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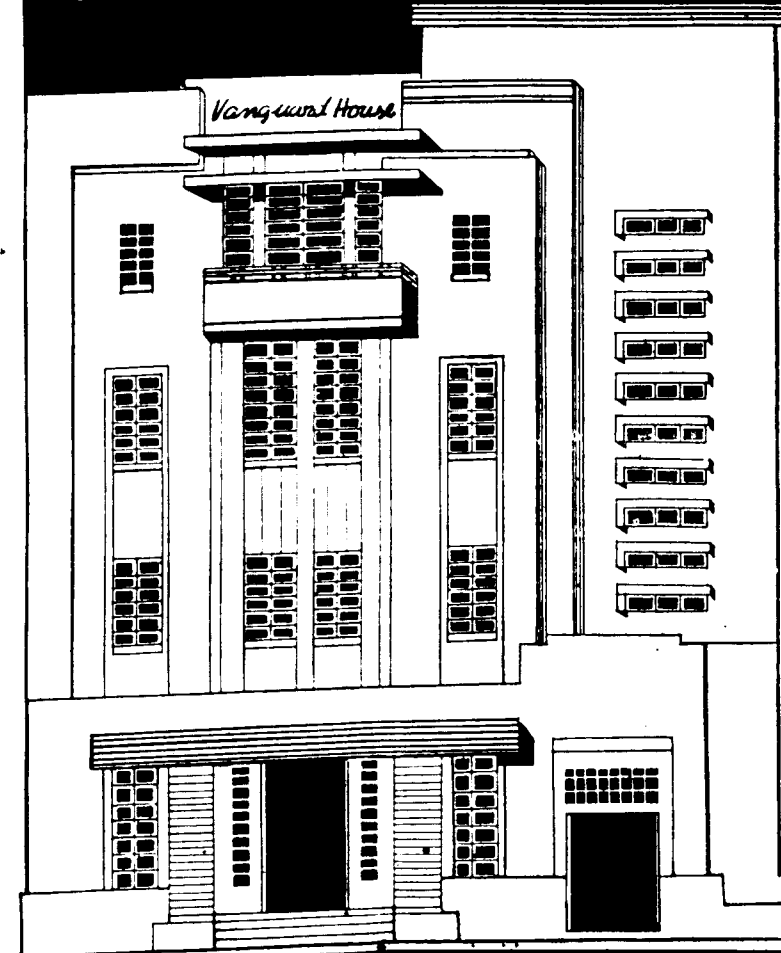
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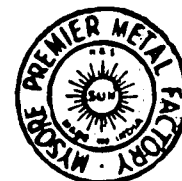
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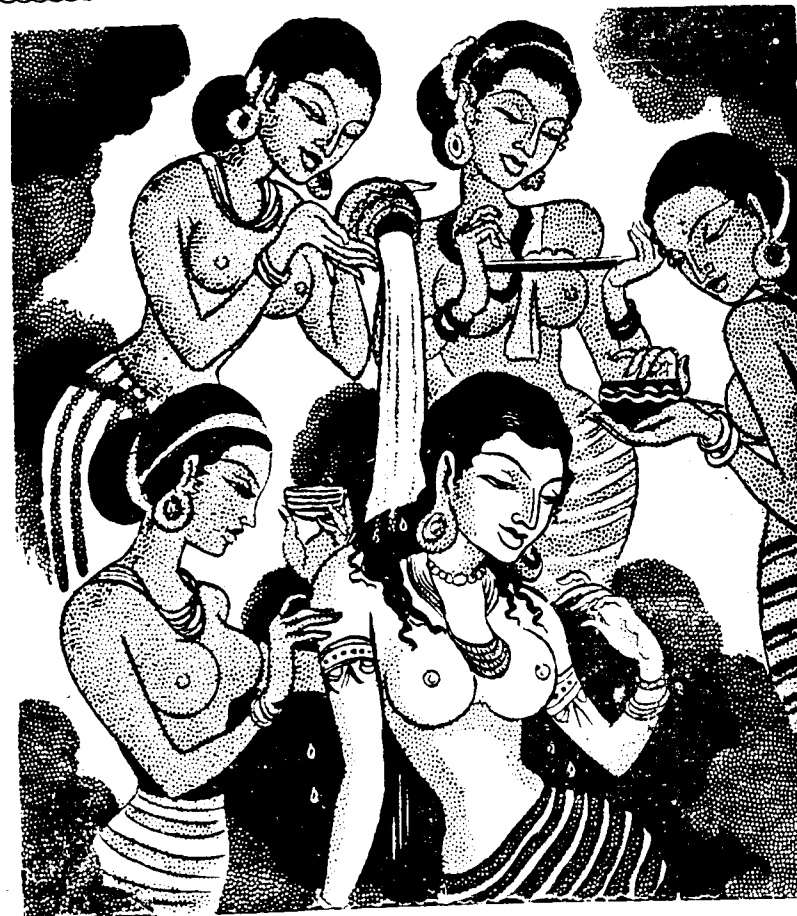
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SWATANTRA

ANNUAL

OCTOBER 1949

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FROM SERVICE TO POWER

THE trend of leadership during the past two years has moved from service to power. The period of service to people, which synchronised with Gandhian leadership, lasted for nearly a quarter century. In service the centre of interest is not one's own self, but the community as a whole, whose welfare is sought to be promoted. In work rendered as service there is therefore room for all. There is no envy or illwill, only an agreeable comradeship. Congress work as fashioned by Gandhi shut out none. It served as an integrating force for drawing people together and stimulating them to worthy standards of social behaviour. And it made the Congress beloved of the people. At every election Congressmen swept the polls. No other party in the country could withstand the might of the influence of the Congress, and one by one they languished, lost heart and retired from the unequal contest, leaving the field clear for the Congress.

This was the condition of affairs when the Gandhian era came to a close with the fruition of Gandhian effort for the ending of British rule. Then came the Nehru Government. The British withdrawal precipitated Congress leaders from jails into ministerships. Some of them have stood the change well. Others, by far the larger number, have not. Nehru at the head of the Central Government continues to be the adored of the masses quite as much as in his pre-office days when the bulk of his time was spent in prisons. He exercises on his countrymen a hypnotism that equals if it has not surpassed the magic hold of the Mahatma. But there is a difference between the leadership of Gandhi and that of Nehru. Discipline was the sheet-anchor of the former. It did not tolerate corrupt or rebellious elements intrinsically out of harmony with its central social objective. It kept itself pure by refusing to rely on numbers for mere prestige. There were no internal disloyalties corroding the character of its endeavour, from within. Along with political heirship to the Mahatma, Nehru has inherited many of the gifts of that great man. But succession to leadership devolved on him in a changed environment that left no scope for the transformation of common people into heroes, which was the unique speciality of Gandhi's influence, but on the other hand reversed that process by converting heroes into clay. Coming after Gandhi, Nehru had to reckon with the exhaustion of the idealistic urges that had their rise in Gandhian inspiration. Many lieutenants



By Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury.

of the Mahatma had tired of the austerities of the Non-cooperation campaigns. Gandhism had been squeezed dry out of them. They were in a mood to cash in on their old sacrifices and to treat the opportunities of political freedom as a means for self-rewarding license. So it came to pass that when Nehru exchanged the role of rebel for that of ruler, a discordance in spirit began to manifest itself between leader and lieutenants.

We owe to this discordance the grave contradictions that are daily multiplying between Nehru's past and present. There is no end to the violations of the tenets and pledges of Nehru the non-official thinker and politician in the actions of Nehru the administrator. As Prime Minister, he is no doubt served by colleagues of outstanding integrity and brilliance of whom any Government anywhere in the world could well be proud. But these are very few numerically. The vast majority do not reflect in their outlook and administration the character of the Prime Minister. Nehru is a Socialist but his Government is far from sympathetic to Socialists. Nehru is a non-communalist, but some of the Congress Ministers openly delight in fervid avowals of communalism. Nehru detests blackmarketeers, but blackmarketing flourishes throughout the country under a canopy of administrative tolerance sympathetically held over the heads of profiteers by indulgent wielders of power. From the citadels of Congress power faithfulness to the Mahatma's teachings has departed though rose garlands continue to adorn his portraits and incense continues to be burnt in front of them. Leaders that have turned treacherous to Congress principles have come to rule in the name of the Congress. They have solved no major economic problems. People are worse off now than they were two years ago. Corruption and nepotism have become rampant. The better class of permanent servants who used to take pride in good work are snubbed, and have become disheartened in the poisonous atmosphere of the Secretariats where they feel themselves unwanted. The only enthusiasm extant among the services is that of intrigue for wangling better jobs and more emoluments. Hope has fled from the people and their faith in the Congress is diminishing day by day.

The mood of discontent and rebellion against the ruling regime is on the increase every day. It would have burst the bounds of restraint, but it is held in leash by popular glamour for the Prime Minister. They have no love for his Government but they do not want any other Prime Minister. Nehru's hold on his subjects is a personal triumph divested of public support for his policies as head of the Government. As such, it represents, in essence, an anomaly under the democratic system. It may be possible for Nehru to rule indefinitely, leaving the race between the mass affection for him and public aversion for most of his incompetent lieutenants, to take its own course. If he does this his stature will not grow. The right thing for the Prime Minister, which will secure for him the destiny for which he is entitled, is boldly to disown and dislodge from the Congress organisation the self-seeking disloyal elements that are exploiting their connection with the Congress for personal ends, and release the Congress administration from power politics for more efficient service to the people.



MY little nephew aetat ten is a precocious politician. He is all for testing new ideas as and when they come into his or somebody else's head. But, unlike the bulk of his tribe, he is ever ready to make a guinea-pig of himself. So when he read in the papers that the Governor-General had announced a sovereign specific for our educational ills he was all aflame with excitement. "Rajaji says that he does not care what you do with a boy four days in the week if only you allow him to remain at home and help in the family's work for the other three days. So from tomorrow I shall not go to school." And he was as good as his word.

We were all in a pretty pickle, as you may guess. We were too civilised to think of the rod. But we did not know what to do with him. His mother with her pots and pans most certainly did not want him at home; what with inflation and the local potters' strike crockery was too costly for a boy to be allowed to play skittles with it. His father, being a schoolmaster, was by proposition ruled out as no fit company for the son in the household phase of the school-week. The uncle, a chronic scribbler installed on the pial like his divine namesake, had perforce to take charge of the boy.

It would be more accurate, however, to say that the boy took charge of him. And he began educating himself at the expense of the uncle by putting him the kind of Socratic question which has the sovereign merit of bringing you back by the most circuitous route to where you started from, as happened to Tony Lumpkin.

"Well, uncle, here I am and here I remain. What shall you do with me? Rajaji expects me to learn the family

occupation. But what is our family occupation? Father earns a salary, of course, but I don't call schoolmastering an occupation. Mother has plenty of work, but she is always shoeing me off the kitchen whenever I volunteer to help. You are frightfully busy, I know, but it brings you no salary, not even enough to buy me peppermint...."

I made haste to change the subject: the *enfant terrible* trod hard on a sore spot. Putting on as severe a face as I could I said, "Look here, you pig, it is disgraceful that you at your age should be thinking of such crassly material things as a salary. The goal of education is not a salary."

"What, then, is it, uncle?" Ambi enquired sweetly. Here was a poser. Luckily only the previous day I had read the report of the press conference held by Chairman of the Universities Commission. I had been dazzled by the verbal coruscations which had filled the firmament. True, in the retrospect the smoke and the smell of burning sulphur were stronger in the nostril than the visions of delight. But I knew Ambi's weakness for big names and so said at a venture:

"Do you know what Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has discovered is the matter with us? Our education today is scandalously un-Indian. Our first duty is to make it Indian. Secondly, it is hopelessly primitive. So it must be made modern, up to the minute. And, thirdly, it must have a purpose. What purpose could be more noble than to produce citizens worthy of the great Constitution to which our law-makers are putting the last finishing touches at the Rotunda?"

I might have gone on in this fashion indefinitely. But my eloquence was arrested by the arrival on

the scene of that kill-joy Kittu, our local know-all. As usual he carried a book. And forthwith in his merciless way he began exposing my shallowness and impressing Ambi with the vast scope of his erudition. But his first words were not calculated to endear him to my independent nephew.

"Ah, playing truant, I see. Do you hope to become a great writer like your uncle?"

This was said with scarcely veiled sarcasm. So I am afraid I remarked with unnecessary asperity, "Enough of your clowning. Ambi and I are exploring Rajaji's ideas on education."

"Admirable. So Ambi suspends his education till he knows what it is all about. He is in excellent company, I must say. The Madras Government, rather than spoil children by making them read the old text-books, has allowed them to take their ease until such time as the brand-new books from Britain come. (You will note that with Swaraj we are becoming more English.) But that perverse fellow Dr. Johnson seemed to think that it was far better for children to learn something than to loaf. Boswell asked him, you will remember, what he thought was best to teach children first. To which the Bear replied, 'Sir, it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the meantime your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child, first, another boy has learnt them both.'"

"But Johnson lived before the days of free, universal and compulsory primary education," I exclaimed, glad of a pause in the pate. "There is little danger of one boy getting ahead of another in free India. Indeed the whole object of our educational policy from pial school to university is to see that no fellow gets an unfair start. If the result should be that none gets started at all, it is a risk we are cheerfully prepared to take."

Here Ambi butted in. "But you were telling me about Sir Sarvepalli,

uncle?" The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Kittu switched on to the subject with accustomed gusto. "Oh, of course, our philosopher-statesman, being in the direct line of succession from Bacon, takes all knowledge for his province. And I have no doubt his report contains a cut and dried scheme after the Miltonic pattern to make little prodigies of our pups."

I felt it incumbent upon me to put in a seasonable word for our leaders. "That blood-thirsty ruffian (I mean Milton) will never do as a model for our *ahimsaic* society. Did he not say in his *Tractate on Education*, 'I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war'?"

I hoped I had put due emphasis on those last two words, but Kittu was not to be intimidated. "But, apparently, your *ahimsaic* society has no objection to acquiring a flotilla of destroyers, slightly shop-soiled though they be. But that is another story. Milton may have aimed too high, but there was method in his madness. Your Radhakrishnan seems to have gone to Gargantua for his model—I mean, to the meal that that hero had on a famous occasion, not to the literary pabulum on which he was brought up. You remember that the giant in his youth had a passion for lettuce and once gathered some for himself to make a salad. They were as great as plum trees and walnut trees and, as it happened, six pilgrims had hid themselves among them. But, blissfully unaware of it, he swallowed the lot along with the lettuce. In the Radhakrishnan scheme your Indian culture will modestly shelter itself behind the succulent lettuce of technological education. Five minutes' meditation on the merits of Mahomed and Buddha, Christ and Krishna is considered sufficient for salvation in our secular State. What happens in such circumstances is pretty accurately described by a perspicacious German, Friedrich Georg Juenger in his book *The Failure of Technology*."

Here my Ambi, who is a little chauvinist, interrupted. "But what

Sovereign Sayings



You can munch them in trains,
you can chew them in trams,
You can scrunch them in buses,
or suck them in prams;
On the plains when it's hot,
in the hills when it's cool—

But we give you a warning—
DON'T EAT THEM IN SCHOOL!



Sovereign SWEETS



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can a German know about our culture?"

"A good deal more than you or your uncle do," was Kittu's uncivil reply. And, to drown my protest, he whipped out his German and read: "As the technician enters this field (organisation of schools and universities), he converts all institutions of learning to his interest... The technical science which comes to a position of primacy is both empirical and causal. Its inroads into education mean the victory of factual knowledge over integrated knowledge. The study of ancient languages is pushed into the background, but with them there vanish also the means to understand a culture in its entirety. The logical capacity of the student, his capacity to master the form of knowledge, is weakened. Factual knowledge is empirical and thereby as infinite as are the endless rows of causes and effects whereby it is described.... If to the human mind all things are equally worth knowing, then knowledge loses all value. Therefore it may be concluded that this factual knowledge will eventually drown itself in the ocean of its facts." And Kittu briefly commented: "The American objective tests of which the Universities Commission is so enamoured will hardly serve as spars from the wreck to float you back to safety."

I had to admit, "Well, Indian culture seems likely to fare in this newest education much as the pilgrims fared in the story. But they managed after all to scramble out of the tooth of Gargantua. Likewise I suppose the Vedas will survive despite our westward-gazing philosophers. But, surely, you will grant that there is something to be said for the view that our education is too literary, that there are too many languages to be learnt, that our schools have no notion of craft-centred knowledge...."

But Kittu was up and away again on his hobby horse. "Too many languages, indeed! And yet you talk of preparing every man for the position he must occupy in the contemporary world. What did Henry Adams say, looking back upon his own wasted school days? 'For success in the life imposed upon him he needed, as afterwards appeared, the facile use of only

four tools: Mathematics, French, German and Spanish. With these he could master in very short time any special branch of enquiry and feel at home in any society. Latin and Greek he could, with the help of the modern languages, learn more completely by the intelligent work of six weeks than in the six years he spent on them at school. These four tools were necessary to his success in life, but he never controlled any one of them)."

"There you are," my hopeful nephew trumpeted in triumph. "Here is uncle badgering me to learn Sanskrit, but apparently I could do it 'by the intelligent work of six weeks' if meanwhile he would allow me to learn Hindi which is so necessary to success in life."

I was saved from the awkward predicament of blurting out sentiments which might have been construed as extremely disloyal, by Kittu coming to my aid with his blunderbuss efficiency. "A fig for your Hindi!" he said. "It is a syce's language. India would be lost if she lost Sanskrit. But, before this young whelp cut in," he went on, turning to me, "I was about to say that if you must have English in order not to be shoved off your perch you had better be honest about it and not camouflage your intention with devices that will not deceive a child. And then there is Mathematics. There was a Minister in Madras who apparently was so allergic to it that he swept it clean overboard and put in Social Studies in its stead. Without some notion of mathematics how can one have any idea of form, order, rhythm? And your Social Studies must remain a statistician's nightmare unless they can be reduced to an intelligible pattern by the analytical mind."

"But," I objected, anxious to be fair, "craft-centred education does not neglect mathematics, as you too readily suppose. Nor does it treat it as a solemn mystery unrelated to life. Finding that mathematics enters into every quantitative relationship, it brings out the basic concepts as they are illustrated in concrete situations."

Whereupon Kittu laughed a great laugh and said, "Oh yes, you do not

burden the young mind with the laborious abstractions of addition and subtraction. But when you go out marketing you ask Ambi, "If we buy five lemons and seven guavas and six coconuts today, how many things shall we carry home?" And Ambi, with his mind running on the tasty Allahabad guavas may ever after associate the number seven irrationally with guavas. Even if by any chance he should add up these dissimilar things aright there would still lurk at the back of his mind the teasing thought that there was something unreal about the whole operation. The first step in mathematics, the isolation of the pure idea of number, would in other words have been, not solved, but merely postponed for him. All your short cuts, your 'play-ways' and Projects are vitiated by the absurd pretence that the multiplication table could be inhaled as if it were a flower's fragrance and had not to be learnt by rote—an unpleasant but necessary business."

But I had been reading recent issues of *Manas*, the thoughtful American weekly in which the Gandhian ideas on education are being appreciatively expounded. And hoping to floor Kittu with my borrowed ideas I said, "My dear fellow, your remarks can't possibly apply to the Wardha system. The unique distinction of that system is that it deals with realities, that it is permeated through and through with the social consciousness. Hear what a *Manas* writer says on the subject! 'There is a marked similarity between Gandhi's emphasis on the constant use of tools and the Learning by Doing methods of Progressive Education in America, but there is also a significant difference. The emphasis of Progressive Education has been on learning *how* to develop certain manual skills. Gandhi, however, was concerned with skills that could be turned to immediate benefit to the community. Instead of teaching things that *might* be done when the pupils became manifestly fit, Gandhi presented them with useful tasks which needed immediate performance as a part of the life of the school itself, thus making the work of the children *real* work rather than token work."

"Too real, if you ask me," replied Kittu composedly. "The Gandhian educators seem to me to make the mistake of going to one extreme as the 'play-ways' to another. The young human is an animal with all an animal's waywardness, its need to indulge in unreasoning impulse, to moon about, to be blissfully oblivious of society and its claims. There is a very real risk in trying to turn the callow fledgling into a premature citizen; don't you know our proverb, 'Putting a palm-fruit on the head of a sparrow'? Phantasy can be more richly educative at that age than the portentous sense of belonging to a community. Your *Manas* writer, whom I too have read, praises the Gandhian scheme as being calculated to bring out the feeling of 'owing something of oneself to one's community.' That would certainly be a fine thing to do, if it could be brought off, in the highly individualistic West. But here in India, except in the denationalised, devitalised fringe, the sense of belonging, the social web holds every child."

"All that may be true. But don't you see that too much of our school life is taken up with empty forms? I don't say that our schools should be narrowly vocational. But Gandhiji was surely right in his central intuition that a child must be taught a primary craft from the moment his sense of observation and discrimination awakes, so that he can rightly orient himself to the world in which he will have to live."

"There is, of course, something in it. But consider for a moment whether spinning or husbandry or wood-work or any of the other half a dozen crafts that may be taught in any school is likely to be the life-vocation of a large proportion of the children who learn it, in a society which is becoming increasingly dependent on secondary occupations."

"Besides," the gadfly buzzed on, "my own observation of children at play does not allow me to put much faith in the educational psychology of Wardha. You know little girls love to play at cooking with their toy pots and pans. But if learning cooking was part of the school curriculum and the mistresses had to eat the meals cooked, the little girls would find no

joy in it. They might become quite good cooks, but at the cost of having lost the bloom, the care-free innocence, the unconscious charm of childhood. They might be serious little housewives or they might be slatterns, but in either case the shades of the prison house would have closed upon them."

During this long and excessively solemn debate poor Ambi had quietly gone to sleep; and he now awoke with a start. My one-eyed barber happening to come in at the moment, Ambi ran to the almirah where the razor was kept. Kittu's eyes lighted up with mischief. "Bring it here, boy," he ordered, to Rangan's open-mouthed wonderment. And snatching it from Ambi's hand he struck a professorial attitude and said, "Now, look here, you shall have an object lesson in co-ordination *a la* Wardha. This razor, you will observe, is made up of three parts..."

