entering character, acted the action of one who looked at and turning to the audience showed his awareness of the new arrival. But now, the actors come to one end and identify the new arrivals in the same manner, though the gas light has removed the man with the firebrand.

VI

The Yaksha Gana must have originally been a faithful form of Bharata's theatre in respect of 'Abhinaya.' As was to be seen till recently in Tamil street-plays, 'Abhinaya' or 'Nritya' must have been present to a large extent in the Yaksha Gana. But now, it has become considerably reduced, chiefly on account of the introduction of speech in an elaborate manner. It is in this respect that it differs from the Kathakali of Malabar and resembles the Tamil variety. In the Tamil play, the whole theme is in the form of songs and verses both of which are sung. There are occasional prose lines which the chorus-like 'Kattiyakkaran' speaks, conveying information to the audience about what follows next and giving similar links. In a way the Yaksha Gana as it has developed now, has approached the modern drama in having a lot of prose dialogue which the actors themselves speak. When the actors stop the speech, the musical theme is sung, and while it is sung the ancient practice must have been to render every word of it through 'Abhinaya' as in Kathakali and Nautch. Still, there are places in the Yaksha Gana even today which are full of 'Abhinaya.' In 'Bhishma-vijaya,' King Salva, and in 'Atikayavadha,' Ravana

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enter with elaborate dance, perform ablution, wear holy ashes and worship 'Sivalinga'—all in 'Abhinaya.' Similarly Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika, the three princesses in 'Bhishma-vijaya,' do bathing in Ganges in 'Abhinaya.' In other places also where there are, unlike the two cases above-mentioned, speeches by actors, there is some amount of 'Abhinaya' of the hand. Many actors give suitable 'hastas' or 'mudras' for the ideas occurring in their speech. I could note the 'sikhara' hand, the 'katakamukha', the 'pataka', the 'suchi,' *etc.*, occurring often. The entry of Salva, Ravana *etc.*, and the dumb 'Abhinaya' in those instances remind us of Kathakali and give us a glimpse into an earlier stage of the Yaksha Gana when it was rich in 'Abhinaya.' If there is no speech, 'Abhinaya' will be complete as in the mute Kathakali, but the introduction of speech brought in a steady loss of 'Abhinaya.' In an older stage, the actors must have done 'Abhinaya' while the songs were being sung by the Chorist.

VII

Though the dance with gesture ('Nritya' or 'Abhinaya') is not extensively present in Yaksha Gana today, the drama is remarkable for its pure dance of 'Nritta.' This 'Nritta,' though not as elaborate and varied as the 'Tirmanas' and 'Adavujatis' in the Nautch, is yet of a very attractive variety. Yaksha Gana is full of this dance, and is worth study at least for this. Next to the make-up, the best part of the Yaksha Gana is this 'Nritta.' All actors are expected to dance, first within the curtain before they enter, then while entering, and thirdly while the song is sung. The dance within the curtain temporarily held by two persons, is very elaborate especially in the case of the entry of the anti-hero, Ravana and others. Even very old characters, as for instance, the old Brahmin appearing in the 'Bhishma-vijaya,' have to swing their bodies to the rhythm of the songs. All actors have 'Gajjai' or small bells on their feet for this purpose. Their hands turn and give graceful curves. When the mood

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is heightened or an actor enters in anger, or one is about to fight, the dance is very vigorous. Wonderful agility of the body is exhibited in these dances which contain many jumps. In some of them could be frequently seen reverses of the leg-poses of the 'Karanas' of Bharata called 'Dandaka Rechita,' 'Krantaka' and 'Dolapada' as preserved in the Chidambaram sculptures. The dances do not interrupt the emotion but only serve to set off the performance. Sometimes two or three characters on the stage do it together in fine harmony. This 'Nritta' is done in three stages: When a song is sung, the dance first proceeds in a slow measure; then the 'tala' is quickened and we have quick and speedy dance; and lastly there is very fast and vigorous dance to the accompaniment of pure 'tala' and often to the accompaniment of the drum called 'Chendai' only. Great dexterity is exhibited on the 'Chendai' drum which almost all actors know how to play on.

