

SWATANTRA

Annual
1948

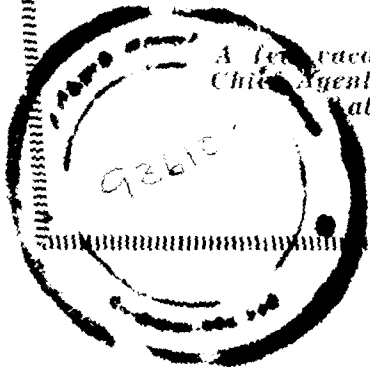
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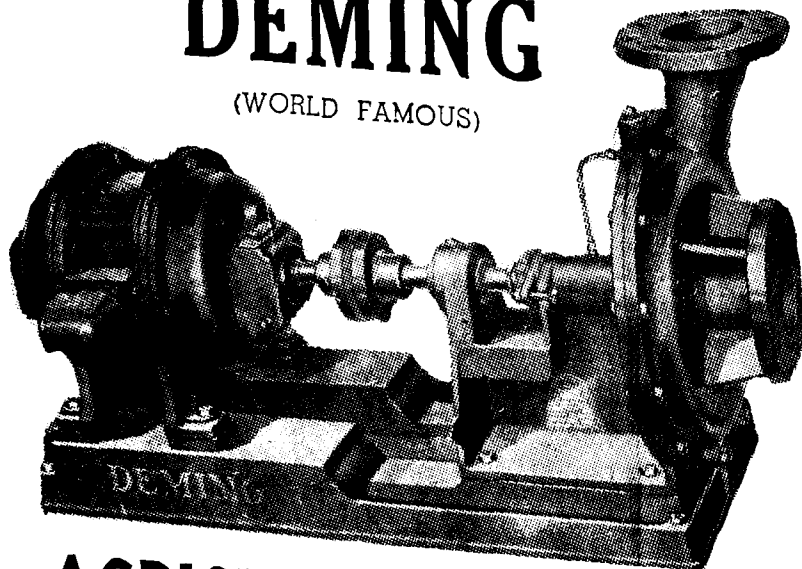
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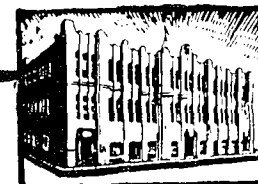
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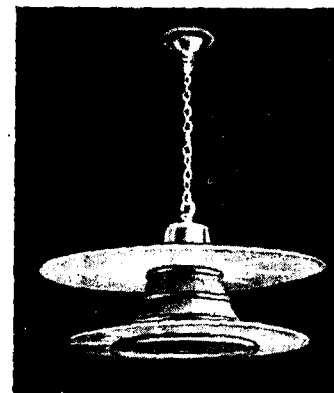
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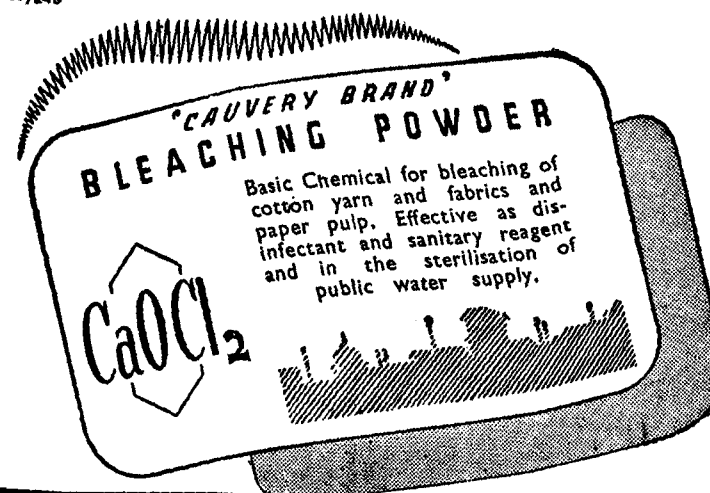
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OCTOBER 1948

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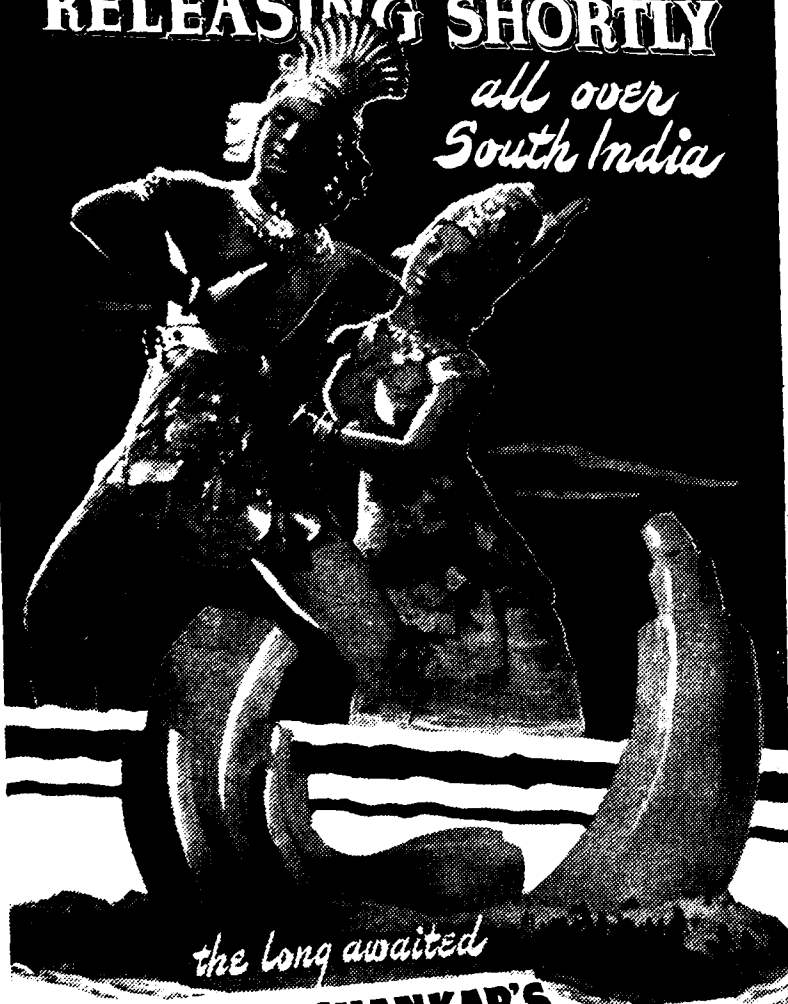
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SWATANTRA

Annual

FIRST FRUITS OF FREEDOM

THE past year has been packed with grave events. The supposed close of the war has not resulted in peace. Strife is still rampant. Every time the statesmen meet to draft an instrument of peace, conflict over some issue arises seemingly preparing the ground for another war. The seekers and makers of peace have become divided into two camps, and the shadow of the division has fallen over the whole world.

India has not escaped from the entanglements of the conflicts in the international sphere. Hyderabad and Kashmir are symbols of the projection of international intervention in Indian affairs. Peace would have reigned in the two States long ago. It was the meddling of powers from abroad that kept disturbance alive and checked settlement for so long.

Independence has thus meant the release of foreign pressures on India's internal affairs. Strength and skill are needed for safe guidance of the ship of State through the dangers and difficulties confronting it. Judged by his past, India's Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, is as able and high-minded a leader as any nation can wish to have. His credit stands very high in the world. The international prestige of statesmen however is not a fixed unchanging thing. It is apt to vary with the rise and fall of their political fortunes in their own national domains. Only four years ago the voice of Mr. Churchill was paramount in world affairs. It does not count for much now. It is not the character or qualities of Mr. Churchill that have changed. The change was in the people. Mr. Churchill was strong not only in his own country but even beyond its confines while his people supported him. When they withdrew that support the source of his strength at home and abroad was gone.

If the high worth of Pandit Nehru's international renown is to be preserved as a national asset, it is necessary that the Government of which he is the head should be strong and stable at home.

Strength and stability come from public confidence, and people bestow their confidence on leaders in whose thoughts and acts they see reflected the bent of their own interests. If Mahatma Gandhi was matchless among leaders in his gift of winning public confidence, the reason for it lay in the philosophy of life which he practised no less than preached and worked into the texture of his politics. He placed service above property and privilege. These standards are now being reversed by those who have stepped into power in the wake of the victory of the Gandhian struggle for freedom. The Ministries at the Centre and in the Provinces generally bear the stamp of such a reversal.

In this context of affairs, the task of the Press has become one of extreme difficulty and delicacy. The full vigour of the progressive elements in the Indian Press was exercised in support of Congress leaders during all their years of struggle with British power. But now the content of progressiveness has changed. It has become necessary to criticise the very leaders who in the past provided inspiration for the noblest effort of the nation. Curiously, that section of the Press which used to consult its own safety and profit during the British regime by backing it for all it was worth as against the Congress, has now swung into an attitude of vociferous loyalty to the present rulers. It is injuring them now with flattery just as formerly it impeded them with hostility.

The fortunes of a journal like SWATANTRA are, in the conditions outlined, apt to be precarious, but such precariousness is part of the essential adventurousness of journalism as a vital profession. The economic foundations of journalism tend to place it at the mercy of rich and powerful interests. Duty often comes into conflict with safety. If compromises are made for the sake of survival, to that extent they represent a diminution of faithfulness to the public interest. If they are not made, the very basis for service through work is cut off, and what is the public interest that can be served at all thereafter? This is, here and everywhere, the eternal dilemma of the conscientious journalist. Social intelligence must come to the rescue in all cases of conflict between economic power and freedom of the Press. Otherwise the Press will be enslaved to the wealthy. We depend on social intelligence which is a farflung thing and is restricted to no sect, as our mainstay.

I WORKED out a little sum in arithmetic and—would you believe it?—it has made me see the world with new eyes. You know its population is supposed to be somewhere about 2,000 millions. That seems a lot, till one remembers that in Germany the other day those who wanted a packet of cigarettes had to shell out a million marks (or somewhere thereabouts). And if you dip your hand in Madras tap water, the odds are it will leave on the palm a few million animalcules, which of course are absolutely harmless, nay positively beneficial to the skin, as our Corporation specialists have assured us. The two thousand millions of our species are hardly more than a fistful in the hand of Brahma. The Malthusians raise bogeys to frighten children by saying that man spawns far too easily and is rapidly eating himself out of house and home. But here comes my arithmetic with its convoy of commonsense. If you stood all our 2,000 millions together on a vast plain cheek by jowl as our good Madras citizens stood at the Island Grounds to hear Pandit Nehru's speech you would cover hardly more than three hundred square miles with an allowance of five square feet per man, averaging Fat Charlie and Lean Joe. But, of course, the poor mugs cannot be made to stand all the time. So I am prepared to give each of them, old and young, big and small alike, a hundred square feet of living space—which incidentally is much

more than the building regulations of our civilised municipalities require of the jerry-builder. That would mean setting apart some 6,000 square miles for our human reservation. Give them double that area for moving about, diverting or dirtying themselves as they do most of their waking time, and you arrive at a total of 18,000 square miles; which, in another way of putting it, is only 100 miles by 180, hardly more than the combined size of two districts. You could easily put that little pocket of territory in any corner of the map of the world and then forget all about it: possibly a second Columbus would be needed to rediscover it. Compared with the vastness of the habitable globe with its many million square miles of land (not to mention the generous allowance of water), this is a mere bagatelle. And yet the Malthusians have the hardihood to maintain that the earth is overpopulated.

In fact these good folk have got their economics all topsyturvy. They want the world's population to be thinned out—as if men were rice seedlings—so that there may be fewer men per square mile than there are today. That is incredibly extravagant in view of the known habits of the animal. Haven't you noticed the simple fact that where human feet have trod the earth nothing grows? A deserted city like Hampi or Fatehpur Sikri may in a century or two be overgrown with jungle, but the land thus redeemed

by Nature will never again be quite the same because it has felt the heat of the hearth and the heat of the human body. Don't you think that consideration for our uncomplaining mother the earth requires that instead of pimply her face over with human settlements we should collect them all together in a single boil, since that may burst some day and give her relief? Looking at it from the point of view of man himself, the case is no less strong. The Malthusians simply don't care a hoot what happens round about 2,000 A.D. No doubt they pretend that it is with the idea of conserving man's heritage that they urge there should be a limit to his multiplication. But they forget that if their crazy ideas were to be adopted in all its rigour there might be no man left to inherit the earth. My Plan would make sure, as far as that is humanly possible, that the rate of reproduction is never slowed down. And it also provides for men as a lot hopping off when one pitch has been exhausted or sufficiently defiled—as it might be in a century or two—to another in some other part of the globe, not too near to the former camp, there to settle again like a flock of pigeons feeding on corn in the ear, till the exhausted earth bids them move on. Thus, wisely economised, the earth might be made to do for a few millennia, which is all that even the most ardent believer in progress looks forward to. The suggestion I make is nothing new; the historians will tell you that when man was in the stage of nomadic culture this was precisely what he did. Since then he has proliferated enormously; hence the need for a Plan.

But, it might be objected, "The nomad was a primitive. When he settled down in fixed habitations and took to agriculture he took a decisive step up the scale of social evolution. You can't possibly ask him to go back." But cast an eye about you. Don't you see that it is the agriculturist who is everywhere looked down upon as outmoded and a laggard in the race for survival?

True, they have no scruple, meanwhile, to take advantage of his laborious toil, to make him grow corn and oil for their benefit while they graciously permit him to remain unobtrusively on the fringe of their consciousness. But the fabled fight between the stomach and the other limbs will no longer serve to keep the agriculturist quiet; he is now big and bursting with grievance. He will not go on producing with the sweat of his brow for idle mouths to consume and curse; he will become a mouth himself and insist upon being fed. How are we to get out of this crisis unscathed unless we rule that all burdens shall be equal? Autarky was the totalitarian solution; but while the workers produced the guns, the drones fed to repletion on the butter which Hitler thoughtfully provided for them. Autarky in fact raises more problems than it solves. It involves the need for perpetually craning your neck to

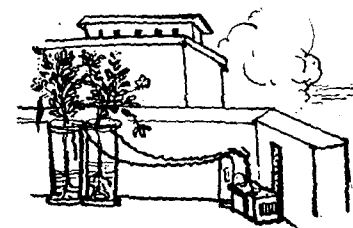


The Fellow On The Other Side

see what the fellow on the other side of the national partition wall may be doing in the game of worsting you. That is good neither for temper nor for morale. My Plan does away with the disadvantages of Autarky while conserving its gains. If every man, woman and child, living and breathing at this moment, could be brought together in one reasonably compact locality, put under one authority, made to observe one code of laws and taught to practise self-sufficiency in the literal sense, there could be no room for grumbling against God or man. The myriad-celled human colony which I propose for the considera-

tion of the unprejudiced reader would give the magical *mantram* of Equality such a chance of justifying itself as it never had before.

You will perhaps ask, "Who is to feed the hungry millions in this vast human beehive? Your bees, not having wings and living in a world sealed off from flowers, will probably take a leaf from the book of the head-hunters of Borneo. If it is a human holocaust that you want there might be more pleasant ways of effecting it. What about the atom bomb?" The last suggestion will be duly considered in its place, but I maintain that the busy bee is most of the time busy for nothing. It seems to make honey-gathering a pretext for lazing about in the sun or carrying on affairs of the heart with amorous flowers. But the adult citizen of my City State will



Soil-less Cultivation

grow his food on his own terrace by soilless cultivation stimulated by radio-activity. He will have no time for philandering, though he should have no difficulty or lack of opportunity for producing his quota of the "thing begotten in a couple of minutes." And sunlight and open air and the gay dalliance of Nature will be childish things which he has learned to put away with his toys.

After all, is that not the ideal that the apostles of One World have set before themselves? But their weakness is that they would eat their cake and have it. The *omnium gatherum* which is the United Nations is as different from my Universal City as chalk from cheese. In the old Greek City State, all the free men could be gathered into the public square by the town-crier to

debate peace and war; but, for the money that goes down the drain at Lake Success, you cannot get the common cowboy of Arizona and the humble earth-scraper of the Deccan plateau to meet and settle how Stalin and his opponents shall be brought to heel before they destroy the world. Faced with this poser, the U.N. propagandists brightly inform you that the world has become an incredibly small place. Radio, television, the jet plane and all the other marvels that the wizards of atomic fission have got up their sleeves are, it would seem, rapidly and inexorably ushering in the supremacy of the common man, binding humanity from Hong Kong to the outer Hebrides with hoops of steel. But the ninnies who argue thus forget that while you may allow the radio to blare without intermission there is no obligation on Arizona Tom or Achimota Jim to listen. He has his daily chores to do, and his private dreams beneath his night-cap that keep him foolishly busy. The pace of Negro-lynching in America has outmatched the progress of aviation. And the thunders of the Security Council, more discriminatory than old Jove's, are far less effective—not a wholly bad thing either. Our Puranas mention Kartavirya Arjuna as the perfect policeman. The moment a sly, revengeful, malicious or mischievous thought began to form like a fog in the brain of any individual in any remote corner of his world empire, that moment Arjuna of the thousand arms, with a sword grasped in each hand, and not for ornament, you may be sure, stood before him—and that was generally the end of the matter. But we in these degenerate days must perforce learn to do with makeshifts. And, considered as second best, the super-settlement I plan has, you will concede, its points. If the whilom slave-owning white of the Southern States of America should feel his blood tingle at the sight of a black brother he will remember in time that the Negroes, formerly of Africa, live only a few blocks off in the new

World State and might demand redress, which in those circumstances it would be hard to deny or delay. Wholesome regard for the safety of one's skin would still be the sanction for peace in my Republic.

I will not pretend that the transition will be easy. Whether that peculiar waywardness which is the special mark of the human animal was the product of an accident—that he found himself planted in a planet where there was plenty of room to indulge his roaming instincts—is an academic question. What we have to reckon with now is the fact that he is scattered all over the face of the earth and that each little clump has a tree-like attachment to the soil in which it has grown. But civilisation itself has been one long process of educating man out of this primitive clinging to his roots. His progress has been continuously from the small to the big—the hamlet, the village, the market town, the city, the conurbation—and Cosmopolis is its logical consummation. The wage-earner who has lived for a decade on the seventh floor of a Bombay chawl, if perchance he finds himself for a night in the Tanjore village where he was born, feels the darkness peopled with fearful phantoms and eerie noises; and he swoons with ecstasy when he returns to the clamour of the mills, which is as the music of bells in his ear. The gregarious creature who has lived in a crowd wants more of it, not less. You think miles and miles of chawls would be a nightmare? That is a common mistake. An undisturbing monotony is one of those things which satisfy our hunger for security; how else do you account for the popularity of a suburb like Mambalam with its endless rows of



Endless Rows Of Bungalows

bungalows, arranged in neat geometrical patterns and all as like as two peas? A visitor from another planet might perhaps find the smells of our super-beehive overpowering, but the perfumer and the sanitarian between them should be able to make them supportable in the first, difficult years. In course of time we should learn not merely to tolerate, but positively to love them—as the man who has lived all his life over a cow-pen will sadly miss the smell of cattle-dung if fate should send him to winter at the Riviera.

And, then, what infinite variety we shall have at our doors to delight, instruct and edify the youth of Cosmopolis, the hope of the new world. The man who, avid for sensation, spends a small fortune now going by rail, aeroplane and sailing ship to some inaccessible hole in the antipodes to observe the Maya Indians *in situ*, much as the entomologist studies the coconut weevil, can conduct his observations with far less toil and trouble in our One World; the Maya aborigine settlement would then be within as easy reach as Tambaram is from Madras, if you allow for the increased efficiency of its communications. We must be prepared for the bewildering differences of race, language, customs and manners to be smoothed out in course of time. But that will surely be a tremendous gain. If the Governments in India are prepared to risk endless strife in their resolve to make Hindi the language of all India, imagine how much more vast and worthy would be the achievement of universal pidgin and a standardised Eurasian amalgam. That may be the end of culture as our old backward-looking world knows it; but, if Soviet Russia is to be believed, that would be no loss. At least our Revolution should eliminate fear. Men are divided as much by their memories as by physical distance; and our super-beehive would make an end of both these things. The secret of family attachment is that brothers are privileged to quarrel with each

other and so can't afford to do without each other. In this sense humanity will become under my scheme one inextricably intertwined family pululating with the energising power of endless antagonisms.

I have said enough, I hope, to show that once you collect all mankind on the top of Mount Ararat the component parts will have little inducement to fall apart. For man fears nothing so much as to be alone; Alexander Selkirk merely made a virtue of necessity. It would therefore be unnecessary to put round our sane New World a barbed wire entanglement charged with electricity such as enclosed the Savage Reservation in Huxley's Brave New World. You have perhaps noticed that I suggest a mountain as the most suitable location for organised humanity. The idea is to simplify sanitary problems and not to keep the inhabitants from venturing into the unknown. They should welcome this elevation, since it will save them from the risk of being corrupted by casual contact with such animals as might otherwise stray in. As this is after all a plan and not a detailed blueprint, you will not expect me to go into organisational details. But I should like to point out that the jungle to which most of the erstwhile populated world would revert would not be without its uses. Such surplus energy as mankind might still possess would naturally need an outlet. And periodical *keddah* operations, undertaken by a representative citizen army organised by centuries as in old Rome, would provide all the pleasures of an outing spiced with a minimum of risk and unlimited opportunities for blood-letting. During these sorties no fraternising will be permitted, of course. And then the jungle would be an ideal penal settlement. For I shall sorrowfully concede, unlike the Utopia pedlars, that the most perfect system in the world must still reckon with nonconformists. In our New World the incurably lonely, the poets, the mystics, the star-gazers will not fit in. They



Poets, Mystics, Star-gazers

will be miserable and they will make others miserable. The jungle is the place for them; such is human perversity that I shall not be surprised if you find them embracing exile with alacrity.

But mankind as a whole will be sensible. It will drink at the trough obediently enough, unlike its equine counterpart; the difficulty might be to take it to water. It is here that the atom bomb comes in, if you know what I mean. I do not suggest anything so crude as a repetition of Hiroshima. It will rather be a power held in reserve by the controllers of the World State who will remain discreetly in the background. They will merely let it be known that the one and only atomic pile was being built up in the citadel of Mount Ararat and the efficiency of its super-bombs was to be tested by sticks of them being dropped at regular interval impartially over London, Moscow, New York, and so on. A period of three months would be allowed for the population of the whole world to seek shelter on the magic mountain so as to be out of harm's way. If the time is insufficient and the panic caused leads to bloodshed and suffering, well, these are incidental to any high adventure, as the partition of the Punjab showed, and you must learn to be philosophical about it. The survi-

vors will for the first time in human history be world citizens, and not only in a figurative sense. They will have unlimited opportunities for evolving new forms of government. From the same huge cylindrical drums, such as those used for the Derby Sweep, the panchayat President and the President of the World State could be elected by the process of the lucky dip. By prolonging the duration of life on the one hand and working out a suitable system of rotation for offices of dignity every human being should be enabled to gratify his supreme

wish by being, for however brief an hour, cock of his own particular walk. The engineers in their cells with their hands alertly within reach of the switch-board will allow the mice to scurry about in their cage without a care; but the moment they suspect an outbreak of thought in any sector, they will push the relevant button and the tainted population will just disappear in a puff of invisible smoke. And the other mice will go on blissfully scurrying about in their cage of illusions.

VIGNESWARA

WHO FIGHTS FOR COMMUNISM

Ruth Fischer, a former German Communist and now an anti-Stalinite, is the author of a book just published in U.S.A. on Stalin and German Communism. She translates the following passage from a "chorus" in a Communist play by Bertolt Brecht, a Communist poet: "Who fights for Communism must be able to fight and not to fight, to say the truth and not to say the truth, to render and to deny service, to keep a promise and to break a promise, to go into danger and to avoid danger, to be known and to be unknown. Who fights for Communism has of all the virtues only one; that he fights for Communism".

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DECISION

by **MANJERI. S. ISVARAN**

THE sun never sets. Nor does it rise. So says an ancient Hindu hymn. The rising and the setting are purely conjectural. For, after having arrived at the end of day, it makes itself produce two contrary effects: night to what is below and day to what is on the other side; and reaching the end of the night, day to what is below and night to what is on the other side. The sun never sets. Nor does it set for him who has such a knowledge.

It is a matter for doubt whether any among the numerous inhabitants of Damal had such a knowledge through a knowledge of the hymn; to them day was day and night was night: a time to work and a time to sleep and rest.

Janardanan was sleeping. Which means it was night as he was not a day sleeper. Outside, the moon was waning with horns towards the west; over the sky the last patch of luminous feldspar faded out quickly and darkness hid the earth, making the slumbers of the sentient heavier. Life lay limp, benumbed, whatever the tone of its dreams, with breath just enough to save it from total extinction. It's a marvel: life struggling to be alive; it's a greater marvel: a new life struggling to be born. Life is real because it is an unbroken flow.

All around was silence except for the vague noiseless noises of the night: the sigh of the passing wind, the squeak of a lizard, a cat calling to its mate, the bark of a stray dog. Nature is never completely at rest. A spirit moves this tree, that stone; walls have ears.

Janardanan turned in his bed. A snore was half-choked in his throat. His hand drew the slipping pillow, aware of what it was doing, and put it in position under his head. He mumbled something, smacking his lips, and drawing the quilt over him settled himself for a further cosy stretch of sleep.

He was suddenly awakened by his wife.

"Rise up," Sarada whispered eagerly in his ear; "they are out in the shed. Come."

Janardanan muttered in his sleep and took another turn on the pillow.

"You told me to wake you up," said she, and the silence intensified the sound of her whisper, its impatience; "and now you go on sleeping like a log. Afterwards to blame me."

"What do you say?" he drawled out, muffling his face in the pillows and lying flat on his stomach.

"I said your mother and your sister are in the shed. I heard them go out just awhile ago. At the first creak of the door I was awake. Get up, perhaps it's already too late."

He sat up in his bed and yawned; his dhoti had fallen off and he tightened it about his waist, and while doing so his fingers extricated the yagnopavita which was caught entangled as a girdle within its folds; he flung it right across his shoulder, and then with a curse began to scratch his back, breast, belly, and the extremities of his legs--the mosquitoes were aggressive.

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"Damn it!" he hissed. "Should I remind you every day about the net? At this rate there'll not be a drop of blood in my body soon."

"Net!" cried Sarada warmly, "as if there are dozens of it lying about the house. The one thing has gone to the washerman and when it comes back, the mosquitoes will have an easier entry through it, I am sure. And while you sit scratching and yawning and talking like this—"

"Yes—"

"It will all be over."

