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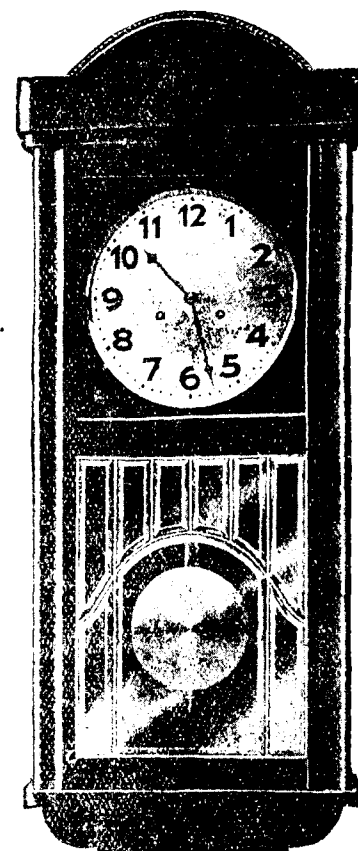
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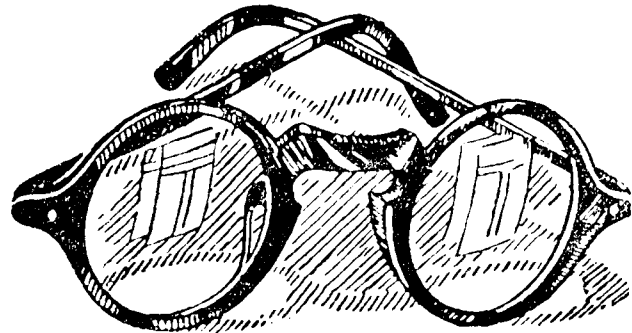
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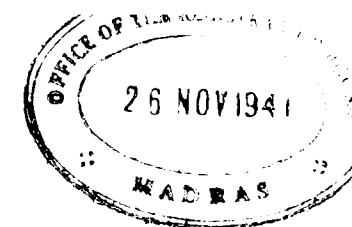
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The Eastman

Nicholas Roerich

# The Scholar

Vol. XVI]

MARCH 1941

[No. 6

## Collectors

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

**H**OW are we to bring art into every day life? Where are these blessed paths? Perhaps they are inaccessibly difficult? Or they may require countless wealth? Or only spiritual giants may venture along these paths of beauty?

All assurances will be unconvincing. These doubts can be answered only by a page out of real life.

I shall take the portraits of four of my friends. They have all left us now. Only one of them was rich in money, the other three were rich only in the brightness of their spirits.

The rich collector was the Moscow merchant Tretiakoff. There was nothing in his family to dispose him towards art. Rather did that old merchant family look with suspicion on the art it did not understand. But unexpectedly young Tretiakoff was drawn into a new path. And gropingly, guided by personal feeling, he began to collect pictures of the Russian school. He went his way alone, only now and again listening to the advice of some artist friend. And it was not by chance that the now famous Tretiakoff Gallery in Moscow began to come into being. With the true intuition of the picture-lover, Tretiakoff understood that the Government generally filled its museums mostly with official productions passing over the best work of the artists. And this official physiognomy of the museums could not reflect the evolution of the national school. So has it ever been. So far, I fear it will be in the future.

Art has always blossomed with an ardent personal urge, which will comprehend and find and preserve and give to the whole nation. And so the merchant Tretiakoff grasped the national task of art. And he found out fresh artist powers and lightened their path. And he preserved their work, surrounding them with pure delight. But he made his joy a national joy, and while still alive gave the whole of his remarkable collection to the city of Moscow. And the task which he had set himself was no small one. He had not simply gathered together a mass of valuable pictures, but made his collection reflect the

whole of the Russian school. Everything that was new, brilliant, important came under the eye of Tretiakoff. This taciturn, grey-headed man, in his large fur coat, indefatigably visited all exhibitions, and nothing could hold him when he considered a picture important. He would mount the steep stair leading to the studio of the young beginner in art. He was first to see a picture finished. He was first at the opening of an exhibition. But he was also first in the possession of the best and most characteristic work.

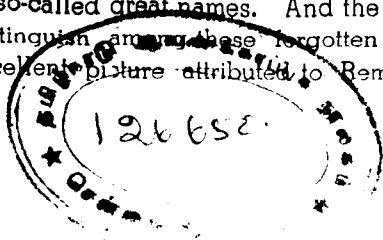
It came to pass that the prizes given by the highest art institutions were considered as naught compared with the purchase of a picture by Tretiakoff. And the destiny of the beginner in art was decided not by the Academy, but by this sincere and taciturn man. When there was no more room on the walls in his house, Tretiakoff built another beside it. If this was needed it had to be done. And art was not to suffer any loss.

Of course, it may be said that with Tretiakoff's great wealth it was, possible to collect on this vast scale. He was able to choose the best and could gather enough to represent the whole of the Russian school in his collection. It was true that his wealth made this scale possible, but the quality of the collection, his love of the work, and his living creative work in the choice itself of pictures and of men—all this proceeded not from the amount of his means, but from the countless riches of his spirit. Thus did one man, strong in spirit, do an infinitely important national work. And now, should the Government seek to have a new Tretiakoff Gallery, it would find itself powerless, for it was the urge of the spirit that created that inimitable combination of beauty.

This is an instance of ideal creativeness within national limits.

Now for another spiritual portrait. Here we have the same power of spiritual urge along with a mighty struggle with means. It was Count Golenishtcheff-Koutousoff, a well known poet and worker in the sphere of culture and Chamberlain at the Imperial Court. In his case family traditions conduced to the development in him of the love of art. His historical knowledge was great, special deep poetic gifts were his.

His collection consisted of pictures of the old Dutch, Flemish and Italian schools. Its fundamental characteristic was not the search for conventional names but the truth shown in wonderful creations. The collector understood that the names of Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyke are purely collective names, that only the lowest type of collector seeks in the dark for that which to him is but an empty sound. But a better knowledge of art shows us a countless number of artists engulfed in so-called great names. And the task of the cultured collector is to distinguish among these forgotten names for truth's sake. If on an excellent picture attributed to Rembrandt we find the signature of



Karel Fabricius, his pupil, is a fine picture any the worse for that? Or again, could Van Dyke paint two thousand portraits in one year? Of course not, but he had up to two hundred pupils.

I know how grieved the Count would be to learn that one of his favourite pictures, by an unknown Flemish painter Haselaer, now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York under the name of Joachim Patinir.

In the name of truth, Count Golenishtcheff-Koutousoff sought to discover the real names of painters and remedied, as far as he could the sins of mercenary human history. And what loving intimacy breathed from his choice collection. Every picture, too, had been obtained with difficulty, with privation. Every new member of the collection was greeted with the disapproval of numerous relations who grudged the money spent on it. And money was so scarce. His small Court salary was not enough to live on. And this collector departed this world surrounded by his real friends, his pictures. And he willed that his collection be dispersed to give new joy to new seeking souls.

Golenishtcheff-Koutousoff was the type of the refined collector, who, working and rejoicing in new beauty and truth, sends it forth again to serve for the ennobling of the human spirit.

Now for the type of a young collector—an instinctive collector from his school days. Instead of the joys natural to his age, the boy develops a love for works of art. From childhood, without possessing any personal artistic capacities, he is distinguished by education and developed taste. He is attracted by all that is beautiful. His spirit seeks to rise.

What pleasure it was to pass the time with young Sleptsoff. While yet a pupil of the Imperial Lyceum, he began to collect pictures. His purchases were not chaotic, not accidental. He knew what he was doing. And all the money given the boy by his mother for pleasures was spent on his noble pursuit. And if sometimes he was short of money, his enthusiasm for his general task never suffered from this.

And this general task was a fine one. The boy developed a love for certain very subtly selected painters, and decided to have specimens of each of them in all the periods of their work, to preserve and to hand on to posterity a complete picture of the creative human life of each. The youth dreamt of the future; each painter was to have a separate room and the whole furnishing of the room was to correspond with the character of the art represented in it—the furniture, the embellishment of the walls and ceiling, the character of the lighting and floor covering. From this we may gather what subtlety of perception lay in that young soul and what deep love and care surrounded each of the artists represented. In these special rooms choice singing

and music were to be heard at times. Or suitable passages were to be read aloud. In a word the dream of harmony of the unity of art was to be realised.

It was a joy to hear how a new work of art was selected for the collection. What subtle and truthful considerations were expressed for discovering and bringing out a new and worthy feature in the creative work of an artist. And you could see in this treatment of art no mere fancy, but a real cultural need. And this subtlety of culture infected those surrounding him. Both thought and speech were purified by this bright ascension of the spirit.

Sleptsoff dreamt of handing over his collection to the nation, without any care for his name. But he left us too early to do so. And he left us in an unusual way. He went out for a ride and did not return. He passed over unexpectedly, in the midst of Nature listening to the harmony of the Cosmos. An enviable passage—a passage to new beautiful labours.

This was the type of a sensitive soul with ingrained feelings of a future harmony and unity.

Now for one more touching type of a collector.

A very poor officer in a line regiment, stationed in a distant provincial town, reaches out to art with all his soul. Depriving himself of many things, Colonel Kratchkovsky, always pleasant in manner, always active, burning with enthusiasm, seeks to gather a collection of specimens of Russian painting. Of course he is unable to collect large pictures. So he collects small pictures, sketches, studies drawings. But in its essential value his collection becomes a very considerable one. He seeks for the best painters; he understands that often the sketch is more valuable than the picture itself. He seeks to bring out the character of the artist in its most typical features. This is not a buyer of cheap pictures. This is a true collector. And therewithal he himself is often in want of ten roubles (five dollars), and for him it is a matter of the greatest consequence whether he has to pay ten roubles more or less for a picture. And he asks the painter to let him have the picture and persistently persuades him to a lower price. And his words produced their effects and the sketches were given him. And he would rejoice with the bright joy of a child, and would write enthusiastic letters about his new treasure. How he loved art, and with what lofty meaning he surrounded the conception of true creative work!

In his will he bequeathed the whole of his collection for public use. More than that, he commanded that all his modest property, all that he had in daily use, be sold, and the proceeds applied to the purchase of more works of art which were to be added to his collection.

This is the type of an outwardly unnoticed but deeply important worker for the culture of the future. His example drew the attention of many. And if you could see his letters written from the battlefield! His was a pure soul. Colonel Kratchkovsky left us during the late war.

I might show you many more characters, full of noble seeking in different spheres of art. But even these four types show the level of those cultural aspirations which are so necessary for humanity.

