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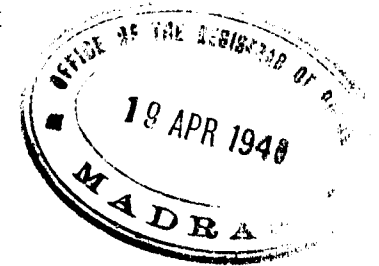
TRIVENI

JOURNAL OF INDIAN RENAISSANCE

239

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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

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The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. Patanjali Sastri, Madras.



Imperialism and American Negro Literature

BY WILLIAM HARRISON¹

I think it essential, before one declares that the cultural development of the African peoples at the present epoch of world history inevitably takes its place among the progressive forces in human history, that one should state one's definition of 'progressive.' This procedure is adopted not in the interests of any narrow dogmatism, but in order that we may severally have a clear idea of what we propose to discuss. 'Progressive,' in the true use of the term, relates to those forces which politically and socially tend to the extension of democracy throughout the

¹ William Harrison, the Negro writer, is of West Indian ancestry, his grand-uncle, on his mother's side, being the late Hon. and Rev. George Lewis Young, a Member of the Legislative Council in Jamaica for many years. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A., Harrison was educated at America's oldest secondary school, the Public Latin School in Boston, where he won many prizes and served as managing editor of the school magazine in the Last Form, having graduated in 1928. In the autumn of 1928 he entered Harvard University, where he took his Bachelor of Arts with honours in 1932 and his Master of Arts in 1934. While at Harvard, he held several scholarships and obtained the Bowdoin, Ruskin, and Dante Prizes, securing also in 1931 a medal from the French Government for a prize essay on Franco-American culture in connexion with the Overseas Colonial Exposition.

While in school and college, he began a career of journalism by writing editorials for the *Boston Chronicle*, a Negro weekly newspaper, of which he was assistant editor from 1928--1930, when he resigned to become a part-time clerk and messenger in the office of the Dean of Harvard College, a position which he held from 1930 to 1936. In the summer of 1935 he was awarded a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship for research in Europe, and he travelled then in Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany, returning to America in October. He was the author of a pamphlet entitled *Italian Atrocities in Libya*, written for the Imperial Legation of Ethiopia, widely distributed in the English version in English-speaking countries and in Arabic in the Near East. Admitted as a non-Collegiate research student in candidacy for the Ph. D. degree at the University of Cambridge, in 1936, Harrison's active participation in Negro political organisations in America such as American Aid to Ethiopia, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the National Negro Congress, and the Jamaican Associates, kept him from returning to England before the autumn of 1937, when he was awarded a Charles M. Cox Scholarship.

He has contributed essays and reviews to such periodicals as the *New Frontier*, *Harvard Advocate*, *Harvard Crimson*, *Harvard Journal*, *Westminster Magazine* (U. S. A.); *Criterion*; *Plebs*; *Socialist Vanguard* (London); *Aryan Path* (Bombay). He is acting chief British correspondent for the Associated Negro Press, and secretary to the editorial committee, *International African Opinion*, International African Service Bureau. He is a past president of the Saturday Evening Quill Club (Boston) and a former executive secretary of the New England Writers' Conference.

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world. It will be found, on examination, that certain irresistible corollaries follow.

Imperialism, the first principle of which is the denial and abrogation of democracy, is thus of necessity retrogressive, and can in no sense be defined now as 'progressive,' whilst if we consider various national economies it will be discovered that those societies whose class structures are such as to deprive the vast majority of the people who live under them of effective political power are not 'progressive.' Consequently, attempts to extend democracy to wider masses will, on the international level, necessarily assume the form of an unrelenting struggle against imperialism for the liberation of the subject peoples in the colonies and semi-colonial nations. Such attempts, undertaken with special emphasis on the structure of society, will have for their single aim the conquest of power for the working class, that class which, as Marx and Lenin showed long ago, is usually without effective political power. To guarantee the probable gains of such a conquest it would be essential, above all, to proceed to economic democracy, which is only another term for Socialism. It is this form of democracy for which the African peoples and all others in the 'progressive' movement are ultimately struggling, confident that it can be attained only through the continuance of bourgeois democracy, limited as it is, at *this* stage of world politics.

It is perhaps imperative to emphasise that political democracy is the indispensable requisite for the African peoples, if they are to take their rightful place as equals amongst the nations of the earth. I am here concerned with the cultural expression of their political and social desires. It would be too great a task for me, to undertake any detailed examination of that cultural expression in all the lands which they inhabit, and in all the forms which such expression can take, in what we traditionally designate as the arts and sciences. I restrict myself, therefore, as a safeguard against the imputation of superficiality, to that section, America, with which I am most familiar, and to that medium, literature, in which I have the greatest degree of competence, both as practitioner and as student.

My choice is singularly happy, for American Negro literature is the cultural expression of the most articulate section of the African peoples. The American Negroes are most articulate

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because they enjoy a greater degree of political democracy than their less fortunate brethren in the colonial empires of Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal. While they do not have a full measure of civil rights throughout the Republic, they do, in certain areas at least, possess the right of freedom of speech, press, and assembly—a right essential to the welfare of literature anywhere.

By its endeavour to deflect the course of historical tradition, by the burning of the books in May 1934, Fascism has demonstrated clearly its attitude to popular culture. The African peoples did not need this historic lesson to become aware of reactionary obscurantism in the contemporary world, for in Kenya, in the Union of South Africa, in the Southern States of the American Union, they have long been compelled to observe the dictates of autocratic rule in the realm of the spirit. Colonial Fascism has sought to enslave their minds as well as their bodies by several methods, of which the most effective is through educational restrictions which place obstacles in the way of their access to the treasures of the past bequeathed them by even their own ancestors, and to the broad currents of cultural contact with old civilisations such as India's, rich and justly proud of its Asoka, its *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, its ancient wisdom stored in the *Upanishads* and the *Dhammapada* or *Bhagavad-Gita*, stores of humanism which less troubled ages than ours have rightly esteemed, preserved, and endeavoured to disseminate widely.

Instinctively, owing to their social position in the class society of America, the Negroes would have seen Fascism as their irreconcilable foe, even if Herr Hitler had not published his ineffable views about the Negro race, in *Mein Kampf*, and if Signor Mussolini, during the course of the invasion of Ethiopia, had not sought to justify his aggressive banditry by references to the 'inferiority of the black races.' For these two supposedly responsible Heads of States were re-echoing the sentiments of slave-holders who debated whether the Negro did not belong to a separate species, in order to justify the institution of slavery, and who sought to prove, by carefully selected texts from the Christian scriptures, that the Negro was divinely ordained to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water unto all the other races of men. This historic view has given the American

Negroes a singularly clear attitude to Fascism which is the effort of finance-capitalism in decay to postpone the birth of a new social order. Their writers have, therefore, almost without exception, enlisted themselves in the struggle against Fascism. I am conscious of the fact that few of the American Negro writers are known in India even by name, and so I shall mention only two, Claude McKay and Langston Hughes.

Claude McKay (1889—), who is the author of *Home to Harlem*, *Banjo*, *Banana Bottom*, and other novels, as well as such volumes of verse as *Spring in New Hampshire* and *Harlem Blues*, was one of the pioneers in the so-called 'Negro renaissance' from 1920 to 1930, a post-war cultural resurgence of the Negro people; the centre was Harlem, the Negro quarter of New York, which contains about 250,000 inhabitants, and is in fact the largest concentration of Negroes anywhere in the world. As one of the moving spirits in this literary movement, McKay was perhaps the writer with the greatest amount of social consciousness, as his recent autobiography, *A long way from Home* (1937), indicates. Of peasant origin, he was born in Jamaica, British West Indies, in 1889, and was educated in the United States, where he migrated after giving up a job in the constabulary force of his native island. It is interesting to note that I. A. Richards of Magdalene College, Cambridge, later to become celebrated as the author of *The Principles of Literary Criticism* and of *Practical Criticism*, wrote the Introduction to the English edition of *Spring in New Hampshire* (1920). When McKay came to England, after spending some time in New York, he became a friend of Frank Harris, concerning whom he recounts many stories in the autobiography; and he met Bernard Shaw, who asked him why he had chosen to be a poet when he might have done better as a boxer! The War and the Russian Revolution found McKay, helping to edit *Dreadnought*, with Miss E. Sylvia Pankhurst, the erstwhile Suffragette; this radical publication was eventually suppressed. Caught up, as it were, by the prevailing waves of enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution and the general feeling that the overthrow of Tsarism meant the birth of a new freedom in one-sixth of the globe, McKay journeyed to Moscow, where he was enthusiastically hailed by the leaders of the Bolshevik Party and by the masses of the Russian people, liberated from the long tyranny and oppression of Tsarism.

McKay's enthusiasm was relatively short-lived. He never became more than a sympathiser with Communism, and of late he has been very outspoken in his criticism of it. Coming under the influence of Trotsky and Radek whilst he was in Moscow and always a close associate of Max Eastman, with whom he worked on *The Liberator* and *The Masses*, two radical magazines, McKay's evolution is not strange. At present he is an ardent racist, and has severed connections with even the Trotskyists. His work manifests signs of his gradual withdrawal from contact with the masses; it was precisely at its most vigorous whilst his enthusiasm for the world movements of liberation lasted. Of this his poem, "If We Must Die," evoked by the race-riots in America after the War, is perhaps the most familiar, if not the best, example:

IF WE MUST DIE

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!
Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but—fighting back.

His recent poetry has revealed his withdrawal to the ivory tower. He no longer writes exhortations to action, poetry full of social content, like some of the poems of Shelley; he writes now the evasive sort of poetry in which the poet uses the importance of his own personal reactions to a love affair or an autumnal day as an escape from the attempt to record his reactions to the significant social activities of his time. That way lies sterility, of course, and that is the way which McKay seems to have chosen, though some of his public acts, such as joining the League of American Writers, which is the American

affiliate of the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture, may be taken as evidence of his opposition to Fascism. But he is not strongly anti-Fascist.

It was my good fortune over a year ago to hear Andre Malraux make an eloquent plea for humanism when it seemed as if that word would convey little in a world rapidly becoming bereft of human values, as the slaughter of women and children by machine-guns and poison-gas in Ethiopia and the aerial bombardment at Guernica, Barcelona, Madrid, and Canton would prove. I thought then that no serious man of letters could support Fascism, and no serious man of letters has, for Dr. Goebbels, Wotan's Mickey Mouse, cannot be regarded as other than a member of the *lumpen-intelligentsia*, who has become widely read only by imprisoning all his more competent competitors in concentration camps and by forcing into exile writers like Ernst Toller and Thomas Mann. My thought is nearly an axiom, for it is doubtful whether Miguel de Unamuno really capitulated to Franco, and I hope to live to see his reputation rehabilitated. Certainly no Negro man of letters in America has preached Fascism to his people. Some are at once anti-Fascist and anti-Communist, which is a possible intermediate stage, though if these had to choose, I may venture to suggest that their choice would be E. M. Forster's.

Langston Hughes (1902—) has chosen to be a vigorous proponent of anti-Fascism. As the author of *Fine Clothes to the Jews* (1927) and *The Weary Blues* (1929), volumes of poetry, he also took an active part in the Negro renaissance of the twenties. He has a greater diversity of talent than McKay. He is a novelist, having published *Not Without Laughter* (1934). He is also a playwright, having published a dramatic skit entitled *Scottsboro Limited*, based on the infamous Scottsboro case, and he has staged many plays, the chief of which is *Mulatto*, based on the story "Father and Son" in his volume of short stories entitled *The Ways of White Folks* (1934). Technically, as a poet, Hughes is original; he has created a personal rhythm, which is the hall-mark of genius in a poet. His rhythm gains strength from its echoes of the folk music of the Negro people composed, during the days of slavery, as work-songs or 'Spirituals.' "Water Boy" is an example of a secular song, a work-song, full of revolutionary content somewhat concealed by

symbolism, and "Joshua, Fit the Battle of Jericho" is a religious song, as is "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See," all of which are full of revolutionary content which the slave-master would not detect and which the slaves would sense.

The rhythm of the Negro folk-songs has been utilised by Hughes to good effect, and he has not scrupled to make use also of the rhythms of the Negro clergymen. This latter case is highly significant. During the days of slavery, the Negroes were not permitted to learn how to read, and even those who learned were generally confined to reading the Bible in the Authorised Version of 1611; hence the clergy were the social leaders, since the masters felt their doctrines would be useful in suppressing the militancy of the slaves and diverting their natural tendency to revolt into the harmless channels of a belief in a supernatural hereafter where they would be at last free from earthly toil. The clergy, practically illiterate, except for a few, appropriated the rhythms of that 'noblest monument of English prose' with that faithfulness with which the illiterate always copy models. To this day, in certain Negro congregations in the evangelical churches, there are preachers who preach in the old way, as the late James Weldon Johnson, another figure in American Negro literature, whom I have had to ignore despite his importance, attempted to illustrate in his poems, *God's Trombones* (1927).