Janardanan was pacified. He even put an apologetic note into his voice when he spoke to his wife. He choked off another incipient yawn. He had no need to be told what would be over. For the last week or so talk in the house had centred round the event that was going to happen, any day, any hour—the calving of Godavari. Ganga, Narmada, Godavari, Kaveri: all the four cows were named after the holy rivers and all the four were a fine specimen of the Kangayam breed. Ganga and Narmada had gone dry and the mistress of the house nursed a special spite against Ganga since the time the cow had eaten her after-birth. She wanted to get rid of the creature; only to satisfy her sentimental husband did she retain Ganga in the pen; the cow was the oldest of the lot, he said, and had served the family best; and hadn't some of her grandchildren added to the glory of the stud? But Godavari was her pet—gentle Godavari, sleek, small, dappled about the flanks and dewlap, with long silky ears, and little horns like those of the crescent moon, and the irises of her eyes as blue and bright as the summer sky—Godavari was her pet. The quality of the milk did not depend on the size of the udder; and Godavari had the smallest of udders that cow ever had and her milk was the sweetest. Now she was going to have her second calf.

"Where are you?" Janardanan asked his wife.

Sarada was already at the door.

"Hurry up," she whispered impatiently.

He groped his way, feeling for her in the dark, and his hand was stroked lightly by a curl of her hair—it had come undone and she was twisting it into a knot; he drew back at the touch as if a lizard or a scorpion were trying to crawl over him; softly she laughed at his alarm and took his hand in hers; he felt the moist, warm touch of her palm both quieting and quickening; for an instant he lingered, attempting to draw her back, but fighting down her answering weakness she had locked her fingers firmly in his and led him out swiftly.

They walked towards the byre. It was a low, thatched lean-to, with a length of fence behind which partitioned off a neighbouring plot of land. Quite a wealth of pumpkin creepers were trained over the thatch, their dense broad foliage almost entirely concealing it; a jack tree rose brooding near by, floating down another sere and yellow leaf to those already strewn below. A single Feurhand tried to dispel the blackness with its tiny, ineffectual glow; it succeeded to the extent of throwing out in relief two figures squatting on the ground, a short distance off—two shadow shapes within the radius of its light that wavered like a pale nimbus of the moon in that gaping void. They were the mother and the sister of Janardanan.

"It'll take another hour and a half to complete," said the elder woman.

"That long!" cried the younger.

A sound like a heavy sigh came from inside the pen. It was followed by a faint lowing.

"Poor Godavari!" cried again the younger woman.

"For every pore in its body, it's an eternity of agony to the poor dumb animal," sympathised the older one.

By now Janardanan and Sarada were within a few yards of the boose; hearing the shuffle of footsteps the women paused in the middle of their talk. Janardanan



took a quick stride or two, leant over the wooden trough where a lantern hidden from view cast its light, and peered inside. Godavari lay on her side on the stone floor, her big bulging belly heaving and falling. She sighed hot heavy sighs, snorted and grunted, bending and stretching her legs convulsively.

Janardanan peered more intently through the dim light of the lantern and saw a tiny calf head with a white patch over the brow and two little forelegs appearing. Of a sudden he felt a warm breath curl up his neck; there was no need to see whence and from whom it came; he knew it was his wife who was watching from behind, as eagerly as he, what he had fixed his gaze on. She had put her hand on his shoulder, and he became presently aware that her breathing had grown rapid; he turned his face on hers and saw the dark rings round her eyes had grown darker. Her irregular periods were the cause of those rings. Haemorrhoidal. He knew. But the longer the interval hope had been stronger; but by and by he learnt to cheat himself no more. And he began to ask himself was it worth-while trying to be a father? He was thirty-five. Ten years were indeed a long time that marked the splendour of his efforts. At the end of a year after consummation, his mother had started to frown on his wife; in the second her innuendos were fitful; in the third they grew louder and harsher; in the fourth she was on the top of her form and clinched matters by saying that her son had sown long enough on rocks and he should seek a more fertile earth. And then his father—a lovable, sentimental man—had intervened; there was a further closer scrutiny of the horoscopes; but astrology differed in its opinions with different individuals of the trade; one said that he was sure to have a son, just to perpetuate the line, and no more; another cited with chapter and verse from the *Brihat Jataka* that his house of offspring was desolate but that of his wife was more promising; and suggestions were made for the performance of a *homa* to propitiate the manes and a pilgrimage to holy Kasi. Nothing, however, had come out of all these; none could break his indifference; and so the years had passed. He had kept pure till he married and gave himself pure to his wife, and his purity continued as a matter of habit. As a matter of habit—that would please society better as it

always prides on its restraint, knowing but not wanting to recognize inherent virtues but being impressive about lesser traits.

Janardanan looked again into the face of his wife. The skin was drawn tight over her temples; her cheeks seemed hollower; her pallor was deathly. Her age appeared to have flown off at a tangent, suddenly from thirty to a decade or so more. She looked so bleak, so ugly. She was breathing heavily through her nose, intent on the cow that lay in travail; and at the sight of her tenseness which was almost ferocious, Janardanan was filled with an emotion very near hatred for her, but the very next instant he was ashamed of himself for his ignoble feeling, and a great pity for his wife surged in his heart.

"Even a cow does it," the words of his mother fell distinctly on his ears. He doubled up under the stab.

"Look, it's coming, it's coming!" cried Sarada in a fever of excitement.

A dull mooing came from within the byre.

Janardanan drew his wife aside and gently but firmly led her back into the house. A mon-goose darted across their path, the light from the lamp betraying its transit. He heard his mother and his sister talking animatedly behind. Evidently they were wrought up at the coolness with which he had ignored their presence. Women are all of a twitter only when they hate or when they love; inferior emotions but make them abnormally normal.

They sat down on their bed. The silence cracked like a shell.

"Yes, they are right, your mother is right," she said, tonelessly. Her voice sounded distant, coming as if from a far-off land.

"What is right?" he asked.

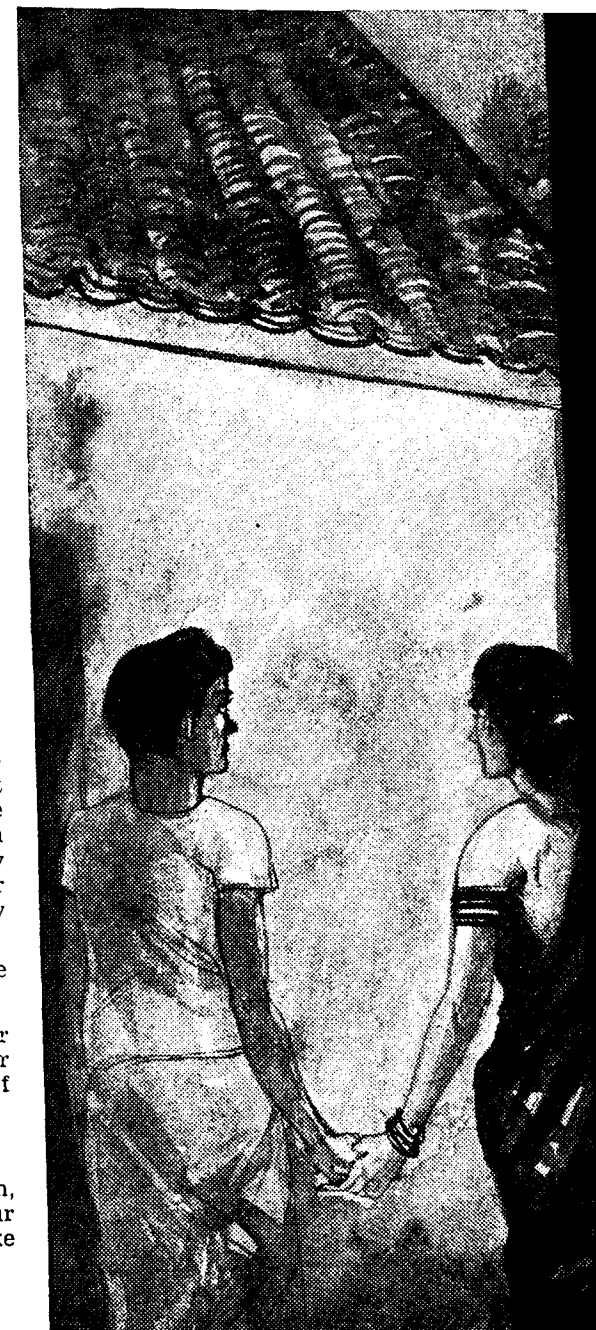
"That you should marry again, that you should no more waste your manhood on a barren creature like me."

"Not while I am alive. Had I wanted to, why should have I waited so long?"

"I must have killed many children in a previous birth."

"Why should it not be me?"

"No. No. You can never—" A sob cut short her words.



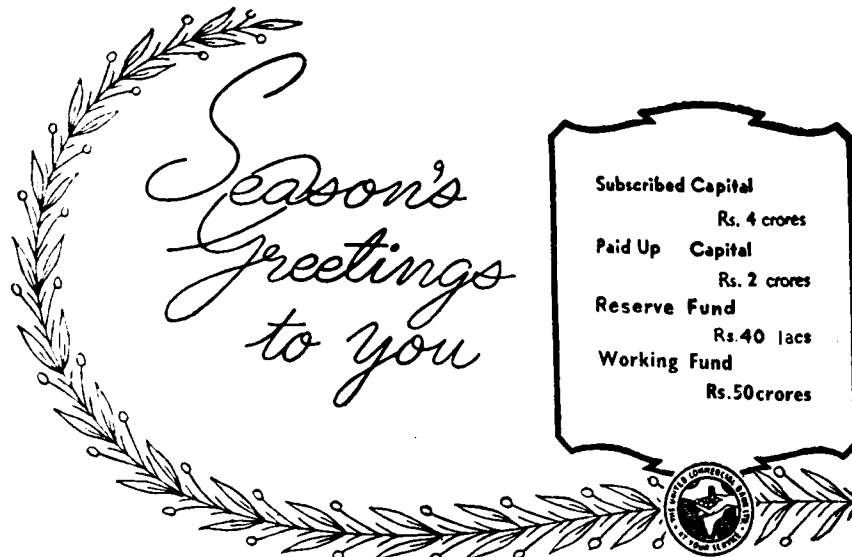
He threw out his arm and caught her to his breast; a tear spilled on to his palm, like a drop of rain pelted by a passing cloud, a tear wrung from the heart of a woman to waken a kindred drop from the heart of her man—of untold agony, of untold bliss. He caught her to his breast and sank to the bed with her; one brief moment, empty, electrical, and then they had rolled asunder.

She lay in a sort of dream, a swoon, a trance—dim with the knowledge that the old life had passed and a new life had opened to her; and with the realisation, too, that it was not a dream, a swoon, a trance, but a feeling really, an extraordinary sensation which for all that knowledge and realisation she could not name; so awed and thrilled was she in her happiness. And she thought she heard the bleat of the new-born calf, and as she thus listened the sound taking on a human note, so rapturous, so close to her as to be tangible..... she smiled at her own foolishness, at her hands fumbling for the dear little body she tenderly visualised.

Outside the sky was slowly being dyed with woad. A delicate pastel colouring and then the lines of the crayons grew bolder. It was sunup. A new day was beginning to be born, bringing newness to the flowers, newness to the grass, to the waters, to the voices of birds that were flinging their flutes and pipes and whistles in the wind.

Sarada heard the housedoor opening with a strident groan and the voice of her mother-in-law speaking irately to the maidservant. She knew the irateness was directed against her. But she didn't care, she got out of bed exceedingly at peace with herself and smiling angelically at her husband. Janardan smiled back at her; he was both surprised and glad to notice a strange new radiance about her, a winsome resilience in her gait. What a miracle does the rising sun accomplish, he marvelled!

But the sun never sets. So says the ancient Hindu hymn. Nor does it set for him who has the knowledge and—the faith.



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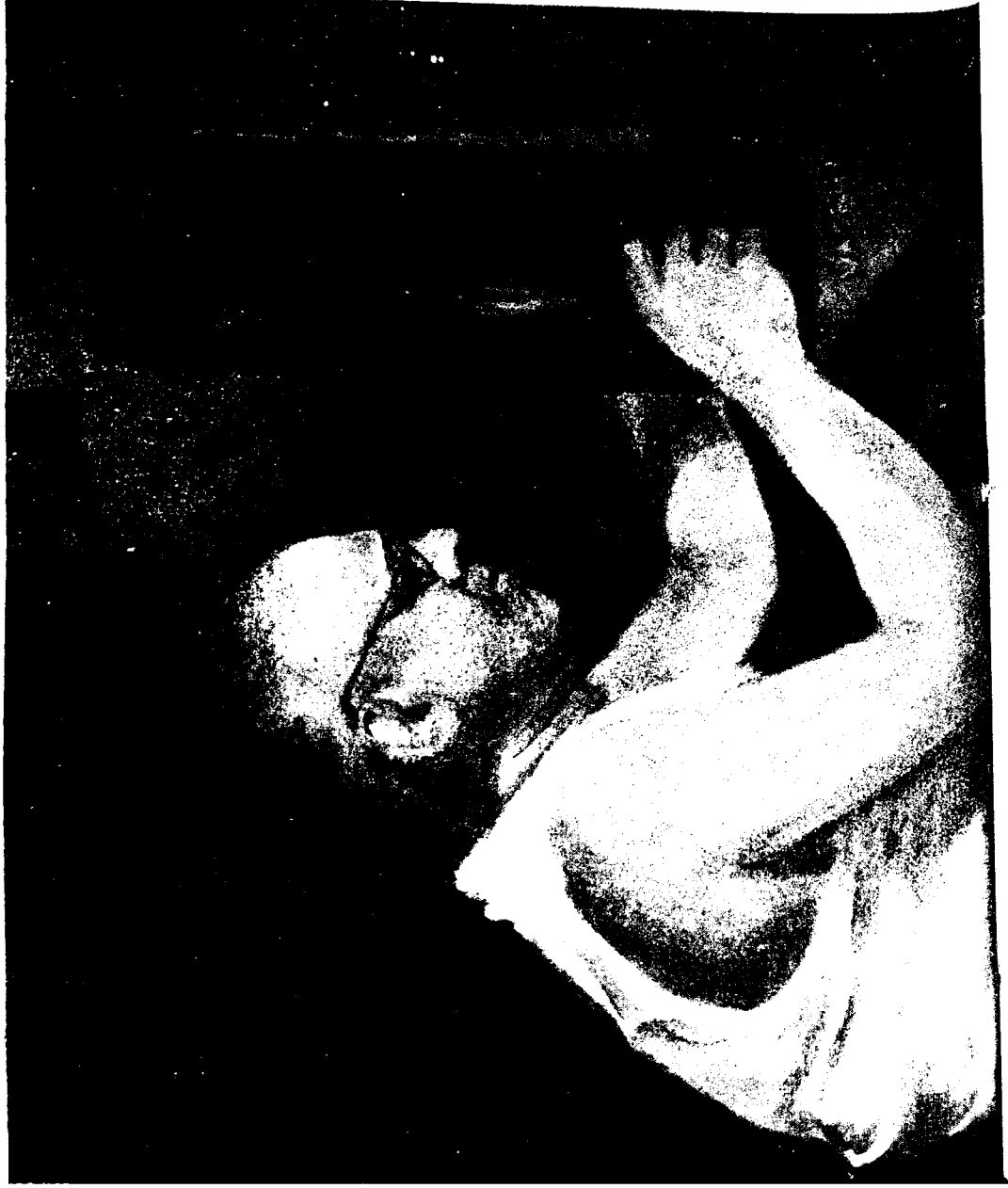
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THE problem of industrial planning is receiving considerable thought and attention everywhere. In fact, one might even say that industrial planning is being overdone. The need to plan the industrial development of a country has been brought about by revolutionary changes in the political and economic spheres and to a great extent also by the new technique of modern warfare. But, in highly advanced countries, it is not the culture of the people, their genius, or their character that is giving the shape to their political or economic activities so much as their industrial framework. So that the replanning of the industrial organisation is generally an attempt to do away with those undesirable features in the existing industrial framework which have been responsible for introducing confusion in the political and economic spheres. The only exception to this is where the country is engaged in planning its industries in such a way that they might serve the purpose of an aggressive war in contemplation. Such was the object of industrial planning in Hitlerite Germany and probably is in Russia and the United States today.

But what most planners and writers on industrial planning have omitted to do is to make an assessment of the present mechanical civilisation. It has been assumed without questioning that rapid industrialisation of all 'backward areas' is necessary if 'the standard of living' of the people of those areas is to be raised. And this in spite of the knowledge that the

present miserable plight of the countries of Europe is the result of an undiluted mechanical civilisation. The opulence and the breathtaking miracles of the industries of the United States are attributed to the industrial consciousness of its people and it is again assumed that every country in the world can be a pattern of the United States if only its people and the Government adopt a forward policy of industrialisation. No credit is given to the vast resources with which nature had endowed that virgin country and it is not being realised that if the drain on these resources goes on at the present rate, the American scene may become as dreary as what we see in India. Just as night is darkest before dawn, a sombre grey rapidly overtakes the golden colours of the evening. It is essential in my opinion that we should give some thought to the philosophy of industrialisation before we begin to plan our industries.

There are, what I would choose to call, three laws which operate wherever there is no pre-planned industrial development taking place. The first law is that industries are attracted only to localities which are already industrialised. There is no need to elaborate about the evils of such overcrowding. It will suffice to say that industrial areas are eyesores and that the people who are obliged to spend their lives in such areas develop an attitude of mind which is not only one-sided but is influenced by the existence of grievances against people in other spheres of life. The second law is that existing industries tend to

MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLAK, whose methodical madness has perplexed historians, has provided one of the imponderable 'ifs' of Indian history. Daulatabad remains a mere dusty town. Had he stuck to his decision to make Daulatabad the capital of his sultanate, Delhi would have been magnificent ruins and north and south would have met midway. New Delhi has patterned buildings, huddled together like white elephants, with the planned confusion of Persepolis, and the sameness of circles and squares suggests the ideal bivouacking ground for army manoeuvres, since even a



Snail-like Grand Trunk Express.

skilled General would not know whether he was advancing or retreating. The modernism of India's modern capital dates back only to

1912. The Moghul empire, with the south following its own wayward course, had only the variation of Maratha incursions. The capital has been a breeding ground of corruption, not a meeting ground of cultures, unless viceregal parties flavoured with champagne could be called a contribution to culture, instead of a page in yellow-book politics. Delhi's distance to the south could be measured by the snail-like Grand Trunk Express, on which much poor wit has been expanded in ridicule. The costly air-mindedness of the new rich or the comfort-love and luxury-mindedness of some Constituent Assembly members has not shortened the mental or physical distance. All roads lead to Delhi. But they converge on quotas, controls, permits, T.A.—drawing committees and the corridors of the secretariat where corruption comes crawling on like paralysis. The Constituent Assembly, far more than the old Central Assembly, has provided a rendezvous for high constitution-making, small talk and a little back-stairs intrigue. But it provides neither Toynbee's environment nor stimulus for responsive clutches. Tongues are joined in issue but minds do not come to grips. Eloquence ends on a note of envy. Intellectualism tapers into scandal-mongering, hoarse or sly. The South Indian communities may be high in the councils of government but when the most effective technique of governance is press notes, it does not matter who is celebrating behind the sloth. These south sea islands in the midst of a sea of Punjabi resurgence are ultimately insular, dotting on provincial confectionery. North and south

have a Chinese wall of separation between them and even the Grand Trunk Express weighs heavily like a hyphen in the consciousness. The south is drawing up the constitution, the north, perhaps, will work it, without much respect for the subjunctive clauses.

I do not pretend to be a Colossus of understanding but the pain of an anomaly persists for one who has known the ghosts both of Shahjahanabad and Hampi. To one for whom the logic of linguistic provinces is inexorable, the logic of the oneness of India is equally inexorable. Northern geography and myth and legend are a part of southern imagery, except in the Tamil classics. The Ganga is a river of time touching Indian consciousness at many points. Yet, it seems, in spite of the varieties of local colour, there are two distinctive personalities divided by the Central Provinces of decadence and the bulge of reaction in Hyderabad. The Middle West and the Wild West of the United States of America have boundaries less distinct, and they are recessions of the same pioneering spirit unified by the Pullman car and Presidential elections. I do not forget the stray birds of passage but the very strayness is the point of difference. Lucknow sweets and Benares pan do not turn a South Indian outwards; he rather recedes inwards. The nearness which is the essence of modern communication seems to be the illusion; the widened mental chasm the reality. And when I speak of the north, I do not include Bengal and Calcutta where Kidderpore Docks, Clive Street barons and Christmas festivity mix abominably. And in the south I do not include Father Verrier Elvin's world of elfins or the modern versions of the Peshwas. But while it requires more than a Gunther to probe inside the continental abdomen of India, I am thinking of two broad belts of the same civilization. Einstein's universe is boundless but finite.

The difference of pattern is obvious even on the surface. You can travel from Lahore to Calcutta without touching any eruptions of the

earth or, if you take a bird's eye view from a plane, you find hundreds and hundreds of square miles of grey flatness. On the road side in U.P., I have seen flying camels and dancing peacocks, but in the dry season I have never seen such a parched piece of earth. The colour changes in the rainy season when the whole Indo-Gangetic Valley seems to be the greatest carpet of green on earth, the puddles of water, lake-like in their largeness, turning the vast stretches into a green glitter which I have seen only in the now blood-stained valley of Kashmir. Except the great rivers, there is no feature, no landmark but district flows into district and province overflows into province. That is, if you do not touch the north, the Kumaon or the Nepal borders which take you into regions by which the beauties of the Nilgiris look niggardly. Similarly with the climate. It is either very cold or very hot, both conducive to extremes of laziness. Except for the air-conditioned classes, for two months of the summer it is a fight against heat-stroke, and four months are of paralysis and ice-water and ice-cream. Geologically the epoch is in reverse process on a minor scale, for people, apart from meteorologists, have felt that summers are getting longer and hotter and winters shorter and milder. The common joke in a city like Madras is that it is eight months hot and four months hotter but the heat has its compensations, particularly the sea-breeze. The Deccan Plateau, of course, has its deviations from this formula, the climate corresponding to the height above sea-level. But the evenness of the temperature is reflected in the evenness of the people's temper.

Here then is a difference. The northerner luxuriates in wool for some months in the year and the students, in particular, assert a natural right to be dandiacal. In Lahore and Lucknow it takes the form of wool-gathering and commonplace dandyism. There is no thought of wool in summer. The two sets of dress produce a colourful

variance in necessity. In the south, a 'blazer' on the Marina



Blazer on the Marina.

invites scorn in winter and a rain of stones in summer, though the sight of fashionable Beaux Brummels going about in tweeds in mid-summer and of bejewelled politicians parading like bedecked parables (think of the Justice Party!) is a tardy tribute to the mildness of the summer. South Indians in general are a set of semi-nudes compared to the caparisoned personalities of the north and since, as Walter de la Mare says, whatever Miss I becomes Miss T, the vagaries of diet, imposed by nature and habit, create the bulbous brilliance as well as the spare rock-bottom features. The rules of complexion can be guessed. Diet, so varied in the south, is as much the cause of temperament as its result. There is an underlying unity of rice-culture. But dietetic variations in the north are few, the non-vegetarianism of Brahmins being a concession not only to heterodoxy but to climate.

The cities of the north are cities of the plain most of whose citizens have not seen the sea. The evils of sequestration are seen in the seven cities constituency of U.P., which has its advantage of decentralization, but has led not only to sequestration of civic consciousness

but sequestration of intellectual life. Each city has a bunch of Hindi newspapers but living from hand to mouth, overlapping each other. Talent is scattered. There is no substitute for Madras or Calcutta or Bombay in the north, the modern metropolis where competitive life produces not only squalor but results. Not that these cities of the plain have not their charm or character. Like Oxford or Cambridge, they have the medieval air, but some also the authenticity of their ancience. Lahore is a city of dandies and pleasure and inordinate night life. New Delhi is modelled on Washington where officialdom lives on a diet of salaries and small talk, completely out of touch with the people. It does not mix with even Old Delhi, which in spite of its dust, has much more life. Allahabad is a dead city and Prayag looks like no holy place. But the rumble of the Sangham gives this city a stubborn adhesiveness to anything that is ancient. Benares, perhaps, is the strangest city and symbolises the attitude of the north to the past. Its facade of temples on the river side looks as old as time. There is a tradition of culture which is kept alive in secluded places and contrasts oddly with the utter chaos of civic life. Pride and sloth are



A set of semi-nudes.

mixed in respect for a city which even many westernized Indians prefer to cultivate as the Paris of the East. There is more of worshipfulness and temple-mindedness in these parts but the craft of temple-building seems to have not existed. The Benares temples look like faint-hearted attempts to imitate southern architecture. While temple-going is more of a routine in the south, it is partly due to the attractiveness of the architecture. So with punditry and priesthood. The purohit does not seem to sanctify marriage here but to detract from its supposed sacramental character. Brahminism is, therefore, less of a formality here and less respectable. It has helped the thawing of caste. The contrast of the villages is greater. The average South Indian villager is a sophisticated, litigious rogue who knows more about his rights, even when he is untouched by political consciousness. The northern villagers have remained destitute, in spite of the political parties, and the village here is a rousing call to immediate agrarian revolution. Zamindari abolition here has been delayed by intellectual cowardice but is more urgent than in the south.

It brings us to a cursory diversion on intellectual attitudes. The Indo-Gangetic Valley is rich in universities too and the dons, while more interested in International Rotary than in their subjects, prefer to trade on their past achievements and cheap publicity but boast without conviction of intellectual standards. There is difference between university and university but taking what is known as the university of life, the student here assumes larger gestures than in the south. He is somebody, a student-leader or a lady-killer or an influential stooge of an influential politician. He gets a large handicap in the form of high aspirations, rarely thinks of the prizes of competitive public service and invariably takes life more cheerfully, even if he lands at the bottom of the ladder. But he starts with Marx. Without mastering the rudiments of composition, he thinks of imitating Dylan Thomas.

He has a contempt for text-books and is the social equal of his teacher. The foundation is weak; it is



He is somebody.

all superstructure. I would not be wrong in summing up the south as all foundation and no superstructure. Students are more slavish to text-books till at least they 'make good in their examination. One has to wade through even the Caroline period before one is allowed to think of contemporary poetry. They approach their professors as if they are gods of some kind. There is little initiative, except for the few who go through the experience of secretaryship of college associations. The north thinks more of the content, the south more of the form, that would satisfy even Saintsbury. The southern student attempts style, the northern is eager to deliver his message. Besides the northern versions of dress parade and higher standard of living, the southerners look like anaemic scholars afraid of curtailing their parents' solvency.