The fights on the stage are done in exactly the same idealistic manner as envisaged by Bharata's system of an idealistic stage ('Natya Dharmi'). The two characters engaged in fight first exchange hot words, then decide to settle the issue and there is at once the beginning of the fight which is done by a kind of dance in which the two cross each other performing 'Mandala,' 'Gomutrika' and other pugilistic movements. The dance ends with a fight with the bow, in which the actors 'act' the shooting of arrows by producing a sound on their bow-sticks. In the 'Draupadi-pratapa' is to be seen a hand-to-hand fight and it is in these places of the idealised fight-actions and fight-dances of the Yaksha Gana that one must try to realise the 'Nyaya,' the 'Sattvati' and 'Arabhati' *Vrittis* of Bharata seen otherwise only in a text-book. One who wants to reconstruct old 'Tandava,' its hundred and eight 'Karanas' and thirty-two 'Angaharas,' can derive much help by a minute observation of these dances in fighting in the Yaksha Gana and the Kathakali and from the 'Nritta' of the Nautch. The fighting scenes of the Kathakali and the Yaksha Gana deserve special attention, for in Chap. IV. Bharata says, before describing the 'Karanas,'

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that they are to be used in 'Nritta' (as we have in the Nautch) and in scenes of fight, that is, the idealised fight-movements on the stage. (*Natya Sastra*, IV: 55). In the 'Rukmangada' a very wonderful dance is done by one of the kings fighting with the prince; he throws himself on both his knees and in unimaginable speed whirls round in circles.

There is yet another kind of dance introduced into the Yaksha Gana. In the 'Rukmangada' there is a scene where a Gandharva comes to a tank for water-sport with two damsels. Before they bathe, the three along with a clown play for some time and here we see a display of the folk-dance called 'Kol Attam,' called 'Samya' in Sanskrit, in which persons dance with small sticks in their hands which they beat to accompany the rhythm of their feet. This dance was done first in a circle and then in pairs.

VIII

The play has an accompanying songster ('Bhagavata') who sings keeping time with a 'Jalara' ('Kuzhittalam.') There is one 'Sruti' instrument or drone, one 'Mridangam' player, and one big drum called 'Chendai' which is beat during scenes of exchanges of angry words, fights, hurried entrance and the travel of characters through long distances. Sometimes the 'Kuzhittala' is displaced by the gong beat by a small thick stick ('Sikhandi.') It is said that in village performances the good songster is the chief attraction, and the other important aspect of the orchestra behind the Yaksha Gana is the very difficult playing on the 'Chendai' drum of which many actors are masters. The musicians stand at the back as in Kathakali and Nautch. Though the drama is called Yaksha Gana and though it is said that it is characterised by a type of music so called, other varieties of 'Kirthana' type have crept in in subsequent times. The musical theme is in song and verse. These are sung by the musician and the actors' speeches explain elaborately the contents of the song. That is, the substance of the speech is already given in the song. Sometimes, a line sung explains

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the action, saying who enters and what the actor does. Sometimes, the actors who are not generally expected to sing, sing stray snatches of the song along with the musician.

IX

As observed previously, the Yaksha Gana differs from Kathakali in its substitution of speech for dumb 'Abhinaya.' It has also been noticed that the substance of the speeches is already sung in a succinct manner in the song by the musician and that the actors then deliver the speeches. The diction of the Yaksha Gana speech is exalted, strewn as it is copiously with good Sanskrit idioms and occasionally ornamented by gem-like Sanskrit quotations. A high moral tone is set; fine truths and classic philosophic ideas make the Yaksha Gana a true form of liberal education, bringing to all the illiterate the essence of the wisdom of the Rishis. The opening scene of 'Rukmangada' is a disquisition on devotion and spirituality given by the king and on the duties of a virtuous monarch given by his minister. Philosophy and ethics are not the only subjects expounded; worldly wisdom of a varied nature is as effectively inculcated. The 'Draupadi-pratapa' closes with a grand sum-up by Lord Siva himself of the mysteries of man's action, agency, and ego, of how it is God who is the real Worker, and how self-important man is but a tool in His hands. In this respect, next to the heroic ('Veera') it is the spiritual Rasa ('Santa') that predominates the Yaksha Gana. The 'Atikayavadha' is an example of a war-theme converted into a spiritual play.

