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SWATANTRA

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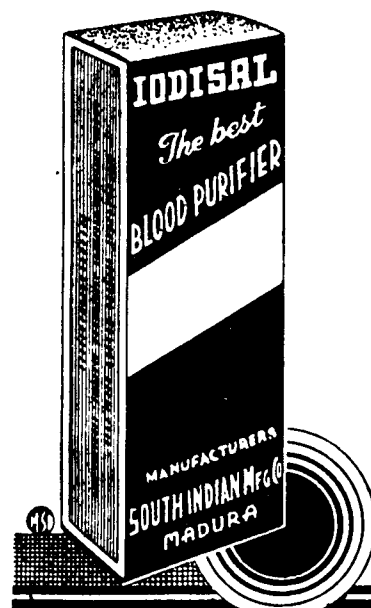
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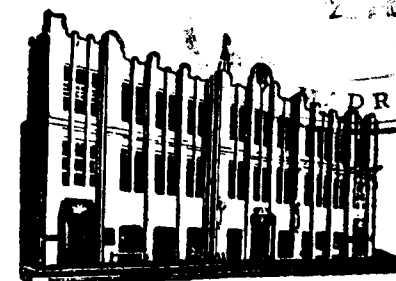
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SWATANTRA

Vol. II, No. 3.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1947.

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SWATANTRA

VOL. II
No. 3

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1947.

ISSUED
WEEKLY

THE FINAL PHASE?

THE INDIAN political situation has been transformed, almost beyond recognition, by Premier Attlee's statement in Parliament last week. It is undoubtedly an epoch-making pronouncement both in its immediate and in its long-range implications. It has cleared the atmosphere of the oppressive pressure of a mounting crisis which portended a catastrophe. It is commendably brief; it is couched in terms which cannot be bettered, if the aim is to present an objective appraisal of present and future trends; and it is heroic in its unconditional and unilateral determination to QUIT INDIA by June 1948! As if to clinch the matter even to the satisfaction of the doubting Thomases among us, Lord Wavell has been recalled and a successor to him nominated who is specifically charged with the duty of hastening the orderly liquidation of British power in India within the time-limit prescribed.

The majority of Indian leaders, having long been accustomed to fixed ideas, have not yet fully grasped the momentous implications of the new policy. They had been brought up in the tradition of looking up for a sign in the sky or of scoring tactical points over one another. To them comes the sudden promise of the very thing they had been clamouring for all through the years; and so they are transfixed by the question or doubt as to whether there could be a catch in it somewhere or other! There is

ample justification for an attitude of distrust, for our past experience shows that we have cause to fear the British precisely when they come to us with their gifts. But this time, and there is no mistake about it, British diplomacy all the world over is engaged in the painful process of cutting its losses lest it should lose the whole. There is an abridgement of imperial commitments inevitably reflected in a shrinkage of imperial power which, in a long-range view, is expected to be a source of strength to Britain. Unaware of these remote but collateral considerations which are shaping Britain's international policy, many of us have fallen foul of the White Paper and have singled out for capricious criticism points of detail while the over-all picture is not at all viewed in its fullness.

At first sight, it might seem as if the deadlock is being perpetuated under a deceptive *alias*. What about the Interim Government, some ask. What is the fate of joint responsibility, ask others. Few have enough sense of humour to realise that while all the talk had been of the Congress members resigning, of the Leaguers sitting tight over a volcano, few or none visualised the possibility of Wavell being asked to quit! We therefore propose to consider the new situation from the point of view of Congress objectives which, we claim, have been conceded with embarrassing completeness in the terms of the White Paper.

1. It had always been the complaint of the Congress that divisions in the country had been artificially fomented by the policy of the third party, and that once we were left free to settle our differences, a lasting and just settlement could be found without experiencing that sense of frustration which has been our uniform experience under present conditions. Well, we have been taken at our word. The British say they are going; they have fixed a date line, after which the writ of His Majesty the King-Emperor of India WILL NOT RUN in any part of British India. Nothing can be less ambiguous and more categorical. It is open to us to implore Parliament to postpone their withdrawal, or even to cancel the notion once and for all,—though we think it unlikely! But on any other basis, can the British Government in India function beyond the date fixed? Of course, Britain might unilaterally change her mind, and decide to stay. Then it will be another war of reconquest which will have to be fought at high speed over large areas for a dubious benefit of uncertain duration. Therefore we may rule it out, as also for the reason that final resort to arms obviates the play of reason and the consideration of such pacific notions as honour, fair-play and equity.

2. It is however objected that the British Government have announced in advance that they will hand over power to one or more parties in one or more centres in the absence of an agreed centrally evolved power able and willing to speak for the entire extent of British India. In effect, it is complained, it amounts to dividing India and then quitting it. This is what Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League are alleged to favour. If there had been some sort of *modus vivendi* between the major communities, even as an interim arrangement for a transitional period, there would have been no justification for the British Government to speak in the vague

fashion they have done, of 'handing over' to more than one party. That a solution of the Indian problem should be achieved through discussion and by mutual agreement has always been the *sine qua non* of our freedom and independence. The British had made repeated attempts to promote such a settlement from the time of the Cripps' Mission to that of the Cabinet Mission; monotonous and tragic failure of all of them has enforced on the British the futility of any further attempt on their part to solve this problem. To a guest who is leaving us after ample notice, if not indeed in a hurry at the actual time when he has to catch the train, it must seem gratuitously irksome to be asked to find out if he is really handing over the keys of the house to the proper owner, specially when the number of claimants is more than one. He is not as frightfully interested in law and order after his exit as till then, and we at least shall not blame him if he throws away the keys to whosoever has the guts or the knack to keep them under his control. As a good friend of ours, anxious to make a good impression for much lost time and opportunity, he tells us on the eve of his departure, that he will give us some time in which to take over from him by joint agreement among us. If even at the eleventh hour we fail, with what fairness can we accuse him of Machiavellism for refusing to adjudicate on the very question to which his century-old rule in this land furnishes at best an ambiguous and at worst a damaging answer?

3. What is stated in regard to the tussle between the major communities is made applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Princes as well. Some Congress sources are said to have complained that the Princes and the Muslims are being prepared as special 'pockets' for the British influence to act by proxy. The proof of this as already stated will be more evident, if the charge is

true, after June 1948; and then we may have to revise our plans accordingly. At the moment, we can only say that the charge is at least previous. As regards the Princes, what the White Paper says is but an innocuous expression of a pious aspiration. Whatever their past status *vis-a-vis* their over-lord, the promise or conferment of a new status—that of independent Princes no more tied to the chariot-wheels of Paramountcy—is not worth the paper on which it is written. To tell them that their faith and fealty are mortgaged to the British Crown until midnight of June 30 1948, and that thereafter they are free like Ariel to put a girdle round the earth in a few seconds is to read them a fairy tale. If there are any Princes who believe that their manumission is going to be so easy, and that in consequence, they can act independently of the entity known as British India, it will not take many weeks to disabuse their minds of such a fiction. If there should be any among them who are swayed by the notion that they need not care to participate in an Indian Union, it will not be very difficult to open their eyes also to the realities of the New India that is to be.

Considering the White Paper proposals from these standpoints, we can safely claim for them a degree of dynamism which, if wisely handled, will take us into the very heart and citadel of that Freedom which is built on the hopes and fears, the agonies and exultations of a nation in search of its lost soul.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

As a corollary to the major implications of the White Paper, we should like to indicate the repercussions of it on the subsidiary aspects of our march towards independence. One of the erroneous conclusions deduced in certain quarters, after the publication of the White Paper, is the notion that the Cabinet has scrapped the Constitu-

ent Assembly. Nothing could be more egregiously wrong. Having declared the revolutionary objective of quitting the country by June 1948, it would have been construed as a piece of officiousness if the British Cabinet had chosen to give us further (unwanted) advice. The C. A. has been brought into being after a deal of trouble; it should not be allowed to die before it hammers out the outlines of a constitution for the country as a whole, and for the parts of it—not necessarily demarcated after the Cabinet scheme. If the Leaguers boycott the further stages of its deliberations, it should not be allowed to upset its equanimity; but it must at all costs go ahead, so that the world may have an opportunity of comparing the labours of the Assembly with those which the Leaguers themselves must undertake if they succeed in creating the sanctions which would entitle them to legislate for what they now vaguely call their 'homelands.'

And that leads us to another delicate point. What should be the attitude of the Congress towards the League if the latter should persist in its obstructionist tactics? We can only say that we should not take any step which would put us in the wrong on the ethical plane. Let us remember that Lincoln, the most high-souled politician of the last century, rose to heights of moral grandeur because he patiently waited for overt acts of disruption from the side of the Secessionists. The cause of unity, of independence and national progress is not weakened by patience, forbearance and a spirit of compromise evinced towards one's own brothers. That is the true test of our Nationalism. The Leaguers say they belong to a different nation! We who deem it a poisonous puerility must knock it out of their heads, without knocking the heads themselves down. The so-called Pakistan areas are incapable of functioning without the tangible and intangible supports provided by the teeming life of

Hindustan. If we can ensure or maintain peace, we win the battle of freedom, independence and unity at one stroke. If we who live in Hindustan are at all true to our professions, we need not despair of an Indian Union which will be ten times as strong as the present British Centre, of Provinces a hundred times stronger than they are now.

THE ROLE OF PROVINCES

A factor of some subtle constitutional import has been in operation ever since the coming into existence of the Interim Government at the Centre. It is that the vitality, power and prestige of it have been dwindling in direct proportion to the pertinacity with which the 'battle of Pakistan' has been fought from inside the Central Government. It is a fatality which dogs all centrally established or federalised systems of government, that when an organic or radical change supervenes by force of circumstances, its first effect is manifested in a debilitated Centre. The very fact of the establishment of the Interim Government is a tacit admission of the incapacity of the Centre to function with its wonted vigour. Now in the grand change-over, the debility will become progressively more and more patent. In the uncertain future, the dissipated power of the Centre will tend to find a locus in the Provinces. Since the Provinces of Hindustan are more numerous, more powerful, more devoted to the concept of a united, unified single Government of India, it is of the utmost importance that provincial leadership in the critical phase ahead of us—in the next eighteen months—should be of the highest calibre and be inspired by the noblest vision of a future integration which will harmonise the claims of the parts with those of the whole. Much loose talk of Pakistan will have to go, for to the 'Muslim nation' as a whole, we must make it abundantly clear that we hold in Hyderabad a *hostage which Pakistan cannot afford to*

lose, and can never hope to gain. If, as we believe, there are moderate elements in the Muslim fold which are at present self-effacing for reasons of self-preservation, we hope they will now hasten to find utterance, for the time before them is short. Hyderabad, as a premier State of a Muslim ruler, will be cheerfully tolerated if the ruler of it conforms to modern standards of administration and respects modern ideas of sovereign power. But if, at any time, the Pakistan cry spills over into foolish direct action, one ineluctable consequence of it would be that when peace again returns to the country—whether after five or fifty years—Hyderabad would remain but an ugly memory in the minds of a fast-dwindling older generation.

THE RECALL OF LORD WAVELL

Speculations concerning the precise reasons which led to the recall of Lord Wavell are likely to continue until the Commons debate clears the air. The question for determination is whether he was asked to resign or whether he forced his resignation. It will be remembered that some time ago, the *People's Age* published a secret document of the Defence Department entitled *Operation Asylum*. This fact, coupled with the reported suggestion that Lord Wavell was in favour of withdrawing British forces to certain 'favourable pockets' and both collated with the meagre report of certain inspections and reviews carried out by the Commander-in-Chief in the Hyderabad area, ought to enable any intelligent student of current affairs to infer that Wavell's policy was to clear the decks for action preparatory to a Hindu-Muslim struggle which he must have anticipated, and perhaps still believes to be inevitable. As a military precaution, it might be defended; but as a political move, it might have hopelessly compromised both the British and the Muslim League. Whether the resignation

was enforced as the only way out of the difficult situation caused by the League members non-co-operating from within, can be clarified only after the assumption of office by the new incumbent. Lord Wavell in that case is paying the price of his chivalrous espousal of the League cause, since it is the League that must be deemed to have brought about his dismissal or resignation.

THE NEW VICEROY

There are good reasons for disquiet in the announcement of the appointment of Lord Mountbatten as our last (?) Viceroy. Notwithstanding the *dementi*, he has come to be a picturesque figure because of his being a grandson or great-grandson of Queen Victoria. Subhas Bose has some caustic things to say of our new Viceroy as a war-leader. He was responsible for organising the Dieppe commando expedition. The fact that the second front was not opened for long afterwards might indicate that his expedition was a costly affair, and that it could not be risked at the time on a much larger scale. He is said to have a reputation for getting things done. We shall never know, for the atom bomb obviated the need for a military re-conquest of Malaya. It is true that he reconquered Burma; but it was understood at the time that the Japs had written off Burma and had decided to make a stand in Malaya. Lord Mountbatten was to have organised a *tribian* operation; but it did not come off, because of the atom bombs that argued effectively at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The new Viceroy's personal staff smells too much of khaki; and it is a shrewd reminder that the Cabinet is not unmindful of the risks or even imminence of "civil war" in the country. Now the ferocity and bitterness of it (if it should come at all) are greatly diluted by the Cabinet pronouncement of a date for Britain leaving the country to

its fate. So Lord Wavell's policy is to be followed, we think, with the important amendment that the British *bona fides* are now made to stand above suspicion and beyond reproach. Against such methodical and martial preparations, we have no reason to feel dismayed. For if we can still cling to Gandhiji's principles and technique, we shall come out of the ordeal, battered and bruised perhaps, but purified and united for ever, even as they have been our never-failing shield thus far.

Thus looking at the new situation from every conceivable point of view, we may render thanks for the mercies already shown to us, and redouble our vigilance in the face of the greater opportunities and dangers that beckon to us.

The Anti-Prakasam Campaign

MAHATMA GANDHI built up the power of the Congress on service and sacrifice. Under the inspiration that he gave to our politics and public life, leaders arose in every province who came to be identified with the Gandhian movement and in popular esteem were looked upon as veritable embodiments of its spirit of service and sacrifice. Such leaders relinquished the ordinary pursuits of careerist ambition. They renounced the path of material acquisitiveness. They dedicated themselves to the cause of freedom and public welfare. The hold they won on the affections of the people became the most potent means of strengthening the Congress for offering increasingly effective resistance to foreign power.

