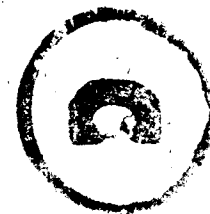


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The TRIVENI Quarterly



Editors

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU
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NEW LIFE-SUBSCRIBERS

The permanent life-subscription for *Triveni* is Rs. 100. The Editors' grateful thanks are due to the following gentlemen who have enlisted themselves as life-subscribers since July 1940.

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THE COVER DESIGN

The new cover design for *The Triveni Quarterly* was prepared by Sri Subba Rao Vali (popularly known as 'Vali'), a rising artist who was a student of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, Masulipatam, when Sri Adivi Bapiraju was Principal.

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

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

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

... 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

'The Triple Stream'

BY K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU¹

SRI KRISHNA RAJENDRA

India mourns the loss of Sri Krishna Rajendra, the noble Maharaja who ruled Mysore for forty years and shed lustre on the Princely Order. Mysore is the sole remnant of the glory that was Vijayanagara: Sri Krishna Rajendra was, in a sense, the successor of Sri Krishnadeva Raya, in whom Hindu Monarchy found its highest fulfilment. While representing in himself all that was best in the ancient Indian tradition, the late Ruler of Mysore was an apostle of progress. He laboured incessantly to modernise Mysore,—to give her a political and economic organisation which would enable her to be a light unto the rest of India. With the co-operation of a people devoted to him and his House, and assisted by a succession of eminent Dewans, the Maharaja made of Mysore the "Model State" of India. And he had the traits of a great constitutional monarch.

But it was his personal life, even more than his public acts as Ruler and Statesman, that endeared him to men of all parts of India. He was an ardent student of the *Upanishads*, and, like King Janaka of old, modelled his life on the teachings of the Rishis. Austere in his habits, he was yet a great aesthete and

¹ August 25.

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patron of art and literature. "Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?"

The new Maharaja, Sri Jaya Chamarajendra, comes to the throne after a splendid training. May he prove worthy of his noble heritage, and may Mysore soon witness the dawn of Responsible Government under his aegis!

BRITAIN NON-CO-OPERATES

It was a fateful step that the Working Committee of the Congress took at Delhi. While adhering to the principle of utter non-violence in the matter of the struggle for Indian freedom, they committed themselves to a programme of employing armed force for purposes of defence against external invasion and maintenance of internal order. Even at the risk of losing Gandhiji's leadership, they proffered help to Britain in the shape of men and material to win the war. To the stalwarts who had worked with Gandhiji for over two decades, this must have been a painful wrench. But they could not conscientiously declare that the country as a whole was ready to resist an invasion by non-violent methods. If the Congress was to become responsible for the governance and defence of India in the immediate future, it must make up its mind as to how it will maintain order. Even during the brief period of Congress rule in the Provinces, occasions arose when the aid of the Military and the Police had to be requisitioned. That was but the prelude to graver decisions like the one arrived at in Delhi, after considerable searching of hearts.

The offer to Britain was coupled with a two-fold demand,—the declaration of India's freedom, and the immediate formation of a National Government at the Centre. Here was a sincere gesture from India's leading political organisation, calculated to end a state of intolerable suspense and pave the way to fruitful co-operation between Britain and India in a cause dear to both. The A.I.C.C. at Poona confirmed the Delhi decision by a good majority, and the nation was looking forward to an early solution of the deadlock. But the cussedness which Britain has nearly always displayed at every crisis in her relations with India wrecked all chances of a settlement. The Viceroy's pronouncement was bad enough, but the Secretary of State's gloss made matters infinitely worse. Between them they sought to stir up the

'THE TRIPLE STREAM'

minorities and arm them with the power of vetoing all constitutional progress. The Congress asked for bread; it got the proverbial stone.

The latest decision of the Working Committee at Wardha has not surprised anyone. In this case, it is not the Congress which rejects the Viceroy's offer, but the British Government which spurns the Congress offer of co-operation. Britain has non-co-operated with the Congress and taken to its bosom the multitude of communalists, reactionaries, and 'Yes' men, who are good enough for a holiday parade but can never represent Nationalist India.

How about the future? Everything points to an acute struggle between the Congress and the Government. It is a struggle which the Congress has most earnestly tried to avoid, so earnestly indeed that it invited the contempt of the bureaucrats who fashion India's destiny from Delhi and Simla. The desire of the Congress not to embarrass Britain was 'misunderstood and despised' as the Working Committee puts it. An invitation to the President of the Congress to meet the Viceroy was hedged in by a direction that the discussion was to be within the four corners of the Viceregal declaration. This "Take-it-or-leave-it" attitude, and the sinister importance attached to the minorities have stood in the way of a settlement. Behind it all lies the unwillingness of Britain to part with real power. Today a fight seems inevitable; unless a miracle happens, it cannot be averted. But it is a fight which is ill-timed and wholly unnecessary. Britain can avert it if she likes. Even now a National Government can be formed with a Muslim Leaguer as Premier. That is Sri C. Rajagopalachariar's 'sporting offer'. But nothing can happen so long as the will to concede the Indian demand is absent.

THE MINORITIES

What are the credentials of the Congress?, asks Mr. Amery. He is obsessed by the importance of the many 'entities' ranged against the Congress; he therefore fails to realise that the Congress is the only political body in India organised on a non-communal, non-sectional basis, and wedded solely to the cause of Indian Nationhood, as distinguished from communal or sectional interests. In asking for a Constituent Assembly to frame

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the future constitution of India, the Congress is seeking power, not for itself but for every Indian citizen, to shape the polity under which he will choose to live. This is self-determination, pure and simple—the same hallowed principle in defence of which Britain claims to be fighting this sanguinary war on many fronts. Any minority in any country can seek protection of its rights, cultural, political, or religious. It is only in India that the preposterous claim has been put forward that the minority can impose a permanent veto on all progress, that it can circumvent the just rights of the majority, that, further, it can call itself a separate nation and vivisect the Motherland. That British statesmen should have made themselves the tools of such propaganda, for gaining a temporary tactical advantage over the Congress, is the most amazing part of the tragedy now being enacted on the Indo-British stage.

ANANDA MOHAN

Kowtha Ananda Mohan Sastri, the gifted South Indian painter, passed away at Dewas (C. P.) on May 21, at the early age of 32. This is a bald statement about an occurrence which has moved me beyond words. The news came to me in far off Berhampore. For a time, I tried to throw the veil of illusion over it. Ananda Mohan had been ailing for some years; it was a bad case of tuberculosis, and he stayed for long months at Madanapalle and Bangalore. Why not imagine he was there still? But the illusion could not be kept up when I returned to Madras and met the bereaved parents, and brothers and sisters. "There used to be two artists in my family;" wailed the father, Srirama Sastri, "now Ananda is no more, and only Rama Mohan is left."

Rama Mohan and Ananda Mohan! Yes, they were like twins. I first saw them in the school of Indian painting at the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, Masulipatam, while they were having their early training under Sri Promode Kumar Chatterjee. That was in 1922. An year later, I joined the Kalasala as Vice-Principal, and the brothers became my students. From the beginning, I was slightly more attached to Ananda, for he was in my History and Politics class along with young Gopala Reddi, Guda Krishnamurti and others, while Rama Mohan, the elder boy, came in occasionally for English Prose or Poetry. In those

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days, Srirama Sastri edited an exceedingly beautiful Telugu magazine, the *Sarada*, and the paintings of Sri Chatterjee and his students were reproduced in *Sarada* in colours or in half-tone. The Art School run by the late lamented Damerla Rama Rao at Rajahmundry, and the Art section of the Kalasala, were the two important centres for aspiring artists. But the centre at Masulipatam was nearer to the approved, traditional Indian style. The first annual exhibition of paintings was opened by Dr. James H. Cousins, who delivered a very illuminating address on the Ideals of Indian Art, and blessed the new Art-centre.

After some years, the brothers migrated to Mysore. Ananda, more particularly, sat at the feet of Sri K. Venkatappa, the famous Palace-artist, and acquired something of the master's colour-harmony and attention to detail. Some of his pictures were purchased for the Jagan Mohan Chitrasala, the art-gallery maintained by the Maharaja. For the rest of his all-too-short life, Ananda Mohan was a teacher of painting in Seth Ambalal Sarabhai's household at Ahmedabad. The fell disease that overtook him unfitted him for serious work during long stretches of time, but he managed to paint some great pictures. It was about this time (1933) that the following tribute was paid to his worth as a painter by M. Pascal Levis, the French art-critic:

"Ananda Mohan Sastri, though aged only 25, has presented us at the 'Salon Des Artistes Francais' works exceptionally masterful, and revealing true originality of conception. This artist, who lives in India, has before him a marvellous field for exploration; his sensibility and refinement, his culture and sense of the beautiful, enable him to draw much from that which he has under his eyes. His paintings are little living dramas; truthful reproductions of the daily life of his passionate country. Let us add that the manner in which the two scenes entitled 'Shadows' and 'Knife-sharpener' are treated is exceedingly beautiful and they impress us by their richness and by a power that comes to them out of their own perfection. It is the style of a great artist in whom youthful Painting has gained one of its most worthy exponents. The Government of India has indeed recognised this by choosing in 1930, some works of Mr. Ananda Mohan Sastri for being shown at the exhibition of the Imperial Gallery of Arts at London."

It is difficult to believe that the icy hand of Death has gripped Ananda Mohan. He was so handsome and so talented; he had an unusually sweet temper, and even tuberculosis could

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not abate his cheerfulness. Art in South India has lost a brilliant votary. An album of his paintings is the only memorial which those who love him can give to the public, to keep his memory green.

I cannot console his family; for, I stand in need of consolation myself.

A Song of Mira

(Rendered by Dilip Kumar Roy from Hindi)

My one Love is the Prince of Love,
To none else am I sworn
But the dancer, crowned with peacock's plumes,
My one Rose, reft of thorn:
Who holds the conch, mace, discus, lotus,
Garlanded, blue-born:

For Him I left my father, mother,
Brothers, friends and home:
Hark back to them I can no more,
For Him alone I roam.

I am their servant who in dust
Will serve him day and night.
The worldly-wise cry: "See, a scandal!"
My soul: "Behold the Light!"

In the heart's lone waste with tears will Mira
Now nurse love's seeds to bloom,
Waiting His vibrant day whose light
Shall laugh at the taunts of gloom.

The Congress and the Constitution

BY PROF. N. SRINIVASAN, M.A.
(*The Andhra University, Waltair*)

I

The demand of the Congress in regard to the constitution is a simple one. The Congress seeks to establish a democratic State, independent and completely outside the orbit of British Imperialism. Independence, Unity, Democracy, and Self-determination through a Constituent Assembly, sum up its ideals for the future constitution and the method of making it. These are the vital principles on the basis of which it considers the settlement of the problem of Indo-British relations possible. On these principles the Congress could not accept any compromise. But on details it would accept any reasonable modifications: it is not tied down to any. The ultimate realisation of these ideals must be guaranteed beyond a shadow of doubt. That is what the Congress insists upon today.

The position of the Congress has been reaffirmed several times since the present crisis arose. But the resolution of the Ramgarh session of the Congress most succinctly and authoritatively sums it up. In view of its importance it may be quoted rather fully:

"The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the War fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances it is clear that the Congress cannot in any way directly or indirectly be a party to the War which means the continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation."

* * * *

"The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete Independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of Imperialism; and Dominion Status or any other status within

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the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British politics and economic structure.

"The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to other countries of the world through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

"The Congress is further of opinion that, while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognised minorities will be protected by agreement as far as possible between the elected representatives of the various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if an agreement is not reached on any point. Any alternative will lack finality. India's constitution must be based on Independence, Democracy and National Unity, and the Congress repudiates attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood.

"The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities of development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a just social order.

"The Congress cannot admit the right of the rulers of Indian States or of foreign vested interests to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people, whether in the States or in the Provinces, and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests. The Congress holds that the difficulty raised in regard to the States is of British creation and it will not be satisfactorily solved unless the declaration of the freedom of India from foreign rule is unequivocally made. Foreign interests, if they are not in conflict with the interests of the Indian people, will be protected."

The clearness with which the resolution sets forth the basic principles of a constitutional settlement leaves indeed little more to be said. It touches most of the difficulties in the way of a settlement and offers a procedure for their solution. But in view of the misunderstanding of the position, or misrepresentation of the resolution in India and in Britain, it might be useful to amplify the resolution in a few respects, from the earlier and later pronouncements of the Congress and its leaders.

The Congress defines the goal of India as complete Independence, the equivalent in English of the term 'Swaraj.' This

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ideal involves full self-government, with the right of the State to order its foreign relations at will and the complete control of its defences. But it does not mean that India seeks isolation in an inter-dependent world and to withdraw into her own shell. India is willing to undertake her full share of responsibility for the common well-being of the world, for peace and for the maintenance of the principles of just relations between States. It is indeed most anxious to contribute its best towards the creation of a world order based upon democracy and freedom, and the ending of the exploitation of one country by another. Nor is complete Independence incompatible with a close external association with the British Commonwealth for common purposes and mutual advantage. Dominion Status, as it has evolved particularly in relation to Ireland, has shown Independence as defined by the Congress to be absolutely compatible with the Status as defined by the Statute of Westminster. Even an independent State could well co-operate with Britain in a close and intimate way, as Egypt has been doing since the settlement of the problem of Egypt to the satisfaction of her elected representatives. What is incompatible with the Congress claim is the continuance of Imperialism in India in any form, political or economic. The shedding of Imperialism, in substance as well as in theory, is an essential for the State that the Congress contemplates. If the friendly association with Britain does not involve the exploitation of India's resources and her people by British capital—assured a privileged position by constitutional safeguards and backed by military power which is a deadweight on progressive Indian economic development in the interests of the millions of India—and if the equal citizenship of Indians in the Commonwealth is a fact and not the helotry that it is today in the Dominions and even in India, and lastly, if such association does not involve participation for the exploitation of fellow Indians and backward African tribes, a partnership with Britain would be most welcome. The partnership has to be one not imposed by Britain, but one to which India voluntarily agrees considering her advantages. There is here no tyranny of phrases clouding the real issues, and no rejection of Dominion Status conceived as it truly ought to be. An Indo-British partnership, provided it is free in the fullest sense of the word, would be the most natural culmination of the relations of India with

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Britain. The circumstances of India, the ideals of democracy and freedom that India cherishes as Britain does, make such a partnership in common purposes the only solution of the problem of Indo-British relations. It is significant that Mahatma Gandhi has visualized the future of India as in a partnership with Britain for their mutual advantage and for the good of the world.

For the Government of the country the Congress seeks a democratic framework. It desires to see the sovereignty in the State, now assumed by the British Parliament, vested in the Indian people. It would base the constitution of India on the widest suffrage, "adult or near adult suffrage." It regards this as the most equitable adjustment of conflicting claims in this country and the safeguard for ensuring that the interests of the masses prevail over against the interests of the few and the privileged.

It is not only in the areas known as British India that it wants to see democracy established. It desires its establishment in the area of the States as well. It regards India as one whole and the people of India as one nation, of whom the people of the States form an indistinguishable part. It desires the end of autocracy and the sweeping away of the remnants of feudalism which flourish in the States under the protection afforded by the Paramount Power. It would establish the same civil and political rights in the States as in British Provinces. It desires to see the level of administration in the States brought to the level of administration in the Provinces. It would urge a consolidation of the areas of the smaller States which are too small and too poor to afford the cost of modernised administration to make this possible. The Congress has never expressed itself in favour of extinguishing the Princely Order; what it has always insisted upon is that the system of autocratic Government in the States should be brought to an end, that responsible Government be introduced in the States and, further, that the Princes should take a civil list. It has been exhorting the Princes to march in line with modern trends and line up with the progressive forces in the country by becoming, by their own free will, constitutional monarchs.

The Congress regards unity as fundamental. It is conscious that the winning of freedom as well as its maintenance depend

alike on the achievement of unity. It seeks therefore to perfect the unity it has created by making the national movement embrace all the people of India. Politically this unity is to be expressed in a Federal structure of Government for all-India. The Congress ideal of Federation is one which would be constituted by the two types of units, States and Provinces, re-arranged on a linguistic basis, enjoying a like measure of autonomy—the widest possible consistent with the unity of India—equality of Status, with the residuary powers vested in the federating units, and an organic and indissoluble union of the units for their necessary common purposes of freedom and self-protection and ordered progress along modern lines.

But, for the sake of the unity of Federation, the Congress will not sacrifice democracy or the ideal of complete freedom. The Federation of the Act of 1935 vests the powers of Paramountcy, on the basis of a new legal theory, in the Viceroy, and reserves the field of the relations of the Government of India with the States in his hands. It creates, so to speak, a lower and higher type of federating unit in the Provinces and States respectively; the States come into the Federation at their own sweet will and under conditions which make them participants in the Government of British India, without in any wise themselves being bound. And the entry of the States into the Federation makes the evolution of India into a free State without the consent and approval of the States impossible. The Act of 1935 forbids Parliament itself to alter certain provisions of the present Act without such consent. Such alterations render the Acts of Accession of the Federating States null and void and thus they return to the conditions before Federation.¹ The unity promised by the Federation of the Act of 1935 is at the expense of the evolution of India's constitutional powers towards Dominionhood as well as democracy. The basic reasons for the rejection of the Act of 1935 were these. Nationalist India would wait rather than sacrifice the greater for the lesser principle, democracy and freedom for the sake of unity at present which means the admission of the tutelage of Britain and of the dominance of the States in perpetuity. From the point of view of India's march towards freedom, the Federation of the Act of 1935 was

¹ Dr. Ambedkar: *Freedom Vs. Federation*.

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a step backwards from the Reforms of 1919. The Federal ideal to embody India's unity, to be acceptable, has to combine Independence and Democracy with Unity.

The existence of unappeased minorities has been stated to be the stumbling block to the realisation of Indian freedom. The attitude of the Congress with regard to minorities has been defined several times. It regards the problem as a purely domestic one to be settled by mutual agreement among the elected representatives of the communities concerned. The Congress has proclaimed that the satisfaction of the minorities is one of its objectives, and that no constitutional settlement would be acceptable to it unless it has the willing assent of the minorities themselves. But it denies that all the minorities which now claim special privileges are real minorities. The Muslims are a special case. They are a very large part of the Indian people, and the danger they fear is not that their rights to an equal treatment would be jeopardised in a self-governing India; what they desire is the assurance of a definite share in power in the future scheme of Government, constitutionally or otherwise. The Europeans and other commercial and planting interests in India would not constitute, according to the Congress, a native minority which stands in need of any protection. Taking the country as a whole, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Parsis, the aboriginal tribes, Sikhs and the Scheduled Classes would constitute real minorities whose position would need to be protected. The principles that Congress advocates for the settlement of this problem are:

1. A system of fundamental rights to be guaranteed to all citizens irrespective of their religion or race. This would include the protection of race, religion, language, education, educational and religious endowments etc., and provisions against discrimination in the public services.

2. Reservation of seats in the Legislatures on the basis of population, with the right to members of the minority communities to contest further seats as they choose, on the basis of common electorates.

3. Minimal representation on the Provincial and the Central Executives to be secured by convention. There would be no limit to the maximum of the places a minority may occupy on any of these bodies.

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4. A guarantee of a swift policy of education and advancement economically for all the castes and creeds of India.¹

These are the safeguards which the Congress would offer to the minorities. What the Congress desires is that the minorities should not isolate themselves as separate entities with differing interests, but consider themselves as part of the Indian people. This is the nature of the solution which the Congress has advocated in the past and would be willing to accept at any time.

Since the minorities and, in particular, large sections of the Muslims have not accepted these, the Congress now offers a new method of approach to the problem. The representatives of the communities chosen through separate electorates, if the communities so desire, but chosen on the widest suffrage, may formulate whatever safeguards they desire for their security. The Congress desires a solution by agreement between such duly authorised representatives and the representatives of the majorities in the country. Failing an agreement, the matter may be settled by arbitration, and the Congress would for its part accept any safeguards such as may be devised by an arbitral body to which the parties may agree. The Congress believes that this method has the merit of giving a final answer to this vexed question.

The Congress, it must be noted, is not unwilling to come to an agreement with other parties in the country; it has been most anxious for a communal settlement. But it is equally anxious that the solution should be one that is consistent with the interests of Indian Nationalism and does not sacrifice justice and the fundamental principles for which it stands.

