

BOY'S OWN PAPER

(INDIA)

VOL. I

MAY, 1936

No. 8

MEANING OF PRAYER

GANDHIJI'S VIEW

WHEN a man is down, he prays to God to lift him up. He is the help of the helpless, says a Tamil proverb. The appalling disaster in Quetta paralyses one. It baffles all attempt at reconstruction. The whole truth about the disaster will perhaps never be known. The dead cannot be recalled to life.

Human effort must be there always. Those who are left behind must have help. Such reconstruction as is possible will no doubt be undertaken. All this and much more along the same line can never be a substitute for prayer.

But why at all? Does not God, if there be one, know what has happened? Does He stand in need of prayer to enable Him to do His duty?

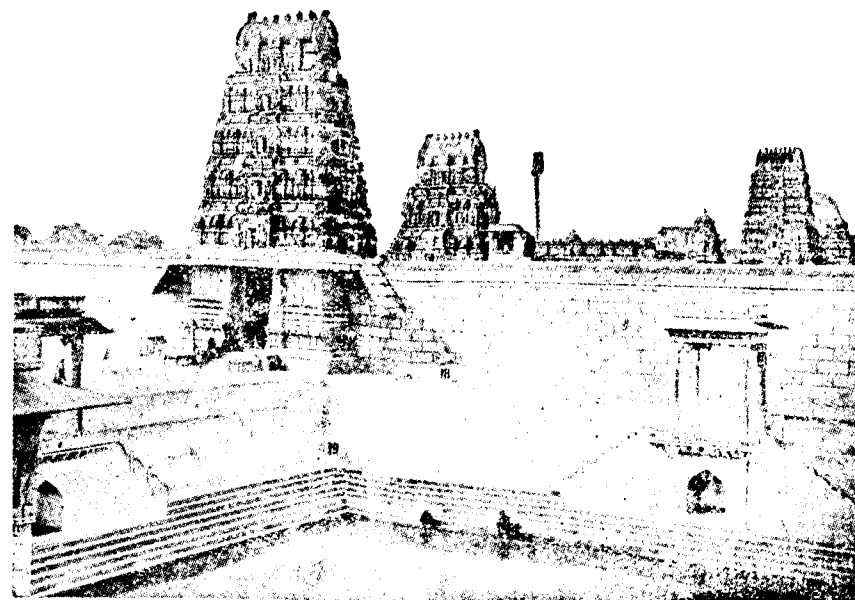
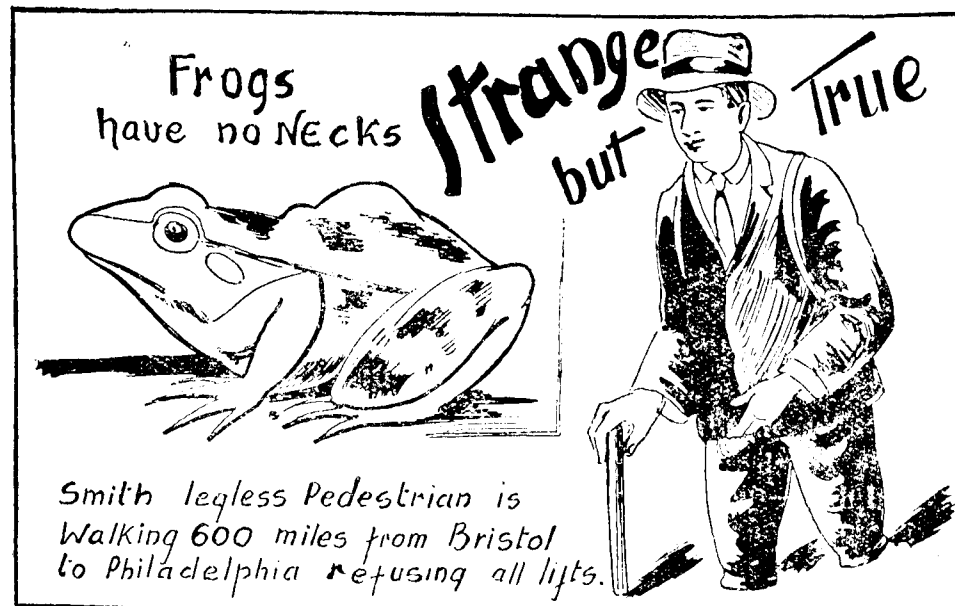
No, God needs no reminder. He is within everyone. Nothing happens without His permission. Our prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without prayer—a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect

if it had not God's blessing behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self purification, to inward search.