"No, only two, *mama*," interposed Ambi, eager to display his knowledge, "the blade and the handle."

"What about the pin, you dunder-head, the linchpin of the whole arrangement? Observe the little things or the little things will diddle you. So much for the razor. And now for the accessories. They are two in number, the strop and the whetstone."

"You have forgotten there is a third," gleefully shouted Ambi. "There is the oil used on the whetstone."

"Yes, of course, oil, the soul of

commerce and of graft. Thus there are six things relevant to a razor, and each has half a dozen sciences hanging on to its coat-tail. Take Metallurgy, it has a tail as long as a comet's. Palaeontologist and archaeologist, old alchemist and new chemist all come in its wake and all eager to grab you. Then you turn to the horn of the handle, a veritable cornucopia. What a rich vista of culture it opens up, linking our humble *cheri* craft with such ontological enigmas as why horns (and scorpions and caterpillars) were created—unless it was to prove the doctrine of Original Sin. In short, there is no limit to what you might learn if you attended zealously on the razor. Here is the poet's vision of the world in a grain of sand made concrete and socially useful."

Ambi, who had been listening with growing bewilderment, could not stand it any longer. He jumped off the pial and ran away, shouting as he went, "I would rather go back to my old school if the new education means that I must mug up all that rubbish. At least I can play marbles there while the teacher is not looking."

I looked daggers at Kittu, holding him responsible for a lost idealist. But that disciple of Voltaire mocked me saying, "We must cultivate our gardens, certainly. But should we not make sure first that they are *our* gardens and not somebody else's cabbage patch?"

VIGHNESWARA.

SHAVIANA

"When I was young and full of years, I consulted a sage that I might achieve the formation of a perfect character. 'Young man,' he said, 'are you a vegetarian?' I promptly answered: 'Yes.' This took him aback; he asked a second question which surprised me. 'Have you mastered shorthand?' I told him that I could write it very nearly as fast as longhand, but I could not read it. That impressed him. 'Young man,' he went on, 'you are indeed high on the Mount of Wisdom. There remains but one more accomplishment, which as an artist is obviously destined for you: a life of poverty.' I fled without turning in case I was converted into a pillar of salt. I was determined henceforth to prove that it is possible to form a perfect character without poverty!"

"I once went to an eye specialist. When I feel for a little fling, the privilege of the rich, I go to a doctor so that I can pay him well for listening to me. Mistaking the object of my visit, he commenced to examine my eyes and after the most carefully conducted scrutiny gravely informed me that I had most abnormal vision. I laughed and told him of the natural method and therefore the latest method of dealing with the eyes but he was not interested. 'And what is wrong with my eyes?' I asked. 'Absolutely nothing. That is why they are so abnormal,' he replied, and asked for an autograph which I inscribed on a cheque."

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"YOU seem to be greatly agitated over something," Swami Anuanda greeted me with this remark.

"Yes, Swamiji," I acknowledged, "the Editor of SWATANTRA has nominated me to write an article on Ramana Maharishi for his Annual. Why he should have chosen me, I am unable to comprehend. I have not known the Maharishi intimately or for long. I am not a devotee of him in the sense in which it is understood in the Asram. I have not even exchanged one spoken word with him. I have had his *darsan* about a dozen times. That is all. What can I write about him?"

"Why did you not tell the Editor you were ill-equipped for the task?" asked the Swamiji.

"Unfortunately, vanity took hold of me," I answered. "I argued within myself, 'If a cat can look at a king, why should I not write about Maharishi.' My vanity was fortified by the thought that some of my friends who know him well would assist me if I appealed to them. But while the appeal was not denied, the expected

help was not forthcoming in time. I am in a quandary."

"I still fail to see any difficulty in writing about a well known person like Maharishi," said the Swamiji. "The Asram has published a number of books and there are the books written by Paul Brunton to furnish enough material for an article."

"True, Swamiji," I said, "I am not a professional journalist who must somehow fill space—even if it be by presenting stale material in a fresh coat of paint. I could still write about my personal impressions of him such as I have been able to gather. But the more I thought of it, the less I liked it. For these impressions are more sacred and more vital to one's being than the feelings of love and affection with which we regard our parents, wife and children. How can I expose them to public gaze? There is the danger that vanity might again step in and make me claim greater spirituality than what I really possess. You are a sanyasin who will not be bothered about these considerations. You could help me to write the article."

The Swamiji made no answer for quite a while. Then he said, "All right. I shall give an account of my impressions. I agree that there is no use in your writing an 'mpersonal account of his life. It will be better if you also question me now and then as I proceed for more material."

Swamiji began his account. "I met him for the first time in my pre-sanyasin days in the year 1934 or 1935. It was the pleasure afforded to me of driving a new car that took me to Tiruvannamalai. An elderly friend of mine had just then bought a car and his driver being absent one day he asked me if I would drive him to the Asram. I was at the time a member of the Rationalist Society of England and I took pleasure in parading my disbelief in the existence of God. I also held the view that all yogins and sanyasins were holy frauds. I pitied my elderly friend for being caught in the snares of these people (my friend was rich). It was after sunset that we reached the place. There was then more of thatch than brick and mortar in the constructions. Instead of blazing electric tubes, hurricane lanterns shed pale patches of light here and there. As commanded by my friend, I offered pranams and sat down in Maharishi's presence. I immediately gave up the idea that Maharishi was a holy fraud. But my rationalism was not so easily destroyed and I concluded that Maharishi must be suffering from some delusions. Before we retired for the night I was given two or three manuscript books to read in which some devotees had faithfully recorded the conversations that had taken place between the Maharishi and the visitors. I still remember two of them. One was a complaint by the wife of a nobleman who had given up both his estate and his affection for her. She was sorely troubled in mind and sought the Maharishi's help to overcome her grief. The other was a high official of the Government who had failed to win promotions and the confidence of his superiors. He also sought consolation. To both of them the Maharishi had given the same reply. 'If you know thyself, there will be no occasion to worry about these things.' I was shocked at these answers. Here were poor people

seeking consolation and this is all the consolation they get. The Maharishi must be a helpless sort of person.

"My second visit was several years later. In the interval of time between the first and the second, events had taken place in my life which had the effect of destroying faith in myself. I no longer considered myself the arbiter of my fate and the architect of my mind. I was in a state bordering on the superstitious. As I sat down before him for the second time, I felt uneasy within myself. The Maharishi's eyes began to haunt me. They seemed to rip open my mind and lay bare all my failings. The uneasiness became unbearable and I left the place with more disquiet than I had taken with me.

"The third visit was after another long interval in 1945. A sense of peace and quiet descended on me as soon as I sat down in his presence for the third time. I even considered it profane to change my posture in spite of my aching limbs. Thereafter my visits became more frequent and you are familiar with the story of my life from that time onwards."

"Swamiji, can you tell me some of the thoughts that came into your mind concerning him after your visits?" I requested.

"Maharishi, as you know, believes in the truth of the Advaitic conception. But let me tell you his Advaitic belief is not the dry intellectualism of the Advaitic philosopher. He does not propound Advaitism but he experiences it. If sage Tukaram had met Maharishi instead of the orthodox brahmin that he met, he would not have cried, 'I want to avoid oneness with God. I do not want to lose my love towards the image of God. If I attain self-realisation, all my desire for doing bhajan, kirtan, etc., will vanish. I do not wish this to happen. I do not wish to hear the voice advocating Advaitism'. For Maharishi stresses the practice of non-identification of the self with the outer self in the pursuit of yoga and prefers to leave the question of identification of the self with the Divine to the discovery of every yogin as he proceeds in his yoga. One does not therefore give up bhakti by going to him. In fact, one develops more and more of bhakti."

"In what way do you consider him to be unique compared to the yogins of the past?" I asked.

"It is not an easy question to answer," replied the Swamiji. "No two yogins travel on the same path towards realisation. Sankara's spiritual greatness has been overshadowed by his intellectual greatness. His followers have been content to elaborate upon the erudite writings that he left behind rather than follow the difficult path of Advaitic realisation. Ramanuja's fervent catholicism has similarly been overshadowed by his intellectual creation of Visishtadvaita. The easier path of bhakti enabled only some of his followers to reach spiritual heights but his writings have made the majority of them engage in disputations about the merits of forms of worship and achara. Buddha preached escape from action by renouncing the world as the correct path but few of his followers were able to travel along this most difficult path of all. Maharishi is unique in the sense that he does not preach any single path nor does he condemn any known method of yoga. He believes that the true path is not the same for every individual and that the true path for the individual must be discovered and the end reached by atma-vichar or searching of the self. Without such atma-vichar, he does not think it possible for anyone to attain self-realisation whatever path he may take, bhakti, karma or jnana. For self-enquiry is none other than the process of self-realisation. Nothing is to be taken up and nothing is to be given up as a pre-requisite to engaging in yoga. It does not matter if work, worship and meditation drop off or cling to us as we proceed."

"Is the Maharishi a learned man?" I asked.

"I have it on sound authority that Maharishi is a very learned man, especially in all branches of spiritual knowledge. He is reputed to know several languages and is well acquainted with the Vedas. But his erudition sits very lightly upon him. Even in conversation, he avoids displaying his familiarity with other languages than his own. He rarely quotes from sacred books authority for the advice that he gives. The advice is always given in homely lan-

guage wrapped in a fine piece of humour. Often the advice is not given immediately it is sought. The request remains unanswered until the applicant's mind is tuned to receive it. A woman devotee found herself making little progress in her yoga. She was afflicted with some domestic worries. But she did not realise it was standing in the way of her progress. Once, while she was preparing sambhar, the Maharishi walked in, took hold of the ladle from her hand and the ground spice she held in the other hand. He waited until the frothing sambhar subsided and then threw the spice and stirred the mixture accompanying the action with these words, 'If the sambhar should retain its fragrance, the spice must be added only after the froth has subsided.' The lady understood the true meaning of Maharishi's advice.

"The jnani in him is apparently quiescent though only apparently so. He has not handed out any intellectual feast to the world by his writings. He has written little. For he does not believe in diverting the mind from the path of yoga to the path of intellectual attainments. If the earnest seeker after Truth will only spend a fraction of the time that he spends in wading through the mass of Vedantic writings in trying to understand the meaning of his oft repeated advice, 'Know thyself,' he can attain self-realisation with less effort, without much floundering and without fail.

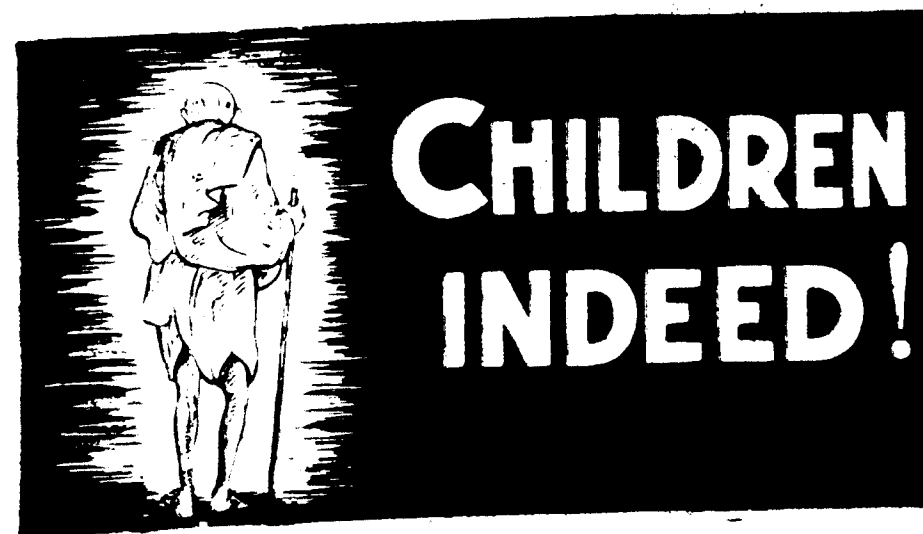
"But his uniqueness compared to present day yogins is his state of Sahaja samadhi. He is unaffected by the events and personalities that surround him. But he is not obliged to enter into samadhi to dissociate himself from the outer world. For external participation and internal quiet exist side by side. The picture of peace and repose that he presents even to the most casual visitor stays constant in spite of the bustle and buffeting that goes round him." Here I ventured to interrupt the Swamiji. "Even the sceptical American who came all the way from America to report for the 'Life' magazine about Maharishi could not help remarking," Sri Ramana would have looked like a superior human being in any surroundings. He had the quietly assured look of a man who

had experienced a great deal and thought out everything to a final unshakeable conclusion. Even an unbeliever could see that he possessed a sort of personal serenity that is rare even in the contemplative orient." "I am glad you mention this," said the Swamiji. "It proves that the American is a better man than the modern Indian with his English education. As I told you I did not carry even this impression when I first met and genius'."

"Is Maharishi engaged in any work?" I asked. "You ask difficult questions," laughed the Swamiji. "Every true yogin is engaged in opening the way to humanity to a higher consciousness. But the work the yogins do is always silently done. So far as the Maharishi is concerned, his humanity is not limited to any caste, religion or country. I doubt if it is even confined to humanity. The proof of his universality is seen in the nationalities and religions of the devotees who come to him. Maharishi has often spoken about the value of silence. I shall tell you a small incident in the Asram. One day, the editor of a paper decided to pay a visit to the Maharishi. He asked his friend who knew Maharishi well whether he can put questions to Maharishi as he had his doubts about the usefulness of the yogic life to humanity. The friend assured him that he was free to put questions, but that there was no guarantee that Maharishi will answer every one of them. He went and sat in Maharishi's presence. No questions came though an hour and half passed by. When we left the hall, we asked him what happened to his questions. He replied, 'I no longer felt the need to put them.' Sri Aurobindo has written a beautiful letter about the nature of the silent work done by yogins. 'Leave aside the question of Divine or undivine, no spiritual man who acts dynamically is limited to physical contact—the idea that physical contact through writing, speech, or meeting is indispensable to the action of the spiritual force is self-contradictory, for then it would not be a spiritual force. The spirit is not limited by

physical things or by the body. If you have the spiritual force, it can act on people thousands of miles away who do not know and never will know that you are acting on them or that they are being acted upon—they only know that there is a force enabling them to do things and may very well suppose it is their own great energy and genius."

"It is your turn to say something about your impressions of Maharishi," the Swamiji told me. "I had one unforgettable experience, and that was on the day when he was operated for cancer on his arm last August. As I was driving the doctors in my car to Tiruvannamalai on the evening previous to the day fixed for the operation, I looked up at the hill Arunachala and it reflected a reddish hue. 'What did it mean?' I asked myself with some disquiet. The next morning I looked up at the hill again before the operation began; this time it had a little wisp of mist sheltering its top. My disquiet of the previous evening vanished. The doctors though accustomed to undertake grave responsibility were tense on the morning of the operation. The crowd of devotees that had assembled in the grounds of the Asram wore anxious looks. Nature herself was grave and silent. The operation proceeded. When the announcement that it was successfully performed was made, the tension melted away and smiles were seen on every face. How about Maharishi? He came out of the anaesthetic state just for a moment to direct those by his side to see that the visitors were fed and not kept waiting. When he woke up finally after a few hours, he tottered to the verandah of his room and insisted on giving darsan to his devotees. That was the signal which Nature was waiting for. Clouds gathered, a cool and hilarious breeze sprang up. The trees shook in glee, the birds fluttered about in relief and the clouds shed tears of joy." "The compassion of great Souls moves even Nature but alas, it leaves man often unmoved," was the comment of Anuananda as I ended.



O Father whom your sons betray,
Dead indeed are you today.

"REMOVE controls. Rely," you spoke,
"On the honour, not the fears, of folk.
Give freedom to the masses. They
Will deal with hoarders as they may."
But now we clamp the heaviest fetters
On the helpless poor robbed by their betters.
It is *cushy* for rich racketeers,
And, for the rest, blood, sweat and tears.

YOU said, "Waste not on propaganda
Your wealth and time. The work you do
In silence like the seed will shew
Its worth in root, and flower and fruit."
But now with many a goose and gander
We make a mighty cackle, and bruit
At home, abroad, our gewgaw grandeur.

WE think much less of food and clothing
Than sounding phrases meaning nothing.
The names we change of stations and nations,
But can we raise our dwindling rations?

YOU said, "Be calm, wise and united."
But we, excited and benighted,
Wage furious war on human unity,
Setting community against community.
Now Hindi has ousted Hindustani
And two scripts are found one too many.

YOU pleaded for innocent labour and tillage,
For work and weal and joy in the village,
For following Nature and finding bliss.
But we seek woe through artifice;
And ply the country with plunder and pillage.

THE College of Carnatic Music

(The site makes even me and you sick)
Is planted exotically,
Queerly and quixotically,
In a city,
More's the pity,
Twixt the salt sea and the tarred road,
Twixt the soft sand and the hard road;
But far away from village shady,
Far, far away from fields of paddy,
Far, far, alas, from fair Trivadi.

WHERE now is your Truth, your Love?
In Hell below or Heaven above?
It is not in our heart or deed.
Your wisdom now we do not heed.
Your words and ways we now forget.
To you we think we owe no debt.
Only your name we utter yet.

YOUR body once did Godse slay:
Daily your spirit we would betray.
Father, whom your children kill,
Will you love and help us still?

—AJAX.

MORAL POWER

Reformers, from Buddha to Gandhi, have sought in soul the apparently inexhaustible moral energy of their lives. If moral creativity can be restored to human beings by closing the psychological gap between man and God, then what possible objection can there be to taking this step? Why not declare the supernatural a province of the natural, and man a spiritual as well as a physical being? Suppose that there actually are two worlds, a material one and a moral one; suppose, further, that man does not exactly live in either one, but in a compromise world of his own making, constructed of his half-true, half-false ideas of both. Would this not come very close to explaining the subtle and multifarious contradictions of human life?

If it be urged that man's true life is a life of soul, that no savior can save him, no devil damn him, except himself—that he is in reality a potential god—who can offer some other theory which is more in accord with all the facts of human experience? Much reason would support the claim that every other theory of human nature has been tried and has failed, miserably and completely. And this one, this idea of man with his inmost being secure in infinity, with his mind able to encompass the secrets of both the atoms and the stars, and his heart of such expandable dimensions as to enclose the whole of life—who is to say that these possibilities do not themselves constitute the only godhood that exists? What if the only way to begin to realize these possibilities is by granting them at the outset, and then acting as if they are certitudes of the moral law itself?

Some will say that such proposals constitute a perilous traffic with the Unknown. It may be so; but no extensive argument is needed to show that in following this course a man can lose nothing that any great man has thought worth striving after.—Manas.



IN a very penetrating study of "POWER" by Bertrand Russell, there occurs a sentence which is most suggestive and which explains a great deal with reference to the change in human values that has been effected during the life time of the present generation. He asserts that "the power of a community depends, not only on its numbers, its economic resources and its technical capacity, but also on its beliefs." A fanatical creed held by all the members of a community often greatly increases its power. Such creeds, which are more prevalent now than ever before, and their effects are of great practical importance although one must never forget that weariness and love of ease are by no means negligible components of human nature so that fervid beliefs are apt to be short-lived.

Even more than Hitler and Mussolini, the present rulers of Soviet Russia are utilizing to the full the propaganda machine. Within the last year there have been published certain books whose influence may not be immediately perceptible, but cannot be discounted. An ex-official of the United States Intelligence Department, Anabelle Bucer, has published through the Tass Agency in New Delhi a book entitled "The Truth about American Diplomats," wherein serious allegations are made about the expenditure of large funds by the United States Intelligence Department, both for self-aggrandizement and for insidious propaganda against Russia. "The Soviet News" of London has recently sent out a

memorandum by the Soviet Government on the North Atlantic Treaty alleging a conspiracy on the part of the ruling circles of the United States and Great Britain in the course of which they are alleged to resort to financial and other economical hand-outs and to make promises to improve the economic position of countries, which, never-the-less, under pressure of the dollar policy, are increasingly involved in fresh economic difficulties. The North Atlantic Pact is pictured as a preliminary step to similar pacts elsewhere in Europe and in Asia in furtherance of the Anglo-American plan for dominating the world and to crush the Soviet Republic.

This is part of the story. With it must be read the numerous and enthusiastic chronicles of the positive achievements of the Soviet Republic demonstrating, according to the Russian version, that material and cultural progress has nowhere attained the perfection that has been reached under the administration of Stalin. A very remarkable brochure with the title "Russia's Secret Weapon" has been compiled by an Englishman, Dyson Carter, to which a foreword has been supplied by the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson. The secret weapon is Science and the book is apparently an authentic narrative of the extensive popularisation of science for the furtherance of agriculture and industry. It furnishes an imposing record of new methods employed to enhance agricultural productivity, and to improve the mining and transport techniques. By such means, it is

argued with figures that not only has production increased but unpleasant manual labour has been eliminated to a large extent. The revolutionary achievements of the Central Hospital in Moscow, both in medicine and surgery, are recounted with great pride and if the facts set out in this handbook are correct, technical and scientific education and practice are far ahead of what can be said of other countries including America. All this achievement is attributed to a resurgence of the human spirit to which Harry F. Ward, a professor in Christian Ethics in the Union Theological Seminary of America, bears witness.

-The Foreign Languages Publishing House of Moscow has issued a summary of the industrial achievement in the U.S.S.R. compiled by Dr. Loshkin. Some extracts from it are instructive.

"In the Soviet Union, the development of technique is free from the limitations imposed by the capitalist mode of production. Here, the main stimulus for such production is the desire to lighten human labour as much as possible; to expand its productive power and to increase without surcease quantity of material values created by society. The anarchy inherent in the development of capitalist technique has been eliminated. Technical progress has become the servant of the people and the spread of technical education has made the inventive faculty a mass phenomenon; and the 'Stakhanov Movement' has revealed the hitherto latent possibilities of technique." Imposing figures are enumerated to enforce the thesis that the incurable ailments of capitalism, such as economic crises and unemployment have been cured and that a planned system of economy opens out, before the Soviet workman, unlimited possibilities of expanding national economy.