Hughes has taken the folk-rhythms, and they have become, in his poetry, the authentic voice of the Negro people in their struggle for civil rights in America. It was with great pleasure that my colleagues and I printed his poem "August 19th" in the August (1938) number of *International African Opinion*, which is the monthly organ of the International African Service Bureau. I may quote a colleague who likened Hughes to the Scottish poet Burns. The analogy is apt, I think. Hughes is just as class-conscious as the earlier poet; this is shown by his "Ballad of Lenin":

Comrade Lenin of Russia,
High in a marble tomb,
Move over, Comrade Lenin,
And give me room.
I am Ivan the peasant,
Boots all muddy with soil.

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I fought with you, Comrade Lenin,
Now I have finished my toil.
Comrade Lenin of Russia,
Alive in a marble tomb,
Move over, Comrade Lenin,
And give me room.

I am Chico, the Negro,
Cutting cane in the sun.
I lived for you, Comrade Lenin,
Now my work is done.

Comrade Lenin of Russia
Honoured in a marble tomb,
Move over, Comrade Lenin,
And give me room.

I am Chang of the foundries
On strike in the streets of Shanghai.
For the sake of the Revolution
I fight, I starve, I die.

Comrade Lenin of Russia
Rises in the marble tomb:
*On guard with the fighters forever—
The world in our room!*

He has never hesitated to raise his voice in the interests of the oppressed, whether in Haiti or in Korea, in Spain or in Ethiopia, and he has been unwavering in his loyalty to the common people in their endeavour the world over, at this present epoch, to secure their just share of those democratic rights and privileges which will allow them access to the reservoir of culture which is the common property of mankind. Hence Hughes has been a most relentless enemy of Fascism, which denies culture to the masses and suppresses it, lest it prevent them from submitting to its desire to make them military robots, in order that finance-capitalism in decay may take on a temporary lease of life.

India and "Federal Union"

BY DR. E. ASIRVATHAM
(University of Madras)

I. THE FAILURE OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

When the World War of 1914-18 was being fought, there were many who sincerely believed that it was a "righteous war," and "a war to end war." On the ruins of this war it was hoped that a new world order in which war would become a thing of the past would be created, and that men would live together in peace and prosperity. A League of Nations was set up representing the governments of various lands; and it was confidently expected that this League would provide security for all its members, reduce armaments, and settle all major disputes between nations by adjudication or arbitration.

The experience of the past twenty years, however, has belied all these hopes. The world has been plunged again into the throes of terrible wars, the end of which no one is able to foresee. For a decade now the dismemberment of China has been going on apace, with little or no interference from the outside world. In 1935 Italy invaded Abyssinia under a slight pretext and annexed the whole territory to her empire. When the war was in progress, the League of Nations, which by then had discredited itself by its policy of watchful inaction, decided after much hesitation on applying economic sanctions. But some of the very nations which had helped the League to make this decision began to sabotage it.

Soon after the subjugation of Abyssinia, troubles began to brew in Europe. A civil war broke out in Spain in all its fury, and the agony was prolonged much longer than need be by the intervention of the principal totalitarian States of Europe on one side or the other of the contending elements. Hitler, who had come to power in Germany in 1933, after having recourse to a few years of vigorous military preparation and intense propaganda, first annexed Austria and afterwards Czecho-Slovakia in two instalments. What has happened since September 1939

is a story fresh in our minds. Poland has been dismembered and, contrary to all her professions of peace and anti-imperialism, Soviet Russia is at present engaged in the task of subduing Finland and making her a vassal State of Russia.

In other fields of international relations, too, the world has been in a bad way. During the twenty years since the close of the Great War, conferences of various kinds have been held to regulate international trade, to promote prosperity, to restrict armaments, and to preserve peace by regional agreements. But hardly any of them has been a success. Barring the signal success of the Washington Conference held in the early years after the War when the whole world was war-weary, other conferences have produced no lasting result. The Locarno Treaties, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the Nine-Power Treaty, the Ottawa Agreement, etc., have all proved to be broken reeds. The League of Nations itself, which achieved some success in minor disputes, in social and humanitarian work, in the economic rehabilitation of post-war Europe, and in intellectual co-operation, has failed in all major political issues. It failed because, by the very nature of its constitution, it could not go beyond the limited authority given to it by the member-States.

II. NEED FOR A FEDERAL UNION

All that this shows is that the time is ripe for a complete change in the outlook of people on international questions and for the devising of an international machinery adequate to meet the demands of a new world. Collective security has really produced collective insecurity. Wars and rumours of wars, the economic exploitation and political domination of the backward peoples of the world, planless production, and iniquitous distribution—all these are bound to last so long as each self-governing country claims the right to manage all its own affairs with regard solely to its own interests, irrespective of the effects of its actions upon its neighbours and upon the world at large.

The chief enemy of freedom and progress today is not Hitler, Stalin or Mussolini; it is an excess of nationalism. The doctrine of national sovereignty came into existence in Europe at a time when the modern State was being born. Thinkers like Bodin in France saw the need of an ultimate political

authority within the State from which there could be no appeal—an authority strong enough to assert itself against the Church and the various contending elements within the State. Writers who came after Bodin developed the idea of national sovereignty more fully and claimed that sovereignty in both internal and external affairs was an absolute necessity and that, without it, no State could survive long.

Whatever merits the doctrine of absolute national sovereignty may have had in the past in building up the State and in arousing the sentiment of national patriotism, it is an anachronism today. It is the breeder of war and the perpetrator of injustice. Whether, for instance, the U.S.A. is to build five battleships or 50, 100 aeroplanes or a 1,000, is a matter which concerns the whole world. For battleships and aeroplanes are not built just for the fun of it. What this means is that matters relating to war and peace are not matters which any one State is solely competent to judge. If the future of the world is to be safeguarded, the doctrine of absolute and unlimited sovereignty should be seriously curtailed, if not altogether abandoned.

It is a welcome sign of the times that the question of the limitation of sovereignty is no longer a mere academic question discussed by jurists and professors of political science; nor is it merely a dream of the poets confined to such noble sentiments as the "Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World." It is fast entering the sphere of practical politics. In a brilliant and forward-looking book, *Union Now*, Clarence K. Streit, an American journalist, has outlined in detail a scheme for a federal union of the democratic countries of the world.

Whatever criticisms may be levelled against the details of Mr. Streit's scheme, there is no gainsaying the fact that the hard realities of economic and political life in the international world today drive us to the realisation of the urgent need there is for an international authority duly elected and controlled by the people of the world. The League of Nations has been for the most part only a "glory in the heavens" because it represented the *governments* of some fifty or sixty countries of the world. It could take no independent action of its own. The delegates who attended its sessions were ambassadors of their countries, who could not move to the right or to the left

without consulting their home governments. What is needed today is an organisation representing the *people* of the world, and not merely their *governments*.

In the scheme outlined by Mr. Streit, the original members of the Union are to be some fifteen countries which have been at peace with each other for over a century, which are governed by democratic institutions, and which possess a more or less common outlook on the affairs of the world around. These countries are Great Britain and her five self-governing Dominions, the U. S. A., France, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. The door is not closed against outside nations. The minimum conditions for membership are the establishment of democratic institutions within one's borders and a solemn undertaking to promote the ends of peace.

The organisation of the Federal Union is to consist of a Federal Legislature, a Federal Executive Board of Five jointly fulfilling the functions of a constitutional President, and a Federal Prime Minister and Cabinet. This Federal Government will have complete charge of such questions as war and peace, defence and foreign relations, trade and communications, postage and currency. Within the Federal Union there will be "one citizenship, one defence force, one free trade area, one money, and one stamp." The colonial possessions of the member-States will be taken away from them and administered conjointly by the Union with a view to fitting them to become members of the Federal Union as speedily as possible.

III. INDIA'S PLACE IN THE UNION

One glaring defect in Mr. Streit's book is that the Union which he contemplates is a union of European peoples only. India is dismissed in a rather light-hearted manner. It is obvious that if the Union is to be a success it should be a union of both European and Asiatic races. Naturally China in her present state of disorder and militarist Japan cannot be admitted to the Union straightaway. But there is no valid reason for the exclusion of India. It is true that she has her own internal troubles connected with the Minorities, the Princes, and the vested interests in general. But these troubles are as nothing when compared with the great contributions that India is capable of making by virtue of her past history and her recent

experiments with non-violence in the political field. To exclude all non-White races from the Union is to start it with a very serious handicap. It is certain to be interpreted as a Machiavellian device for the perpetuation of White dominance in the world, and more particularly of the Anglo-Saxon variety.

As regards the totalitarian States, we are not quite sure that the contemplated Federal Union should wait till they become fully democratic before admitting them to membership. It may be possible to admit them even now, so long as their totalitarianism is confined to their internal policies and is not extended to international relations. It is possible for a 'limited totalitarianism' to find a place in "Union Now" and gradually wipe itself out as it sees for itself the merits of the democratic way of life.

Original membership of India in the Federal Union has its advantages not only to the Union but to India itself. For some years now India has been struggling against both external and internal difficulties in her attempt to come into her own. On the whole her struggle has been peaceful, free from bloodshed. Nothing at this juncture can be more conducive to her self-respect and to a proper sense of her own importance than admission to the Federal Union as an original member.

Such membership is certain to solve many of the vexing questions which have defied a solution for several years. One of the first questions is that of communalism. The chief reason why this question seems difficult of solution is that the entire atmosphere is filled with fear and suspicion, narrow-minded patriotism, and tribal loyalty. One of the surest ways of clearing this vitiated atmosphere is to breathe into it the life-giving spirit of genuine internationalism. Our Communalists are much like the frog in the well which imagined the well to contain the whole universe. Passionate devotion to such an ideal as "Federal Union" is bound to help a great many Indians who are communal-minded and caste-ridden to get out of their narrow grooves and work together for a greater and higher good. A Jinnah or even a Mahatma Gandhi as a member of a Federal Legislature or of a Federal Cabinet is sure to look at national and communal questions from an altogether different angle. The larger loyalty will so captivate the minds of men that the lesser loyalty will naturally find its proper level.

Mr. K. M. Munshi, an ex-Minister of the Congress Government of Bombay, is perfectly right when he says that the true goal of India is not complete independence but equal membership in a federation of democratic nations.

What the history of the world shows is that the progress of mankind demands larger and larger areas of co-operation. In all the advanced countries of the world, village politics and tribal politics have been successfully replaced by national politics. The next step in the progress of mankind is the extension and transmutation of national politics into world politics. Indian politics is still in the tribal stage; if, benefiting by the experience of other lands, India should at once decide to adopt an enlightened attitude in world politics, in which national politics will find its rightful place, she may overcome her communalism and at the same time avoid the excesses of Western nationalism.

Federal union is a satisfactory solution not only to Indian communalism and exaggerated nationalism, but also to the many thorny problems connected with her position in the British Empire. Although India has been promised Dominion Status of the Statute of Westminster variety on the termination of the present war, a good many Indians look at the promise with a suspicious eye. They are afraid that, in actual practice, British interests will still control the situation, and are, therefore, agitating for complete independence. By such agitation they do not necessarily mean that India should be cut off from Britain entirely—which would be a calamity—but that whatever agreements are concluded should be altogether voluntary and on a self-respecting and equitable basis for both parties. It is possible that by mutual discussion and adjustment India can find an honorable place in the British Commonwealth of Nations. But it seems probable that the same end can be achieved more easily by both Great Britain and India becoming members of a Federal Union. Both of them will be placed on an identical basis as constituent States and there will be no trace or even indirect indication of the subordination of India to Great Britain.

It is more than likely that in the Dominion Status promised to India certain questions will have to be partially excluded from Indian control for some time to come—such questions as defence and foreign relations,—causing much misunderstanding and

considerable heart-burning. But if India should become a member of a Federal Union, the immediate consequence will be to place all these vexing questions under the control of the Federal Government which will have complete jurisdiction over war, defence, and colonies. Such federal control is bound to relieve the tense feeling between Great Britain and India inasmuch as India is not in a mood to continue to be under the tutelage of Great Britain.

Another sphere of activity where the scheme of federal union is bound to be of value to India is the field of trade and communications. A common complaint of Indians has been that the foreign trade and commerce of India are arranged in such a manner as to benefit Great Britain at the expense of India. It is claimed that even Indian coastal traffic is subjected to serious discrimination. If, according to the federal scheme, our external trade and commerce and communications with the outside world can be brought under federal control, it will undoubtedly be a step in the right direction.

One further field where the federal scheme can help India in her difficulty is the field of citizenship. Everyone knows of the humiliating position to which Indians have been reduced in South Africa, East Africa, the Fiji Islands, West Indies, Ceylon, and even Burma. According to the federal scheme, there is to be one citizenship common to all the members of the Union. This means that, if South Africa and India become members of the Union, they will not be permitted to discriminate against one another's nationals. So far as Indians in the non-self-governing parts of the British Empire are concerned, relief will be given to them indirectly by bringing all the colonies under federal control.

IV. ALTERNATIVES TO FEDERAL UNION

The scheme under consideration seems to have several advantages in its favour. It acts directly upon the citizens of the member-States, unlike the League of Nations. Every citizen of a member-State will owe a double allegiance, *i.e.*, to his own country as well as to the Federal Union. Certain spheres of governmental activity will be clearly marked off for the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, and in these spheres the federal organisation will exercise direct control over the citizens.