X

Among the players in the Sri Perudur Company, almost all are good in dancing. But, Mr. Ganapati Prabhu (Fig. 1) who plays the title roles in all the performances is the best among them. He is a fine dancer and I am told that this veteran is the best in all South Canara. When he plays the sublime hero types like Rukmangada, his movements are very graceful; his lifts of the neck, the 'Griva Rechakas,' and the

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movements of the chest and the hands are very fine and he depicts the emotions wonderfully in his eyes. I marked his effective facial expression in many places and he easily impresses his superior art upon us. Next to him, comes Kittappa who plays Krishna in 'Bhishma-vijaya' and minister and crown prince in 'Rukmangada.' The 'Raudra' *rasa's* greatest exponent is Kushtappa (Figs 4 and 5). His appearance is always to be eagerly expected showing as it does the largest amount of dumb 'Abhinaya.' When he enters, he inspires awe not only with his dress but also with his long-drawn eerie roar, heard as if from a distance, and with his right hand lifted up in quivering accompaniment to the eerie sounds of his throat. Among the youngsters, Ramakrishna Prabhu does the most vigorous dance next to Kittappa; and Annayya and others are all adepts in dance, wild as well as delicate. Among those who played female roles, Seenappa deserves mention as one suited well to the parts of masculine woman and the forceful type of the 'Praudha' and 'Uddhata Nayika.' These artistes' devotion to their art is admirable, though the remuneration they get out of this art is almost nothing compared to what they can easily earn by abandoning their traditional art for the money-making walks of modern life. Their ardent love for their art must be an example to all modern artistes. The elaborate make-up which takes a long time to go through does not tire them; the neglect of a modernised society does not dishearten them.

The Yaksha Gana is certainly of interest and value not only to the theoretical researcher trying to understand the various forms of indigenous Indian dance and drama but also to the practical reconstructor who is trying to rebuild out of the many survivals the glory that was 'Bharata Natya.' Dramatic renaissance in India today will not be truly Indian if it is only going to create an imitation in India of European theatre; an organic and truly Indian theatre has to be raised, and in this task, the theoretical Sanskrit literature on 'Natya,' dance and drama, the example of Sanskrit dramatists like Kalidasa and Sudraka, and the many vernacular survivals in

TRIVENI

the various provinces in the shape of dances and dance-dramas, have got to play a great part. Drama, says Bharata (*Natya Sastra*, XXIV, 71—72), is of two kinds, natural or realistic and ideal or imaginative. All modern and western drama is of the former type; all ancient Sanskrit drama and other provincial varieties of old Indian drama belong to the latter class. The latter is not to be brushed aside by stale catch-words of criticism—conventional, musical, operatic *etc.* Indian drama is a presentation of a fine unification of 'Bhava,' 'Raga,' and 'Tala,' of an emotional theme conveyed with all the aids of music and rhythm and of action or 'Abhinaya' set like blossoms on the swings and curves of the music and dance. It must be preserved from modern contamination and slander.



Opinion of

Sir C. V. Raman, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., N.L.

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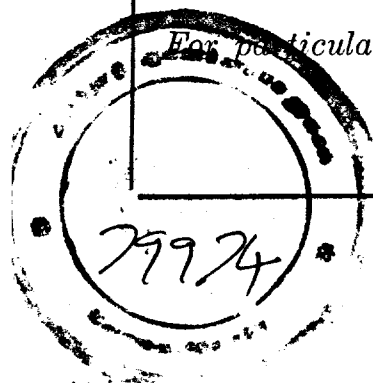
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