The standard of living in the north among the educated middle classes is higher. It is glossy and assertive. The belief is widespread that life is for living. The Gita is

as widely revered here but is kept on the shelves, while, in some form or other, it seems to oppress the south. Life here has taken the form of drawing-room culture with anyone drawing a couple of hundreds not capable of living without a drawing-room. There is a nabobic strain. The south comparatively is sticking to the verandah and the terrace, except in the exalted state of Hyderabad. The veteran of the law-court may meet boldly his brother from the north in the neutral ground of justice and vanquish him but would feel inferior about his drawing-room on a visitation from the north. If this difference in complexes, varied by tufts and dhotties, is carried into the convex reflexions of the Central Secretariat it leads to many kinds of clashes.

become a mere heart of oak threatened by weeds. Not that things



If Pandit Pant were born in Madras

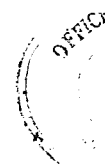
These thin trickles of life add to the surge and ground-swell which is what we are trying to map out. The spaciousness of the Indo-Gangetic Valley is reflected in the spaciousness of mental attitudes. Leadership is so easily created here, without sufficient excuse or foundations, because a greater number of people aim to be leaders. The crop is destroyed by the god-made monsoon but part of it survives. The lack of intellectual sharpness is made up by largeness of gesture. There is even a species known as student leaders who think it is their right to issue thundering statements. The southern intellect, sharper and more active, seems stunted by the peninsular narrowness. The critical faculty ends in a cul-de-sac of self-criticisms. Professors are afraid of self-expression. Leadership is selective and the recruiting ground, therefore, limited. If Pandit Pant were born in Madras, he might have ended as a purohit or a good district bar leader. Jawaharlal Nehru would have found satisfaction in luxuriating over his father's briefs and attitudinizing in the Cosmopolitan Club or Mylapore's intellectual resorts. A northern Sivaswami Iyer would have dazzled his contemporaries as much by his drawing-room culture as by his intellectual finesse. Prakasam translated would not have

are florid in the north. Scholarly simplicity is enshrined in persons like Narendra Deva, though even Sampurnanand has with the touch of power become somewhat pompous. But the large-heartedness of heart looks lavish in these amplitudes, while peninsular generosity is frozen in a grove. Intellectual keenness, so useful in drafting and shaping constitutions, in debates and committee discussions, looks inhibited by its own sharpness when unrelieved by a capacious attitude to life. If the Communists have relieved themselves of even a part of this contradiction in the south, they are Marxists worth their salt. Yet this attempted differentiation in patterns of life is inadequate. For generalisations convey at best only half-truth. The patterns of life have to be studied closely, if the invisible Great Wall of India has to be understood and broken. Such a precise demarcation would require a whole manual and it is the task of a historian with a needle eye for gathering the details of life without falling into the gaping pitfalls of Gunther's slapdash and slapstick school of history.



RAJINI NAIDU.

Blocks by Klein & Peyerl.



NOV 1948

MADRAS

SAROJINI NAIDU

by HARINDRANATH

CHATTOPADHYAYA

(A Brother's Impressions Of A Sister)

FOR a brother, who is not so famous, to write about a sister who is world-famous might, at first, seem to be not only a stupid and unwise undertaking, but a most audacious one. But, "through wisdom lately won" (to quote myself) and the deepening of the being with years which have rendered it somewhat impersonal in its attitude and approach to things and people, I find I am in a position to write about Sarojini, not as one link in the chain of intimate blood-relationship, but as somebody worthwhile, among several others, whom the country has contributed to her own history.

Sarojini has been written about and talked of for years and years—when she was in her teens she wrote lyrical verse and caught the imagination of those who heard her lyrical speeches. At an early age, then, she was acclaimed by thousands as a woman of destiny, a genius of the first order. To add to it, at the time she started writing verse, Queen Victoria was on the throne and had wrought for herself a magical reputation in the hearts of the people of her Indian Empire. English had become the golden tongue of the "educated" few—and it seemed to breathe the breath of the gods. Those who did not speak English were considered to be illiterate and uncultured—even when they were conversant and well-versed in their own respective provincial tongues. Those who could speak English were exaggerated into godhead! In those

days, too, one who returned from England was looked upon as somebody who had returned from Mars or the Moon. An England-returned butler took on the aspect of the superior being as compared even to a scholar who had not gone beyond Indian shores. In such times and conditions, when hardly a handful of Indians wrote verse in English worth the name, the emergence of Sarojini resembled that of a new star on the horizon of India. People talked of her genius and invested her with the miraculous.

But with the passing of years writing verse in English became more and more frequent and even lost its power of compelling attention as it did once. With the growth of national consciousness and the keen awakening of India's people to a sense of slavery under foreign domination, the English language gradually began to take a less urgent place in the minds of the people. All the same, Sarojini's lyrics have still continued to be read and praised. She has been called "Bulbul-e-hind", or "The Nightingale of India". But it strikes me, on closer analysis, that this title has been given to her not so much for her lyrical output in a foreign tongue—which is comparatively small in bulk and uneven in quality—as for the inherent lyrical gift of oratory for which she has always been celebrated.

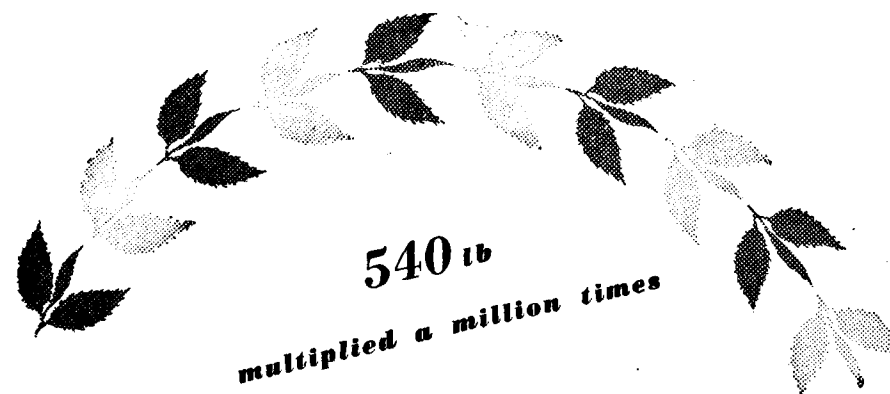
Sarojini, the speaker, is far more important and compelling than Sarojini, the poet. While even her speeches are uneven in quality and

inspiration,—there is hardly any doubt as to the influence she has wielded in public life and the life of the nation with her exquisite output of words intoned like a nightingale on myriad occasions—she does not always rest at the roseal point of lyricism. I have at least on one occasion heard her voice become a roaring fire and her oratory a sharp sword sure-laden with an instantaneous death-blow. There have been other such occasions as well—but I shall only refer to the one occasion on which my hair stood on end “like quills upon the fretful porpentine.” It was in London in the year 1920—after the shameful Amritsar massacres which had left the country humiliated and every sensitive individual burning with bitter vengeance and hate. Sarojini spoke at the Albert Hall which was crowded to an excited overflow of audience. The hall was packed to choking with men and women who had been attracted not only by a famous name but by the subject of the evening on which Sarojini was to address a London which had mixed and vague ideas about what had happened in India. Sarojini rose amidst cheers which, however, evoked no expression of gratitude. I could see she was in dead earnest that afternoon—she was no more a woman, nor was her voice that of a mere individual woman. She had been transformed into India and it was India speaking—India, torn, bled, wounded, humiliated, raped. On the galleries sat a group of men who had come determined to stage an anti-demonstration. When the gradually widening fire in her began to take on the dimensions of a conflagration, the audience sat spell-bound below in the auditorium. Her description of the humiliations in India even moved several to tears—when suddenly the disturbing element from the top began to shout and do their best to break up the meeting. Sarojini, with eyes that burned red, literally red—as though they had suddenly crammed into their two little optical worlds the funeral-flames of those who had been shot down at Jallianwala Bagh—stared at them awhile and then, with a sudden note which sounded

like the bursting of an atom bomb, she said “Shut up”—and the result was a dead stillness which dared not open its brute-mouth again! That was a classic speech—and it only showed that Sarojini was capable of rising to the heights of true heroism, her lyricism resembling that of birds, to an epic worthy of the battlefield.

Sarojini, therefore, is a blend of the lyric and the epic. When she works through herself she breaks into the former, and seems colourful and sparkling—but when historic events of the country work through her, using her as an instrument, she thunders into memorable epic reverberance which influences history.

So much for Sarojini, the poet, the politician. But so little is known of Sarojini, the woman in the home. Possibly this is due to the impression that she has hardly ever lived in a home, that she has spent most of her life on railway-trains and ships, that she has hardly had any time to call her own, being so much in demand by the people not only of this country but the countries of the world. In one sense, it is true—her life has been lived a great deal either in posh hotels or as guest in the houses of the famous and the wealthy. Yet, the fact remains that Sarojini is essentially simple and, whenever she can find the time to get away from social activity, which becomes more and more “seldom”, she relaxes into a simple woman of the home bursting with all the qualities of one. One of her proudest achievements is that she can cook a truly superb stew or boil a delicious soup; during retiring hours you will find her walking about from room to room in a simple gown, sometimes torn at the back and not at all concerned with the proverb—“a stitch in time saves nine!” Behind a mask of non-attachment and even of unconcern she is deeply emotional and affectionate. I have, on occasions, even caught a deeply sad look in her eyes which seemed to go back to the days that are no more, when she was young and had a home, a beautiful home, of her own and four little children who had



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come into her life like four little poems. One of them has been lost—her son Ranadheera whom she literally adored. When I spent a few days with her at the Government House in Lucknow a few months ago, I realised what that loss had meant to her—although she never indulged in giving any visible vent to her deep, deep sorrow. The death of her son has definitely deepened her and amidst all the glamour of Governorship there is a gap which can never be filled—behind all the comfort and luxury of a lit-up palace, a wound which can never be healed.

Sarojini, the poet, the politician, is now the Governor, or as she wittily called herself, the Governess. But it is a fact that she moves about from hall to hall of her magnificent palace even as a caged bird conscious of the bars. There is a growing simplicity about Sarojini which is most remarkable and in keeping with the tradition of our land. In this quality, however, she is easily beaten hollow by the Governor-General who has managed to slip from a great "personality" to a greater "impersonality" which seems freed of the chains of kingship. Sarojini's retinue of servants sometimes does not know what to make of her most unconventional treatment of them. The U. P. calls her Mother—and she does all she can to live up to the reputation. Occasionally, when her health runs down

and her nerves are jangled, she tends to burst into ill-temper—which, to those who are unacquainted with her, comes as a stunning disillusionment. But behind such unpleasant mood and behaviour the essential Sarojini seems to be deepening into a greater understanding, sympathy, and grace towards life and people.

I have often felt that it was a great pity that she never really had the time to spend in inward contemplation which might switch her on to ancestral wisdoms which dwell eternally beyond politics, power and temporal glory. But, even inspite of this gruesome handicap of lack of time for inward enquiry and search, she has not wholly escaped the tradition of mysticism which is in her blood and bones. I have arrived at the conclusion after watching her closely in communion with Nature—with the trees in her gardens or even the flowers in her royal vases. Her eyes then take on a dreaminess which, for a few moments, switches her on to inward planes from where, unconsciously, she has been able, throughout her varied life of political struggles, defeats, triumphs, to draw the sustenance, the living mystical sustenance of the spirit which keeps the heart nourished with courage and the body with an obstinate will which hardly ever accepts weariness or defeat.



PATRONS OF LIFE

There comes a time in the development of ourselves when receiving from others, which is the essence of selfishness, gives way to the irresistible urge to give to others—to grow beyond the limits of one's own skin, whether in the creation of a family or the building of a good society. We reach a point when we become satiated with ourselves and when life demands that we turn outward toward other human life. Then we cease being the passive vessel and ourselves become the living spring. Life does not ask us our wishes in this matter, but in the very process of our very biological maturation it forces us to renounce our status as parasites upon life and summons us to become the patrons of life.—JOSHUA LOTH LIEBMAN, in "Peace of Mind."



I HAVE written much about Gandhi and Gandhism. Indeed the biography of the Indian Patriarch is the history of India's exodus from the land of bondage to the land of freedom flowing with milk and honey. I have written a little about Jawaharlal, the man and patriot. I have also written, though just a bit, about Sardar Patel, the man of iron will and steel spirit. Now this invitation from the editor of *Swatantra* to write a word or two about Rajendra Babu fits in with the series and is tempting to a degree. But the long and deeply ingrained habit of speaking out my mind has proved to be not a little embarrassing though it is redeemed by the stern and solid fact that I have nothing to lose by incurring displeasure as I have nothing to gain by courting popularity. There are public characters who are honest without being self-righteous, straight without being rigid, truth-speaking without being offensive. To such a category belongs Rajendra Babu, thrice President of the Congress, whilom Minister for Food and Agriculture at the Centre, and the chosen head of the Constituent Assembly. Anxious thought was bestowed upon the choice of the person to guide the deliberations of India's instrument of emancipation. Rajendra Babu was the favourite although he was a member of Government. He gladly agreed to bear the burden, and when the Assembly was converted into a Legislature as from the 15th August, 1947 he was

not unwilling to be its Speaker as well; but a member of Government could not simultaneously become the Speaker of the House where he would be called upon to justify his own acts, move his own bills, plead for his own budget. It was the inherent incongruity of the combination that lay in the way, not the magnitude of the burden nor any incompetence of the shoulders. Rajendra Babu is like the proverbial camel to whom only the last bundle is shown before it is added to the full load which is already on its back.

Few people know that Rajendra Babu was at the very threshold of a promising and already remunerative legal career in Patna, when invited by Gandhi to help him in Champaran in 1917 to give relief to the thousands of indigo cultivators who had been paying 64 illegal taxes to their European planter-bosses. It was here that he did his apprenticeship in politics as the junior of Gandhi. Six thousand affidavits were taken. It was then that Rajendra Babu was an eye witness to the service of notice under Sec. 144 on Gandhi to quit the district, and to Gandhi's first open act of civil resistance and triumph against bureaucracy, for the order was forthwith withdrawn under the instructions of the Government of India. It was here too that he learnt what truth was, when his fellow workers were warned that if they retained with

them a copy of the District Magistrate's insulting letter to Gandhi which he later thought fit to withdraw, they could not be said to be acting truthfully. In a word it was here that he learnt that facts are more than perverid oratory and means are higher than ends.

Gandhi, it is well known, had a marked partiality for those who had worked with him in Champaran, Khairra, Borsod, and Ahamedabad, next for those who were with him at the Sabarmati and Wardha Asrams, then for those who served the nation with him and last but not least, for those who resisted him and his programmes. Rajendra Babu came under the first category

and continued to occupy a high place in his affections till the last day of Gandhi's life. The leader of Patna has the three-fold advantage, besides, of being a speaker, a writer and a worker—rather a rare combination amongst Congressmen. As a speaker he is lucid and eloquent. As a writer he is painstaking and thorough. As a worker he is sincere and whole-hearted. What else can a Satyagrahi ask for? The regard for truth promotes depth and humility. The love of ahimsa ensures patience and forgiveness. Not that Rajendra Babu does not get angry but that he knows how to control it and how to transform it into constructive energy. His work in

the Behar earthquake relief movement was a monument to his capacity for organization, for it remains unique in the social service annals of India alike for its magnitude and magnificence. He has always worked with disinterested devotion and on occasions was duly rewarded, as when he was called upon to preside over that momentous session of the Congress in Bombay in 1934 after the seeming failure of the Satyagraha campaign of 1930-1934. In all critical situations his services have been indented upon. When Subhash Babu resigned his second presidency of the Congress in April-May 1939 after the Tripura session, it was Rajendra Babu that was chosen to fill the gap. Again when a similar situation arose after the resignation of Mr. J. B. Kripalani in 1947 the choice fell upon Rajendra Babu, but this time he had to resign his Food Ministership to take up the Presidency of the Congress, so proving that the leadership of the nation stands higher than Ministership even under a National Government.

Rajendra Babu has had his share of doubts and difficulties, for after the release of the Working Committee from the Ahamednagar Fort, the question for him to decide was whether he should serve Government in the province of Bihar or the country at the Centre. He had not really much choice to exercise for it was decided that he should take up Food and Agriculture. If instead he had gone to Patna and headed the provincial Ministry the history of Bihar would have been different. But one would prefer to work on neutral ground instead of entering the arena in the midst of conflicting loyalties to oneself. Not that Rajendra Babu had antagonized one party or one section of the Biharis, but that one should be superhuman or subhuman not to rouse over a thirty years of public work, likes and dislikes amongst one's colleagues, which would naturally be intensified when one assumes authority in the very place. It was indeed a revelation when people pointed out that even in a Ministry formed in Bihar, there

were palpable differences of view and vision not wholly traceable to conflicts of principles or policies. Anyway Rajendra Babu did not entangle himself in the local fissions or factions and worked away on the heights of Delhi. But even there he was not in the serene atmosphere of pure administration, for as a member of the Cabinet, he should naturally be expected to take his own view on any particular matter, and it was widely talked about in Delhi at the time that Sri J. B. Kripalani resigned his presidency of the Congress that even Rajendra Babu had to dissent if not protest on four occasions in respect of certain decisions of the Central Government. What these occasions were, if any, and in what connection they arose one does not know. But when it comes to a question of standing up for right, one need not have any doubt about the correctness of Rajendra Babu's decision. But thereafter one must confess temperaments vary. While some are content to register their dissent, others may follow it up with conduct which no longer agrees to commit itself to the further development of policies which command their allegiance. Rajendra Babu belongs to the latter category and one does not know how far his resignation of Food Ministership to take up Congress Presidency was influenced by the attraction of the latter and dissatisfaction with the former. While he was President of the Constituent Assembly he had occasion to resent the cavalier fashion in which he was ignored and the Secretary and staff of the Legislative Department were appointed without his knowledge or consent. Nor did he like the course of action followed in certain matters during his officiating presidency of the Congress during the first year of the war (1939) when certain friends were invited to the Working Committee without his knowledge and when it was proposed to relieve him of his presidency without the initiative for such relief coming from him. Rajendra Babu is quite capable of resentment and righteous indignation but he

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is not the person to place self above country or personality above party. In a delicate situation, however, he is found to travel along lines of least resistance and is not one of those who would walk into trouble unless he could not help it. This was noticed when the choice of a particular Minister in Bihar was left to his decision by the Working Committee by the casting vote of the president.

To Rajendra Babu politics is not the prime attraction of life. His love of his mother tongue, his knowledge of Persian, his eloquence in Hindi and Urdu alike, his sustained and substantial interest in literature and history, have made him the head of two big organizations, one connected with Hindi and the other with Indian history. On the top of all these, today he is the head of the Gandhi Memorial Fund which is yet to take shape and gather wind and volume. His passion is for the constructive programme. Khaddar is his first love and under his fostering care and untiring devotion, Bihar which occupied a low place in regard to hand-spun, hand-woven cloth in 1921 soon attained a first place in India. It is his abiding and preferential love of Khaddar as the prince of village industries that has made him the president of the Sarvodaya Samaj now being organized in order to keep the torch of Gandhism ablaze so that it may burn brighter and clearer for ever in the coming spacious days of Indian Nationalism. And if a suggestion has been made that Rajendra Babu should for this purpose take the place of Gandhi, resigning even his four anna membership of the Congress, it must be interpreted as signifying the nation's appreciation of his composite equipment of mind and spirit and his perpetual readiness to give his ambitions if any a second place as against the inexorable demands of the country and the people upon his time and talent. Rajendra Babu's *India*

Divided is really a plea for "India Undivided" and this monumental work undertaken at the instance of Gandhi, will remain in Indian nationalistic literature as a landmark while his later production, namely, his autobiography, will be a record of contemporary history written by not a distant student of chronicles, but by a character on the stage, closely associated with the day-to-day happenings of the political programme of a nation which soon become chapters of its history. Rajendra Babu has a facile pen only excelled by a fluent tongue, a quick judgment though not always followed up by a firm decision. Through these and other qualities of head and heart he has made for himself an abiding niche in the halls of honour here and now as well as in the Valhalla of nations later and above. What his future is, no one can say—whether he will be canonized and made a saint or elevated and elected as the first president of the sovereign Indian Republic. Either way it is not the place that counts so much as the qualifications that inevitably emerge into public view, and hold aloft before your vision a great public character who has earned the title of 'the good' without being acclaimed weak, accessible to all and accommodating to a degree, wedded faithfully to principles, yet capable of hammering them out into policies, always looked upon as a pillar of state, but never failing to function as the prop of the nation, ever ready for sacrifice and eternally immersed in service. To him there is no law higher than logic and no logic higher than life, and he is content to be a life's devotee in this pilgrimage of his on earth already three score and three gone, but pilgrims are happy as the perpetual seekers of Truth, by invariably traversing along the paths of non-violence, and to such indeed the mind is the real heaven, and the earth is but the footstool that forms the stepping stone of ascent to its heights.

God is the hardest taskmaster I have known on this earth.
—MAHATMA GANDHI.



VEENA DHANAM

by T.T. KRISHNAMACHARI.

IN the fast moving times we live in, ten years is not a particularly long period. To those that knew Veena Dhanam and were devotees of her music it is difficult to realise that ten years have elapsed this month since she disappeared from our midst. Veena Dhanam's popularity during her comparatively long life was confined to the few that were lovers of Carnatic music. The void in the musical world created by her disappearance is therefore keenly felt only by such of those few that survive her and it is no great praise to say that to them no one in the musical world has taken the place that she occupied therein while she lived. The reader might well ask whether it is wise to revive the memories of something that was ineffably sweet while it lasted and publicise it. That would be a valid objection. Even so it should be recognised that when we continue to feel the loss of something we considered precious it is best to externalise our feelings by putting them on paper and sharing them with others. Besides, is it not fair that those of us who knew Veena Dhanam and have had the privilege of hearing her should tell the present generation something about her and her contributions to Carnatic music. It is true that in this age of violent democratisation of music when its dependence for popular attraction has shifted from mechanical aids like the microphone and the amplifier to benefit performances conducted under the auspices of Ministers and Government officials and widely

advertised in the newspapers, the qualities of the music of Veena Dhanam can neither be understood nor appreciated. Nevertheless, being one of those who with the Editor of "SWATANTRA" believe that things of permanent value can only be eclipsed for a period and not be totally destroyed, I have ventured to put down on paper some of my memories about Veena Dhanam. The rich traditions that are the background of Carnatic music would again come to be realised at some future date though some of us who were privileged to live through the last few decades of the glorious century of Carnatic music have not done anything material to preserve for posterity even a part of what we had heard and enjoyed.

I have the peculiar privilege of being able to remember Veena Dhanam almost since the time when I could remember things about me. Even then she was an institution amongst those that knew her. One of my earliest impressions was of the fact—which was then to me surprising—that the Veena Dhanam with whom I was familiar was held in high esteem by well-known and highly respected musicians. I remember during a wedding her playing consecutively for four nights, and amongst her audience were musical giants of the time like Anantharama Bhagavathar, Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer, Alaganambi, not to speak of several musical connoisseurs that only a place like Kumbakonam abounded in those days, amongst whom the most prominent

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Particulars	1938-39	1946-47	1946-47 as percentage of 1938-39
Passengers carried*	49.91	107.78	215.9
Passenger engines in use	1,756	1,636	93.2
Passenger coaches in use	16,428	15,244	92.8
Passenger train miles*	10.68	9.84	92.1
Tons of goods carried*	8.44	8.77	103.9
Goods engines in use	1,868	2,444	130.8
Wagons in use	205,199	241,083	117.5
Goods train miles*	6.85	7.53	109.9
Capital Invested†	813.25	850.76	104.6
Gross earnings†	103.47	215.45	208.2
Working expenses†	68.79	175.08	254.5
Staff	662,000	1,023,000	154.5
Total cost of staff†	35.83	90.50	252.6

*Number in crores.

†Rupees in crores.

Inserted by:

The Public Relations Officer, M.S.M. & S.I. Railways, Madras 2. to whom please address questions if any.

I now recollect was the late Keerthanacharya C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar. A feature about those performances that I remember which was also a distinguishing feature of her later day performances was the pin-drop silence with which she was listened to.

To say that as a Vainika, Dhanam greatly excelled her peers would be high praise indeed. But even here there might be room for difference of opinion. Several connoisseurs preferred a martial type of Veena rendering and to such Veena Dhanam's music could have made little or no appeal. I have heard some of the best Veena players that were alive during the early years of the century including that grand veteran Veena Seshanna of Mysore, and I believe that by and large they all recognised the pre-eminence of Dhanam in the field. They marvelled at her mastery over a comparatively smaller edition of the Veena. But Dhanam's claims to greatness are not entirely covered by her proficiency in the limited field of Veena playing. Undoubtedly the instrument was a means by which she expounded her knowledge over an extremely wide and varied range of music. It is acknowledged that Veena lends itself to a degree of precision and definiteness which other instruments and the human voice cannot hope to attain and Dhanam had in her time well-nigh exhausted all the possibilities for improvisation on that instrument.

My earliest impressions were that her pacing or tempo was something unique though I now know that in the rendering of pieces in *Vilamba kalam* few could reach her perfection. Vocal musicians of the first two decades of the century never attempted to any extent singing in this *kalam*, though the two eminent Violin players of the century, Krishna Iyer and Govindaswami, both of them great admirers of Veena Dhanam, could with great effort follow in her footsteps.

The other unique feature of Veena Dhanam was her varied repertoire. In the first two decades of the century Saint Tyagayya's

kritis were the most popular amongst musical compositions and these kritis very nearly covered most of the programmes of music performances. Here and there a few compositions of Patnam Subramania Iyer used to be sung. It was not that the celebrated musicians of the time did not attempt composing music. They did, and some of them also used to sing one or two of their own compositions in their performances. I can remember Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar singing his own compositions which have after his time been popularised by his equally eminent disciple. The Dhanakoti sisters used to include quite a number of Shyama Sastri's kritis and even a few of Dikshitar's in their programme of songs. Coimbatore Thayi indulged in a few Kshetrappa padams, though often in a pedestrian manner. But a complete range of Tyagayya's, Dikshitar's, Shyama Sastri's and Subbaraya Sastri's kritis, Kshetrappa and Subbaraya Iyer's padams and Dharmapuri Subbaraya's javalis, not to speak of the compositions of several others, could only be heard in Veena Dhanam's performances.

Saint Tyagayya's kritis lend themselves to embellishment by the improvisation of several sangathis at the hands of a master, some pleasant and some less so, but all of them perfect from the strict Shastriac point of view. But I have heard it said, notably by a friend of my father, one Subbaraya Iyer, vakil at Tanjore who was ten years old when the Saint reached samadhi, that Veena Dhanam's rendering of the Saint's kritis with the minimum of sangathis was nearest to the Saint's own method of singing. Generally speaking, Veena Dhanam avoided multiplication of sangathis in any of her pieces. She concentrated on producing the largest number of musical effects by subtle twists in a few sangathis. I used to be particularly attracted in those days by her rendering of padams and javalis. It is not that I was conscious of the Sringara effects of her Kshetrappa padams. Perhaps, as I might now seek to explain it, it was the association of the 'Krishna'

background in the Moova Gopala padams that evoked an interest in those padams, but the main fact that made the singing of those pleasing to hear was the tempo and the supreme melodic effect it produced. The effect of her javali singing was exactly the reverse. It produced a bouncing feeling, at any rate in a juvenile hearer. While this effect is not perhaps difficult to produce in javalis sung in ragas like Kamas, Janjuti, Kapi and Behas, Veena Dhanam could produce similar effect in other ragas like Suruti, Pharas, Ananda Bhairavi as well.