TRIVENI

Some thinkers believe that the organisation of the world into regional groupings such as a Federation of Europe, a Federation of the Americas, and a Federation of Southern Asia may be a better scheme. But on careful investigation we find that such unions lack an adequate community of interests and a common ideology, which are very vital to a Federal Union. The only advantage they possess is geographical contiguity, but in these days of rapid transport and communication, that is not as important as common interests and common ideology.

Others have said that, instead of scrapping the present League of Nations, the new Federal Union should be allowed to grow within its framework, eventually displacing it. This does not seem to be a practical proposition inasmuch as the two are based on two different principles altogether. It is difficult to see how confederation and federation could co-exist in the League and function satisfactorily. But a good case could be made out for a Federal Union acting as a single whole within a *reformed* League of Nations, until it became universal. Such a course demands a profound modification in the constitution of the League as well as in the temper and attitude of the member-States.

What forward-looking statesmanship requires is courage to plump for Federal Union at once or as soon as practicable, without having recourse to half-measures. Even if the ideal of the Union cannot be brought down to earth all at once today or tomorrow, it is the goal towards which all earnest efforts should be directed. The enlightened citizen should be a good nationalist, but a better internationalist.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

The Vision of the Kannada Dramatist

BY PROF. V. K. GOKAK
(*The Willingdon College, Sangli*)

(1)

Being a composite form of art, Drama combines the movement of music with the statuesqueness of sculpture, the colourfulness of painting with the living voice of poetry and histrionics. It has, consequently, attracted the artists of all ages as promoting Illusion, which is taken by some thinkers to be the very essence of all art. Again, as holding forth unrivalled opportunities for propaganda, the theatre has enlisted the services of the satirists and self-appointed censors of all ages. It follows, therefore, that the mind of a people can at least be as well understood from a study of their drama as from that of any other product of their manifold activity.

I do not wish to dwell here on the beginnings of the Kannada drama. They go back to the solitary verse surviving from 'Bhuvanaika Ramabhyudaya,' the lost epic of Ponna who flourished in the tenth century. In his description of moon-rise he speaks of the moon as the showman or the producer of the great cosmic plays on the boards of the firmament, the few stars of dusk being the flower-offerings strewn on the stage by the Producer, announcing His presence; a fancy comparable to that of Marston, the Elizabethan dramatist:

"Night, like a masque, has entered heaven's great hall
With thousand torches ushering the way."

I will not also speak of Ranna, a contemporary of Ponna, who gave us the 'Gadayuddha,' a great tragedy of character based on an episode drawn from the 'Mahabharata'; of Singaraya's 'Mitravindagovinda,' a seventeenth century Kannada version of Harsha's 'Ratnavali'; and of the 'Yakshaganas' which have been responsible for the continuity of dramatic tradition in Kannada. I will content myself with interpreting the drama as it mirrors the mind of the Kannada people today, or rather of a certain class of the Kannada people,—the rising middle class.

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I have also restricted myself in another way. Instead of a study of the Greek, Shakespearean, Molierean, sentimental, Ibsenic and Shavian forms of modern Kannada drama, I concentrate on the one-act plays in Kannada. The vision of the Kannada dramatist can be disengaged and set forth far more easily and clearly by studying the one-act plays rather than by wandering through the maze of mirrors reflecting complex art-forms and by feeling our way against "complicated webs of melancholy mirth." Not that this other task is easy. Here also is plenty. The one-act playwrights have been influenced by the masterpieces of men of genius as far removed from each other as Bhasa and Chekhov. Many of their representative pieces have been translated into Kannada, along with other remarkable one-act plays in several modern Indian languages. The medium chosen varies from blank verse and lyric dialogue to archaic, literary and colloquial prose, even dialectal varieties being used with great effect. Naturally enough, the full-length dramatist is not always different from the one-act playwright, though a few like Mr. T. P. Kailasam and Mr. Bendre have made the one-act play their chosen vehicle of thought. And we need not have any misgivings as regards the capacity of the smaller art-form for reflecting the mind of the people; for, though the one-act play is, in a sense, a gay myrtle leaf, a glow-worm lamp and a moment's monument, it begins and ends in a moment as long as eternity.

(2)

The mythical and historical plays of the day like Mr. Puttapa's 'Maharatri' (The Great Night) and 'The Defeat of Yama,' Mr. Shastri's 'Ahwana,' Prof. Mugali's 'Vijaya Samrajya,' Mr. A. N. Krishnarao's 'Anugraha,' and Mr. Vaman Bhat's 'Death of Tandava' do not concern us here. Plays like these are an attempt to re-interpret or to re-create the past. A revival of ancient history and myth is a vital part of the present movement, but not its soul. We also leave fantasies like Prof. Jagirdar's 'The Defeat of Yama' and folk tales like 'My Gopala,' out of account.

One of the sphinx-like problems of the day is the reconstruction of present-day society which is torn asunder by opposite forces. The Kannada dramatist has been presenting the

THE VISION OF THE KANNADA DRAMATIST

riddle and clamouring for solution. Marriage, for instance. Ancient society had encouraged weddings in the cradle or in 'prams,' the nursery or the school-room; and all was well, as the people of those times viewed it. The glory of life consisted in letting the will of the parents prevail. But modern society has given every son and daughter a will of his or her own. And the result is the chaos that precedes a cosmos. In a play called 'The Cup of Poison,' Mr. Tengshe introduces us to a heroine who has been allowed to grow up unmarried because her parents could not match her suitably. A young gentleman, one of her acquaintances, declares himself her lover and wins her consent by promising marriage. And he forsakes the girl when she is an expectant mother, pleading his inability to resist the will of his parents who do not want him to marry the girl. What next? That is the problem. In 'Excommunication,' a powerful one-act play by Mr. Kailasam, the tragedy is that of a family excommunicated because Narasu, the daughter of Ranganna, remains unmarried even after she has reached the age of puberty. The ruthless order of priests sets the machinery of torture in motion against a sensitive soul. On Narasu's ear falls like a thunder-bolt the curse of her dying grandmother, pronounced because the priests would not be present at her husband's obituary. And Narasu dies a fierce and triumphant death by poisoning herself in order to free the other members of the family from the blighting effects of excommunication. The dark arrow, as Shelley says in 'Ginevra,' fled in the noon. In a play called the 'Murraine of Mockery' by Mr. Bendre, there is an assembly of widows, those enigmatic products of Hindu society, who pass their time in killing reputations. The widows treat the unmarried girl past her puberty as untouchable and her mother as a 'pariah.' The priest, delivering a sermon which is a compound of legend, scandal and nonsense, inserts in it insinuations against the star-crossed girl, in spite of the fact that his own unmarried daughter is of the same age. Bhagirathi, unwilling to be a burden any longer on her parents, seeks refuge in the flames of death. And this is the dramatist's verdict on the happening, uttered by one of the pall-bearers:

"If it is true that the married alone are saved, it matters little if her soul does not ascend to heaven. She will be happy if her soul will be held captive in hell for ever.

There will be no peace for her or for her parents, *if she is born again.*"

Prof. R. V. Jagirdar views the same problem from a half-bitter, half-cynical angle in 'The Horse-Sacrifice.' The ancient Indian emperors performed the *Horse Sacrifice*, demonstrating their supremacy by letting a horse graze unchallenged through the world. We, their inheritors, have been compelled to do it in another way. Venkappa, the father of a girl called Kamala, inscribes the following verse on her forehead and leaves her to wander through the world:

"Here, on this earth is Kamal, the daughter of Venkappa. The occasion of this overture is the mess of her marriage. May the youth who will be her perpetual host stop her on her way and marry her at once!"

So long as our women are economically dependent and our young men unemployed, have we to repeat the performance of this play.

So passionately do the dramatists feel for the helplessness of women that one of them, Mr. A. N. Krishnarao, indicts Rama himself, the hero of the 'Ramayana' in 'The Golden Image.' Rama abandons Sita, his pregnant wife, in the forest because he has heard the tongue of scandal questioning her chastity during the period of her detention in Lanka. As an ideal king, he wants to satisfy all the scruples of his subjects. Sita dies of a broken heart in the forest. And Lakshman, who leaves Rama in disgust, impeaches his brother in bitter words: "Ramachandra, you cannot be a brother, a husband or father; you are always *the king*—the king and nothing else."

The position of the young wife is often rendered unhappy by the feuds of the Montagues and the Capulets. In 'Manjula,' 'Srinivasa' shows how the mother of Puttu is bent on finding for him a second wife long before Puttu and his wife have met and spoken to each other, simply because Puttu's mother does not find her son's mother-in-law submissive and pliable enough. The crisis is averted by a noble-minded lady called Sitamma who arranges to bring Puttu and his wife together in her own house. Puttu discovers that he would have thrown a jewel away and sets himself up against the dominant but blind will of his mother.

¹ Sri Masti Venkatesa Iyengar.

The mother-in-law is the peculiar product of that worn-out institution in Hindu society,—the joint family. It was essentially a tribal and a feudal system. With the growth of modern economic conditions, the joint family is tumbling to decay. But woman is still the parasite, though not the *pariah*, of Hindu society. And how can a widowed mother live except as a member of her son's household? Once this situation is granted, the orthodoxy of the aged mother and the progressivist tendencies of the young wife meet in continuous conflict. The husband is the only neutralising force in the house. He becomes, instead, the conductor of the house on whose head the two forces meet and flash electricity. The shifts and evasions of Ramanna, the lawyer and municipal councillor of Rampur, form the theme of Mr. Kailasam's 'Home Rule.' His mother is always out to drown herself because of his wife's overbearing nature, and the wife always keeps her things neatly packed in order to leave for her father's at a moment's notice. Ramanna tries his best to play off the one against the other. He tells his wife that his mother is, after all, old and consumptive, and that she suffers from rheumatism, melancholia, sciatica, lumbago and other diseases. She will certainly not survive the pilgrimage to Benares on which he means to pack her off immediately. And he assures his mother that his wife will be sent to her father's for good if she continues to be intractable. When his mother complains again, he takes, as a desperate measure, to metaphysical discourse:

"Mother dear, all things in this world are subject to decay. Should we, who know better, still identify ourselves with the perishable interests of the body and fall out like little children on matters like property, ornaments and authority?"

Hardly has Ramanna opened his lips when the mother opens her mouth wide and is dumb-struck for a while. She suddenly drops the brass 'chemboo' from her hand and bursts out:

"Did that Duessa reduce you now to metaphysics?... This is the fate of all mothers who have borne sons,—everything is dead to me in this house henceforward."

The lesson is thus driven home to her that there is only one master in the house, and that one is the mistress.

Metaphysics get reduced to the practice of 'Padmasana' and absent-mindedness when the hero has not the brains of a lawyer, as in 'The Haunted House' by Mr. Bendre. Satyavanta, the hero, is sitting, with his eyes and ears closed, in a corner of his house all the time, trying to forget the unceasing dissensions in the kitchen between his wife and mother. The wife, who pretends to be possessed by an evil spirit, goes off into hysterics every minute and keeps up a continual clamour in the house, asking the question:

"Tell me in one word: Will you, henceforward, behave as the husband of the woman called daughter-in-law or the son of the woman called mother-in-law?"

Satyavanta consults an astrologer, a 'Dasaya' or village necromancer, a doctor, a physician, a village quack and a 'Hakim,' and wonders whether they can exorcise the spirit. But what can they do when the wife of Satyavanta is bent on being possessed? Moreover, the persons consulted are themselves so many pretenders. A friend of Satyavanta finally sees the matter in its right perspective and tells him:

"You, my friend, and our mother-country are in the same plight. The chosen land of God has become the house of Satan by applying quack remedies to a disease that needs a different treatment."

The friend also lays his finger on the right solution:

"We see sick hurry and divided aims everywhere about us. The modern world is torturing body, mind and soul alike. Is hell any different? Domestic organisations must be formed to establish the kingdom of happiness in every house. . . . The mother-in-law is pestered by the daughter-in-law, the son by the mother and the wife by the husband. . . . If the man and wife fail to remember the mother, obsessed with their own love for a moment, cannot the mother too forget them for a time and be happy in her devotion to God? She can also, after a while, expect a grandchild to play with. We must strive to control and plan life and make it flow in the channels of peace."

The problems of old age married to youth, of remarriage, and of infidelity on the part of the wife are set forth in 'Ahalya' by Prof. Jagirdar, in 'As It May Be' by Mr. Mansubdar, and in 'Narada Garvabhanga' by Mr. Karant. How blind orthodoxy stands in the way of social reform is made clear by these as well as by Prof. Jagirdar's 'Trishula' which is a denunciation of old-fashioned parents and wives. In 'The Meeting

of the Eyes,' Mr. Karant sets forth the clash between orthodox and educated womanhood and shows how the former may be gradually won over by the humane, though unorthodox, outlook of the latter.

Though there are several joint families living in perfect harmony today, like the one pictured in 'What Happened?', the general tendency is the disintegration of the system for the reasons indicated in Prof. Mugali's 'The Instigation to Division.' There are two brothers, both of them married, living as a joint family, along with their widowed mother. The mother tries her best to hold the balance even between the two sons. But the sharp individualism of the brothers as well as their wives will brook no restraint. Each individual pulls his or her own way, the tastes, habits and ways of each individual being different from those of the other. The mother is unable to suppress the repercussions that arise daily in the house. The brothers then divide and begin to rule, each in his own house. But the tin partition which splits up the house cuts the mother's heart into two!