II

The method by which the Congress would have the future constitution of India framed is through a Constituent Assembly. This Assembly is to be elected by the widest electorate. The different communities of India are to have a representation according to their population. The Assembly, in other words, is

¹ See Proceedings of the Minorities' Sub-committee of the Second R.T.C., Vol. III, p. 1391.

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to be a true picture of India's different communities in their exact proportions. The Assembly is to make the constitution for India, settle her minorities' problem and her relations with external powers. The Princes of India will have the option of being represented in the Constituent Assembly. But their representation must be based on the vote of the people of the States through an electorate of the same kind as in British India. The Congress wishes a democratic method for the solution of the constitutional problem, as it sees in a Constituent Assembly the only body that is capable of voicing the true opinion of the people and of evolving a constitution truly indigenous to the country. It wants the future constitution to be truly a creation of the people. It does not matter if such a procedure leads to an imperfect political structure from the point of view of constitutional theory. It would be at least real.¹ The people will be learning, in the only way they can learn, the precious art of governing themselves.

The demand is for self-determination for India and the concrete form of the demand is the Constituent Assembly.

It has been suggested that the demand of the Congress for a declaration of Britain's intentions towards India was made in a spirit of bargaining at a most inconvenient moment for Britain. But if one follows the history of the National movement, and makes a serious effort to understand the thoughts and acts of the leaders of the National movement during the many years of its existence, as well as the careful attitude of non-embarrassment of the war effort in India, one would see that the charge cannot be sustained. The present stand of the Congress would appear as the only policy open to it under the circumstances.

Both the goal and method of the Congress have been a part of its programme for a considerable time. As a mass movement which has spontaneously sprung up as the natural reaction and protection against the exploitation of India by Britain, as the expression of the new hopes of the Indian people to vindicate their natural right to an honourable existence and to regain their self-respect, the Congress has been led to evolve its ideal in the course of its struggles for well over half a century. From the mild claim to be admitted to the public services in India, through the claim for the creation of local representative

¹ Gandhiji: *The Only Way*.

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institutions and advisory bodies, the Congress has advanced to the claim of full self-government for India. It stands today for the complete Independence of India and a democratic polity. As the Congress has grown, its ideals have evolved parallel with it. The development of the Congress has been from an organisation of a few intellectuals trained in Western culture and anxious to Anglicize her gradually, to a genuine movement of the masses, voicing their grievances and representing their aspirations. It is today conscious of the great tradition and culture of India's past and of the individuality of her people which it is desirous of preserving while modernising India. It is this outgrowing of the Congress which explains its insistence on the ideal of democracy, and a democratic method for the framing of our constitution. The Congress must represent the masses, or it represents nothing in Indian political life.

The Constituent Assembly became a part of the Congress programme only recently. This is traceable to two or three main causes. The first of these is the spread of the conceptions of democracy among the people. The second is the manifest failure of every other method for finding a solution of many of our vexed constitutional problems. Every other method had been proved to lend itself to manipulation in the interests of the few. There is a third reason. The Constituent Assembly offers a method of building the strength of the nation. It offers a concrete and practicable way in which the masses whom the Congress represents could give expression to their ideals and aspirations.

It has been sometimes assumed that the proposal for a Constituent Assembly is new. But the fact is otherwise. What is new is the name and not the principle. It has been implicit in the demand for self-determination and Independence which Nationalist India has been urging for a long time. The Swaraj claimed by the Nationalists has always been defined to include the right of India's representatives to frame the constitution. As long back as 1921 Tilak was urging "the exclusive right of fashioning the form of government and determining the most appropriate constitution for India."¹ In the more specific form of a demand for a Constituent Assembly, it made its appearance only later. The distinction of first having suggested the slogan and

¹ Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *A History of the Indian National Congress*.

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programme of the Constituent Assembly belongs to Mr. M. N. Roy. Its popularisation was due to Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. Mr. Roy urged the Constituent Assembly as the positive counterpart to the boycott of the Simon Commission, when it was making its enquiries into the Indian constitutional problem in 1929. The Constituent Assembly was to be the organ through which the popular parties were to build the new State. It was to be based on mass organisation from below, and was to be the culminating point of such organisation. It was to be the instrument through which power was to be wrested from the British, and for building up the foundations of a new and free Indian State outside the structure of British Imperialism, and based on the people.

The rejection of the Government of India Act in 1936 was accompanied by a demand for a Constituent Assembly as the only and proper method of framing India's constitution. It became part of the official programme of the Congress in 1936, being accepted by it at the Faizpur session.

III

The ultimate and immediate aspects of the programme of the Congress must be clearly distinguished. The framing of the constitution by a Constituent Assembly, the establishment of full democratic institutions, the setting up of a federally united India with autonomous Provinces and States, and planned economic development belong to the former aspect. They constitute a programme which necessarily takes time to realise and the Congress is not blind to this. But a beginning must be made along the ways which will inevitably lead up to them. For this, immediately, the Congress urges a declaration of the freedom of India and the treatment of India as a free country to the largest degree possible, by setting up National Governments enjoying the confidence of the people. These must be allowed, in complete freedom, to direct the policies of the country towards the desired ends. This freedom is essential for both the maturing of the ultimate programme as well as for present safety. Such representative Governments will work out the preliminary agreements through negotiations with Britain, for a settlement of many difficult problems such as Defence, the British personnel in Indian Government, British commercial inte-

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rests in India, the question of the Public Debt of India and others, and help to place Indo-British relations on a footing which would make the theoretical equality of India with Britain a real equality. This is the only way in which the transition from the present to the future can be effected with ease and goodwill and in swift time.

The Congress is well aware of the difficulties of realising its programme. It is aware that this is contingent upon one of two things. Britain must be morally persuaded that the programme of the Congress is the only method of dealing with the Indian question and voluntarily abdicate her powers. It depends on the willingness of Britain to shed her Imperialism, in actual fact, under the moral pressure of the Congress. In such a case a peaceful transition to the new order in India is possible, and a partnership of the progressive forces in India and in England emerges, with the common object of advancing the welfare of the Indian people and for the greater good of both Britain and India. Alternately, a grim struggle awaits the Congress. Under the leadership of Gandhiji and the influence of the great moral principles for which he stands, whose value is really perceptible in the midst of the carnage of the war of civilised nations in Europe, every effort will be made to avoid the struggle and achieve the goal of freedom by the unique method of moral suasion or a bloodless war. The Congress is dying for co-operation, but is prepared for a fight if that should become unavoidable.

It is not alone the Congress that stands up for these objectives of freedom and democracy. The Muslims as represented by the Shias, Momins, the Ahrars, and the vast body of Nationalistic Muslims in Sind and the North-West-Frontier Province, where the League's hold is negligible, stands by the programme of the Independence of India and a Constituent Assembly. Today it might appear that the League is the most important organisation of the Muslims of India. But even the admission of this would not lessen the importance or prevent the growing strength of the progressive elements among Muslims who stand for the ideals which the Congress represents.

The Liberals of India, who must be considered a dying sect, but among whom are to be found some of the most outstanding intellectuals of India, are again in favour of the freedom of India as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth in the

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immediate future. Their programmes too assert the need for truly National Governments in the present and the rapid Indianisation of India's Defence to meet the present emergency. At a slower pace, but surely, the Liberals urge the freedom of India. It has been their misfortune to fall between the two stools of British extremism and Indian Nationalism.

Among Indian parties the All-India Muslim League has a different policy and programme. But even the League stands for the Independence of India as its ultimate goal. Its main thesis is that the Independence of India must await a settlement of the communal problem to its satisfaction.

We may conclude that the national demand is an almost unanimous demand of all parties and of all shades of opinion. While, in the method and pace of advance suggested, there may be differences, there is a substantial identity of purpose among them all. They want alike the freedom of India and a democratic State with complete equality with Britain. They want immediately the recognition of this new status by the establishment of truly National Governments representing the peoples of India.

The Song World in Tamil: A Glimpse

BY T. K. CHIDAMBARANATHA MUDALIAR, B.A., B.L.
(Ex-Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras)

The Tamil language has, through the course of thousands of years, developed wonderful poetic forms. The forms are the outcome of the pulsating rhythm and music that pervade the song as a spirit; and it would be no exaggeration to say that to miss that spirit is to miss the whole poem; and, further, that the forms thus evolved are untranslatable. An attempt, however, has been made to indicate, in English prose, how the poets have been trying to express their emotional realities. In the process of rendering, names of places and deities have been omitted, lest these things, gritty to the unaccustomed ear, should stand in the way of appreciating the sense of the poem. Again, to give to the prose rendering the simplicity of the song, the narrative forms in the original have been changed, when needed, to vocative forms. The originals are given as foot-notes.

(1)

Here is a love-song of the twelfth century (A.D.). The lady love expects her lover to return in the evening. She is alone in the house and is waiting till it is almost midnight. Then she goes to bed. But she is restless, walks to the door and opens it to see if her lover is coming. The lover is not seen. She closes the door and returns to her bed. In a few minutes she goes again to the door, and in despair returns to the bed. This going and returning goes on incessantly till sunrise. All this is expressed in a couplet:

Expectancy opens and Despair shuts;
And thus swings the door from eve to morn
Thereby wearing out the hinges.¹

¹ வருவார் கொழுநர் எனத்திறந்தும்
வாரார் கொழுநர் என அடைந்தும்
திரகு குடுமி விடியனவும்
தேயும் கபாடம் திறமினோ.

—கலிங்கத்துப்பராணி, ஐயங்கொண்டார்.

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(2)

We know that the eye reaches the very stars; but not the ear and the other senses.

We know also that, for a girl who is married, the husband is the only one, in the world of relations, to be taken into account. When the youth goes to a distant land, perhaps never again to return, the young wife has only to follow him, bidding farewell to her dear father, mother and other kindred.

Again a man may have abounding wealth. Is there any worth in it all if, in the evening of his life, he has to see his sons playing ducks and drakes with the property, thus giving him endless worry and anxiety?

As for the mother's affection for her child, it is something incomprehensible. It really transcends all considerations of self—nay, reason itself. Now for the song (1st century A.D.):

There is no member, precious as the eye;
No kindred, close as the husband;
No wealth covetable as wise sons;
And, to compare unto the mother,
there is no God whatever.¹

(3)

The joy that comes of temple worship has been and is a living reality for the pious. Those that have gone through that pious experience, by strewing flowers at the feet of the Deity and doing obeisance before the *sanctum sanctorum*, can easily understand the depth of the feeling that found expression in the following song, (some three hundred or four hundred years ago).

Why art thou restless, my heart?
Peace be with you:

The Lord's feet are there,
and there are the sages' songs in praise of them.

¹ “கண்ணிற் செறந்த உருப்பில்கு, கொண்டானில்
துன்னிய கேளிர் பிறரில்கு, மைந்தரில்
ஒண்மையவாய்ச் சான்ற பொருளில்கு, ஈனருளோ(டு)
எண்ணக், கடவுளும்இல்.”

—நான்மணிக்கடிகை, விளம்பி நாயனார்.

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And there is my mouth to sing,
and my hands are there to strew flowers.

And, to bow homage to them,
there is my head:

Why art thou restless, my heart?
Peace be with you.'

(4)

The image of Nataraja, its transcendent beauty, and the interpretative art enshrined therein are now familiar to the entire Art-world. Through the dancing pose of the Deity at Chidambaram, we have to see a vast figure, filling the very heavens, dancing and whirling in ecstatic joy; and, again, through this cosmic image, one has to perceive the oneness and harmony that governs the whole universe, and thus realise the joy infinite. Here is a glimpse of such a realisation:

Thy matted locks waving in the skies,

Thy complexion resplendent,
The milk-white ashes besmeared thereon,

Thy arched brow, Thy ruddy lips,
Thy smile mysterious,

And, above all, Thy lifted foot,
dripping as though with honey.

These, O, Lord! if one could have a vision of,
Even the birth, on this earth, as a human mortal is
worth striving for.

(Found in the hymns of Appar, 5th century A.D.)²

¹ மாலுண்டு நெஞ்சே மயங்குவதென், பால்வண்ணன்
காலுண்டு அடியார் கனிந்திசைத்த—நாலுண்டு
வாழ்த்திட என் வாயுண்(டு), அலர்சொரியக் கையுண்டு
தாழ்த்திடவும் உண்டே தலை.

—கருவையந்தாதி.

² பனித்த சடையும், பவளம்போல் மேனியும், பால்வண்ணீறும்,
குனித்த புருவமும், கொவ்வைச் செவ்வாயும், குமின்சிரிப்பும்,
இனித்தம் கசிய எடுத்தபொற் பாதமும், காணப்பெற்குல்
மனித்தப் பிறவியும் வேண்டுவதே இந்தமானிலத்தே.

—அப்பர்.

Sri Aurobindo's "Life Divine"

BY VELURI CHANDRASEKHARAM

"World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of one God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing." This is the gist of the knowledge enshrined in this great work.

But this, it may be objected, is mystic rapture or high poetic conception, not safe philosophy; for we seem to take our idea of philosophy from what it has been in modern times in the West. Modern philosophy has been profoundly influenced by modern science; its view is dominated by the world-picture derived from the Sciences: and those sciences too, the sciences of inorganic Nature and not the sciences of Life or Mind, which are yet in their infancy. It has rarely stepped out of the charmed circle of imaginative rationality, a great exception being Spinoza. Pure Reason can greatly help us in elucidating and organising our experience and in unifying different departments of thought into one coherent whole, but the nature of Reality eludes its grasp. That is why the first direction given in India to the seeker of Reality has been, "Energise your consciousness." Among modern philosophers of the West, Bergson seems to recognise that the approach to Reality should be made through a certain intensification of consciousness.

"The Life Divine" proceeds on the basis of this direction; for the present organisation of our consciousness is not its final possibility. By an extension and intensification, by a finer and superior organisation of consciousness, we can through progressive comprehension attain Reality. Reason too, by a complete purification of its purely conceptive activity, starting from observation of phenomena though not confined to them, can arrive at a perception of the truth of things; and the truth of that perception, by the very nature of the constitution of man and the universe, must be capable of verification by, and realisation in, his experience. There is also a form of knowledge by identity possessed by the mind, which gives it its self-awareness. That

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can be extended to an awareness of the Self or Reality of the universe and man can thus enter into communion with it. But the highest or true form of knowledge by identity, which alone gives complete possession of Reality, can be reached when the mind attains to a superior organisation of consciousness beyond itself. These, then, are the ways we should follow in our quest of Reality.

The great problem of the human mind is the opposition of Spirit and Matter. We may acquiesce in the opposition as final; or we may explain away one or the other and then base the world on matter and mechanical causation or Spirit and self-determinism. But usually we get along with a sort of weak-hearted compromise between the two concepts, reserving one concept for one kind of phenomena and the other for the other kind. But reason, or rather the faith behind reason, cannot tolerate this discord, for Nature and her instruments seek reconciliation and harmony. The ancient Seers and intuitive thinkers of India found this reconciliation and harmony in the experience and concept of 'Sachchidananda.' With the help of this formula, together with that of Involution-Evolution, they arrived at an understanding of the essential oneness of the manifold universe and resolved all contradictions and oppositions in their experience. They beheld 'Sachchidananda' or Existence-Consciousness-Bliss as the sole Reality and the material universe as the scene of its progressive manifestation in a gradually ascending series of inanimate and living forms.

The infinite energy of Becoming, which the universe is to our experience, is the outpouring of a pure, infinite existence. It is inexpressible, omnipresent Reality and no mere hypostasised universal. It is not merely an immutable, unacting stability, timeless and spaceless, serving only as a support for the phenomenal movement. Nor is it a Nihil behind the movement, with existence as a momentary recurring, and hence illusory, phenomenon. Infinite energy is inherent in It. It is free—free beyond intellectual conception—so free that it is not subject to, or compelled by, its inherent potentialities. And infinite energy is self-aware Force of this Absolute Existence. It would be wrong to think that awareness is confined only to the forms of it with which we are familiar; there are other forms of consciousness in Nature. Again, it is a most astounding fact that we are not aware of

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even our own entire consciousness. From this ensues that consciousness may be present within while not manifesting itself on the surface. Also, an invariable connection may not necessarily exist between vital organisation and consciousness and, anyhow, vital organisation is only an instrument of consciousness and not its generator. It becomes necessary to envisage a universal Force of consciousness organising itself variously on different levels. We are, therefore, led to the conception of a self-aware primal Energy manifesting itself in the forms of the universal forces of Consciousness, Life and Matter, the gamut of consciousness reaching downward into matter's inconscience and rising upward into Spirit's superconscience. Finally, this pure Being is Bliss, this limitless and illimitable Consciousness is Delight, this movement of infinite Energy is Joy. It is bondage and limitation that are the cause of sorrow. And the affirmations of the higher emotional and dynamic, aesthetic and mystic movements of man's consciousness point and lead to a Bliss-Self of the universe. This then is the Upanishadic conception of 'Sachchidananda' or Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, through involution-evolution manifesting itself as the universe without any the least derogation from its absolute status.

But the ancient Seers did not work out the full intellectual implications of this position. They did not present to the mind a systematic and rational effort to assimilate our normal experience to this conception of Reality; only, they threw out intuitive suggestions to impel the seeking mind towards the goal. But intuition is like the fitful flash of lightning, which may help us to reach our destination if we do not stumble and fall in the dark intervals of the journey. Its flashes have to be organised into a steady light which will throw a continuous illumination all along the path. And the pronouncements of the higher consciousness and the perceptions of pure Reason have to be justified to our intellect and ordinary experience. All this has been accomplished in the fulness of time by "The Life Divine."

Not that the work was not attempted before; the course of centuries is strewn with such attempts. They are to be found in the 'Darshanas' initiated by the Sages and in the philosophical schools created by the great commentators. Some accepted difference and multiplicity as ultimate in the teeth of the ancient teaching. Many found in Karma, a sort of mental-moral edition

of mechanical causation, a too ready and facile solution of their many difficulties. Some drove a wedge between pure conscious Being and its infinite Energy. Some, trying to hold fast to the central element of non-duality in the teaching, declared universal Becoming a mirage falsely appearing on the desert-waste of Reality. Surely, they were revenged that had set up that nightmare of Matter existing in its own right through eternity, placed mechanical causation on the throne of the universe, and banished will and purpose into Nowhere. But, equally surely, the true poise of the ancient Wisdom was lost.

Sri Aurobindo has, through some mystic sympathy of his being, recaptured the thought of the ancient Seers in its purity and integrity. Even when he deals with the later systems of thought or ways of discipline, his vision penetrates to their core; their very errors and fanaticisms yield up to his vision the truth which is their soul of good and hence their source of strength. Into whatever apartment of our ancestral treasure-house of Wisdom he may enter, he emerges with his hands full of pure, bright-gleaming gold, freed from the accumulated dross of centuries. In his integral world-view, all truths of the partial and exclusive systems appear to find of their own accord their right place and relation. Thought, having reached its highest centre, seems to present a true and complete picture of its domain. It is as if a mountain-climber reached the summit and some miracle of the mountain air gave inconceivable increase to the range and vividness of his vision, and then he commands a complete and perfect view of all that lies in the full circle of the horizon. Error often is error of perspective, of narrowness of outlook. A wider vision and a finer perspective help us to attain a greater harmony of truth.

Any philosophy that bases the world on Spiritual Reality has to face the problem of suffering and evil. Any philosophy to be satisfying must satisfy us on this problem, for it is this which is often the cause of our philosophical enquiry. It is the same problem of the opposition of matter and spirit appearing in another context. If the problem of that opposition has been rightly solved, its new form in a different context should be automatically capable of solution on the same lines.

The problem looms terrifyingly large before the human mind because we often look at it through a magnifying medium—

through great emotional disturbance, through the mists of certain kinds of religion and poesy that thrive on our sense of sin and sorrow, through deliberately gloomy pictures of our existence drawn by ascetic zeal with the purpose of turning us away from the good things of the world. But if we look at the problem dispassionately, its acuteness diminishes to a great extent. Suffering and evil are so intensely felt because they are the exception and not the rule, because they are really foreign to our being, and nature pointedly calls our attention to them in order that we may deal with them and conquer them. Existence should be joyous in its own right, but our mental interpretation gives the value of pleasure or delight only to those states where the normal joyous existence rises above a particular intensity; normal existence is interpreted by it as neutral. But our vital consciousness should all along be interpreting as pleasurable, for on no other supposition can we understand the overwhelming strength of the vital instinct of self-preservation. Moreover, if we view the problem of suffering and evil against the cosmic background, we find that it occupies only a small intermediate stretch of the evolutionary process. Neither the galactic systems nor the high gods know of it. Thus reviewed, the problem loses much of its acuteness and shrinks into narrow limits. But still, it must be admitted, the problem as regards the fundamental nature of suffering and evil remains the same.