So do things happen; not in dreams, but in real life—sincerely and actively. And such pure labours are accompanied by a smile of joy. How near are the seekings of art to the attainment of the spirit.

It is time to understand, to note and to apply to life these wondrous channels.

And when art has entered actively, irresistibly and simply into all spiritual development of public life, then it will be brought also into the whole of modern life.

And it is through these channels that the true paths of blessing will draw near to every human heart.

---

## Philosophy and Life

By K. C. VARADACHARI, M. A., Ph. D.

HERE is a growing realization amongst philosophers that Philosophy and Life at the present day are somehow divorced from one another and the main drift of late has been in the direction of drifting away from one another. We have known at this end of India that Universities even and Governments have been giving left-handed treatment to Philosophical studies. It is said that 'Philosophy has divorced man from life's pursuits and has depleted the vitality and energy of individuals from the promotion of human welfare'. This attitude has not a little to do with the anti-intellectualist bias of political theories and also philosophies of the Bergsonian school. In the name of *realism* there has been an attempt going along to put down the study of philosophy. That Philosophy has not made for the betterment of the state or country, and that it has acted as a lure to mere word-quibbling and slovenliness of action is a criticism that has been made through out the past few years with a constancy and perseverance that even philosophers believe that there is much truth in that criticism, and the weak amongst us have already succumbed to this slogan. What is wrong with Philosophy that it should have shrunk to this measure of contempt, repression and ridicule? In what has it failed? It is upto Philosophers to discover the underlying causes of this great and pathetic fall.

We have Philosophers anxious undoubtedly to contribute to world-thought, but who have somehow contrived to get it into their heads the notion that it must be a restatement of past philosophies. This is important, for whilst a restatement of Philosophy in terms of ancient thought to which all the people have accustomed for centuries has the initial advantage of appeal, it need not because of that turn out to be truth. All the same, the failure of Philosophy to encourage an indigenous and fundamentally agreeable doctrine to the mass of people will lead to its own debacle. The failure of Modern Philosophy in India has been not a little due to the strangeness of the doctrines and to the novelty of the contents, however much comparative religion and philosophy might seek to discover correlations. Thus Indian Philosophy has to go to its own ancient roots if it has to succeed at the present time, and yet it does not succeed. The reason is the failure that it has registered in the course of life of Man in our country. Thus a paradoxical situation has arisen. "By the fruits shall a tree be judged."

Thus we find that Philosophy if it has to be loyal to the cultural situation cannot but refer to its own ancestry. And if it did, it will

only meet with the disaster that will overtake it despite this incidence of alien cultures and ideas. The position is one of unrelieved gloom. Just as it is with political renaissance and resurgence, so it becomes imperative that there should happen an incarnation of an adequate genius to the new situation, who would synthesise in himself both the ancient and the eternal, and the temporal and the present.

We would have to state our problems of Philosophy with sincerity and clarity. What are the problems of Philosophy and what relevancy have they to the immediate and remote problems of life? Philosophy aims at a world-view, and unless this world view taken in the abstract and the most universal eternal manner it cannot be adequately representative of the truth. But then this world-view need not be the *welterchonuung*, a life-view. Unless they synchronize, or unless the one follows logically from the other, there is only a remote chance of philosophy governing the life and conduct of people. It is true that without intelligence and planning, life must find its end sooner or later. Either we plan our civilization or we shall perish. But this planning must proceed from the most adequate view of reality and influence the relationships so that they could be ordered logically and successfully. A Philosophy that does not aim at bringing about a synthetic view or organic view of the entire factors of the world, which does not guide us in conduct and which engages itself in querrilous and garrulous discussions as to the most unimportant aspects of reality courts an early demise. The fact is that without a logical system of ordered thought, no action can successfully be performed, but whether this logical ordering can be called truth is a different matter. For we can, as Bertrand Russell claimed, have logical groupings of facts or fictions as many in number as we will, but none of them need be truth, that is, none of them need be the most exact and correct logical theory of Reality. The political theories of Marx and Hitler are logical theories put into practice with ruthlessness and consistency, but they are not because of their expediency or efficacy as such truth. Indeed the psychological factors which Hitler has put into execution with remarkable success show that we can by constant and consistent effort condition a people in their thought and behaviour so as to make it impossible for them to think otherwise or see otherwise. This is the psychological influence of Philosophy on Life. The world is mostly governed by these pageantry of thought and behaviour, because they are conditioned by these for a considerable time, intensely and uniformly and consistently.

But this effective doctrine of conditioned reflex, despite its utility, is not at any rate what a philosopher really bent upon knowing the real constitution of the world can permit himself to exploit or to submit to. The doctrines of realism and idealism have had changing fortunes but they have not ceased to take interest in the specific problems of

how we know and what we know and how we know what we know. The nature of mind, the nature of matter, the nature of relations, the nature of the content of knowledge, the knowing, the positive evidence of growth and progress, the end of man and his life, the rules governing his moral life and social life and religious life, all these fall into the purview of Philosophy. All these have to proceed from the ideal conception of their relationships or integral unity of these relations, so as to yield deductions as to conduct. The truth about the Kantian theory lies in the postulate of the need for deduction from *apriori* synthetic judgments of the three kinds, according as they fall within the Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason and the Critique of Judgment. This is because the Reality from which all activity, of cognitive, conative or moral and religious life and aesthetic enjoyment proceed from the Unity of it. This Unity is important, for without this world-view of Philosophy or true view, that does not undergo deformation in consequence of temporal conditioning, because it is uniquely implied in the structure and nature of the Integral Truth-view, there can possibly be no activity, no progress.

The application of the Integral eye-piece, so to speak, to the problems of the immediate situation is what is demanded from us in our moral life as well as in our social and political existence. The idea of a fluxional system of change without consistency, of chance that cannot be explained in any manner except through the cry of ignorance, the non-mathematical view so to call this, is utterly unsatisfactory and cannot be a profitable role for Philosophy. Indeed if Philosophy undertook this role it would be acting as a fifth-columnist. Romanticism in Philosophy, Utilitarianism in ethics, and mysticism in psychology are all such efforts which make Philosophy discreditable. Philosophy cannot and must not forsake the realm of rationalism, and logical unity, but this unity of logical understanding must be forced to undertake the effort of deducing all facts from the nature of the totality of life and being. Can Philosophy ever gain this force of pure Existence on the plane of life that surges with emotions? Is it not a far cry to seek to govern all life from the basis of this abstract life and being? Life and vitality are not seen to flow from this abstraction. In the next article I shall suggest the alternative to this.

## A Goan Poet

By Dr. K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR, M. A., D. Litt.

**G**OA is an enchanting nook in the sub-continent that is India—or so it seems to the casual visitor; poetry seems to lurk in the air, the very waves seem to keep to the rhythms of poetic strains. And yet the Goan poet is an unhappy creature, caught in the coils of his own unique destiny. He talks Konkani at home, Marathi abroad; he talks Portuguese, he talks English. He learns Latin at School and perhaps French as well. In result, he is multi-lingual. He has a poet's perceptions and cravings and self-lacerations; but destiny has placed him (as it has placed the Indian poet) between a world that is dead and a world that is as yet powerless to be born; and he is further handicapped by the very versatility of his tongue. It is all the more astonishing, therefore, that Goa in recent times should have produced so many distinguished poets who have made distinctive contributions to Portuguese and English literatures. Goa is, after all, a small place, scarcely bigger than a Taluka in British India; but the achievements of Goan poets like Paulino Dias, Floriano Barreto and Nascimento Mendonca (who write in Portuguese) and of Joseph Furtado and Armando Menezes (who wrote in English) are as deserving of praise as the triumphs of a Toru Dutt or of a Chattopadhyaya. We dare not prophesy whether Indo-Anglian or Indo-Portuguese poetry has any real future; much will depend on the political future of the country. For our purpose it is enough to note that notwithstanding the many difficulties incident to the profession of poetry in India, several Indo-Anglians have nobly managed to articulate their fugitive fancies and intuitions and to turn them into memorable song. In the scroll of authentic Indo-Anglian poets many names will occur, but few more certainly than Armando Menezes, a Goan every inch of him and at present Professor of English at the Karnatak College, Dharwar.

Many Goans are obliged (as many Madrasees are obliged) to leave their delightful home and seek a living in British India or in Africa. It is, therefore, natural for the cultured and sensitive Goan to lisp, consciously or unawares, the still sad music of homesickness, to invest his native village with the aura of an Innisfree. These poems of exile, whether written by Furtado or by Manuel C. Rodrigues or by Armando Menezes, ring sincere and must find an echo in our hearts. There is none with soul so dead but is profoundly stirred by memories of his home. It is a character of Dostoevsky's who remarks that a man who leaves his village leaves also his very soul behind him. No wonder the exile pathetically seeks his lost soul screaming out song

the while. Menezes's "Commedia Goana" (included in *Chords and Discords*) is to me among the very best things he has done. I must resist my temptation to quote entire the three sonnets that constitute the sequence. The first describes the scene of departure. The second wistfully recapitulates the lost pleasures and yearns for them, weaves fancies about them; reading these moving lines, one dreams of one's own distant home, one unblushingly exclaims—

How often, wearied with ungotten gold,  
Have I, O Mother, dreamed, and dreaming, sighed  
For the pure gold of thy sunsets and the tide  
Of golden ricefields when the wind is bold!  
How often, when sick hope has lost its hold,  
Have I in thy green bosom yearned to hide—  
Thou narrow haven from a world so wide,  
Thou cosy shelter from a world so cold!

Is it an "exiled" Goan dreaming of his native spot? It is, but it is something more as well; it is the quintessence of the poetry of exile, and (to quote Furtado) it implicates

The pang of all the partings gone,  
And partings yet to be.

In the third sonnet, the "emigrant" is back again; he is a sadder, wiser man; he is "ambition's fool, toil-tossed, life-beaten wreck." The ecstasy of re-union galvanizes him for a minute, and he is transfigured as he

Sees, as if waking from an anguished dream,  
The thin, white ribbon of the palm-girt shore;  
Gray fortresses, white churches, hills of jade;  
Mandovy rushing with his yellow stream;  
And then, like Venus from the billows hoar,  
Lo! Pangim rises—queen of masquerade!

Pangim, capital of Goa, is a toy city, with a due harmony of parts, pretty and gay and human. Old Goa, a little removed from Pangim, is majestic in its very ruins; the poet is unescapably drawn towards it as a piece of iron is towards the magnet, and the sonnet-sequence "Old Goa" is his song-offering to "those ruins gray." The poet's fancy takes wings, Time revolves backwards, and Old Goa re-lives for a glorious instant; soon the enchantment fades away, and the poet wakes to realise that he had but "walked among the dead."