The progress made in the U.S.S.R. from year to year, if accurately set out, is breath-taking. It is stated that the post-war reconstruction of industry was completed in 1946. It means that the vast majority of enterprises have been switched back to peace time production. Some astonishing figures are quoted.

Between 1945 and 1946 pig iron

smelting rose 12%; steel smelting 9%; coal out-put 10%; electric power generation 10%; the gross out-put of civilian goods increased by 20% in 1946 as compared to 1945; 30 times as many as in 1945 of trunk line locomotives were produced in 1946; the manufacture of motor trucks and passenger automobiles and machine tools increased by 30%; tractors by 72%."

These increases are attributed to the cultural and technical progress of the working classes and their moral and political unity and vitalizing patriotism.

The Soviet Financial System has been outlined by Dr. Bogolepov, Professor of Finance in the Universities of Toms and Petrograd, who has been associated with the work of the State Planning Commission of the U. S. S. R. The structure of the Soviet State and Financial System has nothing in common with similar institutions elsewhere. The monetary and credit systems of the country, based on the State monopoly of foreign trade and the implementation of certain basic principles with regard to education, public health and labour legislation, are vested in the Central Government, the State being conceived as the master of the country's economy. The 'turn-over tax' and the contribution from the profit of industries are two of the main items of the revenue, the various Constituent Republics and the local Soviets being in charge of the collection. The main expenditure is devoted to the development of heavy industry, to transport and machine and tractor sections, as well as to National Defence. Welfare and cultural services take up a fourth of the revenues including in their scope the promotion of the various local languages, the development of sports societies, clubs and reading rooms and the development of medical services. The number of doctors in the country has increased from 19,800 in 1913 to over one hundred thousand in 1932. Special monetary grants to expectant mothers, summer camps for children, maintenance of sanatoriums and health resorts account for a big proportion of the expenditure. The compiler, Dr. Bogolepov, claims that the Soviet Financial System has

enabled the release of new reserves of energy and new fields for the application of the people's talents and abilities. It has been definitely claimed that there will be no question of unemployment in the Soviet Republic.

It will be seen from the above survey, judged merely as propaganda, that the above treatises and books are bound to produce significant effects. On the other hand, it has been asserted by persons claiming to be first hand observers, that many of the figures are faked, that an elaborate system of window-dressing is in progress in Russia and that, as recently asserted by Mr. G. D. Naidu of Colimbatore, the Soviet Republic has one set of institutions for purposes of showmanship, which portray a picture very different from actuality. We must, never-the-less, judging from what is taking place in Europe, China and even in India, take it for granted that Communism inspires and enables its militant preachers to exploit injustices and inequity among men. To quote General Eisenhower,

"The supporters of Democracy must annul Communist appeals to the hungry, poor and the oppressed with practical measures for the elimination of social and economic evils that set men against men." No longer can we afford to emulate what Voltaire observed, "A man groans over a wrong, he shuts his lips, he takes his supper and he forgets."

In fact, within the last few years, the programmes of most Governments have suffered a "sea-change" and they are becoming progressively more socialist in conception.

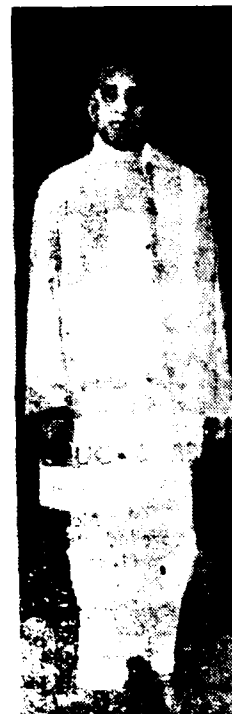
This is so much the case that although there is supposed to be an irreconcilable conflict between Capitalism and Socialism, never-the-less, in addition to England, Australia and New Zealand, America the citadel of Capitalism is, especially after President Truman's new programme

of Welfare and Medical Insurance announced in April 1949, pitching its tent near that of the Socialists.

In other words, it is being increasingly realised that the only stable equilibrium in the world is the equilibrium of equality. Dealing with America's strategy in world politics, Prof. Spykman made the cynical statement that "the search for power is not made for the achievement of moral values, but moral values are being used increasingly in the world for the attainment of power." If this be so, the future of humanity is bound to be dismal. But present day tendencies are inevitably though with painful slowness humanising the world and there is ground for hope that Prof. Spykman's words may be belied. Recent events, viewed in proper perspective, lead to the conclusion that the meaning of the values of life is gradually being understood and there are bound to be profound modifications of man's conception of himself. The former complacency of what was termed 'European Civilization' has dis-

appeared. In the medieval ages and up to the 17th century, divine purpose sufficed to explain many phenomena. Growing misery and disillusionment and scepticism led to the so called enthronement of reason in the 18th century. Neither the French, nor the American Revolutions; however, nor the achievements of the British system of Political Democracy, found it possible to solve the newly emerging economic problems. And the wars, the conflicts and the quest of the 19th century may be described as mathematically economic. Today, we are facing the problems of essential security, not only economic security, but security from fear and apprehension produced among other things by the possibilities of atomic bomb and bacterial campaigns.

It is being visualised, that World Politics as



Sir C. P.

at present conducted is based on a merely mechanist conception of life and is equated to power politics. It is also being increasingly felt that the cure for the ills of economic progress is not and cannot be simply more economic progress. It is noteworthy, at this juncture, to remember that recent scientific developments are destroying old ideas of matter and materialism. It is not too much to say that the objective and material universe is today seen to be little more than a "construct" of our own mind. In the language of a great mathematician, "Relativity is a road to mysticism through mathematics. The ultimate mysticism of the Universe is the rhythm of life which annihilates distance, place and time."

One inevitable result of this revelation whether it is called religious or

psychological is and must be a reorientation of values, a regrouping of our concepts and a spiritualisation of men's ideas and endeavours. The outlook upon life of the Eastern mystic, which was stigmatized as unrealistic and impractical, has a notable part to play in the reconstruction of the economy and politics of the future. A balanced and rhythmic life in harmony with Dharma and the appreciation of the inevitable, which is not to be confused with pessimism or a negative code of conduct, have been the contributions to the world of Eastern thought founded, as it was on the doctrines of Karma and Dharma. It is not too much to anticipate that these ideals will be of transcendental importance in the shaping of human history and in creating the values of the future.

It is said that Goethe's last word before he closed his eyes in final slumber was: "Let more light in!" It is not quite certain. But what he really said, his actual last word, a word against death and for life, is this: "In the end the only thing that counts is progress!"—Thomas Mann.



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"NO, it's no use going to the police."

"But how long are you going to put up with this kind of thing?" The young man who uttered these words gesticulated fiercely to indicate his disapproval of the attitude taken up by his uncle.

"But what can the police do? How can they trace the origin of these sudden showers of stones? What Head Constable is there who can prevent a mass of mud and filth suddenly tumbling into a vessel of rice as it is cooking on the fire? What Inspector of Police can prevent a woman's saree from suddenly catching fire as it rests thrown lightly over a chair after use, and before it has been folded and put away by your cousin? The police will be quite powerless in the matter. Even otherwise, they are none too clever, as you know!"

"But it is all nonsense to imagine there's some supernatural agency. Somebody has bribed one of the servants to harass us in this fashion. It's only the police who can discover who the culprit is. They'll probably tie and beat up the whole lot impartially, but at the end we shall know who it is, as the guilty one is bound to squeal."

"I tell you it's the work of a Kuty-chathan!" said his Uncle, an experienced old gentleman, who was Karnavan (head) of the joint family.

"What on earth is a Kuty-chathan?" enquired the nephew Gopalan who had been educated in a Madras college and scoffed at all things which could not be explained on a rational basis.

"A Kuty-chathan," said the Uncle Kesavanunni Nayar "is a mischievous spirit that delights in doing evil in

any house. It throws stones at the inmates, hurls mud and filth into freshly-cooked food and is generally a complete nuisance. The object is to frighten, to intimidate and to annoy. The Kuty-chathan is usually put into a house by an enemy through the influence of a witch doctor. I suppose our arch-enemy Rama Panikkar has done this because we out-bid him in respect of those railway-interested lands that we bought recently. He's been trying to get them by hook or by crook for a very long time: he was quite surprised when we went so high in the auction-sale. He thought he would get it for a song!"

"Sounds like old wives' tales to me" said Gopalan.

"You wait and see. Queerer things will happen. Only, don't be frightened. We in Malabar are accustomed to this kind of thing."

"But how long can we put up with this kind of nuisance?" protested Gopalan. "Yesterday we were just sitting down to supper when all that rubbish fell in the rice and in the curry. It was too late to cook again, and I merely ate some chapathies and drank some milk and went to bed. I wish I could lay my hands on the Kuty-chathan!"

"Oh, I'm not going to take it lying down" said the Karnavan, his eyes flashing with righteous anger. "I'm going to teach Rama Panikkar a thing or two!"

Even as he spoke, a shower of stones suddenly cascaded from the ceiling and fell noisily on to the floor.

II

My dear Hari, wrote Gopalan to a college friend in Madras the next day, some mighty queer things have been happening in our family house of late.

and I want your help. The incidents defy analysis, and are somewhat frightening. It all began about three evenings ago. We were sitting about 7 P. M. in the front verandah. There's a portion of it which juts out like a portico from the long verandah and all around there are marble slabs for seats. My uncle was seated at one side reading a book; myself and my cousin Lakshmikutty were seated a few yards away on the other side playing a game of draughts. Lakshmikutty is seventeen, quite pretty and vivacious and I like her a lot. She's my uncle's only daughter and has been studying in our local school.

Well, all of a sudden, bang comes a clatter and shower of stones, most of which fell on the tiled roof, but two, which were aimed rather low, struck the marble slab of the portico. One rebounded on to uncle, and another fell on to our draughts board. I jumped up, thoroughly angry, at this outrage and was surprised to find Uncle quite calm, while Lakshmikutty was shuddering with fear.

"Somebody's throwing stones at us," I remarked. It was a fatuous remark, I admit, but I could think of nothing better.

I forgot to tell you that a plantain garden grows up to a few yards on all sides of the house and there are also many large trees in the compound: so it is not difficult for an enemy to hide quite close to us, throw his bunch of stones and then decamp.

Uncle, as I said, was quite calm, and succeeded in soothing his daughter. I wanted to take my electric torch and search in the garden, armed with a stick. But he gently dissuaded me.

"It will be of no use," he cried. "If there's anybody there, he'd have run away long ago. But I don't think there's anyone!"

At this Lakshmikutty's black eyes looked larger and rounder with fright.

"You had better resume your game," Uncle advised.

But Lakshmikutty had no heart for it. She made an excuse and slipped away to her mother who was sitting in an inside room, reading a holy book.

This was at 7 p. m. At about 8-30 p.m. we all went into the inner Kudam to have our meals. As you know, we are old-fashioned here, and sit on the ground on mats and the food is served on plantain-leaves. We had just sat down when the cook came running out of the kitchen which opens on to the Kudam in great excitement.

"Oh, mistress," he wailed. "The rice is all spoilt. And so is the curry!"

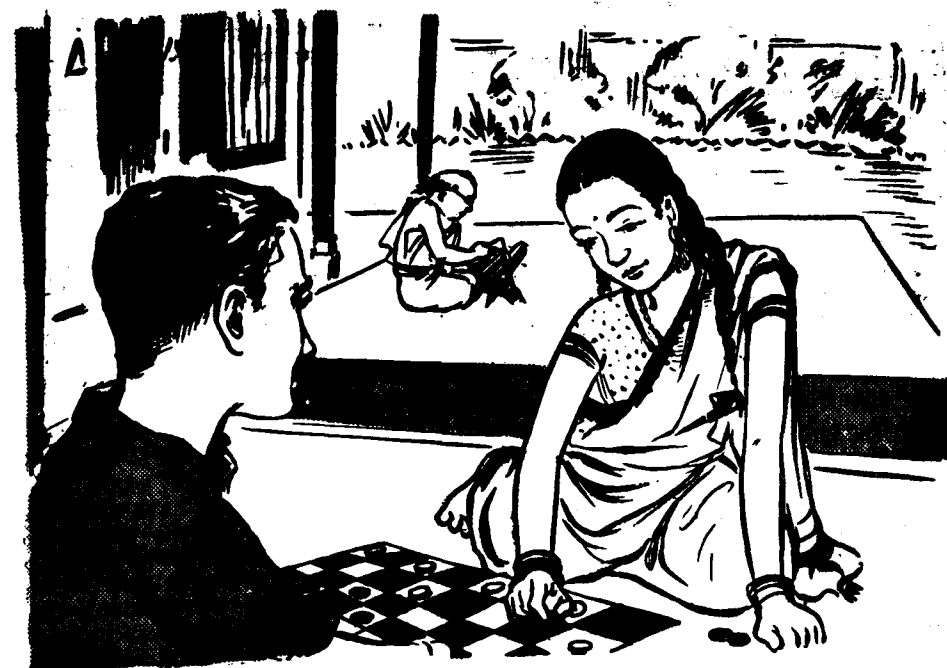
On asking what the matter was, he said he had just uncovered the rice and curry in order to bring it out to serve when, from the roof, a mass of indescribable mud and filth had fallen right into the containing vessels ruining the contents.

Luckily for us, some chapathies were undamaged. Also the boiled milk which was on the side-hearth, still covered with a lid. We had to eat some chapathies with a little pickle and drink hot milk for dinner that night. That's no joke for a hungry chap, my dear Hari, I assure you.

Now, uncle asserts this is all due to a "Kuttychattan" or evil spirit and says it is due to the enmity of a man with whom we had a land-dispute. He refuses to go to the police for help. This is where you come in. I remember reading about "polter-geists" in a book on psychical science. Please go to the Connemara Library, look up polter-geists and tell me quickly how they can be controlled. Treat this as very urgent: otherwise what with stone-throwing each night and no adequate meals I shall waste away to a shadow. So will Lakshmikutty whom you will have gathered, I like a lot. Your affectionate friend, Gopalan.

P. S. I forgot to mention that this afternoon, another funny thing happened. After her morning bath, Lakshmikutty had left a cotton saree on the back of a chair, intending to put it away to the wash later. At about 9 a. m. when she accidentally entered the room, she found it burning at one end. She immediately raised an alarm and I rushed in and quenched the burning end by dipping it in some water: this also has shaken us quite a lot.

R. C. G.



III

My dear Gopalan,

I am glad you wrote to me in your difficulties, and also glad to note that you are so much pre-occupied with your charming cousin, whose lovely black eyes must no doubt have consoled you for the loss of a dinner. Also, I have no doubt the draughts games are doubly interesting when one has so fair an opponent. How intriguing is it not between moves to lift one's eyes and watch the delicate face opposite one, and take in the loveliness of an eyelash and the curve of a bosom. I am quite sure I too could take to draughts happily under such circumstances. Actually, I dislike the game. That a "Kutty-chathan" should venture to intrude into such an idyllic atmosphere shows considerable lack of taste on his part. But you know your Shakespeare: the course of true love never did run smooth.

Now to business. I was fascinated by your account of the Kutty-chathan. I have myself been interested for several years in occult phenomena and you could not have written to a better person for advice. I have consulted several books about the polter-geist phenomena, and all

the accounts confirm that the activities you describe are those of a genuine polter-geist. Your homely term "Kutty-chathan" does inadequate justice to the varied activities of the species. But in this case, the activities have been clearly directed at your uncle through malevolence. That too, is typical. The authorities assert that Kutty-chathans and polter-geists can be directed towards particular individuals by those who have the requisite guiding knowledge and power and that they continue to work petty havoc according as they are bid. In other words their nuisance value which is great, can be directed against a specific person, out of malice.

Now for the antidote. If a "Kutty-chathan" while active is commanded by a more powerful personality to "go back where he came from" he is usually so irritated and upset that he haunts the person who inspired his activities in the first instance. So if you can find any good witch-doctor powerful enough, ask him to divert your little puckish friend back to your enemy of the land dispute, and Mr. Kutty-chathan will no doubt give him hell, when he finds he is baulked of his original prey.

As for Lakshmikutty, I envy her those black eyes in whose depths you are no doubt irretrievably lost. I suppose by the time you come back to college you will be busy reading your Prothalamion, and there will be the sound of wedding bells in the distance. There is a soul of goodness in things evil and I have no doubt that the Kutty-chathan will succeed in precipitating the fair young maiden into your all too willing arms.

Yours etc.
Hari

IV

"My dear Hari,

Thank you for your prompt and interesting reply. I note that you make a number of innuendoes about my fair cousin. I shall not trouble myself to refute them.

I will now instead give you the latest developments. The stone throwing on the roof repeated itself two evenings ago, and as usual a couple of stones or so found their way into our midst without any casualties. There were no more saree-burnings. When we sat down to dinner that night he tried to throw mud at us into our leaves; I picked up a clod of earth he threw down and hurled it back at the roof and it broke into pieces on the roof and came down in a fine shower of sand. There was the sound of suppressed laughter and I assure you none of us were in a laughing mood.

After dinner, I told uncle about reprisals.

He merely smiled and said "Your friend is wise and sensible. His advice is sound. I have already acted on it. This afternoon I sent for Mangu-achan, the best witch-doctor in these parts, and told him to throw the Kutty-chathan back on to Rama Pannikkar. He assured me he would take the necessary steps in the next twenty-four hours, and that we would be free of trouble in a day or two."

This morning there has been no incident. Neither this afternoon. In the evening I went out for a walk with Lakshmikutty and uncle. We walked across the paddy fields and towards the river and uncle showed us the railway-affected lands he had recently bought. They were nothing exceptional to look at but the fact remained that we had just got them. They

were now legally ours.

About a hundred yards away we saw an elderly gentleman standing on a field bund and directing the operations of some farm servants in the paddy fields below him. He was of robust build and his actions were most imperious. He looked like a Roman slave-driver.

All of a sudden we saw a commotion. Something seemed to hit the old gentleman, and he collapsed, and fell down. The farm servants rushed up and lifted him up. He was bleeding profusely from a big wound in his right temple.

My uncle advised me not to go near but out of sheer curiosity I went up some fifty yards to see what had happened. As you may have guessed, it was Rama Panikkar. He was quite unconscious but near by lay a large-sized jagged flint stone—the stone with which he had been suddenly hit on the head. The labourers carried him to his house. Nobody knew who had thrown the stone.

There was no flint stone like that in the paddy fields for miles around. It was clear that Mangu-achan's magic was beginning to work. Rama Panikkar was being hoist with his own petard.

There have been no more phenomena in our own house. Panikkar has recovered from his swoon, and his wound has been dressed and he is progressing satisfactorily. Our servant however has been snooping around Rama Panikkar's house this evening, and says that a shower of stones fell on his house last night.

Obviously playing about with Kutty-chathans has a kind of boomerang effect.

Lakshmikutty is now very much more cheerful and there is no longer any trace of fear in her lustrous black eyes. We have now resumed our games of draughts, and I assure you I find them most interesting.

I thank you very sincerely for all the trouble you have taken in this matter. Who wrote "Prothalamion"? Was it Spenser? I don't need to read books to tell me how lovely life is. We don't have wedding bells in Malabar but I will certainly invite you to the wedding dinner.

Yours etc.
R. C. Gopalan.

SIDELIGHTS :

Freedom has been lost by prosperity and overgrowth. When men and newspapers were poor they were free. The rotary machine and the linotype and the circulation have ruined the editor's freedom.

—SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI.

FREEDOM of the press is a phrase much in vogue. But its content which is many-sided is generally not understood in all its complexity. Only certain aspects of freedom of the press loom large in public discussions. Freedom is not entirely positive in its purport. Most people think of it against the background of an aggressor disposed to interfere with it. Powers of interference with the press belong to Governments more than to other bodies. Governments are therefore accorded a high place as potential aggressors on the freedom of the press. The labours of apostles of freedom of the press have been conspicuously devoted to restricting the area of executive onslaughts on the free working of the press.

The interests of journalism and the interests of executive government are fundamentally in conflict. Being an instrument of publicity, it is the function of the press to drag things into the light of publicity. The press lives by disclosures, and disclosures constitute the staple of press enterprise. On the other hand no Government is so constituted as to afford to have everything connected with it disclosed for public information. Every Government has something to hide. Sworn foes as journalists are, by virtue of their profession, of the secretiveness that is spread over so much of what passes as administration, the shadow of the potentialities of an unending antagonism is cast on the relations between the Government and the press, the one seeking to discover and disclose what the other is anxious to hide and keep from public knowledge.

The Government seek to control the press to make it conform to their inclinations. To resist the desire of the Government to control the press

has become a method of work of the pioneers of democracy. Believing that a free press subjecting the Government to continuous criticism is indispensable for the elimination of mal-administration, they have equated freedom of the press with resistance to monopoly, thinking that the highest measure of political education for the voicing of popular grievances would result from the unrestricted competition of newspapers. They failed to foresee what would happen when the press itself became an instrument of profitable business; that then its business interests would swamp its political function, and falling into the hands of efficient businessmen, the press would be used for personal ends.

The stage has been reached when freedom, out of which the success of newspapers has sprung, is being menaced by that very success. Hailed by democrats as an instrument of liberty, the press is becoming, swiftly, a mere business in the hands of commercial men. The right to start and run newspapers, postulated as the basic condition of freedom of the press, continues still to be open to all. But in theory only. In practice, the right has been knocked out.

In the realm of commerce, competition is ruthless. The drift is towards monopoly. It is the astute that win, and their ambition is to drive rivals out of existence. Enormous expenditure is incurred deliberately to ruin established institutions in order that the ashes of the defunct may fertilise the prosperity of the surviving. Take, for instance, the price policy adopted in the case of a recent entrant into the ranks of the periodical press. The journal is sold for a price unthinkable if the cost is to be met out of its own income. On every copy sold, there is a substantial loss incurred. Except with capital to burn drawn from other business ventures, it could not be made to last a week. Within the few weeks of its existence an immense fortune must already

have been sunk. Why is such heavy loss deliberately sustained? Presumably, it is all part of a fierce capitalist technique of investment in cut-throat killing to sow a harvest on the shambles. The loss from the uneconomic price is to be recovered from a huge advertisement income to accrue in future as the result of a vast circulation extracted mostly from journals of high worth but without funds from other sources to enable them to compete in the price-cutting. After they are duly put out, the victor in the competition would have a monopoly and charge for it at will, and all the loss of the price-cutting could be recovered in a trice!