It is true that on any theory of extra-cosmic God- the problem remains insoluble. But the Upanishadic Reality is One without a second and the universe is its creative self-expression. The one indivisible Spirit has built out of itself infinitely divisible matter as the basis for the multiplicity of this world. In matter's inconscience are involved universal forces of Life and Mind which emerge in an ascending series of forms. It is the effort to make of recalcitrant matter a fit vehicle for higher and higher powers of Life and Mind that involves suffering. The suffering is there only in the superficial vital and mental consciousness, but behind reigns unruffled the joy of existence, urging upward the cosmic effort. Evil, too, the cause of moral suffering, is there, only because man strives yet unsuccessfully to merge himself in the universal. The problem of evil does not exist for the animal. From the depths of man's

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being comes the urge which compels him to grow into one with the collectivity, one with the universal. When man in his ascent recovers his identity with the universal, he transcends evil and becomes an instrument for its elimination in the world. Suffering and evil are only a temporary incident of the Spirit's stooping to conquer this material world. Man shall cease to be subject to them when, with the help of a higher godhead of his spiritual nature, he will uplift body, life and mind into their divine perfection.

But still the mind from its human standpoint may urge: "Why at all this scheme of things where life thrives only on life and Nature is red in tooth and claw? Why this awful travail of man's being, even though it be to deliver the godhead lying imprisoned in his nature?" Posed thus, the question becomes a part of the wider question, "Why and to what end should pure Being throw itself out into this universal movement?" A completely satisfactory answer to this question, an answer that cannot be translated in the terms of cause and end, can be reached only on a higher level than the mind. The mind may seize a fragment of its significance in its most liberated moments. "From Ananda," as the Upanishad says, "all existences are born, by Ananda they remain in being and increase, to Ananda they depart."

But now the question has to be answered, how out of the indivisible unity of pure Being do multiplicity and difference arise? The ineffable Being proceeds out of its status into various poises of itself, but ever on the inalienable basis of the primal status, which is always present as the all-comprehending continent of all poises of Being. Consciousness-Force moves forth into graded formulations of itself, into different forms of its energy and into various rhythms of its activity. Becoming active in its various modes, diffusing itself in multiple viewpoints in self-extension of Being, it initiates a progressing movement of self-absorption in its own modes of working, so that in the lower self-formulations the consciousness involved in the workings grows oblivious of itself in the whole, the consciousness involved in the multiple viewpoints or centres of Being appears separated from itself in the whole. Thus the appearance of multiplicity and separateness is to be traced in the last resort to the self-absorption of Consciousness-Force in its modes and centres. This

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formative and delimiting power of infinite Consciousness through which the One becomes the Many was, as Sri Aurobindo points out, called Maya by the ancient Seers. But later on this fateful word came to mean power of illusion, and the universe came to be represented as an illusion which was the creation of the Ignorance. The non-duality of the Self of the Universe was sought to be preserved by making the universe itself an illusory projection on the one and sole reality of the Self.

For the crux of the whole matter lies in this, that the mind cannot form an adequate conception of Spirit's unity. The mind's idea of unity is either quantitative or qualitative; even the unity of living organisms is somewhat hazy to it. That is why, in order to remain faithful to the perception and experience of unity underlying the multiplicity of the world, so many expedients have come to be tried, such, for instance, as an illusory universe, difference and non-difference or modified non-duality. If we conceive of the sole infinite Reality as a positive or negative Absolute incapable of relations, we shall have to bring in some principle of mind such as Cosmic Ignorance or Cosmic Karma from somewhere and fasten upon it responsibility for the universe. This has been the way of Illusionism and Nihilism. It is difficult for the mind, formed into shape by its dealings with a material environment, to grasp the unity of Spiritual Being that reproduces itself in infinite centres without abolition or diminution of its unity. But here is a fact—the fact of consciousness secretly present while not outwardly manifest, which supplies the clue to an understanding of the essential oneness of the universe; in it can be found the solution to the conundrum of finite out of the Infinite, of apparently divided beings out of the one indivisible Being; it will open the door to the understanding of how the Absolute can enter into relations and yet remain untrammelled by them. That is why the Upanishad says, "the Seers beheld the power of the divine Self hidden by its own modes of working."

It is evident that Sri Aurobindo uses the word Maya in a sense entirely different from that of the philosophical systems. He has restored to it the significance it has in the original Vedanta. There it is a power both of the knowledge and the Ignorance, that is, Vidya and Avidya. But the great Acharya of Illusionism knows it only as power of the ignorance. Sankara

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seems to intend by it some cosmic principle of Mind—not omniscient, not omnipotent, co-present but not in relation with Reality—which is compelled to realise its imaginings in Time and Space. But Idea or Thought, Imagination or Dream of such a Mind cannot account for the Divine Law at work in the universe. Only an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Mind can create and uphold the universe. And it is to that high status of Consciousness which forms in itself the seed of Creation and develops it according to unalterable Law, and which the Veda and the Upanishads refer to in their different symbolisms, that Sri Aurobindo gives the name of Super-Mind.

Mind is based on division while Super-Mind is based on unity. To our mental awareness thoughts are different from things; our idea and will float up from somewhere within our being and often clash with each other. They are not self-effective because the means and the result are outside them. Even the notion of our being is hazy to the mind because only knowledge based on distinction is vivid to it. In Super-Mind being is not broken up in this manner. In it, being, consciousness and will are three effective aspects of a single movement. Consciousness is the light of self-luminous Being and will its creative, self-fulfilling Force. Its Idea is consciousness of a Truth of Being, that is to say, it is the seed of a cosmic formulation, the origin of a universal law and process. Its Will is a seeing Force, working itself out in substance that is not foreign to itself, but which is another effective aspect of Being like itself.

Super-Mind is that intermediate poise of Consciousness-Force which pure and indivisible Being assumes in its descent into the material world. It is described in Rig-Veda as the Vast without the separating barrier, as the Truth of the Stability and the Truth of the Movement where the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Divinities that are different Names and Forms of the One, and who preside over the work of the evolutionary creation of this lower hemisphere of existence, take their birth. "All in each and each in all" is the formula of this poise of consciousness. Here there is multiplicity but not separateness. Through intervening gradations Super-Mind merges itself into the Cosmic Mind, where the Knowledge of unity completely recedes somewhere into the obscure background and the play of multiplicity

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on the principle of separateness and division occupies its entire active attention.

It follows that the universe is no illusion but a real creation of the Super-Mind. On the level of the Mind consciousness falls into the Ignorance, that is, the Knowledge of Oneness, retires, leaving free field for the principle of separateness. But mental, vital and material energies, perceived though they are in evolved, individualised units, are nonetheless universal forces. These three principles of our human existence are specialisations of one and the same Consciousness-Force, material substance-energy appearing as the final aspect of Supramental Being, life as the final aspect of the dynamic energy of the Super-Mind and mind as the final aspect of an apprehending and confronting, as contrasted with a comprehending and pervasive, movement of consciousness in the Super-Mind. But all being the play of one, all is in each and each is in all. So out of inconscient Matter emerge by a process of evolution the involved energies of Life and Mind.

In the forefront of this evolution is man. Is the urge of evolution to come to a stop with the development of mental consciousness in him, or will it sweep forward to the level of the Super-Mind? If it is to sweep forward, is man to be left behind and another creature to take his place and carry forward the evolutionary urge? This is for man the question of questions. The message of Sri Aurobindo is that man is that creature of destiny in whom the rising wave of consciousness shall reach the Supramental level. Man can realise the Supermind, "although to live in it and see and act from it is," as Sri Aurobindo says, "a victory that has not yet been made humanly possible." And it is Sri Aurobindo's mission to realise and create this possibility.

Such, in hurried outline, is the theme of the great work under consideration. It is evident that this is no mere abstract speculation but a grand synthesis of our knowledge and experience in the light of psychological discoveries made at high altitudes of our being. The Veda and the Upanishad have been waiting for centuries for the next forward and inevitable step. That step has now been taken. The result of that step is "The Life Divine."¹

¹ "The Life Divine," Vol. I. By Sri Aurobindo. (The Arya Publishing House, 63, College St., Calcutta). Price Rs. 6.

Folk-Songs of Bengal

BY DEVENDRA SATYARTHI

The folk-tale in my village, in the Punjab, touched the fringe of the traditional magic in old Bengal: the red and gold of childhood, I remember, awaited the story-teller with a growing interest: we actually wanted to see a person being transformed into a bee: it was the triumph of the woman of Bengal, or '*Dhaka Bangala*' to use the original term, the story-teller declared, and once you are changed into a fly, you would no more be a free person, you would have to obey her all your life.

And after many years, in 1927, when I came to Bengal on a musical tour, I remembered the words of the story-teller. What wonder, I thought, if music was a part of the magic of the fairy-land. The voice of Santal Muse, too, came to my ears, as the dark but merry Santals passed in front of 'Panth-nivas' at Santiniketan. But I had decided first to take to Bengali folk-song.

I have acquired a working knowledge of the Bengali language during my sojourns in Bengal; every time the singing voice of Bengal has greeted me.

The hopes and dreams of the people, their smiles and tears, have all contributed to the folk-songs of Bengal; the tears, perhaps, are the leading factor in more cases. Many a generation has come and gone, but the folk-song has always been there. The language changes like the skin of a snake; certain pictures may be sloughed off; alterations and additions have always been there as in the birth and growth of folk-song all the world over. Religion and mythology have both given a stimulus to the song of the people; history, too, seems to have touched it. But the soil for its growth has always been the people's life itself; the geographical conditions sometimes lend it a peculiar local colour.

A land of rivers, the river-side scene seems to be omnipresent in the folk-song of Bengal. There are rivers that flow from north to south; others flow from north-east to south-east;

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some flow from north-west to south-west; and still others that intervene from east to west, and, in some cases, from west to east. It is impossible to understand the position of riverside-scenes in the folk-song without actually seeing the rivers and streams themselves. And it is not necessary that the big names should appear; the little streams, little like the joys and sorrows of the people, appear again and again; the '*Purni nadi*,' the '*Khirae nadi*,' the '*Bhangla nadi*,' the '*Churni nadi*,' the '*Jalangi nadi*,' there may be hundred and one, or, perhaps, more. Some stream may be like the laughter of a village-girl; some like a shy bride; some like a sad widow; some like a sister calmly flowing towards her naughty brother. They flow, touching villages; fields greet them; boys and girls sing of them; again and again their waves inspire the village poet. The big rivers may be enraged so much as to wash away the country-side; the little streams are dearer for they are never so angry.

Nature becomes a member of the village life; her moods change. The trees and plants, in songs, are given human hearts; they speak with a human voice; they bear fruit as women bear children. Flowers smile shyly like brides. Birds near the village-streams sing and observe the play of village life. The little '*Baukatha kao*' bird has its own note reminding us of the story of its previous human birth. The cattle add to the riverside landscape; the cow and the bullock—the time-old partners of the joys and sorrows of the peasant.

The lullaby, the '*Chelle bhulano chhara*' or the '*Ghoom parani chhara*' to be more accurate, is, perhaps, as old as the child itself, not in language but in spirit. The mother has always been there to sing:

Sleep, sleep, sleep—
O, even the leaves of the tree
are now asleep.

The leaf, too, sleeps at night: this is what the mother tells the child emphasising the need of sleep.

The lullaby is the same all the world over, the same mother, the same child, the same sleep. The mother in Greece sang in the same strain; Garnett's *Greek Folk-Poesy* has it:

The lemon blossom slumber too,
The balsam on their stem.

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The Bengali lullaby urges:

The market-place is asleep,
The road is asleep;
Sleep goes rolling about.

A similar thought may again be found in a Greek lullaby:

The wind is sleeping on the plains;
The sun upon the height.

The sleep is given a human role; she may be wearing anklets on her feet; every night she comes as a god-mother. The sisters of sleep's mother and father, too, come in; thus sings the woman of Bengal:

The child sleeps not,
He looks with eyes half-opened;
O, I'll love the sisters of sleep's mother and father
If they bring slumber to my child's eyes.

The Greek lullaby has almost the same setting:

O hushaby, thy mother sings,
Yet thou liest awake, my dearie,
and wide thine eyes are open still,
Though mother's arms are weary
Come, dear sleep, take my boy.
Saint Mariana, lull to sleep;
Saint Sophia, bring slumber deep.¹

The sisters of sleep's mother and father, in the lullaby of Bengal, may soon develop into Harish Thakur, some little household god:

Sleep passes before every door;
Bring sleep to my child's eyes, O, Harish Thakur.

The song of sleep, in Bengal, still goes on:

The sleep of the market-place and the river-ghat
Wanders from one path to another.
I bought her for four cowries,
O, now come, sleep, to my jewel's eyes.

Rabindranath Tagore, in his *Lok Sahitya*², has gone deep into this song to bring out a lovely picture of universal appeal: "Late at night, when the market-place and river-ghat are lone, Sleep feels companionless and goes out in search of man while

¹ The Greek quotations are all from Garnett's *Greek Folk-Poetry*.

² Not yet translated into English.

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it is utter dark; she consents to come to the village housewife for four cowries—a very cheap rate indeed; but, had it been some other time, this little price would not have moved her at all."

One lullaby has a picture of the economic loss of the peasants of Bengal at the coming of the Marathas, the *Bargees* as they are called in the text, some time before the battle of Plassey (1757 A.D.):

The child has gone to sleep,
The street is all quiet,
Lo! here come the *Bargees* in our land;
The bulbuls have eaten up all the paddy ears,
Alas! how to pay the land-revenue?
The paddy is gone, the betel-leaves are gone,
What to do now? O, wait for some days more,
We have just sown potatoes.

As the child grows, the *Chhara* song, too, grows. Leaving aside the domain of sleep, it accompanies the child's nascent imagination. The mother's hand is there, but the child is expected to carry on the current independently. In some cases the child becomes the *genius loci*. The *Chhara* soon makes a world of pictures and dreams. Some seem to be in line and colour, some conspicuous in edginess, some may even be silhouette. *Tapur, tupur*, the rain falls: Nadia is under water: Shiv Thakur marries three brides in this weather: one bride cooks, one takes her lunch, the third one gets annoyed and leaves for her father's: and the child knows not what to call the main figure in the theme. Tomorrow comes Yamuna's marriage: lo! She leaves for her father-in-law's *via* Kajitala. The *Kaji* flowers, hitherto unseen, come before us: the ringing sound of Sitaram's bells fills the air; he takes rice and potatoes and goes to the Tripurni stream to quench his thirst: the girls are late plucking the *Oor* flowers: Har and Gauri leaving aside the realm of mythology mix with the peasantry, the child hurries to describe their field: *Har Gaurir Mathe re Bhai Paka Paka Dhan* (The paddy ears are ripening, brother, in the field of Har and Gauri). The child goes out for fishing and brings home to us a picture:

Full to its brim, the water of this stream ripples,
The sand on the bank, brother, slips under our feet;
Sun-scorched, our moon-like faces are to burst out in blood.

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As in other parts of India, so in Bengal, the moon is the child's maternal uncle. The mother calls the moon to come down and kiss her child. The moon would get the black cow's milk with the child; in a plate of gold he would be served rice. Shachi, the mother of Lord Gouranga, calls her child 'the moon of her home.' The moon does not descend, and only smiles from afar. The child insists on getting the moon. The mother finds herself unable to help the child, and she explains her position:

O, where am I to find the moon, my jewel?
O, it is not made of earth that I may make one for
Nor is it the fruit of a tree that I could pluck one
for you.

Here and there the child is depicted as a bridegroom; the sad bride speaks for herself:

My mother gave me fine bangles,
My father gave me a Sari;
My brother gave me a heavy push and said:
'Go to your father-in-law's.'

Again she thinks of her mother's tears:

O, my aunties, take my mother inside;
Lo! my palanquin trembles amain as she weeps.

"The *Chhara* songs are like the clouds," as Rabindranath Tagore has observed with a poet's aesthetic genius, "both are equally changeful, multi-coloured and ever-floating; the clouds help the growth of the plants, and the *Chhara* songs have always fertilised the child's mind."

Another off-shoot of the *Chhara* is connected with a series of ritualistic fasts, about one hundred in number, observed by the unmarried girls. The *Meyeli Brata Chhara*, as it is called, varies from place to place.

The *Dash Puttal Brata*, that falls every year in the month of Baisakh and is to be observed by a girl continuously for four years, has its own songs; the simple village-girls join to put their wish into words: "If I die and am born a girl again, I'll get a husband like Rama." Every girl thus likens herself to Seeta.

The *Magh Moral Brata*, observed in the month of Magh, has a beautiful song. *Moral* means 'headman.' It is, perhaps,

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the Magh itself worshipped as the precursor of Falgun, the spring month. It goes on for full one month till the dawn of spring. Every day the girls sing in chorus:

This year the *Magh* is great,
The winter is at its pitch!
O we'll open our song
When the sun, our maternal uncle,
Ascends the eastern fringe of the thatch.

Our skirts are full of flowers—
The red *Java* and the white *Bhati*;
The dew-wet beds of the *Doob* grass
Dew drops just pearls, lie here.

With the broken winnowing fan,
Filled with the remains of last night's ashes, we sit
When the birds in the grove would chirp,
Basking in the sun we'll be relieved from the chill.

Come on, elder sister, if you would see
The Dawn Queen going to her father-in-law's;
Her neck decked with a wreath of flowers.
The veil drawn over the head.

With faces towards the east,
And waist upwards unclothed,
We all sit here to observe our dear ritual.
All full of paddy are our parents' barns,
With the grace of the sun—our *Surya Thakur*.

It is a song with movement; apt to be the opening-scene of the fairy-play of the village-life. The Dawn Queen, the *Usha Rani*, like England's May Queen, seems to be a sister of the village-girls; she goes to her husband's place as every girl goes when her turn comes. The description of the Dawn Queen is very simple and homely. The broken winnowing-fan, filled with ashes, is a symbol of the unhearty send-off to the chill of winter. The Magh is dear to the girls, for its departure gives birth to the spring that brings new colour. The idea of the sun-worship, too, is there. The sun and the moon are brothers in folk-mythology; the sun, like the moon, is called maternal uncle in this song.

One *brata* is called *Senjuti* (lit. evening); a very dear and homely word, celebrated lately by Rabindranath Tagore as the name of one of his books. It is observed in the month of Agrahayan.

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One of its songs seems to remember the olden days when a highly glazed plate of silver or gold was used as a mirror:

In the palanquin I come,
in the palanquin I go,
and I gaze at my image
in the gold mirror.
The palanquin of my father's house
goes to my father-in-law's.
Coming and going it takes ghee and honey.

The songs are full of a series of prayers. Every girl wishes to have a brother lovely as moon-beams. Shiva and the Sun-god are both invoked to make her lucky enough to marry a literate young man: the bridegroom should be a prince; elephants should beautify the gate of his palace, his stalls should be full of horses, he should also possess hundreds of cows: she should soon be blessed with a son; one child should be in her lap, and one more in her arms, she prays: her husband should love her wholeheartedly, and the idea of marrying a second wife should not strike him at all.

Some of the songs exhibit the village-girl's hatred for a co-wife; here and there one may find a reference to the murder of a co-wife. There is an old fragment:

Mirror, O Mirror, may my husband not marry twice;
Squirrel, O Squirrel, peace be unto my husband,
Pray eat my co-wife's head.
O you ask me, 'What is this red colour that adorns my feet?'
O it is my co-wife's blood, I have murdered her.

Simple, homely drawings, called *Alpana*, are inevitable. The girls draw bracelets with a solution of powdered rice and pray for gold bracelets. They make kitchens, cow-sheds and dwelling places; every one of them should get a brick-worked kitchen, a cow-shed and a dwelling place after she has married, they pray.