Armando Menezes's two earlier pamphlets of verse, *The Fund* and *The Emigrant*, were primarily the products of a severe intellectualism that felt out of tune with the outside world. Young and impatient, the poet could not suffer fools gladly. Complacency and cupidity, vulgarity and cloth stung him to the quick, and he spouted a stream of satire that sparkled and wounded at once. *The Emigrant* is charged with Prufrock-like poses of spiritual negation: it is the world seen through a convex mirror. Perhaps, Professor Menezes wrote it after

teaching Browning's *Men and Women*; the style is, anyhow, arrestingly reminiscent of Browning—

Now you agree? Ay, think it is a pity  
There is no honesty in all this city?  
But how to shun the lawyer, doctor, bori,  
Or beggar with his tragi-comic story?  
Rank liars all! More impudent imposters  
Than fortune-tellers or the evening posters!  
Talk of newspapers!—cramming you with news  
Which are sometimes more rotten than their views;  
And you who write, you waste your time and pads  
While Mister Editor collects his "ads".....  
From phrase to purple phrase his periods creep,  
His view not sounder than his readers' sleep;  
Till, once a year, they, waking from their slumber,  
Find restitution in a Christmas Number.

It is all excellent fun and it is pointed satire; it is the exercise of youth's prerogative when it feels it can annihilate worlds with an epigram. It is brilliant and enjoyable, but, it must be admitted, it is also spiritually unsatisfying. *The Fund*, a delicious mock-epic in twelve cantos, though written with a laudable motive, seems to have wounded rather than pacified the contending parties. As Mr. Pewter remarks in A. P. Herbert's book, the world cannot stand cleverness, especially cleverness that scintillates. There are passages in *The Fund* that are fascinatingly clever and the shafts presumably went home. The controversy that inspired its composition is now happily forgotten and we can read the poem and just enjoy its vivid portrait gallery and the many mock-epic similes and descriptions that embellish the narrative. Here is a portrait which Bombay-ites would recognize at once:

Another god came, resolute and free,  
A sort of hebdomadal Mercury;  
Expert in interstellar politics  
In dropping meteors or in dropping bricks;  
Of awkward carriage, an apparent fool  
Perplexed with all the trifles of a school  
And civic cares; yet, take him all in all,  
There was no riper wisdom in that hall.

The following mock-epic simile is a sustained piece of buffoonery:

And thus the talk went round, and whispers grew  
To clamours that assailed the careless blue:  
As when two urchins on a city street  
From harmless words advance to hands and feet,  
And plaudits from the circumstantial throng  
Inflame their rage and hearten them along,  
Till saloon car, Victoria and the tram  
Are all confounded in one terrific jam.

*The Fund*, like Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, wished to laugh "party lust" out of court. I believe it is the only mock-epic in

Indo-Anglian literature. The Muse of Poetry need not always be immaculately solemn and sericus; she might, now and then, participate in the quips and and cranks of life, drowning life's little ironies in a sea of laughter. Mock-epics, in their own way, are real and earnest, and have the laws of their particular genre: and Menezes's exhibit is as good as any that the Indo-Anglians are likely to give us.

Admirable as are *The Emigrant* and *The Fund*, it is, however, in his *Chords and Discords* (from which I have already quoted) and the more recent *Chaos and Dancing Star* that Armando Menezes has risen to his full stature as a poet. These two volumes bring together about one hundred pieces, displaying a pleasing variety in theme and treatment, in temper and technique. Professor Menezes is a student of Latin poetry and no wonder he has a sensitive ear and has, too, an acute sense of form. He is not carried away by the grotesque allurements of free verse and he is not blinded by the fashionable contortions of "modernism." His themes are as old as the hills and the sea, but age withers them not and in Menezes's hands the themes acquire a fresh beauty and make a fresh assault on our emotions. The tears in things, the facts of death and decay, of inevitable change, of unescapable disintegration, these moved Lucretius and Moschus and Gray and Shelley to memorable song: and the same themes constitute the enduring stuff of many of Menezes's sonnets and elegies. What theme can be more worn-out than the death of a child, and yet what can be more moving and "aching-intimate" than these four lines!

Pure dewdrop! whom the chilly wind of death  
Shook from the gloomy branches of our life,  
Grudging the spring his new-awakened breath,  
Unconscious yet of sorrow and of strife.....

One reads the lines, and one's pulses respond; no need here to wrestle with Audenesque obscurities or the Lawrentian complicated states of mind.

Menezes is steeped in English poetry, and echoes from the masters raise ripples of reminiscent enjoyment in ever-widening sequence. "The Sweeper's Song" (in *Chords and Discords*) recalls Thomas Hood's "The Song of the Shirt": but Menezes's is no bare imitation it is a moving poem in itself:

Sweep, sweep, sweep—  
And cast in the gutter man's fever and flutter,  
And I sweep into my bin man's sanctity and sin—  
Sweep, sweep, sweep—  
And my dust is the dust that is gathered unto sleep.

There is no trick of utterance here, no artificial pose: it is but the pathos of the sweeper's vocation made poetically manifest. Again, the conceit (I use the word in no derogatory sense) in the sonnet

entitled "Gifts" (*Chaos and Dancing Star*, p. 56) seems to have been suggested by Shelley's "One Word is too often Profaned." However, the echo but enriches the emotional content of Menezes's poem:

I dare not give the mintage of my mind  
Soiled with the market dust of every day  
And tarnished with the breath of mortal wrong;  
But will you take my love of humankind,  
The purity of players when I pray,  
And silences beyond the dream of song?

Similarly, the magnificent pageantry of "The Mighty Lover" (*Chords and Discords*, pp. 7—11) contains echoes from Rupert Brooke's famous poem. To say this is not to deride the poetry of Menezes. Most poetry is necessarily derivative. There is, in fact, as Thomas Hardy pointed out, no new poetry; all that the new poet can hope to do is to come with a new note. The poets are for ever exploiting the same old themes; but if they pipe aright, their songs are for ever new.

Armando Menezes is rooted in tradition, and that is the measure of his strength. Especially in his recent poems, he has shown himself as an unblemished craftsman in verse. None but an accomplished craftsman could have achieved the artistic triumphs of "Ode to Beauty", "Ode to Laughter", "To Silence" and "Hampi." The raw stuff of exultation or awe or effervescent regret is moulded into things of beauty. We are willing to chime in chorus with him either cataloguing the good things in the world or welcoming "auroral laughter" or musing in the midst of the ruins of ancient Vijianagara or feeling enraptured by the saffron after-glow of a November sunset at Dharwar. The rhythms gradually enter the fabric of our memories and we then repeat lines like—

A fire-red evening runs between the rims.....  
A hush has fallen, a swooping bird,  
And caught our lives for evermore.....  
Dark imps pain, angels of grace above,  
Brokers of understanding and of love.....

And so Menezes sings, achieving concretions of colour and sound, imprisoning worlds of aching pain or universes of ecstatic joy. He is content with themes even as "stale" as

the heart's brave gold;  
Love, leaping from the rock, eternal birth:  
Heaven's grace; and furrowed patience of the fields.

Occasionally, very occasionally, we hear a "modern" note. There is a poem on "the Train" in *Chaos and Dancing Star* which is reminiscent of Stephen Spender's "The Express." "To a Fallen One" is grounded on a towering sympathy that is significantly modern. But even in these poems the touch is never harsh, and one hardly notices that they connote any deviation from tradition.

In his latest and best pieces Armendo Menezes has tried to achieve the twin harmonies necessary to the highest poetry viz. the union of word with the idea and the harmony of the poet's inner and outer experiences. Art is form being resolved out of matter, harmony being resolved out of chaos. Professor Menezes, like his own poet, may be "sitting upon the ruined heap of his self-blasted years"; his heart may be, now and again, "dead" within him; he may be sensitive to "broken melodies" and to "Life's rude billows" and "barren hopes and coward fears." These, however, do not embitter him and turn him astray. He is sustained by Love and by Faith; he holds colloquy with Death unabashed; he quietly affirms

Because I bowed me level with the sod,  
And kneeled before the loveliness of you,  
My very senses cry out, There is God!

He gazes up to the sky, "henceforth mine own and thy dominion"; and undaunted by defeats he feels he is the heir of immortality. Professor Menezes's "message" is thus one of hope, and his happiest mood one of prayerful ecstasy.

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\* \* *The Emigrant* (1933).  
*The Fund: A Mock-Epic* (1933).  
*Chords and Disoords* (1939).  
*Chaos and Dancing Star* (1940).

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## The Spirit of the Himalayas

By SVETOSLAV ROERICH

[Mr. Svetoslav Roerich, an eminent portrait and landscape painter, is the son of the great Artist-Philosopher Nicholas de Roerich who has settled in the Himalayas. Mr. Svetoslav's paintings adorn almost all the leading art galleries of the world. He has expressed the hidden beauty and spiritual grandeur of the Himalayas in some of his paintings.

He is the Vice-President of the Roerich Museum. Besides being an artist, Mr. Svetoslav is a physician and scientist who is conducting valuable researches into rare medicinal plants occurring in the Himalayas.

In this article Mr. Svetoslav Roerich whose knowledge of the Himalayas, is firsthand, deep and intimate gives a pen picture of the resplendent mountain ranges.—Ed.]

**F**OR over twelve years I have intimately known the Himalayas—the mighty ranges of the West—as well as the Towering Peaks of the East. My first impressions and visions called forth by their unparalleled beauty and grandeur have only become more vivid, as the years have gone by, and their Message has become even more eloquent. Gradually their outward form and inner meaning have assumed a new significance, blended into one and transmuted by the very power residing in the multiple concepts for which the Himalayas stand. This Great Temple of Nature is reserved for the true seekers after truth in all its forms.

From time immemorial the best aspirations of mankind, the loftiest concepts and legends have been woven about the Himalayas.

Throughout the world, whenever the word Himalayas is pronounced, people become attentive, and a special eagerness and expectation light up their countenance. It is not only the concept of tremendous Heights, the call of unconquered Peaks, uncharted glaciers and valleys, or the unbelievable richness of Vegetation and Animal Kingdom, there is something else besides these outward attractions; there is a greater and deeper significance the word Himalayas conveys to the listener, as if an unseen spiritual influence lives in this very word, a special magnet which made the Himalayas the greater Centre of spiritual pilgrimage. Innumerable are the shrines and caves dotting the valleys and slopes of the Himavat. Every one knows—Kailas, Manasarovar, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Ravalsar, Triloknath, the caves of Arjuna and Milarepa—these centres of spiritual search and aspiration. But how many are the shrines unknown, reserved for the true seekers after Truth, either on this or the other side of the Range!