The whole character of journalism is thus being changed by the advent within its precincts of commercial magnates with immense resources at their disposal drawn from other profitable enterprises. They are not to be confused with press magnates of the pattern of Lord Northcliffe, for instance. The whole of Lord Northcliffe's devotion was reserved to journalism and to the politics incidental to journalism and he never dabbled in other commercial adventures either for profiteering or in a spirit of speculative gambling. Not so our Birlas and Dalmias who are merchants primarily and promoters of sugar and other factories, with journalism coming in only as a by-product. Their property interests make them at once the favourites and dependents of Government. With the aid of Government at their command, they are just beginning to form powerful rings concentrating in their keeping a growing measure of advertisement patronage to the hurt of the regular consultants pledged to principles of scientific publicity planning. The ultimate purposes of Government are registered through their instrumentality in the operations of the newspapers under their control, making nonsense of the freedom of the press. Creatures of commercial adventurers in close alliance with Government and working in unison with them on mutual aid programmes of common interest, have managed to work themselves into key positions in organisations purporting to be representative of the press. When the

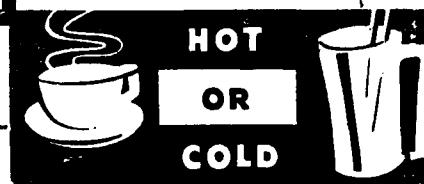
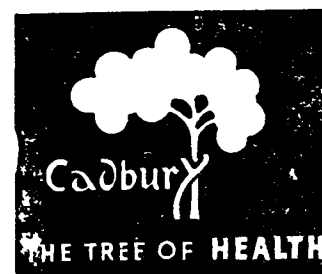
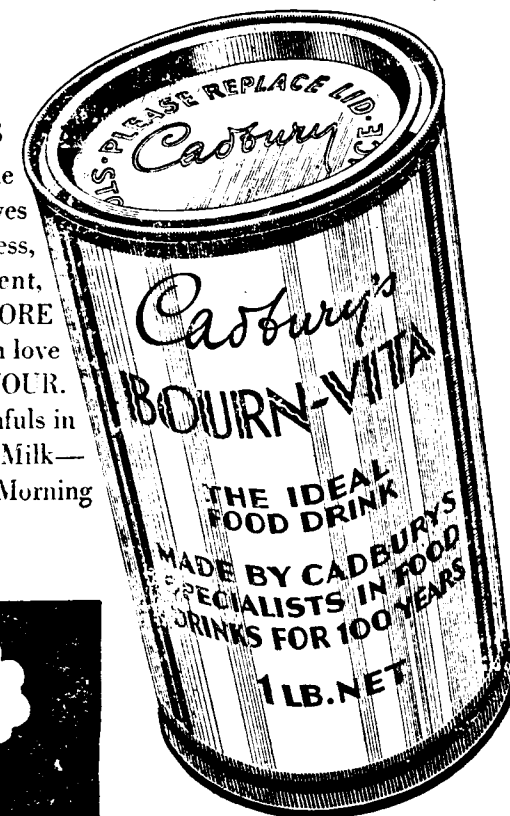
apparent leaders of our Fourth Estate are intrinsically purveyors of furtive official designs, what but sabotage can await the freedom and morale of the press?

Money power and the power of the State have combined to convert the freedom of the press into an illusion. Freedom of the press is invaluable to democracy as, in the sense of the right to start and run newspapers, it means also freedom of information and comment, but such a right is mythical in essence, and amounts in most cases to the doleful privilege of seeing the papers started perish for want of favourable conditions to thrive. Mortality in the press is dreadful. The blight of chain newspapers sits heavy on the future of journalism, drawing with lavish emoluments the best of talent, leaving the scope for efficient personnel greatly impoverished for the rest of the press. While ability is lured by wealth into inventions of cheap stunts that vulgarise the public taste while they exploit it for profit, the worthier aims of journalism, lacking the means for rewarding lucratively, suffer through slipshod service by mediocre executives. There is also the heavy taxation policy of an unsympathetic Government to load the dice heavily against the independent section of the press.

Notwithstanding the capitalist strangle-hold on the press as property, the proprietorial influence on the editorial side of newspapers is not so great as the power of possession might indicate. In the routine of their daily tasks journalists are habitually addicted to cosmic sweeps in which the most august fail to strike awe. It is the least daunted of the professions. Proprietors aspiring for power in their own offices have therefore great difficulty in making their authority felt to their hearts' content. The critical if not the irreverent spirit of the journalist concedes to no temporal master a whit more of yielding than he can help, and no considerations of tactics or benefit to self will ever make him swerve by a hairsbreadth in the secret recesses of his judgment-seat from an attitude of defiant independence against the

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Kasturi Srinivasan

mightiest of employers. Neither power counts, nor wealth. It is all the same whether the exterior be rough or mild. On the other hand absolute submission to the limit of a dog's devotion is tendered whenever esteem is established by ability or affection evoked by character. Nothing is given under coercive pressure. But everything is given, unclaimed, without reservation, when the chord of loyalty is touched. Unaware of this secret of journalistic mentality, exacting proprietors of newspapers seek to subdue their staff to their will in authoritarian ways, and come to grief. I know of one of them, for instance, who, mad for power, thought that the way to gain it was to search out lieutenants with mind and outlook that were exact replicas of his own. All that he got for his pains was formal docility from his employees, poor recompense for the loss of talent that his craze for homage entailed. He has achieved prosperity without distinction.

Among proprietors of newspapers few have attained the distinguished success of Sri Kasturi Srinivasan of *The Hindu*. There is calibre in his unostentatiousness. Nobody's importance is hurt by any manner of his. He compels allegiance with unassertiveness. But it is not just a

formal stroke of surface pleasantness. He combines in himself two all but incompatible sets of qualities: one, the shrewd undecelvable acumen of a keen businessman, and the other a kindly disposition of generous saintliness. Srinivasan's contribution to *The Hindu* is less by way of direct intervention in the daily routine of its work than through the spread of a pervading influence of pride in its greatness and loyalty to its traditions. *The Hindu* must be holding a record in the whole country, and probably a considerable part of the world outside, in the matter of scarcity of desertions from its service. In ninety nine cases out of a hundred, to be once in *The Hindu* is to be always on *The Hindu*. Not many know, for instance, the magnitude of the inducements offered to Sri K. P. Viswanatha Aiyar (who lately retired from *The Hindu* after thirty years of devoted service) to make him accept careerist engagements elsewhere. But he would not look at them in the loftiness of an exclusive dedication to a cherished institution as to a temple in which he allowed to nothing else a share.

The Hindu has steered clear of stormy political weathers by specialising in the employment of moderation as a journalistic weapon. Emphasis goes a longer way when criticism is tempered by moderation. The disciplined restraint of *The Hindu* even on occasions of violent public excitement has built for it an enviable reputation for objectivity. The result is that a little energy expended by *The Hindu* is more efficacious in producing desired results than all the impassioned efforts of habitually more vehement papers. In dealings with a foreign Government the standards of *The Hindu* have been proved wise by experience. But freedom imposes other tests of public spirit on newspapers, and progressiveness might become indistinguishable at times from the martyr role of the pioneer with its liability to grave risks of momentary unpopularity and even opprobrium. It is noteworthy that, on the occasion of the celebration of the centenary of the *Manchester Guardian* a quarter

century ago, the *Nation*, which has since become the *New Statesman and Nation*, then edited by the brilliant Massingham, complimented that great newspaper on having performed, steadily and consistently, "just that kind of public service which many critics held to be incompatible with journalistic survival in the modern struggle for existence." This was praise indeed. Massingham was a lovable and fearless prodigy whose uncommercial spirit led him into fiery denunciations of wrongs that frequently frightened the proprietors of the papers he served—and made—and involved him in heart-breaking wrenches from them at the peak of their success after tussles over some nicety of editorial ethics. He waged the relentless war on the tricks of the circulation-builders of his day who brought degradation on the press by abandoning its public functions for the standpoint of the retail tradesman. Crusaders for the Right of the pattern of Massingham are the true builders of the great traditions of the British press. Francis Williams says of them in his book, *Press, Parliament and People*, that they have in fact "made the popular newspaper infinitely better than it has any right to be by stubbornly refusing to learn the facts of commercial life.... Most of them are always forgetting that what is important is circulation and instead conduct themselves as if what mattered was the public interest and they were its appointed guardians. They give to their newspapers a loyalty that really belongs to the public and involve themselves in struggles for justice, in delving for the truth, in the exposure of evils, in campaigns for this and that, which owe practically nothing to their proprietors' desire for dividends and practically everything to their own journalistic passion."

There is no lack of degradational upsurges within the domain of the press of India. It has its contingents of the vile and the vicious; of wicked fomenters of hate, fear and suspicion; of anglers for the coppers of the crowd who take great pains in lowering the knowledge and intelligence of the average reader; and of unprincipled profiteers of lascivious-

ness given to the habit of exciting rather than informing the public mind. But it has its finer spirits, too, its exemplars of culture and superb traditions, its marvels of uncommercial outlook. There is, for example, Vighneswara, familiar to readers of *SWATANTRA*. Since he made his first bow four years ago with 'A Votive Coconut,' his priceless feature *Sotto Voce* has appeared without a single break week by week. It has been an amazing panorama of multifarious discussion decorated with gems of literary art of matchless grace and beauty. A gossamer thread of culture of exquisite refinement runs through every word of Vighneswara tapering into philosophies that seem to hold the whole cosmos within its unfinished compass. There are no trifles in the economy of Vighneswara's journalism. Everything is masked profundity of universal significance reaching its hand across time into eternity. In variety, originality, wit, wisdom, gay railery, subtle sarcasm, learning and range of scholarship, and for apt phrasing and devastating logic, Vighneswara is nonpareil, and *Sotto Voce* belongs more to literature than journalism.

Another uncommercial traveller that has gone far on the press map is Sri M. Chalapathi Rau. He signalled



Manjeri S. Isvaran

the completion of university education by taking a pledge, along with Sri Manjeri Isvaran and six other college chums, never to marry. He and Isvaran alone have kept the pledge and continue in single blessedness. The six others fell by the way. Isvaran has won renown as a top-notch writer of short stories. He is the ablest of Indian story tellers in English, with a gift of terseness and economy of phrasing rarely found except among select Englishmen to the language born. Through gruelling deviling Chalapathi Rau has risen to the editorship of the *National Herald* founded by Pandit Nehru, a prize post. An early incident in his career illustrates the mettle of the man. When a coveted Government appointment was offered to him as a Non-Brahmin, he spurned it saying he wanted no preference on a communal ground. In professional competence and the quality of his flair for writing he resembles Pothan Joseph. But his reading is wider and his industry more vigorous and sustained. He is the ablest and the hardest working of Indian journalists today. Independence is not a battle to him, but just nature. He does not know how to compromise with convictions. It is not unusual to find him, as editor of the *National Herald*, subjecting to very outspoken criticism Pandit Nehru himself, despite his commanding position in relation to the paper. Chalapathi's boldness and Nehru's respect for it form an agreeable pattern of relationship between press and Government which Ministers elsewhere, too prone to retaliate to criticism with vindictiveness, would do well to copy. Sri Chalapathi Rau is absolutely indifferent to careerist considerations and does not care for money. Not only is he a brilliant journalist, he is a great man who takes his greatness easily in his stride.

Journalists of worth like these, there are in plenty. Most of them are not masters of the property of the



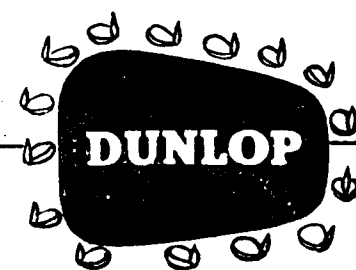
K. P. Viswanatha Aiyar

newspapers in which they serve. If they were, what sort of a newspaper would they turn out? The ideal newspaper awaits a journalist of genius capable of mastering the complicated conditions of modern industrial competition but with the centre of interest shifted from money-making. Outstanding commercial success is no criterion of a good newspaper, and the greatest newspapers in the world are not those that have proved most lucrative to their owners. Beyond making ends meet no enlightened planner of a newspaper should have any financial ambitions. The ideal paper would value brains more than counting of heads. It would educate advertisers on the superior value to trade, as to everything else, of instructed minds, and it would break the racket promoting the remunerativeness of stunts and low standards by paying exaggerated importance to multitudes of primitive intelligence as reflected in the huge circulations attracted by them. It would try to make the patronage of industry through advertisements a means to elevate the press rather than an impetus to vulgarise it. It would be fearless. It would not advertise itself to induce others to advertise in it. It would serve the public and not any private interest.—SAKA.

We are all much of a muchness between our knees and our navels. Physical appetites are common to us all; it is in our heads that we differ.—KINGSLEY MARTIN.



Dewali Greetings



DX 339



By David Hume and Ray G. Gresham. A



MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S greatness is not compelling, for it has too much flamboyance of soul and clangour of sound, and there seems little to provoke an Indian to attempt an estimate of the greatest Englishman of the age who has been also the greatest opponent of Indian freedom. But Mr. Churchill is a personality without being an eccentric, and exploration of such vividness can be an adventure into the insular but spacious spirit which has made England English without making it European. To delineate Mr. Churchill is not to paint a portrait on a postage stamp; he seems to need a wide canvas and a modern Rembrandt. He cannot be glamourized for he is no glamour boy; he is too rubicund and Johnsonian and has the symmetry of Westminster or the Cathedral of Cologne.

In the short line of England's statesmen, he is not a Pitt or a Palmerston. Chatham showed rare moral courage in the American Civil War and his unpremeditated passion smote English stupidity to contrition behind surrender. Pitt the Younger, made interesting by his upturned nose and Beilamy's pork pies, dominated England with placid efficiency during its first great war. Unaging Palmerston for a brief period conditioned public life like a dictator. A mixture of destiny and mystery, Disraeli, in spite of his emerald trousers and canary-coloured waistcoat, added to the empire which Mr. Churchill was

to find it hard not to liquidate. Gladstone was unique; his crusade against Bulgarian atrocities, his Midlothian campaign and his attempt to confer home rule on Ireland will maintain for him his statuesque place among the monuments of liberalism. Lloyd George had a naturalness that belonged to the Welsh mountains, and Carnarvon mists flooded his Celtic genius into surplus gusto and striking deeds.

Yet Mr. Churchill is greater in some aspects. He was more fortunate in that the man found the opportunity and that the deed fitted the utterance. Two world wars do not give two great chances for glory to any general or statesman. He reminds us more of Bolingbroke and the Marlboroughs and their rugged times when English kings had their *camarillas* but the cavalier dash and adventure of Whig and Tory are tempered by the conventions of twentieth century parliamentary life. Mr. Churchill is expansive but still English, like the cliffs of Dover. He had genius without judgement, according to the verdict of a juryman of history. It seemed to endure as an epitaph. Mr. Churchill lived long enough to prove that genius could ripen into judgement. But wholly in an English way.

Mr. Churchill's father was English, his mother, a Jerome, was American. He was, therefore, the perfect man, according to Mark Twain, a coiner of

humour and always a Connecticut Yankee. Lord Randolph Churchill, with all his brilliance, could not detect a greater brilliance in the bud. Behind the son's bull-dog appearance, he saw an intelligence fit only for Sandhurst after Harrow. Beautiful, vivacious, witty Lady Randolph Churchill nursed the subaltern on a strong glucose diet of Gibbon and Macaulay. The son retaliated with early rhetorical mutterings while campaigning in north-western India, in the Malakand and Tirah episodes, and 'corresponding' for the *Pioneer*. But India was also meant for polo-playing and pig-sticking, and Mr. Churchill graduated perfunctorily in these games, with one eye still on Gibbon and Macaulay. The Boer War made him known as a combatant, though there is ground for suspicion that he himself contributed much to the significance of his daring escape from Boer hands. Equipped with this knowledge of empire, Mr. Churchill pondered over Free Will, Pre-destination and a parliamentary career while distending his stammer into eloquence, aided by assiduous memorising. To his still beautiful, vivacious, witty, and now buxom, mother, he rendered gratitude by leading her to the altar for her second marriage.

Mr. Churchill's plunge into parliamentary politics, after a brief training at the hustings and a glimpse of Billingsgate, was like Robin Hood's plunge into Sherwood Forest. He found his kin among the Conservatives, uneasy friends of his father, while Balfour as Premier contemptuously walked the tight rope, swallowed the long sword, produced rabbits from a hat, and ignored the talent of the ugly duckling. For Mr. Churchill's face, like his eloquence, was becoming rotund with adolescent ambition and his maiden speech in the House of Commons, engraved in his heart, was an effort at calculated opportunism and mechanized wit. There was a new sparkle in the house. But the Conservatives, shaken by Joseph Chamberlain's quixotic protectionism, did not want to trouble their tarnished reputation with new talent. The Cecilia always frown on the

Churchills, without marrying them, and when Mr. Balfour, with a disdain equal to his aristocratic languor, would not give Mr. Churchill's baiting a patient hearing, the man of promise stood on his head for a while, completed a somersault and found his opportunity among the Liberals. Mr. Churchill has always treated consistency as a hobgoblin. That is only one reason why he has held the largest number of portfolios, filling every one of them with passion, though he has not held them all at the same time like Gilbert's Poo-Bah.

Mr. Churchill, as a Liberal, was an infant phenomenon. With literary output to his credit, he established intellectual, almost filial, kinship with Morley, a disciple of Mill and Comte, an esteemed colleague of Gladstone, and a leader without a following. Without Asquith's Balliol scholarship, Mr. Churchill strode behind as if he had also been Jowett's pupil. With the insouciance of the period which gained entrance to the society of Edwardian elite, he rubbed shoulders with seniors like Haldane, Bryce, Crewe, Birrell and Grey as if he was their peer, and on the opposite side, with F. E. Smith (later Birkenhead) who, with Balfour and the cadaverous Carson, redeemed Conservative mediocrity. There was Margot Asquith, unconventionally enlivening Liberal society at 11 or 10 Downing Street and as unconventionally committing her indiscretions to a diary, apart from the fairies of the stage like Ellen Terry and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. In Rosebery, with his primrose charm and style, Mr. Churchill found a friend of his father who looked on the new force with the pride of a racing magnate in a future Derby winner.

In office, the reward of well-timed and enlightened opportunism, the phenomenon had become a portent. As Under-Secretary for Colonies, he had his first taste of colonial blood-thirst, redeemed only by the triumph of Campbell-Bannerman's Liberalism in South Africa. As President of the Board of Trade, he showed his grasp of complicated legislation, and as Home Secretary, he staged the Sydney Street battle in which he made his



Chatham

first Napoleonic gesture. Mr. Churchill had by this time become Churchillian and married. There seems nothing particularly significant about this event, except for a note in Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's diary, in which Mr. Churchill was depicted as something ungainly and massive beside the beautiful Clementine, who has given him the support of sustained happiness, denied to other talented public men without the aid of a second marriage. On his side, Mr. Churchill has been an ideal husband, perhaps because he realized early the importance of being earnest.

It was as First Lord of the Admiralty that Mr. Churchill became one of the dominating personalities of the pre-1914 era, a Forsyte saga disturbed by alarms. He found his natural element, and was never, like Carson later in the same office, at sea. He took to the Admiralty as ducks take to water and, while dropping the blind eye, enhanced the Nelson touch with more dreadnoughts. Mr. Churchill's interest in the mechanics of war had something of the tyro but later expanded into state documents of importance. Of course, he knocked about admirals like nine pins, promoted Jellicoe, and, with the prescience of a blood-hound running after an imaginary hare, kept the navy in preparedness. In Haldane's stewardship of the War Office, there was sufficient inspiration, and Mr. Churchill, with a love for the picaresque, had entertained suspicions of the supercilious Kaiser, at Kiel and, perhaps, at Cowe. And since every politician in those days had an Irish skeleton in his cup-board, Mr. Churchill, having graduated in the great battles over Lloyd George's budgets and the Parliament Bill, engaged himself in exciting but dangerous duels with the formidable, eloquent and powerful Carson, with his glooming gusto and his Ulster brood. While the Birrellisms of the Irish Secretary, Birrell, like the Malapropisms of Mrs. Malaprop—and unlike the Spoonerisms of Dr. Spooner—succeeded only in making Home Rule ambiguous without appeasing Ulster, Mr. Churchill uttered threat for threat

and performed a feat of personal courage in addressing a meeting at Belfast. To Toby M. P. or to a student of the biographical and autobiographical literature of the period, the parliamentary scene reveals Mr. Churchill running a close race with Lloyd George, some years his senior, with Asquith presiding over the friendly rivalry like the chorus in Greek drama. It was then that Morley uttered one of his many unsuccessful prophecies, that the war would end the rivalry and in Mr. Churchill's favour. And Mr. Churchill, Margot Asquith notes, was the only cabinet minister beaming with happiness on England's declaration of war.

The war ended in Lloyd George's favour. Mr. Churchill was not ripe and ripeness, not rhetoric, is all. He started well but limped through it badly, like a cruiser with a list. The war developed into a war, fortunately of words, between the generals at the front and the statesmen at home and both fronts have left diaries and biographies, sometimes posthumous, not to speak of diaries like the ubiquitous Col. Repington's. The Dardanelles episode, now buried under prose and verse, had Mr. Churchill as its biggest casualty, though Fisher, whom the First Lord had fished out from retirement as First Sea Lord, could also take credit for turning his three R's "ruthless, remorseless and relentless," against his young friend. The replacement of Asquith by Lloyd George found Mr. Churchill uninterested, for only clever men like Beaverbrook with a talent for intrigue could give the fatal touch to an administration. Mr. Churchill, who had asked Asquith to put him in command of an army to find the Premier unprepared for such a precedent and had rushed into an adventure at Antwerp, found consolation at the front. Having been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the slough of despond for front-rank politicians, Mr. Churchill was Minister of Munitions, Minister for Air, and Colonial Secretary and found in Lloyd George a patron-saint like St. David, not a rival. Plainly he had been overshadowed. There were brief interludes, not all of them creditable. He was



Younger Pitt

one of the architects of the Irish Treaty, he defended enlargement of Egyptian liberty and Montagu's Hebrew conjurer's reforms in India with recaptured liberal favour, not to be found later; he became the most vehement English opponent of Bolshevism and the most inveterate European exponent of interventionism. He was co-planner of a centre party which was to save England from Communism under Lloyd George but the Conservatives decreed the death of the coalition, and Mr. Churchill, with his stature eclipsed by a coalition share in power, found himself between the old stool of the Liberal Party and the new stool of the Conservatives. He was out of favour, out of office, without a seat in the Commons, without a future. He was one of the greatest political orphans of history.