The *Bhaduli Brata* is very interesting; it falls in August. It is not easy to trace the origin of the goddess Bhaduli. The *Alpana* drawings, connected with this *Brata*, make an antique chart: (1) the seven seas (2) the thirteen rivers (3) the sandy sea-beach (4) rafts (5) sea-fowls (6) the palm trees. Dr. Dinesh-chandra Sen, in his *Folk-Literature of Bengal*, observes that the *Bhaduli Brata* originated "when the Bengalis were at the height of maritime activities." The drawings of the chart are

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worshipped by the girls; they are invoked for the safe return of their relations gone on voyage. The goddess Bhaduli is sometimes believed to be the mother-in-law of Indra. When the rivers are full with new water and the sky is covered with the dark heavy monsoon clouds, the village-girls of Bengal sing in chorus:

River, O River, tell me whither you go?
Give me the news of my father and brother before you pass by.
And tell me how fare my husband and father-in-law.
Sea, O Sea, peace be unto thee, pray grant me what I say,
My brother is out for trade, may he come back today.
Raft, O Raft, thou dweller of the great sea,
Rescue my father and brother from every danger.
Sea-beach, O Sea-beach, recognize them with a smile as they pass by thee.
Keep watch on them, protect them, pray grant this boon to me.
Sea-fowls, ye Sea-fowls, answer my earnest query,
Pray tell me where you saw the ship that carries them on the sea.

To realise what songs mean to the marriage ceremony—the vividness of their appeal—one must survey the whole sweep of marriage-songs; every ritual has its own songs which are supposed to have an auspicious influence over the bride and the bridegroom.

The *Shahnai* pipe, connected with almost all celebrations is there; its notes, that create a peculiar pathos, serve as a background music to many of the marriage-songs.

Gauri and Har are beau ideals of bride and bridegroom in most cases. Har, or Shiva, we may be sure, is also ridiculed for his being so much older than Gauri.

The drummer, along with the *Shahnai*-player, goes on. I remember a song addressed to the drummer; he is requested to make a rapid rhythm. The *Shahnai*-player makes a monotonous music; but perpetually it emerges afresh every time; one cannot but mark it with interest as one understands that it is entwined with the heart of the bride who is to bid good-bye to her parents' village, where she spent all these years, to go to her father-in-law's in the bridal palanquin. I remember a palanquin-song that introduced me to the pathetic strain that moves the bride as she leaves her old home for a new one:

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"Cutting the mango tree, brother,
You have made a beautiful palanquin;
O, I won't go away, brother, in this palanquin."

"Just take from me this vermilion, sister,
For the parting of your hair;
Pray get into the palanquin and go."
"O, I won't go away, brother, in this palanquin."

The songs, connected with the Durga Puja festival, are inimitable. Giriraj (Himalaya), his wife Menaka, his daughter Uma, and his son-in-law Shiva, the characters of these songs, are of purely mythical origin. But they do not lack in human traits. Menaka is just a woman of Bengal, we can recognize her in the countryside. Giriraj is reticent; his wife longs for her daughter throughout the year. Tradition has taught the people to invite their married daughters for this festival. Every girl comes to her mother like Uma, whose arrival at her parental house marks the first day of the festival. The *Agomani* (lit. welcome) songs are sung with great joy; most of these songs portray the pathetic condition of Menaka in Uma's absence; she asks her husband to go to Kailasa, Shiva's abode, to fetch Uma. In one song she is seen alarmed at the news of Shiva's wish to sell Uma's bridal clothes and ornaments to purchase intoxicating drugs for himself. Another song portrays her while telling her husband of how Uma came to her in her dream at night and how she soon fled away; it is no fault of hers, she says, she has truly inherited the stone-like heart of her father who is a mountain. "In the month of Ashwina (October-November) the whole atmosphere of Bengal rings with the *Agomani* songs, sung by the *Bairagis*, which describe the meeting of Uma with her mother; and there is no Bengali to whom they do not appeal most tenderly The 'shephalika' flower falls to the ground in the season of these songs."¹

Slowly surging from within, Menaka's song moves us:

O Giriraj, when wilt thou bring my Uma to me?
O tell me soon what I ask thee;
Why art thou so mute—no words?
I am simply dying in her absence.

Alas! my Uma is not with me.
She is my only daughter—

¹ Dr. Dineshchandra Sen: *History of Bengali Language and Literature* pp. 243-44.

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None else to address me, calling
"Mother, O mother dear?"

Alas! how unfortunate am I;
My son-in-law is a *faqir*,
Uma, my daughter, is like a sucking girl, I feel,
With tears in her eyes she must be crying there.
Shiva has no father, nor mother,
O, who is there to bestow affection on Uma?
A golden creeper is she—that moon-faced Uma, my daughter.

Shiva comes to take Uma back before the promised day. Menaka feels sad. The *Vijoya*, or the farewell, songs are saturated with tears. Menaka sheds tears like a common village-woman:

Ah me, Uma will have to go away today!
O, why did the ninth night of the moon
dawn into the day of the tenth moon?
The period of Uma's stay with me is
the eighth and the ninth day of the moon;
Ah me, Shiva has come to take her back
even prior to the tenth day of the moon!

"The first flower that blossomed on this earth was an invitation to the unborn song."¹ Flowers have had a profound attraction for man from time immemorial; again and again he has sung of them; religion recognized them much later, after the sanguine lover had compared his sweetheart's face to a fresh dewy flower for the first time. The folk-song of Bengal is rightly proud of the lotus—the *Padma*. But who can say if the first folk-song of Bengal celebrated the lotus rather than the other flowers of the soil?

As in other parts of India, so in Bengal, the *Baramasi*², or the song of the twelve months of the year, has been a popular mode of expression.

"The sky of Bengal, clear and transparent in the early spring, foggy in winter, and full of clouds in summer, ever changing its aspects from month to month, cannot fail to strike a keen observer of nature with the clearly defined lines of its varied weather. The various seasons produce different results on the human system, on the paddy-fields, and on the variegated flowers and leaves of trees with which the villages abound. Life

¹ Rabindranath Tagore: *Fireflies*.

² In U. P. it is *Baramasa*, and *Baramanha* in the Punjab.

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here changes, as it were, from month to month, and Nature picturesquely disports herself on the stage of this beautiful country through the twelve sub-divisions of the year."¹ The heroine of the *Baramasi* songs is generally a deserted wife; she addresses the image of her heart's lord, as presented by her memory, telling him her joys and sorrows in every month of the year. Needless to say that these songs have turned rather conventional in most cases.

Every occupation gives birth to certain original tunes. The boatman has his own song—the *Bhatial*. *Bhata* means 'the down stream.' The boatman, it seems, first originated this song while going along with the current of water when he was free from plying the oar. East Bengal is the home of the *Bhatial* songs. The songs, passed on as *Bhatiali* in the gramophone records now-a-days, are not always folk-songs; nor does their music correspond always to the original *Bhatial* tune.

The religious mendicant, called *Baul*, goes about from village to village singing the mystic songs to the accompaniment of his one-stringed instrument—the *ektara*. God to him is "the Man of the heart." The folk-song of Bengal can very well be proud of the *Baul*—the singer of mysticism. One should actually see the *Baul* and hear from his lips the rhythmic songs, most of which are extempore. "I can love God only in case He really needs me," he says with the assurance of a mystic. His voice is loud; and when his song reaches its pitch, he cannot but dance. Rabindranath Tagore, in one of his songs, has compared the roaring cloud to the *Baul*: *Badal Baul Bajae Bajae Bajae re Ektara*. I have always remembered a suggestive refrain of a *Baul* song: "*Bol Man Amar Baba Kothae Gailo*" (Mother, tell me whither has gone my father?); the child, in the next lines, tells the mother of how the people sometimes tell him that his father has burnt himself alive, and how on another occasion they tell him that he plunged into deep waters and never came out.²

The peasant has his own songs; the solemn occasions of his life—the seed-time and the harvest—enrich his imagination.

¹ Dr. Sen: *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 24.

² Rabindranath Tagore's *Creative Unity* gives a study of the *Baul* philosophy in a chapter called, 'An Indian Folk-Religion'; *Religion of Man* includes an authoritative essay on the *Bauls* and their songs by Prof. Kshitimohan Sen as an Appendix.

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The lament of the wounded doe is a favourite theme of the Indian folk-song. The wounded doe may symbolise the whole suffering peasantry; the words of the doe, addressed to the archer in a pathetic strain, represent a genuine piece of Bengali folk-poetry:

Lo! there grazes the doe and the archer seeks for
game; he hits her suddenly with his sharp arrow.
Thus speaks the poor innocent doe—

"What a deep wound, brother archer, thy arrow has
given me!

I am but a forest-doe and owe to none;
But my delicious flesh and blood
Turn the whole world against me.
What a deep wound. . . .

"My child remains unsuckled!
No more will I see his moon-like face!
No more shall please him by words of endearment!
What a deep wound. . . .

"Mourn I shall not for my own death;
But what answer, brother archer,
Wilt thou render to the gods above?
What a deep wound. . . .

"Whenever my child aflame with hunger
Will cry calling, 'O mother, mother dear!
That cry will surely strike at the hearts of the gods.
What a deep wound. . . .

"O, my friends of the flock, tell ye my mate,
'Nurse my child with love and care,
No more in life shall we see each other—
The archer's shot ends all my hopes and dreams!
What a deep wound. . . .

"Who is that smith, O who is that smith,
The maker of this deadly arrow?
Extinct be his family from this world!
What a deep wound. . . ."

The longer ballads, too, are there. Sri Chandra Kumar De's services were invaluable in gathering ballads from East Bengal; Dr. Dineshchandra Sen's *Eastern Bengal Ballads*, published by the Calcutta University, are based on his collections. Romain Rolland's note of appreciation of the Mymensingh Ballads is noteworthy:

"The subject it deals with touches all mankind; the differences with European stories are much more social than racial. The good aesthetic taste that is felt in most of

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these ballads is also one of the characteristics of popular imagination in many of our Western countries: "*Womeder Wehmuth*," as a beautiful song of Goethe's, put into music by Beethoven, expresses it, 'The pleasure of tears.' It is true that with us French people, the people of Gaul, it reacts against this with our bold and boisterous joyful legends. Is there none of this kind of thing in Indian literature? From where have these great primitive epics come? It seems very likely that they have always come from some poetic genius whose invention has struck the popular imagination. But the question is, how much people deform his idea in putting it into the shape in which we find it? Which is the part of the collaboration of the multitude in this work of re-casting, which is continuous and spontaneous? Rarely has anyone had the opportunity to seize an epic, as one might say, on the lips of the people who have given birth to it, before writing had fixed it in some shape, as you and Mr. Chandra Kumar have succeeded in doing in this case."

The texts of these ballads, as Dr. Sen himself tells us in the Preface, were found strewn at random in a quite unconnected way.

Dr. Abanindranath Tagore's *Banglar Brata* (1919), in Bengali, gives a study of the *Brata* songs and a number of *Alpana* designs. Mr. Mansuruddin's *Haramani*, in Bengali, offers many *Baul* songs; Rabindranath Tagore, in a Foreword to this book, tells us, how he himself had come across the *Baul* songs. Many songs are connected with the folk-dances. Mr. G. S. Dutt's efforts to revive the folk-dances of Bengal have gone a long way; the Bratachari movement started by him has achieved an inter-provincial importance.

The village-poets, called *Kavivalahs*, who once played a remarkable part in the history of Bengali literature and whose extempore competitions and satirical songs seemed to capture the imagination of even the people of the towns, have lost their office. Some of their songs, however, have added to the stock of folk-songs.

The realm of folk-songs in Bengal is wide like Bengal herself. All points are touched, from birth to death. Work and leisure have contributed separately. It is Bengal herself that talks to you in these songs in a simple homely tone. The folk-songs of Bengal may yield a full epic of village-life, with a story simple and enduring like the earth, and the characters which grow like the paddy of Bengal.

Wardha, Delhi, and Poona

BY B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA¹

I. WARDHA

When for the first time Gandhi appeared on the scene of the Congress as a full-blown leader, he was, by the towering height of his personality, head and shoulders above the rest of the Congress notables, leaders and chiefs of the day. There were secret rumblings in the inmost recesses of the hearts of one and all of these. The one man who could not entertain his accession to power with any feeling of jealousy, made way for him by departing this world on the 31st July 1920. Lokamanya's strength and spirit passed into Gandhi and gave an added interest and weight to his cult of Non-violence which it was that invested his leadership with a halo—a new charm. From that day to this Gandhi has remained the acknowledged leader of Indian politics. It may be that Indian politics at one time centred round a no-vote campaign or a no-tax campaign, council-entry and deadlocks, salt Satyagraha and Round Table Conference, Provincial Autonomy and acceptance of office. Through all these variations of *Raga* and *Pallavi* and *Alapana*, the Sruti of the music of Indian Politics remained the same,—it was the constructive programme that gave a fundamental unity to the inevitable, but passing, changes in the complementary programme of aggression. This constructive programme was only Non-violence in action.

Gandhi's philosophy, at this distance of time, it is easy for us to discover, had its background in the great European war of 1914-1918, its effect and sequelae on Indian affairs, and the rivers of blood that flowed in France and Flanders. The outbreak of the second European war within two decades of the last has come as a real complication of Indian politics. From the year 1927 when the Congress met in Madras up to date, there have been repeated and emphatic avowals that "India shall not take part in the 'next war.'" This long apprehended conflagration began

¹ Written on August 5.

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on the 1st September 1939 in all its grim horror. The Congress lost no time in declaring its usual attitude and demanding a statement of war aims from the British Government. Was it to free Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Danzig? If so, what should Britain do earlier to India, whose freedom has been outraged by her for over a century? Neither the Viceroy nor any British Statesman has so far paid heed to the categorical demand made by the Congress. On the outbreak of the war, having avowed the object of the war as the liberation of oppressed nationalities, responsible statesmen have since pleaded that their own war aims were not as yet determined, and later gently shifted the emphasis of those aims to Europe. His Majesty the King, combating the charge of Imperialism, said on the last Empire Day (May 24): "We, the *free* people of the world cast that word back in their teeth." Of course Imperialism affects only the slave peoples—not *the free*. Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Churchill and Lord Halifax specifically confined the war aims to Europe and the maintenance of freedom for the nations that are the denizens of that continent. India was nowhere. What was worse, India was declared to be a belligerent country without consulting the Indian Legislatures or the Indian political organisations. The Congress was a little concerned over this cold neglect, yea, this wanton affront meted out to her.

Month after month, nay fortnight after fortnight, its Working Committee met and passed various resolutions and took suitable steps to implement them. The insolent refusal to answer the Congress demand of a statement of war aims left it no alternative but to advise the Congress Provincial Ministries to resign. That was a great step, doubtless. Although at first the British appeared to shed tears over it, yet they soon became openly callous and took full advantage of the fissiparous forces in the country, whose reconciliation, they urged, was a condition pre-requisite to the conferment of freedom on India.

While thus matters were dragging on their weary course, France fell on the 17th June '40 and the news reached the Working Committee of the Congress by the Radio. It looked as though the situation was changing almost every minute. What would happen to Britain, when after the rape of the freedom of Czecho-Slovakia, Danzig and Poland, after the conquest of Norway, and the surrender of Denmark Holland and Belgium

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—when, on the top of all these events, France raised the white flag and sued for a cessation of hostilities?

The prospect of internal disorder and external invasion darkened the political sky, and a sense of the proximity of war in all its reality and horror loomed before the Working Committee and gave rise to conflicting thoughts, programmes and policies. The Government of India had just then promulgated a scheme of Civic Guards, without however publishing the details. There appears to be a widespread resentment of the scheme as a slow, but substantial addition—though under the guise of Defence,—a scheme really of war effort. This led the Bombay Government to announce that for some time to come intending entrants had better not send in their applications. The belief that the scheme itself might be withdrawn or suspended began to take possession of men's minds. In any case the issue before the Working Committee was whether the Congress should participate in the scheme. Gandhi was not clear that it should be summarily rejected. He would rather await publication of details, for the scheme was ostensibly one of Defence, and Defence was one of our duties. But Defence—what kind of Defence was it to be? Armed?—then, no; non-violent? then the Congress had a great opportunity of organising India's defence on non-violent lines and prepare the country for the abolition of the Army under Swaraj. Swaraj itself was no distant contingency. Whatever might happen, the Empire, as such, was doomed and India should prepare even from then to rely upon her own resources, determine her own direction of progress, frame her own attitude and develop her own technique of defence.

In this view Gandhi initiated discussion with the question of non-violence and made the problem before the Working Committee single-pointed—not merely because the Civic Guards would be unobjectionable, if from the Congress side they were only an enlarged edition of the Congress Volunteers, subject to Congress Pledges—notably of non-violence,—nor because of the future Swaraj and its Defence organisation on non-violent lines, but because the plea of co-operation, re-acceptance of office and possibly participation in a Central National Government would be out of court, if our Ministers were going back to Government to conduct the war,—the war as such with all its sanguinary destructiveness, its confusion and carnage.

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Accordingly Gandhi began to pour forth his soul into the discussions and charge the proceedings of the Working Committee with a tension, which baffled its ready judgment. Time was flying. Press correspondents and the public were impatient. What was the secret that had to be so carefully guarded? Political secrets like those of lovers, which appear to require careful guarding at one time, become public property ere long and create a wonder all round that they should ever have been kept under lock and key for so long. The secret of Wardha between the 17th and 21st of July, which was sedulously guarded from the Press, has since become public property,—in that Gandhi has been absolved from all decisions of the Working Committee relating to the protection of the land from internal disorder as well as external invasion. It would be just as well, therefore, for the public to realise that this request of Gandhi for absolution was the one secret of Wardha. He has made his demand for non-violence in emphatic and unambiguous terms, and the Wardha resolution of the Working Committee is now not only a chapter of history but the very pivot around which all discussions in a critical period centred for over four weeks.

Gandhi claimed at Wardha that the Congress had been able to present to Europe, wallowing in the mire of violence, a weapon to take the place of brute force in the arbitrament of international disputes. He divided the non-violence of the day under two heads, one as a weapon of the weak, and the other as a weapon of the strong. Hitherto the Congress had employed the former. Now came the opportunity for it to employ the latter,—at a time when there was imminent danger of internal disorder and external invasion. If Congressmen could have tested the efficacy of non-violence in their struggle against Britain and as a result thereof created an unprecedented awakening of the masses, if at the same time they had not met with like results in internal disorders and internecine strifes, the blame rested at their own doors, and the non-violence that had to be employed was the non-violence of the strong. Here lay, therefore, the parting of the ways. Would the Working Committee shirk the responsibility and betray the trust reposed in them at the psychological moment, or sustain its proud record of two decades in spite of the dangers and difficulties incidental to the choice? The question of acceptance of office, Gandhi

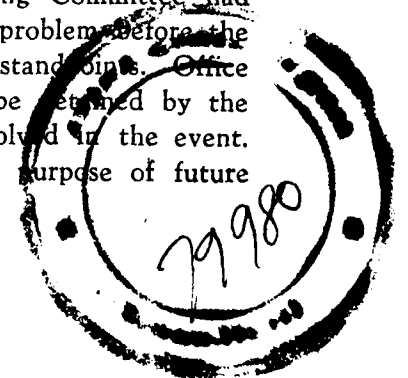
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thought, was inseparably connected with this problem, and he was clear that power should not be sought once again until the Congress had acquired non-violent control over the masses. Accordingly it followed that the Congress would discard the use of arms in repelling foreign attack and create a peace army, which would become 'a living wall' against the invader. This, in short, was Gandhi's lead, this his theme at Wardha. It raised a new issue for the first time, created a certain consternation and demanded an immediate decision. The Wardha resolution was the result.

The developments at Wardha have taken people by surprise. Friends ask in real wonderment why the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress should have spent five days in metaphysical discussions when the claims of politics were obviously overriding. Is this the time for philosophical discourses and debates on the place of non-violence in the coming polity of India, when France has had to surrender and acquiesce in an abject truce, when the fate of Britain herself is hanging in the balance, when no one knows where India will be led after once she has hitched her wagon to the star of England, when the question of office re-acceptance was believed to be the burning topic of the day, when, too, the parrot utterances of Mr. Amery and the effete oratory of Lord Linlithgow should have been taken up in deadly earnest and torn to pieces? Who really initiated this argumentation on the issue of non-violence?