Because of the ignorance prevailing in society and the parasitical life to which women, especially widows, have been accustomed for a long time, there is a school for scandal almost in every street. The incalculable harm that such parliaments of widows inflict on individuals is vividly described in 'The Murraine of Mockery.' The priests in towns and villages are also the bane of society. They live on their flock and pass their time, not in meditation, but in holding afternoon assemblies on 'kattas' or parapets and house-fronts adjoining the roads. Every passer-by is held up for derision. 'At every breath a reputation dies.' Mr. Karant exposes these inquisitions in 'Parapet Discourses' and the cunning practices of priests and the helplessness of the parish in 'Pre-destined Misery.'

The more ghastly aspects of social life are set forth in several powerful playlets. 'Dharma Sankata' deals with the ways of a panderess, who is the instrument, not the instigator, of the evil forces in society. 'The Fourth Devil' concentrates on the progeny tainted with venereal disease at its very birth. Prostitution is the dominant theme in 'The Woman-Tigress,' 'Tulasi' and 'Old Rakes.' The first two portray the satanic in woman, and 'Old Rakes' is a fascinating picture of educated and high-salaried officials whose morals are despicable.

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In the days of feudalism and landlordism, almost every well-to-do family used to cater to a few guests every day. The joint family system necessarily provided for spacious kitchens, and, in a house where fifty sat down to eat together, five more stomachs could easily be fed. But with the increasing dominance of individualism in private life and the changed economic conditions, uninvited guests are not only unloved but even actively hated. In Prof. Mugali's 'The Guest-God,' we have a picture of this reversal of values. The old convention of treating guests as God Himself is almost worn out in modern society; and the guests are as much responsible for the change as the hosts themselves. A village teacher, hailing from the priestly order of Brahmins, goes to a gentleman working as a clerk in a certain town. The clerk's son, an unemployed graduate, is living with his father. The clerk dismisses the village teacher, warning him that his house is not a boarding house. But the villager manages to have bed and breakfast in the house without the knowledge of the master. And, the next day, he has even the audacity to snatch away the clerk's morning newspaper!

Society is thus at the parting of the ways. The old order is changing fast and the new one is, as yet, powerless to be born. The Kannada dramatist has stated all the issues, hinting at a solution wherever possible. Is it too much to expect that society will take the hint?

(3)

As with society, so with education. Because of the drawbacks of primary and secondary education in the country, the matriculates pouring into our universities are so much grist for our mills to grind. In a play called '11-30. A.M.,' Prof Jagirdar shows how empty-headed and indifferent the school-boys are, and suggests that they may be easily mistaken by a cow-herd for dumb, driven cattle. In 'The Circus of Saraswati,' the same writer displays the strange animals called undergraduates and graduates performing amusing feats,—feats of memory. The manager takes one after another out of the box,—the youngsters mugging up the "Apollonius theorem," the Sanscrit texts and the references to the context, and, finally, one drafting an interminable number of applications to solve the problem of his unemployment: "I am a promising young man with a wife and

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many children and I pray you on my bended knees," etc, etc. These are the products of our universities, committing to memory what they will forget the moment after the examination is over and then committing suicide because they see no hopes of employment. Those of our youths who turn out to be lawyers spend their time and forget their worries in the bar room in smoke, play and scandal. When a stranger happens to come their way, they are up on their feet pulling him this way and that, trying to book him as their client. But in many cases, as in Mr. N. K. Kulkarni's play called 'Bar Room,' the client turns out to be a mendicant who had stepped in for charity!

Mr. Kailasam institutes an interesting comparison between two brothers, Puttu and Madhu. Puttu gets a first class at the Matric., swears at his mother, saying that she is a "damned nuisance" when she is ill and groaning, and is allowed at home a special quantity of ghee for his meals and a specially soft bed by his father who is overjoyed at his academic distinctions. Both the brothers are married, but the father has matched Puttu with an educated girl from a high-class family. Madhu fails at the Matric., is cursed by his father for his incompetence, and is given scanty meals and a rough mattress for a bed. But he cares little for all this and devotes all his time to nursing the ailing mother. When accidentally the house is on fire at night and all are asleep, Puttu is the first to wake up, and he collects his books and runs away from the house. The noise wakes up Madhu who rescues both his parents and then plunges into the house, reckless of his life, because his father is clamouring for Puttu who, however, is sitting safe and sound in the courtyard. Madhu is brought back in a faint on the stage. The neighbours then expatiate on the hollow character of Puttu and the sterling worth of Madhu.

This play is a perfect piece of art. Even so eminent a critic as Dr. Cousins wrote about it: "Seeing this play and the keen enjoyment of the audience, one felt hopeful for the future of Indian drama." It is Madhu who speaks out the basic principle of the play: "The rent that we have to pay to God for living on this little planet is our capacity for being useful to our fellowmen." Have our universities succeeded, partially at least, in promoting the right sense of values? The answer is better summed up in the words of Browning: "The petty done, the undone vast."

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(4)

Our politics are in a more perplexed state than our ethics. There are the incessant demands of an insurgent middle class in our country, perhaps for the first time in our history. Breaking in upon this scene of a new life are the forces of reaction still powerful in many Indian States,—those relics of feudalism. Many of our dramatists have given amusing as well as terrible pictures of a dying feudalism. In a play called 'The Fair,' Mr. Bendre introduces us to the chief of an imaginary State where a fair is held every year during a particular season. The fair brings a huge annual income to the State. During a certain year, however, the people want the celebration of the fair to be suspended because of the outbreak of plague. In the name of religion, the chief wants the fair to be held at any cost. The dewan shows him a telegram received from the specialist concerned, that the rats sent for medical examination had been infected. The chief commands that the telegram be torn to pieces:

"What can a specialist in Delhi know of the rats that belong here?"

The medical attendant of the chief is conscientious at first, but he soon changes his mind and learns that his only salvation lies in echoing his master's sentiments. When the ruler says that the people are not dying of plague but of their own infectious fear of it, the doctor quietly asserts the same. When the ruler asks him: "Why is it, doctor, that you are afraid so much of plague?", the doctor returns the interesting answer: "I am not afraid of plague but I am afraid of you, Your Highness." Finally, the ruler orders the suspension when he is down with plague himself.

In a play called 'The Drama of Death,' the same writer gives a complete and revealing picture of the last gasp of feudalism caught in its own coils.

If feudalism is dying, democracy is not yet well on its way. Indiscipline and injustice follow in the wake of the rule of an ignorant majority. Local self-government dislocates all hopes of improvement till we educate our rulers. Ramanna, the pleader and municipal councillor in 'Home Rule,' has framed certain new rules for his fellow-workers:

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"⁽²⁾ If and when elected, no two councillors should reside in the same street locally. This is to guarantee to the tax-payer at least as many clean-kept streets in our city as there are councillors in our Corporation. ⁽³⁾ Each councillor must be presented with a Gold Medal for every occasion that a great personage arrives in the city, if he is *not* present on the occasion.... ⁽⁴⁾ free quarters must be provided for the President; and irrespective of his owning a private palace or mansion, it must be insisted that he resides in those quarters selected in the dirtiest parts of the City."

Along with this arraignment of an unenlightened democracy, there are pictures of poor life which put forward a silent but passionate plea for socialism. An amusing picture of the beggars and vagabonds in present-day society is given in a play called 'The Epidemic of Beggars.' A rich student, Mr. Naik, has moved away from the plague-infected town to his suburban villa, and he expects to study early in the morning according to the exhaustive time-table which he has laid down for himself:

7 A.M.: Awake, arise and brush your teeth.

7-15 A.M.: Tea and wash.

7-30 A.M.: A clean shave.

7-45 A.M.: Hair-dressing.

8 A.M.: Gramophone.

8-30 A.M.: Novel reading.

9 A.M.: Drama.

9-30 A.M.: Instrumental and vocal music.

10 A.M.: Dress and get ready.

10-30 A.M.: Breakfast.

But his routine is upset by the troop of beggars who haunt his house one after another: a fortune-teller in picturesque attire, a priest, a Brahmin widow asking for a handful of rice, a religious mendicant blowing a conch, the priestess of a village deity, covered with 'cowrie' shells and with saffron, a strolling singer with a tambourine, a 'jangam' or Lingayat monk with tinkling anklets, a nationalist on a bicycle out to collect funds for work, a Maratha devotee of *Ellamma*, a village goddess, a young student begging his food every day, and a woman belonging to one of the parasitical, primitive tribes. Mr. Naik is terribly annoyed and feels that, as the Pied Piper of Hamelin did with the rats, someone should drown all the beggars in a river! The author closes the play with the remark:

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"What should we do,—laugh at the rich or weep for the troop of beggars?"

In a fantasy called 'Justice in Hell', Mr. Rajaratnam asserts that the arrogance and *hauteur* of the rich are absent in hell; for Yama, the lord of hell, is eminently reasonable, compared with the bosses in government offices and firms!

Then there is a tragedy called 'Kalki,'—luminous, poignant, penetrating. Ramakant, the author, depicts the struggles of a villager who came to town with his wife in order to make a fortune, in spite of the counsel given by prudence. Malleshi works in a mill and his wife does the same. The mill-owner has his eye on the beautiful wife of Malleshi. She is seduced by the mill-owner, when Malleshi is away at night leading a procession of strikers. The next morning Malleshi, thrown out of employment and not knowing the whereabouts of his well-beloved, has taken to his old enemy, drink. He and his friend protest violently when the police come on the scene to arrest them, and are shot dead. Chinnamma, who has been brought home in a faint by the friend in the meanwhile, dies of the violence done to her and her body, asking in vain for a drop of water to quench her thirst.

The doctrine of the story is 'brought home to the audience in the words of the dying hero:

"The earth must groan oppressed with the weight of suffering. The skeletons of the poor must pave the households of the rich. Their heads must be sent flying to the skies, while their trunks roll on the ground. The children of the workers must die prematurely and like vermin, and their wives sink into their graves, dragging on their life from widowhood to death . . . With the garland of our severed heads dangling from His neck, and with the skulls of a whole nation for dinner-plates, Kalki will descend to the earth. That is the long awaited incarnation of Kalki,—He will come to do away with the distinction between the rich and the poor. Kalki is our only hope,—He will bring us peace, destroying our misery. Kalki alone can bring back the India of the Vedic Age. Let Kalki appear, my friend. We will be willing to part with our lives for His coming."

The picture is powerful, but the comments of the author are of dubious value. One wonders whether a reversion to the ideal of primitive times is either possible or desirable. And how can the four 'Varnas' or orders of society do away with the

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distinction between rich and poor? The idea of the 'Varnas' is of enduring value as distinguishing between the four types of human beings who make up society in any age and in any country. The Vedic society was *primitive*, though the idea of the 'Varnas' operated perfectly with them, whereas it has all been chaotic with us. We have to revive only the true idea of the 'Varnas'—some will be inclined to question even that—and adopt socialism as the only cure of the economic evils in the country.

The problem of untouchability is presented in three plays from different standpoints. 'Tirupani,' a lyrical play by Srinivasa, deals incidentally with this theme, for the magnificence of its achievement lies in depicting with marvellous vividness the superstitious members of an unenlightened class, the blind orthodoxy of Brahmin priests, Lokasaranga, the head-priest in direct communion with God, Alvara, the pious devotee who is granted a divine revelation. And, finally, Tirupani, the untouchable, who waits at the door of the temple at Sirangapatam, is conducted by Lokasaranga at the express command of God to the innermost shrine and there disappears into the Light issuing from the image. Tirupani is, later, canonised as a saint of the Ramanuja Temple. Even today, the temple is thrown open to the Harijans annually for three days. The play is a subtle study in the different degrees of mysticism or the art of spiritual life, and contains songs of haunting loveliness.

In 'The Sweeper,' a blank verse play by Mr. Puttapa, the sweeper is represented as neglected by all the higher classes in society. But he continues his devotion to God unabated. It does not matter if he is refused admission to the temple. His daily life is the worship of God, and the performance of duty his constant meditation. Finally God Siva appears to him in the form of a sweeper and tells him that he himself is of the same caste, being the sweeper of the universe. He purifies the universe by absorbing all the sins himself.

It is in 'Udhara' that the problem is given its contemporary setting. All the implications of the efforts of the Harijans to enter the temples, belonging to the higher classes, by force are examined in the light of cold reason. There emerges the conclusion that such a situation bodes no one any good. Reformists must act with patience and understanding and, above all, in the interests of harmony.

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There are plays which inspire a general political awakening.—Mr. Rajaratnam's 'Parashurama,' 'Gandu Godali,' Mr. Kadengodlu's 'Guru Dakshine' (dealing with the Drona-Drupada episode) and several others. Interesting side-lights on the Kannada-Marathi problem appear in Sri Ranga's 'The Mass-Meeting at Home' and Mr. A. N. Krishnarao's 'Gubachiya Gudu.' The inadvisability of making Hindi compulsory for all and sundry, and of canvassing for pupils with propagandist fervour, instead of restricting it to workers in the political or any other inter-provincial sphere, forms the background of the story in Mr. Krishnarao's 'The Volcano.'