For his return to office under Baldwin's second cabinet of coalition, Mr. Churchill had to thank not only Baldwin's bovine wisdom but his own sense of timing. The story is told that Baldwin was offering Mr. Churchill the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, when Mr. Churchill took the words out of Baldwin's mouth and expressed willingness to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was orthodox; and we have Sir James Grigg's account of the fits of this raiding chancellor. Not a great chancellor, he was an eloquent one. But the five-year spell was to be succeeded by a ten-year stay in the wilderness, while Baldwin, MacDonald, and Chamberlain carried vast synthetic burdens on truncated party shoulders and Mr. Churchill thundered in isolation like a prophet of woe, against Gandhi, against Hoare's India Bill, against Hitler. But for Hitler, Mr. Churchill would have perished as a genius without judgement, as a mass of promise. After a long cannonade of warning prefaced by secret preparation Mr. Churchill found his opportunity, till he lost it in 1945. These episodes of a gallant life are fresh.

This tabloid narration is tedious but to telescope fifty years of public life is not so tedious but necessary. It is English public life. The emerald isle is a blessed isle; for it rarely has spiritual troubles and rarely rises to continental dimensions. Revolu-



Palmerston

tionary urges take the form of reform bills. The greatest excitement of politics is a general election and the greatest product of troubled conscience a General Booth. Governments fall by vote, while subversive activity exhausts itself in oratory in Hyde Park. Since the Gordon Riots and Chartism, the greatest internal violence came from militant suffragettes, while the nearest attempt to a gunpowder plot was the attempt to run away with the mace in the Commons. English temper is mildly excited over beer or coffee and entertained by Aldwych. But the soul of England is serene and rarely disturbed and, except in three threats of invasion, never shaken to its depths since the Civil War. As in life, so in literature where Hardy is the nearest to continental significance since Byron. Originality, daring or leadership must follow convention, play cricket, conform to May's Parliamentary Practice and obey the ballot box. There is no room for a Cromwell, even when coal strikes are popular. Under this decorum there is a limit to genius beyond a Chatham or a Churchill, or even a Marlborough or a Montgomery. Without genius, eminence is entombed in tedious two-volumed biographies, with the inevitable amalgam of early photographs and boring letters, with chapters in which nothing happens. For only eminent eccentrics avoid the somnolence of official biography and attract the x-ray treatment of Lytton Strachey. If eminence overflows, the Morleys and Monypennys cross the statutory limit. Mr. Churchill may set up a record, if his biographer were, with the zeal of a grave-digger, to carry out epistolary excavation. But in him too there are no depths to plumb and no mountain tops to scale. His story is as plain as the histories he has written, motiveless, mysteryless, inevitable. It is the

limitation of parliamentary public life, which can be made Homeric only by bombast and Hogarthian only by distortion. English history is a banquet of legislation and a ballad of second readings. However elongated the public life, however punctured its pneumatic smoothness, there is little of

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the exciting greatness of a Lenin or Gandhi, lives packed of experiment, experience, sublimities and chasms.

Mr. Churchill's record in domestic affairs reveals a famine. No statute immortalizes him. His name is not associated with any reform. He has led no crusade like Gladstone, nor created an Ulster like Carson. Social legislation goes to the credit of Lloyd George or Labour. Neither the widows nor old men nor children need be grateful to Mr. Churchill. He has no Bellsha beacons or Lansbury's Lido to proclaim him, nor the civic achievements of a Joseph Chamberlain or a Herbert Morrison. This is not a measure of his littleness but of his barrenness. For while even Asquith's classicism or Lloyd George's Celticism could be distilled into a social philosophy, Mr. Churchill seems tinkling cymbal and sounding brass. It would be amazing if such a long life had no political philosophy but it can be distilled into a phrase, conservatism, though it might be an old phrase. Mr. Churchill is an eighteenth century Whig or a nineteenth century Tory and even his imperialism, as romantic as Disraeli's and as sensuous as Curzon's did not achieve any refinement like the famous Balfour formula on dominion status. Roused by the cause of empire, he has behaved like a pirate on the Spanish Main, implacable, unimaginative. This is the central consistency among all his seeming inconsistencies. He is no more inconsistent than Burke. Over Free Trade, he walked over to the Liberals, while Free Trade and Protection, his friend, Birkenhead, proclaimed, was not a matter of principle but of expediency. When it did seem expedient, Mr. Churchill walked back the Liberal plank. He was liberal towards the Boers; so was he liberal to the Egyptians and the Indians, but he was truer in his opposition to freedom. The Mountbatten spell which has charmed Mr. Churchill is really the spell of an old enchantment that has not lost its power. Five years of Amery and Mr. Churchill and seven years of Linlithgow promoted Mr. Jinnah's interests and carved Pakistan from India's lions. In spite of the ruggedness,

there is the roundness of a Buddhist *stupa* in the structure of Mr. Churchill's mind, massive, circular, inert. Few other minds have been so consistent, consistent about individual liberty, an enlightened creed thirty years ago, about chivalry for king or people, about humour and high seriousness, about opposition to socialism. Yet Mr. Churchill's contribution to anti-socialist thought, while woolly even beside Lord Woolton's, is not sufficient for a child's dictionary. It is England's instinct pitted against the new power of social conscience. Mr. Churchill belongs to a world of imagination, like Cervantes' or the Grimms, and not to a world of thought.

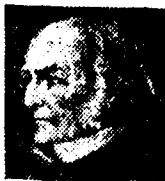
His public operations were impressive and his energy in administration almost electric. He was fond of inditing documents and leaving them to leisured posterity. As essays in exhortation and exposition, these would do credit to Bain. But there in the middle of the war, we have the dual personality of Admiral Crichton and amateur strategist, as inexplicable as the Siamese Twins but not wholly impossible. He did mobilize the fleet in time in 1914; that did not make him a Nelson. The Dardanelles controversy has settled down into dust but not in his favour. Not that Mr. Churchill had the power or the will to override professional opinion and rush into a fatal adventure, as ordinarily supposed. But he did rush the Admiralty, and Fisher's silence over the decision, which Mr. Churchill cites in excuse was followed by a fatal, if Fabian and monosyllabic, opposition. The Dardanelles adventure, in spite of the Gallipoli debacle, was not a strategic blunder but it followed Mr. Churchill's concept of what should be done rather than the professional practice of taking into consideration what can be done. Having rushed in like fools and not angels, the British Government should have persisted but it was not possible; the withdrawal was fatal to Mr. Churchill's reputation. He never really recovered from it but from then on learnt to value professional advice. The episode illustrates Mr. Churchill's uninstructed but imagi-



Disraeli

native pattern of military thinking and his passion for military-cum-political decisions. He was the natural leader of the Eastern school of strategy, though Lloyd George was not far behind, in the two world wars and it is not denied that if the Dardanelles adventure had succeeded, Turkey would have been overthrown, Russia received aid, the Bolshevik revolution prevented and the war ended two years earlier. These are the imponderable *ifs* of history but they are a measure of Mr. Churchill's prescience. Further proof came in the Second World War. For if the Eastern School and Mr. Churchill had succeeded, South-eastern Europe would have been ruled by the dollar and the Iron Curtain might have remained recessive. If military action was to wait on political motives like Mr. Churchill's, wars might miscarry, more often and strategy would become nonsense under lay intuition.

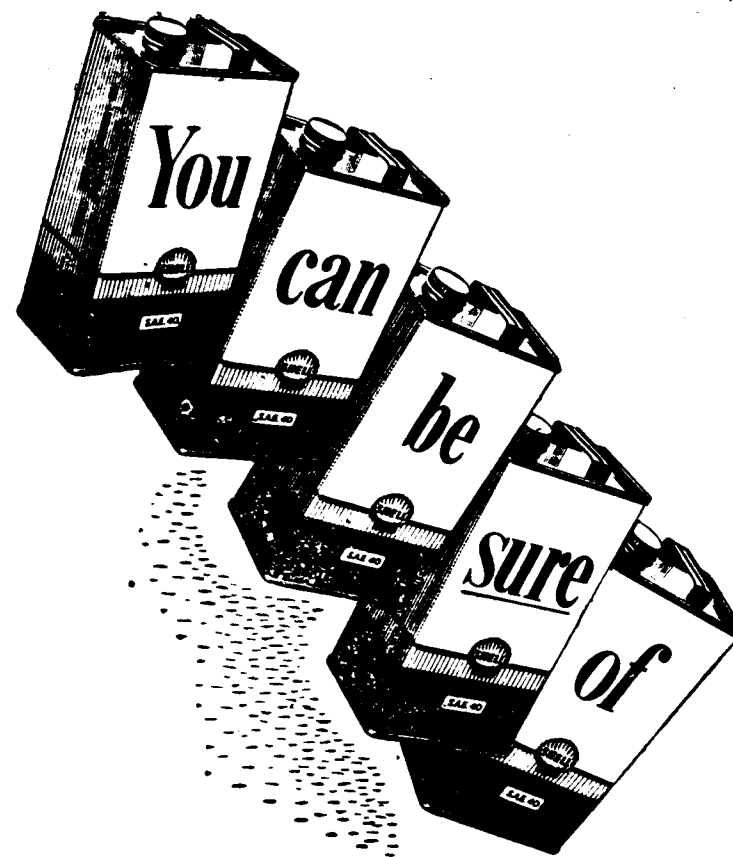
In the First World War, Mr. Churchill was only a subaltern; in the second, he was the head of the majority party, the head of a coalition and the head of the nation. Lloyd George had had to impress his superior intuition on colleagues who were equal in stature; Mr. Churchill, like Alexander Selkirk, was alone in his splendour, and had abundant and mediocre talent to direct. But a level of mediocrity helps discipline, direction and efficiency. On Mr. Bevin and Mr. Morrison, Mr. Churchill could depend for mobilization, man-power and internal security; the service heads were old friends and efficient and loyal, and the service chiefs were equally cooperative, without being spectacular. In the first two volumes of his history of the Second World War, Mr. Churchill has given an account of his method of work, of sleep and of direction. Of personal courage, he lacks nothing; if anything, he is as rash as a bulldog. But he was happy in his generals and admirals, Madame Tussaud's wax in his hands, for the supreme direction was nominally his. He had lost the spirit of tinkering. With greater perspicacity, he relied more on professional opinion. But it was lucky that



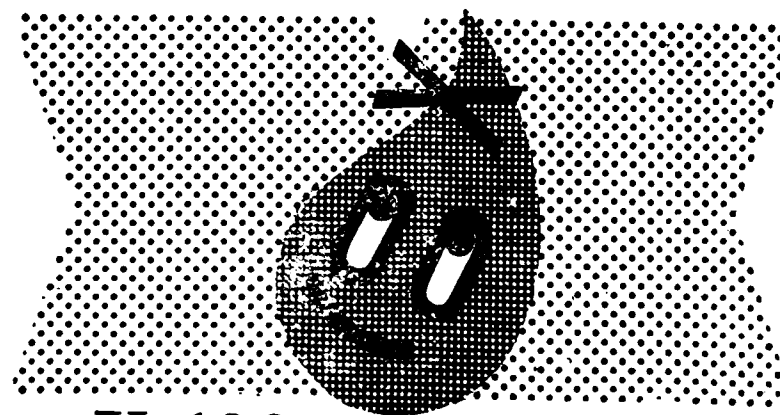
Gladstone

there were no square and solid personalities like Haig or talkative generals like Wilson. Mr. Churchill could have shuffled even Montgomery, at the height of his glory, without creating a threat to the Government; he could transfer, dismiss or replace any of them but it was good that he found men like Dill, Brooke and Pound who had no eccentricities. There was another softening process, from the American side, and the scale of American help from the first hours of Britain's peril was much greater than anything under Woodrow Wilson. Mr. Roosevelt was a great President, noted for bravura effects, with an array of impressive military talent, Stonewall Jacksons in action. But Mr. Churchill, with his supremacy at home, had his discretion and direction circumscribed. Eisenhower narrates how he had to stand up to the British Premier, bound by instructions from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his own view. If Mr. Churchill had had his way there would have been political decisions and spectacular remaking of the map; the U.S.A. wanted early military victory and is now reaping the political harvest. The victory had to be American.

This old-wine temper was to be seen throughout Mr. Churchill's handling of foreign affairs. In spite of striking gestures, he was not very original. The joint partnership meant the senior partnership of the U.S.A. Even Unconditional Surrender was agreed to without discussion by the British Cabinet. But if Mr. Churchill were asked to direct European affairs, he would be less of a success than Lloyd George, who had flexibility but never got the chance to work the post-Versailles peace, and would not have been a greater success than his Labour version, Mr. Bevin. For Mr. Churchill has little grounding in Europe. He is not a European as Briand was or even as Grey was, not a European even on the scale of Austen Chamberlain, who maintained the traditional contact with the European stream of consciousness. But most Englishmen are West European and Mr. Churchill is English in this also. Eastern Europe has been always a land of mystery and unprobed



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instincts, almost Ruritarian, to be studied by Foreign Office experts, spies, the Seton-Watsons and Wickham Steeds. Mr. Churchill's enthusiasm for the rally of West Europe is not only ideological but in accordance with tradition and temperament. For him Europe ends with Dutch dykes and the buxom French beauties of Strasbourg.

But the English instinct of Mr. Churchill has something epic in fortitude and strength. He is as English as beef and broccoli, as English as Shakespeare or Soho, as English as the Thames Embankment. But the vitality seems wholly American. The gusto in Mr. Churchill is something phenomenal. In the rough and tumble of American politics, he would have been at home, and the only British statesman who could be so, unless Horatio Bottomley could be called a statesman. And of the bull-dog breed, with a strong mixture of Col. Blimp, Mr. Churchill is a splendid illustration. The whole of England had to unite to summon up that spirit which had aged since the days of the Armada. In Mr. Churchill, it was summoned fully in the mad mid-summer of 1940. Those battles need not be retold. If that was England's finest hour, Mr. Churchill was the finest English character in England's finest hour.

It was also Mr. Churchill's finest hour as orator. For he is an orator without ceasing to be a debator. If oratory, according to the doctrine of Latin rhetoricians, is action, no other British statesman has roused his nation to such stupendous effort in such dire peril. But it was not natural oratory in its beginning, though at the age of four, young Winston surprised Carson at his father's house by declaring pompously his opinion, that "the ship of state" seemed to be in peril. Demosthenic in his early struggles for utterance and the power of his philippics, Mr. Churchill relied on study of the dramatics, on memory, on manuscript and on rehearsal. Birkenhead among contemporary speakers had the natural fluency to deal learnedly, flippantly or sarcastically with subjects but without form and style in print.



Asquith

Lloyd George, in his war speeches, touched the springs of poetry which invested his calls to the nation with the force of invocation and pathos. Asquith was Ciceronian but without passion and Balfour philosophically circumferaneous. Among natural orators, Gladstone had a largiloquence, as distinguished from Mr. Churchill's magniloquence, and a vibration and magnificence of gesture not equalled in the history of English speech; the voice and the eye of Mr. Churchill attained co-ordination only in Britain's finest hour. Mr. Roosevelt, even from the screen, had a better sense of structure in reading out his written eloquence. Mr. Churchill, it seems, bellows and the pauses that precede the pouncing phrase look somewhat artificial. He can be humorous, sarcastic, scathing, though he has never attained the scorching wit or the terrible flaying power which Simon once tasted at Lloyd George's hand. Mr. Churchill has never been so cruel except perhaps, against the fascist dictators. Yet Mussolini's retorts were more devastating even in the abridged reports of the *Manchester Guardian*. With all the insufficiency of spontaneity and gesture, Mr. Churchill preserves a literary poise and often attains literary style, while sacrificing literary power. For he has a sense of style, and a sense of rhythm, which is rarer. The words have not the Biblical simplicity of Bright but roll out in lordly Latinities, which for a man of no Greek, little Latin and less French, seem surprising. But there is inflation about Mr. Churchill's thought, which, when not aided by inspiration, drops limp like bombast. He has had more of debating triumphs in the House of Commons than of oratorical Trafalgars.

The power of his oratory is the power of composition and, like the composition of journalists and statesmen, it has its defects. Sir Edward Marsh is obviously taking charge of the defects of composition in Mr. Churchill's history of the Second World War. But Mr. Churchill, while satisfying neither Quintillian nor Dionysius of Halicarnassus, is a rhetorician, almost the grand Napoleon

of the realms of rhetoric, as Byron was of the realms of rhyme. The early study of Gibbon and Macaulay has left lasting traces. At times Mr. Churchill has the longitudoous grandiloquence of Gibbon but not erudition or the music, for, in spite of circumlocution, Gibbon remains grandiloquent. It is because he writes, with the sweep of history, of the decline of an empire. On rare occasions Mr. Churchill writes as if Macaulay is mashed and shot from a machine-gun. But the metallic clangour of that easy model is not enough to make it Macaulay. Mr. Churchill has not that eye for detail and that art of dovetailing that detail into a picturesque mosaic. Macaulay makes personalities live vividly and even the outlines of progress are neatly and photographically presented. Mr. Churchill has no photographic precision; he finds it easy to be impressionistic, though he does not love the abstract, which often takes the form of love of abstract nouns. He can write with power, though to write with charm is more difficult. But he can write with indefatigable energy, with a syntax kept unflagging, and with words controlled like phalanxes in a battle. It is style without suppleness and depth.

Mr. Churchill's style depends upon Mr. Churchill's content, and his range as writer is limited. His early accounts of minor campaigns show the first signs of massivity and lack of depth. His biography of his father, ranked as one of the half-a-dozen best biographies in the language, is readable as much for the fascinating personality of Lord Randolph Churchill as for the son's chivalrous and electronic treatment. The parliamentary scene does not require much psychological depth. The motives are plain, the background simple and the environment easily reconstructed. In his volumes on Marlborough, Mr. Churchill attempted a more ambitious project. But, while it was read with interest as it appeared, it looked more like a laborious fulfillment of plety towards his ancestor than an imperishable biography or record. There are purple patches, and purple perso-

nalities, and in Marlborough's campaigns a biographer or historian has something to unravel, much to visualize, reconstruct, and paint. Mr. Churchill reads much of his experience of the First World War into Queen Anne's period. But much better period pieces have been written in much less space. Neither in his sketches on his contemporaries nor in his piece of autobiography does Mr. Churchill achieve anything more than a rhetorician's success. He is no psychologist and his self-trained but unscholastic mind does not prepare him for the abysmal depths of human personality. And if his paragraphs are analysed, there seems to be more sound than necessary and little of the Anglo-Saxon timbre.

But Mr. Churchill's opportunity as a writer is fulfilled in his histories of the two world wars, one of them only partly written. If he ever wanted to immortalize himself as a historian, here was a chance of which Thucydides would have been happy. He constructs his volumes like an architect and plans them like a general reliving his battles. But the method is gravely defective. If history is contemporaneous it cannot be objective enough to be true, stern and final. Mr. Churchill loses even the chance to sink his personality by stringing the narration on the first person singular. His smallest deeds and unimportant documents intrude; he has to start on divagations like his valuable contribution to the making of a tank. The wood and the trees got mixed like something at Birnam and recollection, without merciless editing, becomes repetitive. But there are still the stately bits of history in the grand style. It is history first hand and it is history from a contemporary Gibbon who had a leading part in the shaping of the history he writes. In the Second World War, he was the master mind of Britain and one of the leaders of men and victory. But for such a personal narration, Mr. Churchill brings gifts of which Clio, once a muse and now a mistress, can be proud. There are the grand objectivity rare in controversialists writing about their controversies, judgments delivered like the ver-



Lloyd George

dicts of posterity, frank admissions of blunders and imaginative rendering of the depths of crisis and the ecstasy of victory. Mr. Churchill's estimate of Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution, politely resented by Birkenhead at the time, is an example of true historical perspective, ennobled by the dropping of prejudice. The Battle of Jutland or the Battle of the River Plate is brought back to life vividly. No revolution has suffered at Mr. Churchill's hands because he often identified himself with the counter-revolution. It is an amazing virtue in a politician moulded in a set pattern and now an active partisan in affairs of peace and war. But the defects of passion remain. Beside Froude or Freeman or even the choleric Carlyle, Mr. Churchill looks a whimpering child. He has none of the narrative power of J. R. Green and it would be temerity to bring in his modern contemporary, Toynbee, into the comparison. When Mr. Churchill is not an architect of prose, building St.

Peter's or Paul's domes with it, he is a painter daubing the canvas, as he has daubed real life on real canvas since he first wielded a brush through the inspiration of Sir John Lavery.

Mr. Churchill, of course, is not the perfect man, the perfect writer or the perfect statesman. Such men, as



Rosebery said of Pitt, would be monsters, not men. But as brick-layer or as parliamentarian, in the House or out of office, he has been immensely interesting, arresting, foreboding at times, exciting. It is not likely that he will excite the electorate to put him in power. It never put him in power; he gravitated to it. For the electorate these days is stirred socially and has never put a man in power for his own personality. Mr. Churchill, at

seventy, is a personality without an adequate philosophy, finding use for himself as a memory of the England that saved English life and ways. It was as an Englishman that he made his indispensable fame, and his imperishable mark on his country's history. His whole life had seemed promise and a preparation for England's penance and, while the content of greatness seems limited, he found himself in the summer months of 1940. In that hour he acted, spoke and breathed as if he was the spirit of England which had risen from Stonehenge, Tilbury and Stratford-on-Avon and uttered the essence of eloquence, a small treasury of words, which stand with the best of Pericles and the best of Lincoln in the golden language of history. Mr. Churchill can ask for no better epitaph.