To this class of leaders belong, among Congressmen still living, Rajendra Prasad in Bihar, Nehru in U.P., Khan Abdul Gaffur Khan in the Frontier Province, Vallabhai Patel in Gujarat, C. Rajagopalachari in Tamil Nadu and Prakasam in Andhra. They were made by the

Gandhian movement and gave to it, because of their popularity and influence among the people, a considerable part of the strength and prestige it has acquired in their respective territories.

Latterly, as the Congress progressed from the wilderness of hardship and suffering, jail-going and lathi charges, towards a paramount political status entitling it to ministerial office, a strange change took place in the attitude of those who had been previously its most prominent opponents. These latter changed over to the Congress, avid for a share of the power and position that the Congress had won. They took to Khadi. They wore Gandhi caps. They adorned their caps with tri-colour badges, and the richer of them having cars put Congress flags on the bonnets of their cars in advertisement of their affiliation to the Congress. The shrewder ones among them, nicely calculating the prospective political advantages of a term in jail, deliberately courted imprisonment in the days of individual Satyagraha.

The influx of careerist elements has turned out to be a menace undermining the original Congress objectives. It has enabled elements not very faithful to the creed and programme of the Congress to capture key positions in the organisation and utilise it to personal ends. Nowhere has this power of perversion been more grossly exercised than in Tamil Nadu. At the time of the last elections to the Legislature in Tamil Nadu, Kamaraj Nadar, by virtue of his Presidentship of the P.C.C., was in a position to affect the selection of Congress candidates to a larger extent than even C. R. who had rendered unquestionably the greatest service to the Congress in that province. Kamaraj used this power to prevent pro-C. R. men from getting in. He packed the Legislature with persons whom he could depend upon to cast their votes against

C. R. As such obedience could come only from a very inferior type who but for the favour of their patron, could never aspire to the status of legislators, Kamaraj's Presidentship of the P.C.C. at a very eventful time resulted in worsening the character of the Legislature itself by introducing into it a large body of men whose main and even sole qualification was their serviceability as his puppets. The Congress Parliamentary Board who held revisional powers over the selection of Congress candidates, could have undone the mischief of Kamaraj's anti-C. R. operations, but the Board failed in its duty. One of the reasons for this failure was the then prevalent unfortunate state of mind of Sardar Vallabhai Patel who held a dominant position on the Board. North Indian Congress leaders are generally overbearing to South Indians and treat them less as colleagues than as camp-followers. But C. R. had accomplished the feat of getting closest to Gandhiji, the dispenser of power, position and prestige in the Congress. C. R. therefore had to be tolerated. He was disliked in proportion to the compulsion he placed on the High Command to treat him with respect. But when C. R. departed from the war policy of the Congress in 1942, and developed ideas of his own as to how the Pakistan demand of the Muslim League was to be met, the High Command indulged its inclination to teach C. R. a lesson without bestowing any serious thought on the repercussions of such an attitude on their part on the morale of Congressmen in Madras. Sardar Patel played into the hands of the anti-C. R. clique in Tamil Nadu in the most important of the preparatory stages of the election campaign. There was also Dr. Pattabhi on the Board and he, aided by Shankar Rao Deo did his best to pack the Andhra section of the Legislature with anti-Prakasam men just as Kamaraj and the Sardar between



PREMIER PRAKASAM.

them packed it with anti-C. R. men for the Tamil area.

C. R. and Prakasam are the two most powerful leaders in Madras Province. In the matter of popularity, they hold a unique position. If the popular character of any Ministry to be set up by the Congress was to become a reality, both C. R. and Prakasam had to be in the Ministry. This was rendered impossible by the machinations of Kamaraj Nadar to whom no thanks are due that the next best arrangement, that of having Prakasam as leader, was somehow brought about. Soon after the elimination of C. R., events happened which restored goodwill between him and the Sardar and took C. R. to the Interim Government. He is now so indispensable there, that any idea of his return to provincial politics must be ruled out as impracticable. At the moment, therefore, Prakasam is the most popular of all legislators with a hold on the affections of the masses enjoyed by none else. In the present context of affairs, a popular Ministry without Prakasam is a contradiction in terms.

Yet we hear of a no-confidence motion against the Premier having received the signatures of some 114 out of the 196 members of the Congress Legislature Party. The remarkable thing about this "no-confidence" has been the complete avoidance by its leaders of the opportunities afforded in meeting after meeting of the Party to give any inkling of their minds. To judge by the proceedings of Party meetings so far held, the only impression that anyone can gather is that Prakasam enjoys the undisputed confidence of the whole Party. Not a measure of his has had to be abandoned for lack of support. There has been, of course, abundant criticism, but never has the criticism been carried to the point of obstructing the proposals of the Ministry. The Leader has always

been able to carry the Party with him for implementing the policies and programmes of the Government, and even in the matter of the Public Safety Ordinance which evoked considerably more of opposition than other ministerial measures, the very persons who led the opposition initially withdrew it after the Premier had given his reply to their protests. Nor can it be alleged against Prakasam that he has deviated in any manner from the election pledges of the Congress. If the constructive programme is the soul of the Congress's nation-building activity, Mahatma Gandhi is the architect of the constructive programme. No provincial Congress Ministry has won from the Mahatma the approbation that Madras has been able to win under Prakasam's leadership for its wholehearted thoroughness in the matter of implementing the Congress constructive programme. This is the more remarkable since Mahatma Gandhi was at the outset the most determined of all Congress leaders that Prakasam should not be allowed to become Premier. The Premier's record after his election vanquished Gandhi's original attitude of distrust, and nowadays there is scarcely a week when *Harijan* is not filled with some commendation or other of Prakasam's faithful adherence to the spirit and letter of the Congress programme, for the benefit of Ministries elsewhere, not so faithful to it.

It is thus a strange paradox that is being enacted in Madras politics today. Premier Prakasam has achieved the confidence of the Mahatma who can be said to be, more than any other, the custodian of the conscience of the Congress as an organisation pledged to the service of the people. Despite the discord and spirit of internal conflict animating the Congress Legislature Party as a result of bad selection of candidates, the Premier has during all his period in office, never

failed to secure the support, almost unanimous, of the Party as a whole, for any one of his administrative measures. When a leader elevated to office gets a full measure of support from the party electing him for all plans and policies emanating from him as a holder of such office, the resulting condition is patently one of "confidence" and not "no-confidence." The signatures of the 114 belie therefore the confidence of the authors in the Premier already patently demonstrated in action in a public manner throughout the period that the Party has been in existence.

This plain contradiction between the recorded public action of the signatories of the "no-confidence" motion and the purport of their signatures now, stamps them as quixotic and irresponsible, as ignorant even of the real meaning of "confidence" and "no-confidence" as applicable to the attitude of the members of a political party to an elected leader entrusted with administrative responsibilities. The relationship between a party and its leader is not a personal or domestic one round which individual likes, dislikes and idiosyncracies can play. It is a public relationship existing for public and administrative purposes. And in regard to these purposes Premier Prakasam has had the unbroken support of the Party. What is there left over in respect of which dissent or opposition is entitled to have its way? Nothing except whispering campaigns of calumny which in themselves amount to reprehensible treachery and stabbing in the back, coming as they do from avowed followers who have not mustered the courage and decency so far to make any open charge at any of the numerous Party meetings.

For a proper understanding of this enigmatic condition of affairs, it is necessary to look back a little. The anti-C. R. drive excluded from the



Gopala Reddi.

Legislature, as stated above, abler men for the pampering of their inferiors. From the purgatory of enforced idleness, these ill-treated victims have been looking out for loopholes through which they could come back. They have made a full-time job of the work of organising all the malcontents in the Legislature for forcing an upheaval conducive to their restoration to political importance. They have become the rallying centre of a veritable conspiracy to unseat the Premier. Kamaraj Nadar, smarting under the imagined indignity of having failed to find a Minister's place for his protegee, Madhava Menon; a host of Andhra legislators like Gopala Reddi, Kala Venkat Rao, Pallam Raju and Kaleswara Rao nursing resentment against the Premier for having been excluded from coveted offices; followers of C.R. boiling with rage over the fruition of the Nadar's anti-C.R. campaign of last year and anxious to utilise any opportunity to turn the tables against him; disappointed applicants for special favours from the Ministry—all these

have made common cause, and under the impetus of the combined forces of their baulked desires and eager hopes, a regular signature-collecting campaign has gone on, stampeding into an anti-Prakasam front every legislator with a grouse to be exploited or an ambition to be played upon.

"Confidence" or "no-confidence" in Prakasam is not the real issue now. The real conflict is between those actually entrenched as Ministers and aspirants who wish to dislodge them and instal themselves in their places. A peculiar complication of this conflict lies in the fact that some of Prakasam's chosen Ministers are themselves supporters privily of the attacking party. In this way they plan to ensure their own positions as Ministers whether Prakasam continues as leader or not. What we witness today is the plain abuse by Congress legislators of their position as legislators for the furtherance of their own and their friends' self-interest of various kinds, and the no-confidence move is an attempt to find a scapegoat



Kala Venkata Rao,

in Prakasam to promote their designs while veiling its true character from the public eye.

Legislators of the Congress Party are no doubt entitled to remove a leader as much as they can elect him but they have no absolute right over their votes and cannot dispose of them in a manner antagonistic to the wishes of their electors. A fraud on the electorate is committed when legislators abuse their trusteeship status to pursue personal ends, play ducks and drakes with the public interest and defeat the wishes of the people, and when confronted with such a fraud, the Leader is entitled to seek support from the people, the sovereign fountain source of all political power. One characteristic difference between the Premier and his opponents is worth noting. The no-confidence-wallahs have not up to now held a single public meeting to explain the why and wherefore of their withdrawal of confidence in the Premier. Their operations have been confined to Press statements and secret conclaves. On the other hand, the supporters of the Premier have held meetings attended by thousands of people at which enthusiastic votes of confidence in the Premier were unanimously passed. According to all accounts, Prakasam's tour this week in the Andhra districts has been a triumphal march greeted by the adoring welcome of millions, while it would appear that legislators opposed to his leadership have been reduced to the position of refugees from their constituencies.

If the Premiership of Madras Province were at this moment to be settled by plebiscite, in the manner of the Presidentship of the United States, the choice of the people will fall undoubtedly on Prakasam. The people of Andhra will back him solidly. He will get more votes in Tamil Nadu than any Tamil competitor can hope to get in Andhra. He will receive substantial backing

in Kerala. Not one of the signatories of the no-confidence move can dare to contest such an election with him. It is not "democracy" that a leader of such a gigantic stature with incomparably so great a hold on the common people, should be unseated from leadership by any technical manœuvre, nor is it right that the High Command should in this case lend any fraction of their authority to the anti-Prakasam clique. Congress power cannot be enhanced through inflictions of hurt on idolised leaders of the people commanding their love and trust by virtue of years of service and sacrifice, and not all the Gopala Reddis and Kala Venkata Raos will ever be worth a tiny fraction of what Sri Prakasam's leadership can bring to the Congress in the form of popular support and goodwill. The High Command realised too late the folly of their unwise backing of Kama-

raj Nadar against C. R. If now they back the opponents of Prakasam, the sabotage of Congress influence with the masses in Madras Province will have been rendered complete. C. R. and Prakasam are the two real leaders of the people in the Province, and though C. R. is away at the Centre, his co-operation with the Prakasam Ministry is indispensable if there is to be any stable administration under the Congress banner capable of inspiring popular loyalties. We appeal to all interested in national and provincial welfare to help to put an end to the disgraceful chapter of strife and hole and corner plotting that has disfigured our politics already for too long, and to restore discipline and harmony in the working of the Party before chaos and disruption shall have overtaken it irretrievably.

Sotto Voce

The Little Egotist



THE PAPERS are still warm with centenary tributes to Thomas Alva Edison, the wizard of the electrical age. The incandescent lamp has hitherto been regarded as his most signal achievement. But here comes along Soviet Russia claiming that the honour should properly go not to Edison but to a Russian scientist whom the outside world does not seem to have heard of. Russians do not deny that Edison had talent. But it seems he was bent upon discovering deadly weapons because of his love of America; whereas the Russian, being free from the blight of capitalism,

could only invent beautiful and beneficent things.

This brilliant piece of inductive reasoning is part of the pep talk provided for Soviet children in a newspaper devoted to their enlightenment. But the bourgeois countries can be no less patriotic. I have a vague recollection that half-hearted claims of priority used to be advanced on behalf of a German scientist in the matter of the discovery of the "Effect" which brought the Nobel Prize to one of our own countrymen. And it looks as if

competing claims for the discovery of atomic fission may, in the learned controversies of the future, prove to be as dangerous an explosive as the atom bomb itself.

When you go from specific inventions to the basic ideas underlying them, it is much more difficult to establish paternity; and by the same token it is easier for half a dozen different countries to stake a claim at one pitch or other in the same patch of *terra nova*. Thus Hertz, a German Jew who lived in England, discovered and demonstrated the "waves" which made wireless possible. But Clerk Maxwell had decades before anticipated the discovery in his famous equations. And it was left to an Italian, Marconi to harness the waves to practical uses. Or, so the world has thought—outside Russia, where it is an article of faith that Papoff was the father of wireless.

But it is pre-history that is the happy hunting ground of the professional claimant. Many European scholars can never be persuaded that great ideas could have come from anywhere but "the classic land of antiquity." Has India a marvelous tradition of Buddha sculpture? Then it is obviously the result of Greek influence on Gandhara. Was the Punjab the home of the Aryans? How could it be when the mud-flats of Mesopotamia have such indefeasible claims to the honour? And the first of the philosophers was, of course, Thales of Miletus; the Upanishads must have been interpolated late into the primitive Vedic hymns.

Indians are often blamed for lacking a sense of history. Many a scholarly sneer at our credulity points to the ease with which every *sthala puranam* is palmed off on Vyasa and a poet like Pugazhendi is made to groan under the load of rhyming doggerel which has taken popular fancy. Imagine a Bach or

a Beethoven being credited with the authorship of five hundred thousand songs as poor Purandara Dasa is! Such indiscriminating reverence for everything that is old stamps us, for the western savant, as incorrigible idolators.