No apology is needed for not dealing with the goody-goody political pronouncements of the day. The fate of India does not hang on them. As Byron said, 'in native hands and native swords' lies the only hope of the nation. The sword of Greece might have been of steel but that of India is Satyagraha based upon truth and non-violence. The fact is that, as Gandhi said at the Second Round Table Conference, he is "under no illusion that liberty could be obtained by argumentation or even by negotiation." It is not as if the Working Committee had no sense of actualities at Wardha. But the problem before the country had to be approached from multiple standpoints. Office resumption is all very well. We need not be detained by the constitutional or the politico-legal issues involved in the event. What is of real importance is the plan and purpose of future administration.

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The Indian Congress has all along suffered from unpreparedness. It was not ready with its programmes and personalities to take up the Ministry three years ago. We stumbled into it and had to fumble through it. Tomorrow the Central Government will have to be handled. There is a talk of Provisional Government, some would say parallel Government. The Congress has indeed been a parallel Government, as it were, for some years in the country. Dealing with the charge that Congress was trying to run a parallel Government, Gandhi said at the Second Round Table Conference that "well would he endorse the charge if it could be run by non-violence, eschewing the dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet and the spear."

When therefore Gandhi raised the question of non-violence at Wardha, this must have been at the back of his mind. He had stated his position clearly in Delhi in September 1938 at the time of the Munich Pact, saying that he would not be serviceable to the Congress if the Congress was thinking of utilising the war for striking a bargain. In 1939 he made it still more clear that the co-operation he was offering to Government was moral, not material. Today, in the situation that is before us, we see that we shall be called upon to take large decisions in the near future. Even in 1931 Gandhi said: "Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what the Congress stands for. It stands for liberty—call it by whatever name. A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the sword, the spear, or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say 'No' and the nation is today learning to say 'No.'"

And, in concluding, Gandhi said in London: "India will not be baffled. For heaven's sake, give me, a frail man 62 years gone, a little bit of chance. Find a little corner for me and the organisation that I represent."

These words he addressed to the English people in 1931. Today when he is over 70 years, he is addressing the very words to his countrymen. This patriarch of three score and ten sees a vision before him—one in which, after the slaughter of man by fellowman in Europe which claims to be more civilised than Asia, he has a chance of realising his long cherished ambition of carving out a State, not on the slippery foundation of violence

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but on the solid rock of non-violence and love and self-sacrifice. To this end he has been preaching the need of a 'peace army,' one that can throw itself before the onrush of the enemy and convert his heart and turn his victory into a defeat and its 'defeat' into a victory. That has been his advice—or at any rate, his wish in respect of Poland; Czecho-Slovakia, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, France and England. How could Gandhi, who gives this advice to England, based upon the sight of these horrors—infructuous even so—of Europe, ask for, or be a party to, the formation of a Government of India based upon violence pure and unadulterated? We have turned a deaf ear during the past three years to his exhortation for a peace army. We have not responded to his call. The Congress had virtually suspended the revival of the Hindustan Seva Dal after 1934. There was a plea for its revival at Haripura and after. It was then that Gandhi pleaded for the peace army. The Congress that was indifferent to his appeal is enthusiastic today over the rehabilitation of the Congress Volunteer organisation. Look at the well-trimmed dresses of the youth who form the Volunteer Corps. The U.P. contingent walked into the President's camp at Ramgarh and gave salute to the Rashtrapati. It made a great impression upon the youth of the country whose drooping spirits it helped to revive. Other Provinces have followed suit. The mind of the youth is still after adventure which is undisciplined and awaits sublimation. But on Gandhi's part he has to face facts as he sees them. His mind works under the spell of visions. That is why he is able to work miracles. Practical difficulties and political standpoints do not baffle him. When he gets into grips with the fundamentals, it matters little to him what impediments are presented by the accessories.

This issue of forming the Government of India based on non-violence which is unadulterated and absolute, was raised therefore at the outset by Gandhi with a full sense of responsibility based, however, upon loyalty to his own principles. What should his colleagues say and do? They are men of affairs. They have to face their own facts. Ministers and politicians cannot live in a land of dreams. The Utopia is not for them, nor is the administration of a country an experiment in self-governance. Rather, it is self-government itself in conducting which the Ministers must stand or fall upon the vote of the

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demos. They fully appreciate the force of the step in evolution sponsored by Gandhi. Nor is the Congress the only body to reckon with. Although the Congress has claimed to speak for the whole nation—not merely by its composition but by its services to it, yet, at this very moment, the Congress would gladly wait to take other organisations with it in its march to freedom. Would these organisations acquiesce in this new experiment of a non-violent organisation of the Government of India? These are the various questions which subjectively any man of affairs would visualize before himself.

But there is another aspect of the matter. Even objectively viewed, the question can be presented on the side of the 'mundane Ministers' effectively. Dealing with the issue of regiments and armies, what did Gandhi say at the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931, ask they. "The Congress," he asserted, "was capable of shouldering all responsibilities that flow from responsible Government, i.e., from a complete control of Defence and external affairs with, of course, necessary adjustments." "The Army," he pointed out, "was really an Army of occupation, and its members—no matter to what race they belonged—were all foreigners because he could not speak to them, they could not approach him openly, and they were taught to regard Congressmen as other than their own countrymen." "The whole Army must pass under Indian control in its entirety, but the Army would not accept my command, nor the Commander-in-Chief—nor the Sikhs—nor the Rajputs. India knew how to defend herself. Mussalmans and Gurkhas, Sikhs and Rajputs can defend India. The Rajputs are responsible for a thousand victories, not one." Was Gandhi thinking all the while of disestablishing the armies of the military type altogether? That does not appear to be the case. But well-nigh a decade has passed since the Round Table Conference sat, and while Gandhi's mind and spirit have travelled over a century during this short interval, to his colleagues the decade appears as but a day and they have covered no progress in their ideas of non-violence. They fully endorse and wholly adhere to the view that, in our struggle with the foreigner, our abiding principle is non-violence, but they feel that, as practical politicians, they must discharge their trust according to their lights. This is the issue between the two sides, that was holding the field at Wardha.

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Having studied in outline the different standpoints involved in the so-called crisis in the Congress, we must now proceed to answer some of the questions that have been raised by well-meaning friends of the Congress in this connection. Does Gandhi believe that the country is prepared for this experiment which really is the consummation and climax of his ideas? Have all people, in his view, imbibed his high spirit which alone can justify his experiment and without which it would be hazardous to contemplate it? One might as well ask when professors examine candidates and declare them to have passed the test, is it suggested that the candidates are equal to the professors in knowledge and learning? No; you pass your Matriculation examination if you get a certain percentage of the marks in each subject, and on the total, 35 per cent generally entitles one to a pass. That is to say, while the candidate's knowledge is 35 per cent, his ignorance is 65 per cent. And even so only 22 per cent of the candidates are passing the test. There is therefore a heavy shortage in the number of passes and an equally heavy shortcoming in the measure of knowledge. Yet the Universities run, the professors examine, the parents educate, the boys struggle. Judged by the standards of a University, of which all of us are ardent votaries, where is anything wrong in urging that, if the Indian nation has passed its examination in Non-co-operation in 1920, passive resistance and civil disobedience in 1921, and graduated in Satyagraha in 1930 and 1932, it may attempt an M. A. or Honours Course in the self-same Satyagraha in 1940 or 1941? Should we not hurry up while yet the founder of this new University of Life is alive, while we can receive guidance and a post-graduate course from him? It is no use saying that, when the Satyagraha army of non-violence is not ready, we cannot dissolve and disestablish the 'Duragraha' army of violence. It is true that, even as nature abhors vacuum, politics too does abhor it and something must rush in to fill it. But if no attempt at all is made to prepare that something which must be the substitute, the dread of vacuum must always remain there. It is the old story of learning to swim without dipping into the waters. The two processes must go on *pari passu*. In fact both are the same process with but different stages.

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An analogy like this implies that there should be a give and take in the transitional period. Of course, there must be. The politicians can ask for the Police and relax the Military or *vice versa*. Gandhi himself is not against the Police for a while, and will perhaps be prepared to consider the question of Military as well as any interim measures, *but the principle must be conceded in unequivocal language and unambiguous spirit*. The resolution of the Working Committee has indeed attempted some such thing. It has re-affirmed its faith in non-violence and expressed its fears about the disestablishment of the Military. It is easy to describe this position in witty language as a person facing East but walking West. Parodying is a cheap pastime, particularly in politics, but spiritual advancement is not accelerated by sallies of wit or humour.

If the process of transition from violence to non-violence in national affairs is to be effected smoothly, you cannot get it by a kaleidoscopic shake so as to place all our strategy in a new design. We must therefore prevail upon Gandhi to view our failings with sympathy and exercise his judgment so as not to allow sternness of justice to stint its generosity. After all he is the Doctor and we are the Hospital. Without him we cannot get his treatment, without us he may pursue his experiments nevertheless, but not on the nation-wide scale.

During the few years left to him, it is his duty to give, and our right to get, his best for the world. Let us not exaggerate the effects of the Wardha resolution and get into a panic, saying that hereafter the constructive programme is doomed. The Working Committee has only hesitated to make a revolutionary change in its existing policy; it has not reversed its policy. Non-violence is still its cardinal pivot. The constructive programme is still non-violence in action. Panic always emanates from a spirit of exaggeration, and those who exaggerate their hopes or fears are those that ardently feel for a cause. It is the orthodox wing, therefore, that is apt to fall an easy prey to this self-delusion. Our failures in the past must be an added incentive to an augmentation of effort in the future, not to a feeling of despair, despondency or disdain. When the new programme was started, it converted the Congress to it. The higher rungs of this programme will doubtless take the Congress to still higher altitudes. But as Gandhi himself stated, there is a spirit

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of violence in the air. We know that, if chaos and anarchy ensue in the near future, the Congress Ministries, if in office, will have to resort to naked violence which would be destructive of our hopes once for all.

If the Congress means to build anew, it may have to build from bottom to top and therefore have to restrain itself considerably. The times are bad enough and worse times may be in store, and the very reason for taking up office to control anarchy may be good enough reason for not discrediting ourselves through office. Gandhiji is positive that the way to non-violence does not lie through office. It is his belief that, if we had had enough of non-violence, even the British could not have prevented a hearty understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims.

May we not humbly call Gandhi's attention to the wise, the prophetic, words he had spoken at the conclusion of the sitting of the second Round Table Conference in London in 1931, in pleading for the recognition of the Congress organisation? "You distrust that organisation though you may seemingly trust me. Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organisation of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organisation and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also."

Descending to the cold light of reason from the warm heights of sentiment, people soon began to realise that, although the Wardha resolution stated that it absolved Gandhi in regard to decisions of the Working Committee on the Military and the Police, yet the absolution claimed would be an all-round one including leadership of Satyagraha. Gandhi could not lead the movement with such a resolution on record. What then would follow? Would no Satyagraha be possible unless the Congress was agreeable to the elimination of the Indian Army? It is true that even from then Gandhi began to feel, and everyone else began to feel, that India was independent, and, feeling so, she must order her affairs on a truly non-violent basis—not that Gandhi must say what he would do when he was in power—for he could not say that—but that we had all to make a beginning even from then, placing the matter before the people and canvassing their support for the new idea. If the Civic Guards were to be armed, they at any rate were to be freed from the pledges of Congress Volunteers—of non-violence.

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Where then, was anything common between Gandhi and his dissentient colleagues?

After all, non-violence is a direction, not a destination. It is an atmosphere, not an attainment. There will be immediately no more perfect non-violence than there is of truth and purity, justice and generosity. These are perfect positives in a world of negatives, and all that we can do in our short lives is to leave the atmosphere purer and kindlier than we found it, in the humble view that all purification is corrosion one step removed, even as all science is ignorance one step removed.

The fact is that we are handling a new science. We are not acquainted with the elements of it. We are to solve problems which thousands of years and hundreds of experiments have not been able to solve.

Into our midst has come a new scientist and we have helped to constitute his laboratory. Let us labour together and make new discoveries which will yet save Europe from eternal perdition. Our scientist is not merely a man of science; he is a well-known expert in Art and it is thus that he has built this great work of Art called the Indian National Congress. We who have co-operated with him in raising this monument shall not be parties to its destruction. And if we desire the leadership of such a rare emanation of the Divine, we must deserve it. Let us therefore at this crucial moment indulge neither in despair nor in derision. There is no reason why with a little more patience on one side, and a little more forbearance on the other, the Congress may not be made the instrument it is destined to be, to carve out a new world hastening the realisation of the poet's dream:

The Bridal time of Law and Love,
The gladness of the World's release,
When, war-sick at the feet of peace,
The Hawk shall nestle with the dove.

II. DELHI

The urgency of affairs based upon the surprises of the European war demanded a meeting of the A.I.C.C., and a confirmation of the new step taken by the Working Committee, coupled with a re-examination of the bearings of the problem in its many aspects—particularly in relation to the Ramgarh

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resolution. It was almost felt that the Working Committee had to sit from day to day, and, if it did not exactly do this, it met, within a fortnight of its dispersal from Wardha, at Delhi on the 3rd of July.

In Delhi the old difficulties presented themselves with reinforced emphasis. Gandhi again brought the question of non-violence to the fore. Pointed attention had been drawn by him to the confusion prevailing amongst Congressmen as to the interpretation of their last statement made in Wardha on 21st June. Certain newspapers and individuals, including Congressmen, had begun to believe that the Committee had given up non-violence as an integral part of Congress policy, in spite of two clear paragraphs in the Wardha resolution emphatically and unequivocally declaring that policy. Accordingly Gandhi felt that the Working Committee should re-state the position to the effect that it exclusively relied upon Congress Volunteers, pledged to non-violence and to Congress discipline, in order to deal with internal disorders to the extent that was possible, and all co-operation of our volunteers and Civic Guards with other similar organisations must be on a non-violent basis. On the question of meeting external invasion, Gandhi owned that the Working Committee never had any occasion to determine the Nation's duty up till then, but, considering the proved futility of violence to defend the Nations of Europe, he felt that there was sufficient indication for the Working Committee for coming to a decision. But till that hour came he felt that the Working Committee must keep an open mind. In this view it followed that Congressmen must not have anything to do with Military training or activities calculated to make India military minded. And therefore the Working Committee, he felt, could not but view with grave alarm the attempt made in an organised manner to prepare India for military defence.¹

In the opinion of Gandhi, if India were free and independent without any army, she would have no fear of external aggression, and the best defence that a free India could put up,

¹ Let it be remembered that we are talking of the beginning of the Delhi meeting and not the end, and therefore the military defence contemplated herein related to Civic Guards and not the military aid promised for India's defence in the Delhi resolution.

if the people accepted the Congress policy, would be to cultivate friendliness with the whole world. To invest crores of money on men, money and munitions, however, would itself induce a foreign attack. The obvious fact was that the so-called preparations for the defence of India—costly and elaborate—were intended merely to help Britain and could not help India in a real sense. No secret was made of the Congress claim to be wholly friends with the British people. The very non-violence policy of the Congress demanded nothing but goodwill towards them. But to turn to account such friendliness and goodwill in the best manner possible, India must be free from her bondage and be made the master of her resources of men and money. It was on these lines that Gandhi initiated the Delhi discussions.

Here, however, we must invite attention to one important event which had transpired between Delhi (July 3) and Wardha (June 17), and that was the publication of Gandhi's famous "Letter to every Briton." We shall revert to this matter presently, but now proceed to a consideration of the Delhi deliberations.

Delhi was but the continuation of Wardha. No one had suspected that a call would be sent to Gandhi by the Viceroy so soon after the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee. The interview with the Viceroy on June 29 was reported to be lengthy in duration and, therefore, must have been detailed in character. The discussions at Delhi were themselves prolonged, but, really, when the last dice was to be cast in the game of politics, surely it will be agreed that the throw must be well deliberated upon.

The initial difficulty arose from the fact that Gandhi was very firm on his ideal of a non-violent State. The issue was to him no longer a theoretical one. India, in his view, could no longer be hitched to the star of Britain which was wedded to violence and warfare. If the Indians, after being disarmed from the year 1877—i.e., for over a generation—were to resume their long demanded weapons, their whole mind would travel along a future strewn with the blood of their enemies and themselves. Should India then choose a bloody path or a bloodless one? Her independence, to Gandhi, was not a remote or problematical issue.

A National Central Government was not a fib of optimistic imagination. If we paid the price of armed resistance to Britain for the acknowledgment of our independent status, the real position would be that India would be declared free, and a free India, out of her own unfettered choice and with eyes wide open, would be proffering military aid and participation in the war effort. What is enforced by Britain on India, what is exacted by Britain from India, might be dismissed as not coming from a free nation, but what is rendered by a free India would bind her for the future.

Gandhi all the while is not thinking of power. If anybody feared that he had missed or was missing power, it is his firm belief that, though one may get power by non-violence, one cannot retain it by violence. All that you could do is to touch power, and even if you mounted to power by non-violence, you will not be able to retain it by violence. He may for some time concede the Police, but he has no mind to concede the Military, although all that he asks for at present is that the nation should keep an open mind on the matter.

It is his belief that we must educate people non-violently. Once you introduce the Military, it is the military language that predominates, the military technique and the military remedy. This apart from the mechanical fact that you will not be able to train armies for twenty years to come. Once you use weapons of destruction, you bid good-bye to non-violence. Six thousand officers are about to be trained. What shall we do with them? But it is not the officers that worry him so much as the influence they would have upon the masses.

The logic of facts and events embodied herein, and ever so forcibly expressed by Gandhi, was irresistible. It was, for one thing, a test of the faith of his colleagues. But there was another aspect of the matter. A decision on this issue must be consistent with the resolutions of the Congress. The Congress in its creed only speaks of "the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means." Beyond answering those critics who queried whether India could observe non-violence after attaining Swaraj, by the statement, cryptic and clinching, that what she attains by non-violence she must be able to keep by non-violence too, the Congress never has so far applied its mind to the character of the Indian State in relation to non-violence.

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On the other hand, when it was proposed at the Bombay session of the Congress in October 1934, that the words "peaceful and legitimate means" in Article I should be replaced by 'truth and non-violence', the change was stoutly resisted and it was this resistance that partly and finally accounted for Gandhi ceasing to be a four-anna member. In Wardha and Delhi, six years after this refusal by the Congress, Gandhi sought the support of the Working Committee for a non-violent State divested of all armies, a State which would resort to non-violence as the sole weapon against external aggression as well as internal disorder.

Again, tracing the progress of events chronologically, we note that the resolution of the Working Committee on September 14, 1939, embodied the principle of co-operation with Britain in war time on certain conditions. What was the co-operation contemplated therein? Let it be remembered that Gandhi had stated in his first interview with the Viceroy that he would offer unconditional co-operation, and later explained that what he offered was moral co-operation, not material.

It is just possible that on September 14, when the Working Committee passed its historic resolution on war,—i.e., hardly a fortnight after its outbreak—the Working Committee and Gandhi were thinking of different meanings of co-operation, for it was not till long after that Gandhi explained his proffered unconditional co-operation as moral in character, and that was in answer to a virtual challenge from a newspaper in London. It is evident now that Gandhi has all along been thinking of only moral co-operation, both for himself and for the Congress.

The point came up for clarification after the fall of France on June 14, so that the atmosphere had altogether changed by the time the Working Committee met on June 17 at Wardha. The question of non-violence assumed practical importance. The differences on the issue came out in all their polarity. In Delhi the question assumed an added importance by virtue of the practical bearing of the decision on the issue of the demand and the offer to be made, of and to, the British Government. Gandhi stood up for the demand of complete Independence being acknowledged now and here by Britain, and for the offer of moral support by India. The Working Committee agreed with Gandhi in respect of the demand but differed in respect of the offer.

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The difference was really one based on a principle. It was not a difference based upon a personal element and the attitude of India towards Britain. All were at one in condemning the Fascism of the day as well as Imperialism. If Britain shed the latter, and proved the fact by acknowledging the Independence of India, she would be no longer guilty of Imperialism on the one hand, and, on the other, would be able to negotiate the co-operation and support of a free India. This sentiment was clearly expressed when Gandhi said on December 4, in a cable to the *News Chronicle*: "I am anxious as a friend of Britain, bound by many personal ties, that she should come out victorious—not because of superiority in arms but because of her will to be just all along the line."

It would thus be seen that, though they agreed that a free India meant well by Britain, yet they differed on the issue as to how a free India should be organised and equipped. Those who would concede the correctness of making the future free India a non-violent State, would still halt because the sanction of the Congress was as yet wanting. At the same time, everyone could readily see the urgency of the issue as visualized by Gandhi.