The second decade of the century was in a sense a breaking away period from the past. The golden age of Carnatic music was well-nigh over by that time. These ten years saw the eclipse, and in many cases the disappearance of the older savants. Violin Krishna Iyer was the first to pass away. He was in his field as unique as Veena Dhanam. New stars like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer made their appearance. But the old and the new were alike eclipsed by a meteor in Pushpavanam. The timbre and reach of his voice held the imagination of the then rising new class of musical enthusiasts drawn mainly from the student population. But he went as he came well before the end of the decade. The next decade saw the emergence of a number of music sabhas, and with them, a greater field of activity for the music vidwans and a considerable raising of their status. But in the act of providing caviar to the million the quality of the caviar steadily deteriorated till a level was reached when the difference between the genuine article and its ersatz varieties became indistinguishable.

With the disappearance of the demand for the semi-chamber-cum-public hall type of music the public appearances of an artist like Veena Dhanam became rarer. Want of encouragement, due mainly to the disappearance of the class from amongst which most of her admirers came, failing eyesight and the psychological effects arising out of these causes, very nearly drove

Veena Dhanam into the background. A genuine friend who has now vanished into obscurity, Jalatharagam Ramaniah Chetty, kept her interest in her art alive by gathering a few friends and admirers weekly every Friday at his house to hear Veena Dhanam. I owe to this act of Ramaniah Chetty the renewal of my association with Veena Dhanam which provided me with the opportunity of hearing her inimitable music as often as my pre-occupations would permit, till a few weeks before she passed away. Barring a few public performances every year specially at the annual festival conducted by the Music Academy, she rarely appeared in public in those years. Her devotees went to her and listened to her in a small room in the upstairs of a house in Ramakrishnan Street, one of the most congested parts of the city. Of the older savants Violin Govindaswami Pillai was one of her visitors till illness and death intervened. The younger musicians used to make it a matter of pilgrimage to visit her on Fridays. Of the elite I have seen none among these Friday pilgrims except one constant friend, Sri S. Duraiswami Iyer, now of Pondicherry. The last years of the greatest of the musicians that the living generation has known were passed in this manner.

In a sense Dhanam as a Vainika and as a musician reached the heights of absolute perfection during the last ten years of her life. Physically she had then become frail besides being nearly blind. She was not without the faults that beset human nature. She had a live temper and a caustic tongue. She could never tolerate the second-rate in the musician. She was an aristocrat and never believed in playing to the gallery. To her last days few could ask her to play any particular piece. That was a privilege rigorously confined to her chosen friends. Nor would she tolerate the slightest disturbance amongst the audience. In her earlier days these facts made the quality of her performances sometimes uneven. She would be excellent at one place, the next day at another place her per-

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formance would not reach that standard. To a large extent the quality of her music depended on the musical qualities of her audience. But during her last ten years there was no unevenness of quality in her music. I am not a musician and I cannot therefore write about the gymnastic feats she achieved by her deviations from conventional types of singing within the limits that orthodoxy permitted. But this much I knew of her. She hated the exhibition of ultra-musical knowledge that was the special forte of the professional vidwan. She felt that the hair-splitting arguments advanced in musical controversies were often beside the mark. I was once treated by her to a dissertation on the futility of taking such arguments to their logical conclusion. She took up the raga Nata Kuranji and played it for over twenty minutes pointing out at various stages how traces of the various other ragas of the same motif obtruded into her treatment of Nata Kuranji. I have never heard anybody perform an alapana of Nata Kuranji like that.

Of her special talent in her treatment of ragas a lot can be said. It always appeared as if she had a clear picture in her mind of how she was going to deal with a particular raga when she launched forth into raga alapana. As none could detect in her rendering the trace of any method of alapana pursued by her known contemporaries we must concede that her treatment of ragas was unique if not original. Whenever she departed from tradition in her alapana she did so fully alive to the fact. Yet to the listener it appeared that the progression in an alapana, while it was simple and logical, was by its simplicity itself made so baffling as to defy the reproduction of even a single note. It would be difficult to say what were her favourite ragas. When she was in the mood she was excellent in any raga she handled. Usually her alapanas were not of long duration. Yet, I have heard her sing Begada for over thirty minutes without any trace of repetition. No matter what time she took over a raga, whether

it was half an hour or three minutes, she always produced a perfect and full picture of the raga.

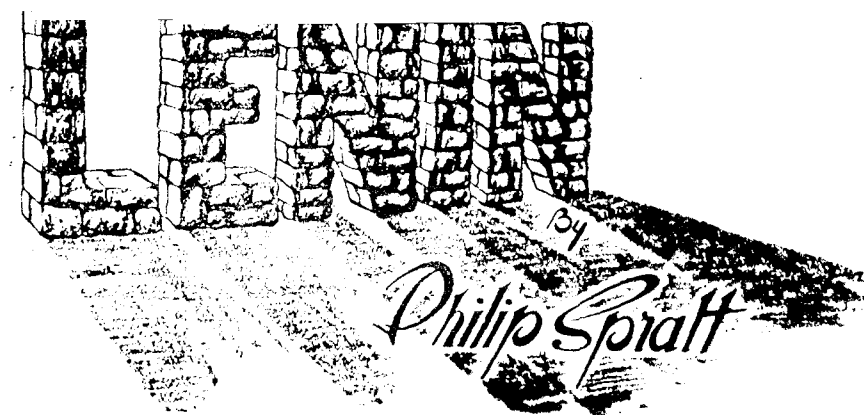
Swara manipulations while singing krithis she rarely indulged in. She positively disliked the now confirmed habit of swara singing for every krithi whether the songster had the necessary equipment or not for the purpose. She preferred to play the set chitta swaras for particular krithis which were of uniformly superb quality. In most cases the composer of the chitta swaras she sang was unknown. I have already referred to her dislike of the multiplication of sangathis. But the absence of many sangathis was more than compensated by the importation of some pleasing twist or turn at the various stages of pallavi, anupallavi and charanam in every song she sang. Her rendering of even the better known of Tyagayya's songs had a stamp of her personality. Who could imitate her *Yochana Kamalalochana* in Durbar even if he or she had heard her a dozen times? Whether it is sung in Harikamboji or Karnata behag, can any one of the vidwans who attempt to lay down the law in these days sing *Nenendu Vedaluthura* like her and produce the effect of giant waves rolling on. Who in these days can create the mental picture of Sree Rama in the minds of the audience that she was able to create when she sang *Ninuvina Sukhamugana* in Thodi? In Dikshitar's krithis the field has been all her own and in many instances she has blazed the trail. Songs composed by an outstanding Vainika, it looks as though these were composed for Veena Dhanam to popularise. How many of Dikshitar's compositions she knew, no one knows. The most significant impression she created in the minds of her hearers while playing these pieces was that not only was she musically competent to play them but that she was also mentally equipped for the task.

For Shyama Sastri's krithis I have a particular partiality. In their melodic content they reach the heights of Kshetrappa's padams and Veena Dhanam's rendering of them

is in my view the sole standard by which the rendering of these compositions by others could be judged. I wonder if any body can produce a similar effect as Dhanam did when she played those lines in the charanam of *Marivere gathi* in Ananda Bhairavi, "Apara Kripa Nidhi Neeve Rakshimpa". The extent of her knowledge of Kshetrappa padams was not known. Intended essentially for Abhinaya it is not easy to render these padams either through voice or the Veena. There are many that feel that if a padam is sung in an elongated manner it is in the orthodox Dhanam style. Nothing is farther from the truth. She never played any piece in a flat long-drawn out pace. It was the essence of her craft that she could imperceptibly change the tempo. Who taught her all this technique, how much of it was her own improvisation, these things are all unknown. That she had learnt from many masters and that she had known many eminent musicians is a fact she had herself revealed and the enumeration of the names of those she had mentioned would convey nothing to the reader. Besides the songs of these well-known composers, her repertoire included the compositions of several lesser known ones. In the matter of javali singing the setting was very largely her own creation. Dharmapuri Subbaroyar, that composer who reeled off javalis was her contemporary and not merely followed her about but composed for her to play on the Veena. His admiration for her was so great that in one of his javalis in Pharas he transposed their relative roles and described Veena Dhanam as the lover who *Vinula Kimpuga Veena Vainsune*. Veena Dhanam was not merely a great musician, she was also an entertaining conversationalist. She kept the talk at a very high level and in doing so revealed her profound knowledge of men and things acquired over several decades. An affectionate person, she was during the last ten years of her life anxious that her friends should hear her play as often as possible. Speaking for myself, knowing Veena Dhanam and hearing her play and sing in that pleasant voice with the faintest touch of a tremour in it which stood her in good stead all her life, was perhaps the richest experience in a not altogether uneventful life. May her soul rest in peace.







TWENTY-FIVE years after his death and thirty years after the culminating event of his life's work, a man should stand in a clear enough perspective to allow of assessment. But so much is Lenin's achievement bound up with the clashes of our day that an unprejudiced judgment is as difficult now as then. In his time it was possible to regard the Russian Revolution as a merely national event; today it cannot be denied the status of an epoch in world history.

There was however never any doubt as to Lenin's stature. When conservatives everywhere still considered it likely that the Soviet State would break up and disappear, Churchill acknowledged his respect for Lenin. He was outstanding as a national political leader, but he was also a symbol of the greatest significance for the world. He expressed with exaggerated vigour and clarity the growing-point of the collective emotion of his age—the disgusted repudiation of the social order which had prevailed for the previous century. It is unnecessary to inquire into the roots of this emotion in him. What matters is that he felt it acutely, and acted on it.

This emotion was in fact endemic throughout the time of the dominance of capitalism. It is shown by such different men as Rousseau, Carlyle, Nietzsche, as well as Marx. They rationalised their objections to capitalism in very different ways, but at bottom the objections were probably much the same. Even in the socialist movement one suspects

that the motive-spring is not so much sympathy for the proletariat as a recoil from the capitalist order. For what was felt to be so repulsive in this system was not its economics—it was the best economic system yet known, and was steadily improving—nor its wars, which in no way differentiate it from other systems. It was not, again, that capitalism was cruel or oppressive: on the contrary, it was far more humane and liberal than any previous system. What was wrong with capitalism was the emotional impoverishment it brought, shown in its prudery, its "stuffiness", its vulgarity, its humdrum mediocrity, its "materialism", its artistic philistinism, and its immense scientific progress. Its critics fulminated against the starvation of the masses, but what really moved them was their own emotional starvation. When Rousseau advocated a return to nature, and Nietzsche glorified the murky "Dionysian" depths of the psyche, they were voicing the same disgust as Marx and Lenin.

This disgust with everything bourgeois doubtless became stronger as one went eastward. There are obvious, as well perhaps as more obscure, causes of that. Lenin did embody an element of the specifically Russian, the messianism of which Berdyaev speaks. There are some minor figures in the early Russian revolutionary movement who seem to be historical rehearsals for Lenin. Perhaps only that background could have given him the superhuman, and quite unscientific, certainty which was the main factor in his success.

But though in this respect he bears the marks of his national origin, he was well fitted to appeal to a world public. There was nothing about him of the popular caricature of the Russian intellectual—nothing sentimental, profound, extravagant, unworldly, artistic. He reminds one of nothing so much as Benjamin Franklin's advice to a young man on how to make money. No great man in history, probably, has been more single-minded, more completely free from ambition and vanity. He underwent the supreme test of success, and emerged totally unscathed, as modest and humorous as ever. This awe-inspiring yet human and companionable figure was a mighty factor in the world-wide acceptance of his doctrine. So also was his literary manner, with its complete carelessness of ornament and artifice, its mastery of fact, its apparently inexorable logic, its confidence, and its bellicosity.

An emotionally starved and intellectually bewildered generation found in him a way out of its frustration. His success against impossible odds seemed to justify even his self-confidence. The young found a father in whom they could trust, who yet told them to revolt against their fathers. They found companionship, a generous cause, a means of identification with the masses, with mankind, with "history", a theory which seemed to hold the whole world within its grasp. Here was something to devote oneself to. Life was worth living again. In the twenties and early thirties Lenin conquered the intellectual world.

Lenin died at 54. It is useless to speculate on what would have happened had he lived. His reputation might have declined even earlier. For as it was, admirers contrived for years to allay their doubts by putting all the responsibility on his successor. But in fact, beside the great and endearing in Lenin's nature are to be seen the seeds, at least, of Stalinism. The two most important events of the twentieth century are the Russian Revolution and its sequel, the moral collapse

of Russian and international communism, which promised to raise mankind to the heights and then hurled them down into the pit of a still deeper crisis; and Lenin, the supreme leader of the one, cannot be absolved of responsibility for the other.

His private life was spotless, yet he advocated in theory and tolerated among his colleagues a total political amorality. He encouraged armed robbery to fill the party coffers. He was unscrupulous and remorseless in manoeuvre. His totalitarian principle of party organisation passed over naturally into the totalitarian state. He repeatedly split his own party, in order to get a faction completely subject to his own leadership. In the same way he split the International. He dissolved by force the Constituent Assembly, though it had an 80% socialist majority, because his own party had won only 25% of the seats. He habitually attributed to political opponents cowardice, flunkeyism, corruption, mercenary considerations, and indeed a long vocabulary of abuse. He carried even farther than Marx the subordination of intellectual life to politics; though thought was still relatively free in his time, he initiated "militant" philosophy and the persecution of religion, a sinister trend which has resulted in "proletarian genetics" and the shooting of exponents of scientific theories which are disapproved by the Government.

Nobody but an ideally consistent Gandhian can object absolutely to the use of evil means for good ends. Lenin's means might have justified themselves by success. But in fact he was not infallible, and even by his own realistic political criteria many of his policies have proved disastrously wrong. Without denying the weaknesses of the Second International, one can say that he gravely misjudged it, and accentuated its weaknesses by splitting it. Indeed he misjudged the whole world outside Russia. His defiance of accepted political principles alienated allies at home and abroad who might have saved Russia much of the civil war and foreign interven-

tion. His ruthless methods provoked a fear and hostility which spread far beyond the ranks of the capitalists and were probably a decisive factor in the rise of fascism. Apart from this provocation he provided the fascists a model of party, state and police which both Mussolini and Hitler followed. And without fascism there would have been no second world war.

The split in the International harmed not only Russia but almost every other country. It was fatal to Germany, the key country of the interwar period, and was a great disaster to France, Italy and Spain. The spirit of stagnation, purposelessness, decay, which pervaded the world in the interwar period would have been far less in evidence had the International remained the authoritative liaison centre of the great socialist movement, in good relations with Russia on the one hand and the British Labour Party on the other.

Lenin did not initiate the terror until provoked by opposition, but a minority seizure of power makes opposition inevitable, and once the terror was unleashed he used it mercilessly. His own position was so strong that he did not need to use the whip within the party, but he established the tradition of total discipline and devotion, and the intellectual justification for it, which provided his successor all he needed to bring the OGPU into party controversies. It is true that he decided during his last illness to get rid of Stalin, and failed; but it is not certain that another leadership would have been greatly different. It is however unlikely that without his authority intellectual regimentation would have gone as far as it has; and there can be no doubt at all of the disastrous results of this policy in Russian cultural life.

These however, important though they are, are only corollaries to the failure of the main policy, the policy of a non-democratic imposition of socialism. The aim was to establish a substantially equalitarian society: at the beginning no Soviet official was paid more than skilled

workman's wages. It was expected that people would work from a sense of public duty. It was expected that the standard of living would rise rapidly, that the element of democracy in the Soviet system would spread, that personal freedom would increase, and that old prejudices like sex inequality and narrow nationalism would be quickly got rid of.

In fact scarcely any item in this programme has been realised. Russian society is by this time just as inequalitarian, just as truly a class society, as the unregenerate West. After very few years idealistic motives collapsed and the lucky few had to be bribed and the majority coerced to work. It is doubtful if the standard of living is yet above that of 1913, though but for war and war preparation things would of course be better. There is no self-government of any sort at any level, and liberty is most drastically restricted—more so, probably, than in any other country. There is some improvement in the outlook of the people on sex and other such matters, but even here things have gone back since Lenin's time.

Russia is now a great military power, placed by geography in an impregnable position. She has allies in all countries, in the ignorant and suffering masses, led by groups of intellectual fanatics whose appeal, though it has lost most of its rational basis, still possesses immense emotional strength. Russia is using her power, and these allies, to sabotage other countries' efforts at economic recovery and political unification, and with the advantages of centralised direction and complete ruthlessness she is steadily extending her sway over a devastated, divided and leaderless world. She may succeed; but thirty years after Lenin's revolution, which was to emancipate the human race, the prospect of this style of emancipation, far from enthusing, strikes terror. Worst of all, this campaign of expansion threatens the world with a third war.

That is the great failure, the moral collapse, of Russian communism. Except in a few countries the capi-

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talists, the natural enemies of communism, have lost self-confidence and all real power. The world is clamouring for a new order. But communism has to be forced upon it at the point of the bayonet, and at the risk of world suicide. Lenin and his successor have transformed communism from an utopia into a nightmare.

It may seem unfair to hold Lenin responsible for all this. There is indeed reason to believe that in the last bedridden year of his life he began to realise that something had gone wrong. It is possible that if he had lived and retained his full intellectual powers for another ten years he might have undone some of the mischief caused by his earlier policies. But it is certain that he was the only man who could have done it. The others could only have followed the lines laid down by him,

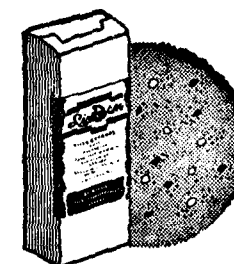
and those lines have led to the present moral collapse. The basic errors were his.

It is clear that though he made such a convincing show of rationality his thinking was guided by passion just as much as other men's. The disgust for the bourgeois, stronger in him perhaps than in any other historical figure, led him to adopt a dogmatic and bellicose belief in the Marxian class war. The class war is but a half-truth, an aspect of the truth, but it became the central assumption of his thinking, and whatever may be thought of its effects in Russia, it has certainly had the most disastrous results in application to foreign countries. It blinded him completely to the merits of liberalism and social-democracy, which he saw as nothing but hypocritical masks over the



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face of rapacity and aggression. His disgust for the bourgeois distorted his principal contribution to the Marxian theory, his pamphlet *Imperialism, the Last stage of Capitalism*, which is principally concerned to indict the capitalists as responsible for the war of 1914. The case however is not proved. The peculiarity of the 1914 war was that it took place in the technological age. It was otherwise a typical eighteenth-century war, initiated by the least bourgeois states in order to redeem the balance of power. Trade and colonial rivalries were at best secondary factors, and the states which were principally concerned with these were dragged into the war against their will. Lenin's emotions had manifestly run away with him.

On the other hand he accepted—as did Marx—a thoroughly bourgeois fallacy, that of automatic progress. This led him into one of his most fatal false beliefs, that once the revolution had been achieved utopia could be established without any special difficulty. Some months after the revolution he wrote that the “jump into socialism” (Engels' phrase) would still take them some years, “perhaps ten or more”. Probably he did not realise what he was up against till 1921, when he forced through the New Economic Policy. To do this he had to overcome the opposition of virtually the whole party; and since the party derived their opinions mainly from him, this suggests that until then his views on the matter had been quite utopian.

The whole Marxian school has suffered from lack of psychology. Their best men have not lacked shrewd psychological insight, but it has not been incorporated into the theory, and Marxists are men of theory. Lenin's optimistic blunders just referred to were rendered possible only by the crude Marxian assumptions about human nature. In effect this theory assumes that men naturally form themselves into good societies, and that the only important factor disturbing this tendency is economic inequality and

competition. It followed that all one had to do was to abolish inequality and competition as quickly and drastically as possible. It did not occur to him that the attempt to do this might run into insuperable difficulties, that the process of abolition might have prolonged and unpleasant repercussions, or that men's aggressiveness, denied outlet in economic rivalry, might find still worse ways of expressing itself. In fact all these possibilities have materialised. Lenin's protests in his last years against the growth of bureaucracy show that he saw some of their manifestations, but he probably never grasped in its full extent the evil potentiality of the totalitarian state which he created.

Among Lenin's eminent contemporaries was Thomas Masaryk, the founder of Czechoslovakia. He was certainly Lenin's superior in scholarship, and in his grasp of psychology, of the historical process, and of the human values. Starting, admittedly, with a less devastated country, he made a far better job of building up a civilised state. But he fell short of Lenin, perhaps in penetration, certainly in passion. He had none of that hatred for the old order which made Lenin so supreme a revolutionary.

But in the short view at least, passion is more powerful than reason, tearing down easier than building up. Only this year the military empire which is the outcome of Lenin's destructive passion engulfed the island of civilisation which Masaryk shored up in eastern Europe. The historian of a century hence may decide that Lenin's penetrating theory was sound, and may justify the violent dissolution of the bourgeois order, Czechoslovakia with the rest. We who observe at shorter range can only judge by what we see, the overthrow of the more civilised by the less. To us it seems merely the triumph of the irrational destructive passion which animated Lenin. As an earlier liberal, Gladstone, said of an earlier revolutionary, Cromwell, “He was a mighty big fellow, but I don't like him.”

TO HELL WITH BRAINS

By
J. VIJAYATUNGA

IT was the name of the place as spelt in the advertisement that had first attracted him. He liked the name Urur—Ur repeated twice, and it intrigued him to find a village so named in an area that was predominantly Andhra. How did a Tamil name (Urur in Tamil meaning “Village”) get itself appended to an Andhra village? Before he had seen it he dreamt of all kinds of romantic things in connection with Urur. Surely there must be woodland springs and trees hoary with age and the people must be pleasant and care-free leading an idyllic pastoral existence. He had recently been reading about “Sweet Auburn” and he had imagined an Indian counterpart of it in Urur with just the difference that none of the harsher realities of life were to be found in Urur.

Those were the days when newspapers used to carry columns of advertisements inviting applications from teachers at a salary of twenty-five rupees a month. Urur, the little village, which had just formed itself into a Local Board was not going to risk its finances, so the salary offered to the Teacher-cum-Drill Master for the school which it was going to start (as soon as a Teacher had been found) was briefly put as Rs. 20-2-7: Rs. 35, which meant that the lucky candidate would start on a salary of Rs. 20 and would have it raised by two rupees until at the end of seven years' service he would get the maximum salary of thirty-five rupees a month!

But those were days when men were men and the wide open spaces of hungry mouths to be fed and hungry bellies to be filled held no terrors for those pioneers. So lo, and behold! Chellapathi, just

married, just turned twenty-three, and just become a Bachelor of Arts, being selected as the Teacher-in-charge-cum-drill-master of Urur's first “Anglo-Vernacular School” as the Local Board named it.

No Yankee pioneer going West felt the adventure more keenly than Chellapathi as he set out for Urur in a roughly made bullock-cart with his sweet little wife, Ranna, sitting beside him while their belongings signified by a smallish tin trunk, a cloth bundle containing odds and ends and soiled linen, and a brass pot for carrying water from the well and a few other cooking pans and pots remained precariously perched between the driver and Ranna. But at every jolt and every yard of the way the driver kept adjusting his seat more comfortably with the result that the luggage was continually piling itself against Ranna. But sweet seventeen is not easily discouraged and Ranna even slept in fits and starts while Chellapathi guided by a waxing moon looked on the countryside and kept himself awake dreaming dreams and seeing visions of an Urur made famous and himself made famous as the creator of India's model village.

The model village-to-be when they arrived travel-weary after a night's journey was a typical small Indian village with a collection of thatched mud-walled huts whose greyness was relieved by a streak of white-wash and various paints of the houses of the half-a-dozen well-to-do residents. Among these were two merchants, three landlords and the village headman. It was too early to see whether the village had any shops but Chellapathi who craned his neck this way and that trying to locate a “coffee

hotel" was soon convinced that Urur had no such caravansary. A member of the Local Board met them and took them over circuitous mud tracks to the house of one member of the Local Board after another where there was the usual conventional how-do-you-do's but nothing else, until Chellapathi was forced to ask for some coffee for himself and his wife at the last house they visited. At this request there was a certain amount of consternation but after much shouting, messengers had been sent to get buffalo milk and orders had been transmitted for coffee to be made; and they settled down to wait for coffee, Ranna waiting in the cart. At last coffee was produced and drunk and they were conducted to the school and their quarters.

The school was a shed and the "quarters" was a small mud-walled thatched hut. There had evidently been some white-wash left over at some Local Board Member's and this had been splashed on the front walls on either side of the single door-way which admitted Ranna and Chellapathi to their new home.

But for Chellapathi who had filled his brain with stories of the Pilgrim Fathers and other hardy pioneers this was Adventure in real earnest and he scanned the horizon, now being filled with an increasing heat haze, expecting all kinds of miraculous manifestations. But for Ranna there was a year's work to be accomplished in a day. She had to improvise a cooking-place, find firewood, go in search of a well and fetch water and start cooking with the few provisions and foodstuffs she had had the forethought to bring. Chellapathi paid off the bullock-cart driver, moved the bundles and other luggage from one corner to another and fell to dreaming and building castles in the air.

However he held on, long enough to earn his maximum salary, and in the meanwhile he had not only improved the school and raised its attendance but he himself had undergone one searing and soul-

shaking experience after another. In the course of the seven years Ranna had given birth to two daughters and a son, and the buxom lines of her body (which might have led an observer seven years back to fear that she might run to fat with the years) had vanished and her frame was lean and spare and her face care-ravelled and work-obsessed. But she had caught in some dim, half-comprehended fashion the exalted "madness" of her husband and still hoped to see Urur grown into an Utopia and themselves occupying a respected place there and enjoying modest comfort.

Chellapathi taught with a burning fervour hoping that his students would turn out to be Mazzinis and Garibaldis and Lokamanya Tilaks and Sri Aurobindos. Notwithstanding one disappointment after another in his pupils, who after a little smattering of knowledge left school either to assist their fathers in their shops or to go to the town for more ambitious careers, he fixed his hopes upon one likely pupil after another. One of his greatest disappointments was Karunakara, a lean-faced, idealist-looking boy who seemed to drink in all that the teacher said. In fact Chellapathi secretly hoped that Karunakara might become the husband of his eldest daughter, Lakshmi. But soon after his eighteenth birthday Karunakara married his own niece—his eldest sister's twelve-year-old daughter—falling in with the plans of the elders for keeping the family wealth in the family. Karunakara and his girl-bride left for the provincial capital where he joined a political boss and thrived and flourished *sans* ideals, *sans* service. In the next few years Karunakara's former Shelleyan face became transformed into a coarse, heavy-jowled, hirsute countenance, and once when on one of Karunakara's rare visits to Urur Chellapathi had a glimpse of him he was so revolted by the sight that he sat down by the road-side and nearly became sick.