(5)

When soulless conventions seek to govern the social and religious life of a people, certain minds take to free thinking, and begin to preach independence of thought with all the emphasis at their command. This emphasis should be understood in its emotional rather than in its intellectual implications. To some it may seem that such thinking is profanation and an attack on the very core of religion. But that is because they have failed to notice the shifting of values that goes on for ever.

Thus, in Sri Ranga's 'Niruttara-Kumara,' the opening situation of the 'Bhagavadgita' is viewed in a different light altogether. Arjuna refuses to fight against his relatives ranged on the side of the Kauravas. Krishna has just started blowing his metaphysical conch: "All souls are one. There is only one Over-Soul," etc., etc. Uttara, the son of Virata, now appears on the scene. He charges Krishna with inciting Arjuna to fight because Krishna wants his sister, Subhadra, to be an empress. He exercises with Krishna the right of a relative in teaching him *Vyavahara* or practical wisdom since he is so much steeped in *Vedanta* or metaphysics. And Uttara tells Arjuna that it is necessary for him to fight in order to defend himself, not to kill others. He has already taken leave of Draupadi, assuring her of victory. How will he face her if he slinks back like a coward from the field? And if he does not defend himself, where can he go? The Kauravas will lead the man-hunt even in the forests. It is the commonsense of Uttara, not the metaphysics of Krishna, that prepares Arjuna for the battle!

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In 'The Universal Religion' by Mr. A. N. Krishnarao, we are introduced to an author who is writing a book on universal religion. His child tears away the Mss., and the father is all grief about it. His friend tells the author that the immediate problem is one of *Samsara*. Universal religion may wait till the author turns an ascetic!

In 'Purva Ranga,' 'Sampushta Ramayana' and 'The Justice of Hell,' we have statements regarding the new values that should prevail in dramatic art and also a criticism of the old.

(6)

There are other plays which lay down a positive creed for individual as well as corporate action. In 'Shanta,' Srinivasa shows how man and woman are complementary to each other, almost platonic halves. Rushyashruna, who sees a female form for the first time, says to the heroine: "This life of mine has attained perfection through you." In 'Usha,' the same author represents dramatically his own conception of art, and shows how perfect realisation is a manifestation in conscious life of the inspiration that haunts the subconscious in us,—our dreams and visions. This is one of our finest one-act plays and the songs in it are charming. 'Tapaswini' by 'Bharati' or Srimati Rajamma, one of the talented women-writers of Karnataka, exploits a neglected episode of the 'Ramayana'—the meeting of Lakshman and Urmila after all the years of parting—for depicting how the 'blank spaces in their togetherness' ennobled both the lovers. The impregnable will of Lakshman and the unshakable faith of Urmila transformed a period of intense agony into an opportunity for a prolonged striving after the Truth. In Vinayaka's 'Mahashweta' we find an original handling of some of the episodes from Bana's 'Kadambari' for illustrating the Truth stated felicitously by Donne:

"Love's mysteries in souls do grow,

And yet the body is the book."

The stories of Mahashweta and Kadambari form, with a few modifications, ideal material for illustrating the truth. Here is a song of the 'Kinnara' (faery) lovers from 'Mahashweta,' describing the twilight loveliness that lingers between night and dawn:

"Beneath the self-same tree we stood,
I king, you queen, of the old dim world;

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The well-shaped tree with bell-flowers, for good
Had hid'd us from the eyes of the old dim world:
But the morn came laughing like a silver nymph
And moved on her primitive feet in our world.
Oh! How she glanced at us! How her eyes danced at us!
Did you see it, fair?
But the moon was on high,—we had hung him in the
sky,—

And we knew we would soon be in the air.
In a moon-mad love-tryst we met
Beneath the bell-flower tree:
But the morn came and discovered us,
She shed light all around us
In all the four corners in her name:
Our old world was gone,
We had nothing left our own,
We had nothing, nothing left for us
But to hide our shame!"

There is a play called 'Nagarika' by Mr. Srinivasa Murti. It presents a contrast between the priest of the Pampapati temple in the ruins of Hampi, a pious and God-fearing person and an educated sceptic from the town who is visiting the ruins. The *nagarika* or educated townsman is a peculiar product of modern civilisation and appears to be an unbeliever and an atheist in the eyes of the pious priest. Vidyaranya, the spiritual founder of the Vijayanagara Empire, reveals himself to both of them. He shows the priest that the townsman is a believer in his own way and also gives to the latter what he needs,—an assurance that the disintegration in the past was inevitable and that the glory awaiting India in the future is greater than any of her past achievements. The play portrays, in an admirable manner, the temperament and the mood that are responsible for the regeneration of the country. A boundless love of the mother country, a genuine enthusiasm for the achievements in the past, a careful diagnosis of the disease that overtook feudal India, and the will to build splendidly for the future,—these are the qualities sorely needed for the country if she is to keep to the path of progress.

In a play called 'Goal,' Mr. Bendre makes the position still clearer, though, by doing so, he is forced to confine himself to

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character-sketches and not full-length portraits. A few college students have gathered together in a room in the hostel to bid farewell to their friend, Mr. Ranga Naik, a fellow of the college. Ranga Naik is a philosopher and thinker. Gokhale, another member of the group, is a *Karma yogi*, a man of action. Timma and Gouda are epicureans and Kulkarni a sceptic. Kaji is a perfect sportsman. An interesting conversation arises in which we are told that all the world is a football field and all of us players. The epicureans are the defenders, and the poets, thinkers and men of action the forwards in the game. *To be* is the goal. We want actively good men and great men in all fields of life. *That* is the goal. This is the only way to build up the mother province and the mother country.

In a collection of lyrical plays, called 'Pavana Pavaka,' or 'The Sacred Fire,' we have a symbolic presentation of the spirit that is prompting modern India. Mr. G. B. Joshi has dreamt these dreams, and Prof. Mugali has presented them in dramatic form. In 'The Sacred Fire,' a youth hears a voice bidding him go and fetch the sacred fire. He is bent on his quest, in spite of the tearful protestations of his parents, sisters and brothers. He wanders through the vegetable world, the land of apes, the land of beasts, the land of children and the land of the gods. But he cannot catch even a glimpse of that light. Finally, he comes across a sage sitting in meditation. The sage takes him through the very countries he had visited, and shows how all the objects in each of them are permeated by a fire resembling a burning lotus. In answer to a question by the youth, the sage shows that the lotus-shaped fire is burning in the youth's own heart, and disappears. What India needs today is this consciousness of soul. We must become so many points of light united into a constellation.

There is another play by the same authors, called 'Pratirupa' or 'Reflection.' "Every time we try to destroy others, we destroy ourselves," is the central idea brought home by the story of a prince who loved game and war. As a young boy he tried to kill a sparrow sitting on the branch of a tree. He saw that a boy like himself was taking aim at him, armed with bow and arrows as the prince himself was. But the prince loosens his arrow from the bow all the same. The boy on the tree disappears and the sparrow falls down dead. This

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happens to the prince again on the occasion of a deer-hunt and a tiger-hunt. When the prince grows up, he thinks of killing his elder brother and usurping his throne. He steals into his elder brother's room at night and thinks of killing him, now that he is asleep. But he sees a child with features like his own, flourishing its sword at him, instead of his own brother. The prince uses his sword nevertheless. The child disappears and he sees his brother lying dead in a pool of blood. In the same way, the prince kills his father and sister. Tired with his life of sin when he is old, the prince seeks to kill himself. The angelic infant appears to him at that time and tells him "You thought of killing me. But you have killed yourself." The infant then disappears. The prince looks into his own heart and finds there a beautiful infant groaning with agony. Its limbs are mangled and only the head is whole. The prince knows now that he has lived a life of prolonged suicide! Is this not a beautiful dream-symbol?

In a play called 'Patana' by Vinayaka, we are told that, though we may rise by sheer force of will and aspiration, we must suffer a miserable fall if we do not have the personality or the spiritual strength to sustain our rise. And, in his 'The Road Unending,' we see how the ideal always baffles us, though we still seem to clutch the inviolable shade. The jewelled bird of paradise, which two dreamers had hoped to find within the easy grasp of romance, escapes them, leaving only its image in their hands. And it sings to them from amidst the clouds:

You have broken beyond the bounds of beautiful forests
And toiled up the mountain-ranges, peak by peak.
And you have diffused everywhere a smile
Radiant like that of the stars.
Why then be down-hearted, my child?
Why turn back and flee?
You have set your heart on the bird of paradise.
A dream is on your brows, transfiguring your life.
Why not pursue it for ever and ever and ever?
Scatter worn-out creeds to the winds.
Plunge headlong into the flames of suffering,
And reap from them the harvest of endless light.
You have set your heart on the bird of paradise.
Why not pursue it for ever and ever and ever?

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Attune yourself to the world around you.
Forget the pomp and pride that lie writhing in the dust.
Put your trust in the beauty that is to come,
And pursue it for ever and ever and ever!

In this essay, I confined myself strictly to the vision of the Kannada dramatists. I have said nothing of the technique of their plays or of the marvellous perfection of art that is to be found in at least half the plays I have mentioned. For, all that has been attempted here is the elaboration of the social and psychological content of those plays.

Folk-Songs of India

BY DEVENDRA SATYARTHI

Since 1927 I have been travelling in various Provinces of India to collect folk-songs. It is a great joy to me to live among the villagers and to listen to them singing their indigenous songs. My note-book is always with me, my pen ever ready to record these songs, and my camera ever ready to yield the pictures of village life. I am myself a villager. But I cannot confine myself to my native village in the Punjab. I have the urge to see each village of India. You may call me a Gypsy—a way-farer going from place to place. I am glad to see new faces, but the real joy comes when I peep into the hearts of the people, and that is possible through their songs. I have so far collected songs from more than thirty languages of India. This song-pilgrimage is now the mission of my life.

The true heart of India lives in her seven lakhs of villages. The vitality of the Indian villager is India's real vitality. "Villages are like women," observes Rabindranath Tagore, "in their keeping is the cradle of the race. They are nearer to nature than towns, and are, therefore, in closer touch with the fountain of life. They have the atmosphere which possesses the natural power of healing. It is the function of the villages, like that of women, to provide people with their elemental needs, with food and joy, with the simple poetry of life, and with those ceremonies of beauty which the village spontaneously produces and in which she finds delight." The voice of India's villages is, indeed, *par excellence*, India's innermost voice; the threads that sew through it are of the past and of the present; and the past and the present prophetically throw their shadows into the future.

India's folk-songs are of many varieties; they pervade all walks of life; they are deeply associated with various religious rites and social ceremonies; men and women, young and old, all alike share the joy of song. They are redolent of the common joys and sorrows of the Indian people.

Folk-songs are always the Gypsy Children of the Muse, and they come as easily to the people as the sweet notes to the

nightingale. Their characters have always the true air and light of the village life, and, in the words of the poet, "they live in description and look green in song." We are impressed by their spontaneity, freshness and originality. They always offer us a true source of joy and inspiration in life.

The aspirations and ideals, the loves and hates, the hopes and the beliefs of the people tell their own story in folk-songs; the tears and smiles of the people speak in the first person; nothing is hidden here; even the most secret compartments of the heart are thrown open. We can take them as the real autobiography of the people.

The urge of song has never been the monopoly of a particular country. Songs are omnipresent. They are the same all the world over. Their birth-place is the same universal heart. Do away with the difficulty of language and you will find the same songs in all countries. There is, of course, difference of local colour, but that makes them all the more pleasant. It is very seldom that the local colour in them is entirely local in appeal.

The wandering bards have been serving as the moving universities of folk-music in all countries. Patriotism touches many of their compositions. But they are not expected to be Hitlers and Mussolinis in their outlook of patriotism. They may simply celebrate their love for their respective countries without shouting a war-cry against their neighbours. And we observe that songs of patriotism current among the villagers in various countries harmonize in one orchestra. Here is an Indian folk-song, from the Khasi hills of Assam:

O, Land of the Khasis,
Sweet land of the Khasis,
We are all in love with thee.
Thou didst cradle our hoary ancestors.
They are now no more with us,
Their memory lives ever fresh in our hearts,
A memory proof against death's sharpest darts.
O, Land of the Khasis!

We are all in love with thee.

This Khasi song can be in tune with any folk-song of simple patriotism, current in any part of the world. Especially is it in tune with many Indian songs. The bard of Nepal can be

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heard celebrating his native land as "a golden Heaven." The Coorg bard in the Western Ghats calls his home "a star-besprinkled Heaven." A Gujarati song describes Gujarat as "a country dyed with henna." If the Kashmiri bard sings of the Jhelum:

'The Jhelum is a river of love serene,'
the Burmese poet sings of the Irrawady in the same spirit:

'Irrawady, my Irrawady, my dearest Irrawady!'