The issue of a non-violent State was certainly to be brought up before the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Poona—whatever may be the reaction of the British Government to the Delhi demand. If Britain agreed to it, the offer of active participation in Defence should be ratified by the A. I. C. C., though in one sense no such ratification would be needed because the statement of September 14, 1939, was clear. It ran as follows:

"If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals, by mutual consent, for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have in the recent past faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic State in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom, when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her."

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Even if the Delhi resolution did not for this reason require ratification, the fact remained that the position of Gandhi which concerns a vital issue would necessarily force to the front a consideration of the issue of non-violence in the organisation of a free India, as 'a new matter' emerging in the middle of the year. The matter was one of urgent public importance because, apart from the fate which the Delhi resolution might meet at the hands of Government, we had before us the question of organising our own Civic Guards and deciding whether they shall be wedded to non-violence like our volunteers, or whether they shall be free of this restraint, like the Civic Guards of Government. Altogether, then, the Poona deliberations were bound to be full of animation in that they would concern a life-and-death problem for India.

A note of caution requires to be sounded here. If the Britisher, or any anti-Congress Indian, supposed that fresh quarrels have broken out in the Congress camp, they would be wholly in the wrong. In the first place, whatever may be the differences on these finer details, the Congress acts as a single, solid body and is particularly fortunate in that it has secured the full co-operation of Gandhi himself in respect of the Delhi resolution. This alone should be enough to give the quietus to all apprehensions and misgivings. It is to be hoped that other groups in India, the Muslim League and the Princes, will join their voice to that of the Congress in putting forward the Delhi demand, for the country would do well to remember the ancient couplet from the *Mahabharata*:

"They are a hundred, we are five,
In disputes each with other,
But in strife with others
We are a hundred and five."

If we might summarise the crisis created in Delhi in one word, we must say that it arose from the irreconcilability of a world character having to lead a National movement of a dependent country. Few people realise that Gandhi had come into Indian politics only by accident. It was Edwin Samuel Montagu that had asked him in an interview in 1917, why a social reformer like himself meddled in politics. "For that very reason," said Gandhi in reply, "I had to get into politics." Here is a social

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reformer, a founder of a new faith and philosophy which is incidentally useful for the emancipation of India, but which in reality is meant for the uplift of the world. It was only such a character, free from all self and desire, that could venture to address a letter "To every Briton" to lay down arms, not in base surrender before the enemy, but in order that they might lead a higher, nobler and more exalted life, lifting all fight from the plane of violence to that of non-violence. Once having addressed such a letter, which the Viceroy conveyed to England though the Press would not, having tendered such advice to the foreigner, how could Gandhi give any other advice, more so a diametrically opposite advice, to his countrymen to take up arms as Civic Guards or in National Defence? That is why he initiated at Wardha this discussion on non-violence, for the historic "Letter to every Briton" had been drafted earlier than the meeting day, though it was published later. A chronological study of events is essential to a correct understanding of their logical and psychological bearings on the destiny of a nation.

III. POONA

The scene shifts to Poona. The stage is already set, only the curtain lifts; the music alters, but the characters remain unchanged, and so does the plot of the Drama. But, for the first time in the history of the Congress during the past twenty-five years, the drama has to be enacted without the principal character playing his part before the public from the Congress stage. His platform has become widened, his message has struck a deeper note, his jurisdiction has been enlarged. The popular cry and complaint that Gandhi has left the Congress carried no meaning to the enlightened mind. That is not a mere make-believe to put courage into the flagging heart. In all times and countries we note how the *pater familias* becomes the patriarch, the father's sphere of interest and attention widens, his share in the immediate duties to his sons and grandsons becomes steadily attenuated, as he is the monitor and mentor, the overseer and the care-taker of society.

Gandhi's absence from Poona as the prime mover of the Congress did not detract from his new role as its philosopher,

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friend and guide. His absence in flesh and blood only helped to fill the whole atmosphere with his spirit and to impose a stricter sense of restraint, a sterner sense of discipline and a loftier sense of decorum amongst the members of the All-India Congress Committee. It greatly added, in one word, to their sense of responsibility. The Congressmen in Poona would have done anything to secure Gandhi's presence, if only to sanctify the magnificent structure which they raised as the Congress abode in that great city. It was in this home of the Peshwas, at this scene of Gokhale's life-long services to the nation and Tilak's life-long sacrifices for the nation, it was in this centre of Indian renaissance that the Congress Executive met and made the demand for the declaration by Britain of the complete Independence of India. There is an admixture of a cultural bias and a certain military-mindedness in the atmosphere of Poona, and it was but appropriate that the A. I. C. C. should have met in this ancient and historic city to reconsider Wardha in part and ratify Delhi in full.

The issues before the A.I.C.C. in Poona were clear as daylight. Those that objected to the ratification of Delhi asked in derision whether the Ramgarh Congress resolution on war was thrown to the winds. The reader cannot therefore do better than profitably spend a little time in a rapid survey of the resolutions of Ramgarh and those that preceded and succeeded it, for, the charge was openly made that, in Poona, we were going to content ourselves with a mere National Government and that we were ready to barter away the convictions of two decades for this mess of pottage. What should be the co-operation that India would, if at all, offer to the British Government in this war? How could India make it material in addition to moral? Did not Ramgarh say in so many words that

"Congressmen and those under the Congress influence cannot help in the prosecution of war with men, money or material"?

The Ramgarh resolution was the Bible of the Congressman's faith, the charter of the Congressman's freedom, the compass of the Congressman's voyage on the high seas of Indian politics.

The Ramgarh resolution repays study. It is the habit of some to quote from documents the most striking passages and

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omit the less striking ones. That breaks the context and distorts the meaning. At Ramgarh we said:

"This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe, and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the resolutions passed on the action taken on the war situation by the A. I. C. C. and the Working Committee."

This is the key to Ramgarh. To omit this opening sentence and speak of withholding "help in the prosecution of war with men, money or material" is to fumble with the lock without the key.

The war broke out on the 1st of September, and within a fortnight thereof the Working Committee met at Wardha and passed its world-famous resolution wherein it stated,

"co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom, when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her."

Shortly after, Jawaharlalji joined the Working Committee and was made the President of the War Sub-committee of the Working Committee. He put all his strength and spirit into his utterances, comments and communications which appeared in the Press in India and in England. On the 29th of September he issued a statement in which the following passage occurs:

"But we must be convinced of that world freedom and we must see India in the picture of world freedom. Then only will war have meaning for us and move our minds and hearts, for then we shall be struggling and suffering for a cause that is worth while, not only for us but for all the peoples of the world. Because we feel that large numbers of British people have the same world ideals as many of us possess in India, we have offered them our co-operation in the realisation of these ideals. But if these ideals are not there, what do we fight for?"

* * * *

"Only a free and consenting India can throw her weight for ideals that are openly proclaimed and acted upon."

On the 7th of October 1939 Pandit Jawaharlal sent a message to the *News Chronicle* from which the two following sentences are taken:

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"India can take no part in defending Imperialism, but she will join in a struggle for freedom. India's resources are vast, but even of greater volume is her goodwill and moral support for a worthy cause. This is no small offer that India makes, for it means the ending of a hundred years of hostility between India and England. Only a free and equal India can co-operate of her free will in this task. Till that vital change is made none of us have the power to make the people of India enthusiastic for a war which is not theirs.

* * * *

"The first step must therefore be a declaration of India's full freedom. This has to be followed by its application now, in so far as is possible, in order to give the people effective control of the governance of India and the prosecution of war on India's behalf. Then only is it possible to create the psychological conditions which can lead to popular support. India wants to forget the past of conflict and wants to stretch out her hand in comradeship."

The Provincial Governments had passed in the month of October a comprehensive resolution moved by the Premiers of Madras, C. P., Bihar, United Provinces, Bombay, Orissa and the J.W.F. Province. In it occurs the following significant sentence:

"It is essential, in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people, that the principle of democracy with effective safeguards for the Muslims and other minorities be applied to India, and her policy be guided by her people."

Finally came the very important meeting held at Allahabad of the Working Committee from the 19th to the 23rd of November 1939, at which a long resolution was passed, and we take from it the following passage:

"The declarations made on behalf of the British Government being inadequate, have compelled the Congress to dissociate itself from the British policy and war effort, and, as a first step in non-co-operation, to bring about the resignation of all Congress Governments in the Provinces. That policy of non-co-operation continues and must continue unless the British Government revises its policy and accepts the Congress contention. The Working Committee would, however, remind Congressmen that it is inherent in every form of Satyagraha that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with the opponent. While a Satyagrahi is ever ready for a non-violent fight, if it has to come, he never relaxes his effort for peace and always

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works for its attainment. The Working Committee will therefore continue to explore the means of arriving at an honourable settlement, even though the British Government has banged the door in the face of the Congress. The Committee must, however, resist by the non-violent methods of the Congress all attempts to coerce the people of India along paths which are not of their choice and everything that is against the dignity and freedom of India."

It is thus obvious that the Congress had offered conditional co-operation and that that co-operation is both moral and material.

Then we come to the next issue, that of Independence. It was contended at Poona that the Delhi resolution, and therefore the Poona one, betrayed the Ramgarh resolution. Turning back to the latter, all that we could glean from that long statement about Independence is this:

"Nothing short of complete Independence will be accepted by the people of India."

And this too as a preamble to the demand for a Constituent Assembly. The Ramgarh Congress, in the last paragraph of the resolution, authorised the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee "to take all steps to implement the foregoing resolution as the Committee may deem necessary." What has the Working Committee done now? As against the all-too-short and academic statement relating to Independence quoted *supra* in the Ramgarh resolution, the Delhi resolution states:

"The Working Committee are more than ever convinced that the acknowledgment by Great Britain of the complete Independence of India is the only solution of the problems facing both India and Britain, and are therefore of opinion that such an unequivocal declaration should be immediately made and that, as an immediate step in giving effect to it, a Provisional National Government should be constituted at the Centre which, though formed as a transitory measure, should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and secure the closest co-operation of the responsible Governments in the Provinces."

People may or may not agree with this resolution. But it is not open to any critic to say that the Working Committee went beyond its authority in passing this resolution; and what

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the Working Committee has done has been approved of by the A.I.C.C. When, therefore, the Ramgarh resolution stated that India cannot supply men, money or material in the war effort, it only meant that she should not until certain conditions were satisfied. When it spoke of nothing short of complete Independence being possible of acceptance, it did not want to leave the idea as a vague, ethereal, impalpable concept. The Delhi resolution has demanded a National Government and provided a formula for the fulfilment of the demand for complete Independence, in return for which co-operation in Defence as envisaged in the various war statements and resolutions of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee (Wardha—October 1939) prior to Ramgarh had been proffered. Those, therefore, who complain that the Ramgarh resolution has been thrown to the winds do themselves throw to the winds the first sentence of that resolution which confirmed all the previous statements and acts of the Working Committee in relation to the subject, as well as the last sentence of the resolution which authorised the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. to take all necessary steps.

The train of politics does not run on fixed rails like a railway train; but it is like a motor running on a road, getting clear of obstacles, pursuing a tortuous course, at times negotiating hair-pin curves, now accelerating its speed, now relaxing it, but all along intensely related to, and affected by, not merely a knowledge of the ultimate destination and the direction leading to it, but by all the gradients on the way, the rises and the falls, the loops and the curves, the traffic, the bulls that keep to the left, with or without their driver, and the buffaloes that walk across the car and run their horns into its spokes, and have therefore always to be taken by the back. The automobile of politics is in living touch with the actualities of the incessantly changing world, and during the time of war such changes which complicate a set course are ever more sudden and surprising. If therefore Wardha, Delhi and Poona have at all re-aligned the course of the Congress, that much of deviation is but to be expected in the exigencies of politics in the first place and, more so, of politics during the period of a great war. If the leadership of the greatest man of the world appears to have been risked by the Congress, the fact remains

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that, though Gandhi is stern in justice, he is never stinting in generosity, and his synthetic abilities and the wide receptivity of his heart may easily be trusted to effect that reconciliation between Nationalism and Internationalism, between force as a passing measure during a time of unpreparedness, reluctantly agreed to in an emergency, and that universal love inspired by sacrifice and fostered by suffering which he wants to infuse into the war-weary nations of Europe.

We are not merely canonizing Gandhi, having deposed him as a leader, for, the sentiments expressed in the foregoing sentences have proved to be not merely hopes but anticipations by a day of Mahatmaji's abiding interest in the affairs of the Congress, which he has chosen to express in the following words:

"If I retired from the Congress in Bombay in 1934, I did so to render greater service. Events have justified the retirement. The present isolation too has the same motive behind it."
(*Harijan*—4th August)

The Drunkard God

(A STORY)

BY K. V. JAGANNATHAN

(Rendered from Tamil by Srimati K. Savitri)

The sound of a moan was heard rending the air of the dark still night. It seemed to come out of a hut where flickered a tin oil lamp.

"Oh my! Oh! God! Why can't I die? Why does not the plague carry me off? Oh God! I can't bear it!" were the words that fell on the ears at intervals. The voice was evidently that of a woman. No one indeed save the Lord of Wind seemed to venture into that hut and inquire into the cause of the distress there. Even he entered softly and very slowly, as if he thought that his rough entrance might frighten away the tiny flame in the tin lamp. Overhead, the sky was covered with a wide mantle of dark clouds.

There was also heard another voice, thin, gentle, but very clear in the midst of the piteous moans, which was asking now and then, "Does it pain you so much, Ma? Ha! the blood too is coming." This was definitely the voice of a child—a boy.

"Why would father beat you so, Ma?" the child asked, "Can't he see that it pains you?"

"It is all fate, my evil fate, dear! That pitiless God too will not call me away from this suffering," replied the woman.

"If father goes on beating you so, what shall we do, Ma?"

"Whatever shall we do? I can do nothing. I must be only quiet."

"What if we run away somewhere?"

"Hush! darling! Don't speak so. Go to sleep, dear!"

"No! I can't sleep," said the boy. "Why don't you go to the Pannai Master and ask him to threaten father?"

"It is all impossible, dear! God alone must pity us. If he does not help, we have only to suffer and die."

There was silence for a few seconds and again the child's voice broke through the stillness.

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"Where is that God, Ma? What shall we do to make him take pity on us?"

"Don't you see the temple in that street where the higher caste people live? The God Karuppanna dwells there. If we pray to him he may perhaps take pity on us," said the mother.

"See! I shall pray to him," replied the boy. "Oh God Karuppanna! Please give father a good beating and threaten to kill him if he raises his hand against Ma! Oh! God! Grant that it shall not pain Ma when father beats her."

The mournful tones of the mother suddenly changed to a merry peal of laughter at these words. But a moment after, the piteous moans started again.

* * * *

It was a small village, called "Rasipalayam" in the District of Salem. The people there were mostly of the labouring class. Beyond the streets where they lived lay the Harijan quarters. From one of the huts in that quarter seemed to come the sound of those speaking voices in that dark night.

Mariyayi was a good young woman. Her man, Kathan, too was all right, and they both lived quite happy and peaceful until their child, Munian, was born. In the year following his birth the father went astray. He was caught in the clutches of that great evil—Drink. Gradually he gathered around him a big group of drinking friends. There were days when he used to work hard the live-long day and, coming home cheerfully, partook of the simple meal that Mariyayi cooked for him. But that happy life was no longer his.

Once that great curse—drink—took possession of him, their domestic peace was ruined for ever. With the boy, Munian, troubles rose and grew up in that little hut. When a little baby, Munian could have no knowledge of all this. As he was about three years old, his mother fell seriously ill. Though she recovered from it, yet it robbed her of her physical strength.

She used to remonstrate and defy Kathan stoutly and her body was well able to bear the rude kicks he gave her. Now, alas, she had hardly strength to put up with them. She got even tired of making a row with him. Nevertheless that inveterate drunkard would hardly ever leave her in peace. She was to receive at least once a week the hard blows and kicks he was pleased to give her.

Munian was now five years old. He was just beginning to feel the cruelty of his father and all that his mother suffered. It went to his heart and gripped it with exceeding pain. But what could the poor boy do to alleviate the sufferings of his mother? At times he too had a share in the rough treatment to which she was subjected.

She said to him she could see no other way out of the difficulty, but that if they prayed to the God Karuppanna, he might perhaps relent and save them. Munian fully believed her. Did not Dhruva himself in the ancient days put faith in the words of his step-mother and achieve his heart's desire by doing penance even as she told him?

From that day onwards Munian had his mind constantly fixed on the God Karuppanna. "Oh! God! please cut off the hand that beats my mother. Won't you at least come in time and prevent him from beating her?" Such were his prayers. But did the God hear him? No! He did not seem to listen to him or take pity on him. Kathan did not show any sign at all of mending.

"Can't you hear me, Oh God? Are you deaf?" The child wept and grew wild at the thought of his father.

* * * *

The next day was the festival of Deepavali. Mariyayi had saved a little money got from selling bundles of grass in the market, and she had hoped to buy with the money a coloured dhoti for Munian.

"What do you say to wearing a dhoti, lad? Shall I buy one?" she asked him with beaming looks.

"Yes; certainly," replied Munian and ran away to announce the happy news to the other boys in the *cheri*.

Their hopes however were not destined to be realised, for that very Deepavali morning the black-guard Kathan somehow got wind of the secret place where the money had been kept. He straightaway went to the toddy shop with it and got heavily drunk.

"You devil," his wife abused him. "What have you done? I had kept the money with the hope of buying a coloured dhoti for the little fellow. Now you have stolen it and got drunk with it. What am I to do?"

"What! you stand there and speak to me, you hussy?" the husband growled. "What cheek, as if the fellow can't do without a dhoti!"

"You had never meant to buy anything for the boy out of your own earnings. Now you have taken without scruple even the little money I had kept away. Whatever shall I say to him now?" she wept bitterly.

"Shut up! Are you making a scene here?" he cried. "A silk string indeed for the broom-stick!" he spat down as he said it and gave his wife a sound kick. She fell heavily on the ground.

Munian stood in a corner of the hut and watched all this his little frame trembling all over. His heart kept beating fast. In his anger he wanted to seize his father and crush him to pieces.

When that brute went away leaving them, the boy went to his mother and, placing his face near hers as she lay on the ground, he sobbed as if his heart would break. The mother also joined with him and together they celebrated the Deepavali, their heart-broken cry providing the only music for the occasion.

At first Munian's anger was only against his father. Now he got angry even with God. "Shall I go and see that God Karuppanna and tell him everything myself?" thought he. He joined the festive crowd and entered the temple. It was a grand sight there. Various kinds of fruits, bunches of tender cocoanuts, boiled rice and meat etc., were all offered before the deity.

"This one seems to be a big God. He must be very big indeed! Otherwise how can he eat away all these things," he thought to himself. His eyes fastened themselves on every object they saw. He had a look also at the deity, which had special decorations for the occasion. All of a sudden his eye was caught by something. He was startled. He looked again intently so that there might be no mistake. He could not believe his eyes. Yes, it was toddy—that stuff his father drank. He had seen him bring it home in a bottle sometimes and he was well acquainted with its smell.

There were several of these bottles among the things offered to the God.

The sight of them gave him a shock and he screamed out "toddy!" For, he saw in it all the cruelty his father inflicted on his mother.

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The shrill cry fell on the ears of those near him and they turned towards where he stood.

"How did this dog come here? Catch him and kick him out," one of the men cried. In a few seconds many people, all furious, surrounded the little boy and began to beat him. Amidst the heaps of blows Munian fainted. "Throw the dog out. He has contaminated the temple on such an auspicious day as this," shouted some.

Munian was left all but dead. He was carried out of the temple by some Harijans. They placed him by the side of his mother and related all that happened.

"Oh, Oh! my boy! Is it for this that you went there?" she wailed. "Oh God! Have you no eyes? They have killed an innocent child. Oh Munia! my darling!" she cried out in her anguish.

Munian opened his eyes. The mother poured a little water into his mouth. He drank it eagerly.

"Mother! don't believe the God Karuppanna," he said in a faint voice and gazed feebly around him. The terror that overtook him did not forsake him yet.

"Hush! don't say like that, dear! He and only He has saved you. If it were not for Him, you would have been dead now," she said with tears.

"No; it is a lie—a lie, Ma! It is a wicked God. He too drinks. I saw it with my own eyes. If father drinks and beats you, why then, the God also drinks and He it was who made them beat me. No! we will have nothing to do with him, Ma!"