And still the idealism burnt undiminished in him. He had responded to one national leader after

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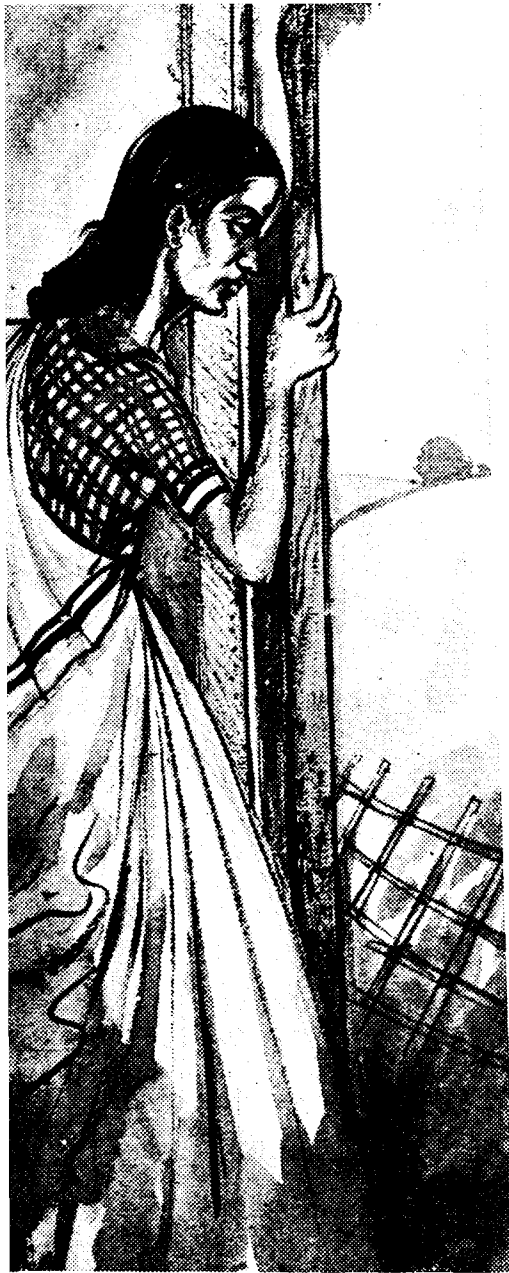
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another and had according to his circumstances carried out their policies and in his humble way fulfilled their political programmes. First it had been Sri Aurobindo, then Lokamanya Tilak, and next Mahatma Gandhi. At the Mahatma's call for Non-co-operation he had without compunction turned his

back on his school and had done some silly thing and got himself arrested and spent some months in jail. During his imprisonment his thoughts were only of India, and of course of Urur. He had no thoughts to spare for Ranna and their growing children. God will provide, he used to say to himself, in conscience-stricken moments but it was not God but Ranna that somehow kept the home going. Back from imprisonment he took up teaching much against his will because he was beginning to realise that patriotism, unless it was platform-patriotism, never filled the pot. However, he took to spinning and wearing home-spun and forced, rather coerced, his wife and two daughters into wearing the heavy stuff which made them very uncomfortable.

The seven years had become fourteen (and grudgingly the Local Board had raised his salary to eighty-five rupees a month; and the fourteen years had grown into twenty-one, and his salary was now one-hundred and fifteen rupees a month—a very adequate salary the Local Board, now dignified into a Municipality, told itself. Chellapathi, now forty-four years old still taught hoping to inspire, still dreamt dreams and saw visions but his eyes were weaker, his limbs thin and his face lined and harrowed. Ranna had ceased to share his visions but she carried out her household chores without any bitterness or disappointment. Lakshmi and Radha having learnt all that their father had cared to teach them helped their mother in the housework and spent such leisure as they had improving their singing. They had long since stopped taking lessons, being unable to pay the seven and a half rupees a month for the singing teacher. They were comely girls but self-conscious of their lack of jewellery, and like the rest of the family badly needing two square meals a day. They had ceased to worry about marriage for they knew that their father had not saved a penny and young men who married a poor patriot's daughters just for what their father was

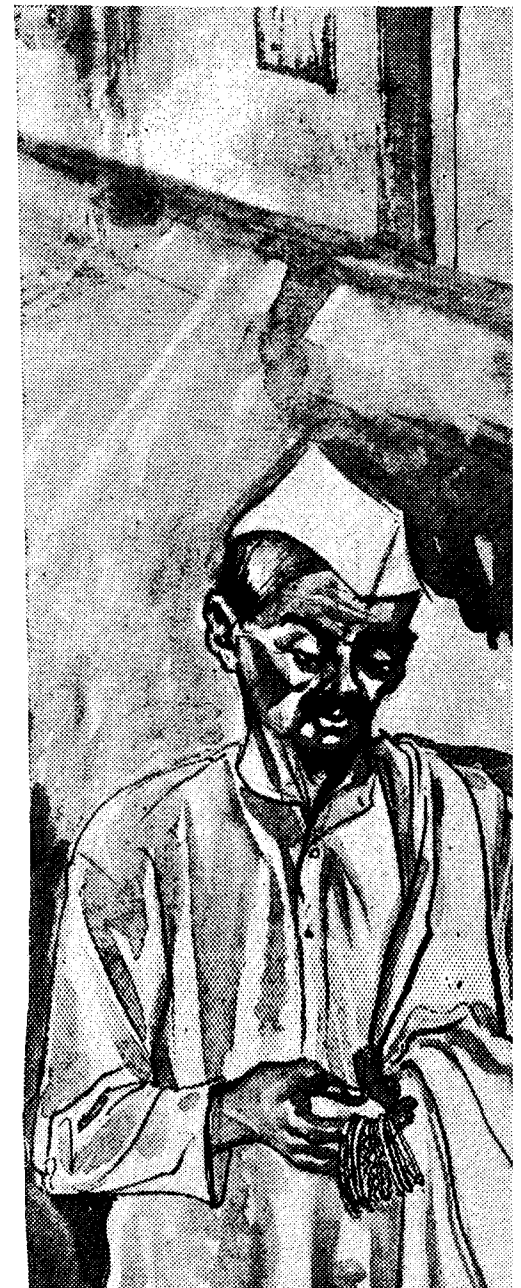
and for their looks and brains were still unknown in India. Mani, the son, and the youngest, was still of school-going age, and he attended his father's school, and managed to squeeze some little pleasure out of life.

But there was now an increasing discontent within Chellapathi's breast. His pupils noticed it. He seemed to say things by rote. Formerly whatever he taught, even when he spoke on general matters, his pupils had noticed the glint in his eyes and the swelling in his breast and the catch in his voice when he became emotional. But of late all this had given place to a far-away look and an absent-minded manner.

Well into middle-age Chellapathi was at last taking stock of himself. The patriot, he realised, ended on the scrap-heap, every time. It was the time-server, the opportunist, who caught the eye of the leaders and got preferments and places. And above all he was sick of the indulgence with which his fellow-citizens treated him. The Urur citizens, mostly tradesmen, and new-rich landowners introduced him to a visitor or referred to him as "Shri Chellapathi, our school-master" in such a reproving, sad tone as if they were suppressing the fact that he had been convicted of attempted rape. Those tradesmen, those self-important city-fathers, he asked himself, did they have a grain of culture, did they read a book from year's beginning to year's end, did they have the faintest notion of idealism and real patriotism? And still with what superiority they looked down upon him, with what snobbish airs did their over-fed, over-bejewelled wives and daughters look down upon Ranna and Lakshmi and Radha because they had themselves so little of jewellery and they wore the same saris as they had worn two years back.

As for Urur, of which he had hoped to make a model village, it had grown but quite contrary to his plans. Every second door on "Main Street" was a restaurant, and they had blaring radios which trans-

formed the peace of the village into the pandemonium of hell. And what was more, people were always going into and eating and drinking in those restaurants. They seemed to have no other pastime. There was even a cinema. There were all kinds of shops. Only the streets were unpaved, undrained. There



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was no drainage or sewerage, but money-making went on with such zest that people did not notice the lack of these very necessary conveniences of collective living. Urur, like every other urbanised village in India, advertised one fact—Wealth and Poverty. When Chellapathi first came there, there was not a beggar in the place. Now there were swarms. Twenty-one years ago there was not one prostitute, that is, not one who publicly plied her trade. Now there were scores. Nevertheless the Urur citizens subscribed to the Kasturba Fund: they celebrated the birth anniversaries and death anniversaries of national leaders, and on appropriate occasions some of them clad themselves in Khaddar and wore Gandhi caps.

* * *
What finally decided Chellapathi was the much-heralded visit to Urur of "its most distinguished son". Chellapathi remembered Kosambi Rao as a seedy bookworm, who used to hasten home the moment class was over. He knew on which side his bread was buttered—even then. He never took part in a political procession or attended a meeting of public importance. His father, who had started life as an "oil-presser" had done well and now employed others to "press" while he squeezed profits and enjoyed his wealth. It was the old man's constant advice to his son "to be always well-in with the Government." And the son, an undersized, goggle-eyed, fish-faced little monstrosity, followed his father's advice to the letter, passed his matriculation—Chellapathi's school was now, thanks to his labours, a High School—and having given up schooling, seemed to bide his time.

About the time the British announced their plans to quit India Kosambi Rao left Urur and shortly afterwards paragraphs began to appear in the newspapers to the effect that "among those who spoke were such-and-such, and Shri Kosambi Rao, the leading Congressman and Khaddarite of Urur." Sometimes there were variations in the reports: "Shri Kosambi Rao,

Urur's leading nationalist made the most spirited speech of the day", or, "with tears in his eyes Shri Kosambi Rao, the well-known Congressman of Urur spoke of the sufferings that he and his fellow-Congressmen had undergone in those dark days of 1942."

Well, the paragraphs became more frequent and longer, and one fine day it was announced under a New Delhi date line that "Shri Kosambi Rao, the well-known Congressman of Urur had been appointed Head of the newly-created Central Appropriation Fund. Before taking up his duties in New Delhi Shri Kosambi Rao will make a tour of Europe and America to study the methods of work in Central Appropriation Funds as they exist in those countries."

What more natural than that Urur should have the first claim on its Citizen Number One before he started on his world tour? So he came, and conquered. Urur went wild. Its muddy streets were sand-strewn, buntings and flags flew, and *Nagaswaram* and a Brass Band added to the general din. At the public reception given him under a massive pandal in the centre of Urur, Chellapathi managed to get a glimpse of him. He was still undersized, but self-assurance and good-feeding had softened the contours of his body and those who had not known him in his early days must have beheld a hero in him. Standing under five feet, but making up in girth what he lacked in height, Kosambi Rao, weighed down by several garlands made such a speech in defence of the Plans of the National Government as Urur or any other village or town in India had never heard. Even Urur citizens who barely comprehended the difference between the National Government and the Government that had just left, felt that here was a new force, and that it was good policy to be well in with the Government and such influential men as Shri Kosambi Rao.

* * *
On his way home Chellapathi thought of that small twelve-acre farm just seven miles outside of

Urur. He had met the owner recently, and the latter was willing to give a long lease of it. People were putting their money into buildings: farms did not pay, so the owner had told him. Chellapathi liked the mixed orchard, with its guavas, bananas, mango, orange, and pomegranate. And then there was the well reputed never to go dry. There was only a watcher's hut on the land, but he could, he imagined, easily construct a temporary dwelling.

He had in all those years never bought Ranna any jewellery, but she had brought as her dowry some worth-while jewellery, the costliest of them being her neck-chain and the next costliest being her gold bangles, six of them on each wrist. He thought of those bangles. His most urgent need was to get away from Urur and from those flesh-pots; and his next most urgent need was to stop using his brains. He wanted to live the rest of his life by the sweat of his brow, not by the sweat of his brains. People barely disguised their contempt for intellect which did not bring its owner financial success.

He explained it all in a torrent of words to Ranna. She listened to him and without saying a word took off the six bangles from her left wrist and then the remaining six

bangles from her right wrist. She handed them to her husband. He felt like one who was committing murder in cold blood. He took them to the local *bania*, who after much haggling paid him a thousand rupees for them.

Chellapathi paid five hundred rupees for a two years' lease of the farm with an option for renewal, and kept the other five hundred for expenses. They went by bullock-cart, in two bullock-carts rather, one to carry their goods in, and one for the five of them to travel in. They reached the farm by sunset. On the way Chellapathi again dwelt on the future. His two daughters might never get husbands, his son might never be called an educated man and never become an important citizen, but they could all live clean, healthy lives working with their hands and eating by the sweat of their labour. Let God see to the rest. To hell with brains!

It was sunset as the two bullock-carts pulled up by the watcher's hut. Ranna and her two daughters hastily got hold of the pots and pans and the firewood. Soon a fire was nicely blazing in front of the hut, and Ranna was cutting the vegetables up. Chellapathi was looking at the sunset. Or was it at a vision of his own?



WORLD GOVERNED BY OLD MEN

A mistake which all societies have made is to entrust the management of their affairs to the old. Old men are naturally more vindictive, bad-tempered, malevolent, and narrow-minded than young ones. They are easily provoked to disapproval, and dislike more things than they like. Having for the most part lived their own lives, they have nothing left to do but to interfere in the lives of others. They form the governments, misrepresent the people whom they oppress, preach to the people whom they exploit, and teach the people whom they deceive. If the country were handed over exclusively to the governance of men under thirty-five, and everybody over that age were forbidden to interfere on pain of being sent to the lethal chamber, it would be a happier and a better place. Unfortunately the young men are too busy trying to make a living in the subordinate positions to which the old men grudgingly admit them, to have the time or energy to interfere with other people.—C. E. M. Joad.

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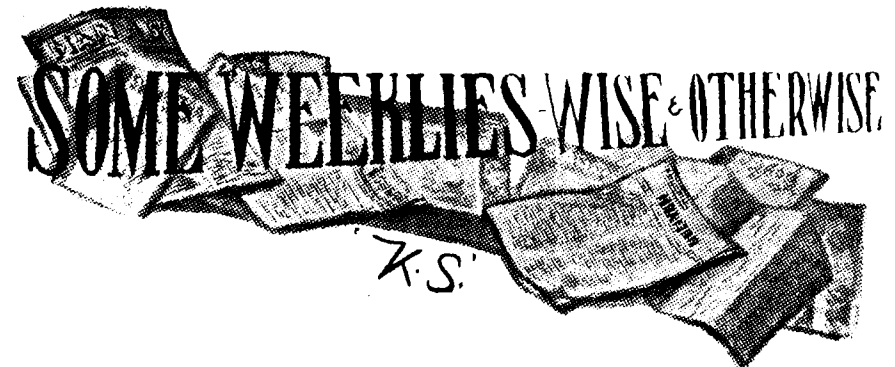
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It may seem odd that *Swatantra* should gratuitously publish a study, which may serve as an advertisement, of other weeklies, but then *Swatantra* has been evenly odd and long may it continue so!

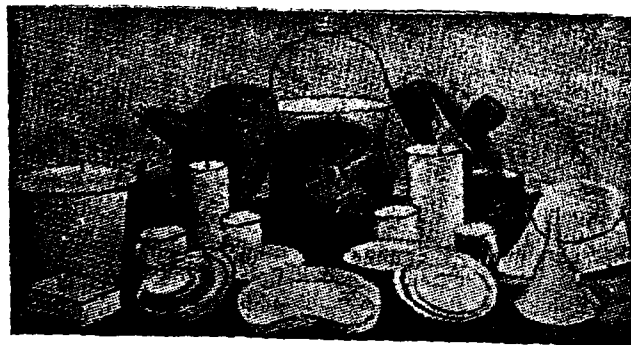
Newspapers, journals, periodicals, organs, bulletins, transactions—all these words suggest topicality and a certain restriction to a particular time, place or subject. They rule out the leisure, the calmness and the comprehensiveness that we associate with literature, the Great Books of all time. For fullness and up-to-dateness of information, for urgency and effectiveness of propaganda, for immediate and ponderable results, whether academic or practical, we have learnt to look to our periodicals and, on the whole, we are not disappointed. For wisdom, however, we look elsewhere; we go to the *Kural* or the *Bible*, to *King Lear* or *Gitanjali*, or if we go to a periodical at all, it is to the organ of some professedly religious cult or brotherhood withdrawn from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.

Young India and *Harijan* were the first periodicals to combine the exciting details of the programme and pursuit of a vigorous political campaign together with the calm contemplation of eternal verities. The many-sided but well-integrated personality of Gandhiji gave to his weeklies a wealth and variety of values, both immediate and permanent, which were far beyond the capacity even of A. E., T. P. O'Connor or G. K. Chesterton at their best. As the years passed, Gandhiji became less of a moral

teacher and more of a suffering saint and *Harijan* was transformed into a confessional diary in which Gandhiji gave to the world a faithful and charming reflection of all his passing moods, his tentative thoughts and half-formed plans, as well as classical expression to his deepest convictions. All the troubles of India Gandhiji adopted as his own and used as the raw material of his spiritual development, and the columns of *Harijan* carried the two-way traffic of ideas and influence between himself and the people for whom and with whom he thought and felt and laboured. In his open conspiracy and bloodless war against embattled Evil *Harijan* was the main means of communication between himself, his followers and his opponents. And if it contained ultimata and orders of the day and interim reports and despatches, it did not on that account cease to be great literature presenting the dynamic balance between the practical and the ideal, between the topical and the universal. One could pass from the *Kural* or the last acts of *King Lear* to any issue of *Harijan* and back again to the *Ramayana* or *Sophocles* and not feel a jolt in the transition. Some of Gandhiji's articles, like some of Lincoln's speeches, were at once historical events and literary masterpieces. With Gandhiji journalism was a necessary means and concomitant of intense practical action, itself the by-product of a life of earnest prayer. Gandhiji, in fact, was in Carlylean phrase "The Hero as Journalist". When shall we see such another?

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After the sudden death of Gandhiji, the *Harijan* stopped publication. On the 13th, 14th and 15th of March 1948 there was a meeting at Sevagram of over five-hundred constructive workers, all followers of Gandhiji, who formed themselves into a loose organization called the Sarvodaya Samaj and resolved to carry on with greater vigour, if possible, the various items of Gandhiji's programme. As a natural corollary the *Harijan* was revived and is now being issued under the editorship of Sri Kishorelal Mashruwala. The first numbers contained articles by Vinoba Bhave, Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Mangaldas Pakvasa, J. C. Kumarappa and others. The revived *Harijan*—as amateurish as the old series and far less intimately connected with current politics—is still a most interesting experiment in journalism as it presents with engaging naivety a way of thinking and living which has been adopted by a small but creative and critical minority of the professed followers of Gandhiji. The disciples are attempting to continue the Gandhian movement of self-reform farther and farther and they have been scrupulously careful to avoid the ever-present danger of arresting this movement by petrifying the teachings of the Master into a creed or cult. In Vinoba Bhave, whose life has been one long austerity and who is a master of Sanskrit and Arabic as well as of many living Indian languages, we have a scholar and reformer who may claim to be a true and full spiritual successor to Gandhiji. Those who set "the budding rose above rose full blown" will watch the career of the revived and crescent *Harijan* with sympathetic curiosity.

A few weeks before the death of Gandhiji—to be precise, on the 7th January 1948,—there appeared the first number of an American weekly, *Manas*. (Indian agents: International Book House, Ltd., Bombay; 5 dollars for a yr., 8 for 2 yrs.) The cause for which Gandhiji lived and died, the cause which the revived *Harijan* is struggling so hard and against such public indifference and technical inefficiency to uphold, the

cause of humane education and true spirituality, is being served with great intellectual distinction and with far fuller resources of knowledge and in a far more attractive get-up, by *Manas*. To those who believe in the reality of Spirit, the essential oneness of the human race and the urgent need for self-reform as a first step towards any improvement of the world's economic and political situation, in fact, to all practical idealists, the issues of *Manas* offer the most valuable information, drawn from all countries and all ages, and the most welcome encouragement and inspiration. Like the *Harijan*, *Manas*, too, carries no advertisements. It goes farther than any other periodical in its studied impersonality. Its editors, printers, publishers are all anonymous—which is a tribute not only to the modesty of the persons concerned but to the genuine freedom of the Press in America. *Manas* deserves the most careful study and the most generous support at the hands of all earnest and serious-minded persons in the English-knowing world. It is the authentic voice of Advaita Vedanta broadcast from America for the benefit of all mankind, as the following extracts will convince the reader:

"The building of a civilization is an organic process, like to the evolution of a plant succession, in which the diversity of human life finds its best flowering through the conscious symbiosis of human co-operation, and this will be attained when enough individuals can see, quite literally, the whole in the part of the human family, and the part in the whole. Each individual human relationship will then become an expression of the inviolable symmetry of the great brotherhood of all; and, schooled by this mood, each one will find his place and his true freedom in that place. And so, the Whole will be the God of each, and each will feel himself to be a moment of the Universal Self, his life a movement of the Spirit within eternity."

"A philosophy of the Self, to endure and to be adaptable to the infinite varieties of human experience, must provide a universal center. It must have a spiritual center in the immortal human essence and a radiating moral connectedness with the entire human

race. It must be, in short, a religion of solidarity with a transcendental ground."

'Manas stands explicitly for the principle that the end of thought is practical decision, and should, therefore, be 'careful' about its thoughts.'

"One delightful bit is Tucci's discovery of Einstein's devotion to ancient Greek thinkers. Learning that the great mathematician spends an hour each evening,—tired out or not—reading aloud in Sophocles, Thucydides, and Aeschylus, he remarked, 'So you too, Herr Professor, have gone back to the Greeks.' Einstein replied: 'But I have never gone away from them. How can an educated person stay away from the Greeks? I have always been far more interested in them than in science.'"

"Gandhi put sincerity into politics... He has shown, by personal example, that individual morality and political morality can be the same thing: this, we submit, is a world-shaking innovation in public affairs."

"The practical act is always the act issuing from moral judgment. It has been Gandhi's genius to be able to convey this idea of human conduct to millions of Hindus."

"Jawaharlal Nehru is India's greatest man of divided mind—divided between East and West."

"We know nothing, really, of 'God', yet we talk to our children about Him with confidence. What we are not sure of for ourselves, we seem to be very sure about when we address the young."

"Children are more like Tolstoy than we usually realise.....Psychological death and rebirth is the fundamental process of character growth."

"The struggle of Gandhi against the age-old oppression of the Untouchables and the inequities of the caste system in general was an emergence into practice of a universal ethical principle. Essentially, the principle declared by Gandhi in this struggle was that man is by nature a creative being—that his past, cultural, hereditary or personal, ought never to be held against him."

"The greatest tribute that India could pay to Gandhi would be to follow his example as a man. This would be more, much more, than repeating his words and imitating his actions. The wisdom in his words and the purpose behind his

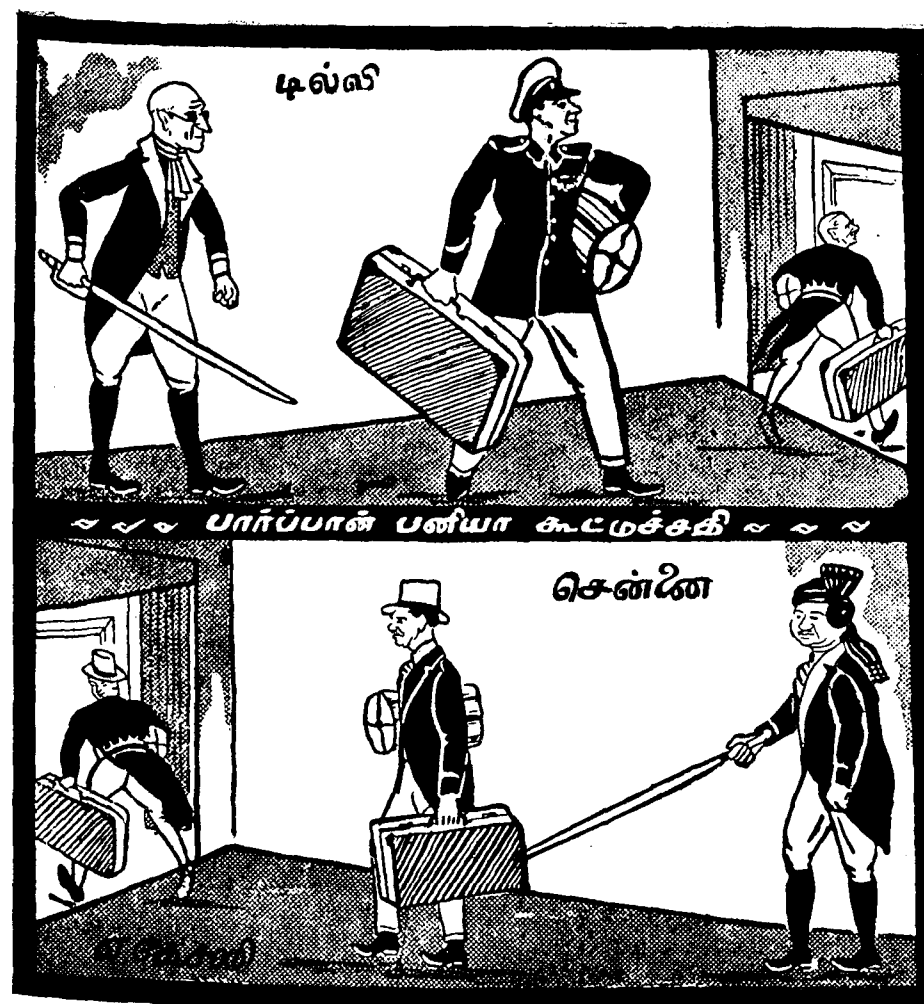
actions will continue to live, not from religious devotion to them, but from a resolve like Gandhi's, on the part of many, each man according to his light.

"From Gandhi the people of India may learn also the meaning of purity of heart and unqualified self-sacrifice. But they will not learn it by making a 'code' of his personal habits, nor even by a literal following of his exhortations. They will learn it from the principle of honesty which came before anything else in his life, and from the imagination which he exercised in applying it."

"There must be solid faith in a philosophy which interprets all of life's experiences, unpleasant as well as pleasant, as of evolutionary value to the human soul."

"The recklessness with which such words as 'fascist', 'communist', 'reactionary', (and we may add 'Aryan' and 'northerner') are hurled about betrays a lack of thought equalled only by lack of vocabulary.....Were the truth seen, the unknown areas of agreement might frequently be greater than the known areas of disagreement. Men seldom label one another face to face.....The classifiable individual is never the whole individual. No true advance in human affairs is ever brought about by classifiable men, nor, we may add, by the habit of classifying them. Classifiable men advance social dishonesty, through their 'necessity' of concealing thought in order to keep their friends, their possessions and their 'security'. And condemning them with slogans confirms their weaknesses by creating the need in them for self-defence. Only one label fits any human being—man."