The great Rishis directed their holy quest towards the Himalayas. Mighty Teachings and Doctrines were born under the towering peaks. Is it not strange that throughout the world, the Great Teachers of all Races or Faiths have always gone to the Heights to receive some of their greatest revelations? Does Height, does Eternal Snow, the rarified Atmosphere contribute towards greater lucidity, or is it in order to rise above the sphere of the turmoil of life?

Those of you who have climbed great heights—you will know how active your mind becomes, how light and even unnecessary becomes sleep. Are these some of the qualities that attracted the great Searchers after Truth from times immemorial?

Pure thoughts are born in pure places, in places unsullied by the lower selfish passions generated in the struggle for existence and self-gratification.

The caravan is nearing the highest point of the Pass. The men dismount and gather bright little primulas; reverently they place these offerings on the nearby rocks, "to the Devas, who live on those Peaks." Truly this is the sentiment unconsciously expressed by every one when the word "Himalayas" is pronounced,—the Abode of the Devas.

The Great Sages and Rishis, perhaps, could contact these spiritual influences; they most probably could or else they would not turn towards these mighty Peaks. These Great Souls, these brilliant Minds, who have given us the loftiest Philosophies, Systems and Concepts, could they make a mistake in choosing their Abode? Could they ever be justly suspected of not knowing what place was best for the generation of transcendental Thought?

These great philosophers proclaimed the mysteries of Nature long before Science was able to demonstrate them: the atomic theory, the theory of relativity and vibration—the *maya* and *tattvams*; they proclaimed telepathy long before the human brain was found to emit waves.

The conscious-awakened mind must and can attune itself to the influence of the Cosmos and can read the Book of life. It is part of Life itself, this individual focus of conscious existence, hence partaking of all its influences. And if it is endowed with the faculty of self-realisation and cognition with individual consciousness—truly there can be no limits to what human mind can achieve and know. Some of these, marvellous mysteries of the subconscious we see in certain prodigies and in the realm of hypnotism.

The pilgrims gather at a wayside shrine: "Have you ever heard of the Shining Ones, the snow men, and those who live beyond the

Eternal Snows?" Quietly flows the narrative, attentive are the faces. A new hope and understanding unite these accidental passing friends.

There is always some truth at the foundation of every legend, of every apocryph.

The quest of the Spirit for ever it remains the supreme effort of Mankind, the inborn aspiration to something beyond the apparent emptiness of everyday life. All great minds stopped to ponder over the mysteries of Life and Death, and they told us that this life here on Earth, this short, evanescent existence, is not a mere accident to come and to go-snuffed out by Death for some unknown purpose. This life is only the means for the spirit to gain experience and when the material existence has come to an end, the real man continues in a different state and sphere.

Could one logically accept or believe that the products of the human mind, systems, philosophies, great works of Art and all manifestations of human genius to survive for centuries and milleniums, are the products of a finite mind, and the creator, the cause of all these manifestations has disappeared and exists no more?

Beyond all conflagrations and strife, beyond all destruction and violence stands the eternal concept of Spirit.

Mightily stand the Himalayas, their ramparts drawn towards Heaven. Along the winding valleys and gorges Guru Charaka gathered his precious, healing herbs. Hiun-Tsiang that amazing Chinese traveller thirteen centuries ago describes the medicinal plants found on the Himalayas. The Pandavas came here to rest wearied by the great struggle, and the Tibetan Poet-Saint Milarepa listened to the echoes of Nature and voices from beyond.

What memories lie concealed in the mighty folds of these Ranges! The Great Gautama in search of the salvation of mankind, Rishi Vyas, Rishi Narada, Rishi Agastya, innumerable are the noble souls to find their best inspirations in the shadows of these towering peaks and to carry them down again to struggling humanity—Humanity caught in the coils of ignorance and selfishness. The great Pythagoras, Appolonius of Tiana, they have certainly contacted these illuminated Men, when treading the soil of India in search of Wisdom.

The lama says; "I must go, my teacher calls me,

His pilgrimage on Earth is coming to an end."

"But where does he live, your Teacher?"

"He is now at Kailas and it will take me months to reach

Him there."

Thus speaks a Lama hermit, having heard the voice of his Guru a thousand miles away.

Mysteries still live along the slopes of the Himalayas. They are ever present for him, who searches for them with an open heart, not for the sake of curiosity or for derision.

Let us then look with an unprejudiced mind for the real understanding of life, we shall find it all around us, and it will regenerate our outlook and our habits. How wonderfully rich life becomes once we contact these eternal values, everything assumes a different meaning and purpose! And it is precisely now, in these days of Armageddon that we must think of these sublime Truths, Real and Eternal beyond every conflict and destruction.

Beyond the ravages of strife the Spirit of the Himalayas distils its influence throughout the world. We find it in the lofty philosophies, we find it in arts, in poetry, in music, in painting, sculpture and architecture.

The great temple of Kailas at Ellora, its outline was designed after the holy Summits of Kailasa to inspire and remind those, who were far from the mighty Ranges, of those profiles and masses that meant so much to the builders.

How unforgettably beautiful are these majestic ranges! Every possible variety of form and colour is theirs. Through the narrow, winding gorges, mighty rivers carry the message of the snows into the distant plains—the three sacred Life-givers of toiling millions—the Ganges, Brahmaputra and the Indus! Waterfalls break into a thousand rainbows and relentless glaciers rub against the crags and cliffs and carry them down to some gaping precipice. The ever present, all pervading pulse of Life scattering, pulverising rocks and growing glistening crystals. The Eternal Proteus Life in its infinite manifestations combining and recombining forms, dissolving them in order to bring them again into objectivity under a fresh impulse and in new combinations. One can truly say such riches of natural beauty as are found in the Himalayas are not to be seen anywhere here on this Earth.

Kanchenjunga, the Guardian of the Five Treasures, like a priceless necklace of shimmering pinkish pearls floating above the hazy valleys and hills, is the transcendental vision of another World of sublime Beauty to draw our spirit upward.

I always think of the words of a world traveller, who said: "If the Grand Canyon of Arizona is the Entrance to Hell,—the Himalayas are the Gates to Heaven."

Himavat! the birthplace of the greatest thought, the loftiest concepts hover over Thy Mighty Peaks. Shambhala, the Holy Grail, the Heavenly Jerusalem, are symbols of the interlinked aspirations and visions of so many different ages, the eager and earnest Hope of weary mankind and the eternal affirmation of the great philosophies.

Himavat, the beautiful, Thou hast given us our greatest Treasures and for ever thou shalt remain the Guardian of the Greatest Mystery—the Holy Marriage of Heaven and Earth!

## The Village Calls the Student

By BHARATAN KUMARAPPA, M. A., Ph. D.

**E**DUCATION today has criminally neglected the village. If education is to have any national significance, as indeed it should, it must in our country be rooted in the village and relate itself primarily to village conditions. But unfortunately as it happens school and college education have little to do with villages, and the benefits of it do not touch them. On the other hand, if anything, university education has been a disaster to them, for the intelligentsia or those with special gifts of intellect or organising ability have been weaned away to towns, with the result that the village is left merely with the drudge who can only do what has always been done. The villager pays taxes to support schools and colleges, and we who benefit by it are guilty of gross misappropriation of his hard-gained money if we make no return to him.

There are several ways in which students may seek to repay even if it be in a small measure, their debt to the village. As students, their first business is to investigate into the conditions prevailing in villages. They should carry on an intensive survey into everything that affects the life of the villager—his water-supply, lighting, drains, roads, public latrines, housing, health, diet, lands, tools, livestock, rents, taxes, debts, litigation, number of dependents, occupation, periods of unemployment and their causes; if he is an artisan, from where he gets his raw material and where his articles find a sale, how much profit he makes, how much training is required for the industry, how much capital and equipment, what industries formerly existed in the village, reasons for their decay, what skill is still left; schools, subjects taught, whether they prepare the children for later life in the village recreation, village panchayat and its working, opportunities for adult education if any, social and religious customs and such like. It may not be possible for a student to take up all these subjects for investigation. He may choose from among them such subjects as interest him, prepare a questionnaire, if possible with the help of someone who is well versed in them, and gather as much information as possible.

But mere theoretical study of village condition is not enough. On the other hand, such study if it is not to be merely academic but rooted in reality must be undertaken with the practical motive of organising work as the result of its findings and only in the process of such work will the problems of the village unfold themselves.

In general, however, we may indicate the lines along which, village work may be undertaken by students.

1. **Sanitation and hygiene.** It is evident that unless the streets lanes and open spaces of the village are kept clean, and water supply is pure, the villager will suffer from constant attacks of epidemics, itches and fevers which sap his already too low vitality. It is necessary therefore to free the village lanes and open places from accumulated rubbish which gather flies and disease-carrying germs, introduce improved and economic methods of disposal of human excreta and of carcasses, clean village wells and tanks, teach villagers sanitary habits in regard to spitting, ventilation and clothes, and give them a knowledge of simple remedies and preventive measures in regard to common ailments.

2. **Diet.** The productive capacity of the villager is low partly because of malnutrition. It is necessary therefore to introduce life-giving elements into the villager's food or at any rate to see that whatever food he is able to afford is not deprived of even what little nutritive value it may have. Hence propaganda should be carried on for the use of unpolished rice, whole wheat flour, gur (jaggery) in the place of refined sugar, greens and leafy vegetables, and fruit and milk where these are available and can be afforded. Villagers should be advised to reserve part of their land for fruit and vegetable growing and efforts should be made to improve the milk yield of cows. The whole question of the food ordinarily taken by villagers should be studied and a balanced diet which will provide them with the necessary body-building and disease-resisting qualities, should be evolved, which will at the same time be well within their means.

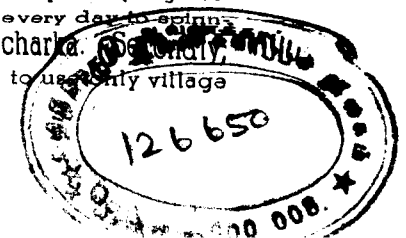
3. **Social and cultural life.** At present, the social life and level of culture in the village remain where they were several centuries ago. Students can do much to bring new life and happiness into the monotony of the village. They may organise lectures, meetings, bhajans, dramas where local talent may find expression, games and sports, and reading clubs where interesting papers or books are read out to the people on matters which affect their life as well as news in regard to the outside world.