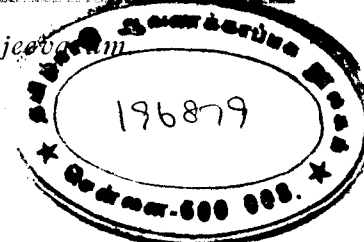
I must repeat what I said at the time of the Bihar disaster. There is a Divine purpose behind every physical calamity. That perfected science will one day be able to tell us beforehand when earthquakes will occur as it tells us to-day of eclipses, is quite possible. It will be another triumph of human mind. But such triumphs, even indefinitely multiplied, cannot bring about purification of self without which nothing is of any value.

Of course we will forget this latest calamity as we have forgotten the Bihar one. I ask those who appreciate the necessity of inward purification to join in the prayer that we may read the purpose of God behind such visitations that they may humble us and prepare us to face our Maker whenever the call comes, and that we may be ever ready to share the suffering of our fellows, whoever they may be.

PICTURE PAGE



Sree Kamakshi Temple, Conjeevaram



Our Short Story.

THE GUEST

T. K. VENKATARAMAN, M.A., L.T.,

Pachaiyappa's College, Madras.

"Wife" cried the old man, "we have reached the end of our tether. We have kept up this straggling inn, and got little profit out of it."

He glanced weakly out of the window of his old dwelling which clearly revealed the ravages of time. His wife, as gaunt and withered as himself, came up to him.

"Carlo" she cried. "I have never seen you so dispirited before. You remember the several lines of activity you pursued for earning our living, before we came here and set up this hostelry. You were a hawker trading your wares in gondolas from house to house in Venice. You were worked to death in a macaroni factory at Palermo. You sought a livelihood as a goatherd milking goats at the doors in Malta. You ruined your health, working in the galleries of the sulphur mines in Sicily. But, always, you were trusting in the future, and never lost heart."

The old man sank into a

broken chair. "Francesca" he said, "you forget that we are aging rapidly. At our time of life, we should not work. What we want is enough gold to sustain us at ease. Oh, I wish we had our only son by our side to help us now!"

His wife wiped away a tear. "Yes, Carlo", she said. "It is now 18 years, since Paslo fled to the sea. He was then 12 and should be now a sturdy youth. But, only God knows where he is, or whether he is living at all. It is terribly unjust that we should lose our only son, and work our old bones to death for maintaining our lives, when the world is full of rich and proud persons who scruple not to feed their dogs with provender which should sustain persons as poor as we are."

They sighed heavily, and began to shed tears. But, before she could say anything more, there came a clang at the bell. Carlo jumped up.

"God's mercy, there is a traveller, at last," he cried, and hurried to open the door.

The man who entered was well dressed and as he warmed himself at the fire, the old couple saw he was fair of feature and evidently rich. He wore valuable dress and from his pocket peeped forth an undoubtedly well-filled purse. Carlo showed him into a room, and had occasion to see him open a small suit case, one part of which was heaped with bank notes.

Francesca prepared a humble meal; but, the guest ate it without any complaint, and put the old couple at ease by his cordiality of manner and talk. Carlo ventured to ask, "Sir, I believe you have travelled widely." The guest laughed and said, "There is no place that I have not seen. Will you believe me when I say that I had shared in a tiger-hunt in the Terai jungle, that I had narrowly escaped from being poisoned by the juice of the manive in South America, that I was arrested by the secret police while tasting the samovar in the house of a peasant at Moscow, and that I had a miraculous escape from death in a Stintoist temple at Yokohoma at the time of the earthquake? But, I was fortunate to "break the bank" at Monte Carlo, and as I enjoyed my triumph, sitting on a bench in the Casino Gardens

over looking the sea, the idea came to me to start a business. Now, I am prosperous and own a member of cafes in the Avenue of the Champ Elysees at Paris. But, after all, home is home and I came to visit Italy. As I fed the pigeons that flocked to the Piazzetta of St. Mark in Venice, or gazed on the Bay of Naples from the Blue Grotto at Capri or wandered in the elegant saloon of a 14th century palayya at Florence, I felt a thrill which I never felt in any foreign land. Even the sight of the Stromboli in eruption fills me with divine delight."