This failing, supposing it is one, is surely less unlovely than the pathological craving of the modern plagiarist for other people's finery. The man who added on the sly a chapter to Valmiki's Ramayana and was not found out might have been gratified by this evidence of his skill in imitation or tickled by the gullibility of the scholarly world. But he could not have hoped—and indeed did not wish—for glorification of his own private self. The applause of little senates, the incense that makes human vanity "assume the god," would never come his way. Living in a world that did not prize originality overmuch, he had no urge to develop into a little egotist.

Among the less desirable achievements of science must be classed the monstrous inflation of personality to catch the rays of contemporary fame. The myriad engines of propaganda can project on the consciousness of millions a synthetic picture of titanic proportions, which has very little reference to the trivial actuality. And that is a temptation to distend and falsify their puny selves which the Napoleons and the Hitlers, the film star and the author of best-sellers can never resist. Homer in his heyday was known only to the seven cities of Hellas. Even the great Sankara who travelled the length and breadth of this vast land could have never hoped for a fraction of the audiences that the radio brought Mr. Churchill. In the old world, a great reputation blazed like the fire that lights any lamp that has wick and oil in it. In our dropped age it is the sound and fury of the wind among the trees.

VIGHNESWARA.



If Chitrakona could have a synonym (of course it is impossible, it is the name of a place, but if it could have) it would be "Tobacco". Those who had the land there grew it. A few of the others were employed in the warehouses where it was stored. The rest of Chitrakona went to work for eight months in the year at the big American factory where it was cured.

Twice a day, going to work and going home, five hundred of these crossed the *Pedda Vagu*, a shallow but broad ravine which was quite fifty yards wide where it was narrowest.

They said that it brought water from somewhere 'up north' and though there was no flow to show it for the greater part of the year it was none the less dangerous for that. The unwary stranger was deceived by the thin layer of sand that lay on the *Vagu's* bed, like the veneer of virtue on the face of a woman who is wronged and nurses revenge; but the people of Chitrakona only knew too well the bog that lay underneath. At a place where a few rocks in the bed held the mud a little firm they spanned the *Vagu* with palmyra-boles placed side by side and end to end. And on this they crossed the *Vagu* everyday and crossed it perilously like the souls who waver in their faith on *Al Sirat*, for if one placed his feet anywhere except on the boles, it took two to pull him out of the sucking marsh.

When the monsoon struck it turned the *Vagu* into a raging torrent. Then boats and rafts were helpless against the angry waters. But it was impossible for the people of Chitrakona to be

cut off completely from the outside world for two whole months, and many, confident in their strength and skill, braved the rushing stream. Some of them paid dearly for their rashness, but there were always others who carried on.

They are a hardy, independent people, the peasantry of these parts. In these degenerate days, losing everything else, they never lost an easy dignity inherited from a martial ancestry. Raghurama Reddi who knew history was in fact certain that the people of Chitrakona descended from a garrison which was stationed there and guarded that part of the coast in the days when the Reddis ruled. One of his favourite haunts was their old ruined fortress on the top of the cliff which lay east of Chitrakona overlooking the sea and which gave the village its name.

He himself represented a type fast becoming historical. He always walked about in sandals whose straps were brilliantly painted and whose soles were studded with iron and at least an inch thick. He owned half the land in Chitrakona and sent more tobacco to the factory than anybody else. Yet when the bags were tied, with typical oldworld fastidiousness he sent some of it to Kasim the shopkeeper.

Kasim, who was an artist, did mysterious things with it and at regular intervals sold Reddi at an atrocious price the cheroots which when smoked gave out an indefinable fragrance that suggested the *attar* of roses and musk. Reddi never touched any other.

About the nut-brown mare he rode, it was commonly said by the people of Chitrakona that Rani was his other child. She was a present from his friend, the Zamindar of Kota, and so great was Reddi's love for her that it was only less than his love for his young son Krishna. She had a splendid coat which he preserved by feeding her on plantains and once every quarter he made Rosayya, the groom, take her to the veterinary hospital fifteen miles away for a complete medical examination.

It was a morning in early October, a couple of years after the filly had come to him. The monsoon had just begun. There had been a steady down-pour all the night and the day before.

Reddi got up from his bed and looked through the window. The sun had risen high into the heavens which had cleared and it shone on everything with a dazzling whiteness. There was a certain crispness and keenness in the air which tingled the nerves and everywhere there was the invigorating scent of earth. The trees, flushed with a new life, swayed in the gentle breeze and their quivering, wet leaves glistened in the bright light. Nature, like the girl on the opposite balcony, had bathed and perfumed herself and was drying her long tresses in the sun.

Reddi finished his ablutions and shouted for Rosayya. But there was no answer. Nor was Krishna anywhere to be seen. He went into the house. Krishna's mother was in the kitchen.

"Where is the boy?" he asked.

"He was pestering me since he got up from bed to let him go and see the *Vagu*. Everybody was going to see the flood. I sent Rosayya with him," she said.

"Why. Is it such an unusual thing?"

"They say that there has not been so much water in the *Vagu* for years."

"Well, when did they go?"

"They left early, soon as it was day," she said and brought him a large tumbler of delicious, steaming coffee. He drank it and then went to the stable.

Rani had been fed and was moving about the stable with restless energy. Rosayya had also polished the harness which hung from the big hooks, the metal knobs gleaming on the shining leather.

Reddi strapped them on the mare and clattered down the street towards Kasim's shop as he always did when he wanted to get at the news. Kasim had the knack of getting all the reports and

severely editing them to the barest facts, which meant rejecting three-fourths of what he heard.

The old man heard Reddi pull the mare outside the door and came out stroking his venerable beard.

"Going to see the flood, sir?" he asked. "I saw your boy and the servant pass this way. They told me they were going there."

"Yes. How is the angry goddess this time, *Sayaboo*?" asked Reddi from the saddle.

Kasim laughed. "This time? I think the angry goddess has been bitten by a mad dog this time. She is biting off whole chunks of the bank and carrying down with her even the rocks under the bed in her fury. I saw it, sir, with my own eyes and never saw anything like it before. It seems that due to the heavy rains a tank up north burst its bund and is overflowing into the *Vagu*."

Reddi started off in a dignified trot towards the stream but inwardly he was excited. For old Kasim, who was never surprised at anything, to say he had never seen it so bad before really meant something. As soon as he left the last of the crowded streets behind him, he impatiently galloped the mare.

The shrill cry which rose from the distant waters went beyond his ears and gave place to a hollow, painful silence as he approached the stream. There was a heavy vibration all about him in which the sharp clatter of Rani's hoofs sank into a succession of dull thuds and was finally drowned, and Reddi had the feeling of his ears being muffled. He went up to the waters' edge.

All sorts of flotsam were hurtling down the swollen stream. The roaring waters were carrying along with them everything from dead rats to rotten stumps of trees, and as the waters rose higher and higher a thousand black snakes on the surface seemed to shoot out a thousand forked tongues of foam up the crevices of the stones.

There was a lot of boys about. Reddi saw Krishna and the groom sitting on a large boulder and went up to them. The boy with the others had a long hooked stick in his hand and was trying to land with it the slimy bodies of the small animals that came swirling down.

Rosayya saw him first and came up to him but Krishna did not notice his presence till Reddi tickled the back of the boy's neck with his cane. The boy

turned round and grinned at him and then went back to what he was doing.

Reddi went up and down the bank for a quarter of an hour. The fine, cool, hissing spray which fell on his face and glistened in little drops on Rani's mane and the vigorous exercise soon sharpened his appetite.

He nodded to Krishna that he was going home and was about to turn round when the boy pointed to the opposite bank and shouted something.

Reddi turned and looked across. Somebody was approaching the *Vagu* on the other side. But the keen young eyes of Krishna recognised who it was and the boy shouted over the sound of the water:

"Father, that is Penchelu with the letters. How is he going to cross the *Vagu* when the water is like this?"

The figure on the other side came nearer, and Reddi recognised the mail-runner and his bag. Penchelu had carried the mail to and from Chitrakona day after day for ten years, and the *Vagu* in its worst moods had not harmed him so that the people said that he bore a charmed life. But Reddi was not very sure this time.

He looked at the boy's face and then at the groom.

Rosayya turned to him and said in a rather frightened tone, "I think he is preparing to enter the water, sir."

Something had to be done now. Reddi shouted at the top of his voice that it was dangerous to try to cross the torrent.

"Stay where you are, Penchelu, the water is still rising," he bellowed, and waved his arms across. But the howling of the waters drowned everything and Penchelu didn't even look up. He calmly entered the water and struck out.

Reddi bent forward on the back of the mare and anxiously watched the man as he moved towards the middle of the stream. Then the anxious look gave place to one of alarm. The swimmer had gone beyond his depth and his strength. Reddi gripped the reins hard and Rani which was also seeing the same thing widened her nostrils instinctively.

Suddenly the fellow in the stream swallowed a lot of water and started bobbing up and down helplessly.

"Fool, risking his life!" swore Reddi to himself and tugged at the reins. The mare leapt into the water.

It was dangerous going. When Reddi reached him, the drowning man clutched first at Rani's tail then her legs, but never at the hand that Reddi stretched towards him. His arms went round Rani's hocks and the kicking animal fell on her side into the water.

What happened afterwards and how the two men and the mare reached the bank Reddi was never able to explain. He always said it was the hand of God that saved him. All that he knew next was that he was on the bank soaked completely, and that his clothes were in rags. He looked about and saw Rani sprawling by his side, breathing faintly, her whole body bruised. Farther up was Penchelu, exuding the green water from every part of him.

Rosayya, though shocked, had his wits about him and in a short time got a couple of bullock-carts from an adjacent farm-house. They put Rani on one of the carts and the shivering Penchelu on the other. Rosayya waited for Reddi also to enter, but Reddi turned to him and said in a sharp tone, "There is nothing wrong with me. I am all right and I will walk. Go and look after the mare."

The man went and Reddi looked at Krishna. The boy was staring at Rani as she lay in the cart, her brown side bruised and heaving. There were no tears in his eyes. But he was near to weeping and Reddi took off his hand and said gently, "Come on, Krishna, let us go."

The slow procession started and Krishna held his father and walked by his side, his eyes riveted to the ground.

They reached home and his mother came out but he found it difficult to look at her. He went straight to the stable where they tried to get Rani inside. The yokels who drove the carts laid their hands roughly on the poor animal because they were afraid to touch it. The more Rosayya shouted at them to go gently, the clumsier they became and they pushed and dragged the poor animal through the door in a way that made the boy's stomach turn inside him.

Then, when everybody had gone and he was alone, he went inside to the mare and, passing his hands over her matted body, looked at the suffering in her eyes and burst into tears.

Penchelu came on the fifth day completely recovered and brought with him the local medicine man. Reddi reluctantly allowed him to see the mare. He

had no faith in his powders and tinctures but he could not do anything else. All the doctors were on the other side of the *Vagu*. The water had gone down a bit, but it was still dangerous to cross.

That night, as he lay in bed worrying about Rani, the shrill cry of the waters rang in his years and it seemed to him as if it were mocking his helplessness. His face flushed in anger in the darkness. He had to do something about it. The *Vagu* was not an 'angry goddess' as the people called it. It was not a goddess at all but a hag, evil, sinister, hostile. He would be even with her.

He was writing a letter when Kasim came to see him next morning. "You have come in time, *savaboo*," he said, finishing it, "Read that."

It was a letter to the District Collector about the *Vagu*. Reddi gave details of the inconvenience and havoc caused by it every year and said that the lack of a bridge made the people of Chitrakona take their lives in their hands to get the smallest things across. A bridge was a dire necessity and, if required, Reddi promised on behalf of the people of Chitrakona a portion of the cost of construction of such a bridge. But they had to have it as soon as possible.

Kasim went through the thing. "I hope we will get at least an *anicut*," he said, returning the letter, "though when the Government says 'now' it means at least six months."

When the unexpected happened.

Hardly had a fortnight passed after sending the letter when a number of men were seen one afternoon by the people of Chitrakona across the *Vagu*. They were all in khaki shorts and turbans and while some of these carried charts rolled up under their arms others were seen peering through long narrow tubes mounted on long wooden legs. One of them wearing a hat, shorter and stouter than the rest, seemed to direct the others.

This man was seen in the village early next day going to Reddi's house with the *munsiff* and the *karnam*. He left an hour later and by noon the whispered word went round, "They are building a causeway across the *Vagu* as soon as the rains stop."

Old Kasim went as fast as his legs could carry him to Reddi's house in his unbelief.

"Our letter—I don't—" he began. Reddi smiled, "You don't believe it is our letter? You are right. It isn't." Kasim opened his mouth to ask something, but Reddi waved his hand.

"Sit down, *savaboo*. I will tell you everything. It seems the Americans at the tobacco factory want a causeway built across the *Vagu* so that they can go in their motor-cars to the seashore. They are planning to build a small house there to spend the summer. They have been pulling strong wires and now the Government is going to build it."

"Who was the gentleman who came here?"

"The Engineer. The Department were short of labourers, he said, and he wanted to know if he could get men from the village for some of the ordinary work. The *munsiff* just brought him here."

"So it is not our letter?"

"He says that he saw our letter there at the office. But I do not care whose letter it is. I told him I will give all possible help. It is high time the *Vagu* was taught a lesson."

"Yes, but how did he get across? The water is still not safe."

"No new man can understand it. He came on a raft. He wondered how we were getting on all these days. 'The things is, sir, it looks so harmless,' he said, 'but while crossing, at midstream I thought the ropes would give way and send the planks flying apart.'"

"He must have seen it that day," said Kasim. There was a long pause and then he asked, "How is the mare, sir?"

"She will live," answered Reddi enigmatically.

II

It was a great day for Chitrakona when the causeway was opened.

The Americans started building their shore house with typical American promptness. Bricks, mortar and wood came in a steady stream and the peace of the village was rudely disturbed by the motor-cars as they tore through the main street towards the sea and back.

The people of Chitrakona didn't mind the noise. They looked with loving eyes on the white, hard, stony road stretching across the *Vagu* and felt a new freedom in their hearts. No more had they to balance themselves perilously on palmyra-boles. No more had they to carry the sacks of tobacco across the stream on their backs. Now they could be neatly carted away. No more had they to brave the dangerous waters at the time of the rains. It was a great feeling.

But Reddi's happiness was not complete. In fact, he had never felt so

bitter, thinking about Rani, as he felt now.