4. **Economic Life.** Above all, efforts should be made to increase the productive capacity of the villager, whether in the realm of agriculture or industries. In regard to agriculture, students may not be able to do much, for it is linked up with questions such as the system of land tenure, fragmentation, irrigation, land-revenue, exchange policy, credit, research in regard to tools, seeds, cattle-breeding, pest-destruction, and such like which can be dealt with effectually only by the state. What might be done is to induce farmers to make use of human excreta as manure. It is now being wasted and the whole air in and round the village contaminated. If night soil is collected in manure pits and used in fields, much wealth can be

added to the soil, and lead to richer yield of crops. Students themselves should undertake this work and teach by example.

What strikes one most who visits the village is the amount of idleness that prevails there. During the season of work in the fields the villagers are busy, but the rest of the time they are idle. The economic loss to the country of so much idle man-power is incalculable, and the psychological effect of unemployment—despair, pessimism, irresponsibility and moral degradation—is if anything even worse. Moreover the skill in industries that formerly existed in the village is fast disappearing, for with the import of ready made goods from outside there is little scope for it in the village, and skilled artisans either migrate into towns and cities in search of other occupations or become unskilled farm hands, thus increasing the already too great pressure on the land. With lack of employment owing to the disappearance of industries, the village is growing poorer and poorer, while its shops are flooded with cheap, tawdry imported articles, which lure the villager into parting with even the few pice he may have earned with the sweat of his brow. The village can never be prosperous so long as foreign goods find free entrance into it. The villagers should be encouraged to produce in their own village whatever they need, as far as that is possible, and impetus should be given to industries which require little capital, organisation or equipment, for which there is a ready market in the village itself, and for which the raw material is locally available. Industries which meet these requirements are such as carding, spinning and weaving, paddy-husking, flour-grinding, gur-making, oil-pressing, bee-keeping, pottery, tanning, shoe-making, carpentry, blacksmithy, paper-making, toy-making etc. The villagers should be discouraged from catering to distant markets, for thus they get into the hands of middlemen, who take away much of the profit themselves. They should on the other hand produce all that they primarily need, making themselves self-sufficient. In the past, Indian villages produced all they needed themselves and some of their industries such as those of cotton, silk, carpet, brass and ivory work were the envy of the world. There is no reason why today India should be reduced to being a purely agricultural country; and what is worse, the increasingly impoverished condition of the masses shows that if this process of depriving the villager of industrial occupation goes on unabated, it must bring about the complete extinction of the masses.

Nor may it be said that students can do nothing to help in the revival of village industries. They can teach the villager by example their faith in village industries to bring about prosperity and progress. This they will do by themselves devoting a part of every day to spinning, and teaching the villagers to card and ply the charka. Secondly, they can do a great deal by making up their minds to use only village



made articles, so far as that is possible. Take for example cloth. If you buy cloth spun and woven in the village you give employment to the spinner, the weaver, the dyer and others, but if you buy foreign cloth or even Indian mill-made cloth, your village neighbours go without employment. If only we made up our minds in all our purchase to see where our money goes and to see that it goes to feed the starving villagers by patronising their goods, and if further we induce others to do the same, we shall have done a great deal. It is true that quality for quality, village goods may be inferior, but unless we patronise them they cannot survive, much less improve. Youth at any rate must have sufficient idealism not to count the cost, when it is a question of life or death of our millions. After all our lives are tied up with those of our neighbours, and we cannot live unless they live also. They can live only if they are in employment and it is upto us to keep them in employment by buying their goods. And when we do so, we shall find that not only do we make for their material prosperity but in so far as work makes for intellectual and moral development we make also for development of their whole being.

The opportunities for village reconstruction are many, and they challenge our best thought and effort. The faith and enthusiasm of youth are required here if anywhere. It is for students now to band themselves together, think out village problems afresh and apply themselves to the work. Village uplift means in our country national uplift, and who would not want a share in so great a task?

—*The Theosophical College Magazine.*

## Velakali

By K. P. PADMANABHAN TAMPY, B. A.



ELAKALI which is the most fascinating, spectacular and interesting entertainment during the *Utsavam* (Temple Festival) season in the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple at Trivandrum, wherein is enshrined the tutelary Deity of the Ruling House of Travancore, is a highly scientific and technical war dance peculiar to Travancore. *Velakali* was originally instituted to keep alive martial tactics during times of peace and to provide delectation to the patriotic sons of the soil.

The *Utsavam* season which occurs usually in March or April lasts for ten days. The gleaming swords, the ornamented shields, the quaint and impressive costumes of the *Velakali* actors and the vigorous martial music to the accompaniment of which they dance lend rare old world charm and classic dignity to this indigenous performance which exhibits physical prowess of a rare type.

The *Velakali* actor holds in his left hand an ornamented shield and brandishes a sword held in his right hand. The shield is circular in shape and is a work of Art in itself. The sword is short, and slightly curved.

The actors wear armlets and anklets and adorn their exposed chests with garlands of multi-coloured beads, shells, spangles and glass pieces. Their head-dress is a red turban tied into an elongated knot on the right side and adorned with gold or silver lace. They wear two clothes, one snow-white reaching up to the ankles and the other a triangular piece of deep-red silk ornamented with silver knobs and dots. A narrow strip of white cloth which serves the purpose of a belt is tied over the red silk. Before they dress up for the performance, they bathe and worship at the shrine. They smear on their forehead, shoulders and chest sandal wood paste and rub their eyes with black dye.

This war dance brings to life the ancient achievements of the Nairs of Travancore in the *Kalaris* (gymnasia) and the battlefield. The Nairs were in the palmy days of yore the war-lords of Travancore. They formed the chief warrior class of the country.

Luis de Camoens, the Portuguese Virgil, in his epic poem *The Luciad* describes the Nairs, with whom he became personally acquainted four centuries ago thus:—

By the proud Naires the noble rank is claimed  
The warrior's plumes their haughty brows adorn;  
The shining faulchion brandish'd in the sight,

Their left arm wields the target in the fight ;  
Of danger scornful, ever armed they stand  
Around the king, a stern barbarian band".

Only Nairs take part in the *Velakali* performance. It is a hereditary right of certain families in the Karunagapally Taluk in Central Travancore to participate in this indigenous war dance. These families enjoy liberal endowments of tax-free land from the Maharaja and the temple. The *Velakali* is enacted before the temple as an act of adoration to the God. The Battalion of *Velakali* actors is commanded by Mathur Panikker, a wealthy landlord, whose ancestors were hereditary Ministers and Captains of War under the Rajas of Central Travancore.

The *Velakali* actors have to undergo a course of strenuous physical training under reputed masters to become proficient in this military game. They are expert acrobats and they possess complete control over the membranes and muscles of the body. With lightning speed they move their limbs, jump, tumble and dance. Their movements are acrobatic but never obtrusive. They dance to the stentorian music of drums, gongs, cymbals and trumpets. It is thrilling to watch and hear the simultaneous rattling of swords and shields synchronising with loud beats on the drums and gongs. The measured steps and poses of the actors are guided by the time beats on the drums. The dexterity of the drummers is truly amazing. The crescendo and diminuendo produced by them are supremely effective.

The *Velakali* actors represent the hundred and one *Kauravas*, the enemies of the five *Pandava* brothers, the story of whose feuds and enmity is described with an amazing wealth of detail in the great Hindu Epic the "*Mahabharatha*."

The great battle of Kurukshethra, at which the *Pandavas* destroyed all the *Kauravas*, is staged by the *Velakali* actors in front of the Sree Padmanabhaswami Temple twice every evening and night during the festival season. This thrilling fight reminds the eager spectators of the heroic battle between the *Pandavas* and the *Kauravas* which is believed to have taken place many, many centuries ago.

The *Velakali* commences with a flourish of trumpets and drums. The *kombu* (horn), *Kurumkuzhal* (clarion), *thakil*, (kettle drum), *thappu*, and *madhalam* (hand drums), constitute the military band of the *Velakali* warriors. On hearing this call of arms the warriors muster and form into a line. The rearmost line comprises of flag men and the front line is formed by the young warriors. In between the elders take their place. The battalion is accompanied by birds and beasts used in olden days for military purposes. Bullocks, swans, etc., made of wood, paper and cloth carried by retainers come last.

The encounter is strictly regulated by custom and convention and no deviation is permitted. The army of the *Kauravas* (the *Velakali*

actors) prance like furious war steeds and engage in duels and solo exhibitions of martial prowess such as fencing, jumping. They march in battle array from the encampment against the *Pandavas* who are represented by gigantic wooden statues, and after a mock which lasts for an hour, retreat in panic stricken stampedes up the temple steps. Their movements are similar to well planned assaults and retreats in regular warfare.

The fight is most spectacular and it provides an evening entertainment to the large crowds of sightseers and pilgrims who gather inside the Fort at Trivandrum during the Temple festival season. The picturesque penons, in various colours and shapes, of the *Velakali* actors shine resplendently in the glow of the evening Sun.

During the festival season huge wooden images of the *Pandavas* are set upon on either side of the road leading up to the shrine of Sree Padmanabhaswamy. These stately images which are twenty to thirty feet high, look most picturesque in their quaint costumes.

The head-dress worn by the *Pandavas* is highly attractive and is profusely decorated with many coloured beads, shells and glass pieces. The images have voluminous skirts of deep-red cloth. The *Pandavas* are portrayed as giants having long, flowing tufts of thick black hair, long and pointed nails, round and bulging eyes and possessing a most formidable appearance.

All the *Pandavas* except Dharmaputra the eldest are in a standing posture. Dharmaputra is seated with one leg over the other, serene, dignified and calm, watching the battle. Bhima's image is the biggest and most spectacular. He looks a veritable giant with his huge club carelessly poised over his broad shoulder. The costume and make-up of the *Pandavas* bear a remarkable resemblance to the costume and make up of the *Kathakali* actors.

The images of the *Pandavas* are of such huge dimensions that they are set up and dismantled with the help of an army of men and a number of elephants. The wood carver's art is triumphantly demonstrated in these stupendous statues which are exhibited only once a year. They contain great deal of intricate, elaborate and delightful carving cunningly executed by master craftsmen of vision. The carving is superb for its sumptuousness of detail, perfect finish, richness of colour, dignity of expression and demeanour and artistic perfection. These statues exhibit a sumptuous exuberance of human fancy run riot.

The *Pandavas* look impressive, powerful, determined and confident. These awe-inspiring images are gorgeously draped in deep coloured cloth and they extort notice from a distance. They tower-up like defiant giants instilling terror in the minds of children and curiosity and admiration in the minds of elders. The images face the

temple and represent the mighty *Pandavas* and the *Velakali* Actors impersonate the vanquished *Kauravas*. There is an epic grandeur in the *Velakali* which has powerful rhythmic vitality. The "*Velakali*" is a glorious heritage, a remnant of a great nation's marital tactics and artistic skill.