Carlo interrupted to ask "Sir, to which part of Italy do you belong?"

The guest got confused and said, "I feel sleepy now. So, with your leave, I shall retire to the bed. I shall tell you all about me to-morrow. The only thing I shall tell you now is that I have a lovely, white villa, surrounded by vines, near Leghorn, which I purchased only two days ago."

He yawned and taking a candle in his hands, went to his room.

"Francesca," he muttered, "did you hear him speak of his house at Leghorn? Leghorn, where I

was born and where we were married and lived for long! This rich upstart does not know what to do with his money."

His voice dropped, "Did you see his bulging purse? His very suit case is crammed with money. And, we have yet to pay the rent for the last quarter!"

He lapsed into silence; but, there was a wild glow in his eyes. His wife looked at him in alarm. "Oh Carlo, what are those thoughts? I guess them, and yet am afraid to guess them."

He dragged her to him, and whispered fiercely, "None saw him enter here. It was already dark. None knows he is here. Here is ready money to take. The river flows by the window. None will know."

Francesca trembled violently.

Next morning, their neighbour Grisappa walked in and cried out "Old mother, has he not got up yet?"

Carlo got up with an unknown terror clamping his breast "welcome Grisappa, but if you are referring to me, I have got up even at dawn."

Grisappa laughed and cried, "I was not referring to you. I am

referring to the young gentleman who came to be your guest, yesterday. We met by chance, while he was explaining the mountains in Sardinia, and it was then that I heard his story, and when he came here yesterday, naturally I rejoiced to meet him. Cunning rascal, we shall all die of laughing at his trick. Call him here."

As Grisappa robbed off good humouredly, the old couple stood petrified. At last, Carlo stammered "Oh, you are referring to the young man who came yesterday night. He pleaded an urgent business at Rome and left before dawn."

Grisappa was amazed. "Impossible!" he cried. "He told me when I met him yesterday that he was going to take you with him to Leghorn today evening. You ought to be glad that he is so rich, and he was sure that you would forgive his little trick."

Carlo cried, "What is the trick you speak of?"

"My dear sir," said Carlo "did he not come to you as a stranger? He said he was doing that only to see how you received him as a stranger, that your joy might be

Our Readers Page.

DO NOT DELAY.

A. HASAN,

Std. VIII St. Bede's High School, Madras.

RAMACHANDRAN was a poor cobbler in Chingleput. He was well skilled in the art of shoe-making and shoe-mending. One day a Zamindar called at his shop and asked him to make a pair of shoes out of some valuable leather which he had brought with him; for they were intended for a special occasion. The Zamindar said that the shoes were to be well made and delivered at his mansion a week later adding that he would be richly rewarded.

But Ramachandran was a lazy

care-free man and he delayed the making of the shoes for four days. On the fifth day he did his best to execute the job but to no avail. The next day the Zamindar called to see how he was getting on. When he found the shoes were not complete he took them to another cobbler and did not pay anything to Ramchandran. Thus Ramchandran lost a very promising customer by delaying the job.

Motto. Never delay a thing for no apparent reason.

all the greater when you knew who he really was. That is why you see I am surprised when you tell me that he left."

A fearful suspicion was forming itself in the mind of Carlo. He saw in his mind's eye the terrible picture of a strangled corpse being dropped through the window into the deep river. As he

stood rooted to the ground in deep horror, with an awful scream Francesca fell fainting to the ground.

Carlo sank down in a heap, and heard dimly the words uttered by Girisappa, as he ran out for the police, "Foul wretches, you have murdered your son Pavlo for his gold!"

Our Serial Story.

A THRILLER FROM THE EPICS.

T. S. VIRARAGHAVACHARI, M. A., L. T.

(Continued from last issue.)