She had never been quite the same all these months. True, doctors said there was nothing wrong with her physically, and there were four of them who said it. But none of them had anything to say about that frightened look which never left her eyes. Also she moved about with an annoying slowness inside the stable, and if she was taken out, the least sight of water sent her into paroxysms of terror. When Reddi mounted her, she simply backed.

But Rosayya stood by her in sickness as in health, and he never gave up. He would twist the mare's tail and try to coax it forward. Rani would take slow steps and he would look at Reddi and say, "She is getting better, sir." And Reddi would nod his head silently, never admitting defeat.

Billy Phillips sat staring at the sea. He was seated in a deck-chair in the long shadow of the shed cast by the afternoon sun. He was smoking his sixteenth cigarette and thinking long thoughts.

Billy Phillips was normally a cheerful person, and thinking was rather alien to his nature. But he was not normal to-day. He was having a fit of the blues.

He had had a letter from his mother from Louisville that morning. And little Trudy had placed in it a piece of paper on which she had drawn an amazing likeness of himself with a ridiculous turban on his head captioned, "Billy in India." But on the back she had scrawled:

"Billy boy, I think I miss you too much—Trudy."

Phillips tried a thing or two to forget. He took out the portable gramophone and started a record at random. But it gave out, "My Old Kentucky Home," and he shut it up.

He looked at his watch. Half past four. Trudy would be coming home from school. No. It was not half past four in the afternoon back there. Perhaps she was in bed, sleeping. Damn it, everything was different here, even the time.

What was he doing here anyway? He was known as the stores manager at the factory, but they generally used him as an odd-job man. And now they had sent him here to look after this damned construction job, and spend the nights in this foul hut. Would he ever get used to it? Like Richardson?

Richardson was a real pal. "The first blues are the worst ones, Billy. They

wear off," he had said. It was wonderful the way he got on with the people here. He spoke their language. He thought nothing of taking a sip of native toddy which the men sometimes brought him, though the reek turned Billy's stomach. And he ate their food, chutneys so hot and pungent that *tamale* was almost tasteless in comparison. And he never felt lonely. How?

"Don't feel strange, Billy," he said, "why don't you make friends around? They are human beings like ourselves, aren't they? And a fine, decent gang they are, who will always stand by you. I don't see why you should go about like Robinson Crusoe." But Phillips had been there for only three months and he *knew* he simply couldn't make friends. There was no worse misery than this, for he was by nature expansive. Why, in Louisville fellows.....

Phillips pulled himself up. There was no use moping like this. Wherever he started, his mind went round in circles and somehow took him back to Louisville, mother, little Trudy.

"I think I'll take a walk as far as the village," he told himself and went inside. He lit the stove and brewed some strong coffee, drank some of it, filled his thermos flask, and, locking the shed, sauntered out with those two inseparable companions, the binoculars and the Cine-Kodak, dangling from his shoulders.

He felt a little free as he walked. The evening air was dry and crisp, with a lightness which relaxed his nerves and the brooding tension in his mind.

The evening was calm in the village. Carts rattled along, dogs yelped at the slow cattle and the speech of a hundred voices, muffled and strange, hummed in his ears as Phillips walked down the street. He felt much better then and he felt much better still when the girls came to the well to fill their water-pots. It was one of Richardson's 'don't do's,' but Phillips didn't care. He stood with his elbows on a low wall and peered at them through his binoculars.

Suddenly there was a strained silence in the street. Phillips saw the men who had been sprawling on the stone-seats chatting, suddenly stand up, and turned round.

Down the street came a strange procession.

It was a procession of three, two men and a mare. One was mounted on the animal's back and though he sat there with the reins held tight and with a glum face, Phillips noticed a dignity and refinement in his bearing. It was what the other one was doing that made it



"The mare ploughed through the waters with a fearful strength. She seemed to have the strength of ten horses in her. She was possessed."

absurd. He stood behind the mare holding her tail and tried to drive her forward by twisting it. Any other mare would have reared and plunged at that, knocking out the man's face. But this one didn't. She simply pawed the ground and dragged forward unwillingly.

They came up the street, and Phillips felt like screaming with laughter. The whole thing was crazy. But the laughter died in his throat as he looked at the others, for they didn't make a sound. They watched the whole thing with an awful seriousness which was unbearable. It seemed as if somebody had uttered a hair-raising joke when the company was most mellow.

The dark spell was broken by Phillips. He was an American, an American with a camera, and he did the inevitable thing.

Reddi saw him at that moment. It was a little too much. The whole thing was an ordeal which he underwent everyday. People knew what it was and did not laugh, but he felt ridiculous all the same. If it had not been for Rosayya forcing him as he was forcing Rani now with her tail in his hand.... He felt a rather queer, calm anger and his memory struggled to capture the English he had spoken at college fifteen years ago. He wanted to talk to this white man.

He framed the sentence as he dismounted and went up to him and then said quietly, "What is there to photograph in this, my friend?"

Phillips was surprised. This man spoke it quaintly, but it was English, and he felt suddenly that he ought not to have hurt him. But then he would not have spoken at all.

He grinned sheepishly, "I am sorry—I thought it was so funny." And he suddenly took out the film and, before Reddi could stop him, struck a match and set fire to it at one end. The hissing, yellow flame devoured it slowly.

Reddi looked at him and smiled. "It is funny for you, but it is not funny for me. That is why these people are not laughing. It is funny for them, but if anybody laughs I will never try to ride anymore."

Phillips looked at the mare. She was trying to turn back but the groom held her firmly by the bit. Phillips saw the wild fright in her eyes and turned to Reddi.

"Why don't you shoot her," he asked. "What?"

Why do you keep her like this? The poor thing seems to be suffering so much. What is wrong with her?"

Reddi shuddered. This man, he felt, was a brute. But, curiously, he felt so against him. The man seemed to be quite sincere. He smiled faintly.

"I don't want her to die," he said, "I want her to get well. You see, she has no disease. She is only afraid."

"But what happened?"

She fell into the water—before the anicut was built. There was a pause and then he suddenly asked, "Are you not the new manager at the factory please?"

"Oh, you know?"

"I have seen you many times and the people told me. You live near that new house you are building, is it not?"

"You know that too? But I don't know about you at all."

"My house is very near," said Reddi, ignoring what Phillips said. "I will be very glad if you come there. There are people looking at us here. You can take some coffee and I will tell you how Rani fell into the water."

It was very dark when Phillips came out of Reddi's house and started towards the shack. Rosayya walked before him with a lantern to show the way, because Phillips had not brought his torch.

Phillips walked behind, and in his mouth was one of Reddi's fragrant cheroots.

It was a great friendship which grew up between Phillips and Reddi, but that which grew up between the American and Krishna was greater still. While Phillips had to somewhat tone down his American expression to match Reddi's laboured speech, he never did so with Krishna so that in a short time the boy was chattering away with him in fairly good Americanese.

A couple of months after he arrived, Phillips one day suddenly rode into Reddi's courtyard on a lean, handsome, black horse. Reddi brushing Rani's coat heard the sound and turned round.

"You did not tell me at any time that you were going to buy a horse. Mr. Phillips," he said.

"No. But ever since I came up here it made me feel that I should beg, borrow or steal a horse, and ride. The place seems all bridle-paths. And now, Mr. Reddi, I've gone and got one."

"What are you going to give it for a name?"

"It's already named. Dara Shukoh. Name of some Mughal Prince I guess."

"It is a princely horse and deserves the name."

"Hmm, yes. A bit too princely for any discipline. They disqualified it at the races. Could never be really tamed, they said."

Reddi said, "It looks very fearless. Rani too was like that once." There was a silence.

Dara Shukoh approached Rani, looked at her for a minute, smelt her coat, and made a little noise. But Rani would not even look. Then the horse licked Rani's hocks. A faint light showed in Rani's frightened eyes but died away in a moment.

They heard the sound of motor-cars passing through the streets outside towards the sea.

"Are you going to the house on the beach, Mr. Phillips?" asked Reddi, breaking the silence first.

"Yes."

"Do you have any place there for your horse there?"

"No. But if you can have him here for the night I'll walk to the shack. In fact, I came here to ask you if you can do it."

There was not much space in the stable but Rosayya placed some long wooden poles across and made a sort of partition and he tied Dara there.

In the morning when Rosayya opened the stable-door he stood there for a minute, and a faint smile spread itself over his features. Dara was standing by the side of Rani, quietly nibbling some grass. The horse had somehow broken loose and jumped the poles.

"Ha, ha," said Phillips smiling broadly, when he came for Dara an hour later, "I don't know what exactly to say, Mr. Reddi, but I'll never trust him here another time." He went up to Dara and patted his back, "Come on, gay lover, you are too dangerous around here."

Reddi was not without his own humour. "It is no use crying over spilt milk," he said, like a school-boy repeating a proverb.

But Krishna did not know what it was all about. "What has happened, Mr. Phillips?" he asked.

Phillips grinned at him, "Well, Christy, what month is this?" He always called him Christy.

"March, Mr. Phillips."

"Then, Christy, ask me in December."

The foal came with the New Year, cloud-grey in colour and all hair and legs. Krishna was wild with delight. He fingered the soft hair between the foal's ears, and looking at Reddi said, "See, father, it has such a beautiful zool!"

So Zool was the foal's name.

III

Zool grew up very fast, and wild, and handsome. He rushed about all over the place with his nose in the air till Krishna put Rani's bit in his mouth and began riding him bareback.

Reddi did not like it very much, and one day Krishna's mother said to him, "Please ask your friend not to encourage the boy too much. The colt is as wild as his father and I am afraid that he will throw Krishna down into a cactus hedge one of these days."

But Phillips laughed at Reddi's fears. He remembered the thrilling time he once had when he was a boy, when they branded the steer at his uncle's ranch at Wichita Falls, and presented Krishna with a saddle and bridle all studded with shining brass on his birthday.

The seasons revolved. There were rains, scorching summer, and again the days in July when a few clouds skip the barrier of the Ghats to whisper to the people how the sea was distilling into the land on the Western coast and that their own monsoon was not far away.

And on her long, slow road of recovery Rani passed a milestone. She went into the street without the groom.

It was the morning when Phillips came and Krishna went with him on a ride to the top of Chitrakona.

From her corner Rani looked on while the boy came in and, saddling the colt, led her out. And as Zool and Dara galloped away in the direction of the rising sun, Rani slowly moved up to the stable-door and watched them.

She was still watching when Reddi came into the stable ten minutes later.

He too had watched Phillips and the boy ride away towards the east, and suddenly he felt a twinge in his heart. The old ruined fortress on the top, when had he been there last? Almost two years! It was a long time since Rosayya had to twist the mare's tail to make her move, he was able to lead her forward now by the bridle. But would she ever be the same as before?

Rather absent-mindedly he mounted the mare. He was in the street when he suddenly realised that Rosayya was nowhere about. Rani, all by herself,

was actually making her way through the street!

He heard someone call and turned. There was Rosayya standing at the gate and by his side was old Kasim, shouting something. But the groom made signs to Reddi not to stop but to go on.

Reddi's heart beat wild with hope but his head was in a sort of daze. The thing was too good to be true. So he held the reins in his limp hands.

He did not know what to do. He didn't want to do anything. There was no volition in any part of him. Something had possessed the mare and he felt it.

The village was left behind. Before him stretched the rough road to the sea covered with mud, and in the distance Reddi saw the green back of the cum of Chitakona.

The wet mud still held the tracks left by Dara and Zool a quarter-hour before, and Reddi understood now that Rani was going along one of them.

She stared rigidly in front of her, looking neither left nor right, and never deviated an inch from the track but kept going on and on with an insistent, monotonous tread. Nothing but this track, so fresh and yet so old and familiar, seemed to exist in the dark sea of her mind.

They reached the base of the cliff. The bridle-path became stony, and climbed, twisting and winding, up the slope between the trees. Here Rani stopped and did not move further but stood gazing fixedly at the path. Nothing moved for ten minutes. Then Rani slowly turned round and started back.

The sun was high in the heavens when they entered the village. The mare made her way through the street with the same plodding motion and entered the courtyard. Rosayya was standing there and he moved forward to hold the bridle and help Reddi down. But Rani went past him as though she didn't see him and entered the stable. For a second she stood in the cool darkness as Reddi dismounted. Then she collapsed on the floor in a heap.

It took Reddi and the groom the best part of two minutes to remove the harness. Then old Kasim came in. From the shop he had seen Reddi come up the street. His wrinkled face was wreathed with smiles.

"Sir, it was wonderful——" he began.

Reddi silently pointed his finger at the prostrate animal. Her eyes were closed and she was breathing silently and deeply.

"Why, sir, what happened?"

Reddi told him.

Kasim went and placed his hand on Rani's flank. The mare didn't move.

"So she fell down as soon as you got off her back," he said.

"Yes."

"She is only very tired, sir, that is all."

"You mean nothing is wrong with her?" asked Reddi.

"Nothing, sir."

"What do you mean, sayaboo? Just look at her. I don't believe it."

"Neither did I, sir, at first. But I tell you now, sir, she is just very tired. The thing has been too much for her."

"But, then, why did she go all that distance?"

"Because she wanted to go there. She is very brave, sir. You see, sir, on that day she fell into the *Vagu* and was brought home, burning with fever, I looked at her and said to myself, 'In the name of Allah, if it were my mare, I would give her a dose of poison. She is suffering too much.' I didn't know then that she would be so brave, sir."

Reddi wondered whether Kasim was talking sense. But then, Kasim had always been right.

"I don't know, sayaboo, I don't understand it at all," he said, in despair.

"Here comes your friend," said Kasim, as they heard the clatter of hooves in the yard, "Let us ask him."

Krishna came in, leading Zool and with the new saddle on his back. Phillips, coming behind him, stopped dead at the door and looked inside.

"Hello, what is this?"

Reddi repeated the story which he didn't understand. He was rather vexed.

"Rather plucky, isn't she?" asked Phillips at the end of it.

"What, plucky?"

"Yes, plucky, I mean, brave, courageous. She saw us going and attempted it herself."

"Then, please explain why she is lying down there like that," he said.

Phillips went and stroked Rani's mane, and turned round.

"Just taking a rest," he said with a smile.

Same words as those of Kasim. And no more explained.

"Is Rani taking rest like that because she walked four miles?" he blurted out.

"Sure. She is still having lots of fear in her and that is like having cannonballs tied to one's feet, only you can't see it. And every foot she moved forward she fought that fear in her. One more round and she's the winner."