Mrs. Besant used to say, "You cannot argue a man into slavery through the English language." Similarly, a generation ago, it might well have been said, "You cannot preach narrowness, exclusiveness or hatred through the Tamil language," for from the earliest times the outlook of Tamil literature has been universal, its temper all-tolerant: "Every town is my home and all men my friends." But other times, other manners. Today there is quite a number of Tamil weeklies of which the following cartoon, with the legend translated in English, is a fair specimen:



(Cartoon From Tamil Weekly)

"When Wavell and Mountbatten have left Delhi, a Brahmin brandishes the sceptre as Governor-General. When Arthur Hope and Archibald Nye have left Madras, a Marwadi comes in procession as Governor. The White Man goes from the seat of power. But the Banya and the Brahmin ascend the seats. The Brahmin-Banya conspiracy flourishes triumphantly in the land. Who is there to question this injustice? Who has the courage to destroy this cruelty—except the Dravida Kazhagam?"

Week after week and day after day, these beautifully-composed Tamil articles, swallowed up eagerly by devoted groups of readers, spread bitter communal hatred. False his-

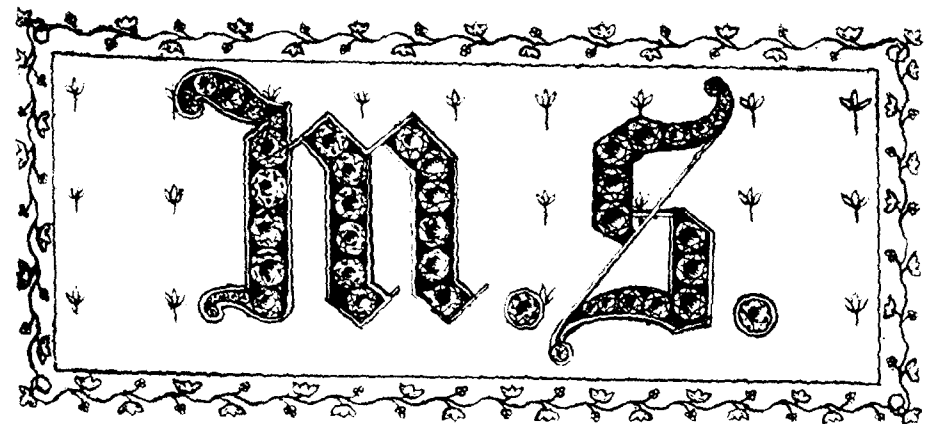
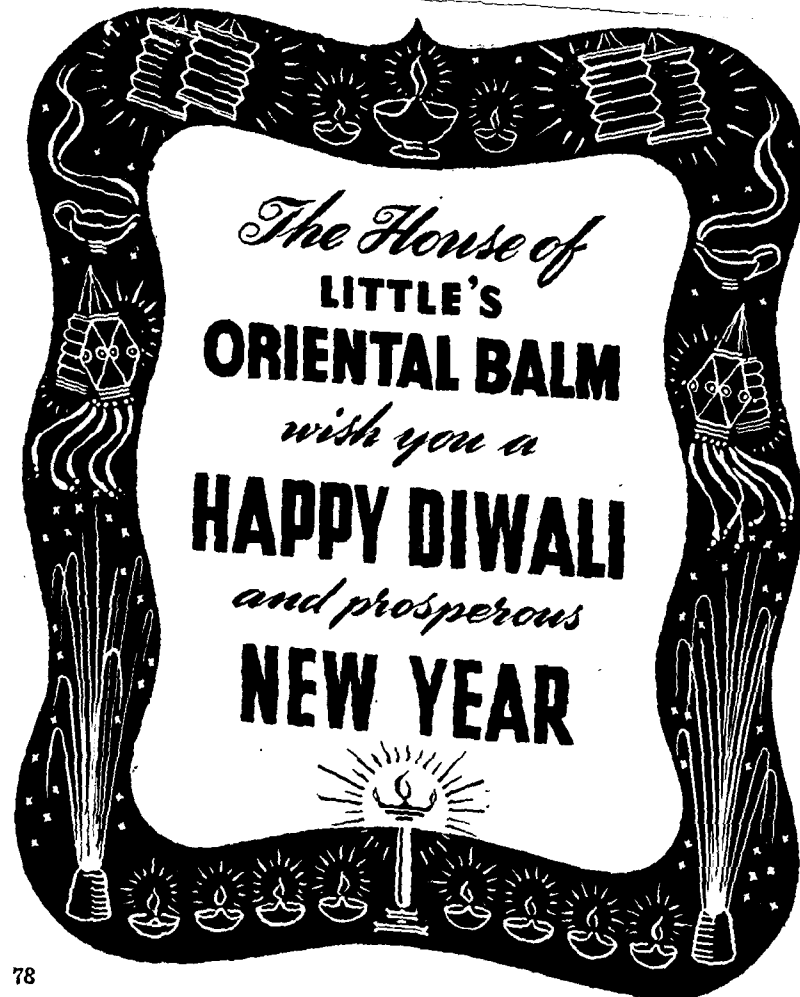
tory, cooked-up etymology and fantastic anthropology are dragged in to reinforce the latest and most untenable "two-nation" theory. To believe in it is rank folly. To propagate it without belief is worse. Is it not time that the Tamils, the inheritors of an ancient, unbroken and noble culture, learn to look forward rather than backward and to co-operate with one another instead of arraying themselves into mutually warring and destructive groups? You may say what you like (and there is a great deal to be said) against the claims of some persons labelled 'South Indian

Brahmins'. But real Brahminism which is progress towards unity, an attempt to identify the Atman in each individual with the impersonal Brahman, is a process known also to mediaeval Europe and modern America; and no blackness of shirt or bitterness of heart can destroy this living and growing thing from

the face of the earth. Hereditary caste is bound to vanish, as its doom has been irrevocably pronounced by Vivekananda and Gandhi. The attempt to destroy it, not through courage and love such as theirs, but through fear and hatred, can only postpone the day of its disappearance.

CASTE

Caste is the symbol and embodiment of exclusiveness among the Hindus. In the social organization of today it has no place left. If merit is the only criterion and opportunity is thrown open to everybody, then caste loses all its present-day distinguishing features and, in fact, ends. Caste has in the past not only led to the suppression of certain groups but to a separation of theoretical and scholastic learning from craftsmanship and a divorce of philosophy from actual life and its problems. It was an aristocratic approach based on traditionalism. This outlook has to change completely for it is wholly opposed to modern conditions and the democratic ideal.—Jawaharlal Nehru.



by T. V. R.

*"Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak."
"Bright Gem Instinct With Music, Vocal Spark."*

GREAT men and women of the South must be discovered for us by others! If today Rajaji is in a position of well-deserved eminence, if Raman and Radhakrishnan have attained international reputation, it is in spite of us in the South, and certainly not because of us.

If you are a good speaker, they will say you are shallow. If you are a very learned man, they will say you have no powers of expression. If you have both scholarship and eloquence, they will say you are not quite religious. Well, something must always be said to qualify their praise!

Among those who have suffered by this queer weakness of the South Indians, not the least is that great singer of our times, Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi, familiar as a household word in all mouths as "M. S."

Mahatma Gandhi, Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Devi and Dilip Kumar Roy must praise her music before Mr. Highbrow of South India will concede some reason for the unsophisticated millions growing lyrical over the haunting melodies of Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi.

Many years ago, Vox Populi gave her a Sanskrit title, a tribute to her voice, "Kokila Gana", and a Tamil title, "Isai Vani", which is a tribute to her music in general.

These two terms admirably sum up the exquisitely unique music

with which M. S. has been regaling tens of thousands of people year after year.

Voice that of a nightingale, music that of a celestial being—that is the import of these two titles.

And any one who is not a prude or a prig or a cynic, anyone who just loves music and allows no irrelevant prejudice to cloud his judgment, will admit that there is little or no exaggeration in this view of Mr. Everyman.

Has India known of any artist who has thrilled with her sweet melodies so many thousands of people, over such a long period as M. S.?

It is a superb blending of all the features of a very great art—mellifluous voice, perfect knowledge of the science, a fine sense of proportion, a marvellous understanding of the *Sahitya* and *Bhava*, innate attunement to the atmosphere created by the ecstatic symphonies and the wonderful ease with which she reaches the highest notes—it is such a splendid blending of all the essential qualities of great music that has made Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi's rendering so captivating to so many over so long a period.

In point of consistency, of *Gamaka*, of being the first in the field for years and years, while new stars rise and set, M. S. is among



Sm. M. S. SUBBULAKSHMI

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women-artists what Ariyakudi has been among musicians of the other sex.

Like him, she too has developed a distinct school. She blazes the trail. Others imitate, with more or less success. If she sings Marubalga in Sriranjini, or Guha Saravana Bhava in Simmendra Maddhimam, or Maye in Tarangini or national songs like Katrinile Varum Gitam, they are seized with avidity by other artists and they become the rage everywhere.

Her public spirit and patriotism are, in their genuineness and intensity, as unique as her gifts of music.

To how many causes has she given, and given as generously as no artist has even done!

It is not for nothing that saints and statesmen, who have a fine sense of proportion, have rated M. S. not only as a unique vocalist but also as a cultured, public-spirited citizen.

All honour to that celebrated violinist, Vidwan T. Chowdiah, for having cast away the monstrously medieval notion that a lady, however great her proficiency in the art of music may be, should not have the benefit of being "accompanied" on the violin or mridangam by any celebrated Vidwan of the other sex.

But these superstitions, prejudices and fads melt away with the passage of time. But M. S.'s contribution to the country, as a great vocalist and as a patriot, as a generous giver for good causes, and above all, as an astonishingly modest person, will live for ever.

Kalki among lucid, persuasive, forceful Tamil writers on current affairs, Rajaratnam among Nadaswara Vidwans, Dhyan Chand among hockey players—like these in their respective spheres, among women there is none who can come anywhere near Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi, so far as her powers of music are concerned.

.....the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing
from her face,

The heart whose softness harmonized the whole.



A FRIEND who recently returned from New Delhi after a business visit tells me that the country is going to the dogs, but it is not he alone who laments symptoms of a slight decline in efficiency and standards of public life, he being completely oblivious of the simple fact that "good government is no substitute for self-government." The dictum is attributed to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman when he proposed self-government for South Africa after the Boer War. According to that sage, Purushottamdas Tandon, the Sambamoorthy of the United Provinces who refuses to retire, corruption and the quest for favours have become so rampant in Congress ranks that he would prefer slavery under the old British regime as against the sort of independence that India enjoys, but here again he forgets that self-government even of a lower pattern is better than alien efficiency. Let us consider some of the malpractices and tendencies that characterise the present transition.

(1) *Loss of Efficiency.* I am quite prepared to admit that there has been a decline in the efficiency of bureaucratic smartness in the Secretariat, but there is no reason for alarm. We have taken over

the steel-frame machinery of the British Government which operated with a sense of distance and awe from the common man. Indianisation has narrowed the gap of prestige which means increased pressure on officials for the grant of reliefs through inexperienced hands. Remember that in the agitation against foreign rule, many positive promises were made to give it voltage. If the Government have not been able to catch up with them, cost free on delivery, it should not be taken for lack of efficiency. All the same, the sense of bewilderment accompanying the change-over is there to account for slow adjustment. As against this complaint, there is comfort in the fact that the old fever of frustration has been overcome by the transmission of power to Indian hands. British rule in its last stage had overstrained the material capacity of India through a strenuous and exhausting war. Inflation against which we fight is a British bequest; and defects in rolling stock on railways are due not to the incompetence of the Ministry since ramshackle conditions in the transport system form part of the legacy we have inherited. I often feel that among the reasons which prompted the British to quit India,

was the dread of famine and the prospect of chaotic developments beyond foreign control.

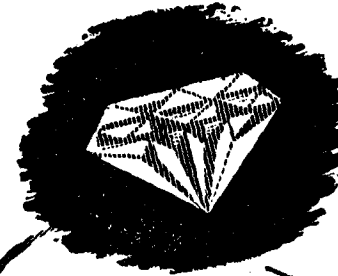
(2) *Increased Bureaucratization.* The pessimist would make capital of the following facts comparing the strength of the Secretariat in 1948 with that in 1939 when India was undivided. The position in the Central Secretariat according to various categories of officers and staff in 1939 and 1948 is roughly as follows: Secretaries, nine and now nineteen; additional secretaries, nil and now five; joint-secretaries, eight and now thirty-five; deputy-secretaries, twelve and now eighty-four; under-secretaries and assistant secretaries, sixteen and now one hundred and ninety-one; superintendents, sixty-eight and now two hundred and ninety-six; assistants in charge, eight and now one hundred and nineteen; assistants four hundred and ninety-three and now three thousand, four hundred and eight; clerks, six hundred and forty-one and now two thousand, five hundred and sixty-nine; stenographers, ninety and now five hundred and ten; chaprasis, eight hundred and seventy and now three thousand and one hundred. These figures do not include the Railway Board establishment and the General Headquarters of the Defence services. When the doctrine of *laissez-faire* is dead and the Government have entered the market with control of commodities besides currency, there was bound to be an increase in the number of nincompoop officials. In Britain there is the same criticism about enlarged personnel in Government services, and Socialism has been proved to be more expensive than mid-Victorian democracy. Sir William Meyer, when he returned home from India, predicted that the adoption of the democratic system would entail more expenditure for the Indian tax-payer than government by the Heaven-Born Service to which he had belonged. We should not be appalled at rising budgets although we should be on our guard against squander-mania. The danger is that amateurs have come into power upon the extinction

of a well-tryed system and more mistakes are liable to be made in detail than in the routine of the past. Inexperience is bound to result in fumbling and therefore we should give a wide margin of condonation for those elevated out of the jails to the carpeted rooms of the Secretariat. If the subordinates who had jailed them appear a little perplexed over their reverse duty as they say "Namestae" before the ex-culprits at the door, is it any surprise that there is a look of sheepishness in the whole situation?

(3) *Corruption.* Because there is corruption and nepotism which is the vulgarest form of corruption, they should not suggest a hark-back to the past, wistfully reminiscent of British rule which has vanished for evermore. The very grouse about corruption creates a mental complex taking it as a novel discovery corresponding to the fabrication that it was British Imperialism that had introduced communalism in India as a balancing fraud. A certain degree of corruption must always exist. There are more venal practices in France than in Britain; the influence of dissolute characters in the public life of Paris makes a hideous form of self-government, but no Frenchman dare dream of some kind of foreign subjection to purify and sublimate French politics. We must not forget that the prospect of prizes in public life suddenly held before the eyes of demagogues wandering in the wilderness as nationalists ultimately consenting to the demands of the two-nation theory, found them in a state of psychological incontinence. Deeds of favouritism were inevitable although they are rendered in nasty fashion by the perpetrators of patronage loudly declaring that there should be no such thing as liberated India except in some metaphysical sense.

Congress irregulars, like private armies equivalent to non-violent Razakars, ought to be disbanded. Time-expired soldiers are usually given land to cultivate, and erstwhile heroes accustomed to jall-going tactics should be asked very kindly to enlist themselves in the

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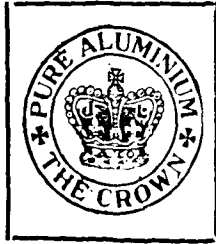
urity, exquisite blue white colour, exceptional brilliancy, perfect cut and fashioning - each of these factors is present to a maximum degree in the diamonds used by us. Since the very beginning, we have spared no effort to help in supplying high quality products at fair and consistently low prices. You may be sure of our personal attention to each order sent to us.

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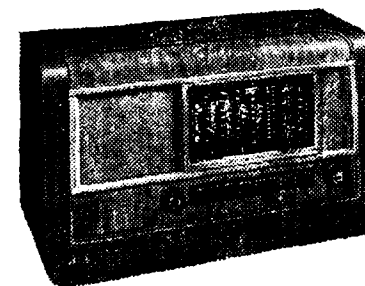
Grow-More-Food campaign on the original level of their culture, agriculture. If school-boycotters find themselves lost in career, it is for them to re-adjust, out of regard for a grateful nation. The world is too small for accommodating all of them as ambassadors. A huge salary for the Governor-General? No accumulation could exceed the capital gains of an Alladi Krishnaswami whom he could have rivalled in practice from the time C.R. forsook law and resolved on sacrifice. Moreover every patriot has the right at the proper time to proclaim that everything he has acquired is really meant for the nation, he himself subsisting on gruel, and in old age fixing false teeth only on public occasions for the issue of audible statements containing platitudes in token of a childlike simplicity of heart.

The struggle between the haves and the have-nots in Congress circles is the real bane of our present public life, corrupting even

black-market patronage, but these things are bound to pass; anyway the re-instatement of foreign rule can mean only a drain of good juice out of our internal economic cesspool. Let us reign in hell rather than serve in heaven. What is required is the spirit of compromise, the readiness to sing *Jana gana mana* to the tune of *Vande Mataram* during the enjoyment of our bluff-won freedom.

(4) *Interference with Justice.* This is a sore issue, because of the mean disposition of some people in power who after misuse of authority are exposed by courts of justice and who in retaliation resort to arbitrary reserved powers in the hands of the Executive or a docile Legislature to gain the better of an equitable award. Here is a tendency which should be resisted in terms of "British Justice", a faculty which we should value in spite of all the faults of the British during their two hundred years of administration in this country. Even so, self-government with an inferior

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juristic stamp, is better than good government.

(5) *Party Racket*. A current complaint is that people do not know whom to bribe, whether a Minister in office or his jealous counterpart, namely some boss of the Congress Committee on the spot. The Emperor Tiberius wrote in his diary that he would extend the governorship of Pontius Pilate in Judea for the reason that a new hungry Governor might cause more corruption and bribery than the one who was already in a state of surfeit. Gratification both for a Minister and his unofficial gauletier must constitute a practice unknown in British rule, but eventually, the Khadi-clad volunteers will have to be told that the war for Indian independence is over, and that they had better treat themselves as released from soldierly service happily demobbed and now free to cultivate land and increase food supplies for the civilian population.

(6) *Upstartism*. This is the kind of annoyance which naturally makes men above forty long for the *burra-sahib* in office of the good old days. Tom, Dick and Harry have suddenly ascended to seats of power and their relatives go on Government mission abroad in huge picnic parties. Whereas in the days of yore a single return-voyage for a veteran in public life was considered as an opportunity and a privilege much noticed in the press and valuable in result for the country, today there are rabble-excursions of the most irresponsible kind in order to chloroform claimants for favour. This practice has become a scandal and nobody dare say a word in the face of its principal author who as in the case of body-odour cannot perceive its noxiousness. Favouritism and family infatuation constitute his only pathological weakness and considering what the nation derives from the individual we had better accept it as so much balance of advantage in our favour, putting incidental loss as what cashiers call "current expense under suspense account."

On the whole when I survey the situation, I cannot agree with my licence-denied friend from New Delhi that the country is going to the dogs.

* * *

In Pandit Jawaharlal's *Autobiography*, he gives a story about his pinching father's fountain-pen and getting a hiding from Pandit Motilal Nehru for the offence. Jawaharlal was really innocent since he suffered from an inborn urge to distribute whatever he could lay his hands on for the nearest and the dearest. Let us imagine that we give him a *carte blanche* allowance per year of Rs. 25 lakhs (we can't get a substitute), what is there wrong in the debauch over Swedish furniture for Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit or a Rolls-Royce car for Krishna Menon for his travel from Chalk Farm to the door of India House in his newly acquired robes of dignity? Pandit Jawaharlal is worth the foster-brother's Kashmir war whilst critics murmur against the daily cost to blow up the two-nation theory, Sheikh Abdulla's professed mission. Many newspapers would prefer the theme as advertisement, like the "Grow More Food" campaign.

In one of his psalms King David bowed to the God of Israel and played a refrain on the harp that "even if Thou slayest me, yet shall I trust in Thee." John Hay at the first milestone past the American Revolution paraphrased it in Bostonian verse:—

*"For always in Thine eyes, O
Liberty!
Shines that bright light
Whereby the world is saved.
Even if thou slayest us
Yet shall we trust in Thee."*

The roly-poly crowd draped in unwashed linen should be dissolved from the rabble-scene of Indian politics, and clean measures should be restored since Free India's greatest enemies consist of Satyagrahic pretenders within the bounds of Hindustan. On the whole the going is good.

THE significant characters in this narration are: A seashore, a coconut grove, a rice field. Others who figure incidentally are: An agriculturist, a judge, a college girl, a progressive intellectual. Also, a host of inconsequentials.

The seashore is the Marina, Madras. The rice field and the coconut grove are in the delta of the Godavari, which is also the home of our agriculturist. The judge is a dispenser of the Sircar's laws and the college girl is his sister-in-law. Enquiries made about the young intellectual show that he is, by faith, a votary of the Religion of Man and, by occupation, an international revolutionary who has dedicated his life to service of the world's toilers.

A word about another character who fares here, Head Clerk Anand. In a way, the whole string of events hangs around this personality. He is, as it were, the catalytic agent aiding each incident to unfold inevitably out of its predecessor. It is sad that he should, despite his important function, remain at the end of the narration in the same humble station as at the beginning. It is not fair, it is perhaps a blot on the story. But it cannot be helped if faithful chronicling is desired. Incidents in real life conform very rarely indeed to any artistic pattern or poetic justice.

Again, it is very difficult to decide from which point to start this narration. It seems cruel to impose the rigidity of sequence on what happened with such crystalline spontaneity. However, if it is agreed

that of all the characters here the sea is the most sublime, mysterious and eternal, it would only be proper to start with it. And so....

Srimathi Madhavi, that lovely evening, was at the Marina, discussing, with Mister Masha, current history. Madhavi is the only woman in this tale.

She was born very rich, in a silver cradle as they say. And was orphaned at a tender age. Her sister, ten years older, assumed guardianship. Madhavi was brought up most affectionately. The brother-in-law was no less devoted than the sister to the sparkling, vivacious young girl in their joint charge. Near and dear to both, to whom Madhavi was dearer, no one could tell.

Four years ago Madhavi came to the metropolis and joined a college. In those days, she was noticeably fond of silk sarees and blouses of gorgeous colours, of tall dazzling eardrops and all manner of other trinkets. She liked cinema shows—in Telugu, Tamil, Canarese, any language—and sat through the long hours at the picture houses with a relish which often amused her companions. Holidays? They were, to her, god-sent intervals of sheer joy. Wandering about the city, dropping into eating houses, sipping cups and cups of coffee (sometimes iced, sometimes steaming), munching tea-cakes and gulping ice-cream (how sweet and thrilling)—these were her holiday hobbies. Her brother-in-law made it his duty to visit his ward at least once a month and see for himself how the 'child'

was progressing. And when he came, they visited English pictures, ate their lunch in restaurants (which seemed to her ever so tosh), and imbibed rainbow-coloured liquids (what a queer sensation they gave her) at reserved tables.

Today Madhavi has changed, changed a great deal. So much more mature, spiritually. Life has taught her many revealing lessons. As a result of certain contacts, she has turned her attention to politics now. The bitter truth has been proved to her on her pulses that her personal happiness is something that is entangled in the collective happiness of mankind, that the one problem is inseparable from the other. Her class-mate, Masha's sister, had helped to set her mind on this new track by introducing her to Masha. It was a meeting of minds pregnant with consequences, as Madhavi was to discover.

She was deeply influenced by Masha. The dark apolitical corridors of her mind were lighted up by the flashes of Masha's brilliant intellect. He was nothing if not modern. With equal ease he exhibited his grasp of Marxism and Relativity, interpreting the latter in terms of that class struggle of which he was an eloquent devotee. Madhavi today wears only Nylon and tissue sarees, not those heavy things of native silk of earlier days. She visits only English picture houses and studies only the costliest books on advanced political philosophy. They also serve who stand and wait, for the break of the revolution on the sky of human destiny, the revolution that is ultimate and red as the blood of the cactus flower.

Saraswati, according to Hindu mythology, is the goddess of learning. And one is reminded of Her, looking at Madhavi today. The hoary procession of sculptors, artists and poets of Ind have immortalised in stone, mural and page, the contours of Her divine body, rendering with reverent care the pair of her heavy, rounded breasts as symbols of Literature and Music, the twin attributes of the Goddess. Be it so, and by the same token, the allied attributes of Madhavi suggest

themselves as symbols of dialectical materialism and historical necessity—the twin heights which it was the ambition of Masha to reach and hold.

That evening at the Marina, Masha felt sad, very sad. The state of affairs on this unfortunate earth was so gloomy. There was no change in the hard lives of the tramwaymen in Honolulu; and from Mexico, there was no further news at all of the matadors' strike. Revolutions elsewhere were still in the offing. And for these reasons, Masha was very sad.

Also, Masha was badly in need of money. A situation was fast developing in which it was imperative that he should go underground. Madhavi sighed a comradely sigh and asked him anxiously, "How much do you need, Masha?"

To the soft, tender query, Masha replied with a helpless gesture, "I can manage with a thousand rupees ...but from where is one to get even that?" His voice sounded so feeble and so full of pain it seemed to echo the desperate cry of the world's exploited toilers.

"You must let me try and help you, Masha. My brother-in-law is the only person I can think of and the size of the amount we need rather frightens me. If he should ask why I need so much in one lot at once, I wonder what I could say. Anyhow let me try. You will know the result within a week. I shall start off by tomorrow's express."

Madhavi did start by the morrow's express, telegraphing in advance to her brother-in-law. The train reached the station at the break of dawn and the judge was there with his liveried retinue to receive her. He was a big man of the locality, one of the biggest. Servants saluted as Madhavi stepped down from her compartment and the ticket collector at the gate too.

On their way home in the car, to her brother-in-law's remark. "But this is so surprising, what's up, Madhavi?" she replied, "Oh, dear, I felt so nostalgic about home and

I wanted to see—sister." And she laughed a laughter of utter abandon.

On reaching home Madhavi had to plunge at once into the activity familiar on such occasions—chitchat with her sister, exchanging remarks on the latest acquisitions of furni-

ture and pictures, playing with the children and humouring their antics, responding to the servants' greetings, and so on. She was free at last at 8 o'clock, after breakfast, and stepped directly into her brother-in-law's room.

The judge was reclining on a sofa, lost in deep thoughts having to do apparently with the law journal on his lap. On the teapoy beside him stood a half-empty bottle, glasses and a tin of cigarettes. The rich odour of tobacco smoke pervaded the room. When he was in his study, only three persons were allowed to enter it—Head Clerk Anand, personal valet Venkanna and Srimathi Madhavi.