If I had to mention a single quality which I think the future biographer of Mr. (Winston) Churchill should be especially careful to display adequately, it is that of 'magnanimity'. If ambition is the last infirmity of the world it is at once one of the rarest and in its ultimate consequences the most rewarding. History has many instances of opportunities fatally lost through failure to display it at the cardinal moment, and records no less the infinitely rich rewards which have sometimes followed when the opportunity was seized.—Sir Arthur Salter.



the girl who hated Men

By SANTHA

(Place: A metropolis, preferably Bombay or Delhi. A room-A girl-A telephone)

(Period: 1949)

(The telephone rings. The girl takes up the receiver.)

Hello? Hello, Malathi. At last! I thought you were never going to ring me up. I was almost sure you had forgotten . . . What? You did? My dear, but . . . Oh, you found the line engaged? . . . No, my dear, I refuse to believe you rang me six times. Don't tell me I was speaking so long to . . . No, Malathi, your guess is all wrong. I had made up my mind to cut him, don't you remember? . . . Yes, I know, but I just couldn't help it, you must believe me. He came right up to us at Icilmann's and what could I do but answer civilly. . . Yes, my dear, it was terribly embarrassing. And then I had to introduce him to Premi and Krishna and they were at once all over him—you know the sort they are, they can't resist an open shirt and moustache—and before I knew what was happening he was sitting by my side and having a drink. But I was freezing, my dear, absolutely below zero and with spikes all over me . . . Make it up with him indeed! Not if he came on his bended knees, I assure you. Let me meet him next, that is all. He will have different words on his lips, I can tell you . . . I said his lips, dear. Words on his lips, I said. I did not say kiss. How could you, Malathi? . . . I shan't speak to him again, of course. He is absolutely impossible . . . I said I hate him, don't you? . . . Oh, dear, I had forgotten all about the swimming party, but I will cancel the date with him, of course. I will have to get someone else. Mathu will be pleased to take me, I am sure . . .

No, dear, I am not mad about him, but he is nice, don't you think? He is a baby, really, hardly twenty-one and absolutely harmless . . . With you? Well, I must say it surprises me. He never told me a word about it . . . No, Malathi, of course I am not angry. Why should I be? I am not narrow-minded, thank goodness. But he does tell me all sorts of things about his family, his property, his work and all that sort of thing you know and that is why I was so surprised he had not told me about the painting. I guess he really wanted to surprise me . . . What, dear? . . . What! Really! . . . Of you? Well, I haven't seen it yet. Is the exhibition still running, dear? I must go and see it one of these days. And it won a prize? How nice. I am pleased, dear, I really am. Though, to be very frank, I don't think I would sit for a painting even if I am given a million rupees . . . Why not? Really Malathi, you must know. These horrid painters really have no decency have they? Of course there are exceptions, dear, as there are in everything else in life. I mean, they come and feel you all over and then explain they are feeling your bone formation, that sort of thing . . . Madhu has passed the stage when he feels bones? How interesting. How very interesting . . . New experiments? How very clever, dear. Are the experiments also on you? . . . I said tell me about the experiments . . . Oh . . . Oh . . . Oh. Well, dear, to be quite candid, I really don't think much of these things,

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THE bullock cart moved on at a trotting pace. It was a summer night in early April; the moon was waiting to be born, true to the hour and minute recorded in the almanac, and under the owl-light of the stars the country road stretched out, bordered on either side by jack and mango and plane-trees, and now and then by ancient sals, winding gracefully, twisting abruptly into hair-pin bends and as abruptly debouching into the open amid fields expanding to the very horizon, with low hills wheeling all around. The fields had been cut and the harvest gathered in; the long rows of stubble stood like toy-soldiers in rigid attention, asserting their brief life, before the ploughman turned them over into the earth again. Huts of tumbledown thatch belonging to the working class huddled dismally together in moor and heath beyond the highway trees, while at the edge of the road, very rarely, rose a stately house, tile-roofed, its garden clamorous with jasmine and rose, its bamboo paling in front covered over with creepers and an odd wild flower here and there startling the dark with its crimson glory. A wind originating from the Western Ghats met a wind blowing from the Arabian Sea, the two rubbed their noses against each other and melted into a caress, quivering with tenderness, delicious as the milk of coconuts. It was a night of peculiar charm, potential for peculiar happenings, when nature is a little doubtful of her moods, doubtful which way to

plunge, into playfulness and gaiety or don the sable of tragedy.

The bullocks progressed at a gentle trot. They were beautiful animals, one deep brown, the other dapple-grey, with dewlaps hanging fanwise, horns curved like kukris, their tapering points fitted with ornamental metal caps, scalloped delicately, from which hung tassels of variegated thread,—bullocks of the finest breed, which while they proceeded at a jog-trot, varying it into a majestic walk, ruminated wistfully of the time when they were high-spirited young bulls, of their recent castration as the marks on their thighs and rumps branded by hot iron, still a little raw, revealed, and the painful consciousness of which quickened their pace, if only to catch the illusion that they were high-spirited bulls once again, free of the heavy yoke that cumbered their necks and the stupid, inanimate object of a cart pursuing them blindly, insistently. But to the cartman they were beasts of burden whom he should drive and goad to earn his bread, in return for which he gave them their feed of grass or straw, and occasionally when he could afford it, the luxury of the sweet copra. And as though reconciling themselves to their lot, the bullocks trotted on, their collar-bells of bronze tinkling clearly, hilariously, the deep silence of the summer night giving the bells their swelling resonance and conveying it more hilariously over the voice of the cartman who sang a ballad with such soulful naivete, so

spontaneously as the birds do, crackling his whip, heigh-heighing the bullocks with a delightful nasal twang, and stroking their backs affectionately. Elated with his own song, floating on wings as it were, he forgot for the moment that they were beasts of burden; he hummed and whistled and leaning forward he very nearly brushed their backs with his lips. He was a young fellow, still in his middle twenties, of the robust rustic type, with clean-cut features. There was a fluidity about his limbs that leaped like quicksilver and an almost impudent beauty. He had grown to his puberty in bullock-stalls. He had the grace and poise of a panther, but the qualities of this animal seemed to be held in leash in him; otherwise he would have pounced upon his own bullocks. In his perch on the cart he was happy as a king. He sang his joy while the steelclad wheels grated on hard laterite, grooved the gravel, or ribbed the dust registering the argument of the road as it lengthened out, and his song, simple, suave, describing candidly a tryst of lovers, praised the night as a perfect accomplice, but nature still remained a little doubtful of her moods. Hushing his voice suddenly, he lifted the curtain of sackcloth behind him lightly at a corner and peeped into the cart, wondering at his boldness. And respiration in two keys, one high and the other low, fell on his ears; he glimpsed the outline of a figure lying on the mat of soft rushes, its knees drawn up short of touching the chin, and the profile of a body reclining against the side of the vehicle. He struck a match to get a clearer view of the persons when the profile unexpectedly came to life and asked sternly:

"Who's that?"

"It's me. Just lighting a cheroot."

"Oh!"

Credulity balanced truth with a lie. It was masculine, it made an anxious inquiry:

"Is the thing safe?"

"Quite safe," replied the cartman, postponing to light his cheroot. He had begun to hum again.

Akhileswaran did not know that he had dozed off for a while. He was wide awake now. He bent over his

wife asleep beside him and straightened her legs to make her posture more comfortable, lifting her head again onto his lap whence it had slid down during the short space he had dozed. She sighed, nuzzling mechanically against him; for a moment he felt he had disturbed her rest, but soon her steady breathing assured him that he had not, and he was free to return to his thoughts.

"Where are we at present?" he asked the cartman, feeling he must speak.

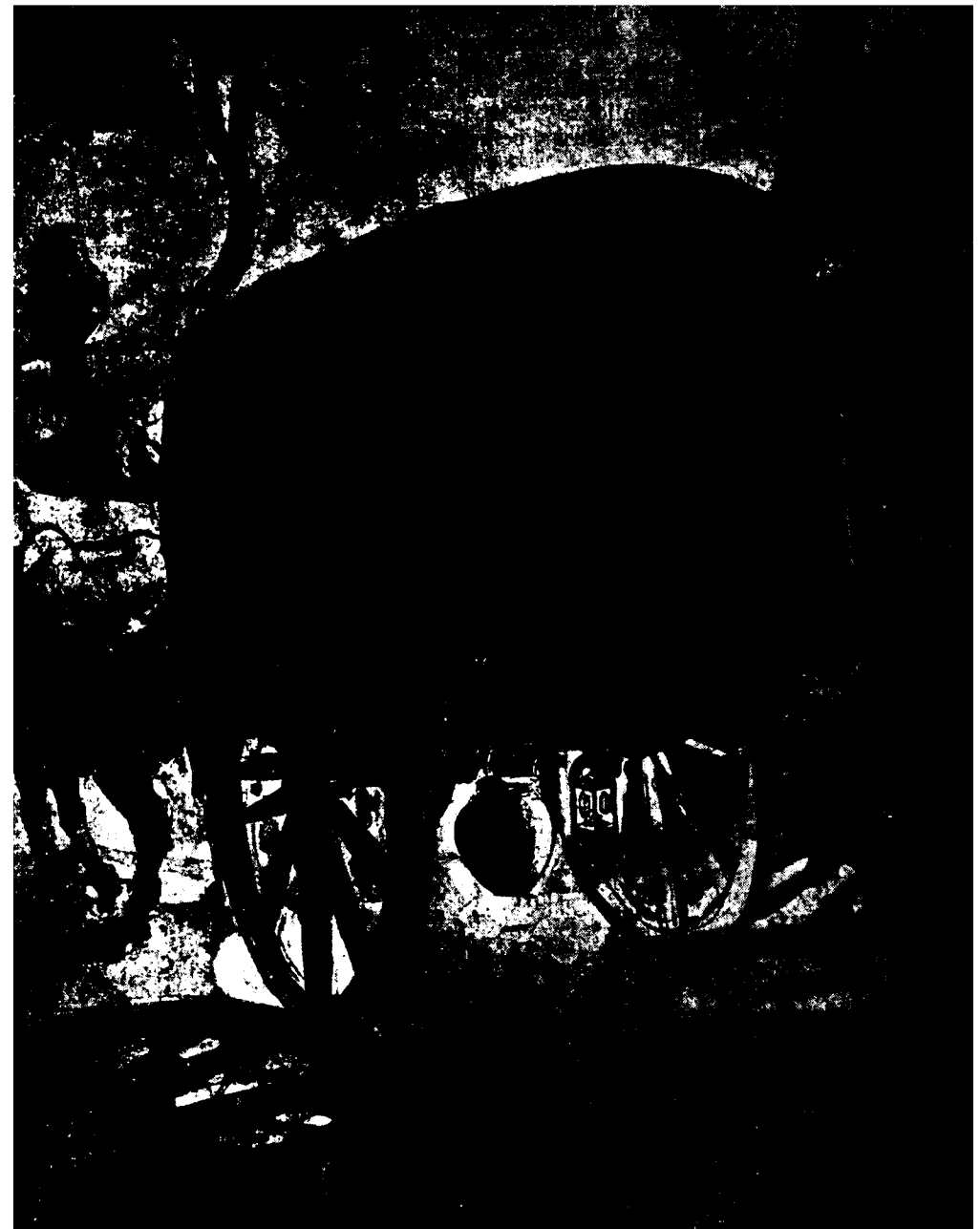
"A little past the Umbrella Stone," came the answer.

His thoughts, without notice, were side-tracked and he allowed himself an instant's digression. The Umbrella Stone or *Kodaikal* had a tale to tell. It was a group of three conical rocks, shaped like a pyramid, surmounted with a huge circular rock, standing in the middle of a paddy flat. Local history had it that a holy Brahmin while returning from a pilgrimage saw three pariah women at work in the rice-fields. It was the season of transplantation, and as a protection against sun and rain the women had wide deep umbrellas made of palmyra leaf resting on their heads, covering their backs too. The Brahmin called out to them from a distance to keep off his way; they were the untouchables, unapproachables, whose propinquity would pollute him, but they turned a deaf ear to his halloo and refused to budge an inch. Whereupon, he, in his wrath, laid a curse on them that they be turned into stone, and the poor women did, complete with their umbrellas. But in the transformation, while their bodies remained separate, the three umbrellas changed into one, all of a piece!

Akhileswaran recalled the story which he had heard often as a boy; the place was about three leagues from his village and he knew it well. At the moment, however, he was not interested in mythicizing the episode; this short digression but intensified his anxiety relating to more important matters.

"Will you pull up for a while?" he suddenly asked the cartman.

There was no response. Carried away by his song the fellow was on the golden road to paradise.



"You heard what I said?" he cried, somewhat loud.

"Hm!"

"Pull up, will you?"

"That isn't possible. We are on the top of a steep incline, and to draw reins now would mean putting too great a strain on the bullocks."

He was frank without being impolite.

Akhileswaran became conscious of the changed motion of the vehicle, the wheels bowling rapidly, and creaking noises at the yoke. He was about to speak again when the cartman interrupted him:

"I know why you want me to stop. Since we started on the journey you've asked me a hundred times if the thing is secure. I assure you it is. Why bother yourself? I'm always keeping an eye on it."

"Good. I am glad. I won't talk of it again."

The 'thing' on which so much concern seemed to be concentrated was an earthen pot fastened to the axle-tree of the cart. It was wrapped about in areca fronds, a rotund pot, narrow at the neck. Near it hung the cart lamp, of crude country make, two of its four sliding glasses bedimmed by kerosene smoke. The lamp threw a circle of light on the road in which the ~~rolling~~ wheels spun their spokes and ~~the~~ in swift succession played the shadow of the oscillating pot, like a single big bead on an abacus.

Akhileswaran's thoughts hovered over the pot, thoughts of profound worship and devotion, withal of a great ache, of an endless sorrow. It was as if he had put his heart, his soul, everything he held dear and precious in his life within it and stayed back empty. And in that emptiness now sounded the echo of a voice, ominous:

Father sinking rapidly, start at once.

In truth, it was a telegraphic message he had received while on a visit to his maternal grandfather. When he left home his father had been in the best of health, the wire was a great shock. And before he could hasten back, missing the first train and chafing at the slowness of the bullock cart, before he could hasten down the two hundred miles from where he was, his father was no

more in the land of the living; in the course of twelve hours he had three heart attacks, the first two had made heavy incursions on his strength, with the third he had been at the end of his resistance. And shortly before he became unconscious he had asked for him, plaintively appealing, the end had come peacefully, there had been no struggle.

Akhileswaran felt his heart breaking within him. His father had tried to reach him at the last moment of his fading consciousness! He had asked for him, his brother and other relatives said; and he the eldest-born was not fated to see the last of him. They had talked of the divine beauty of his body when it was washed and laid out,—he in his *pancha kachcha* of immaculate white silk, with the *vibhuti* and sandal paste adorning his forehead, and the gold-encrusted *rudraksha* string lying gracefully around his neck. All his grandchildren,—not all, Akhileswaran thought with a pang—how fortunate his sisters and their offspring were!—his grandchildren had stood about him in a ring, when he lay like that, holding lighted torches fed with ghee, but his own five-year old son was not there to be proud of that glory and privilege—the little boy along with his mother—his wife—were then at his father-in-law's. They had hoped he would come in time to do the rite of burning the body, he had delayed; hoping against hope they had waited for him a couple of hours or so at the crematory, then a heavy shower had aided them to prolong their wait, still he had delayed; finally his younger brother had kindled the pyre and when the flames had done most of their work, he had rushed to the spot raving like a mad man! His father dead and burnt to ashes! To die, he thought; just to die. To expel once for all the breath out of the body! The tongue to lose taste, the nose to lose smell, the ear to lose sound, the eye to lose sight! But eyes blind and ears deaf the body lives! Partial death! Death! To expel once for all the breath out of the body! His father dead and burnt to ashes!

The pot tied to the axle-tree contained those ashes.

Sitting in the cart Akhileswaran saw the scenes of the past, still as

painful and exciting as when they originally occurred. Being the son of a rich father and brought up in comfort, comfort that never pampered, for with its natural good taste it had no leanings towards any kind of vulgar luxury, Akhileswaran even at the age of thirty, living a healthy normal life in the midst of a healthy normal family, had not been forced into anything unusual and unpleasant but when death came suddenly to the house and took away the prop, his parent, he looked upon it with fear, aghast at its treachery. But while performing the obsequies and seeing his cousins, uncles, brothers-in-law and other not so near relatives trying to look important, and impatient that he should carry out their suggestions this way or that, he accepted death as inevitable, for any of those so rudely healthy whose importance, for all their intense ego, was confined to their village, to a street in the village, to a temple in the village, might die of a heart attack, as his father had died in the pink of condition; even before the funeral ceremonies were over he overheard his three sisters whispering about the division of their mother's jewels and costly sarees among themselves—she dear soul, had not yet put on her widow's weeds; and his father-in-law talked to him subtly how partition between brothers in proper time avoided bad blood and conduced to courtesy and amity. They were in such hurry. Before the ashes of his beloved father . . .

Secure in a pot, for six months, the ashes had lain buried in the earth under a *pipal* that stood on a mound outside his house. The tree had been planted by his great grandparent in the paternal line who had celebrated its *upanayana* and then married it to a *neem* with an ostentation such as the sylvan world had seldom seen. The *neem* was not there now, and when the wind rustled the leaves of the *pipal*, it seemed to mourn forlornly for the loss of its mate. After six months, during which Akhileswaran had devoutly performed his father's monthly *sraddh*, the pot had been dug out from under the tree, and tonight, accompanied by his wife, he was travelling with it to Benares to consign it in the sacred

waters of the Ganges. The auspicious day and hour for the immersion had been decided on by the family priest who had gone in advance of him, two days ago, to prepare and keep everything ready for the ceremony in the far-off holy city. He was such an experienced hand. Akhileswaran thought of his father and his father before him who had travelled to Benares on a similar purpose, but surely the journey of his great grandfather must have been long and arduous—to foot the entire distance; the railway had not come to India then. Tonight, accompanied by his wife, he was riding in a bullock cart to the nearest station, twenty-five miles away from his village, to catch the early morning train that would take him on to other railroads, leading ultimately to Kasi, the holiest of the holy cities in India.

His wife was fast asleep, her head which had rested on his lap had slid down again. Impulsively, he looked on her rumpled hair, so becomingly rumpled, on her half-parted lips through which her breath came out softly. Her body quivered with the rocking motion of the cart, and her face rocked on the palm on which it reposed, and as he watched her while thus she slept, a great affection for her took hold of his heart. It struck him as singular, this new affection, for he had never felt that before towards his wife; she looked so isolated, lying there beside him. Perhaps had they taken their son with them, she would not have been so lonely, he thought; he had caught such an yearning look on her face, her eyes glistening with tears when the child cried piteously to follow them; but the elders of the house had decided against his going; a child was an irrelevance, a positive nuisance in a journey which was purely of a religious nature, they had said.

Inclining on his elbow, Akhileswaran gazed long and pensively on the face of his wife and a strange impression grew on his mind that she was intensifying her isolation and was receding gradually away from him, into a nebulous, unknown sphere, her body rubbed out as if by a pumice stone. A queer chill crept into his bones. Quietly he lay down beside

her, smoothing her rumpled hair, gently so as not to awake her, to have the solid feel of her flesh against him and arrest its flow into impalpability. And thus as he lay, one by one, the ghosts of their ten married years flitted past his eyes, glad sad ghosts: she in her girl's beauty as a bride, as his wife in the height of her loveliness, as the proud mother of a son, the first daughter-in-law in a rich family . . . curious that his mind should go round and round, round and round; curious that his ears should hear his lips murmuring Jagadamba . . . Jagada . . . that was the name of his wife. He pressed closer against her, her warmth penetrated into his deepest being, and a pumice stone began to rub out his body, rub it out slowly, cunningly . . .

"My son, you are betrayed!" sounded a voice, as if from the unknown.

His brow wrinkled in perplexity.

"Betrayed!"

It rang like a hammer on an anvil. It was the voice of his father. Unmistakably.

With a shudder he sat up, jerked like a marionette, dragging his wife along with him. He saw the curtain at the back of the cart being abruptly lifted and heard the cartman calling him agitatedly.

"What's the matter?" he asked, realizing at once that the vehicle was not in motion.

"The pot is not there," came the reply, rather hoarse.

"The pot . . . not there!" cried Akhileswaran in consternation. And in one bound he was out of the cart, bending down, and peering at the axle-tree, peering for dear life. Only the lamp obscured by kerosene smoke swung lightly in the wind, the pot of ashes that had been fastened near it had disappeared. He stood stock-still, turned into a pillar of salt, his face ashen, his mind an utter blank, while his wife who had felt his cry hit like a cold-pig on her face, could only echo his words in a feeble gasp: "The pot not to be seen! The pot not to be seen!"

Her terrified voice drew him out of his momentary petrification, making him feel in a quaint way inimical to her.

"The cord must have snapped" said the cartman, breaking the deathlike silence.

But no answer came either to confirm or refute his statement. Suddenly he heard a suppressed moan and saw the woman trying to jump out of the cart, to follow her husband who was tearing down the road like mad.

"Now, now, stay where you are," he said to her, seizing the sackcloth curtain and preventing her intended leap. "He'll be back in good time, there's no use hurting your pretty feet."

The moon had risen and the earth lay wreathed in silver as Akhileswaran ran down the road in search of the missing pot. He bent over every little rut, scanned round the smallest bush and shrub, and as he ran shadows emerged from every nook and cranny, preceding and pursuing him, closing in on him from right and left, and a strange fear entered his heart that he was careering through a phantom world murmurous with phantom voices, voices familiar to him as those of his manes who were upbraiding him for his irreverence to the shade of his departed father. The tears crowded thick in his eyes and he begged for their forgiveness; and the road was lost in a blur because of the tears, and he wiped them, his throat choking, as he ran under the trees that creaked dolefully in the wind and a stray owl ululated and beat its wings on the branches whittling down twigs; his knees caved in, still he ran on, the blood pounding in his veins and pouring out in a thousand rills of sweat; he stopped awhile and closed his eyes, the eye of the moon closed too beneath a sailing cloud, and when he opened them again, and the moon too, the road unrolled like a shining garden path, and at a hand's stretch in front of him stood the pot, between two ruts on a patch of grass . . .