III

AS Duryodhana sat on his throne in his Council Chamber surrounded by his brothers and counsellors, Narada was announced. The King received the sage with due honours and offered him a seat near him. Narada expressed his delight at the ensuing marriage of his son, and asked if he had sent invitations to all important people. Duryodhana replied he had forgotten none. "Great King," said Narada, "I am sure you have overlooked Subhadra. She lives with her son at Hardwar under the protection of the good Vidura. You perhaps remember that she has been entertaining the vain hope that Baladeva would bestow his daughter on her son. To mortify Subhadra, if for nothing else, you should invite her. You may enjoy the triumph of making the heart of Subhadra bleed with envy. You hate the Pandavas like poison, and you will be revenging yourself upon them through Subhadra!"

The wicked Duryodhana eagerly took up the suggestion and lost no time in despatching a special messenger to Hardwar with an insulting letter. He wrote, "Fair cousin, Baladeva's daughter is to be bestowed on my son. Krishna's niece is worthy of an Imperial throne. Abandon your wild dreams. The beautiful Vatsala is too great a prize for a beggar's brat! Attend the marriage with your poor son!"

On his way to his celestial abode Narada said to himself:—"Duryodhana's insulting letter will provoke Abhimanyu. He will certainly proceed to Dwaraka. I have done my task. I have carried out Krishna's wish!"

IV

Abhimanyu was out hunting in the woods. Subhadra sat alone awaiting her son's return. Now a messenger arrived from Dwaraka carrying Baladeva's invitation. Subhadra's head swam as she read her brother's accompanying letter.

No sooner had she finished reading than Duryodhana's messenger arrived and handed her his master's letter. Subhadra hastily opened the letter and began to read it. Scarcely had she glanced through the cruel letter—every word an insult—when she writhed in agony, gave out a wild shriek and fell down in a swoon. The alarmed messenger fled in haste.

A few minutes later Abhimanyu returned from the forest. He was not a little frightened to see his mother lying senseless on the hard ground. He hastened to revive her and endeavoured to make her speak to him. Subhadra opened her eyes, but no word came out of her mouth. She lay motionless with her eyes fixed sadly upon Abhimanyu's face. Abhimanyu cried, "O mother, what has happened? Have you heard ill news of my father and my uncles in the forest? Or is anything wrong with my uncles at Dwaraka? Has Vidura been unkind? Or have I offended you unwittingly? Speak, mother, I am maddened by your silence. Mark my words, mother dear, if you do not speak to me at once, I shall slay myself!" Hastily fixing an arrow to his bow with the point turned towards his heart Abhimanyu made as if he would

shoot the arrow. With a shriek, Subhadra sprang up and caught his arm. She cried, "Insensate boy, what are you doing? Is it not enough that I should be separated from my husband, your noble father, abandoned by my own brothers and insulted by the heartless wretch Duryodhana? Would you add to my misery by doing away with yourself? Read, my son, read these two letters."

Abhimanyu first read Duryodhana's letter. He threw it down and trampled upon it. The second letter made him reel in surprise. "Mother," said he, "this is unkind of my uncle Baladeva. I refuse to believe that uncle Krishna is a party to this. Not a day has passed but you have told me of Baladeva's promise to you in days gone by. You have made me believe that Vatsala is my destined bride. Now uncle Baladeva appears to have changed his mind! Am I not now a beggar living upon Vidura's charity? Still as Arjuna's son I have my portion of pride. But for the insulting letter of Duryodhana I would forgive my uncle's fickleness and even forget dear Vatsala. But my cousin shall never be Lakshmana's bride. If I am truly the son of Arjuna

and Subhadra, if Krishna is indeed my favourite uncle, I will yet win the beautiful Vatsala for my bride. Mother, give me leave to go to Dwaraka."

Subhadra took Abhimanyu to Vidura and told him of her son's resolve. Vidura reflected a while and said, "Yes, Bhadra dear, let Abhimanyu go. God's will be done! I shall give him a chariot, but he would require some one to drive it. Ah, I forget! Need we go far to find a charioteer? Didn't you drive Arjuna's car when he carried you off from Dwaraka? This time you will drive your son's car! Go with him, Subhadra, and may your journey be fruitful!"