The Kacha road in Utmanjaee, a Pathan folk-song, well illustrates people's love for home:

Some sing of their streets,
and others adore
the river-bank pebbles in their lore;
there is a *kacha* road
in Utmanjaee,
really an inspiring thing to me;
just a short road,
a dirty way,
having no particular goal,
but the way of Paradise—
my sweetheart's abode,
springs out of this tiny road.
Some sing of hill-peaks,
and others adore
south or north of home in their lore;
there is a *kacha* road
in Utmanjaee,
really a sacred thing to me;
just a narrow way,
so small a road,
having no particular goal,
but by its side
lies a sacred platform
where stands my love
to kiss my hand,
with all her charm.
Some leave home for distant lands,
and others adore
far and wide travels in their lore;
how I wish to return

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to the *kacha* road in Utmanjaee
really a thing so dear to me;
just an old way,
a narrow path,
having no particular goal,
but always leaps for it
my travel-worn heart,
sweet home's memory
thus plays an important part!

The Gond, who compares his village to the moon, cannot be said to be devoid of the life-lit note of patriotism; and the peasant in the desert tract of Bikaner State, who compares his heart to a grassy plot in the rains, loves his village no less. The villager's love for his soil is, indeed, a sincere note of nationalism; the village, where boys and girls grow up only to be married as a matter of course, has its own picturesque scenes and emotions, too, that never fail to temper its children's sense of patriotism; generations come and go, but the songs of the people, their dances, their festivals and fairs are always there to add to their love for home.

The song of motherly love covers a wide range. What narrow frontiers can there be for the simple lullabies and cradle-songs? If the woman of Gujarat sings:

'Thou art a sweet gift of my gods, my baby.

Thou art a cherished boon, fruitage of my prayers, my baby.

When once to thy mother's lap thou hast come,

Live long, O, live long, my baby!'

the Pathan woman, too, sings a similar song:

'My baby is a juicy grape,

A gift to me from Allah's garden.

If the woman of South India says in a Telugu song:

'A small lamp lightens the whole palace:

My baby lightens the pupil of my eye,'

the Pathan woman can contribute her own note:

'My baby is a star of the heavens,

Allah has blessed my lap with it.'

How a genuine folk-song is born is evident from a *Birha* song, sung originally by the *Ahir* in Bihar:

It is not a crop, brother, raised from the fields,

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Nor indeed the fruit that a forest tree yields—

This *Birha* song of ours.

In heart, O Rama, it lives in every heart,

And whensoever emotions play their part—

We sing this song of ours.

Birha means separation from the lover or the beloved. But the *Birha* song is not always a song of separation. Any theme may enter into it. It is originally composed of four lines. The *Ahir* (cowherd) seems to be the uncrowned king of this type of folk-song. But how can he establish a monopoly? "Don't you know any *Birha*?", I once inquired from a villager who was not an *Ahir* himself. "I know many," he replied smilingly, "though I cannot sing them like an *Ahir*." The *Ahir* is often a good flute-player. But his love for *Birha* songs is great and perhaps nothing can compete with it. They are his poetic asset which he hopes to carry even beyond his present life. "No matter if I go to Heaven or Hell after this life, I will not leave my *Birha* here," is a beautiful expression found in the *Ahir* folklore itself.

Love-songs are many. Here is one from Bengal. A far-travelled villager returns home, and wants to please his sweetheart with a few betel nuts and *pan*-leaves. But she refuses them and sings:

Thy betel-nuts I will not take, my love,

Nor will I take thy betel-leaves.

What love from a wayfarer can I expect?

And thou art always a wayfarer, my love.

Like an earthen pitcher is a wayfarer's love,

Once it breaks, none can help it.

Thy betel-nuts I will not take, my love,

Nor will I take thy betel-leaves.

That love appears in the human heart as pollen on a tree is a popular idea in the folk-songs of the Punjab:

Daily I stand on the roof of my house;

Always I look for thee, my friend!

Lo, on the berry trees is formed the pollen,

And in my heart is formed my love for thee.

A Garhwali song begins thus:

Love is a wave of the Ganges.

Marriage-songs constitute quite a big family. Indispensable accompaniments of various rituals, the songs of marriage-

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festivities are supposed to have an auspicious influence over the marital life of the couple.

The Khondh bride, in Udyagiri Agency greatly enjoys her song addressed to her bridegroom, the hunter of tigers:

Where dost thou come from,

O thou, the hunter of tigers!

A hero with manly courage thou art,

O thou, the hunter of tigers!

Come, come, O come to my cot,

O thou, the hunter of tigers!

With a cup of wine I'll serve thee,

O thou, the hunter of tigers!

The king of my heart shall I make thee,

O thou, the hunter of tigers!

The bride and the bridegroom, as seen in marriage-songs, talk to each other. The song of the Sora bridegroom has an air of freedom about it:

Come, my love, O come, my bee!

Hand in hand shall we dance:

Believe me, my love, O believe me, my bee!

Hand in hand shall we dance!

The inheritance of ancient religious stories, side by side with the folk-experience, is apparent in many parts of India. Ram-chandra is still the *beau ideal*; Sita is still there. Next to Ram-chandra is the name of Krishna that they give to the bridegroom with a religious flavour.

A strong and sincere note of parallelism runs through a wide range of marriage-songs, as in a Telugu song, which the Andhra mother may sing even as a cradle-song, imagining the auspicious day of her child's wedding-day:

You are dancing in the play-ground, O Peacock!

The hunter has come; now wind up your dance.

In your golden palace, you laugh and laugh, my daughter!

My son-in-law has come; now wind up your laughter!

He wears ear-rings coiled like snakes;

O whose son-in-law is this fair-complexioned youth, O housewife?

When the bride goes to her husband's place the wedding-song turns pathetic, as a Bihari song depicts:

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Costly indeed is the vermilion in the market place
Costly, too, the bridal veil with which I am decked.
But the vermilion on my hair tells of our parting—
I say Good-bye, dear Father, to thy well-loved home.

The song of the Assamese bride, too, is no less pathetic:

The birds bring up their off-springs
To beautify the branches of their trees.
Ah me, to adorn but a stranger's house,
With love my mother brought me up.

That the girls are like sparrows is a common theme. A wedding song in the Punjab opens thus:

They are but a flight of sparrows:
Father, the daughters will fly away.
Long indeed my journey, father,
Pray let me know my destination.

The daughter of Gujarat, too, sings in the same strain:

I am but a sparrow of this green forest,
But I will have to fly away to a strange land!

There is a long series of peasant-songs; at the time when the Indian peasant is beginning to feel the impact of the outside world as never before, it is essential that his songs of joy and sorrow should be studied from a new angle. When the Gond youth brings forth the rich refrain of his favourite song, telling us about his landlord who sold his sister to buy a *dhoti*, we should not pass on to his next song without visualizing a famine-scene.

The fear of hunger is present in many songs. Even the *kachar* creeper, that is too fruitful, remembers the horror of famine in Marwar:

I have nine children in my lap;
another nine are ready to walk with me
hand in hand;
still I can give birth to nine more;
but how will they be nourished,
if a famine attacks us?

The suffering peasant is tired of his life; here is a contemporary song from the peasantry of the Punjab:

Make me not a peasant, O God,
Make me not a peasant.
In any future birth of mine, O God,

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Make me not a peasant!

So poor look my crops,
just glance;
how can I jump
in the *Giddha* dance?
They have confiscated
my plough and yoke!
And the corn I kept for seed
I sold to feed my family!
O, I have failed to pay the revenue-tax!
O, where is the profit
of a peasant's labour?

Make me not a peasant, O God!

Make me not a peasant!

In any future birth of mine, O God,

Make me not a peasant!

The bullock-cart driver, in Maharashtra, has his own contemplation, touching the fringe of the modern problem of exploitation:

O bullock-cart driver!

Poor bullock-cart driver!!

On your bread, so rough,

You have an onion—

Is it for this, just tell me,

You wander about the fields

All the day long?

O bullock-cart driver!

Poor bullock-cart driver!!

Songs are many. We may divide them according to the phases of life from birth to death. Most of the songs seem to be common to the people in almost all Indian Provinces; some are confined to various professions and modes of labour. Many of the longer songs, like the Pathan ballad of Mamunai who was killed by her own husband, or the Andhra song of Urmiladevi's Sleep, have their separate, unique importance.

Since the dawn of Indian folk-songs, innumerable songs may have been sung and have disappeared, as none cared to preserve them. Who can say that there were no folk-songs in Vedic India, and again in the days of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*? But it is probable that some of the ancient folk-

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songs, which disappeared from the living lips of the people, are reborn again and again in various forms in different languages and dialects of India. Songs, perhaps, never die.

It should be the duty of every son and daughter of India to spread love for these songs—these cultural and literary Kohinoors of India. We must welcome now the revival of all-India folk-songs. It will certainly offer new inspiration to all artists and literary persons. As every ripe fruit wishes that the dear hand of some man or woman should receive it from the branch before it falls down on the earth and gets spoiled, perhaps every genuine folk-song awaits the hand of a great poet who may transform it into a master-piece of poetry.

How fundamentally one is life all over India! The oneness of Indian life and culture pulsates in the songs of the Indian people, as we pass from one Province to another: same smiles and tears, same love for home, for nature; same hoary belief in the pity of gods; same metaphors and similes of life and death.

I have not been able to express my love for my country in political activity; nor could any form of social service suit me. I have only one work for my whole life—the study of Indian folk-songs.

I will put my collections one day at the threshold of India reborn.

The Theory of Re-incarnation in English Poetry

BY DEWAN BAHADUR T. BHUJANGA RAO

I

It is often said that, though the Romans conquered the Greeks, the culture of the Greeks held the Romans captive. A similar thing has happened in the case of the conquest of India by the English, and of this the intrusion of the theory of re-incarnation into English Poetry is a good instance.

II

By the theory of re-incarnation I mean the Indian doctrine that the human soul is re-born in the physical world. There are some English poets who, without being influenced by this Indian doctrine, have declared that the human soul existed as a soul before it appeared on earth. One of them was Wordsworth. Modifying Plato's doctrine of pre-existence and reminiscence so as to suit Christianity, Wordsworth taught that the human soul lived in the heaven-world before it came down to earth to inhabit a human body, and that during infancy man remembers to some extent his previous existence in heaven but gradually forgets it as he grows older. Everyone must remember the passage in his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, which runs:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, out life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy. . . .

But Wordsworth did not preach the doctrine of a succession of future lives for the human soul, whether in this world or in other worlds. So he cannot be placed amongst those who

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taught the doctrine of re-incarnation as known to India. The same is the case with Tennyson and Browning. They did not speak of a past life in this world for the human soul; and though they spoke of a succession of future lives, it is not at all clear that they did not mean a succession of embodied or disembodied lives in other worlds. Tennyson seems to have believed in creationism, that is, the view that God creates a human soul from His General Life and sends it down to inhabit the human cell formed in the physical world. Thus, in the poem *De Profundis* written on the occasion of the birth of his eldest son, Tennyson, referring to God and addressing the child, speaks of God as One

Who made thee unconceivably thyself
Out of his whole World-self and all-in-all.

In his *In Memoriam* Tennyson speaks in several places of future lives for man thus created. One must remember the lines:

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks.

In another passage Tennyson says that he can follow the spiritual progress of Arthur Hallam in the future ages, but will be himself ever "a life behind."

Though following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee
Through all the secular-to-be
But evermore a life behind.

As for Robert Browning, in his *One Word More* in the series "*Men and Women*" dedicated to his wife Elizabeth Barrett Browning, he said that in his life in this world he could dedicate to her only his achievement in verse, but that in other lives it was possible he could attain success in other fine arts and dedicate his achievements in those arts to her.

I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me; . . .
Other heights in other lives, God willing—

All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

But in spite of the use of the word "lives" in the plural, one is bound to agree with Stopford Brooke when he says that there is nothing either in Tennyson or in Browning to show positively that they believed in the Indian doctrine of the return

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of the human soul to this physical world. Though some would like to speak of them as "re-incarnationists," I hesitate to do so.

* * *

III

But there are undoubtedly English poets who believed, or wrote as if at the moment of inspiration they believed, the Indian doctrine. The treasure-houses of Indian thought were first revealed to the Western world in the first quarter of the 19th century when the great orientalists translated the Indian epics and philosophical writings. As could be expected, Indian culture was not immediately rated high in England which had conquered India. But in America, where there was less of prejudice, the Indian doctrine at once caught the imagination of the two great poets, Walt Whitman and Emerson.

* * *

Walt Whitman was a daring and unconventional poet. His acquaintance with Indian literature is shown in passages like the following:—

I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of
Sankara,
I see the places of the idea of Deity incarnated by
avatars in human form.
(*Salute Au Monde*)

According to Whitman, death comes for the relief of man. When in this life he cannot evolve any further, man is like a woman with a dying or dead child in the womb, who becomes free and feels relief when the child is removed. Death is the accoucher or doctor who assists the woman in the removal of the child. So does man become free to live his life again when death destroys his physical body. Apostrophising death and the embrace of death, Whitman says:

And as to you, Death, and you bitter hug of mortality,
it is idle to alarm me.
To his work without flinching the accoucher comes.
I see the elder-hand pressing, receiving, supporting.
I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,
And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.
(*Songs of Myself*)

In the same poem, apostrophising Life, Whitman says:

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And as to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of
many deaths,
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.
In the "*Children of Adam*" Whitman refers to himself thus :
Ages and ages returning at intervals,
Undestroyed, wandering immortal,

* * * *

I, Chanter of Adamic songs.
In one place in his "*Songs of Myself*," Whitman writes :
Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

And all these extracts are from Whitman's "*Leaves of Grass*"
first published in 1855.