"One more round?"

"Yes, one more fight. I'll be getting along now, Mr. Reddi," said Phillips and went away.

"What did he say, sir," asked Kasim, smiling.

"Oh, what you said."

Kasim went away too. Only Krishna and Reddi were in the stable now. The boy let Zool loose and was hanging the harness on to a hook.

Reddi stood thinking. One more fight. Where would she have the strength for it?

"See there, father," said Krishna and pointed. Zool was on the ground beside his mother and the mare was quietly rubbing her nose against his mane.

IV

The rains came.

The *Vagu* was once again flowing. But people didn't care now. The wild thing was there, properly yoked.

Phillips never stopped coming into the village. His own country was one which extended over all the three terrestrial zones and which experienced a thousand climates and a hundred climatic convulsions of nature. Floods, blizzards, tornados. But not a monsoon. The first spell lasted one day and a night and was a steady fall. So was the second.

The third gave the people a day's sunshine and then took over. The people were used to it. But Phillips sat in his room, and felt that only the walls stood between him and the elemental, annihilating fury outside. It poured down in sheets, thinned down to a drizzle, then again poured down, but it never stopped for five days.

So that when on the morning of the sixth day the sun peeped out and Phillips started out, he felt as Noah must have when he stepped out of the ark.

It was a sheer joy to feel Dara's flanks heave between his calves as he galloped towards the village.

He felt as if he was meeting long-lost friends as he rode into Reddi's court-yard.

"Water, — water everywhere, Mr. Reddi, and four feet over the causeway," he said as he gave the reins into Rosayya's hands and climbed up the steps.

Reddi gave a superior smile, "It is only the beginning." After a pause he asked, "Four feet of water on the anicut?"

Phillips nodded.

"How is the water flowing?"

"Quietly, I think," said Phillips. "I don't know. It is the first time I have seen it."

"It is always full of dangerous tricks. But not now. We have the anicut."

Krishna entered the room.

"Hello, Christy, shall we go and see the water?"

Krishna leapt with excitement, "Yes, oh yes, Mr. Phillips. I'll ride on Zool." He looked at Reddi. "Father, will you also come?"

"You are going on horseback," said Reddi.

"Why not you, Mr. Reddi?" cut in Phillips, "try the mare. Of course, she doesn't need a groom by her side, not after that day, does she?"

"No."

"Let's go then, all of us," said Phillips.

It was a queer mixture of hope and fear he felt in his heart as Reddi went down the street with the other two. It became a little confusing and tumultuous when, as he passed Kasim's shop, the old man came out and smiled at him.

He was actually in a state of nervous excitement when the mare reached the end of the street. He held Rani's reins steadily, but his hands were shivering. The mare was going with a slow pace, and Zool was walking at her side. Phillips was going a little before.

They came to the spot where a small lane crossed the road and was lined with cactus. The road too had the bush on either side and on one side was a well. Reddi was very silent. It was the spot beyond which the mare had never gone after the accident. The well was a signpost that told her that the *Vagu* was in that direction.

The mare stood at the crossing with the colt by her side. Would she move, or would she turn back? Reddi pulled at the reins, but his hands wouldn't move. The tension was unbearable.

Suddenly the man in front turned round and shouted, "Hi, youngster, come over here, quick!"

Krishna went up to him. The American whispered something into the boy's ears, then both started galloping towards the stream.

Reddi shouted to them but they didn't turn round. What were they up to now? He was very angry all at once. So angry that he didn't realise that a miracle had happened. That the mare had started after them.

It was a mad race. Only one idea buzzed in Reddi's brain. To get at those two.

They came to the causeway. The water was flowing, powerfully and swiftly over it, without a hump. Reddi shouted as loud as he could, this time in alarm, for Krishna and Phillips did not stop but started going on the causeway. Reddi saw the water reach up to the larger animal's hocks. Only the hand-rails were above the water.

When the mare reached the water's edge, the other two were a third of the way across. The water seemed to be swallowing them. Reddi closed his eyes.

For ten seconds Rani stood there. Then she gave a loud neigh and sprang into the stream. Reddi opened his eyes. He felt better now. He didn't care for himself. It was the boy.

The mare ploughed through the waters with a fearful strength. She seemed to have the strength of ten horses in her. She was possessed.

The other bank was reached. Phillips and the boy were standing on the stones holding Zool and Dara. Rani rushed towards the colt and started licking him all over. Reddi dismounted and looked at the boy and then at Phillips. The American was smiling to himself.

Reddi could not speak for very indignation. It was Phillips who spoke first.

"Don't be upset, Mr. Reddi. It's all right."

"All right?"

"It was Rani's last fight. And, as I expected, she won?"

"Taking the boy like this over...."

"Yes, and taking her boy over too, the mare's boy. You were anxious for Christy, she was anxious for Zool. And she braved the water to save him."

"It was very dangerous."

"I think I know a thing or two about horses, Mr. Reddi, I spent my boyhood with them for friends. No horse, or colt, will enter water if she knows she can't do it. It is an instinct. And Zool is Dara's son."

"I am glad it is over," said Reddi.

"Everything's over. Look at Rani."

Reddi looked. The mare was rolling on the sand. Even in her exhaustion, she felt her freedom.

They stayed with Phillips till the next day waiting for the waters to go down a little. They started next evening.

Rani was the old mare now. She seemed to be wading through the stream quietly on the hard causeway. For safety Reddi rode slowly and held in his hand a stout rope from Zool's bridle.

There was a big crowd outside his house when he reached there, and great excitement. Rosayya was there with his bewildered smile, Kasim with his serene one.

The people were crowded around Zool and plying Krishna with questions and talking, all at once.

"How did you cross the water...?"

"For a colt like Zool nothing is too..."

"Of course, of course, it is the spunk of the white man's horse..."

Over all that Krishna was answering his mother's questions. She was standing on the steps as Rosayya quietly led Rani, with Reddi still on her back, towards the stable.

It was dark inside. Reddi dismounted and turned to go out. Krishna's mother, Kasim, they were all waiting for him there.

"Wait a minute, sir, while I light the lantern. There are ropes and things across the floor," said Rosayya.

In the yellow light groom and master looked at Rani for a minute. Her eyes shone like stars.

Outside the people were all talking about Zool, wild, young Zool. But Rosayya was faithful to the mare to the last.

As they made their way out, he said from behind, "Write a letter to Kota as soon as you can, sir. The people there will be glad to know that Rani has conquered her fear."



Spotlight On The World

By Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya, M.A.

A most momentous event which is bound to affect the destinies of the world for generations to come happened last week when Prime Minister Attlee announced in the House of Commons the decision of the British Government to take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power over India to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. In the words of Pandit Nehru it was a wise and courageous decision. If it is sincerely and completely carried out it will mean the liquidation of British imperialism not only in India but in the whole of South-East Asia. It will also mean the ending of the French and the Dutch imperialisms in this part of the world. A free and independent India with her population of 400 millions and with her vast economic resources is bound to play a most significant part in shaping the future of the world. Much of course depends on two important factors. One is whether the British will transfer power to one Central Government having effective jurisdiction over the whole country or to a number of sovereign Governments each administering a particular region. The other is whether the two world powers—the United States and Soviet Russia—will adopt a policy of genuine friendship with India or pursue the traditional game of power politics with a view to filling in the power vacuum created by the departure of the British. It is because of these possibilities that the world has been looking at the British announcement with mingled feelings of joy, hope, anxiety and fear. There is however no doubt whatever that the coming eighteen months constitute the most critical period in the contemporary history of India.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

It was in 1783 that the British formally recognised the independence of the United States. There

is some appropriateness in Attlee's announcement having been made only two days before the 215th anniversary of the birth of George Washington who is regarded as the father of his country. The 22nd of February—the birthday of this founder of American Independence—is a day of national rejoicing throughout the whole of the United States and this year it was celebrated with the traditional enthusiasm. As the General who commanded his country's forces in the war of independence against Britain, as the President of the Convention which framed the constitution of the country and as the first holder of the office of President under the new constitution, George Washington rendered services of an invaluable character which have endeared him to one and all of his countrymen. America is to-day in real need of statesmen of his vision and outlook.

UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA

The relations between the United States and Russia seem to be worsening. This is illustrated by the wordy duel that has been going on for nearly two weeks now between the Governments of these two countries on what appears to the outside world to be a petty affair. On February 10, Dean Acheson, the United States Under-Secretary of State, was giving some evidence before a Senate Committee on matters connected with atomic energy and one of the questions put to him was as follows: "Now, assuming that Russia is reaching out not only for those countries that she already has, but is reaching out for additions to her territory, do you not believe that if she gets this bomb discovery, she would take not only the remainder of Europe but perhaps the remainder of the world." Acheson gave to the Senator the following answer: "I don't think that that is

a question capable of being answered in the way in which you ask it. I am quite aware of the fact that Russian foreign policy is an *aggressive and expanding one*. I think that one of the great efforts which everyone is making in the United Nations is to attempt to find means for solving problems of that sort. If those means and agreements can be found, then there is hope that there will not be major clashes. If they can't be found, then I think the situation is very serious." Four days later Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, sent a note describing Acheson's statement as "rude, slanderous and hostile to the Soviet Union," and the note also characterised the question itself as a rude attack on the Soviet. On 18th February Mr. Marshall, the United States Secretary of State, sent a reply that under the American constitution with its separation of the executive from the legislature, executive officials have to appear before the committees of the legislature and answer all questions put to them and that under American standards a restrained comment on a matter of public policy is not slander and that on second thoughts Molotov would not attribute hostility to frankness. On February 20 Molotov sent a reply saying that Mr. Marshall's note was not convincing and that the Soviet Government remained of the same opinion as before. Many newspapers in America are glad that Mr. Marshall's reply marked a move towards a more candid and straightforward approach to the problems facing the two countries and there was nothing incorrect in the statement of Mr. Acheson as, since the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1939, Russia added to her territory more than 250,000 square miles and more than 20 million non-Russians. What has to be noted is that it is with this view of Russia's foreign policy that Mr. Marshall will be taking part in the forthcoming Moscow Conference for settling the terms of the treaties with Germany and Austria.

MILITARISM

Three other facts connected with the United States are to be consider-

ed in this context. At a recent Press Conference President Truman re-emphasized his support of universal military training for American youth. Speaking on the occasion of George Washington's birthday anniversary, Mr. Patterson, the Secretary for War, also said that universal military training alone would provide the force needed to defend the nation. Faith in militarism is becoming more and more deep rooted among the Americans. The intimate cooperation between the United States and Canada in military matters for which arrangements were made a few days ago point to the same direction. There is also the recommendation made by the Inter-American Defence Board which is representative of all the 21 American republics that for securing armament unity in the western hemisphere there should be a standardization of land, sea and air forces regarding military equipment, materials, supplies and training. Although it is generally stated that all these should be fitted into the broader frame-work of the United Nations the real significance of measures like these consists in America trying to become an irresistible military and naval power.

JAPANESE MANDATED ISLAND

The same significance has to be attached to the trusteeship plan proposed by the United States for the former Japanese mandated islands in the Pacific. They are 650 in number and are grouped into three areas—Marshalls, Marianas and Carolines. They have a population of 53,000. They occupy an important strategic position and are on the route from Pearl Harbour to Japan and China. The trusteeship plan proposed by the United States is what is called technically a "strategic area" trusteeship under one of the articles of the U.N. Charter. It gives to the United States power to erect fortifications. Portions of the area can be declared as "closed" and would not therefore be subject to any kind of inspection by the United Nations. The whole territory would be administered as an integral part of the United States. It is this plan that has now been



Photograph of Asoka Mehta taken on his recent visit to Kerala. Mr. Mehta is seated in the centre and to his left is his sister Mrs. Shroff Mehta.

submitted for consideration by the Security Council. It marks an important step in the series of measures now being taken by the United States to establish her sole supremacy over the Pacific.

BRITISH WEAKNESS

The growing militarism of the United States is also in part a consequence of the growing weakness of Britain, a weakness which is reflected in her attempts to withdraw from her commitments in India and Burma and in countries like Egypt, Palestine and Greece. She is now maintaining about one and half million forces and this is one of the reasons why she has not been able to command enough manpower to work in industries, agriculture or mines. The "Economic Survey for 1947" published last week by the British Government shows how acute the economic situation happens to be at present and how it is necessary to undertake all possible measures to speed up production, to export more and more commodities and to get adequate supplies of food and raw materials which have to be imported from abroad. An imperialistic foreign policy is not so

easy to pursue now as in the century preceding the second world war. Britain is forced to cut her coat according to her cloth now. There has been a sort of informal understanding between her and the United States for sometime that while the latter takes responsibility for guarding the Pacific and the Eastern portions of Asia she should take the responsibility for keeping American oil and other interests safe in the Middle East and the countries in its neighbourhood. But Britain now finds it difficult—physically impossible—to adhere to this understanding. Her man-power is limited. She is in a sense in the same position as Portugal was in the 16th Century when, owing to the small numbers of her population, she had to abandon her empire to rivals like Holland, France and England which had larger populations.



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LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN

by WILLIAM LAWLOR

(Who served with the Admiral on the Kelly).

I remember Lord Louis at the very beginning when we commissioned the destroyer *Daring*. More than any officer I have ever been with, he really makes it his duty to know the man. Their welfare comes before anything whatsoever and by that he got the best out of us of every type. He was so human with me and with everybody.



Lord Mountbatten.

It was funny when he spoke to us on the ship; it was not like an officer speaking, you had the idea that he was speaking more or less as a father—a young father.

Once he told the men on the lower deck that their troubles were his troubles; in trouble we could always go straight down to him, directly go down to his cabin. And when we went to him he was very human.

He pretty well knows my home life—I remember him advising me to wait before I got married. I have never been punished by him—never had to go up for report, so I do not know what his reaction is at the table, but he could be strict. He is

very strict on one item—leave-breaking even in peacetime. But one thing, with Lord Louis you are not guilty until you are proven guilty.