V

"I know not the road to Dwaraka, my son. Which way shall we go?" asked Subhadra. Abhimanyu replied, "Why trouble about the route? Let us travel as the crow flies. It will be the shortest route. Drive into the forest, mother dear. I shall quickly make a way through the woods, clearing the trees and levelling the ground for the car with my arrows. You may drive the car as quickly as you can without slackening speed."

In a short while the car entered the densest path of the jungle. It was the abode of the Rakshasa Gatoth-gaja, son of Bhimasena. Enraged at the destruction of the trees, the Rakshasa rangers attacked Abhimanyu. With a single arrow Abhimanyu cut off the right arm of the whole company. The terrified Rakshasas fled to their Lord and reported to him the destruction of the forest by a mere boy.

Furious with rage Gatoth-gaja hastened to meet the bold youth, followed by the Rakshasa legions. When he saw before him a slender boy standing like a young lion on a chariot driven by a beautiful woman, Gatoth-gaja was filled with pity. "Run, bold boy," said he, "take yourself off. I shall forgive the injury done to my trees and to my men. I have not the heart to punish you. Turn back and leave the forest." Abhimanyu answered, "Turn back I never will. My route lies straight through this forest. Stop me at your peril!" Gatoth-gaja wondering, said, "Bold youth, I am astonished at your audacity. You are a dainty morsel for the mouth of a Rakshasa. Throw not your life away. Be advised. Leave the woods." "Boasting Rakshasa," said Abhimanyu, "bar

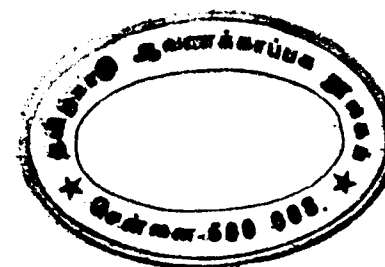
not my way. If you do, I will despatch you to the abode of Death in the twinkling of an eye."

Thus saying he shot an arrow piercing the Rakshasa's breast. Gatoth-gaja had no other option but to fight. Unwillingly he began to fight, loath to injure the handsome boy. He wondered why he felt so mysteriously drawn towards a mortal. Soon he had need to call to his aid all his fighting skill. The two fought long and hard. At last the Rakshasa hurled a fiery trident upon his foe. The missile sped, scattering sparks of fire and landed on Abhimanyu's breast. The gallant prince fell down like a young tree struck by lightning. With a sad heart the Rakshasa returned to his abode in the forest.

Subhadra was overwhelmed with grief, and broke into wild lamentations. She cried, "Alas, my darling, was such a fate

reserved for you? You could vanquish the Gods in Heaven as if in sport. Where hid your valour before this Rakshasa? My husband is an exile in the forest. My own brothers have abandoned me. The wicked Duryodhana has dared to insult me. Are these not enough for me, wretch that I am? Now you too have abandoned me, my darling! My cup of misery is full to the brim, Oh what shall I do? Where shall I go? Oh my brother, my beloved Krishna, why do you neglect me like this? How could you suffer your favourite nephew to die at the hands of a Rakshasa? Oh my Goddess, Oh Gowri, Oh Durga, whom I have worshipped since I was a child, help me in my distress. Neglect me not. If you will not come to my aid now, I will not live. Come to me! O mother, O Supreme Sakti!"

(To be continued.)



DRAMA.

BLESSED IN A WIFE.

BY V. V. SRINIVASA AIYANGAR.

Ex-Judge, Madras High Court.

The drawing-room in the same house.

Act III.

(Continued from the previous issue)

Scene II.

TIME—NIGHT.

[Ramanathan seated in a settee, reading a Newspaper. Enter Lalita.]

Lalita.

I think it is not good that you should read so long, sir. It will weaken you. Reading is such a strain.

Ramanathan.

I am all right, thank you!

Lalita.

That is what the doctor also thinks. So, he has asked me to discontinue attending from tomorrow. He thinks it is unnecessary—

Ramanathan.

Hang it! What does the Doctor know? I am not yet all right! And there is nobody here in the house that could attend on me.

Lalita.

I could not continue like this always, sir.

Ramanathan.

Why not? Are there not lifelong patients?

Lalita.

God forbid you should be one.

Ramanathan.

Well—can't you stay at least a fortnight?

Lalita.

Of course I might—but—

Ramanathan.