V

Next comes Emerson whose theory of the Over-soul shows
his acquaintance with the Vedanta philosophy. In his poem
"*Brahma*" he makes God say that the murderer cannot kill the
real self of his victim, as the self is indestructible and, passing
into other worlds, returns again to this world.

If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain thinks he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways.
I keep, and pass and turn again.

In fact the above lines are based on the familiar *Gita*
passage about the indestructibility of the soul. There is a poem
of Emerson written on the occasion of the death of a child. It is
entitled *Threnody*. In it he said that the genius of the child
was so brilliant that, when the child looked at the sun and
moon, we might take it that it came to its own world of glory;
that the child, however, needed the sustenance of beauty from
the objects of nature in this world for its growth; and that,
because they could not feed the child with the brilliance that
it required, the child went back in scorn to the other world,
intending to come back after an age and thus giving Nature
another chance.

They could not feed him, and he died,
And wandered backward as in scorn,
To wait an aeon to born.

RE-INCARNATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

VI

The next set of poets to be attracted by the Indian
doctrine of re-incarnation arose in Ireland. The Irish sympathise
with Indian aspirations in general, and it is not surprising
therefore that they should appreciate Indian thought. For my
purpose I shall not speak of poets still living such as Dr.
Cousins and Mrs. Eva Gore Booth. I shall refer to the departed
poets, George Russell (A. E.) and W. B. Yeats who are generally
accounted the greatest amongst the poets of the Irish renaissance.

VII

George Russell had friends in Theosophical circles and was
probably a member of the Theosophical Society at one time.
In his small poem, *Forgetfulness*, supposed to have been written
at nightfall, he wrote that, just as the night was lustreless and
blind without a single star, he too was blind of vision so far
as his past lives were concerned:

The hills have vanished in dark air;
And night, without an eye, is blind.
I too am starless. Time has blurred
The aeons of my life behind.

In another small poem entitled *A Farewell* he makes a dying
man bid good-bye to the earth, not for ever, but for an incal-
culable number of years:

I look on wood and hill and sky,
Yet without any tears.
To the warm earth I bid good-bye
For what unnumbered years.

The poem proceeds to say that the man's incarnations were so
frequent that, just as one does not remember the details of acts
frequently done, he could not say whether life beyond the
grave was a life of gloom or sunshine.

So many times my spirit went
This dark transfiguring way,
Nor ever knew what dying meant,
Deep night or a new day.

Russell's poem entitled "*Babylon*," in which he says that he
fell into a reverie one afternoon in Ireland and his vision

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went back to his life thirty centuries ago in Babylon, is very pretty.

VIII

W. B. Yeats, who wrote a book on *Yoga* in his last days, was very familiar with the Vedanta philosophy. There is a small but complete poem of his on *Death*, where he says that, unlike a dying animal which exists in the present but cannot think of the future, self-conscious man dreads the future but hopes for the best.

Nor dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all.

The poem proceeds to say that man has many incarnations and that even when attacked by murderers a man truly great of soul thinks nothing of the destruction of the body, as his soul is indestructible.

Many times he died,
Many times rose again.
A great man in his pride
Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Supersession of breath.

The poem ends by saying that man knows death fully, because it is his creation, the product of his imagination coming into existence when he identifies himself with his body and under the influence of *Maya* thinks that what has happened to his body has happened to himself.

He knows death to the bone—
Man has created death.

The same idea occurs in section 3 of his poem entitled "*The Tower*." In the poem "*Mohini Chatterjee*," Yeats says that lovers, who may not find an opportunity in a single life for the complete satisfaction of their love, will have re-births, succeeded by the inevitable deaths, which will give them the opportunity denied by time in any single life.

Old lovers yet may have
All that time denied—

RE-INCARNATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

Grave is heaped on grave,
That they be satisfied,
Over the blackened earth.

IX

It is not surprising that at long last even poets in England should be influenced by the doctrine of re-incarnation and make it the theme of their songs. It is sufficient to speak of the present Poet-Laureate, John Masefield, who in his poem "*A Grave*" wrote:

I hold that, when a person dies,
His soul returns again to earth,
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise,
Another mother gives him birth;
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the road again.

The word "hold" in the authorised edition of his poems now stands corrected into "held." But the correction does not improve his orthodoxy, because he has not corrected lines such as,

These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

The poem deals also with the doctrine of *Karma*.

* * *

X

Going back in time, no account of the theory of re-incarnation in English Poetry can be complete without a reference to Shelley. Shelley was not a student of the Vedanta Philosophy like Emerson or Yeats. But his genius thought out the Vedanta. From Plato Shelley imbibed idealism; and as a reaction from the Calvinism of the 18th century he adopted a pantheistic view of life. The result was that Shelley's philosophy became, to use Stopford Brooke's phrase, "idealistic pantheism"—a synonym for the Vedanta. As the doctrine of re-incarnation was known to the Greeks, Shelley borrowed it and introduced it in his poems in at least two places. One such is one of the choruses in "*Hellas*," a poem written when the Greeks were trying to free themselves from the tyranny of the Turks; and the other is his poem entitled "*With a Guitar to Jane*." The latter poem is

addressed to Jane Williams, the partner of his friend Edward Williams. Shelley sent a guitar to Jane along with the poem; and in it his fancy makes him declare that Jane is Miranda (of Shakespeare's *Tempest*) re-born, while Edward Williams is the re-incarnation of Prince Ferdinand. Shelley calls himself the fairy-spirit Ariel who cannot die like mortals but whose happiness consists in serving Miranda in all her incarnations. He refers to himself thus:—

Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who
From life to life must still pursue
Your happiness.

The poem then goes on thus:

When you die, the silent moon
In her interlunar swoon
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.

Leaders and Landmarks of Telugu Literature

BY PROF. RAYAPROLU SUBBA RAO¹

(Osmania University, Hyderabad, Deccan)

I now come to Vijayanagar, the centre of great activities, of great progress in religion, art, literature, commerce and politics. My survey of this period can only be scrappy, a mere outline, because the years are crowded with events enveloping almost all the phases of personal, social and national history, and the achievements of the epoch are varied and wonderful. But as my concern is with Telugu literature, I confine myself to the times of Sri Krishna Deva Raya, the greatest monarch that ever wore the crown in South India. The history of Vijayanagar makes it clear that the pre-Krishna-Deva-Raya period was full of political bustle and discloses a strong popular religious fervour. Sanskrit was not only studied, but original writings and standard commentaries in Sanskrit on great works were attempted and accomplished. It was during this period that South Indian scholarship in Sanskrit unfolded itself and won recognition in the North.

Before I deal with the voluminous literature of Sri Krishna Deva Raya's Court, let me indicate the trend of polite taste in the society of those times. The art of music made rapid marches. Architecture progressed greatly. Painting reached a high level of perfection. All these arts were encouraged by the Durbar as well as by the aristocracy. Therefore, there appeared to exist a lively contest between the Poet, the Painter, the Musician and the Architect, for much-coveted royal patronage and honour. They vied with one another in creating masterpieces of art. It is important to remember this fact because the literature of the period is remarkable in its revealing all these phases. The patient carving and the careful design of the architect, the melody and soft strains of the musician, the enchanting line and alluring colour of the painter are skilfully

¹The last article of this series was published in *Triveni* in the August-September number of 1939.

blended and beautifully woven even into the delicate and dazzling fabric of poetry. I must deal with at least four poets of Sri Krishna Deva Raya's Court so that I may (however meagrely) illustrate the cumulative genius of the epoch.

Recently a scholar estimated that Vidyaranya's literary work alone would amount to some millions of words. And what of the rest of them? But it must be remembered that all this work in Sanskrit was stimulating the vernaculars, steadily and surely, though silently. The glory of Sri Krishna Deva Raya and of the Vijayanagar Empire is the glory of Telugu Literature. Krishna Deva Raya himself was a poet of a high order of merit, and in his court there was a galaxy of poets. The poet occupied the first seat of honour in the Durbar. He was given *Agraharams*, and he rode in palanquins. It is stated that the Emperor once actually lifted the palanquin of his poet-laureate, Peddana, to show his love and respect for the poet.

Allasani Peddana is commonly known as the Grand Old Man of Telugu poetry. He was the poet-laureate of Sri Krishna Raya. He wrote the 'Manucharitra,' a first-rate poem in 6 cantos and about 3200 lines. Though the bulk of the work is not much, its value is indeed very great. He is a conscious artist, but one who with subtlety conceals his art. The proper temper of his literary art is in its graceful elegance, easy melodiousness and vivid portraiture. The burden of his song is love. A celestial lover in the Himalayas ardently loved a celestial lady but was disappointed. A mortal youth who goes on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas loses his way and, in his aimless wanderings, suddenly scents in the lazy breeze a strong perfume. Suspecting the presence of human beings, he seeks the perfume to its source. He sees this beautiful maiden in a valley. She is playing on the Veena with her eyes half closed as if they were absorbed in the entrancing strains of her own music; the jingling of gem-set bangles is harmonized to the tune. The Veena is vibrating as if the music gave it life.

When she opens her eyes and looks on the stranger, she is embarrassed and hastens behind a tree-trunk. The youth breaks the silence, narrates his misfortunes with an artless innocence, and asks her to show the way towards his home. She is fascinated by the youth, and she answers him with the most delightful sense of humour. She indulges in witty sallies and

provoking sarcasm. But the passion and the provocation are lost on the silly inexperienced youth. For he *must* go home, and he has no other thought. She argues with him. She pleads her love for him. But it is all profoundly useless. All her subtle tricks in words and acts fail to rouse the youth. They even repel him. Hinting her love, expressing it outright, and forcing her passion on him—all fail of their purpose. He throws her aside, with the rudeness of which only men who never loved a woman are capable, and goes away.

What interest us here are the situation and the dialogue between the hero and heroine, for they serve the purpose of understanding the times and temperaments of the age through its literature.

The situation is this. A beautiful youth is set against a handsome maiden. He is depicted to be a lovable replica of all that is noble and worthy in an ancient culture and tradition, but the maid has a culture and an outlook on life which are of a more recent origin. The young man is a model of piety, learning and contentment. The maiden's home and accomplishments keep to the standard of the most fastidious and refined taste of free artistic life. The hero ascends a high hill, hoary with the remnants of the old religious places but loses his way. He is just similar in that to one who can, by assiduous endeavour, probe into the high thought of the ancients but is not able either to assimilate it himself or apply it to the current needs of life. Then comes the heroine. She never thinks of the high tops of the mountain but chooses an abode in the cool shades of a valley whose rock-beds the sun sweeps with his golden broom morning and evening. The place has no holy remains around but fulfils all the requirements of a glorious garden house which artistic taste can conceive and enormous wealth create. Music is her passion and her pastime, and when she plays on the Veena the stones melt and the trees swoon. The atmosphere of the whole valley, laden with the fragrance of flowers, haunted by her music, flows along the delightful dales and floats mildly on to the mountain peaks. And here the young man lost his way and found the maiden.

"I must hurry up—," cried the Brahmin youth, "because my old parents are anxiously waiting for me. My daily religious duties are sinfully put off."

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"What wonderful village is yours?" mockingly responded the young maiden. "Can't you tarry a little? Gaze on these marble halls, breathe the fragrance of these sandalwood groves, and look at these beautiful beds of white sand and the green bowers of smiling creepers. Do your thatched huts attract you more? Why talk of feasts and privations in the name of religion, when you are able to realize heaven on earth."

"Where the mind sprouts into blossom with love, where it rests in harmony without flitting from one attraction to another, and where, like a steady flame in a dome, it realizes its oneness with all around, that state of love is Bliss. Don't you know that even the Veda declares that Bliss is Brahman?"

"You boast of the sacrifices you have performed. Of what use are they? Religious ceremonies, however exacting they may be, do not yield any good, unless they are tempered with mercy, the quality divine."

There is yet another situation which shows the spirit of the times, the free thinking that found classical conventions and orthodox dogma irksome. Some young girls go for a stroll in the neighbouring woods. They see something strange, like a heap of cotton among the trees. One girl, out of playful curiosity, pricks into it with a sharp stick. Lo! It was a man, a hermit in penance, over whom dried leaves and wild shrubs gathered and grew in a heap. He rose in all wrath. He not only cursed them, but began to beat the girl who was running in a panic. The hermit composed himself after a while, and the other girls spoke thus: "Oh, wicked man! How could you lift your hand to beat this tender girl for nothing? What has she done? Do the wise curse without cause? Are you a killer of innocent birds like the Boya? Have you no sisters, young or old? Is this severe penance meant only to gain the powers of cursing? Look at those Sadhus who seek peace in silence. What would they speak of your action?" One of the girls indignantly bursts out saying, "You belong to the Brahmin caste and thus your life is not in danger. Otherwise, we would have reduced you to ashes and dust." This is not sanctifying Brahminism!