"No, darling! don't say so," said the mother. "If father beats me what can the God do for it?"

But why should he drink? Will not rice and fruit be enough? How could such a God listen to us indeed who drinks so many bottles of toddy! They would not have beaten me if that drunkard God had not told them."

The mother could not make any reply to all these charges. She wept and could only pray more fervently to Lord Karuppanna.

* * * *

The next year Prohibition came into force in the District of Salem. Gradually the village people began to forget the evil habit. The earthen pots, wherein toddy had been kept, disappeared

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from the huts, and in their place those containing the small savings of the poor out of their daily earnings were found. This revolution brought a little light even into the hut of Mariyayi and Kathan. At first Kathan felt quite desolate and could not but pine for a drop. Then slowly he began to recover. As he remembered the wicked deeds he did, when beside himself with drink, the tears started in his eyes. "God! Thou hast saved me indeed from utter ruin," he prayed deep from the heart.

There was a little brightness even in the face of Mariyayi. "The grace of the God Karuppanna indeed has put an end to our sufferings," she firmly believed. The boy, Munian, too saw the change and was filled with surprise. He could not understand.

"Why, Ma!" he asked, "does not father drink now? He never beats you now as before. He takes me too in his arms when he sees me."

"They don't sell toddy here now-a-days," replied the mother. "Those who drink will be punished by the Sircar people. That is why they are afraid of setting eyes on it now."

"Who did all this, Ma!"

"Why, the God Karuppanna, of course! Who else, my dear!"

"What? that drunkard God!"

"Hush! don't say so. It is a sin," corrected the mother.

Munian however could never bring himself to believe in Karuppanna. Nothing on the other hand could shatter the immense faith of his mother in that God.

* * * *

When there was still a week for Deepavali the temple of the God Karuppanna was thrown open to the Harijans. Mariyayi was overwhelmed with joy as she heard of this. She had saved a little money again this year in order to buy a coloured dhoti for her boy.

"I shall spring a surprise on my man by showing the nice dhoti I am going to buy for Munian," she reflected joyfully.

On the eve of Deepavali both Mariyayi and Kathan, each without the knowledge of the other, bought a coloured dhoti for Munian.

The boy celebrated the festival wearing both the dhoties, while the parents' hearts overflowed with happiness to see him.

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The first thing they did was to start for the temple of Karuppanna with fruits, cocoanuts and camphor. For, had they not now the rare privilege which had been denied to their forefathers? They wanted to enjoy it on an auspicious day. And, to be sure, what day was more auspicious than the Deepavali?

All went into the temple and had their *darshan*. Munian's eyes looked with suspicion at the things in front of the image. He could not still bring himself to place any faith in that drunkard God. He had even a dread of people coming to beat him.

"I don't see it here now, Ma!" the boy asked her.

"No, dear!" said the mother.

"But why, Ma!"

"It is all by the grace of the God Karuppanna, darling."

At the burning of camphor before the deity, all hands were joined and raised over the heads in prayer. The boy Munian too forgot all his terror of toddy and the hard blows he received last year, and folded his hands in fervent prayer.

Flame in the Window

BY SRIRANGAM NARAYANA BABU

(Rendered by R. Appalaswami from the original Telugu poem)

Serene as the mind of a sage
Where the senses no longer rage,
Straight as the tongue
Of a bell and as long,
Bright as its bronze-note,
From the window-sill,
So secure and so still,
A flame on the Cosmos unwinking doth gloat!

This side the wall
In the hall,
The light
Doth grow dense as it slowly congeals:
Without is the Darkness immense,
So quiet, so tense,
With right
At its heart some sharp light-perpetrated fresh weals.

Hell and Heaven,
Blest, bereaven,
Death and life,
Peace and strife,
Knowledge immense,
Crass ignorance,
—There's all the difference.

Ah for the vow I've ta'en
Not to inflict or e'en
Witness inflicted pain,
Within on the wall
Countless *jivas* crawl
For light,
And by a hungry lizard crunched
Are quenched
Into night.

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As a sucking baby's choking-fit
Doth into sudden activity burst
A gust—
Beyond the wall Darkness doth chuckle a bit,
In the window the flame in the wind's grip
Doth shake like one spirit-possessed,
And trembling stands awhile the test,
Then elongating like a rubber-strip,
And elongating snaps the flame.

Within, without
Darkness doth shout
The same...

...
...
...

Is it the fallen all-extending knife?
Supervenes a gush of the mystery of life!

The Problem of Adult Education

BY SRIMATI SAVITRI RAJAN, B.A.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

No nation is able to overcome smoothly the problems that have to be faced at every stage of its evolution. Today, we are in the melting pot, with an indefinite political, social and economic future, forming as it were a vicious circle, the retarder of advancement.

One of the various problems that confront our nation-builders is the illiteracy of the masses. Illiteracy is not present in just one area or two: it is nation-wide, and India stands a very poor comparison with the percentage of literacy in other countries. In our Presidency only 8 or 9 persons out of every hundred are literate, and the percentage of women is still lower. Within South India, Travancore, Cochin and other States have a slightly higher percentage, and when one stops to reflect, one can understand that the cause is mostly due to the efforts of the foreign Missionaries. They have been working there for well over a century and they are carrying on this teaching of reading and writing as an integral part of their mission work. They run parish schools, and as Bibles are translated into all vernaculars, they teach the young and the old to read their prayer book. The vegetable vendor, the cooly woman, the milk woman, the sweeper,—if she is a Christian, she is literate; if a Hindu, she is certain to be illiterate.

What is woman's part in this movement? How can she, the educated woman, acquit herself creditably of the responsibility that is hers in this social uplift? It has been a proverbial truism that when two ladies meet they discuss only their sarees and jewels. Endowed with the blessings of wealth and education, we have not developed a will to understand the state of the women around us. We have been sent to schools and colleges and given a liberal education and a disciplined intellect to know

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and understand the world around us. But how many of us have stopped to think that this great fortune is the privileged possession of a very poor number, nay, a miserable percentage of our population? Ninety-two to ninety-seven women out of every hundred are still steeped in illiteracy and gloom. The rays of the light of learning have not pierced their dark and musty huts yet. They remain drudging along like dumb cattle to earn their living by some physical exertion, getting a living utterly out of proportion to their family needs. It is the ignorance of the masses that is hampering the political, social and economic progress of our country. Every citizen has a right to being literate, to know the 3 R's as it is popularly known, and every one can put forth a legitimate claim towards this right of his on the Government. It is as important as health, water, or for that matter, any other problem.

The evils of illiteracy are too well known to all of us and I will be carrying coals to Newcastle, if I were to dwell long on them. Deprived of education, the woman is blind, credulous and ignorant. She cannot decipher a letter or a telegram addressed to her. She has neither the eye nor the ear for topical news or what is happening all round her every day. The pawn-broker and the money-lender easily exploit her and she falls a prey to their deceits. The woman's status in family life is so miserable that she is not able to manage her own affairs. This endless dependence on others for literacy cripples the growth of her mental and moral powers. Today, within the City of Madras, there are hundreds of girls between the ages of 13 and 18 who are illiterate. It is almost inconceivable how such a condition prevails in spite of great efforts to promote compulsory education. They are in this state because they cannot afford the books and pencils required for schooling, and pathetically more so because they have not the proper clothing to attend schools! These women who have managed to enter the world illiterate will become illiterate mothers, and their children naturally will be forced to take the same course. The magnitude of the situation needs no emphasis.

The adult women's education is a work that women alone can and should handle, if it is to be successful. It is exclusively the educated woman's duty, for it is she who can reach the heart of her poor illiterate sister. It is no exaggeration to say

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that a woman's instinct, inborn and inseparable, is to give to others the best and always the best of what she possesses. As mothers, we preserve for our children the best of eatables the best of comforts and are happy to see the smile of joy and contentment on their faces. We can, and do make sacrifices for our home, and the dear ones. Do we not take pride in making delicious dishes and serving our guests? Real happiness comes in the giving and not in the mere possession. So, if I appeal to every educated woman to extend education to the adult illiterates in her neighbourhood, I am sure it will not be an unnatural or impracticable scheme. Every one of us has a few hours and *can* spare them once or twice a week. Either through associations,—there are various Women's Organisations doing social work,—or individually we should get together the illiterates of our locality and teach them to read and write. By conversation they can be told the history of the land they live in, the crops that grow there, the economic problems involved in their little sphere, simple rules of health, hygiene and mother-craft. The adult is quicker than the child in grasping ideas and assimilates them better. She loves to hear of the women of other lands, how they live, dress and work. It stimulates her love to learn more and her curiosity to know how to better her standard of life. Stories of brave mothers and sisters of history, like Jeeja Bai, Rani Sarandha and Lakshmi Bai, will thrill her and elevate her out of her little groove.

To those sceptics who cherish misgivings about the receptivity of the illiterate adult, let me convey this information, that the adult is quick in grasping and assimilating ideas, as she has already a command of the language and ideas. It has been proved by actual experimentation that there is no age bar to literacy,—anyone at any age, even at three score and ten, can become literate. If we make one adult illiterate literate, she will never allow her child to enter the world illiterate. The schools of tomorrow should be schools for adults rather than schools for children. Our compulsory elementary education today is not progressing as it ought to, and will never progress unless we have behind the movement the support of an intelligent and educated adult community.

In spite of their illiteracy they are found to possess as a background a certain amount of our national culture. Culture is

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a subjective thing, and they have inherited it from out of that subjective instinct which has governed our civilisation for thousands of years. Without being dogmatic and biased, one can safely say that, to a poor class of people, to show that subjective instinct by acquisition of objective learning is far simpler than we imagine. I can safely vouchsafe for this from my association with that class of people, that wherever I have attempted to teach them, I have found a quick grasp and retentivity. Within three months of tuition they are able to read sentences and write five-lettered words. This is undoubtedly up-hill work, but surely not insurmountable at that, for, unlike social ills, this is not a gnawing disease on the body social. It can be cured with an organised, co-ordinated effort. With compulsory education for our child-population successfully assured, the illiterate adult community becomes limited, and as Prof. Laubach, the pioneer in Adult Education, has propounded, the "each to ten" method will go a long way in solving the question. Each one should make ten illiterates literate within a year, and within nine years we can envisage a nation without a single illiterate man or woman.

Two things are absolutely essential for this work,—man-power and money. As regards the first, man-power, primary effort should be enlisted from those who have immediately benefitted by education, and they, it is obvious, are the great number of students, teachers, professors and educationists. Education has given them all benefits, personal benefits, assets to fit them in society and in the world. The University, by endeavouring to make them honest citizens, bearers of the torch of learning, is also entrusting them with a heavy responsibility. As of the Gurus of old, our modern system of 'Gurukulavasam' involves no 'Gurudakshina', in the truest sense of the word. The Gurus of the Puranas always asked their disciple to accomplish for them something as a 'Gurudakshina' and invariably it was a test of the powers of sacrifice of the 'Sishya.' But today the student accomplishes no feat of sacrifice or service to show his debt of gratitude to the *Alma Mater*. The student population, given the proper stimulus and organisation; can easily accomplish a great portion of this mass campaign. Excursions, historical, botanical, zoological, are a popular feature in the educational institutions. The student is practically a care-free indivi-

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dual, hampered by no responsibility but blessed with energy and holiday leisure. If a portion of the money and energy spent on excursions is portioned out for this literacy work, and if it is taken up by educational institutions and heads of schools and colleges, then great results are sure to be forthcoming. There are certain standards fixed for every academical qualification; the medical student has to attend a certain number of maternity cases before completing the course, the graduate has to put in practical training before attaining the L.T., the botanist has to collect a number of flora from all over the Presidency before submitting a thesis. These are of course useful standards stipulated for those academical qualifications. If this practical social work, this civic help is also stipulated from all students alike, not only will society be highly benefitted, but it will also enable the student to get a wider knowledge of the conditions of our villagers and poorer classes, and will be a training ground for the students to become real citizens of the country.

Human energy alone is not enough and cannot achieve much without financial aid. It is not as if it were a hospital or an orphanage or a poor-house and that we could appeal to the sentiments of the generous-minded for funds. This scheme does not come under the scope of philanthropy. Money should come from the Government and the Local Bodies. They should form the co-ordinating centre for organised work.

What money-power can achieve is evident from the Bihar Literacy Committee's Report. Four and a half lakhs of people have become literate since the campaign was launched in April 1938. Government have sanctioned two lakhs of rupees as recurring expenditure for three years. The 'whirlwind' campaign of Bombay towers as an outstanding example for what man-power can achieve. By means of lorry-drives, mass-meetings, classes on maidans and sea-shores, lantern-slide lectures, story telling, reading of news-sheets and Bhajanas, they have proved what student-power can establish, for, within thirty days, in the month of May, 1939, they were able to make nearly 20,000 illiterates literate within the City of Bombay.

May I appeal to every thinking man and woman to give a thought to this problem?

Sri Krishnarajendra Wodeyar

BY D. V. GUNDAPPA

Warm-hearted tributes have been paid to the qualities that shed lustre on the life and character of the late Maharaja of Mysore. His love for the Motherland, his devotion to the well-being and prosperity of his people, the keenness of his eye for the good and the noble in the cultures of the East and the West, his sensitiveness to the appeal of music and sculpture and painting, his delight in the beauties of nature, his devotion to the religion of his ancestors and his understanding sympathy for all sister-faiths, the purity and simplicity of his private life,—all these have evoked praise from a thousand quarters. I should like to dwell on two traits of his character as the Sovereign and Ruler of a State.

The first was his scrupulous loyalty to the traditions of constitutional monarchy bequeathed to him by his great father. The Government of Mysore, as conceived and instituted at the time of the resuscitation of her self-rule in 1881, was a constitutional monarchy. It was no doubt a rudimentary kind of constitution; but there could be no missing of its constitutional character. The Sovereign was to act in all public matters on the advice and through the agency of duly appointed Ministers; and these Ministers had to work in consultation with a body representative of the people. The elements of the Cabinet system were thus present unmistakably, though with no guarantee of permanence and further development. Nothing important could be done by the Sovereign without the instrumentality of the Ministers and without reference through them to the Assembly representative of the public. In other words, the Ministry became the principal means for the expression of the power of the State. Accepting guidance and control from the Sovereign on the one side, and guided by suggestion and criticism from popular representatives on the other side, it was chiefly for the Ministry to bear the burden of public administration, exercising initiative and judgment on its own responsibility in a major part of the field of governance. It was not for the Sovereign to make himself

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personally responsible, in the eyes of the public, for any commission or omission. This responsibility was, in practice, to be shouldered by his Ministers. It was his privilege to advise them, to caution them and to smoothen their path. But he was neither to compel their hands, nor to hamper them. Subject to his general supervision and control, their movement was to be free and spontaneous. They were no doubt bound to obey his commands; but it was expected of him that he should so moderate his individuality, so restrain his impulse to act by himself, and so economize the use of authority, that their character as free agents was not impaired. Sovereign authority and ministerial liberty had to work in a delicate state of mutual understanding and adjustment. It was impossible to define their respective spheres in terms so precise and so exhaustive that there could be no need for personal equations and temperamental accommodations. Great thus was the need for imaginative understanding and trustful goodwill on both sides. This psychological demand of the situation, it may naturally be expected to have been more easy for the Minister to meet than it was for the Sovereign. The Minister was after all the servant, appointed and removable from office at will. The Ruler was the complete master of the situation. And yet, such was the good sense and such the regard for constitutional rectitude and such also the capacity for self-restraint which characterized the two Sovereigns who preceded the late Maharaja, that the administration of Sir K. Seshadri Iyer could go on without a hitch for nearly 18 years, and carry out many courageous projects for the building up of the country. There was, however, something special in the circumstances of that period to induce an attitude of self-restraint on the part of the Sovereign. The administration was in a formative stage for a larger part of the reign of Sri Chamaraja Wodeyar (1881—94). Previous policies had to be revised, and programmes had to be framed anew. Everything was in a state of transition. The Maharaja was young. It was thus only natural that he showed much deference to the more experienced Dewan. After him, his Queen who became the Regent was a lady of remarkable shrewdness and circumspection; and she appreciated the need there was for accepting guidance from the zealous Dewan who had already proved his worth. But no such special circumstances were there to recommend a policy of self-restraint

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to the Sovereign in his relations with the Minister when His late Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar came to the throne (1902). The administration had by then come into good working order, like a well-oiled and carefully handled machine. The Departments had been rationally organized; and their laws and regulations had been elaborated. The policies and purposes of the Government had come to be generally understood and appreciated. Traditions had been formed both for the Government and for the public. The Maharaja came to his great office perfectly fitted for it by education and training. He was full of energy and enthusiasm for his exalted duties, and had a serious sense of his own "individual responsibility" for the Government of the State, as may be seen from the speech he delivered to the first session of the Representative Assembly that met in his time. Everything thus was conducive to a course of self-assertion on his part in the work of Government. And yet he preferred to tread the path of constitutional self-restraint in the manner of his illustrious parents. The State knows not a single instance of his having acted otherwise than through his Ministers, or of his having interfered with the freedom of their judgment or arbitrarily overruled their recommendations. No doubt, he did often enough see things from points of view different from theirs. His sense of the relative values of things did not always coincide with theirs. But when such differences arose on important issues, he was content with indicating his personal views to the Dewan and asking the Ministers to re-examine the matter in the light of those views and submit their own independent recommendations once again. The responsibility of advising and cautioning was his; but that of deciding after a full consideration was usually theirs. The orders that issued finally represented not the individual opinion of the Sovereign, but the considered opinion of the Council.

He was able to give so much of his confidence to the ministers because of the very great care he had exercised in selecting them for office. It was at this initial point in the forming of an administration that all his insight into the character of men, his evaluation of their merits and his sense of their suitability to the circumstances of the time came into full play. That his choice fell on men not of the usual type and not in the running, according to public expectation, for the Dewanship,

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—on an engineer like Sir M. Visvesvaraya and on one not in the regular line of general administration like Sir Mirza Ismail,—is eloquent testimony to the independence of his judgment as well as to the keenness of his capacity for evaluation. Having selected men with so much care and judgment, he saw that simple fairness required him to give them free scope to put forth the very best they had in them for the service of his State. Carefully to choose and wakefully to trust—was his motto.

This unfailing sense, in the late Maharaja, of the importance of the Ministry as the instrument of Government appears as something unique when we remember how Ministers have fared in many Indian States. There are Rulers who have tried to do without a Dewan at all. In many States the tenure of the Dewan is a precarious one; and in many others, the functions of that office are barely those of a Secretary. If Mysore in this respect has differed from Bikaner and Baroda, we owe it altogether to the Mysore Maharaja's ingrained sense of constitutional propriety. It is to this sense that we have to attribute the Mysore Maharaja's refusal of the seat offered him in the Chamber of Princes in 1919. His instinct led him to see the wisdom of Bagehot's dictum that the monarch should "never seem to struggle."

"When a monarch can bless, it is best that he should not be touched. It should be evident that he does no wrong. He should not be brought too closely to real measurement. He should be aloof and solitary. The nation is divided into parties, but the Crown is of no party. Its apparent separation from business is that which removes it both from enmities and from desecration, which preserves its mystery, which enables it to combine the affection of conflicting parties—to be a visible symbol of unity to those still so imperfectly educated as to need a symbol."

The late Maharaja of Mysore had a firm hold on the truth of this observation; and that saved him from being betrayed into positions that would have exposed him and his actions to the corrosive blasts of public controversy. He realized that the Minister held a place as distinct and vital as the Sovereign's in the mechanism of the State, and would not put himself forward to fill the role that properly belonged to the Minister. His part rather was to strengthen the Minister for his minis-

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terial role. All the public approbation and prestige which his own personal virtues had earned for him, he was glad to lend for the support of the Ministers. Not unoften when the Government's popularity had for one reason or another waned or there were premonitions of a demonstration of public disapproval such as might damage the Government's prestige, it was the Maharaja's personal prestige that kept the Ministers in countenance and helped them to tide over the situation. The Ministers' own deserts were a separate matter. If they had done badly, they were dealt with duly, but in a manner that could not affect the standing and reputation of the Government as Government.