An eminent scholar hits it off thus :

"During the palmy days of the age of chivalry in Malabar, this game supplied an amusement, to the patriotic sins of the soil which modern military review with its bright uniforms and glittering panoply, its splendid cavalry and powerful artillery, its waving pennons and musical band, fail to afford. It stamped a force of character, a spirit of self-confidence and a readiness for action on the people which form the life-blood of national existence and supply an incentive to further progress. Who can contemplate the decay of such institutions without a sigh?"

## The Ceremony of the Holy Fire

The Festival of the Miracle.

By V. T. NEELAKANTAN

**T**HE Greek church ceremony of the Holy Fire is celebrated on Easter Eve. It is a great feature of the Annual Easter routine of Jerusalem, altogether eclipsing the Resurrection services on the following day; but historically it is incidental, not implicit in the "Passion of our Lord", and it is in no way connected with either the holy Ghost or the Pentacost, as is commonly believed.

The story of the miracle is legendary, dating, according to some, from Apostolic times, but in greater likelihood from the second century of our era. However that may be, and whatever truth there may be in the legend itself, the rite of the Holy Fire has been established for at least eleven hundred years. For, in the ninth century, the monk Bernard of France recorded in his memoirs its existence and observance in terms which indicate that at that date it had already a permanent place in the calendar of the Church. But in telling the story of its origin we may ignore the arguments as to both its veracity and its date.

**Prayers Answered.** An early Christian Monk in Jerusalem was celebrating the Easter Passion. He and his scanty flock had observed Good Friday, and preparations had to be made for the relighting of the lamps in the chapel to greet the Risen Lord on Easter morning. But there was no oil. The monk sought everywhere in vain, and between times prayed devoutly for divine assistance. Good Friday passed. Easter Eve was nearly spent. Still hoping that his prayers would be answered, even at the eleventh hour, he prepared the lamps for lighting, putting water in them in anticipation of the film of oil in which the burning wick would float. He then retired once more to the altar and prayed as he had never prayed before. And this time his prayers were answered. On rising from his knees he found a layer of oil in each vessel, in which burned, bright and clear, a lighted wick.

The story spread rapidly through Christendom; the Divine Fire was kept alive through the years; and the festival of the miracle was absorbed into the Easter ritual of the Christian Church, which had not yet been split by the schism between the East and the West. When the schism came, the Greek Church alone retained the ceremony of the Holy Fire, and today the Latin Church gives no countenance to the Annual Orthodox service in Jerusalem.

It is, however, a curious coincidence that in the Roman Catholic missal the Holy Saturday service at the station of St. John Lateran opens with the kindling of a light outside the church, which is subsequently blessed by the priest at the entrance. "Meanwhile, there are no lights burning in the church, so that they may be presently lighted from the *Blessed Fire*". The deacon brings a taper "lighted from the *new fire*," and after a threefold repetition of the words "Lumen Christi", to which the congregation responds, "Thanks, be to God", he lights the candles on the altar one by one.

**Happiness and Hope.** In the Greek Orthodox Church the mysticism and the reality of the celebration of the miracle have survived undimmed throughout the ages. To the majority of Christians of the Eastern Churches, the Russians, the Greeks, the Americans and the Copts, it is still a miracle and its annual representation still miraculous. Once a year, at Easter time, divine fire is given to them. They smear their faces with its smoke; they burn themselves in its flame; they bear it and bring happiness and hope to their homes.

The festival is for them a festival of joy, the precursor of the universal joy, which will come to Christendom all the world over on Easter morning. "Modern evolution in the West may spurn the idea of the miraculous and be at narrow-minded pains to scoff at the clumsiness of the ritual and the transparency of the deception; for in a world slavishly concentrated on an analysis of cause and effect we of the West have lost our faith in miracles. But when we were children we believed in fairies; we sent our applause to Peter Pan when he pleaded for Tinker Bell; and we were as happy in our innocent beliefs as is the child-like Eastern Christian of today over the Miracle of the Holy Fire."

The ceremony naturally drifted into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and has ever been an eventful feature of that extraordinary fame. In Turkish times the estimate of the successful or unsuccessful issue of the ritual was based on the number -- more or less -- of deaths which its celebration had occasioned. For Ottoman Jerusalem was at its unhappiest during Easter time.

**Yearly Occurrences.** The Christian sects which had a footing within the precincts of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were for ever wrangling and even fighting on the slightest provocation; and to complete the chaos there was always the Turk, ready to exploit the internecine strife of his Christian subjects at Easter, in accordance with his principles of government on the lines of *divide at impera*. Moslem intrusion and incitement were a feature of Turkish tactics, and in the cramped rotunda around the Sepulchre quarrels amounting to battles and degenerating into a primitive struggle for life itself were almost yearly occurrences.

Curzon in his book, *Monasteries in the Levant*, has left us a classic account of the rite in the Holy Sepulchre on the occasion when Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt in 1834 elected to see for himself what was this much-advertised Christian miracle. Being late by half an hour, he caused its consummation to be delayed pending his Moslem convenience. The additional and unwelcome wait turned the fanatical exhilaration of the pilgrims into indignant fury and resentment; and, in the terrible scenes which followed, Ibrahim and Curzon all but lost their lives.

Three hundred pilgrims were trampled to death or killed by the Turkish bodyguard of the Egyptian Pasha, and two hundred more were seriously wounded. In more recent times Holman Hunt, the artist, was present to collect material for this subsequent picture of the ceremony. On that occasion there was desperate fighting, and two hundred pilgrims, mostly Russian, perished.

These facts may appear mediaeval to the visitor to Jerusalem today. The supercilious accounts of the ceremony, both by Dean Stanley and by Curzon, represent it as a barbarity. But their accounts are faithful, sincere versions of what they saw and experienced. To the visitor of today, however, they read as though the writers had viewed the happenings in the Holy Sepulchre from the lofty respectability of Westminster Abbey—which, as a matter of fact, a Russian pilgrim would hardly look on as a Church at all.

The East demands something from religion which the West does not look for, and which it dislikes when found. What is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander. Eastern Christendom has standards and ethics of its own, and in a special way the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is its Cathedral Church. The two are supplementary one to the other, but supplementary in an Oriental fashion. Together they plead to the West. "For God's sake leave us our illusions."

**Much needed order.** The British regime in Palestine has not in any way interfered with the ritual of the ceremony of the Holy Fire, but it has brought much-needed order into its proceedings. The crowds are still so great that the on-looker wonders how in the available space they could be greater, although he is assured that in other days they were. The excitement of the Holy Fire is still so intense that involuntarily he averts his eyes from the sight of the mob surging and screaming to light their candles.

But there are now no casualties; method, unobtrusively applied, makes avenues where processions have to walk, and movement in a single direction where clashing tides have in the past spelled tragedy. And the service has gained thereby. It is still of the East, Eastern, primitive, exuberant, and exciting; but the venom has been drawn, and it is once again the healthy, albeit boisterous, expression of thanks

-giving for the divine miracle which, centuries ago, saved the old monk in his dilemma.

Jerusalem at Easter time has points of resemblance to Beyruth during the Festival. "What have you got tickets for?" And the old habitue, "No, I'm not going. I've seen that." Everyone in the Holy City talks tickets for weeks before Easter and the stranger must bestir himself betimes if he wished to get one for the exclusive and popular Holy Fire ceremony. When he has got it, only half the battle is over, and he must leave his hotel early on Holy Saturday if he hopes to benefit from his good fortune.

**Candle Hawkers.** The crowd will already be thick in the Courtyard outside the Holy Sepulchre when he arrives; he will have to push his way through serried rows of candle hawkers and onlookers before he finally reached the great door of the church. There the coveted ticket has to be shown. It proves to qualify for a view of the ceremony from a side gallery of the Greek Cathedral, the Catholicon, which stands on the site of the Original Crusaders' Church and opens to the west, directly on to the entrance to the Sepulchre itself, a few steps below in the centre of the domed rotunda. But after climbing through Calvary and up several flights of stone stairs, worn slippery by many feet before him, the visitor will find that from his gallery the view round the tomb, where the culminating scenes of the ritual will be enacted, is sadly blocked by the massively arched west end of the Catholicon.

Happy then the man who has a smattering of Arabic and a handy five-piastre piece to open other avenues to him. There will be more stairs and tottering ladder to negotiate; but in the end he will find himself on dizzy heights among the angels—or, in other words, he will be admitted to standing room overlooking the Catholicon on the top of the arch of the lofty reredos, a thick, heavily ornamented wall separating the main body of the Cathedral from the choir, and containing in its recesses, among other treasured Orthodox relics, a bone of Saint Oswald of Northumbria, who died in 642 A. D.

He is indeed among the angels. The narrow sloping ledge on which he stands is fronted, toward the Sepulchre, by a closely set row of gilded wooden angels, their wings spread so that they overlap, the wormholes with which they are everywhere pierced redolent with a haunting aroma of incense.

**A fifteen-foot cross.** On the apex of the arch, supported by chains from the roof, is a fifteen-foot cross, also of gilded wood, and by craning his neck under the protecting and—from the point of view of vision—highly obstructive wings of the angels, he can see on the wall below him a great gold medallion, a rayed sun, which hangs over the arched entrance leading from the main part of the Catholicon

to the choir and altar behind him. He proceeds without delay to take stock of his most immediate surroundings.

On his arched ledge, the East is meeting the West in a way which gives a sad lie to the superior criticisms of Dean Stanley and his Victorian compeers. On his left, clutching on one hand a bunch of **tapers**, is a Greek woman of Jerusalem, waiting for the fire which will bring her a year's happiness. In the crook of her spare arm she holds a rather elderly baby, which is suckling with that frank gusto which a Western mother would find embarrassing.

On his right, a full-voiced Briton is discussing Palestinian politics with a ~~glib~~ little Syrian woman, who knows nothing and cares less about such things, and is only waiting for an opportunity to tell this dull but obviously powerful representative of the mandatory Government that her husband's salary is too low. Farther up the slope an amazing female dreamily lights a cigarette immediately behind the cross.

The visitor turns away in horror, picks up the shawl which has fallen from the Greek woman's shoulders, and, red with shame for the civilised West, seeks shelter under the angel's wings. From the gloom of the Catholicon, sixty feet below him, rises a murmur of voices. Ahead, through the arches of the West End, he can see the rotunda and the Holy Shrine bathed in Eastern sunshine.