Well, with the war, it was seetime in a big way. We were seldom in harbour. What I remember best was bringing back the destroyer *Kelly* after she had been torpedoed. We were ordered to intercept an enemy convoy off the German coast; then we were torpedoed by an E-boat. It struck us under the bridge and blew up the boiler rooms. After 24 hours, she was more or less sinking. We abandoned ship and watched her for seven hours—a floating target with four or five submarines in the vicinity. Then Lord Louis against all rules and regulations took 17 of us back on the ship. He was not going to lose her. Just after we got on board, we got a signal from a senior officer on another ship, "Abandon ship, sink *Kelly*." They thought she could not make it. Lord Louis was raving when we got that signal. I'll never forget the reaction on his face. He returned the signal, "Send me a salvage tug. We can fight our way back." Then we had four days and four nights of it bringing the *Kelly* back, towed along at three to five knots. With the ship's crew of more than 200 cut down to 18 you have still got to keep the guns manned all the same.

We were attacked all the way—by submarines, torpedoes and aircraft—four days and four nights across the North Sea. Aircraft dived again and again. In one day we had 20 to 30 attacks by aircraft. But they got such a hot reception from the 18 of us on board that in the end they eased off their attacks. I was on the pommoms, but even when we could not bear on the airplanes with our guns, there was Lord Louis up there on "Point five's" bridge—ripping away all on his own. We had no sleep for four nights. At various times, I made my way

up to the bridge—it was pretty well shattered. I was taking coffee up, I remember once, when I caught him alone. Lord Louis looked very tired with his face black and unshaven, standing there hanging on. There had been lot of casualties when we were hit, so when I caught him there alone I could read him like a book; I knew he was feeling the losses. But down with us, he was the life of the party. He kept us alive all the time. He would crack jokes to show we were the same old crew every time. And he brought us and the *Kelly* back fighting all the way. He is the only man who would have even tried it.

Then, when the *Kelly* was repaired, we got back on her and there was an incident I will never forget. We were only three destroyers on patrol somewhere off the Channel Islands and Lord Louis made a broadcast to the ships' crew. This is what he said: "We are now going to intercept two battle cruisers, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, also four cruisers of the *Hipper* class with a destroyer screen and a heavy E-boat screen. After breaking through the destroyer screen, we will torpedo the battle cruisers and then we will intercept the destroyers."

We were happy and feeling fine when he said it, because everything he said, we always seemed to get away with it. If he had said that the *Kelly* had got wings and she was going to the North Pole, we would believe it, because everything he said we always seemed to do it. Unfortunately the Germans had got so big a start on us that we were unable to catch them.

Then there was Benghazi. We were ordered from Malta to bombard Benghazi with a flotilla. There was a heavy mist and we arrived slightly out of position. I was on the bridge then and I remember Lord Louis saying to the navigating officer: "We'll do it the boxer style." And not waiting for any more orders, he made sure. He went in almost to the breakwater of the harbour, just like a boxer shaking hands with the enemy, and he took a cool look round and then coming out he went in a second time and bombarded at point-blank range. The rest of the flotilla followed suit. Then we went back to Malta and Crete and we saw a lot more fighting before we were sunk off the coast of Crete.

We were hit by a 1,000-pound bomb from a Stuka and the *Kelly* sank at last on May 23, 1941, at 7-55 a.m.

I was badly burned beyond all recognition and covered in oil and fuel. On the ship which picked us up the doctors told Lord Louis that there was not much hope for me. And I can remember that while the doctor was giving me a blood transfusion, Lord Louis said to me: "Now Lawlor, I want you to live yourself up and remember your honeymoon when you get home. And above all you have got to avenge those burns some time." Then he went round talking to the other wounded, though he was hit himself. Now my burns and nervous shock are almost completely cured. Shortly I may be fit to go to sea again. And I feel that if I go back to sea, he is the man I want to go with.

ABOUT OURSELVES

Smoking two cigarettes is enough to impair a person's night vision, according to Dr. Charles Sheard of the Mayo Clinic. A vasoconstrictor, the nicotine cuts the flow of blood to the retina, causing a 15- to 30-minute delay in the time eyes require to adjust themselves to dim light. It is because of this that Army Air Force training manuals advise against smoking before night flights.—*Science Digest; Pathfinder.*

NALINI

by BINOD

TODAY we are celebrating Nalini's twenty-seventh birthday and soon we shall be celebrating our seventh wedding anniversary.

By common reckoning life begins with marriage, slowly and inarticulately like history, all else being prehistoric. Until then life just comes and goes, appears, and makes off again as if it had forgotten something, reappears, and peeps round the corner a hundred times before making a decisive entrance. Then all is different. After marriage people are not as other people are, or as they themselves were at another time. They take on an added significance, an added responsibility, an air of business and a sense of purpose which may make giants of them but which may also make of them cowards.

How the years slip by! It was but yesterday that we met—Nalini and I—in a street that I shall call the Street of Happiness, a lovely street shaded by tall coconut trees with brilliant patches of sunlight dancing on the green grass, and lined by red-brick houses with bright flowers bordering their clean paths. It was but yesterday that we courted, and loved, and married, again in this Street of Happiness, this most wonderful street in which opposition and unfriendliness and anxiety about the future fell away from us, leaving us free for the glorious enjoyment of living. It was but yesterday....

But, as in every other case, Time, that old gypsy man, hasn't stayed to put up his caravan. Days have passed, months have rolled by, and the intervening years have swept us away, away from the lighthearted occupation of loving, nearer, and yet nearer, to the grim preoccupation of living. Being a husband (or a wife) is a wholtime job; being a parent is overtime.

Like, I believe, most other couples, our married life has been one of vicissitudes. We have loved and we have hated; we have agreed and we

have quarrelled; we have been ready to give our lives for each other, we have wished each other dead. But, by and large, having regard to the constant pandemonium that life generally is today, I believe we have hit it off together not too badly. After all, but for this perpetual contest between variegated emotions, but for this constant interplay of opposite impulses, leading up finally to the discovery of correctives, compromise and reconciliations, marriage would be bereft of all that gives it a meaning and life would be scarcely distinguishable from death.

The fact is (as Nalini herself will testify) I am the most indulgent of husbands. I am an unobtrusive believer in letting the "female of the species" go their own way—provided they honour the rules of the game. Thus it is that Nalini, while not rocking the cradle, still rules our world. But do not on that account run away with the impression that she is a termagant wife. She is not. While it is true that sometimes I stoop to be conquered, it is also true that generally, like Hla-watha's beloved—

Though she bends me, she obeys me,

Though she draws me, yet she follows.

Nalini is modern in an old-fashioned sort of way. She is no husband-worshipper but she is a husband-lover. She fusses over me with just the right amount of fussiness—no more and no less. She can cycle and she can cook. There is a quality in her that throws my faults and virtues into sharp relief. I love her, I dislike her, I admire her, I slight her, I fear her, I defy her, I obey her, I command her, I understand her, I do not understand her. But above all I love her.

Is it any wonder, then, that at a moment of such high and rare emotion as an anniversary, I find myself more in love with her than ever? Even if, on certain occasions,

for a few unguarded moments, my thoughts might have strayed from Nalini to some other maiden, always I have stopped those thoughts at the threshold of my heart. And

as for Nalini, what woman, however old or young, has not the bridal favours and raiment stowed away, and packed in lavender, in the innermost cupboards of her heart?

"GIANTS FROM THE TINY ISLAND"

by "ZEEVI"

THE All-Ceylon XI that was in Madras recently left a lasting impression on our minds by its glorious exhibition of cricket. They virtually stalked like giants on the green grounds of Chepauk. Inflicting an innings defeat on a formidable South India XI was no easy job. Enterprising team spirit and remarkable individual proficiency made the impossible inevitable. Though the absence of Palla, Ram-singh and Aibara had much to do with the result, one cannot overlook the gigantic strides of Sathasivam and Jayawickreme and the alert wicket-keeping by boisterous Navaratne, not to omit the consistent effect of Heyn's off-spin, De Kres-ter's off-breaks and De Joysa's leg-breaks.

Sathasivam stood head and shoulders above the rest of the batsmen. He wielded the willow with an artist's instinct. We find in him a close resemblance to our impetuous Mushtaq Ali. But unlike Mush-taq, Sathasivam possesses patience in abundance. Unorthodox in his execution of strokes, Sathasivam was a treat to watch. The way he treated with scant respect the Mad-ras Speed King, C. Rangachari, by driving him straight to the sight screen was astonishing. Quick on his feet, he is at home when doing leg glances and swipes. Smothering the ball past cover and point to the boundary, he revealed perfect timing and wrist work. With ease and grace, he executed strokes all round the wickets. Rightly, he deserves credit for breaking records of Rusi

Mody and Hardstaff and establishing a new grand record by scoring 215.

M. Stalin, the opening batsman who missed the three figures by a narrow two, was a shuffling and nervous sort of artist. He used the crossbat often and was not pleasant to watch. De Saram, the Oxford Blue, truly followed the copy book. He was patient and stolid in his defence. Jayawickreme used the long handle with aggression. He played to the gallery well.

Of the bowlers, Heyn, the Ceylon captain, was very consistent in keeping immaculate length. He spinned the ball cleverly. De Krester and De Joysa though average in quality, triumphed in the match by their sheer length. Krester mixed cleverly a slower straight ball with a faster one that broke, while Joysa deceived the batsmen many times by his change of flight. Both are right-handed and their run to the crease was effortless. Spittel, the fast bowler, did not come off in good form. One should not forget that he took a heavy toll of India's star batsmen when an Indian XI played Ceylon a year or two ago.

Witnessing Navaratne behind the wickets, one completely agrees with Hasset and Sismey with their verdict that Navaratne is the best wicket-keeper in India and Ceylon. If only we have a keeper of his sort, how fortunate we will be when playing against Australia.

The Ceylon cricketers' visit should open our eyes and help us to realise our true standard.



TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO

by N. S. RAMASWAMI

"C P. JOHNSTONE c Holds-worth b Wensley '35." Cricket rivals Nature in that a touch of it makes the whole world kin. This brief record of an innings played at Hastings one August day twenty-two years ago serves to bring into focus many recent incidents. The bowler and the batsman are well known to followers of the game in Madras. The successful fieldsman cannot be unknown to those who take interest in the transactions of the game in the rest of India. He has captained the Frontier Province in many a forlorn match in the Ranji Trophy Tournament. His achievement once of opening the innings and remaining unconquered with a century to his credit was not unexpected in a batsman of his reputation and ability.

Statistics of cricket differ from those employed in other walks of life in being as entrancing to students of the game as roses are commonly said to be to minor poets. The success of Wensley, which has been quoted above, has been taken from *Wisden's Almanack* for 1926.

It is a tribute to Madras, no less, to find that Johnstone, "back from India on holiday," was considered to have "given many brilliant displays, his hitting against Surrey at Blackheath being very fine". His average that year was certainly meritorious. In twenty completed innings, he amassed 524 runs with an average of 26.20. His highest innings was 102. In addition, he captured six wickets for 83 runs at an average of 13.83.

These figures are not to be dismissed lightly. They imply that the batsman whom a wondering young generation observes every Sunday feet-tied and hesitant in the execution of strokes, had borne himself manfully in the best company.

Twenty years ago, Kent was still a powerful combination. The magic that was Woolley had laid the

county under a spell. The 'twenties were surely the heyday of the "pride of Kent." In 1925, for example, he had the splendid average of 55.27 with a total of 1,990 runs in 36 completed innings. He carried the county on his shoulders in bowling as well. For, his share of success with the ball was considerable.

Freeman, as was customary, obtained his more than hundred wickets. C. Wright, a fast bowler, who is unknown to the present generation, secured seventy-five wickets. The great left-hander lured sixty-three opponents to their doom at the moderate cost of 24.65. The trusty Hardinge was declared to have "batted consistently well and at times with marked skill in desperate situations".

It could not have been easy to hold one's place in such a powerful team, which ended fifth in the County Championship. Those inclined to deride skill diminished by age might well ponder these facts.

The *Almanack* is notable for the fact that it records the death of two players, famous in the history of the game. Capt. Robert St. Leger Fowler, M.C., might be unknown to most cricketers, but his death in 1925 in Ireland at the age of 34, removed a central figure in a truly immortal match.

In 1910, Eton were in a parlous position against Harrow. To their opponents score of 232, they had replied with but 67. There was no improvement in the follow-on, when five wickets had fallen for 40. Fowler, who captained Eton, could find nobody to stay with him until the last wicket. Even so, his splendid innings of 64 could secure for his side a lead of no more than 55 runs. But the all-conquering Harrow failed of this moderate total in their second innings by nine runs. Fowler secured eight wickets with his accurate off-breaks. This fixture has gone down in history linked with "Cobben's match" in the series of Oxford versus Cambridge.

Another famous figure to die that year was A. N. Hornby. A severely practical book like the *Almanack* makes no mention of the fact that the Lancashire Captain had been immortalised in a poem of Francis Thompson. "It's little that I repair to the matches of the Southern folks", wrote that strange poet to whom cricket was mysticism. He himself was a Lancastrian, and to him

"O, my Hornby and my Barlow of long ago,

As the run-stealers flicker to and fro."

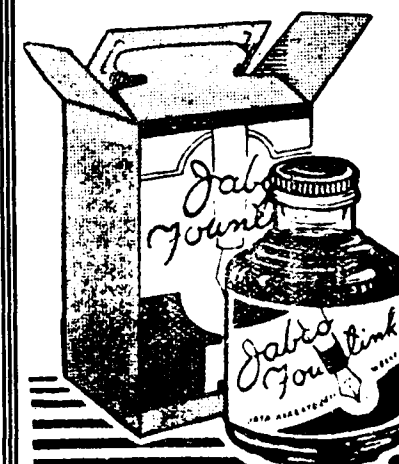
were as real as the ladder of Jacob "pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross".

Hornby himself was by no means poetically given. The affectionate sobriquet given to him was "monkey". He certainly could take care of himself. In 1879, a Sydney, a ruffian, angered by a decision of an umpire, invaded the field and struck Lord Harris with a stick. As the *Almanack* describes the sequel, "Hornby seized the offender and although hit in the face and having his shirt nearly torn off his back, he conveyed his prisoner to the pavilion".

The book also record the performances of a more pacific combination of English players in the same land. "Setting forth in September, 1924, with great hopes of recovering the mythical 'Ashes', the M.C.C. team, under the leadership of Arthur Gilligan, failed in their quest." They lost four of the five Tests, but received some consolation in that the tour served as the beginning of the great careers of Sutcliffe and Tate who, along with Hobbs, were the successes.

Figures are certainly dull, but at least they serve to bring to the mind's eye great events and great men. At Lord's, the Oval, the Old Trafford, and countless other grounds in all parts of the globe, was the game played that year under a beneficent sun. The *Almanack* is a brief and impartial record of those joyful occasions.