He did not know how many miles he had run and when he came back tired, but with sparkling eyes, joyously bearing the pot on his shoulder, he saw the cart moved to an edge of the road, the bullocks off the yoke and feeding leisurely. His wife stood leaning against the trunk of a tree, and on a heap of macadam, a little

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away, sat the cartman smoking his cheroot.

"Thank God I found it," cried Akhileswaran, coming up to his wife.

She was silent.

"Not a scratch on it, not a crack. Earthenware dropping down from a moving cart. I was that afraid. It's a miracle!"

She was still silent in the face of his effusiveness. It didn't strike him as unusual.

The cartman congratulated him on the miracle.

"To be safe shall I have it inside the cart? After what has happened?" Akhileswaran asked the cartman, almost pleading.

"No, no. I can't have a dead man's ashes inside my cart. It goes against my sentiment. Don't fear it will tumble down again."

"You assure me?"

"I do. But tie it tight."

Thereupon Akhileswaran fastened the pot to the axle, as before, twisting two cords into one, strengthening the support.

The cartman gathered the remnant of grass from the feeding bullocks and slung it neatly under the mat inside the cart. He then yoked the animals and expressed his readiness to start.

Exhausted by his run Akhileswaran fell into a troubled slumber. He tossed uneasily; and in that state between sleeping and waking, his mouth trembled as though he were fumbling in his mind for the proper words to comfort his wife, as atonement for the inexplicable hostility he had shown her at the terrible moment he had been apprised of the disappearance of the pot. Ah, he had found those happy words and in his happiness that he had spoken them to her and consoled her, his lips began to move in another fashion, to a soft, solemn chant:

'Fathers who sit on sacred grass, come, help us; these offerings have we made for you; accept them.

'Come to us with most auspicious favour, and give us health and strength without a trouble.

'Bowing your bended knees and seated southward, accept this sacrifice of ours with favour.

'Punish us not for any sin, O

Fathers, which we through human frailty have committed.

'Lapped in the bosom of the purple mornings, give riches to the man who brings oblations.

'Grant your sons a portion of that treasure, and, present, give them energy, ye Fathers.'

The chanting ceased, the peaceful light on his face faded, and he began to toss uneasily again, dimly conscious that some obscure yet implacable force had risen against him, obtunding his sense of reason . . .

She sat at his head watching him, wondering whether she really was his wife and had borne him his son. He had married her, with sacred Agni as witness; he had loved her as much as a man could love a woman, always polite, never getting over his boyish shyness which made him so attractive. She remembered his habit of passing his hand over her brow and cheeks with a trembling caressive movement whenever he wished to express his boundless love and devotion for her, of his endeavours in their early married days to catch in the midst of a bustling joint family a look on her face, a smile to tell him that she was happy. To his mother she was the ideal daughter-in-law possessing both physical beauty and goodness of heart; after the birth of her child when she was sixteen, her beauty had blossomed forth and even after six years her reserve of youthfulness had stayed undiminished. And now in the dim interior of the cart as she surveyed that beauty—her arms, her bosom, her hips, her legs—the beauty that had made her husband proud of her, she was filled with a deep repulsion for herself, a loathing which stifened her body as though something indescribably slimy were embracing it, to be followed immediately by a sense of horror, its iciness eddying to the very depths of her womb; and in a flash she knew what she would have to lose in exchange for the honour of her husband, the good name of his family, and a cry like that of a wounded animal burst through her lips.

Outside in his perch the cartman heard it and was awed.

Her husband woke up startled. She had moved away from him, to the fore of the vehicle.

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"Jagada!" he called, sitting up.
"Jagada!"
"Jagada! Are you asleep?" His hands clove the narrow space of the cart.

"Yes," she answered faintly.
"I heard a voice weep. It was so near, I thought it was you."

"No."

"Come closer."

She shrank back. He moved up, pulling her to him. At his contact he felt her body go inert, she was trying to keep the distance between them.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing." Her voice seemed stuck in her throat, emanating in a ghostly whisper.

He quickly seized both her arms and leaning her against his breast, scrutinized her face. Her eyes were closed and passing his palm over them he felt them wet. He was amazed and alarmed at her tears. "What are you crying for?" he gently asked.

It was *her* burden, hers alone the bitterness of despair.

"I am silly," she lied. "Those are tears of joy. Isn't it the first time I am out with you on a long journey? Just you and I. But—"

"But what?"

"Our son might have come with us. Then perhaps—"

"Yes?"

"Oh, nothing. Only I felt a little afraid, a little lonely when you ran away like that. Everything was whirling round and round me, like when you are attacked with vertigo. For a moment everything seemed so changed . . . I wasn't myself . . . You were a long time returning and I was really getting frightened . . . Oh, why did the pot tumble down so? Upon your dead father—"

"Hush, don't swear like that," he said, pressing her to him, bewildered at her disconnected talk. "Thank God, I found the pot safe."

"Thank God!" she echoed, but the irony in her tone was lost upon him.

The cartman who seemed to be straining his ears behind the curtain became suddenly conscious that the voices inside had ceased to talk.

The bullocks walked slowly, on loosened reins, switching their tails lazily. They breathed harshly, from their lolling tongues strings of saliva falling, making the dust. The

wind had dropped and their collar-bells were muted in the stifling, sultry air.

Half-sitting, half-lying in his perch, the cartman chain-smoked, staring into the moonlit distances before him which were slowly dissolving. A cock crew from a cottage yard, another cock, far away, crew back. Roused from his listlessness by the crowings and observing the leisurely pace of the bullocks he twisted their tails and gave a tug at the reins. The animals plunged forward into a run, their bells ringing to greet the sun that was beginning to outline the fields and hills around, and when with a clatter of wheels the cart rolled to a stop at the station yard, he was glad to see the arm of the semaphore still up and the red light burning. That meant he had brought his fares in time to catch the train.

They alighted from the cart. Akhileswaran untied the pot of ashes from the axle-tree. The cartman carried their luggage and deposited it in the veranda outside the booking office.

Akhileswaran put the hire into his hands. He counted the coins, there was an extra rupee. He looked up enquiringly.

"Keep it," said Akhileswaran. That is for getting the pot safely back."

The cartman averted his face. Akhileswaran was struck with his gratitude.

"Ten days from today we'll be returning by the evening train. Will you be here then to take us back?"

He seemed to ponder. His face was still averted.

"Well, what d'you say? I must be hurrying up to get the tickets."

"Ten days from today, that is a day after the market day in the village. Thursday. All right."

The train whistled from a distance. The arm of the semaphore lowered, and the green light shone. But looking up he saw the green swiftly changing into red again, like a spot of blood widening, widening into a scarlet web, then tearing it to shreds he heard a wild and prolonged shriek. He started as one in a dream, a haunted expression on his face; only the train had drawn up at the station platform.

Throughout the long journey by rail she was abstracted. To all the solic-

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tous enquiries of her husband as to what ailed her, she only answered in monosyllables, smiling sadly, telling him not to worry.

"You aren't angry with me for anything?" he importuned.

"Not at all," she replied, "what's there to be angry at?"

"Then what are you thinking about?"

"Guess."

"I cannot. I confess my failure."

About the many fine things we are going to see in Benares," she lied.

"Truth?" And he looked at her fixedly awhile, unconvinced and troubled at the pallor of her face. She seemed really ill.

She sat by the carriage window, looking out, trying to avoid his questioning anxious gaze, and if she wanted anything at all then it was to be left alone. But independent of her will and to her utter disgust, her body lived on, and despite her best efforts to concentrate her thoughts she saw herself attracted by stale and common sights: the filth in the compartment, the fly-ridden light on the roof, the piebald dress of a fellow passenger, the hare-lip of a woman who sat opposite her. She wondered whether any other about her noticed these too; and then her mind became a limitless void, a great tiredness overpowered her, and she felt herself slipping fast, faster than a rock down a mountain slope, into a bottomless abyss. Her husband saw her head nodding against the wainscot of the carriage, rising up and lifting her softly by the arms he laid her down to sleep.

They were at their journey's end.

It was a bright, breezy, genial morning. The family priest received them at the Benares station.

They drove along in two *ekkas*, the priest in one leading as guide. Facing the rising sun, on the bank of the holy Ganges, eternal Kasi lay, its many domes and towers mounting like a hymnody in the splendour of dawn. Throngs of pilgrims moved up the streets, devotees from the farthest parts of the land, men with hoary locks and beards, like sages of old seen in pictures, women with children astraddle on their hips and pots or bundles balanced on their

heads, moving endlessly as the sacred river.

Akhileswaran was not an explorer, he was the philosopher type, calm, meditative; he saw the city with a spiritual eye, as the centre of the Hindu faith, soul-illuminating, ever-resplendent; he was enveloped, as it were, in its venerable aura; and if some of the streets through which they drove stank, and if some of the sights they met were harrowing, he was hardly aware of these, the inviolable impression of the place stuck unaltered in his mind. By calling her attention to this turret and that *stupa*, to the massive walls of a fort rearing its pinnacles on the opposite bank of the river, he attempted to cheer his wife along the way; she smiled wanly at him, and taking it to be a symptom of her good spirits returning he was greatly pleased.

"We shall go sightseeing as soon as the ceremonies are over," he said. "the suburbs must be really grand."

She nodded her head, continuing to smile, but her hand did not respond to his impetuous pressure.

Later in the day, while in lodgings in the house of a south Indian brahmin, which the family priest had fixed up for them, Akhileswaran drew his wife for a longer talk. He was determined on breaking down her melancholy.

"And have you thought over all the things we must buy?" he began.

"As though you don't know," she said.

"First, a splendid Benares saree for you."

"Let it be last."

"Why so?"

She refrained from reasoning.

"All right then. The smallest, finest *rudraksha* beads for mother, and bigger ones for the two uncles."

"A correct start."

"Pots of Ganga and Triveni water, of varying sizes in brass and copper, trays with Vishnu *pada* engraved in the centre, portraits of Viswanatha and Visalakshi, little caskets for *kumkum* . . . and what do you say for our boy? . . . something exquisite . . ."

At the mention of his name her throat went thick and she stifled a

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sob, covering her face with her hands. She left him hastily, going into the adjacent room.

"A pity we didn't bring him with us," Akhileswaran murmured to himself. "I quite understand her misery now."

The nexus of the living world with the dead. But everything spoke of that particular day.

A veil of gossamer mist hung over the Manikarnika Ghat. Akhileswaran and his wife purified themselves by a preliminary dip in its waters.

The ceremony began.

The chant of the priests, so sonorous and charged with significance, lashed at his senses and Akhileswaran went through the rites in a trance of reverence. Once, during a brief respite, he glanced at his wife who was standing behind him to be a participant in the ceremony at some of its points and he could scarce repress a cry of amazement at her appearance. She glowed like a goddess, her beauty took his breath away. The family priest noticed it too, and he was disturbed. She had looked so pale and ill yesterday, this radiance was preternatural.

The ceremony drew to a close.

Akhileswaran and his wife descended the steps of the Ghat. His right hand bore the pot of his father's ashes, while with the left he led her down. At the last step, on the water's edge, they stopped short. He felt her hand trembling violently in his. He glanced at her face and shrank back, appalled for a moment, at the ineffable anguish so lucent in her eyes and in that anguish a reflection of such tenderness—a whole world of love and adoration for him.

"Now, throw the pot into the waters, and dip together, husband and wife, clasping hands," came the voice of the priest across the flight of stairs.

The pot went down with a gurgle. They dipped. Akhileswaran felt the hand of his wife slipping from his, suddenly freeing itself with a jerk.

He rose up, shouting frantically. He sank in at once, groping with his hands and legs, feeling for her, to catch some part of her saree, but he only stirred the slabby, putrid clay which daubed his nose and mouth, suffocating him. He didn't know how to swim and was afraid to go deeper;

he rose again, and dragging himself to the step sat on it, looking around and looking horrified at the dense, clayey water. He groaned loudly and fell across the step.

The family priest precipitated himself down the stairs. But he didn't plunge into the waters.

Her body was not found. It had joined the bodies of the innumerable dead floating down the Ganges.

"She has gone a *sumangali*," cried the priest, "on the hallowed bosom of Ganga. Glory be to her!"

But Akhileswaran did not hear him, nor the shouts of the other bathers who crowded round him more curiously than anxiously. The sky had fallen on his head and there was darkness on the earth. He had fainted sway.

The shock was great. He was struck down with a raging fever. And in his delirium he raved, his voice sinking into agonized whispers, intermittently: "The pot . . . sure it's hanging down the axle of the cart. Oh, but how could it disappear? Forgive me for leaving you alone. Jagada, you are not angry with me? Tell me you are not . . ."

The priest was really unhappy at the turn of events. He was not troubled over the acute mental distress of the bereaved man, the state was natural; but he was puzzled about his disjointed talk, in its incoherence he saw a thread of coherence: the recurrent mention of the pot of ashes; that too could be natural, seeing that it was for its immersion this journey to Benares had been made; all the same he was somewhat puzzled.

Akhileswaran recovered from his illness after what seemed an eternity to him, although only a fortnight had passed. He was almost reduced to a skeleton. The family priest had been an excellent nurse. Akhileswaran expressed his gratefulness to him.

"It's nothing," said the priest, "man to man. I've been part and parcel of your family for the length of a generation now, knowing its joys and sorrows. But this sorrow is the greatest . . . your wife . . ."

Akhileswaran closed his eyes in pain, saying in a resigned tone:

"It was to be."



"You came to Kasi on a noble purpose, to immerse your dear father's ashes in the holy Ganga," said the priest solemnly, "and God thought it fit to take away your wife. We, poor mortals, have to submit to His Will. Your wife is indeed blessed, for as you know, death in Kasi is the surest way to salvation. Many people come here just to die."

"Even the very young?" Akhileswaran asked sorrowfully.

The priest fidgeted. But he wanted to lead him on to what he so burningly wished to know and he diverged cleverly:

"In your illness you were highly delirious—"

It crossed Akhileswaran's mind he must have been, but he showed his disinclination to hark back to it by remaining silent.

"And all the time you were talking about the disappearance of the pot from the axle of the cart. What's it?"

The fact expressed in delirium could not be withheld in the conscious state and Akhileswaran said, reluctantly:

"Yes, the pot fell off the road for its string got broken and I went to find it."

"How long were you away?"

"Reckon an hour or so."

"And of course your wife followed you?"

"She didn't, she stayed behind."

"Oh!"

"Why should she have run with me? In the dead of night. She would have been a hindrance and not a help."

"Sure, sure."

"But don't talk of this accident to anybody when you get back to the village, I request you. If I hadn't found the pot or if I had found it broken and the ashes mixed with the dust of the road, the consequences would have been different. But now everything's all right."

"Yes," drawled the priest. "But the wonder of wonders is it was found unbroken, an earthen pot dropping down from a running cart, like that."

"Yes, that's the wonder, the miracle. The hand of God saved it."

But the priest seemed to have a different idea of the hand of God, its function. He smiled inscrutably.

Doubt is said to be a sign of spiri-

tual growth. The priest had spirituality in him sufficient to enable him to make good in his profession; his present doubt, certainly, was not of the kind calculated to enhance that spirituality.

Akhileswaran did not expect that the cartman would wait for him at the station, to take him back to the village, and when he found him there even after a fortnight over the due date of his return, he was more than surprised at his eagerness to be of service and the patient wait he had put. Perhaps the extra rupee he had given him was responsible for it, he thought.

The cartman, on his part, was surprised too, he stood almost open-mouthed at the sight of his fare being followed by a man.

"I know why you are astonished," said Akhileswaran to him. "I was ill, very ill, and besides—"

Akhileswaran felt the priest pulling him by the hand, and he said: "What purpose is served by not telling it to him? He may as well know from me before he knows from others, after all he drove the two of us when we came." Then turning to the cartman: "My wife is dead. She was drowned accidentally in the river."

"Dead! Drowned in a river!" ejaculated the cartman, a shadow flitting across his face.

The priest was quick to notice it in spite of the dim light of the station yard. He, in his turn, was amazed, intrigued at the exhibition of feelings by this plebian of the species. He began to conjecture furiously.

"Shail I yoke the bullocks?" the cartman asked Akhileswaran, glancing at the priest whom he disliked heartily, for his shaven head, his greedy paunch, and the pig-like eyes which seemed to bore through him.

"Do. And get into the village before the day breaks. I don't want anybody to see my homecoming," Akhileswaran said sadly.

The cart moved on at a trotting pace. There were a few others along the road but soon it outstripped them. The night was dark, the third after the new moon; the stars were reticent; there was no wind from the Western Ghats or from the Arabian Sea; nature stood with bated breath.

The cartman stared and stared into the blackness before him. He had removed the ornamental metal caps from the horns of the bullocks, their collar-bells, for his mood of late had been so variable that he was hardly the fellow he usually was, jovial, singing songs, cracking jokes, happy as a king on his perch in the cart. He sat, absorbed in the night, his brain phrenetically thinking, his limbs unbearably tense; then hurled into sudden movement by the force of his thoughts and imaginings—for something in his head was threatening to snap—he twisted the tail of the bullock and dug his teeth into it, and the cart swept along to a violent clatter of wheels and hooves. The whirlwind motion soothed his nerves, after a mile or so the bullocks subsided into a trot, and he felt like smoking to take off the sickening dryness in his mouth. He relaxed the reins, tucking them in his armpit, and putting a cheroot between his lips bent his head down to light it when a sudden jerk threw him back, the reins slid down and the match went out with a splutter. His hackers rising, he looked up cursing the bullocks, but what he saw before him froze him to the marrow. In the pale light of the cart lamp which obliterated the darkness for a few yards ahead, he saw the shadow of a figure which, before he had seen it, the bullocks had, with the prescience common to animals, for they had become restive; and as he gazed, all animation ebbing slowly out of him, the shadow moved up, up towards him, up the yoke, along the shaft . . . a pair of glittering eyes, melancholy, wild, hair dishevelled and falling across its shoulders, its hands clenching and unclenching . . . then a strangled cry like that of a wounded animal pierced the hollows of his ears, tearing out the strings of his heart. "It's she, it's she," he gasped, terror-struck, and raising his whip tried to beat back the apparition, when, suddenly, with dreadful snorts, the bullocks reared and pawed the air, pitching the cart back and tossing him out of his perch. He went down with a thud, the bullocks leaped forward and jibbed again, and a wheel cut across his breast, cracking the ribs and the collarbone . . .

The bullocks stood quiet. Scared out of their wits at the commotion of the few minutes before, Akhileswaran and the priest scrambled out of the cart, and to their intense dismay saw the cartman stretched across the road, his head against the wheel of the vehicle. Akhileswaran unfastened the lamp from the axle-tree and held it over the body, his hand shaking nervously. The priest had collected himself, he peered down with hands on knees. He seemed to reflect deeply.

Supine the cartman lay, his breast clammy with blood, his breath coming stertorously through his half-parted lips. His eyes were shut.

Akhileswaran bent down to lift him when the priest said sharply: "Don't touch him."

Just then the cartman opened his eyes, moaning in pain. He saw as in a haze a figure stooping over him; gazing fixedly at it, gathering with a desperate effort all his failing strength, he recognized the figure as that of his fare. He clutched at his hands, essaying to speak:

"I—I—" There was a gurgle in his throat, and his voice trailed into a whisper.

"Speak!" said the priest, strangely compulsive.

"The pot . . . of ashes . . . from the axle"—the words died on his lips, the gurgle in his throat stopped with a rattle, and his head fell to his shoulder with a spasmodic droop.

In a blinding flash the priest knew what had happened. He turned a look of pity at Akhileswaran. But it was pity tinged with contempt.

Unaware, however, of pity or contempt, Akhileswaran was looking intently round the spot. There, at a distance, stood the heap of macadam on which the cartman had sat smoking, and there again was the tree against which his wife had leaned. A tear trickled down his cheek . . .

"In Benares my wife died, drowned accidentally," he said in an undertone, "and here the cartman has met with his end, accidentally thrown down by restive bullocks. The omens must have been bad when we set out on the journey."

"Really bad," concurred the priest.

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Ongole.
Palakol.
Parvatipuram (Vizag Dt).
Pedana (Kistna Dt.).
Peddapuram.
Pithapuram.
Rajahmundry.
Ramaraopet (Cocanada).
Satur (B. N. Ry.).
Samalkot.
Tilaru (Vizag Dt.).
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BERTRAND RUSSELL

By Philip Speart

C. E. M. JOAD has commented sadly on the decline and fall of Bertrand Russell and Bernard Shaw. It is a shame, he suggests, that men who thirty years ago were abhorred as heretical and subversive should today be accepted as the country's representative thinkers. Only heretics, it appears, can be right.

Joad exaggerates. Russell's views on religion are no more popular than Shaw's on foreign policy. Joad also forgets, when he accuses them of sacrificing integrity to popularity, that public opinion has changed in these thirty years. Russell's opinions have altered in detail—he is the most inconstant of philosophers—but not in such a way as to make him more acceptable to the prejudices of those days. It is rather that the British public has at last left Victorianism behind.

Russell has revised his philosophical opinions many times, but the spirit of his work has remained remarkably constant. He says that as a boy he took pleasure in mathematics because of the restfulness of mathematical certainty, and had a hankering after materialism because it helped to dismiss "nonsense." His philosophical quest has continued to be directed towards certainty, not content with mere empirical knowledge nor willing to be humbugged by high-sounding words.

As a boy he read Mill's *Logic* and found he could not believe the doctrine of that book that mathematics is empirical. The first philosophical task he set himself was to discover why mathematics is true. We know two plus two is equal to four: he set himself to prove it. He succeeded, as he believed, in reducing mathematics to the consequences of half a dozen premisses of a purely logical character. The conclusion of the argument,

drawn much later by Wittgenstein, is that the propositions of mathematics are empty, tautological. He says that he was grieved at this deflation of the grandiose edifice of mathematics which he so much admired.