Peddana's poetry is deeply coloured by the events and culture and civilisation of his times. In his descriptions of hunting expeditions we feel that it is not mere poetic imagination that portrays but actual sight and experience of the sport as it was conducted in his times. He refers to the army of hunting dogs of different classes and breeds. And the fond care with

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which they were looked after can be seen from the various names that were given them.

The Hawk and Eagle were a regular part of the sport, and there were trainers engaged to carry and conduct them in hunting. The elaborate sketch of pig-hunting reveals the skill of the hunters of the day and strikes a deep realistic note as if the poet is writing of actually what he saw with his own eyes.

And then, when the whole party began to rest after the thrilling sport, there were preparations for food and drink. Here the poet narrates, in vivid colours, how the fire was made and how the particular parts of particular animals were selected and cooked. They made deep pits, covered the sides with fragrant leaves, put the raw meat in tamarind twigs, covered the pits with special leaves, and on it the fire was lit.

While reading these passages one sees the scene as if actually revealed, moving or focussed on a screen before one, and feels the whole atmosphere of keen sport, and relishes every word and phrase with the keen appetite of a sportsman. Peddana's remarkable powers of realistic description are also in evidence when the hunting dogs are pictured in words. His sense of music is so exact that one particular verse, properly read, almost reproduces a dog's barking. It is often the case that details mar the beauty of a poem, but Peddana's details are charming. Then, again, coming to the palaces and their surroundings we see nice gardens, with broad villas, shaded with green vine creepers, clustered with bunches of grape fruit. Various kinds of birds were kept charmingly in cages, and we are aware that high-born girls developed a hobby of teaching the birds the popular songs of the day. The realistic nature of Peddana's poetry could be elaborated at great length. But what has to be noted is the profound influence on Telugu literature of the Vizianagar epoch of South Indian history, and the skilful way in which Telugu poets, and particularly Peddana, reacted spontaneously and beautifully to that outburst of new life.

(To be Continued)

Love's Home-Coming

BY PATTUMARATTU-MOSI-KEERANAR

(Translated by P. N. Appuswami from the original
poem in Tamil)

[A travelling minstrel tells a maid that her lover is coming home. She is overjoyed and is unable to believe her ears. And she eagerly questions the minstrel about it.]

Did you see with your own eyes?
Or heard you, perhaps, from one who saw?
The truth I would hear; oh tell it me.
So shall you have golden Patali
By the Sone, where white-tusked elephants bathe,
Tell me: from whose lips heard you
Of my lover's coming?

Reviews

ENGLISH

NEW POETRY

Shanghai.—By P. R. Kaikini. (Published by The New Book Company, Hornby Road, Bombay. Price One Rupee net.)

Chords and Discords.—By Armando Menezes. (Publishers not given. Price One Rupee only.)

Songs and Lyrics.—By R. Appalaswami, M.A. (Copies can be had from The Secretary, The Society of Oriental Studies, Vizianagaram. Price As. 8.)

Mr. Kaikini is a typical product of the modern civilisation—not, I am afraid, of India but of Europe. It is really strange, but Mr. Kaikini seems to whip himself into a rage with the happenings in Europe which are so remote from the Indian clime. I hope I will not be accused of being chauvinistic, but the *raison d'être* for such tortured outlook on the part of an Indian is beyond understanding. It may be that the trend of events is very dismal and the outlook gloomy. But Mr. Kaikini does not seem to have any personal relationship with the events, 'no personal tears to wash the spectre of doom.' He has, *ipso facto*, assumed that his duty is, like that of the prophets of old, to rise and condemn. And what better medium can he employ for this purpose except the hard, glittering technique of the post-War English poets—in a word, the technique of the Auden School?

Auden, Lewis and Spender, however, are genuinely faced with problems for which they can find no answers. They are frustrated and defeated by the circumstances; they are still oppressed with a sense of guilt, and their escapism is through a psychological and social solution. Auden then has become very 'clinical'; he has outdistanced Eliot to whom the world is a kind of hell not even worth damning. This modern trio makes high-spirited horse-play with everything from brothels and fields to counting-houses and sewage; but underneath all this, like a critic's fatuous comment about the tragic underlines in a comedy, there is a nervous exhaustion, a cynicism, a deliberate digging up of the Unconscious.

No wonder their style betrays their irritability. Their technique is a natural corollary of their doubts and misgivings. It is an attempt to correlate their personalities with the environment. Hence the justification for those half-broken lines, those jarring effects. And the circle completes itself.

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How far they are right and how far their technique is effective is a matter for the judgment of posterity. We are too near the trees to see the wood as a whole.

Mr. Kaikini, however, tries to join this Marx Circus. But how pitiful is the attempt! He has neither the cause for the rage nor the justification for the sneer. And it is really a matter for condolence when an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Kaikini goes so far as to talk about the decay of the 'Crescent Moon' school in India, and about the existence of imitators of Mr. Kaikini. It is hard to swallow this statement without distaste. Are the new writers in India imitating Mr. Kaikini, or are they imitating those whom Mr. Kaikini himself is imitating?

This new volume, 'Shanghai,' contains about twenty-five poems. 'The Revolt' is an echo of D. H. Lawrence with its 'betrayal of the word of the blood.' 'The Lightning' is very good—in fact, the best poem in this group. 'The Millionaire' is trite and insincere. It is just likely that Mr. Kaikini is a poet, but he has to unlearn a lot, and then only shall 'the word of the blood not be betrayed.'

The romantics are not dead, for there is Mr. Armando Menezes! He has given me great pleasure, and almost a hope that Indo-Anglian poetry has a future. Many of his poems are exquisite, chiefly the 'Ode to Beauty' and 'A Vision of War.' He is sensitive and has a sense of values. His imagery is powerful. For example, in 'The Mighty Lover,' he says:

I love to see ice clinking in the glass,
And all bright lovely things that melt and pass
With glad indifference—dew-drops that shake
Their opalescent dreams as they awake
To tremulous nothing; silver seeds of rain
That die in fertilizing; and the grain
That perishes to plant, the plant to bloom,
And bloom to seed again for Nature's womb.

And there is a single sentence in the same poem:

And million, million happinesses more,
which is so spontaneous and joyous that it touches our heart-strings.

Again in 'To Silence':

What are you, Silence? Has no plummet sought
To sound the abysmal darks of your profound?
Are all our gorgeous pomp and circumstance
But tinkling anklets of your endless dance,
But jagged fragments of your perfect round?
Or are you that, O Silence, which is not?

In 'Prospero Speaks,' there is a single line which is so mighty, so wonderful that it must be repeated:

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Chord on chord, chord on rolling chord.

The only fault in Mr. Menezes is, he is so repetitive. He needs must go on emphasising and re-emphasising in the same mode and tone that it is apt to be irritating. There are many clichés too.

The starry gleaming on the billow-crest
I love, and sunset bleeding in the west;
And dawn, eternal bride who blushes red
With tingling memories of her nuptial bed. . . .

Every line here is a cliché. It is a pity that Mr. Menezes should fall into obvious suggestions like this.

There are also some very unhappy lines. In 'A Ballade of Builders,' the lines,

Prince, you must fancy me an arrant sot
To make all styles of 'architecture' meet

are very bad.

The word 'abysm' is archaic; is it a combination of abyss and chasm? 'Godged' is another word which is unwarranted.

There are many poems in 'Chords and Discords' that can be made more effective by ruthless pruning. But it is up to Mr. Menezes.

Mr. R. Appalaswamy, the author of 'Songs and Lyrics' is a second-hand poet. If familiarity with English literature is a sufficient title for essaying in the 'Elysian fields of poesy,' Mr. Appalaswamy is a poet; if, however, the requirements for a place among the dreamers is a genuine, innate, spontaneous appreciation, then, Mr. Appalaswamy is not.

'Songs and Lyrics' seems to be his first attempt. He never rises to the dignity of a poet in any one poem. They are not even poems—they are just arrangements and sequences of words without any rhythm but with laboriously-contrived rhymes. And he has a model before him for every such word-sequence. One is modelled after Shakespeare, one after Shelley and so on—but without even the graceful philandering of a Chatterton.

He seems to place great faith in such words as 'bed and board,' as in the lines:

Denying me thy bed and board,
Denying me thy love

and again,

She graces my bed and she graces my board.
There are other things too. For example,

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His ways need I them mention
and

In the sweat of his bonny brow, Sir,
are two lines in the poem 'Zamindar' which require no comment.

'The Sanguine Sun' in the evening is an appalling blunder. 'I possess her *so whole*' is another little line that betrays the author's immaturity.

There is, among the hundreds here, only one poem which can be mentioned with approbation. It is the 'Plough Man.' I do not claim for it any special virtues. But in the welter of vexatious mediocrity, it stands out—for the feeling which has animated it seems to be genuine and simple.

K. J. MAHADEVAN

Professional Conduct and Advocacy.—By Rao Bahadur K. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer, B.A., B.L. (Madras Bar Council. Price Rs. 3.)

"Life, experience, personal thinking, feeling and acting are alone the original and proper sources of education," are the words which occur in this volume, in the relevant context of the inefficacy of merely reading books on the examination of witnesses. One may push the significance of these words to their ultimate end and say, "Why need listening to lectures of this kind which after all contain maxims so ideal that it would be impossible to follow them?" A statement like this can at best be only cynical like that of Bacon who said, "Philosophers are like stars who give little light because they are so high."

Perhaps such lectures on Professional Conduct and Advocacy in book-form are much more necessary now, when, in their great diffidence of success, aspirants to fortune in the legal profession resort to methods which lower the standard. Moreover, the times we are living in have begun to witness a great change in our view of the law; for the law is fast becoming 'the instrument through the Legislature of vast social and economic changes.' The fact of life being an organic whole can no longer be ignored, and we can never feel comfortable unless we learn to relate institutions to wider conceptions and seek to justify them by their contribution to the progress of the human race. Therefore, while agreeing with the nice distinction made in the 'Introduction' between 'Conduct' and 'Ethics,' we feel the distinction between law and ethics to be broad, only because the contacts between them are always so close and constant. Thus we may even say the lawyer and the moralist are both intimately concerned with human conduct. Once the lawyer is placed on a level with the moralist, natural then that his primary duty will be to con-

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form to certain ethical standards, whether prescribed by professional bodies like the Bar Council or as a result of long tradition.

Rao Bahadur K. V. Krishnaswami Aiyer, no mean representative of an order of society which by its very brilliant record of achievements claims recognition on all hands, has chosen well to begin his lectures with a discussion upon the lawyer's place in society and his worth as a human being. He rightly points out that "if the profession is a great calling, it is a calling in which we have great responsibility."

The chapter on the "Equipment of a Lawyer" brings within our ken the many instances of great successes that bear evidence to an early good equipment. His 'Hints for Legal Studies,' 'Training Grounds,' 'Meeting of Clients,' 'Preparation of the Case,' 'Drafting of Pleadings' and 'Examination of Witnesses' follow each other in a regular order of sequence in interest. The recruit to the profession will find in them really rich experience collected and analysed with the sole objective of making it useful to the younger members of the Bar.

In the chapter on 'Conduct in Court' a general survey of the practitioner's demeanour and accessory aids to a correct manner of presentation of cases is given. Very many minute details of conduct, which the lecturer so very exhaustively provides us, compel us quite to marvel at his genius for detail and his thorough understanding of difficulties. Again in the chapter on 'Professional Conduct' there is much food for thought, especially when he discusses matters pertaining to 'contingent fees.' The succeeding chapters of the lawyer's 'Duty to Court,' 'Duty to the Profession,' 'Duty to the Opponent,' 'Duty to the Client,' 'Duty to Yourself' and 'Duty to the Public and the State' contain all the possible views upon them, with a precision and a passion for clarity that leave little room to complain.

In the last two chapters on 'Has the lawyer any privileges?' and 'The Problem of the Future,' there are the frequently mooted points of discussion, like the overcrowding of the profession, examined in view of the recent pronouncements of many of the eminent members of the legal profession itself.

We cannot close a book of such interesting material and practical value without feeling how wholesome the advice given here is when much of it has been conceived in a spirit of optimism and of generous appreciation of the legal luminaries who have made the Madras Bar what it is today. Himself a votary at the shrine of professional probity, his lectures are all the more valuable; for, who can otherwise bear hearing another who preaches what he does not practise?

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

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TELUGU

Manikyam and other stories—By Kappagantula Satyanarayana. (Katha-mala Publications, Royapettah, Madras. Price 4 as.)

The author of "Manikyam and other stories" is a young aspirant to literary fame. This is his first collection of short stories, six altogether in number. The title story "Manikyam" is named after the heroine who sacrifices her child to save her chastity. The other stories are keyed to the same tune, but the variations are spicy.

Like a promising tennis player, Mr. Satyanarayana tries a variety of strokes. Still unable to find his length, he indulges in vigorous drives. His style, wanting though in the finer subtleties that distinguish the master's touch, yet flows with unobtrusive ease. He commits faults sometimes and sometimes scores aces. Now he confines himself to the base-line, and anon he runs to the net. But he lacks consistency and judgment. So he loses to his superiors, always playing the game.

SRI. SRI.