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NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

by JESUDOSS CHELLIAH

THE one thing our rulers did to us in good faith was the imposition on us of their language and culture. It is an irony of fate that it should have turned out to be their greatest crime. They are leaving behind a body of men filled with aspirations and tastes foreign to their genius. English literature and art on which the elite of the country have been nurtured have created in our young men cravings and desires, impossible of satisfaction in the totally different conditions in which we live. The student of modern English literature avidly devours Ethel Mannin, Aldous Huxley and James Joyce. He is filled with nebulous ideas about free love, nudism and what not; he falls head over ears in love with erotic Mary Thane and looks for one like her among our prudish maidens. Parental restrictions, segregation of the sexes and our traditional inhibitions enrage him. He ends up by despairing that this is the most benighted of all countries where life is only a dreary monotony of abstinence.

We are neither here nor there; we have developed a dual personality. That is why we come across so little of genuine art, chiefly in those fields in which we have tried to imitate the English. Our novels, for instance; what strange, listless creations! They are anything but artistic and genuine expressions of the struggle or joy of the saga of life. And yet what else could the artist do when his aspirations are rooted in a foreign soil and culture? The creation of any genuine art by the 'educated' Indian is ruled out so long as his life, his thoughts, his morals and even his politics are all imitations.

The tragic fact is that the average educated man in India is a very unhappy man who tastes little of the pleasures of life because his mind is in chaos. But that is through no fault of his. Who can, in all fairness, ask him to turn to indigenous art for consolation, when he has been brought up on an exotic diet?

For one thing, he considers himself immeasurably superior to those who have not had the 'benefits' of English education. He runs away in disgust from Bhagavathar because he inevitably compares him with Clark Gable. Bhagavathar's exquisite attitudinizing and cadence of speech are (alas!) lost on him. Bhagavathar is apparently not the worse for it, but Hollywood magnates a good deal richer! How much better for all of us if we could think that Bhagavathar was our great actor and if our College boys could fall in love with Rajkumari instead of Ingrid Bergman!

Then, of course, there is the problem of language. In our attempts to master English we have let our tongues go rusty. The result is that we can express ourselves beautifully neither in English nor in the mother tongue. A strange mixture of pidgin English and vernacular has become the medium of expression. We were once proud of this state of affairs; now we are beginning to be ashamed of it—thanks to the Mahatma.

"With momentous political changes looming large in the horizon," a lot of dust is being kicked up regarding the retention of English. Some zealous Indo-Anglians have become unexpectedly anxious for the welfare of the country. They have raised the fool's cry of national collapse and a return to barbarism in the event of our doing away with English. Putting on international airs, they call upon us solemnly not to let our narrow nationalism blind us to the disastrous consequences of abandoning this language of culture and civilization. What would the delegates at U.N.O. think of our representatives if they were to mouth this jaw-breaking Hindusthani of yours? Did not our very Nationalism and the early Liberalism of the Congress spring from a study of the English classics? Where would you be, Oh you bigoted, unhappy fellow-countrymen, but for your English?"

Others say with Pundit Nehru, "We have to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession

with the supernatural and metaphysical speculations, that loosening of the mind's discipline in religious ceremonials and mystical emotionalism, [Yogis! rise up in arms!] which come in the way of our understanding ourselves and the world." But he knows only too well that "some Hindus talk of going back to the Vedas and some Muslims dream of an Islamic theocracy." But I think the Vedic civilization they envisage has a place for the steel and oil magnates. They are to lead the world in the path of *Ahimsa*, but in this imperfect world they would rather be fully armed! The statue of the Buddha, I am sure, would be saluted by the largest number of shots!

There has been some tall talk about spiritual leadership and, in the same breath, about political leadership of Asia; some glorification of ancient Indian customs coupled with urgent appeals to ape the West. The ancient Indian woman is held up for emulation for her chastity, obedience and endurance; and yet we are not to lag behind the West in giving our women economic independence and domestic equality!

With these Westernized Oriental Gentlemen occupying the saddles of power, the fate of the country is in no doubt. Would it be too much to hope that they would follow in the footsteps of the Westerner and abdicate in favour of *pukka* Oriental Gentlemen?

BIRTH OF A CO-OPERATIVE HOSTEL

Enterprise of South Indians in Bombay.

WITH the advent of the new year, a South Indian limited company's hotel established over a decade ago and supposed to serve the South Indian community in Bombay, shut its doors on its three hundred boarders—bachelors and married bachelors who had been messing there for the last three to four years, simply because a 'Hotel-goers Union' was formed in Matunga. A dozen youngmen of stout heart with enterprise refused to accept defeat and decided to start a new hostel on a co-operative basis. They set about the almost impossible task of finding an abode for their hostel, with the help of Sjt. S. K. Patil, President of the Bombay Congress Committee and his right-hand Sjt. B. N. Maheswari, the veteran congress leader of Matunga and many other Corporation officials.

In the space of a week, vessels were bought, cooks engaged and the first meal was served to over 200 boarders on the morning of Sunday the 2nd February the former hotel having served the last meal on the previous night. The sincerity and selfless spirit of the promoters attracted the people of Bombay, who helped these youngmen in all possible ways.

The place 'Meera Bhuwan' was formally opened on the 2nd Feb-



A view of the gathering on the opening day.

ruary at 5 p.m. by Srimathi Meera Devi (daughter-in-law of Sjt. Maheswari). Sri Maheswari, presiding over the function, paid a glowing tribute to the untiring and indomitable spirit of the promoters that had brought them this unique success in record time.

Besides many other plans of the society, providing boarding and lodging at cheap to those South Indians who are stranded in Bombay is one of the main ones. Those who visit Bombay will no doubt, have one more place in their list.

V. SANKARAN.

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| 2. Nungambakkam. | 11. Alwarpet. |
| 3. Mylapore I. | 12. T'Nagar I. |
| 4. Mylapore II. | 13. T'Nagar II. |
| 5. 108, Big St., Triplicane. | 14. T'Nagar III. |
| 6. Abirampuram. | 15. T'Nagar IV. |
| 7. Royapettah I. | 16. Teynampet I. |
| 8. Royapettah II. | 17. Madavapuram. |
| 9. Lakshimpuram. | 18. Saidapet II Branch. |

Coupons entitling holder to a guaranteed daily supply are being issued by the above branches to customers who register. Coupons are free and payment is made on taking the milk. There is a small deposit required of those taking sealed bottles as security for return of bottle.

The reconstituted milk will also be sold in retail at the Factory premises in Adyar in the Government Godowns (near Chingleput Collector's Office) between the hours of 6-0 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 3-0 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the price mentioned above.

Payment must be made in advance for a period not exceeding one month at a time for direct supply from the factory. Deposits in cash for the supply of milk will be received at the Factory Office between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. and a receipt given.

For other particulars, please apply to the Manager, Milk Factory, Madras.

The reconstituted milk is similar to that which has proved so popular in Colombo.

Unutilised milk is sold without coupons after 8-30 a.m. in the forenoon and 6 p.m. in the afternoon at T.U.C.S. branches.

PLEASE MAKE A TRIAL PURCHASE.

Issued by the Director of Information & Publicity, Govt. of Madras.

SIDELIGHTS : :

I have often had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune. Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man and prostrate him in the dust seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character, that at times it approaches to sublimity.—WASHINGTON IRVING.

SIMPLICITY and naturalness are the distinguishing qualities of Sucheta Kripalani, wife of the Congress President. The remarkable thing about her is the way in which tasks difficult to reconcile with each other have by her been brought into harmonious adjustment. Tradition has given to our women excellent patterns for all domestic purposes. But as participants in public life they are yet novices. Charming women tend to develop into bores when they take to sturdy political activity without culture enough to save their interest in public affairs against posing. But culture is the antidote to all disharmonies. As culture develops, poses disappear. The true mark of culture is ability to take all provocations cheerfully, an ability not conferred by text books. It comes as the choice product of a congenial philosophy of life. Such a philosophy is the one taught by the Mahatma, and Sucheta Kripalani is steeped in Gandhian philosophy.

That is why she is able to undertake work entailing great strain with ease and grace. Work does not kill but worry does. Worry is the Nemesis that dogs the footsteps of the self-seeking. It means that one's courage is not equal to the occasion. There is no limit to the courage of the non-self-seeking. At a time when refugees poured out in panic from Noakhali, Gandhiji rushed into the arms of the very danger from which others were fleeing, because there was no clinging in him to anything on which fear could fasten itself to defeat his spirit. By her work in Noakhali, Sucheta Kripalani manifested the

same sort of spirit as Gandhi did. But it is of even rarer value. For a woman to embark on rescue work in a region that had become notorious as a centre of ruffianism and of appalling atrocities was nothing short of sheer heroism, especially as she lacked the protecting armour of world-renown that a leader like Gandhi could not help carrying with him wherever he went.

Sucheta Kripalani might have blazoned a trail of publicity in the legislature at home and in conferences abroad in the manner of Vijayalakshmi Pandit. She has all the qualifications needed—intelligence, industry, knowledge of affairs, influence in high quarters and ample power of expression in speech and writing. But under Gandhian guidance, she deliberately turned her back on the glamorous side of politics, and devoted herself to the more difficult tasks connected with the constructive programme. Gandhiji is a hard taskmaster who does not give his trust easily and is given to subjecting those in whom he has confidence to fiery ordeals, but Sucheta has come out unscathed through all Gandhian tests, and holds pride of place as a top-ranking favourite with the Mahatma.

While she has excelled in work that male veterans of the Congress might have envied, she has retained all the graciousness and charm pertaining to the feminine miscalled the weak as a sex. Without being sophisticated she is acute. She combines the polish of good breeding with a certain naive rusticity. Snobbery which is a besetting sin from which very few are totally immune, is totally foreign to her nature. When good housewives emerge from the home into public life, they are knocked into all sorts of odd shapes that are not cheerful to look at, but Sucheta Devi is a rare example of nicely balanced opposite virtues hard to reconcile with each other. As the wife of the President of the Congress her social status is that of the first lady in the land and she fills the role most worthily.—SAKA.

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

This section is offered to readers for free discussion on subjects of interest to them. Letters should be brief and typewritten.

Chameleons

The same group of men who made Sri Prakasam Premier some months back are now openly denouncing him and have expressed their want of confidence in him as their leader.

Those 'warriors' who once successfully resisted the imposition by the High Command of an 'unwanted man' on them as their leader are now prepared to act according to the wishes of the High Command. Though there seems to be a change in the outlook of these men their purpose remains the same. Formerly they wanted to shut out Rajaji and now the prospective victim is Sri Prakasam.

Will the High Command see to it that the fate of the Province is not left at the mercy of these people who change their creed and colour so often and so quickly?

N. S. SRINIVASAN.
Madura.

People Grateful to Premier

The public who are shrewd can never forget the great services of Sri Prakasam to the cause of the country ever since the inauguration of the non-cooperation movement. Whatever differences some of the legislators might have with the Premier, they should on no account serve as tools to the present planned and sinister move to unseat him initiated by intriguers.

People of the Madras Presidency will, I am sure, be ever grateful to the Premier for saving them from starvation by his timely and firm action.

(Dr.) C. S. RAMAN.

Prakasam, Man Of The Masses

It is really gratifying to read Swatantra's "Sidelights" on Premier Prakasam and Kamaraja Nadar. It is also timely. Saka's recommendation that the

Madras Legislature should be dissolved forthwith is apt. Nadar has come out with a disclaimer that the differences in the party as minor. If they are so minor, why the necessity to run up to the High Command? It is sheer hypocrisy that these stalwarts should preach Hindu-Muslim unity when they cannot adjust matters among themselves. But these are all good lessons to the public to see that such people who misrepresent public opinion are not to be returned to the Legislature any more.

The Andhra Congress, under the dynamic leadership of Ranga, has done yeoman service in proposing disciplinary action against these misinterpreters of public opinion. Prakasam does not belong to the richer few. He is the symbol of Andhra nationalism and the man of the masses. Any attempt to oust his leadership will surely lead to a major disaster and the prestige of the great organization will surely dwindle.

M. PATTABHIRAMAYYA,
Annamalai University.

Pseudo-Congressmen At Work

None in Madras Province can equal, much less surpass Mr. Prakasam in service, sacrifice and integrity. But for the past week, a huge commotion is prevalent in the province about the 'no-confidence' move. The responsibility for this nauseating spectacle should be shared by the provincial congress parliamentary boards and the central board who blindly chose and approved the selection of the present legislators, most of whom were non-entities. The result of such action is what we witness to-day. The fair name of the Congress, kept aloft by veterans, has been tarnished by the insidious activities of pseudo-Congressmen. The High Command should lose no time in checking this. Meanwhile the legislators would do well to think if they can

establish democracy by mutual recriminations and pursuit of personal ends.

M. KRISHNASWAMY.

Tirupati.

Whole Andhra Behind Prakasam

Though no-confidence motion is a legitimate and legal way, it is not the only way to get grievances redressed. Mr. Prakasam has sacrificed his all for the country. The dissatisfied Andhra M.L.A.s are trying to do nothing except become spokes in the wheel of the administration. The whole of Andhra is behind Prakasam. His voice is the voice of Andhra.

It is time for the Congress High Command to see that the name and reputation of the Congress is properly maintained.

K. S. VISWANATHAM.
Nellore.

Party Spirit

This is the first time in the history of the Andhras during the British period that an Andhra has occupied the position of the Premier of Madras with a large following behind him. This is a unique position indeed. But it is unfortunate that there should be two strong opposing parties among the Andhras in the Legislature Party. Both the parties have considered the prestige of their own party more than the good of the people. Thus they could not co-operate with each other in the administration of the province.

In this hour of crisis, it is a great tragedy that leaders should fight among themselves. It is high time for them to realize that they are representatives of the people sent to the Legislature to redress the grievances of the people, but not to indulge in shameful party politics, forgetting the very people who elected them, and to whom they are ultimately responsible.

"JAI HIND."

Amalapuram.

Choice Only Between C. R. And Prakasam

What has Mr. Prakasam done to make the members of the Congress Legislature Party lose confidence in him? This crisis is due to scandal-mongers and power-seekers in the Congress Legislature Party. It is evident that Mr. Prakasam has not done anything against the principles of the Congress and against the sentiments expressed by those who have precipitated this crisis. It is ridiculous and silly to

refer to the High Command our domestic affairs.