But—what?

Lalita.

But—I have also some special business at home, sir.

Ramanathan.

You are not married! Are you?

Lalita.

I should say not.

Ramanathan.

What a curious answer? Have you any doubts about it?

Lalita.

No doubts whatever, but I was thinking of something else.

Ramanathan.
Absolutely!

Lalita.
Will you take your wife and live with her?

Ramanathan.
I shall—try to.

Lalita.
Promise it!

Ramanathan.
Yes, there's a promise.

Lalita.
Shall I go and fetch your wife?

Ramanathan.
Is she in this house?

Lalita.
Quite close by!

Ramanathan.
Yes!

Lalita.
I shall return in five minutes.
(*Ramanathan* rising and walking about) (*Exit.*)

All this is so strange—What did I promise? Her eyes made me do it—I could not possibly resist—I wonder how all this will end!
(*Enter Lalita* dressed in Indian style.)

Ramanathan.
(Looking bewildered.) Whom do I see before me?

Lalita.
Your whilom nurse—your true and loyal wife—Your *Lalita*—

Ramanathan.
Is it possible? Am I dreaming?

Lalita.
No, not a dream—but this is life!

Ramanathan.
Oh God! Can you forgive me?

Lalita.
He has forgiven you and blessed you!

Ramanathan.
For you!—my dearest, my own *Lalita*!

CURTAIN.

Current Topics.

NEWS AND NOTES.

LORD Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada, speaking at Cheltenham College, observed that after the War there was a tendency for boys to play a short game and not a long one. He believed that that point of view had completely gone, and that to-day young people wanted the risky and not the safe things of life. They said, "We are living in a rough world and we want to make certain that there is nothing we cannot face up to."

He suggested to the boys two maxims which seem worth remembering in life. They must be willing to take risks and be ready for an honourable gamble with life. The wise thing was to make up their minds what they wanted to do and to go in for it, and never mind the risks and difficulties.

A lot was said about character. That was tremendously important, but unless it was guided by intelligence it was not very effective. Competence in everything that they took up was of the greatest importance. The man with both character and brains

was the citizen who would sooner or later get us out of difficulties.

To-day, as never before, public affairs, mattered tremendously to all of us, because they are woven considerably into our private lives. We should endeavour to pass on something new and valuable to our successors. The only way of paying our debt to the past is by putting the future in debt to ourselves.

Plans have been completed for the opening of the world's most northerly oil field located near Fort Norman on the Mackenzie River in the North-West Territories of Canada. Crude oil was discovered at Fort Norman about fourteen years ago, but two wells sunk at that time have been closed for some years. Fuel oil is urgently needed by mining operators in the Great Bear Lake and other Northern mining fields and the wells are being opened at Fort Norman to supply the needs of these mines. On account of the great distances to be traversed, the cost of oil if brought from outside sources would be

prohibitively high. Great Bear Lake, where Canada's already famous radium fields are located is about 1,000 miles beyond the railway lines and the only transportation facilities available to the district are by water along the rivers and lakes and by aeroplane. Fort Norman, however, is fortunately located at the mouth of Great Bear River, where that river empties into the Mackenzie. Transportation of the oil from the wells to Great Bear Lake mines will be relatively quite a simple matter.

The "Flying Flea" the smallest aeroplane in England, involuntarily hopped and rolled over on its back when it made its first public appearance at Heston. The machine is home-made. It is twelve feet long and has a wingspan of 16 feet. It stands five and a half feet high and can be housed in a garage when the wings are removed. The machine

rose a hundred feet at a demonstration but was unable to maintain the height and gradually sank and landed on a vegetable allotment. The inventor claims that the forced landing is not a serious matter either to the pilot or the machine and this is borne out by the exhibition flight. The machine cost £ 90 to build and costs half-a-penny a mile to fly.

Signor Mussolini has instructed all prefects of provinces, governors of cities and presidents of charitable institutions to eliminate "anachronisms" from their public speeches. They may not invoke the help of the Divine Providence in public. Such phrases as "I have been appointed through the confidence of my superiors," "I am conscious of my heavy responsibilities," "I am aware of the seriousness of the undertaking," and "I will administer my post with honesty and severity," are taboo.

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