The second distinguishing trait of the late Maharaja was the All-Indian range of his patriotism. His own beloved State of Mysore was to him but a single room, though his own room in the vast mansion of Mother India. He had made a pilgrimage of the Motherland from Kailas to Kanyakumari, and felt the charm of every part of it. He had formed personal contacts with representative public men and leaders of thought and culture in various Provinces. The finest blossoming of Mysore's life was to him in her fulfilling a worthily useful part in the larger life of India. It was in this view that he,—naturally a shy man whose one great anxiety at all times was to avoid publicity,—persuaded himself into accepting the Chancellorship of the Benares Hindu University at its inception. This is what he said, addressing the first Convocation of that University in 1919 :

"This University is the most striking manifestation of India's effort at self-determination and self-expression The Benares University should develop such a culture in its widest sense as the embodiment of a New and United India, and should aim at a definite preparation for future citizenship in the largest sense of the term."

The same spirit actuated the Maharaja in his thoughts about political reforms for his own State. In inaugurating the 1924 Reforms he observed :

"India is shaping into a Federation. We in Mysore form, as it were, a nation within a nation. While co-operating with both the Government of India and the rest of the Indian public in measures which lead to the prosperity of the country as a whole, we in our local sphere should promote education etc.,"

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It was this faith of his in the destiny of India as one nation that impelled him to stand up for the idea of Federation earlier than other members of the Princely Order. In July 1927, when 10 Round Table Conferences had been dreamt of, the late Maharaja, addressing Viceroy Lord Irwin at a banquet in Mysore, said :

"I and my brother Princes have long felt that one of the most urgent, if not the most urgent problem in India today, is the place the Indian States are to fill in the constitution of the future. We had felt, until your Excellency's advent on the scene, that there was a disinclination to grapple with a problem that seemed to present innumerable difficulties And we sincerely hope that, as a result of the conversations which your Excellency is inaugurating in this matter, a way may be found in which it will be open to us to play an honourable part as partners with the British Provinces in whatever form of Federal Government may hereafter be decided upon."

It is making no extravagant claim on his behalf to say that the strength and persistence of the late Maharaja's advocacy of the cause of Federation helped to make it a live issue and secured for it the serious attention of the British Government and of the Princely Order.

Constitutionalist and Nationalist as he was, his politics had for its basis a certain upward-looking disposition of the soul. He was ever on a quest after *Dharma*. Life's experiences had filled him with a vivid and constant sense of the limited values of the things of this world. He was a boy of ten years when he lost his father. Cares fell on him thick with the process of years. Loneliness must be the lot of any serious-minded man in circumstances so trying; and doubly so the lot of one born to sit on a throne. Fancy would like to speculate what might have been his future if his father, Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar of blessed memory, instead of meeting with an untimely death in 1894 (in his 31st year), had lived on to 1904, and had been persuaded to leave the son free to choose his career. Would not the son have expressed preference for a life of enlightened leisure and reposeful contemplation for himself, recommending his more active-natured younger brother for the onerous duties of kingship? The late Maharaja was a lover of great solitudes and great silences, a man who loved to brood and to penetrate to the mystery of Life, one who sought to commune with Nature

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and realize the One Essence behind her phantasmagoria. He was such a one among Princes as might have been singled out by Plato for approbation. He belongs to the company of Asoka and Aurelius, with the splendour of the Crown made mellow by the wrinkles on the brow.

Reviews

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The Science of the Self—By Babu Bhagwandas, M.A., D. LITT.
(Published by the Indian Bookshop, Benares.)

Babu Bhagwandas is an eminent scholar who always exhibits in his writings striking originality of thought and presentation. The present work is an expansion in book form of an article contributed to "The Contemporary Indian Philosophy," edited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, under the caption "Atma Vidya or the Science of the Self." Mr. Bhagwandas has been a life-long student of Indian Philosophy and Literature, and has striven to evolve the main principles which underlie the comprehensive and carefully thought-out 'philosophy of life' of the Hindu seers and thinkers. The pivotal concept, according to Mr. Bhagwandas, around which these principles revolve, is the Science of the Self or Atma Vidya. As it has a practical bearing on life, its truth and validity are further affirmed by the autobiographical sketch given by the author stressing his spiritual experiences.

A careful study of our scriptures brings home to our mind the fact that this Atma Vidya has been evolved by our sages and seers as the central doctrine whose truth has been experienced by the reality of their inner vision. It runs through, permeates and illumines the whole mass of their conceptions and views regarding life, social organisation and ultimate objects. Hence the Gita declares it to be the 'Raja Vidya,' the 'King of all Sciences.' Mr. Bhagwandas has therefore rightly attempted in this work to give a succinct, logical and scientific exposition of the application of this truth of Atma Vidya in all the different spheres of human activity. In spite of the "many mannerisms" alluded to by the author himself, the reader is enabled to appreciate fully the profundity of his thought. Many scholars and thinkers have written upon the various aspects of the principles and ideas which have formed the foundation of the great fabric of the ancient civilisation of India. Many and varied have been the views profounded by them in regard to their historical evolution and their effect upon the progress of India. There have been sharp difference of opinion and keen controversy among the educated Indians themselves in regard to these matters. Hence naturally a work like this is apt to provoke much thought and sometimes even controversy, but the critical acumen of the author is so effective that it is not easy to differ from him. Further, he has striven to enunciate the main principles behind Indian thought which one can perceive after a careful sifting and

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analysis which steers clear of the degeneracies, limitations and excrescences which may have modified them in their application to the facts of Indian life in the course of centuries. Every one of us will, therefore, agree that a re-statement in the language of modern thought of this central doctrine evolved by our sages and seers is absolutely necessary at the present day. The author, as a great theosophist, has had the advantage of a close and intimate acquaintance with the literature of the other great religions of the world and has naturally therefore tried to picture in appropriate places the unity underlying the fundamental conceptions of all religions and 'philosophies of life' evolved by the great thinkers throughout the world. In his characteristic way, Mr. Bhagwandas tries to derive support for his conclusions from the root meanings of the words used to connote the main ideas in all the literatures on the subject.

K. BALASUBRAMANIA IYER

Our Cultural Heritage—By Dr. Ishwara Topa (Kitabistan, Allahabad. Rs. 3.)

This is a well-meaning, but ill-arranged and ill-written book. It purports to show the evolution of important aspects of Indian culture under the pressure of political and religious forces through the ages. The author has a surprisingly tedious way of labouring the obvious; while his attempts at original 'interpretation' or commentary have nothing but their cocksureness to commend them. Kicks and bouquets are lavished with unthinking prodigality on the historical processes of the past. Nowhere in the book is there a specific answer to the question: What is Indian culture? Nor is there any appreciation of the chronological factor in the author's crescendo of thrice-damned iteration. The attempt to indulge in picturesque writing is unsupported by adequate resources of imagination and scholarship. Consequently the style is woolly in thought and flabby in expression. The learned will be repelled by the manner of the author, while the layman must reel under a sense of most 'admired' disorder!

Of the two essays in the volume, one deals with the cultural trends in Ancient India, and the other explains the evolution of Indo-Muslim Kingship. By way of introduction to the first, he says: "It is now a *fait accompli* (sic!) that, before the advent of the Aryans, Indian civilisation was moulded by the Dravidian factors and influences. The Dravidians were a cultured people who had settled in North-western India They represented a type of civilisation which had attempted to urbanize life" This is a fair sample of the author's treatment of the archaeologist's tentative theories of proto-history. Then the author traces the conflict between Aryan and Dravidian culminating in the triumph of the latter. The fusion of the two races and cultures is then summarised in the pseudo-scientific jargon considered appropriate by one school of historians at the present day. Then

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we have the familiar rehash of the text-book versions which have found in the priestly class and the caste system the villains of the piece that have tended to the emasculation of Hindu society. The makers of the Upanishads are described as at once escapists and destroyers of society. It appears that their philosophy exhibited anti-social and anarchic tendencies; at the same time, this philosophy is said to have left the masses 'cold.' Buddhism and Jainism are then claimed to have effected the emancipation of the individual from his thralldom to the priest. Buddha is said to have attempted "in plain and simple language to bring home to the plain and simple people of his times the importance of the transvaluation of values in life"—whatever that might mean. But the wicked priest reasserted his sway over men, notwithstanding Buddha; and our problem today is said to be "to free India from the paralytic efforts of the priestcraft civilisation!"

The second essay deals with Indo-Muslim Kingship. Any discussion of this subject is like the discussion of 'Snakes in Iceland.' There is no such thing at all! The period of Indian history between Ghazni's looting expeditions and the rise of the Mughals is marked by one simple fact. All the invaders, and so-called kings were merely birds of passage. They had no cultus either politically, culturally or ethically; though they were Islamites, they allowed none of the ideology of their faith to shape their policy or conduct. Four to five centuries of mutual violence, rapine and sporadic dreams of dominion were needed to drill into the invaders' minds that the problem of government was not merely to break as many heads as possible, but also to organise civil life. This consciousness dawned only when the rulers made up their minds to stay in the land. There was nothing Indian in the ideas of the Kingship which had a chequered line of development; but there were isolated attempts to give it a Muslim complexion. These can be seen in periods of exceptional internal disorder and repression. The author reads too much of the present into the past, even as jaundiced politicians of today are attempting to transpose too much of the past into the present. These two, between them, only help in misreading the past and in mortgaging the future!

From the point of view of production, the book is a credit to *Kitabistan*; but the price of Rs. 3 is a little too high judged by any standards.

P. MAHADEVAN

Zoroaster—By Professor A. R. Wadia (G. A. Natesan, Madras. Annas 12.)

Professor Wadia's lectures on Zoroaster at Bangalore in 1936 form the basis of this book. The essential features of the religion of Zoroaster have been explained clearly as a protest against the sacrifices and rituals of his day. To Zoroaster

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the term 'Deva' meant an evil spirit and Ahura-mazda is the Supreme God. The prophet was against religious propaganda backed by force. He emphasised that the path to immortality and bliss was a highly moral life; and his God was the God of Righteousness. The later Zoroastrians however developed a complex theology and code of rituals although they did not let the rituals or theology obscure the fundamental principle of purity in thought, word and action. Prof. Wadia points out how mistaken was the popular notion that the Zoroastrian is a Fire worshipper. Fire is only a symbol of God chosen by man to focus his attention upon for worshipping Him. The worship of Fire was an old Aryan custom which the prophet transmuted into the worship of God.

The new religion of Zoroaster was characterised by the high position he gave to woman and the cultivator. Prof. Wadia adopts the dictum that every theistic religion that claims to be ethical must be dualistic, and explains the Zoroastrian religion in the light of that dictum. In the chapter on "Later Zoroastrianism," the Professor explains how the freshness of the faith had been lost through endless excrescences but through them all shines the flash of illumination which came to the prophet and found expression in the emphasis on the cultivation of moral and spiritual ideals instead of a belief in the efficacy of rites and rituals.

V. NARAYANAN

Buddha—By Devamitta Dharmapala (Publishers: G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Annas 12.)

To this fourth edition, (the first after its author's death,) is added as an appendix the article on the study of the Buddha Dharma which the author contributed to 'The Indian Review' just before his death. Other appendices explain the principal doctrines of the Dharma and include extracts from Asvaghosha's Buddha-charita and from the Dhammapada, besides extracts from speeches of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi on the Buddha. The exposition of the life and teachings of the Buddha contained in this handy book, coming as it does from the pen of one of the greatest of modern Buddhist monks, is at once lucid and authoritative. It is interesting to be told that the Buddhism of the people of India is of native origin, that the gods of the Buddhist were the gods of the Brahman, and that the Brahmans and the Sramanas were equally the objects of devout Buddhist charity, and that archaeology reveals to us that one common enemy wrought havoc on both the Buddhist and the Hindu images which existed side by side in ancient places of worship. The venerable Devamitta points out in the introductory chapter other common features between Hinduism and Buddhism. The Buddha came to show the path of righteousness and to destroy the path of error. Enlightenment comes by investigation, says the Buddha, and not by

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prayer or ritual or sacrifice; Buddhism therefore is a religion of analysis, and prescribes a path to happiness unfettered by religious beliefs. Earnest unswerving effort without looking up to a god or gods characterises the doctrine of the Buddhist, coupled with a faith in the Buddha and other holy ones and in their teachings. The path to Nirvana or Supreme Bliss is two-fold—*Ekayana* for those who concern themselves with the salvation of others, and *Hinayana* for those who do not so concern themselves; but there is very much in common between the two paths which every aspirant moulds his conduct by.

V. NARAYANAN

TELUGU

Phidelu Ragala Dazan—Prose Poems—By Patabhi (Price As. 6. Copies can be bought of the author, addressed to Sudarsanamahal, Nellore.)

This small volume of prose-poems is perhaps the cleverest thing in modern Telugu literature after *Kanyasulkam*: I mean, naturally, that it is the cleverest thing in modern Telugu literature after the clever side of *Kanyasulkam*, for, to be frank, *Kanyasulkam* is the most uneven piece of art that genius ever perpetrated. There are portions of *Kanyasulkam*, as the drama develops mechanically, which make one not just yawn but weep. The authentic voice of Gireesam disappears, and Madhuravani somersaults into maudlin sentimentality. In this unbelievable transmutation of the soul of a prostitute, *Kanyasulkam* descends to the level of dramas like *Chintamani* and *Vipranarayana*, so dear to the public of Mr. Sthanam Narasimharao. *Kanyasulkam* should have been, like *Kubla Khan*, an unfinished piece. That it happens to be a completed drama is a tragedy of some magnitude to Telugu letters, for it cannot be denied even by its most ardent admirers that the latter part of it is

"Like some poor nigh-related guest
That may not rudely be dismissed;
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile."

Phidelu Ragala Dazan is all of a piece. It contains twelve poems each of which is a masterpiece of fine observation, felicity of expression and perfect execution. Whether the poet writes about the season of 'spring in the City of Madras,

"I have heard that the season of spring
has visited the city of Madras.
Where is this season of spring?
I do not hear the songs of birds.
I only hear the endless uproar of trams and buses.
Is it really the spring?"

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But, look
In letters that pierce the eye,
In front of Chellaram's shop
Is advertised
The Annual Spring Clearance
Surely, it must be the season of Spring."

or, whether he compares the traffic policeman to a girl dancing the *Bharata Natya*, or moonlight in China Bazaar to *Badam-kheer*, he is always attempting to be clever, and nearly always succeeding. The majority of the poems deal with sophisticated life in Madras: with telephone calls which lead to taxi rides which do not end there. Prostitutes in half-dark recesses of their Mint Street homes, ladies in gold-bordered Mysore sarees, with handbags and high-heeled shoes, and certain unfortunate Anglo-Indian girls "who, as consideration for a nine-annas' seat in a picture-house, yield their surface for the adventure of exploration,"—all flit across the poems, whatever the title or the theme of the poem wherein they occur. There are rare places, just one or two, where the verses cease to be merely clever, and attain the serious dignity of poetry. But, generally speaking, cleverness is the only claim of these poems to be noticed. Like all modernist verse in other lands, at least in the first stages of rebellion, these verses too exhibit an anxiety to eschew all conventional metaphors, similes and poetic associations, in order to replace them by the material that modern life supplies. When T. S. Eliot discarded Wordsworth's description of a quiet evening sky as 'a nun, breathless with adoration,' and talked in his turn of 'a patient etherised upon the table,' his merit lay, not so much in any immediate effectiveness of his own imagery as in his stern refusal to trade in imagery which was outworn and which was ceasing to have any intrinsic emotional value in modern life. If poetry in the days of Matthew Arnold was, in Arnold's phrase, the *criticism of life*, modernist poetry in the early stages had no creative value of its own but had value only so far as it could be construed as a species of *criticism of the poetry that just went before*. In England, for instance, this negative achievement was all that it could lay claim to, and was perhaps content to claim, for quite a long time. But when something more positive is sought and achieved, standardization begins: standardization of rhythm, standardization of rhyme-schemes, and even standardization of imagery. It is too early, therefore, to start hoping, with the slender evidence in hand of the verses here reviewed, that a new movement in Telugu Poetry is on the horizon, and that the illusory dawn heralded by Messrs. Krishna Sastry and Viswanatha Satyanarayana and men of their ilk has died out. It may even be that in the succeeding decades poetry must yield outright to prose. There is, however, a valiant band of pioneers in young poets of real merit like Mr. Srirangam Srinivasa Rao and Mr. Mallavarapu Visweswara Rao struggling to do something different, but their hour has not yet struck. Meanwhile Mr. Pattabhi Rama Reddi

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may congratulate himself on his own peculiar significance in this context. But, before he can achieve anything really worth while, he must shed his cleverness.

BURRA V. SUBRAHMANYAM

Kathalu, Gathalu; Ekavali—By Veluri Sivarama Sastry (Can be had of the author, Suravaram, Atkur P. O., Kistna District. Price As. 12 each.)

These two books, being the first published poetical works of Sivarama Sastry after a lapse of nearly twenty years, are greatly welcome. Sivarama Sastry holds a high place amongst modern Telugu poets. It is rare to find such scholarship as his amongst modern poets, and rarer still to find his poetical gifts amongst scholars of today. While yet young, he soared like a rocket into the firmament of fame and shone there in glorious colours, along with his 'Gurus', Tirupati Venkata Kavulu. His 'avadhanams' at Guntur and Tenali are still a record in that line, but the days for such exhibitions of poetical feats are gone, and gone for ever. Since then, while he went on enriching his scholarship of the classics with a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the English and Bengali literatures, his muse had been almost silent, except for an occasional stray note here and there. It is these stray notes that are gathered together in these volumes.

'Kathalu, Gathalu' is a translation in verse forms of Tagore's 'Katha' from the original Bengali. Most of these are short stories—as the title itself shows—and are familiar to readers of Gitanjali, Fruit-Gathering, and Broken Ties. Of these stories it can truly be said what a critic said of Tolstoy's *Twenty-three Tales*—that even if no other work of the author was available to us, this little volume of stories was enough to rank him as a first class artist. Of passionate outbursts of poetry, and of exuberant, unbridled expression we have many samples in modern poetry. We have been so used to this 'efflorescence of individual lyricism' that anything savouring of simplicity is mistaken to be of no artistic value. Our great art-critics believed that human emotion is only one of the ingredients of literature and not its aim, which is 'the beauty of perfect fulness consisting in simplicity and restraint.' Great art consists in feeling much and controlling much, but not in parading it. These stories would have been taken by Tolstoy as examples of the highest art. You may not find any single line of poetic flourish or lyrical beauty that you can quote to others, but the story as a whole is like a full-blown flower that has its beauty not in individual petals but in its fulness.

We ought to be grateful that these stories are rendered into Telugu by Sivarama Sastry alone and by none else. When Sastry translated Gandhiji's Autobiography into Telugu, he set a very high standard for translations. His translation is now

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read as much for the beauty of the simple style as for a knowledge of Gandhiji's life. This kind of the surely classical simple style where the maximum effect is brought out with a minimum amount of words is his peculiar gift.

'Ekavali' is a collection of the author's original poems contributed to different magazines during the last twenty years, and, as said before, this period was one when his muse was least active. The poems are arranged neither chronologically—in which case it would have given us an insight into the poet's development—nor in any definite order. As it is, it is a jumble: you can pick a blank or a full prize in this 'lucky dip.' The 'Snake Charmer,' and 'Uttarayanam' are philosophical poems of a high order, while 'My Necessities' is uninspiring. 'The Plot' and 'The Pup' are good narrative poems, while 'Satya Pratijna' is mediocre. While his 'Anandam' is sincere, his 'Head-ache'—what a medley of titles!—is not very genuine. In poems like 'The Rose' and 'Prasadhanam' a straining after effect is clearly seen. It may be an accident, but it looks as if his 'Temple Entry' is suggested by 'The Gain of the Lord,' a poem of Tagore published in the first mentioned book, 'Kathalu'; and the poem 'Padamulu' suggested by a poem of Edward Thomas entitled 'Words.' The poems I like in this volume are 'Uttarayanam,' 'Snake Charmer,' 'The Furrows,' and 'The Pup,' besides the lyrical poem 'Mohamu.' The last poem in this collection 'Agni' is a melancholy poem, and the reader shares the author's grief when he finds all his manuscripts destroyed by a disastrous fire in his house.

Altogether this collection of poems is not the best the author can give us, and the country expects much more from this scholar-poet.

The get-up of the books is good, but while in 'Ekavali' a few printer's errors are left unnoticed in the errata column.

SURI SUBRAHMANYAM

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