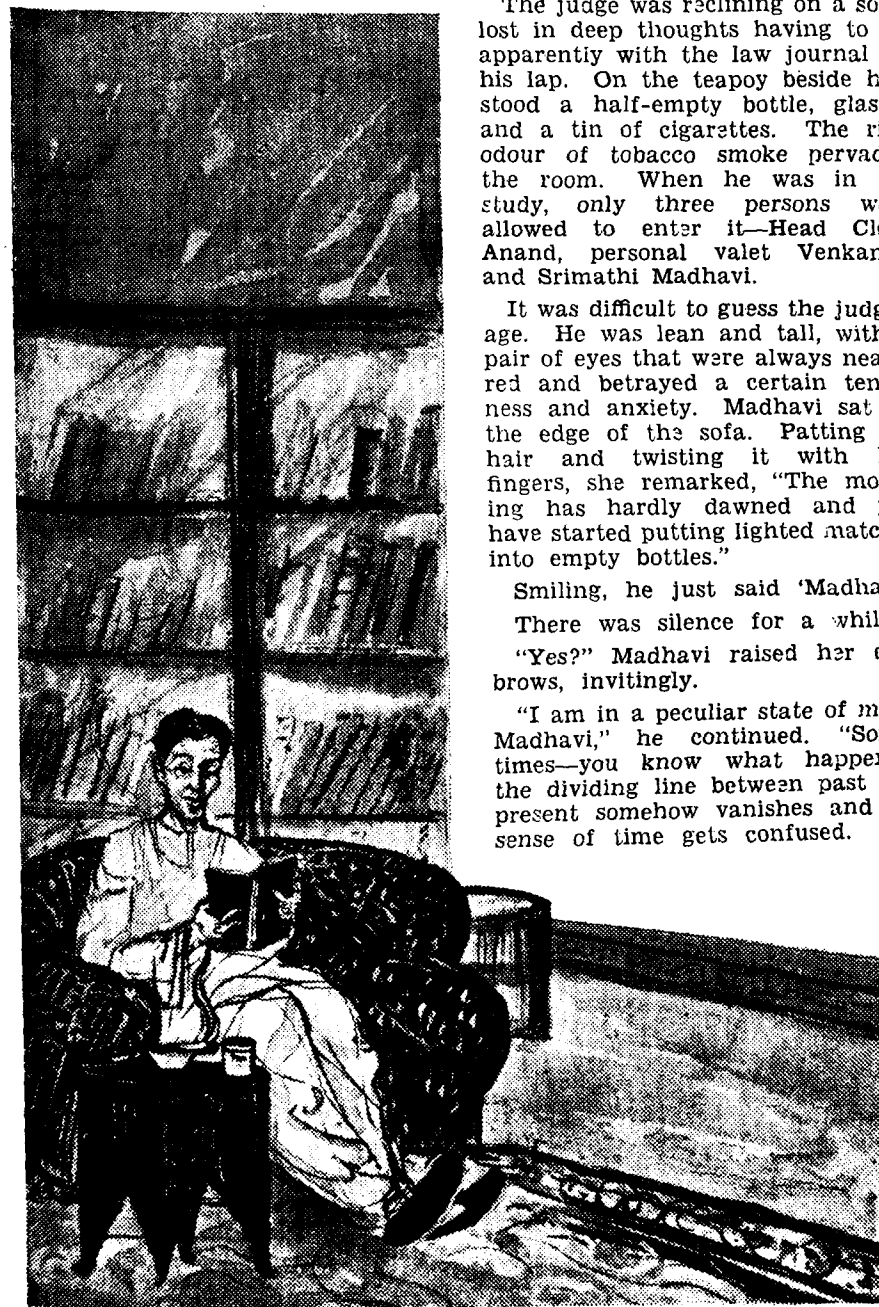
It was difficult to guess the judge's age. He was lean and tall, with a pair of eyes that were always nearly red and betrayed a certain tenseness and anxiety. Madhavi sat on the edge of the sofa. Patting his hair and twisting it with her fingers, she remarked, "The morning has hardly dawned and you have started putting lighted matches into empty bottles."

Smiling, he just said 'Madhavi!'

There was silence for a while.

"Yes?" Madhavi raised her eyebrows, invitingly.

"I am in a peculiar state of mind, Madhavi," he continued. "Sometimes—you know what happens—the dividing line between past and present somehow vanishes and my sense of time gets confused. Tell



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me, how long is it since we left Krishnapuram? Years ago, of course. But last evening, returning from the club, a strange sensation overpowered me. I imagined I was in Krishnapuram and started searching for advocate Venkatarao's house. Funny, silly, isn't it?"

Madhavi burst into laughter and said, putting her arms around his neck, "My dear and marvellous brother-in-law, you are really the most remarkable man I have met. That *nirvana* to attain which so many seekers tried and failed, you have reached it with so little effort, with such ease. Now, I do hope you are not imagining that I am still that young Madhavi in skirts!"

"My dear, you cannot imagine how much I wish I could still regard you as a child. But I must confess the effort is totally unsuccessful."

Madhavi looked at him intensely. Deep womanly understanding was evident in her look—but the judge fancied that she imported flashes of mischief into it too, the wench.

The spell of their mutual fascination was suddenly broken. Venkanna entered to announce "Mr. Anand to see you, sir."

Madhavi clapped her hands in joy. "Mr. Anand has come? How lovely! Let me go and enquire how the chaste and faithful wives of the place are faring." She darted out of the room, whistling an air. The judge followed her, chuckling to himself.

Anand was waiting in the hall. The floor was covered with a bright, finely worked carpet and on the walls were hung tiger skins. Spotting the judge trailing behind Madhavi, Anand stood at attention and greeted him with "Good morning, Your Honour!" Turning to Madhavi, he said "Good morning, Madam! It is such a pleasure to see you, and so unexpected."

The judge just nodded in response. Madhavi said, "Me? I came by the early morning train. How is everybody getting on, Anand?"

"Getting on well, Madam, thank you." Turning to the judge, he said, "Today the Hanuman Lanka case

will come up for defence arguments, Your Honour. I have come to remind you."

"You mean Chandrayya's pronote case? Yes, I remember. The case apart, Anand, the child has come from the city and badly needs some relaxation. Will you arrange a suitable dinner?"

That meant meats and wines, of course. Anand nearly smiled. He thought of his old pious mother and his own correct observance of the Brahmin code at home. And he thought of the variety of things he had done (which would have shocked his mother to death if she knew of them) in order to please his bosses. The incongruity of the two worlds in which he lived alternately did pain and amuse Anand now and then. But one had to live.

Lying huddled in a sofa, Madhavi was examining her manicured finger-nails. Looking at Anand obliquely, she was musing too: "Head Clerk Anand! Past middle age, he has all the time been treading softly, gently, in the shadows of his officers' benevolent looks. Violet curtains, pretty faces, cauli-flower, if the officers were fond of them, why, he was a connoisseur of them too. Anand has recognised and acted on the bourgeois truth that it pays to please and be helpful to your boss. His personal code of conduct, habits and morals, he has likewise attuned them to suit the varying tastes of his successive superiors. And in return for all this self-discipline what does he hope to get? Next to nothing. How irresistible and empty this attraction of bourgeois life! What absolute power of enslavement in its culture! Caught in its spell, even a man-eater of Kumaon might start using knife and fork and so conform to table manners. And to resist the charm of this bourgeois world it needs a man much stronger than Anand. After all, was she not also being carried away, like a feeble straw in this floodtide of pretence?"

But did it really matter? The sands of time will run out fast and meanwhile she, with Masha, was only trying to project her life, like

a rainbow, across the sands. Why not?"

Down the centuries, generations of Telugu poets (may their tribe increase) have sung ballads and poems in praise of the river Godavari. Nannaya, the father of Telugu poetry, was nurtured by the holy waters of the perennial river and this gave him the strength to write the epic of Mahabharata. Mother Godavari, silent witness to the rise and fall of many Andhra empires, the poets say, is part of the Andhra's life and heritage. Flowing majestically across the Andhra terrain, it has fed millions of acres of rice fields. The river is indeed the god-mother of the Telugu race and its culture. (It was lucky that at the turn of the century Sir Arthur Cotton built an anicut and thus saved the embedded Andhra culture from being washed out into the sea).

Chandrayya of the pronote case referred to by the judge is the agriculturist of our story. The coconut grove belongs to him. The rice field, however, belongs to Chandrayya's cousin Surayya. According to a pronote executed by Surayya, he owed eight thousand rupees to Chandrayya.

The grove and the field both lie alongside a canal of the river Godavari. The sprout in the field and the sapling in the grove are nourished by the same waters and grow on the same soil. And for generations the ancestors of Chandrayya and Surayya were born, they flourished and perished on the same soil. Children of that earth, their ancestors treated it with reverence through fair weather and foul.

But during the time of Chandrayya and Surayya the grove and the field were insulted many a time. Their honour and pride were dragged to law courts. One never knew what passions, what dark hatreds of the old days of the jealous queen Chitrangi lay dormant in the waters of the holy river, but they seemed to have come to the surface now. Between Surayya

and Chandrayya grew an estrangement.

At the time when the pronote executed by Surayya was reaching the expiry date, his daughter Rangamma came of age. Chandrayya advised his cousin to marry Rangamma to his wife's brother. "What!" yelled Surayya, like a wounded tiger, "To your wife's brother? That congenital idiot, that worthless, silly insufferable ass! Never!"

"Well, in that case, let him pay what he owes us to the last pie," was the advice given to Chandrayya one night by his better half.

Surayya stiffened and Chandrayya counter-stiffened. A suit was filed and it was contested.

On the evening when Madhavi and Masha were engaged in their pourparlers at the Marina at Madras, Chandrayya called at the house of Head Clerk Anand.

After hearing the story, Anand said "Certainly, you are within your rights. You need an injunction order restraining Surayya from proceeding with the reaping of the harvest. It could be given. Meet me day after tomorrow evening at seven o'clock at the Refreshment Room. I shall be waiting for you in the front room. You can depend on me for the rest of the programme."

Things moved according to plan and on the appointed evening, Anand was found with Chandrayya in the front room of the R.R. And in the ante-room were, at a reserved table, Srimathi Madhavi and the judge. A snow white cloth, glittering like the forehead of Lord Shankara, like the crescent moon in his matted hair, like the crystalline waters of the Ganga, was spread on the table. The table sustained many bottles with liquids that glowed like the Aurora Borealis. His Honour started dropping lighted matches into emptied bottles.

In the adjoining room, Anand was asking Chandrayya: "Is this all strange to you? Are you afraid?" Chandrayya was touched to the quick and retorted, "You are asking

me? God, if only you knew how many officers and inspectors I have met here!"

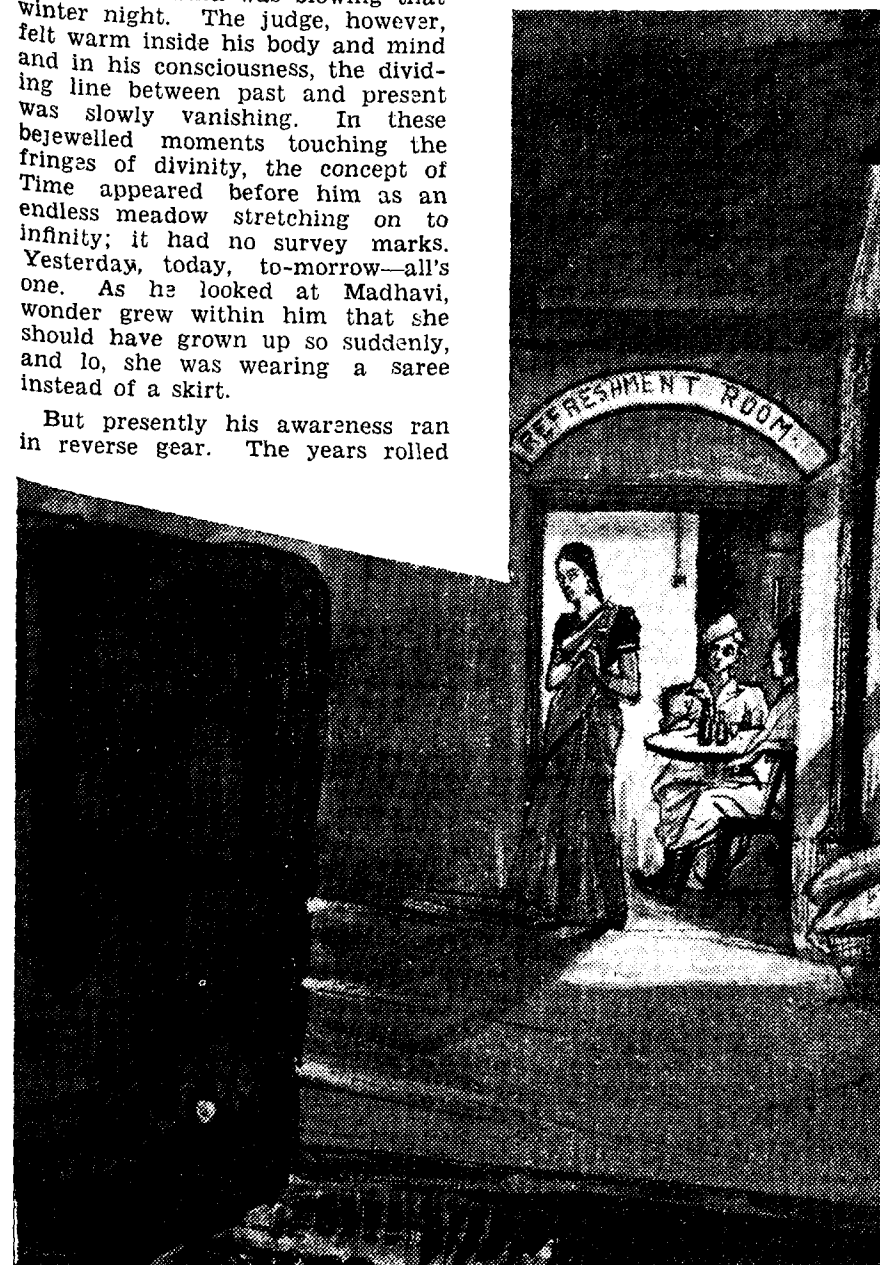
"So you need not confine yourself to plain soda water?"

Outside the room it was cold. A cutting east wind was blowing that winter night. The judge, however, felt warm inside his body and mind and in his consciousness, the dividing line between past and present was slowly vanishing. In these bejewelled moments touching the fringes of divinity, the concept of Time appeared before him as an endless meadow stretching on to infinity; it had no survey marks. Yesterday, today, to-morrow—all's one. As he looked at Madhavi, wonder grew within him that she should have grown up so suddenly, and lo, she was wearing a saree instead of a skirt.

But presently his awareness ran in reverse gear. The years rolled

back. He was in a different situation, in a different place.

Presently a local train puffed into the station. It was about to move. The guard whistled. He waved the green lamp. Like an arrow shot by an unknown hand His Honour



ran out and boarded the train. It moved on.

"Brother-in-law!" shrieked Madhavi and came running into the front room. But the train had gathered speed.

There she stood, astride on the doorstep, stunned. She felt the rolling wheels crushing her heart. Her languid eyes heavy with mascara gazed vacantly into the space beyond.

There she stood, astride on the doorstep, like a statue carved by a master sculptor who, tormented by the magic of the midnight silence and moved by the beauty of his vision, had created this inspired angel in marble—

There stood Madhavi, astride on the door step.

Anand suddenly saw her. Oceans clashed in his heart.

On the saffron blossomed gardens of Kashmir the 'follies girls of gay Hollywood the midnight music of negro maidens in the dense African forests the hula hula dances of Bali and Javanese maids the lights of New York and Monte Carlo Rio Rita Carmen Miranda—oh the fused essence of the warm delights the psychic music in soul the music of a thousand violins the coma of a thousand wine casks the charm of a thousand Nylon garments oh the confluence of music and literature oh the congestion between literature and music oh!—

"Why, what has happened, Madam?" asked Anand, with a dry voice, coming to.

"My brother-in-law! He jumped into that train!"

"Which train?"

"God, what an idiot! the train that has just left, didn't you see?"

The droning in Anand's brain stopped. Comprehension came to him gradually.

"The car is parked outside. And there is no driver! And I haven't brought my hand bag either! Tell me, Anand, what am I to do now? What am I to do..." Madhavi's angry voice trailed off in helplessness. Anand felt a strange elation

as of a hero, a knight. Sir Galahad, Don Quixote.

"Don't you worry your pretty head, lady", he said emboldened by an overpowering impulse of gallantry. "After all, nothing has happened. His Honour though tipsy will be quite safe—"

"Blast his honour—" interrupted Madhavi, "how am I to pay the bill and get home?"

"Leave it to Anand" said Anand coolly, "and like the dear thing you are, follow me. I shall escort you home."

Chandrayya paid all the bills. Anand took the wheel. Chandrayya was dropped at his cottage on the way.

The moon was down when the car reached the bungalow. A petromax was burning in the hall, and at the gate a liveried servant was dozing.

Entering the hall, Madhavi asked him the appropriate question: "Is the master in? Has the memsaab retired to her bed?" The master was not in. The memsaab was asleep.

Madhavi stretched herself on the sofa. Conferring on him a piquant look to show her gratitude she told Anand "Many thanks indeed". I am grateful to you for your help. I shudder to think what might have happened stranded there like that."

"Please, Madam, don't make me feel uncomfortable. I have done my duty and nothing else. I am much too small to be able to render you any help. On the other hand, it is in your power to do me favours."

"You are wrong," said Madhavi, "I don't agree. In a way, you are placed in a better position than I am, you at least earn your livelihood, I—I am a parasite."

"Livelihood, my foot," Anand exclaimed. "My total monthly earnings cannot buy, say the blouse which you are wearing."

"May be, but you know, Anand, I too sometimes suffer for want of money," confessed Madhavi. She was in an expansive mood.

Anand was surprised. "You don't tell me, Madam! That is incredible."

Pray, why? It is perfectly credible. For instance, I am now desperately in need of a thousand rupees, see? And where can I get that? My brother-in-law is the only source. But if he refuses, I am helpless."

"Money!" said Anand, "You shouldn't talk about it like that. You are a Maharani, and a thousand rupees is nothing to you. A thousand? I will get it for you, don't worry. You have only to tell me, Madam! By nine o'clock in the morning, you shall have a thousand rupees."

It was a pleasant shock for Madhavi. She called the portico servant and told him he could go home for the night. And turning to Anand, she said, in soft undertones, "This is a strange evening, Anand. All sorts of fantastic things are happening. A thousand rupees, did you say? Where can you get it from?"

Anand smiled at her. "There is nothing you do not know, Madam. You are, of course, pretending ignorance. This is the age of the sovereign rule of officials, Madam. And they in turn depend on their clerks to look to things. Officers can't be bothered about petty details of administration. Their pursuits are after the higher things of life—fraternity, peace and happiness. But if in the course of their delicate pursuits, any dangers crop up, the minor fry are there to be sacrificed. And the officers continue harvesting their delights. This golden age must surely be familiar to you. And therefore, a thousand rupees is as nothing to me—as long as it is for you. Only, I must be a detached agent—a trustee. If I take a single pie home, the wrath of the gods will descend on me. *Sircar* gives me something, thank God, to keep the home fires burning."

Madhavi felt outraged. But the prospect was so tempting.

"Supposing, supposing," she timidly put in, "You give me a thousand rupees! will not my

brother-in-law know it?" "There is no need for your brother-in-law to know. And even if he knows, the heavens won't come down. You can take care of him yourself, can't you?"

Whither Madhavi, she questioned herself. But it did not matter. Society was moaning with the pain of class war. Money was cornered by the chosen few and frozen. The first attempt of one should be to make it melt and flow, after which it would find its even, proper level. Caught in the uncritical entanglements of our tattered moral attitudes and petrified behaviour-patterns, she heard nothing but a pandemonium of rococo voices and weird music. It was difficult to know which was the melody and which the mad cry. In these times when all human values were in the melting pot it was foolish to cling to absolute notions of right and wrong. Coming was the great revolution, and till then, all else was secondary.

"Agreed, Mr. Anand, let us close the deal. What shall I do in return for your kindness?" asked Madhavi.

"Simple!" said Anand. "What you have to do is this. You have seen Chandrayya, haven't you? He has a case in Honour's court. Involved in the case are the affairs of a rice field. Chandrayya wants an injunction order restraining his cousin from reaping the harvest—only for a week. You have only to whisper this in the ear of your brother-in-law at a propitious moment."

"Who is the other party in the case?"

"One Surayya. He owes eight thousand rupees to Chandrayya. They are cousins, you know."

"Is Surayya a poor man?"

"He owns two hundred acres of wet land, besides coconut and mango gardens."

"Then why can't he pay back this small debt?"

If Madhavi was a child of that soil, she would never have put that question. What did she know about the complex psychology of people

like Chandrayya and Surayya? They could lose at a single night's game of cards thousands of rupees and execute pronotes. She had never seen the mile long marriage processions of that part of the country, where the bride, going to the husband's home for the first time, would have trailing behind her scores of people carrying over their heads the bridal presents—bunches of plaintains, gourd fruits, crockery, confectionery and so on. Chandrayya and Surayya (and they were only representative of their class) would contribute liberally to the funds of mutually opposing political parties; they would court the favour of all officials. It was not in Madhavi's ken to comprehend the complex and contradictory trends of these people.

"Oh, family feuds," said Anand.

There was silence. Madhavi yawned, stretched her limbs. How weak she felt! How awful the hangover from the night's experience!

"Alright, Anand," she said smilingly, "the court now rises for the night."

"Good night, Madam."

The judge, (a mighty man he was, dispenser of the Sircar's laws) finally reached home during the dying hours of the night.

Hearing the sound of the footsteps in the corridor, Madhavi sprang up on her bed, drew the curtain aside and cried, "Is it my dear dear brother-in-law that I see or his apparition? I thought you had disappeared into your sweet wonderland—"

"To meet dear Madhavi in her infinite variety—" interrupted the judge, entering the room.

"You naughty brother-in-law. But, look, silly ass, do you know to what humiliation you put me last night?"

"Tell me what happened. How did you reach home?"

"Oh, Anand brought me home. There was another bucolic brute with him. He paid the bills, however," replied Madhavi. She drew the curtain back and seated herself

squarely on the bed, lazily stretching her arms out. The blue lamp on the wall was dim. Suddenly it started to rain outside. A whiff of cold wind pierced the curtain and the lamp-flame went out. A calendar on the wall, showing Radha and Krishna, quivered and dropped to the ground.

"It is very cold, my dear brother-in-law, would you mind closing the shutters?" The judge did not mind.

* * *

After some days, one evening, thousands of people gathered on the Marina. An important public meeting was going on. The orations were on the subject of banishing hunger for ever from the country. Presiding over the function was Srimathi Madhavi. And the principal speaker was Masha. He did not have to go underground after all.

That evening, in the provincial town, the judge was sitting in his club, at a game of bridge. The problem facing him and his friends at that moment was not hunger—it was thirst. Well-bred horses, pure-white, galloped in the sparkling glasses. But the thirst continued.

That evening, in the fields of Hanuman Lanka, in the Godavari Delta, there occurred a terrible riot. Local factions had come to a clash consequent upon a certain injunction order, restraining the reaping of harvest for a week. Two people were killed, and forty-six were injured. Police arrived on the spot immediately after the event and arrested two hundred people including Surayya and Chandrayya. Details of the riot appeared in the daily papers.

That evening, Mr. Anand attended the town cinema with his chaste and faithful wife. The picture was a mighty mythological. Superb dances, music right through.

That evening, in the coconut grove of Chandrayya, fireflies glowed as they had from times immemorial. The crickets chirruped as they had always done.

That evening, the weather was fine, with dry white clouds floating lazily across the sky and the wind blowing with its caressing coolness.



MUSLIM



MAHARASHTRIAN





MARWARI



SIKH



GUJARATI

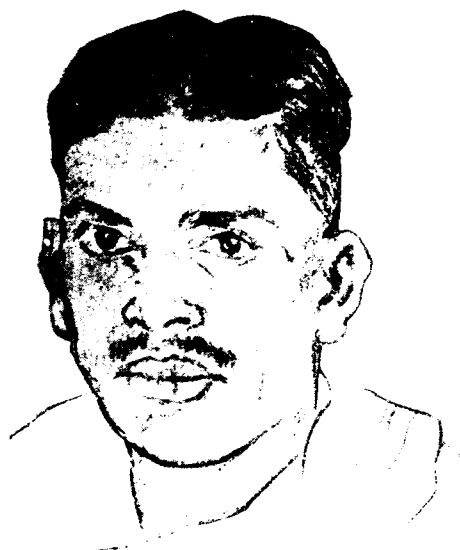


BENGALI

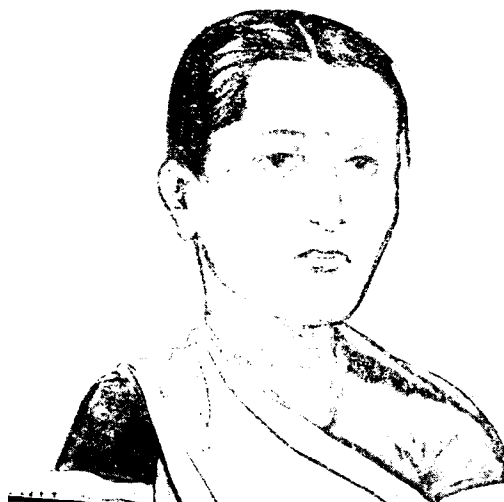




KALAYALEE



ANDHRA



FROM PARTITION^{to} PARTITION

A SEDENTARY ODYSSEY

By "FREE LANCE"

RECLINING in my arm-chair with the key-board of my typewriter at my fingers' ends, and the mind beginning to turn back on itself, I feel tempted (I know it's also hazardous) to chronicle for the nonce a synoptic history of my own times. Let me enumerate my disqualifications for such a task in hopes of disarming adverse criticism in advance. I am not one of the big men of my time with any record of outstanding achievement to my credit. For, there has been an unbroken tradition from Thucydides to Trotsky, from Caesar to Churchill of the makers of history writing it up as well. Nor, as befits less heroic times, have I had access (fugitively or by the front-door) to the ante-rooms of the great. I have not peered through strategic key-holes nor eavesdropped behind diplomatic curtains. I do not know how much of my urge springs from an untenable egoism, and how much from the sense of a vocation.

There are two considerations which should extenuate, if not justify, attempts at autobiography by the obscure, camouflaged under any misleading title whatsoever. The first is that I may claim to know just a little more about my times than I can ever hope to about that of the Pallavas. Even the people who write most learnedly about a remote past must feel and be more intimately at home in their own *milieu* than out of it. The only shocking exception to this universal rule that occurs to me is—Gibbon. For he remained a silent and inglorious member of Parliament what time Burke thundered against the iniquities of England in two con-

tinents. It did not however prevent him from becoming and still remaining the greatest authority on the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

The second consideration is that contemporary records, however confused or meagre, have a superior validity to the circumstantial inferences and bold guesses of the future historian. We who are too near the scene might often fail to see the wood for the trees, but the distant or so-called dispassionate view, evolved long after the event, ascribes to the wood all the merit that pertains to the trees! For there is an inner logic, an occult coherence, a spiritual inevitability underlying events, the discovery of which is the obsession of the philosopher brooding over purpose in life. Only contemporary testimony can make a vital contribution to the evolution of it.