**Heaving and Pushing.** The Church has by this time filled up considerably. Sunburnt youths of the Palestine police, from Aberdeen, Cardiff, Wigan and Galway, are heaving and pushing, efficiently but unostentatiously, to keep open the avenues of entrance and exit among the tightly packed crowd on the floor of the rotunda. Its high, arched recesses have been boarded for the occasion into tiers of boxes which recall Mr. Vincent Crummel's theatre at Portsmouth on the night of Miss Snevellicci's benefit.

They are crammed with onlookers who have paid high prices for their comfort; but they have thereby saved themselves the expense of a night at a hotel, as most of them have been there since the preceding day, eating and sleeping, watching and praying. For thus does the East undertake its religious obligations. All have candles in their hands and friends on the floor with whom they exchange shrill greetings. One green-trousered worshipper waves his arms to give the time to a group which is dancing on the pavement below. His lady friends in the box crane their necks to see the fun, and applaud his and the dancers' efforts with the high tremors of the *Zaghareet* and much hand clapping.

Suddenly the visitor's vision is blocked, as a bunch of tapers, dangling on a string, drops past his nose from nowhere. There is a laugh from over-head, and he looks up to catch the eye of a jolly

Transjordanian boy, a Christian probably from El Sall, lying full length along the eerie gallery which circles the twin dome of the Greek Cathedral, much as does the whispering Gallery in London's St. Paul's. The boy has lathered the candles betimes to attract attention from the floor below, and to ensure that when the Fire does come some kind co-religionist there will light them for him to bring him early joy on his airy perch.

**Beginning to move.** This is a first sign that time is passing and that things are beginning to move. The visitor looks at his watch. It is nearly noon. On the floor of the Catholicon below him there are indications of happenings. A queer, throbbing, dactylic chant, which is at once taken up by the congregation within the Church, is heard faintly from outside.

And suddenly through a side door bursts a noisy troop, singing at the top of their voices and surging toward the rotunda between rows of the police, who have just been reinforced by the sandwiching between them of Greek Boy Scouts, oddly dressed as sailors. The invaders have entered thus by right of birth. They are of the twelve Greek families of Jerusalem whose immemorial privilege it is to carry the sacred banners of their Church round the Sepulchre in the coming patriarchal procession. The chosen bannerets of the year are being escorted by their relations to their post by the Tomb, where the banners have been placed; and soon all except the happy delegates of the occasion ebb back whence they came, still shouting and jostling.

The Greek mother proves a well-informed churchwoman. The Greek Church, she explains in a mixture of Arabic and French, does not countenance images as does the Roman Church; and these tattered banners of Jerusalem, which are incredibly old and fervently revered, are paraded as the visible emblems of Orthodoxy on days of festival.

**Hailed with wild applause.** The visitor has heard her joining shrilly in the tune of the chant of the twelve families, and asks her for an interpretation. Arabic and French, the one only half understood, the other wholly murdered, are poor material for the reconstruction of what proves to be little more than a doggerel:—

*'Our great day.*

*We are glad.*

*Jews are sad.*

The conversation breaks off with a smile on both sides, as both parties once more crane their necks under the angels' wings to see the patriarchal procession, which is just forming in the sombreness of the Catholicon below. Its advent is hailed with wild applause, above which rises the shrillness of the woman's *zaghareet*; and the still more piercing voices of the white-robed acolytes who lead the way.

Behind them follow interminable files of black-garbed priests, their long hair coiled under the brimless top hats, which are the uniform of their grade. They move slowly and with difficulty through the swaying throng, shepherded lustily by the youths of the police; and in their wake emerge at length into the body of the Cathedral the twelve leading dignitaries of the Greek Church in Jerusalem, who two days before had filled the roles of the twelve Apostles at the Maundy Thursday ceremony of 'The washing of the feet.' Today, they are clothed in white embroidered with orange, which glistens and glistens again in the soft radiance of the tall candles which they are holding.

Down the nave, they proceed, a wonderful oasis of light in the gloom below; and suddenly there is a still greater outburst of song and applause as the Patriarch himself appears. White-bearded, his features strikingly reminiscent of Michael Angelo's statue of Moses, he stands facing down the Cathedral toward the Sepulchre, an arresting figure in his stiff white robes and silver cope, leaning on a magnificent golden crozier, and on his head a golden filagra crown, such as Tsars wore domed and scintillating with jewels.

The progress is agonizingly slow, and the congregation reacts. There is an atmosphere of breaking tension, of rising fanaticism—a working loose of primitive passion, which will be assuaged only by the final rite of the ceremony. Three times the procession slowly circles the Sepulchre, the banners in front, the Patriarch, magnificently erect for all his eighty years, bringing up the rear. And at last the climax is reached. On the conclusion of the third circumambulation, the procession makes its way up the steps from the rotunda to the Catholicon.

**Frenzied Congregation.** The Patriarch alone remains below. He stands for a few moments before the now frenzied congregation, facing the lowly door of the Angels' Chapel, where reposes such of the stone which the Disciples found rolled away from the Tomb as has not been removed by the Turks to the museum at Constantinople. Two archimandarites of his suite, in gold and white, divest him first of his crown, then of the many golden chains of office which hang around his neck, and lastly of the silver cope and the white brocade robe. And, looking more than ever like Moses, he disappears into the Tomb, leaving, as he bends his back to enter the shrine, a memory of a tapering cross of gold embroidered on the pale blue silk of his cassock.

For some five minutes he is hidden from view. Let us not ransack our Western vocabularies for flippancies to describe what happens within, or how he will contrive to produce the miracle which will crown the ceremony. This rite is of the East, and we are in the East. Let us rather watch the sea of excited faces round the Tomb, which

gaze with straining eyes toward the two openings in the walls of the shrine whence will issue the Holy Fire. There are no questionings or doubtings in the minds of those whose upraised hands, each clutching a faggot of candles, stretches out madly, like reeds shaken by the wind, for the light which will bring another year's happiness to their hearts and homes.

'Our great day.  
We are glad.  
Jews are sad.'

**Mighty Cheer of Triumph.** The chant swells and echoes to the domed roof, and is suddenly drowned by a crash of bells, a barbaric peal from the beautiful twelfth-century belfry in the courtyard outside. The Holy Fire has appeared. A minute later and the Patriarch himself emerges from the Sepulchre, carrying high above his head two great faggots of candles, flaming and smoking in either hand. There is a mighty cheer of triumph, and the old man, his fine face looking almost unearthly in the yellow light of the blazing torches, is practically carried in the stout British arms of the police up the steps from the rotunda and through the surging, hysterical turmoil of the Catholicon.

Once again the parallel of Moses is irresistible. 'And Aaron and Hun stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady'. He disappears to the din of a beating of gongs and a clash of bells; and the wild chant of Christian Joy rises almost to a scream.

Meanwhile, the Holy Fire has been kindled, and, from candle to candle, spreads like some fresh conflagration. A pall of oily blue smoke rises up to the angels, and through it, blurred but vivid, springs into life a flickering, kaleidoscopic sea of flame. It spreads with miraculous speed; up the balconies, along precarious ledges to the galleries, and finally to the angels themselves.

The Greek mother plunges her free hand into the smoking flame of a neighbour's candle and smears the oily soot first over his child's and then over her own face. She kisses the infant with a passion which cannot be merely maternal, and shakes the visitor so warmly by the hand that for one embarrassed moment he fears an Eastern embrace.

But nothing jars. She is the spirit of the *genius loci*, the incarnate expression of Eastern Christendom in its moment of supreme jubilation.

**Everyday Black.** The final ceremony of the ritual, which might be compared to vestry prayers at home after the conclusion of a cathedral service, takes place in the Greek Convent, which adjoins the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Patriarch, now once more in everyday black, appears to receive the congratulations of his flock. There are no prayers, only a wonderful chant to the glorification of

God in nature. 'O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever'. The words of the Greek *Benedicite*, *Omnia opera* are different, but the spirit is the same:—

'To the wind, salutation.  
To the sun, salutation.  
To the wind, salutation.  
To the moon, salutation.  
To the wind, salutation.  
To the earth, salutation.  
To the wind, salutation.  
To the stars, salutation.

The refrain is ever of the wind—the mysterious, the rushing wind the spirit which animates all mankind.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has the true appreciation of the Miracle of the Holy Fire. 'What is a miracle?' 'A miracle is an act which creates faith.'

## A Day in Delhi—II

By RISOV

(Continued from the February issue).

**N**EW Delhi is as clean as old Delhi is dirty. And no surprise too, considering the amount that has been spent on its construction. Indeed, there would be legitimate cause for surprise if it were not really so clean and beautiful, for we are told, that its construction cost the Government nearly sixteen crores of rupees.

"A colony of clerks", remarked a friend of mine, referring to New Delhi. I don't know, but there are big officers too, "burra sahibs", as they are called, and their bigger bungalows. And then there are the Secretariat buildings, the Council chambers, and the Laxminarayan temple. No, it would be unfair to say New Delhi is merely a colony of clerks.

If we set aside the local population, the Bengalis top the list of other provincials, followed by Punjabis and Madrasis in order. The population, of course, is mainly clerical, and hence, go to whichever corner of the city you may, you cannot escape hearing "Office talk". You know the sort of dreadful bore who takes you all unawares, on your way pounces upon you, and tortures you for an hour or two with lingering relish, like some incurable sadist with his helpless victim. Well, New Delhi can boast of many such agreeable beings. Meet them but once, and they will succeed in making you simply despair for life. But New Delhi contains the Laxminarayan temple as well, and it is better to write about it than about much depressing things.

The Laxminarayan temple owes its existence to the munificence of Rajah Baldao Birla. It was opened by Mahatma Gandhi in 1936. Its construction cannot be said to be quite complete even now, for workers are still busy on it.

The temple is built in the usual Northern Indian style, and one can convey a fair idea of its shape to Southerners only by saying that it looks like a fully bedecked temple car. The whole internal structure consists of marble and marble alone and looks lovely.

It must be prejudice, but to me it seemed this temple lacked that quality in Malabar temples which we call sanctity. As I have said, it cannot be anything but prejudice, for it all comes of association of ideas. A marble temple, one cannot say why, suggested more of pomp than piety, splendour rather than spirituality. Lovely, cool and shining marble suggested comfort and luxury to the burning body rather than light to the yearning soul.

Marble may look dainty, but it looks also tame. Granite may look gruff, but it is grand. It may be we have come to associate grandeur with granite and tameness with marble. But there it is and one cannot get over it easily. A granite temple instils respect and inspires awe; the black-spotted rocky surface seems to hide a mystery. It seems to mock at man and his feeble efforts. Marble, on the other hand, is lily-white, shining and almost transparent. It has no mystery; it yields up its secrets, if any, in a moment. It is like a pale, love-lorn maid, whose youthful hopes and wishes are clearly depicted on her pretty face. Now all this may sound like some strange theory and may be an unpardonable digression also into the bargain, but even strange theories must be given expression to and life itself is not worth living if it has not its occasional 'digressions' from its seemingly main pursuit of participating in the "Great race for sixpences."