For the leadership and Premiership there is only choice—C. R. or Prakasam; and C. R. having joined the Centre, the next best choice is Mr. Prakasam. But if the people do not want him, it is better to go back to the Adviser regime, than to live under either the Omandur Government or the Kumaramangalam Cabinet.

Whatever view one may hold, it is clear that Mr. Prakasam is the ablest, fittest and most competent man to be the Premier and leader of the Congress Party.

If those members who are against Prakasam, are faithful to the Congress organisation, they would not carry matters outside the province but would withdraw their charges against Mr. Prakasam and co-operate with him in discharging his duties as Premier and leader of the Congress Party.

K. V. VARADACHARI.
Conjeevaram.

Nadar--Reddi Combination

I for sometimes thought that your strong views need not have deflected you from charity of judgment in indicting Gopala Reddi (as in sentences like 'He mistook survival for ability and his aspiration soared'). But seeing Nadar and Reddi to be the animating souls of all intrigues in the Legislature Party, I have to revise my notions and agree with your Junius-like attacks on Reddi and Nadar. They deserve every well-reasoned censure. The Nadar-Reddi combination bodes perpetual disaster to the Madras Presidency.

As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the involvement of a man of Dr. Rajan's calibre in the anti-Prakasam front, is amazing. Is it because Prakasam played a considerable part in the former anti-C. R. clique? It is inconceivable, at the present day, that the choice of Premiership should be determined by any sort of clan feeling. Ability and national service alone should count. I request you to advocate with all the vigour that you can command the continued leadership of Prakasam for no Premier ought to be ousted for no apparent reason.

V. RADHAKRISHNAN.

Fresh Elections, The Real Remedy

Your leader about the need for a stable Ministry voices forth the desire of all right thinking persons. It is really a pity that provincial squabbles should preoccupy the leaders here.

The remedy lies in scrapping the entire local Assembly and launching fresh elections. At the last elections, the selection committees repelled all competition even among Congressmen of established integrity with the result that the electorate had no chance to elect whom they thought best. Of course there have been exceptions and top-ranking men have been elected in certain constituencies.

Most of us expected the discord amongst the members of the local Assembly; it was bound to get patently pronounced as at present. Unless we have a sound and stable Ministry acting in unison with a clear majority on all major issues, nothing tangible in the matter of common good can be expected. A fresh and free election alone seems to be the solution. In fairness to the electorate the members of the Legislature should be able to guarantee and achieve a stated scheme calculated to satisfy the urgent as well as the more remote needs of the people in all matters affecting the well-being of all sections of society.

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN.
Tanjore.

Weed Out Political Adventurers

Sri Prakasam has announced that he proposes to set up a sub-committee to investigate into the group system operating within the Congress Legislature Party with a view to taking disciplinary action against members who are found to have been indulging in such disloyal activities.

The announcement, coming as it does on the eve of the no-confidence motion, might be ill-timed, but the necessity for weeding out the undesirable elements in the party has been felt ever since the formation of the Prakasam Ministry.

One may not however agree with the Premier that the very formation of groups amounts to disloyal activity. If that were so, in plain truth, the whole party has to be dissolved. It would be an excellent thing if this could be done.

But that is only by the way. There is no harm in party members forming into groups with the purpose of studying the problems that come up for discussion. But what is intolerable is the fact that certain members of the party seem to have no other activity except indulging in conspiracy to dethrone the Ministers in power, going about doing secret propaganda against them and gathering about them a set of legislators whose votes on the eve of a no-confidence motion are open to sale to the highest bidder. It is these ring-

leaders and political adventurers that have to be expelled from the party. They are the men that drag the Legislature to the level of the district board administration. But the sub-committee has to be very wary if it is to avoid false decisions. The expression "in a manner calculated to bring the party, its leader, or its executive into discredit or contempt" is very comprehensive and if it is not interpreted liberally, the spirit of the rule may easily be abused.

POLITICUS.

Mischievous Game Of Numbers

One broad principle runs through all the schemes of Sri Prakasam, namely handing over power and sovereignty to the man in the street. It is training in self-government apart from good government.

This is the essence of Swaraj. Mr. Prakasam is implementing all that is fundamental not only in Mahatma's teachings but also in all for which the Congress had been fighting all these years. It will be an irony of fate if for these very reasons his Ministry is to be thrown out of office. We wanted People's Raj; but when it has actually come amidst us, we feel horrified and would not recognise it.

It is a shame that for a mess of pottage, people go to the length of cutting the great organisation into pieces—both horizontally and vertically; four language cuts horizontally, and again any number of communal cuts vertically.

These are not children. But alas! they are moustached babies!

I would only appeal to them to close up these meaningless groups and give a practical demonstration that the great organisation to which they belong, is one and indivisible, and if they dislodge Prakasam's Ministry, they must do it strictly honestly on the merit of his policies.

Let them lay the case before Mahatma and the public and abide by their decision, but not indulge in the jugglery of manipulating the numbers of heads that can be canvassed against him.

Let them desist from this mischievous game of numbers. If this mischief once gets into the air, nobody's Ministry will be hereafter.

MANIKANDA SATYANARAYANA
SASTRI.
Vuruttur.

Anti-Prakasamites Should Resign

What is the reason for the move to propose a 'no-confidence' motion

against the Leader of the Legislature Party now? None except power politics. The groups who were unable to make the Leader act in a way to give some sensible advantage for themselves or unable to secure offices in the Ministry, join together to overthrow the Leader who is a staunch adherent of party principles and who works not for his own advantage but for the good of the people who have returned the Congress in a large majority. Can these people say that the present Ministry is carrying on a different policy from the one set down by the Congress in its election programme?

Once an agreement is reached between the two groups in the Tamilnad Congress, that they should, instead of using such a position for facilitating the wider adoption of Congress policy by giving full support to the Ministry, take the first opportunity to send out the Ministry, makes one conclude that the Tamil Nad group does not like an Andhra occupying the Premiership of Madras. This is likely to embitter the relations between Andhras and Tamilians in the province, if such a thing is the general feeling in Tamil Nad also. I think such a possibility is far from the real feeling in Tamil Nad. It is for the people in Tamil Nad to show that they never entertained such an idea as is shown by their representatives(?) in the Legislature.

Andhradesa is solidly behind Prakasam to-day and the Gopal Reddy group (including Kala Venkata Rao and Kaleswara Rao) represents a set of disgruntled and disappointed people in the Legislature. Can they by any chance claim that their policy of non-co-operation with the present Ministry is in keeping with the general feeling of the people of their constituencies? If they think that what they do is in accordance with the wishes of the people of Andhra, let them resign their seats in the Legislature now and seek election from their constituencies on an anti-Prakasam stand.

The present anti-Prakasam group should think twice before it takes a leap into the dark. They should understand their position as representatives of the people. It will be shameful if regardless of the good of the province these people try to promote their own selfish ends.

"FAIRPLAY."

The Tungabhadra Project

The Tungabhadra project is already under execution near Hospet. But everything regarding it is blacked out, and even Hospet people know very little of the project. Such public utility

concerns must be widely advertised long before they are taken up. The reverse course has been followed in the case of the Tungabhadra project. The public are entitled to answer for these questions:

Why is nothing allowed to be known to the public through pamphlets, lectures or blue prints regarding such an important project as the Tungabhadra project, though the dam works have been begun?

Why is the Timmalapura project which is said to be more beneficial, put in cold storage?

Why has the Tungabhadra project shrunk to one-fifth of the dimension of the original scheme?

Why should 1941 prices be the basis for valuation and compensation though 1947 is passing?

Why should the Nizam get 65 per cent. of water under the project instead of sharing half and half?

Why is concession after concession made to the Nizam at our sacrifice?

N. LAKSHMANMURTHY, M.A.
Hospet.

N. S. R.'s Comments on Sathasivam

Please permit me to make the following observations on the recent article by Mr. N. S. Ramaswami concerning the festival match between a South India XI and Ceylon Cricket XI.

He has dared to comment upon Sathasivam's game in a most unjustifiable manner. If he had not witnessed the treat that came off Sathasivam's bat on the first day that was of his own making. Sathasivam, after making 150 runs in a most delightful fashion, could not be naturally expected to continue such vigorous form on the next day. The writer sees a wide gulf in the art of the game of Sathasivam and the other masters such as Hardstaff and Amarnath. As a cricketer myself, I should say that while Hardstaff revelled in strokes off his backfoot and Amarnath soared to great heights in front of the wicket, Sathasivam was a mixture of the two. He was classic all-round the wicket and the bowling which was not mediocre, was at no moment able to tie down this batting genius. Gulam Ahmed, the reputed spinner of South India, who is constantly tipped for the forthcoming Australian visit, was treated in the most facile fashion by Sathasivam and it should be remembered that it was Gulam Ahmed who tied down the visiting Australian batsmen last season and proved a menace so deadly this season also. Sathasivam's runs came unnoticed. They came without any effort.

Thorough sport as he was, he got out immediately after beating the ground-record of Hardstaff.

N. S. R. must have seen his game on the first day when he would not have been denied a rare batting exhibition and I would even venture to assert that his comments would not at all have been made after such a sight.

N. S. R. is to be applauded for his facile language making most of us almost feel in the company of Neville Cardus. But Neville Cardus knew the art of the game, while the art of the game is not fully understood in this instance.

V. R. LAKSHMI RATAN (Jr.).

Yoga Of Sri Ramana Maharshi

Swatantra is to be warmly complimented on the learned and brilliant review of "Golden Jubilee Souvenir" in its latest issue. The description of Sri Ramana Maharshi as "a warrior at the core" and of his "Ulladu Narpadu" as reading 'very much like the curt, military appraisal of master-tactician planning a decisive coup,' is as true as it is felicitous. It reminds me of the late Kavyakantha Ganapathi Sastry's declaration that the Maharshi is an incarnation of Skanda the celestial Commander-in-Chief. Also the exposition of the Maharshi's ideal as "utter Silence.....that massed-up in gathered precreative and proto-creative level (of consciousness) in which there is no trace of auditory or visual elements" is superb and cannot be improved upon.

The review raises two fundamental issues: Can the Absolute be evaluated by a relative standard? Is it not for the interests germane to the Stateself to endeavour for a 'contact' with the silent exponent of Atma-Vidya rather than to expect the reverse to happen, for the obvious reason that the latter is concerned with what is eternal and unchanging, while the former aim at temporal, material, achievements? (In fact the 10th canto of 'Ramana Gita' brings out the Maharshi's response to a 'contact' of that kind). I wish that these issues may be discussed further in your esteemed journal.

In conclusion I crave permission to guard against a possible misapprehension in the readers' minds. The story of the boy who played the truant from home in search of the true Self and steadfastly pursued his goal in the face of all vicissitudes is not quite accurate. In fact the Maharshi realised the true self at seventeen while he was still at his Madura home. His "traps" ever since has been not of any normal,

traditional type but simply "the abidance in the Self." Sri Ramana is an unique instance of one who when quite young, unaided by any Guru or Scriptural lore and almost *accidentally*, attained Self-Realisation, and in his approach to any question displays absolute originality and directness. His case should therefore be of the utmost interest even to strict rationalists and researchers of psychology.

G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA.

Nellore.

Lengthy Films

I thank Mr. N. Jagannath for his article in *Swatantra* (Nov. 30, 1946) "What length, Indian films?" wherein he wisely exhorts that the Government should do something to restrict pictures to some reasonable length.

As Mr. Jagannath puts it, the public never clamour for films of extraordinary length, except a few who desire to make the most of the money spent on films, in point of time.

Even when pictures were 11,000 feet in length, they contained "semi-nudity in dances, vulgarity in dialogues, overdose of music, unrelated comedy, etc." Every one of these things was there and it bored us. Of course, we had the consolation that in two hours' time we would be free.

The English film "Gone With The Wind," was a comparatively long film. As it was double the length of ordinary films, the proprietors charged double the ordinary rate. As the picture was interesting throughout with the magnificent technicolour, no disappointment was felt even at this double expense. If our producers charge the audience this way, then we can succeed in curbing the desire of even the small portion of audience crazy over lengthy films.

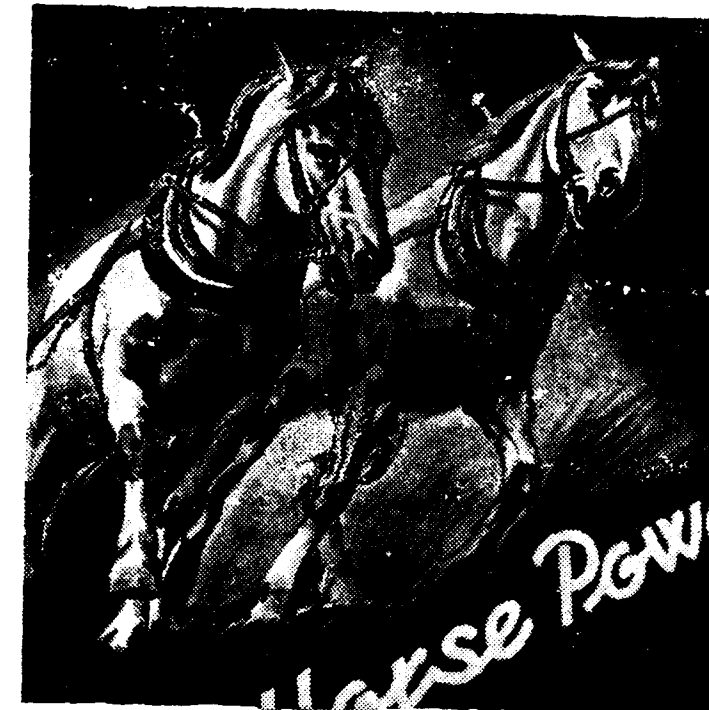
I entirely agree with the suggestion put forward in Mr. Jagannath's article that "the producers can come to an understanding to restrict their pictures to some reasonable average length, say 11,000 feet and thus put an end to the mad race after length to produce super time-killers to beat the competitors.

I earnestly appeal to the Member in Charge Industries and Commerce to re-impose the previous limit in regard to length in order to save the strain to the eyes which obtain to result from seeing lengthy films.

RAGHAVAN.

Woriyur.

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"TRUST BEGETS TRUST"

Tittimatti (S. Coorg)
January 2, 1947.

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