The autobiographies of the great draw attention from the events of their time to the secrets of their ego, thus suffusing movements with the glow of emotion. But the autobiography of the obscure should promote a reverse process, namely, to divert attention from the insignificance of the man to the magnitude of the events chronicled, thus making the heroic credible. Letter-writers, diarists, chroniclers, and other smaller fry have often thrown transverse beams of light on current affairs without however being aware of it.

I have just been a spectator of my times, and have watched the current of life flowing by, both in its clear and muddy states, with a

bureaucracy, and continue to be prize-boys of the Nehru Cabinet as well. This remarkable power of survival and self-renovation has been the subject of exaggerated satire and irony. But it is after all an insignificant penalty to pay for our success.

In the dark ages of Indian history, the torch of our culture has been kept burnished and burning only in the South.

Among ourselves, there are differences enough which are certainly acute even where they are not always real. But beyond the Vindhyas, we are all dubbed Madrasis with compendious envy. Unlike the canny Scot, we don't stand by each other. Each of us plays a lone hand. We are supple and supremely serviceable; we germinate ideas but allow their paternity to be enjoyed putatively by others!

The chief difference between North and South is this: there is a geographical and climatic continuity of background in the North; there is a mental and ideological continuity in the background of the South.

Madras politics have never been at the mercy of emotional aberrations. But they have matured more securely for that very reason. The essence of the democratic game being a scramble for power, it is a matter of astonishment that our corruptions are not so serious as they have been elsewhere. We have not yet made administration impersonal; but the vagaries of individual intrusion are neither so many nor so scandalous as they might well have been.

This leads me to consider the origin and growth of the Non-Brahmin movement. It is a short-sighted notion to suppose that the movement started with connivance of the bureaucrats thirty years ago. Its roots really go back to the oldest period of South Indian history. Although the communal wrangle has been going on for more than a generation, it has left the springs of social intercourse singularly untouched and unpolluted. At the beginning of the movement it had a patron saint in Sir P. T. Chetty who

affected white robes to underline his claim to canonisation, but whose real title to fame is that he once declared that 'political prisoners were worse than criminals.' To balance him, there is in Mr. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker a 'black-shirted saint' who has popularised the notion that the Aryans are a kind of bloodsuckers. But it is not realised that not all Tamils are Dravidians, nor all Brahmins Aryans. The scientific foundations of Dravidastan cannot bear extended or sustained scrutiny. They are mostly eked out by erratic etymology, fanciful history and frenzied phonetics. But the cry does duty for a nucleus out of which an opposition may eventually emerge, capitalising mass-feeling but without capitulating to it.

Of other notable figures who filled the South Indian stage with distinction, special mention may be made of the roles of Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar and Dr. C. R. Reddy. From the point of view of pure intelligence, Dr. C. R. Reddy is easily the first; but it was his misfortune to be up against the Raja of Panagal, and to be smitten by him hip and thigh in the vulgar arena of politics. For Dr. Reddy's forte was in politics, and yet he was driven out of it by the unkind fates,—an unfeeling, mechanical block vote!

Sir C. P. had the rare honour of running the administration of the province of Madras during the period of Lord Willingdon's governorship. His greatness synchronised with the palmy days of dyarchy itself. Of the two halves of the Government, the popular one was supposed capable of being changed by a free vote of the Council. But there was a block vote which was in the pocket of the better half, and which was invariably pressed into service to bolster an unpopular Ministry. That was the unpleasant discovery made by Dr. Reddy, and thereafter he turned his back on the Council as a delusion and a snare. Sir C. P. was however differently sponsored. He once declared in the Council amidst laughter and cheers: 'My Government of which Lord Willingdon is the head.' Though

he was the victim of an unprecedented volume of rancour and obloquy, he laid the foundations of our provincial prosperity by visualising the benefits of cheap power, and making it available for industrial and agricultural purposes on what was then feared an unduly optimistic scale. Events have since vindicated his vision and courage.

The Economic Revolution

Thirty years ago, the basic wage was Rs. 15 a month; and millions found it not intolerable to live on it. In retail shops, I remember to have bought rice at 6 to 8 measures to the rupee. Everything else could be adjusted to that norm. But two world wars have had the effect of bringing to the surface millions who had lived in placid, pathetic content to whom a vision of an ampler world if not a purer air was unfolded. Two spirals of inflation have thus been tacked on to the economic structure within a generation; and so prices are booming while commodities are either shrinking or disappearing altogether. In those far-off days there was plenty of everything, but not enough money about; now there is a lot of debased money, and nothing which can be bought with it which is worth while.

An index to our diseased economy is the alarming growth of the art of advertisement. In the old days, we had to go in search of our trusted dealers. Now they invade us in packs in the privacy of our homes. Though there are less things to buy, there are more shops everywhere in which to buy them. I do not pretend to understand this, being but a layman. We are at once richer and poorer, better fed and worse-starved, more active and more lazy—all because we fought the war on the basis of unlimited liability. So our debts are coming home to roost.

This new situation is ideally suited for the tactics of the Communist Party throughout the country. For, agreeably to their major premise, they find the economic argument their strongest weapon of propaganda. The emergence of the Communist on the Indian scene is matter for separate consideration. But

he has not only come, and burrowed himself, but also intends to stay on for ever. Outlawing him, proscribing his literature and other ancient but puerile expedients cannot dispose of him. We can deprive him of his occupation only by removing the root-causes of mass poverty and mass ignorance. We are all agreed on these desiderata; only we go about implementing them in blundering ways. We intend to abolish Zamindaris, but there is no definite promise of relief to the tiller in that platform. We have deprived the ordinary worker of his drink; it may be a dubious pleasure; but our motive is an unlovely puritanism. The black-shirts threaten the liquidation of our temples; if that materialises, it would be an instance of the triumph of atheism over the pleasures of popular superstition. But in all these mad flights from pillar to post, and back, the facts that the poor are getting poorer, and that the rich are only changing their labels are entirely forgotten.

Literature And The Arts

The onset of a renaissance in the regional literatures has been advertised throughout the period. But it has been a case of all cry and not so much wool. The Tamils are overdoing Bharati, the Andhras have doubtless their opposite number, and the Malayalees perhaps swear by Vallathol or some one else. Everywhere it is still largely oneman shows. For the rest, there is a sentimental harking back to the Sangam classics, or to Kambhar or to Krishnadevaraya. Journalism has become a capitalist enterprise with the security of gilt-edged and the profits of successful speculation. The artist with the one talent appealing to the still small voice is rebuffed by a barrage of sound and fury signifying nothing.

Chamber music now blares forth from loudspeakers at every street-corner. The nautch which was solemnly excommunicated with bell, book and candle thirty years ago as a naughty recreation, has come back under the sonorous title: Bharata Natyam; and every parlour is converted into a school for dancing. How much of unintended

cruelty to children goes on unchecked can never be known, for parental vanity has been bemused by the mystic utterance of the word ART in all the languages. In this fury of competition, nothing more is achieved than the liquidation of the true-born artist and a lowering of standards.

The learned professions are more crowded, but their influence is on the wane. For the course of events is determined not so much by means of debate and discussion as by authoritarian imposition from above. Indeed, the decline of oratory and the discrediting of debate are the most serious of our losses in this period. In the name of party discipline, the spirit of democracy is sought to be sterilised at the source. The lot of the common man is thus seen to be imposed upon either by his friend or by his enemy. But he does not know till too late who is who!

Summing Up

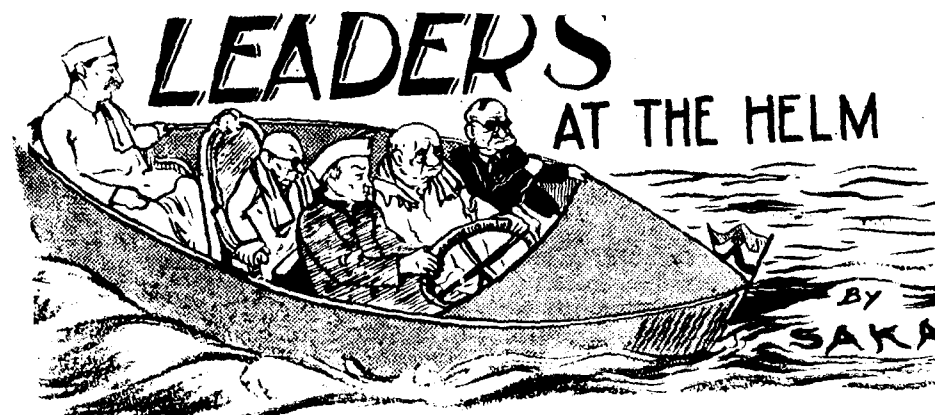
Thus there has been a more or less complete revolution in all walks of life. But as the French proverb says: "The more things change, the more they remain pretty much the same!" I have sampled the feeling of being enslaved no less than of being free. To be frank, my old-time servitude was not as insupportable as it was taken to be for rhetorical purposes. In our un-free condition, we had the luxury of parading before the world as a nation

with a grievance. Now that we are free, I have not felt any of the raptures which I was taught to expect. In short, my character, the character of my fellows, the national character has not changed overnight. I wonder if it will change at all; and if it can, whether it should. Our venerable historical dichotomies still persist:—Hindu vs. Muslim, North vs. South, Brahmin vs. Non-Brahmin. We were easy-going in subjection, for the yoke that bowed us was light. It gave us security without responsibility. The irresponsibility still remains. Luckily for us, the danger of our being over-run by any major power is remote; but we are in danger of pawning our heritage in multifarious directions in exchange for unconsidered trifles. It is as well that we cannot hope to achieve a totalitarian regimentation of our staggering millions; for if we could, we would swallow Russia at one end or challenge the supremacy of America at the other.

If we can keep order within our boundaries, and encourage the peaceful evolution of regional patterns of the good life, we will make an enduring contribution to the peace of the world. For we have the material and moral resources to rear a society which can be progressive and stable, and an economy that distributes its burdens equitably, so that a clear field may be left free for the adventures and achievements of the spirit of man in its ageless quest.



The paradox of the moral life consists in this: that the highest mutuality is achieved where mutual advantages are not consciously sought as the fruit of love. For love is purest where it desires not returns for itself; and it is most potent where it is purest. Complete mutuality, with its advantages to each party to the relationship, is therefore most perfectly realised where it is not intended, but love is poured out without seeking returns. That is how the madness of religious morality, with its trans-social ideal, becomes the wisdom which achieves wholesome social consequences. For the same reason a purely prudential morality must be satisfied with something less than the best.—*Niebuhr*.



PANDIT NEHRU, Sardar Patel and Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar are the three most important figures of India's Central Cabinet today. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has lately declined in influence. He had an initial pull over his colleagues in the Cabinet as the nearest in spirit to the Mahatma, though perhaps the prize for Satyagrahic perfection among all his disciples would have been awarded by the Mahatma himself, if one such had been instituted, to Vinoba Bhave. Gandhi however looked upon Nehru as his political heir. For sagacity in practical affairs and organisational effectiveness of the institutions he controlled, he relied on Patel. The Sardar was the Mahatma's Chief of Staff when the theory of any movement propounded by him reached the operational stage and had to be mobilised into action. For Rajendra Prasad the Mahatma had the preceptor's good-humoured regard for the most obedient and least trouble-giving chela. But it was to C.R. that he turned in difficulties. A strange blend of sets of qualities in opposition went into the making of the Mahatma. He was shrewd, yet simple and candid; firm as a rock in his stand on chosen principles, but ever ready to co-operate with those who challenged them; punctilious but unattached; regal and yet humble; both an egoist and a saint; inflexible of will, yet permeated with the spirit of compromise; unsparing in his judgments but affectionate in personal rela-

tions; a fighter and a lover of peace, a preacher, crusader, propagandist, politician, rebel, reformer, philosopher, all rolled into one. C.R. set himself to study Gandhi; and acquired in course of time enough expertness to be able to calculate to a nicety every minute nuance of Gandhian reaction to any kind of event. He mastered the Mahatma with his intellectual comprehension. He alone among Congressmen could enlist the power of dissent to extract influence in his dealings with the Mahatma. Nehru also, like C.R., proved capable of self-assertion before the Mahatma through attitudes of dissent. But the aloofness and objectivity of C.R. were lacking in Nehru. Nehru's dissent was governed by a pre-ordained harmony of identification with the Mahatma and it could be depended upon never to allow its tempo reach a breaking point. Dissent in the case of Pandit Nehru is a constitutional ventilation of integrity for the satisfaction of a conscience in search of peace in the midst of a taxing world torn with perennial conflicts of duties. There is a certain spontaneity as of the innocence of childhood in it. Which is the reason why it is possible for Nehru to proclaim a difference and act as if it did not exist. No dread of any breach with Nehru therefore ever disturbed the Mahatma. Not so in the case of C.R. He shared with Gandhi one quality of the great: the zest of conquest over opposition. Jinnah magnetised Gandhi with the

constant exercise he gave for his gifts and abilities through the difficulties he presented him with. A similar fascination for the hostile enabled C.R. to seek in conflict the fruition of his influence with the Mahatma. Only Mr. Jinnah, had he been subdued and brought into the fold, could have rivalled C.R. in the hold he exercised on Gandhi. When C.R. passed on from allegiance to divergence, a competitive element entered into his relationship with Gandhi. Respect was consolidated by conflict. It placed C.R. on a higher pedestal than any of the Gandhian lieutenants. Uncertain loyalties fetch a higher price.

The partition of India established C.R. as the most sagacious of Congress leaders. As the partition took place on the lines of the C.R. formula, the credit of an exclusive feat in the prophetic envisagement of history belongs to C.R. Some say that with his formula he gave to events a turn which they would not have taken otherwise, by imparting a filip to Mr. Jinnah's forlorn hopes at a time when they were on the eve of collapse for lack of encouragement. Whatever the theory as to the extent of C.R.'s contribution to the partitioning of the country, the fact remains that the final architects of the plan were Nehru and Patel, while the attitude of Gandhi was one of disconcerted protest eventually lapsing into philosophical acquiescence. The horror of the sequel scarcely left any room for C.R. to claim the honours of pre-vision over the destiny that emerged. Nor was there, at first, any sign of fraternal readiness from Nehru and Patel to invite him to a share of the power that had come. His exclusion from the Centre might have continued indefinitely but for the intervention of the Mahatma. The posts for which he was subsequently chosen seem as though planned to divest him of the fruition of a lifetime's laborious dedication to Gandhian principles.

Renunciation of wealth and material benefits was the basis on which the pattern of Gandhian leadership was perfected over the past quarter of a century. Popular con-

fidence came to Congress leaders because they revealed themselves as selfless servants of the public who cared nothing for the normal paths of lucrative endeavour. But at the moment of the political triumph of the Congress, it is as if it lost its moral footing. C.R. in receipt of the fabulous Governor-General's pay fixed for British predecessors in the predatory imperialist era, is a figure of incongruity. If one steeped in the distilled essence of the culture of Gandhism over so many years needs so much, is it any wonder that throughout the hierarchy of Congressmen the floodgates should be opened for a complete disowning of the non-acquisitive standards of the Gandhian teaching? The power of saintliness lies in its immunity to the common acquisitive impulses of the worldly-wise. Influence of the Gandhian type cannot be squared with overmuch of affluence. C.R.'s gains as Governor-General are balanced by losses which leave him the poorer now in the power to influence people. He was richer in this respect previously. Influence is not a matter of the technical adjustment of words to captivating sentiments. It is an emanation of character. There has been a steep decline in the power of Congress leaders to live up to their professed principles in the wake of their assumption of office. They survive on the momentum of the past. It is a precarious foundation for existence.

In the setting of pomp and luxury of the Governor-General's office, C.R. has lost his rank as an exemplar of Gandhism. The inhibitions of the office have cut him off from the heart of simplicity. His new dignities seem to have captured him more than he has captured them. We are presented with a cultivated technique of manner which is no substitute for the lovable benevolence of the Satyagrahi. While he wears the crown of sovereignty, other hands wield the sceptre of real power. For Nehru and Patel, the wielders of the sceptre, it does not seem to be easy either, to have to reckon with the exclusion from direct administration of an aspiring

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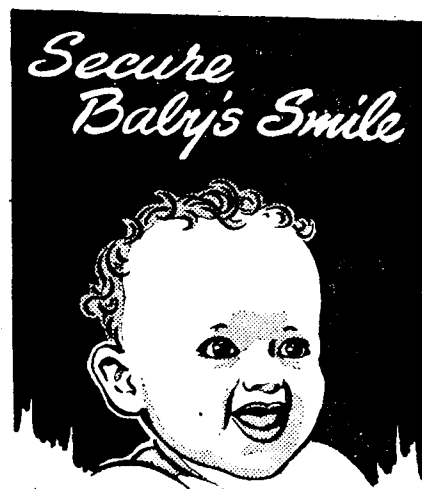
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genius of the stamp of C.R. with an unsatisfied thirst for the contents of files and the handling of portfolios. Two more dissimilar colleagues than Nehru and Patel, harnessed to the common task of running a Government are scarcely to be found in any capital of the world. Nehru's passion has ever been for Socialism and it was thought that it was only held in leash by the bigger passion of the patriot in him for national liberation from foreign rule. Nehru is the natural leader of the Socialists and the Congress Socialists came into being as a party with his blessing. Patel is the darling of the capitalists, their chosen knight-errant for defence of their threatened privileges.

Nehru is impetuous and susceptible to criticism, though the democrat in him is schooled to the admission of the rights of all to criticise whom they wish as they please. Nehru's impetuosity is balanced by a delightful forbearance. He allows the whole world to play on his judgment and subjects himself to the harassment of a continuous introspection that never leaves him any rest. The battles of all conflicting ideologies are for ever being waged on his conscience as an arena. Patel is nothing if not cocksure. He goes inflexibly his own way and his attitude to critics is one of indifference and contemptuous disdain. The Cabinet and all the environs of government at the top are divided into a Nehru party and a Patel party. The two work at cross purposes ceaselessly and it is a miracle that the accumulated force of their clashes has not resulted in a crash. This miracle is partly due to the deep personal esteem of the two leaders for each other despite the heat of the differences that continually drive them to mutual exasperation. Their patriotism is greater than their ambition and each is aware of the country's need of the other's services no less than of his own. Nehru and Patel complement the virtues and failings of each other impelling the Government run by them into a middle path between the extremes repre-

sented by their respective characters.

C.R.'s chance for real power will come if and when the Nehru-Patel harmony diminishes. C.R. is credited with having established great influence over the Prime Minister already, and to be exercising it in the filling of some of the important appointments. The C.R. stamp is patent in Santhanam's admission to the Cabinet. The dexterity of C.R.'s choice for injecting into the Centre a trusted lieutenant of his own acceptable to both the main parties must compel the admiration of all political strategists. Is it the prelude for the conversion of the bi-party structure of the Cabinet into a triangular orientation? When major parties are fairly evenly matched, there will be occasions when the whole power of decision of the State will pass on into one single vote poised as a balancing lever between the two.

In the atmosphere of exciting possibilities confronting the Centre,

Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar has established himself in the esteem of all as a counsellor of rich worth and dependability. He has ability, wisdom, experience and integrity. He is attached to no party. He has no favourites to godfather into positions. He has no personal ambitions. His inclination is for well-earned rest after so many years spent with such distinction in administrative service. Membership of the Central Cabinet came to him unsought and he continues to serve there as a call to duty which he has no right to ignore, whatever may be his own inclination or the strain of the effort on one of his age. His strength lies in his detachment and freedom from vainglory. Often he is content to work and strive, leaving others to reap the laurels. Few are aware of how much the grand success of our police action in Hyderabad is due to his timely initiative and insistence. But this is no accident. It accords with the pattern of his conception of public work in which there is no room for any

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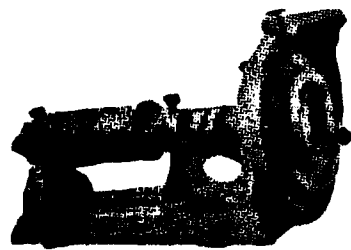
bravado, no putting forward of self to win applause. He is a man of few words and inclines to taciturnity but there is no element of unsocialness in it. He combines graciousness with precision. His proneness to silence invests his speech with rarity value, and his opinions have added weight in consequence. To the intrinsic worth of his judgments on affairs, is added the further virtue of economy of articulation, and nobody's advice is more res-

pectfully sought by the dissident groups at the Centre. He has attained a position of matchless influence with the leaders of the nation and he has been using it with exemplary rectitude to ensure peace and promote efficiency. The value placed on his approbation and goodwill by both Nehru and Patel is not the least of the stabilising influences at the Centre in the midst of the intrigues and turmoil of the day.



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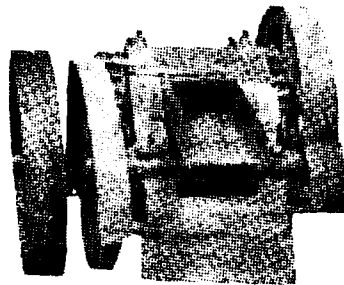
We have to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession with the supernatural and metaphysical speculation, that loosening of the mind's discipline in religious ceremonial and mystical emotionalism, which come in the way of our understanding ourselves and the world. We have to come to grips with the present, this life, this world, this nature which surrounds us in its infinite variety. Some Hindus talk of going back to the Vedas, some Moslems dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies, for there is no going back to the past; there is no turning back even if this was thought desirable. There is only one-way traffic in Time.—Jawaharlal Nehru.



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(Excerpts from Mahatma Gandhi's Writings and Speeches)

In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level.

The prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed.

Everyone thinks of himself and his family. No one thinks of the whole of India. The centripetal force is undoubtedly there, but it is not vocal, never boisterous; whereas the centrifugal is on the surface, and in its very nature makes the loudest noise, demanding the attention of all. It manifests itself most in matters communal. This has given rise to fear in other fields.

It is wrong to think that anyone is good enough for the Constituent Assembly, it is altogether wrong to think that the election carries any honour with it, it is a post of service if one is fitted for the labours and, lastly, it is wrong to regard the post as one for making a few rupees while the Assembly lasts. The Constituent Assembly should have such members only who know something about constitutions all the world over, above all, about the constitution that India's genius demands. It is debasing to think that true service consists in getting a seat in the Assembly.

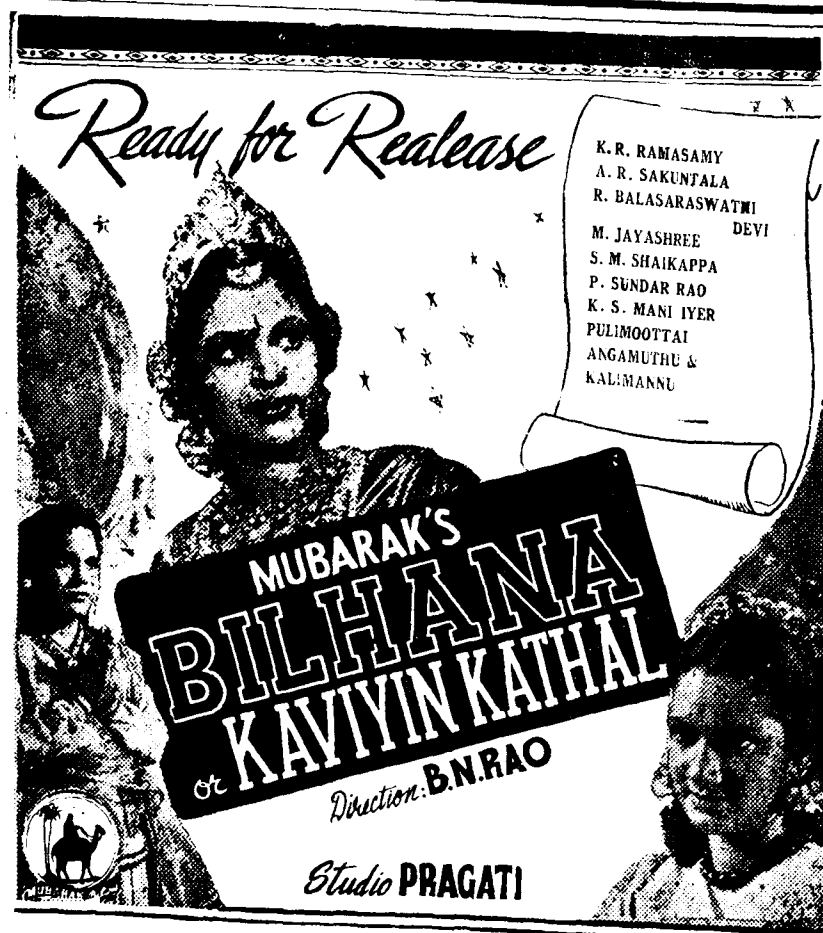
In my opinion, the salary and allowances drawn by the gentlemen of the various Assemblies are out of all proportion to the services they render to the country. The scales fixed are on the English pattern, not at all compatible with the income of this country—the poorest in the world.

If the Congress wants to continue as a people's organization, the Ministers cannot live as *sahib log* nor use for private work facilities provided by Government for official duties.

I have been saying for some time, that the words "truth and non-violence" should be removed from the Congress constitution.

If the wife has to prove her loyalty and undivided devotion to her husband, so has the husband to prove his allegiance and devotion to his wife. You cannot have one set of weights and measures for the one, and a different one for the other. Yet we have never heard of a husband mounting the funeral pyre of his deceased wife.

A slave-holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself in his deputy in the cage holding the slave.



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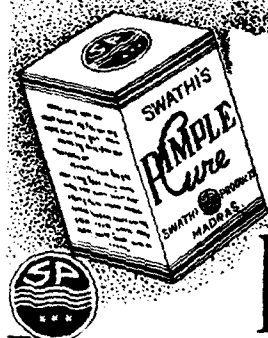
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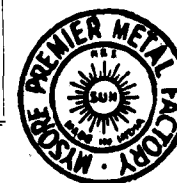
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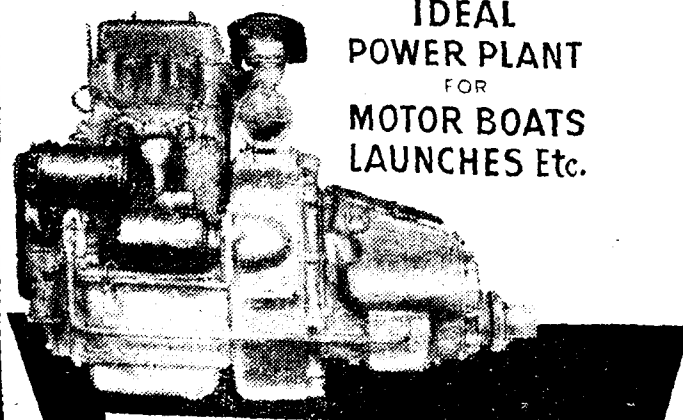
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