The temple is like a beautiful poem in marble. Its marvellous beauty compels attention and extorts praise. Inside the temple the marble walls are full of quotations from the Gita and the Ramayana: sayings of great teachers and saints like Buddha, Guru Nanak, Mira Bai and others adorn the walls. Visitors are enjoined to enter the temple clean in body, neatly dressed and pure in mind.

There is a separate Buddha temple, and a grand marble image of the sweet and kindly teacher meets the eye as soon as one enters the main hall. Here also the wise words of the beloved Master adorn the walls.

Another most attractive feature of the temple is the charming paintings of the Jaipur artists that adorn the walls. Scenes from the lives of Rama and Krishna beautify the walls. The paintings, with their wealth of colours and imagery, are really a feast for the eyes. A better hour can scarcely be spent than the one in going round the temple and drinking in the beauty of the same.

If the Jumma Musjid is the Colossus in Old Delhi, the Secretariat is the Colossus in New Delhi. One almost feels inclined to picture it as the challenge of the new to the old. The old, the conservative, people of little or no receptivity as regards new thoughts and ideas crowd the old world. The young, the new, the bold, people possessed of great receptivity (in point of new thoughts and ideas as well as each) crowd the new. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Anglo-Indians and Europeans all crowd here, in the Secretariat buildings, and worship at the same shrine. What a grand picture this! Is it not the challenge of the secular to the Religious world? And if the secular world can create harmony and promote brotherhood, one wonders whether it will not be a crime on our part not to be a little more secular in outlook? Will Religion go to pieces if only we were a little more accommodating, a bit more tolerant, and a nice bit inclined

to realise that the man in the other camp feels exactly like you about his faith? What a sad comment on the understanding of man that he should in the name of Religion and God, fly at the throat of a fellow human being!

One wonders whether the sight of the Secretariat buildings has evoked such strange thoughts in anyone else.

The Secretariat consists of the North Block and South Block, two colossal structures in red, each trying its best, 'as it were, to stare the other out of countenance. Most of the Government departments work in either of the two. The war has necessitated the expansion of many Government departments and various other buildings in the city have been called into use as offices for these departments of Government. The old Secretariat and the old Council Hall near Timarpur are now again housing a number of Government Offices.

Delhi, of course, loses most of its importance during summer. Like many other parts of Northern India, it also has extremes of climate. The winter, though severely cold, is enjoyable in Delhi, provided one has sufficient warm clothes. The summer, they say, is quite unbearable. Probably it ought to be so, for one wonders whether the winter cold would be so welcome if the summer months were not so unbearable.

## Reviews & Notices.

**श्रीमूकपञ्चशती (Sri Mookapanchasati)**—with meaning in Tamil by Mr. D. Balasubramanya Sastri—Published by B. G. Paul & Co., Francis Joseph Street, Madras—Price Re. 1.

This work of Sri Mooka Kavi has not become as popular as it deserves. The great literary merits, the spontaneity and captivating charm of the work have been accessible only to a few scholars. The present publication gives these five hundred inspired verses of praise of Sri Kamakshi in Nagari characters and with translation in Tamil. The scant knowledge we have of the poet is itself inspiring. Along with the translation of the verses in easy Tamil, the work is sure to become the solace of many a soul. It may be confidently recommended to all devotional minds.

**வேதாந்தவிளக்கம் அதாவது கடோபநிஷத்துப் பொருள் விளக்கம்—** by C. Rajagopalachariar—Published by Rochouse & Sons Ltd., 292, Esplanade, Madras.

Mr. Rajagopalachariar would seem to have specialised in the art of explaining in simple Tamil whatever profundities he may have read or felt, be it politics or philosophy. The little book under review is a neat production, explaining the world famous Kathopanishad. Every verse is rendered into the language that is so unmistakably C. R.'s. Notes have been added wherever necessary. The author has not hesitated to differ from previous commentators also, and wherever he has differed, he has pointed out his view as also the usual interpretation. The book is sure to be a very useful guide to everybody, giving as it does a lucid presentation of one of the gems of Indian soul-searching thought.

**The Coronation High School English Grammar and Composition—** by W. G. Eagleton—Published by B. G. Paul & Co., Francis Joseph Street, Madras.—Price Rs. 1—14—0.

There is not much scope for originality in the teaching of Grammar. However clever the teacher and however good the text book, no student ever likes it. Any improvement, therefore, in the teaching of it is possible only in a change of outlook on the part of the teacher. The book under review has this advantage. "The true aim of the language teacher," says the author in 'Note', "must be to habituate the pupil to the accurate observation of usage. From the beginning the student must be encouraged to interest himself in the *what* rather than in the *why*. For the truth is that there is no *why*."

The statement is true even in non-English-speaking countries. This is the attitude with which the book has been written. It is thus a step in advance in the teaching of grammar in our schools. All the portions usually covered in High Schools are covered with reference to syllabuses. The exercises at the ends of chapters are also useful. Within the limitations of this dry subject, the book will be a boon to students. The index also is of very good service.

The printing and get up are neat and the price very reasonable.

கதைக்கோவை — (Collection of stories) — Collection T.—  
Published by the Alliance Company, Mylapore, Madras—Price  
Rs. 3 (glazed), Rs. 3—8—0 (feather-weight).

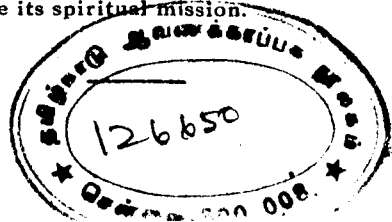
This book of more than 500 pages is a collection of 40 short-stories in Tamil written by persons who have for long been favourites with the Tamil reading public. The stories are racy of the soil. Their appeal is universal, despite their local colour. The collection contains stories with a deliberate moral intention, stories of mere amusement, exquisite pen-pictures and stories of profound character study. In portraying character and in emphasising the eternal verities of life, the stories are of a high order. The language has all the sweetness and expressiveness of Tamil.

There is a very valuable introduction by Mr. N. Raghunatha Iyer.

The printing and get up are particularly good. It is a substantial volume well worth Rs. 3.

**Kalyana Kalpataru—The Bhakta Number.** The Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Price Rs. 2—8—0.

To publish a special number at the beginning of every year is a regular feature of this first class spiritual journal and the stout volume before us is its issue for January 1941 called "The Bhakta Number." It contains 94 articles of varying lengths and it need hardly be said that even to catalogue them would require much more space than any monthly journal could afford to devote for a review. The last article contains an explanatory note on each of the 36 beautiful coloured illustrations, and photography and drawings of Bhaktas and Saints. An editorial note speaks of the realisation of *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda* and points out how *Uttama Bhakti* alone, the best form of Bhakti, in which there is no trace of any other desire, which is free from the cravings of *Jnana* and *Karma*, and whose only object is whole hearted service of Sri Krishna, leads one to *Ananda* or eternal bliss. Adverting to the several concepts of Bhakti the editor goes on to give us an idea of the contents of their precious number. We shall better allow him to speak:— "Bhakti has been conceived by the scriptures as a Goddess of whose progeny are *Jnana* and *Vairagya*, Knowledge and Dispassion. Again Bhakti has been compared to a tender creeper which has to be carefully nursed and protected against the outgrowth of weeds to other parasitic creepers and against the inroad of the wild elephant in the form of offences against a Vaishnava or against the Divine Name. Further, it has been described as a *Rasa*, a delicious drink of nectar of five different tastes—*Santa*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsya* and *Madhura*—which have been dealt with in some articles in this number. All these definitions bring out the different characters of Bhakti and are valuable as standards for understanding and appreciating the lives of Bhaktas which is the subject of our present study. The more we understand Bhakti, the more shall we appreciate the value of the Bhakta as the guide and redeemer of individuals as well as of humanity as a whole. Let the blessings of all Bhaktas be upon us, so that the loving world may find a way out of its present difficulties, the extraordinary sufferings of men we observe on all sides may cease and the sign of Peace and good will may return to a distracted world." We add, let the blessings of all be on 'Kalyana Kalpataru' to continue its spiritual mission.



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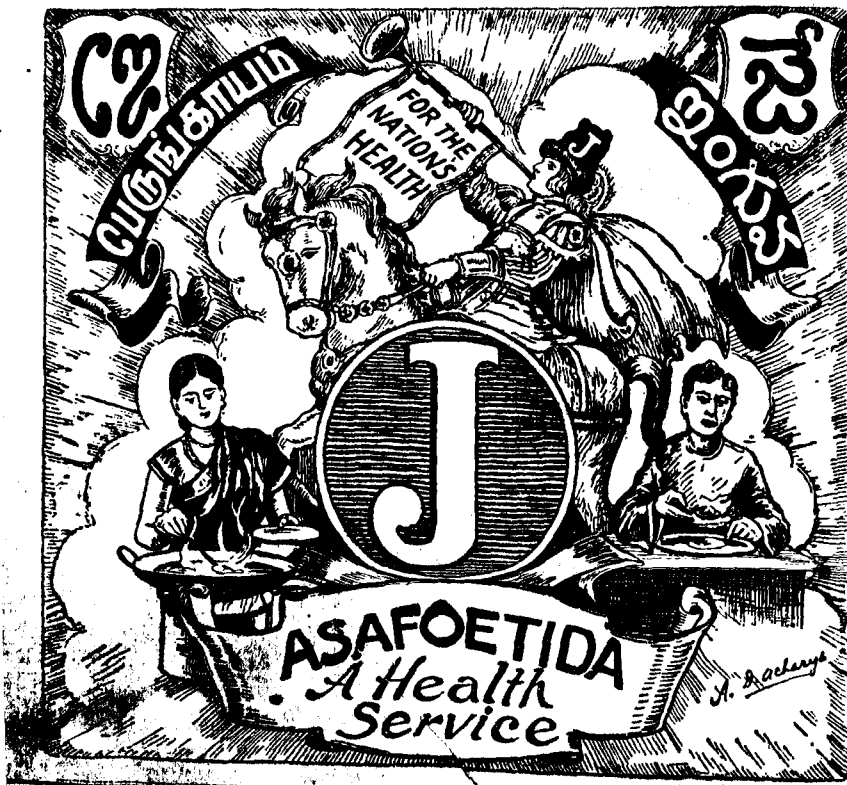
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