After mathematical logic, he interested himself in epistemology. Again it is a quest for certainty, a ruthless criticism of all that passes for knowledge, and a provisional, and even final, rejection of much of it. Again it turned his attention away from the profound problems and grand constructions of philosophical thought to elementary and superficial things like patches of colour, the sound of knuckles striking tables, and the shapes of pennies. Of course in principle epistemology merely provides a foundation upon which the edifice of knowledge is to be rebuilt: but somehow no one ever completes the foundation.

After his rejection of Hegel he became, as he has remained, a zealous advocate of pluralism. He was always concerned to disintegrate, to question speculative connections. He maintained the New Realist view that objects exist without the mind, or any mind, and that objects exist in themselves, and are not constituted by their relations to other things. His examples are characteristically homely. A man, he says, can become an uncle, and again cease to be an uncle, without even being aware of either change. This relation is in no way constitutive of the man. Thus the dogma of internal relations is refuted. Critics at the time attacked his pluralism as socially irresponsible. The task of philosophy, they said, is to trace the deeper connections of the apparently diverse, to exhibit unity in multiplicity. He recognised no such obligation. What he demanded of philosophy was not unity but

certainty: and certainty can be obtained, apart from logic, only on the surface, in immediate experience.

From logic and epistemology he passed to semiotics. Here the contrast is still more amusing, between the lucid and rhythmic periods of one of the great masters of prose, and the search for the "minimum vocabulary" and the laborious discussion of "the," "or," "all," and "some." Soon all ordinary discourse was relegated to the "metalanguage," while true philosophy was confined to the kindergarten, indeed nursery, flights of the "object language." But he does not go as far as some devotees of logical positivism. He believes that knowledge other than linguistic knowledge is possible.

Russell has dabbled little in constructive philosophy. He doubts the propriety of such construction. He has always criticised the pretensions of those who, like Hegel, claim to deduce the nature of the world from purely logical considerations. The investigation of the world is the business of science. Logic by itself can tell us nothing about the world; and even in conjunction with empirical data it tells us very little. The better your logic, he says, the less you can prove with it.

His own effort at philosophical construction therefore is of a very unambitious type. His "neutral monism" springs directly from his epistemological ideas, and his principle, derived from William of Occam, that rather than infer or assume some doubtful existent, we should "construct" it out of things we certainly know to exist. Thus we know that percepts exist, and from them we infer material objects; it would be preferable to construct the material object out of the group of percepts which are said to be of it. In this way material objects are assimilated to minds, which also consist in parts of percept. The difference, it is supposed by neutral monism, is only in the way these entities are grouped together: one type of grouping constitutes matter, another type mind.

The results of science are compatible with this view of the nature of things, unfamiliar though it is. For science as usually expounded is full of

unwarranted metaphysics. Science tells us nothing about the internal nature of things, but only about interrelations. As regards science, Russell has inclined strongly towards pragmatism, though he rejects the main pragmatic doctrine of truth.

Of course this appearance of superficiality and scepticism in Russell's views is in part illusory. He has been concerned nearly all his life with deductive logic. The logic of empirical science is a different matter, and as he sometimes seems to imply, of inferior status. After all induction never gives certainty. But empirical knowledge is knowledge. He accepts science, purged of metaphysics, and has quite lately turned to the investigation of induction. His latest book, *Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits*, is concerned with this problem.

He had in fact long before declared his opinion that pure empiricism is untenable. It is impossible to construct the system of science without assuming induction or some equivalent, and this cannot be established either empirically or deductively: it has to be postulated. Actually he analyses induction into five logically independent principles, all of which are essential. Thus the necessary apparatus of knowledge multiplies. The world is not a unity, nor can we apprehend it without a whole array of independent postulates.

Russell has written little on ethics, though he has strong and definite ethical opinions. Needless to say he regards ethics as entirely independent of the rest of knowledge. It can be analysed, on Moore's lines, into a small number of abstract principles, known intuitively, and a multiplicity of value judgments. But even this is too intellectual. He denies that ethics can be given any rational foundation. If people disagree on their ultimate value judgments, no argument is possible.

His own ethical judgments are emphatic, and would for the most part be accepted as enlightened. Nevertheless his views on social matters tend to be cynical. He is largely in agreement with Marxism in its low estimate of the motives that impel men in the mass. Indeed he is sometimes more cynical than the

Marxists. He has often said that if men would follow the path of reasonably enlightened self-interest things would be vastly better. It is because in addition to being selfish men are swayed by the passions of destruction and domination that social affairs are so disastrous. He has no high opinion of democracy, but is clear that all the alternatives are worse.

He has read a good deal of history, and has written historical books. He accepts much of the Marxian argument as to the importance of technology and economics in causing social change, but of course he cannot accept the Marxian monism. History can be explained only by reference to many causal factors.

He is equally unable to accept the Marxian teleology, and the values implicit in the system, and he therefore rejects the Marxists' policy. They greatly overestimate their understanding of social processes; and it is only knowledge which could justify the drastic policies they propose. They overlook the desire for domination which largely inspires themselves, and the hatred which they stir up in their followers. To suppose that good results can follow from such methods is to ignore history. He has always been specially critical of domination and power, and while not rejecting the State altogether, he insists that it can have a good influence on affairs only if it is democratic, and if its power is kept within limits by devolution.

He went to Russia in 1920 and wrote a short book about it, in which he pronounced his judgment that the Revolution was not worth while, and predicted that it would degenerate

into a bureaucratic tyranny and would forget its ideals and launch upon a career of military expansion, if it did not first involve the whole world in war.

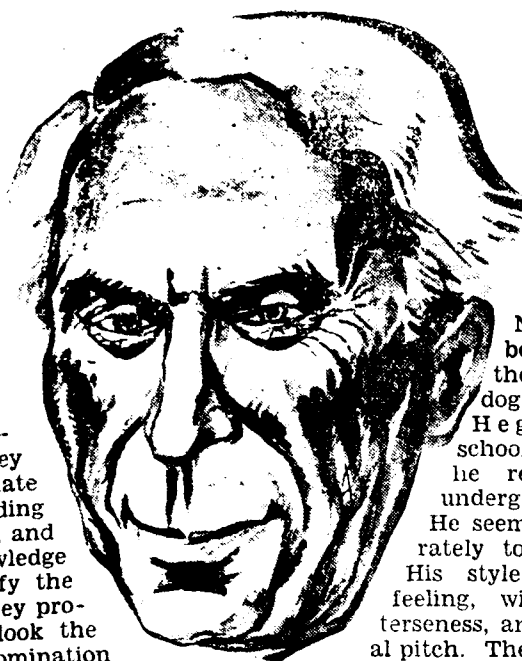
He has devoted much energy to working for peace, and in particular opposed British participation in the first world war, being prosecuted twice and going to jail once for six months. But he never committed himself to complete pacifism, and he supported the Allies' case in the second world war. In view of Russian aggression in Europe after the end of that war, he conditionally advocated a preventive war while America still

had a monopoly of atom-bombs.

All through Russell's writings, therefore, philosophical and social, run the same threads of scepticism and pluralism.

Nothing could be more unlike the all-embracing dogmatism of the Hegel-inspired school against which he revolted in his undergraduate days. He seems to try deliberately to be superficial. His style conveys that feeling, with its clarity, terseness, and low emotional pitch. There are no tragic depths or heights; everything seems simple and commonplace. His favourite device is a homely example which punctures a high-sounding generalisation. Even the forbidding pages of *Principia Mathematica* are enlivened by a joke.

But there are signs of hidden fires. There seems a shade too much conviction in his repeated repudiation of monism; pluralism, he has said, is his most deeply held belief. In opposition to James's will to believe he could preach the paradoxical will to doubt. He protests that he wished to believe in God, and in a rational ethics, but could find no grounds for



these opinions. For a time he believed in a realm of Platonic ideas, but eventually discovered how to free himself from that incubus. He assures us that when he was convinced that mathematics is nothing but tautologies he was grieved, but he embraced that conclusion all the same. It seems pretty plain that his puritan conscience, inherited, it appears, from a Scottish grandmother, insists on a specially severe respect for the evidence where emotionally attractive doctrines are under examination. He has spent his life in quest of certainty, and has succeeded in vastly extending the area of doubt. But if passion only peeps out from behind the mask of logic in his philosophy, it makes itself felt quite unmistakably in his social opinions. And whether one likes its expression or not, it makes him more human.

There is no need to inquire further into the popularity of this philosophy in our age. Thirty years ago, few people had become aware of "the crisis." Now there is no escaping it, and Russell's intellectual masochism fits in. It is especially suitable to the Anglo-Saxon temperament. The German plunges into the depths—as well he might—of Barth's theology of despair. The Frenchman seems to

find a paradoxical solace in Sartre's *credo quia absurdum*. The Englishman does not like the agony to be piled on too thick, and finds a suitable unguent for his punctured imperial pride in Russell's cool scepticism. Even now there are things too deep to be discussed: Russell respects his countrymen's preferences.

And with it all he is subtly flattering. His neat deflation of every emotional balloon, especially Marx's, is a confirmation of English common sense and muddling through. Has not the superficial, eclectic Russell proved a better prophet than Lenin? Everyone now knows that the most dangerous enemy of the ordinary man is not the puny capitalist but the leviathan State; Russell was one of the first to proclaim this. He is a Socialist, but only because he cannot persuade himself that anything more ideal is practicable. That is just the Englishman's attitude to his own country's Socialism.

But in Russell's scheme of things there is room for optimism. Joad, in his newly recovered consciousness of sin, feels that mankind does not deserve a better fate. Russell sees no reason to suppose that deserts have anything to do with it. He is no prophet of an inevitable catastrophe, nor does he call men to repentance. He asks men only to use their brains.

AUTHORITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Practically all progress, artistic, moral and intellectual, has depended upon exceptional individuals. . . . In the present century we have seen in important parts of the world a loss of moral values which we had thought fairly secure, but we may hope that this retrogression will not last. The prophets and sages who inaugurated this moral advance, although not always honoured in their own day, were, nevertheless, not prevented from doing their work. In a modern totalitarian State matters are worse than they were in the time of Socrates. In a totalitarian State an innovator whose ideas are disliked by the government is not merely put to death, which is a matter to which a brave man may remain indifferent, but is totally prevented from stating his doctrine to his fellow-men. Innovations in such a community can come only from the government, and the government, now as in the past, is not likely to approve of anything contrary to its own immediate interests. This is a new fact in human history, brought about by the much increased control over individuals which the modern technique of government has made possible. It is a very grave fact, and one which shows how fatal a totalitarian regime must be to every kind of moral progress. . . . Our present pre-occupation is due more than anything else to the fact that we have learnt to understand and control to a terrifying extent the forces of nature through a wider understanding of human needs than is assumed by most politicians and economists that we can find our way to the realization of those hopes which, though as yet they are largely frustrated by our folly, our skill has placed within our grasp. — Bertrand Russell



By Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury.

PERILOUS PATH



IT wasn't quite as the reporters had reported. They did not have to wring out the cloth which had been spread on the Chairman's table after the Seshu Celebration Meeting at the Sarasvathi Hall the other day when the Chairman, the celebrated Va. Va. Na., had wept copiously in making his speech—wept tears of joy and affection to think that at long last his lifelong friend whom he had befriended as a struggling poet had been recognised and was being suitably rewarded. But the caretaker of Sarasvathi Hall did have to hang up to dry his *chaddar* which, when the organisers of the meeting had called for a cloth for the Chairman's table, he had lent them.

It was rather a treasured *chaddar*, hand-woven and hand-designed by Masulipatam weavers. But it wasn't to dry up the precious tears shed by Va. Va. Na. It was to sterilise it in the sun. For Va. Va. Na., in making public speeches splutters saliva all around him somewhat in emulation of the charge of the Light Brigade. And on that occasion he had spluttered with excessive vigour what time the tears ran down his cheek. For had he not been called upon to present to Seshu in recognition of his services to Tamil literature the Five Hundred Rupees which the Government had granted him at the same time that it sent a cheque for Five Thousand to "a political sufferer." Besides the Government cheque there was a silk *angavastram* paid for by "Seshu's admirers" which also Va. Va. Na. offered to the aged, nearly blind Seshu

with a magnificent bow at the end of his speech. But let me go back to the beginning.

Gokulpuram is a tiny village, miles from anywhere, in the district of Salem. Its dwindling population of Brahmins eke out a living by doing astrological work. There was a time when Gokulpuram was famous for its astrologers who were consulted by Maharajahs and similar rich patrons: but "business is bad" these days, with Maharajahs marrying for love and no horoscopes compared, and with rich patrons going elsewhere for their requirements. But, be it said to the credit of the small community of the Gokulpuram Brahmins that they have neither sought employment in that other I. C. S., the Indian Cooking Service, nor have they ventured into trade—that is, all with the single exception of Va. Va. Na., who as everyone knows is the successful owner-managing editor of the *Dakshina Ravi* (the Southern Sun), the popular daily newspaper of South India. But then his fellow-Brahmins of Gokulpuram did not regard Va. Va. Na., redoubtable as he was in the affairs of the province, as one of themselves: nor, for that matter, did he regard himself as belonging to them. He left Gokulpuram at the age of fourteen when he got accepted as a free scholar by a missionary college in Tiruchel, and never did he turn back, from that day, both literally and figuratively. So that Va. Va. Na. and Seshu did not know each other in their village. There was a difference of ten years in their ages, Seshu, who

was the older, having been born in 1881.

Va. Va. Na. has been true to type all his days. At school in Tiruchi he gave the Jesuit priests in charge the impression that at any moment he was ready for conversion; and so he managed to get special attention, both in his studies and in other respects. A born organiser he was always in the foreground in everything, not in group photographs only. He was an indifferent athlete but if there was a sports meet it was Vasudeva (as he was then called) who gave everybody the impression that he was both the best all-round sportsman and the organiser and coach as well. He is the kind of man, even today, who, if he were to organise a meeting to honour a successful Everest expedition, would give everyone the impression that he had organised the expedition, that he had taken part in it himself and was the leader and the best mountaineer, and that to some extent the fact of Mt. Everest being there was rather due to his contrivance. So you see he was born to succeed, born to do the obvious thing. And he did. Tiruchi could not contain his ambition. It was the capital that he had set his heart upon. So one fine day, while he was yet a student in the matriculation class, young Vasudeva Visvanatha Alayar, packed his little tin trunk and took the train to Madras.

There he boldly walked into the office of Sri Dandapani Deshkar, owner-publisher of the *Dakshina Ravi* and thrust under the nose of Sri Dandapani a sheaf of cuttings from his college magazine some of which consisted of Vasudeva's literary efforts and others referred to his many activities from debates to athletics. Sri Dandapani took the young man on his staff. He rose from one job to another until within three years of his joining the staff he had become "managing editor" and had married the boss's daughter. The latter, an ugly, toothy, squat creature, made up for her lack of comeliness by the amount of gold and diamonds she wore. Ordinarily she wore fifty thousand rupees worth on her person and on special occasions a hundred thousand rupees worth of diamonds and gold. Vasudeva was not one to be deterred by lack of

good looks and he was perfectly happy; and, as the years progressed the good lady gave him a regular brood of children in quiet succession. Sri Dandapani, having found the ideal son-in-law for his only child, retired.

Under Vasudeva Visvanatha Alayar's direction the *Dakshina Ravi* made exceptional progress and its circulation went up by leaps and bounds. To make its fortunes even more secure the first World War broke out and Vasudeva Visvanatha Alayar became a fire-eating pro-Allies propagandist. During this time he had been furiously experimenting with his signature and had tried different variations from V. V. Alayar to V. Vier until he struck upon the three magic syllables which made his name famous in every Tamil home. He was the originator of that form of *feuilleton* which has since found many imitators. More people bought the *Dakshina Ravi* every Saturday to read what Va. Va. Na. had written than for any other reason. But between ourselves Va. Va. Na. for all that he was a brilliant creator of innovations was himself not a creative writer and the many volumes since reprinted from the columns of the *Dakshina Ravi* and credited to Va. Va. Na. were originally written by a consumptive hack who lived in a garret off Armenian Street and whom Va. Va. Na. paid twenty-five rupees monthly. Towards the end of the war he raised it to thirty-five. But the hack lived only a few months longer to enjoy his magnificent salary and when he died Va. Va. Na. discovered another hack. There has been a succession of hacks, and the current wage-slave gets fifty rupees a month with an added seven-and-a-half rupees thrown in as "dearness allowance."

Let us go back to Gokulpuram. Seshu, or Seshagiri Rao, to give his full name, a delicate youngster, pursued his studies diligently first, under his father, then at the village *Pathasala*. He was equally good at Sanskrit and Tamil, and quite early in life he began composing in both languages. His father, a scholarly man, marked his son's creative ability and encouraged him. While still in his teens he married a relation of his. Pushpa, a comely graceful girl, and he had known each other as children.

They were ideally suited to each other. With the prospect of fatherhood the question of employment became necessary and Seshagiri Rao became a *Pujari* in the local temple. But his main occupation was writing and many were the *keertans* and songs that he composed during the first three years of his married life. The signature that he appended to his writings was "Sesha." He did not know quite how it happened for he did not write for an audience but from the sheer inspiration of it, but his *kavi* and *keertan* began to circulate, passed from mouth to mouth. Bhagavathars here and there would introduce into their *katha* some of his *keertan*; and critics who knew nothing of "Sesha," whether he was an ancient composer or a contemporary, marked out these *keertan* for special praise.

He was also the innovator of a new mode in Tamil poetry. He introduced a stress into Tamil poetry in place of the rigid rhyme and foot and while his *bhakti* songs were on the traditional theme of Krishna and Radha he infused a clean eroticism to romantic poetry. Unversed in English as he was he did not, of course, know of any literary movements in other countries and he followed no precedent, nor did he follow any school. But quite unbeknown to him there arose a "Sesha school," and though for a long time he was not aware of it, followers arose on all sides. But the tenor of his life in his native village was even and tranquil and he was a happy man. Pushpa was that rare kind of woman, one who understood the needs of a creative artist. There was perhaps no happier, nor more contented family in the whole of Gokulpuram than that of Seshu, Pushpa and their little daughter, Malati.

The War was over, and Va. Va. Na. had emerged from it with the title of "Rao Bahadur" and scandalously rich. Not only had his paper been the most in demand among the Tamil troops but he had reaped a rich harvest from Government advertisements. He looked round for something new, purely from habit. His paper had a steady circulation but he more than the paper needed a new sensation. He thought of two: and

exploited each with his usual vigour. He became a "Nationalist"; strictly speaking, a Non-cooperator. And he became a "discoverer"—he discovered "Sesha, the Literary Sensation of South India." He and the *Dakshina Ravi* took sole credit for the fact that such a person as "Sesha" had been born and had grown to be a poet and singer. It was done like this:

Va. Va. Na. wrote a long letter, in his own hand, to Seshu, reminding him of the fact that they both belonged to the same historic village, that he in his own fashion had tried to add some lustre to his birthplace while he, Seshu, had already shed so much lustre on Gokulpuram's fair name, that he looked upon Seshu as a Master and a revered elder, that the country was at the threshold of a renaissance and that one should share one's divinely inspired gifts with as large a public as one possibly could, that his, Va. Va. Na.'s newspaper with its wide circulation was ever at the disposal of Seshu, and would Seshu consider the proposition of coming to Madras so that his large public could see their hero in the flesh, that it was left for Seshu to decide whether to join the staff of *Dakshina Ravi* as such or to remain free, that he could contribute to its pages regularly or whenever he wished, and that should he deign to consider these suggestions, most humbly placed before him, he might at least come to Madras, and that Va. Va. Na. was in any case sending one hundred rupees for the expenses of the journey, should the Master accept his humble invitation.

You see, Va. Va. Na. could play the humble role most convincingly when it suited him to do so. It was a long letter which went into three foolscap pages and when he read it, Seshu, who had never been outside his village, thought it was a good opportunity to see the world and give his young wife and daughter as well a chance to see something of town life; and he left Gokulpuram with Pushpa and Malati for Madras. Va. Va. Na. met them at the railway station and garlanded him with a garland which had cost him four annas and took the "Master" and his family to a cheap hotel in a back street in Park Town. Leaving the young mother and child in the hotel Va. Va. Na. whisked Seshu off

to a photographer where he and Sesha were photographed together, he standing uncomfortably close to Sesha. Then he took Sesha back to the "hotel" so-called and left him there promising to call for him the following day. The following day the front page of the *Dakshina Ravi* carried the photograph of "Va. Va. Na. with his revered Guru, the celebrated Sesha." And there followed a sensational story of how Sesha battling against poverty had written immortal poetry and religious songs and how the *Dakshina Ravi* had decided to place its pages at the disposal of the Bard of the South so that he may write or compose without the spectre of Want hanging over him.

Sesha who did not read newspapers knew nothing of all this. Va. Va. Na. drove up in his magnificent Humber car and took Sesha away to his office. Near the entrance to Va. Va. Na.'s private office they had placed a deal-wood table and a chipped chair. There was an inkstand, a pen, and a sheaf of blank newsprint paper. Pushing the swing door to his own office with one hand he pointed with the other at the table and chair and told Sesha:

"There's a table and chair reserved only for you. Come when you like and sit there when you like and as long as you like and write what pleases you. In the meanwhile come in to my office and let us have a chat."

Secretaries, visitors, printing foremen, so many people were popping into Va. Va. Na.'s office that there was no chat and Sesha finding that he would not be missed went and sat at his table. Shortly afterwards Va. Va. Na. dashed out with an obsequious secretary at his heels and he did not even so much as glance at Sesha. Sesha sat there for some time and went back to his hotel. A town more than any other environment imposes reflex conditions upon its inhabitants such as taking the same bus, going to the same restaurant, walking on one or the other pavement as a rule. So next day Sesha came along to the *Dakshina Ravi*, sat at his table, saw Va. Va. Na. dash in and dash out, and went back to his hotel. He repeated this for a week. On the eighth day as he sat there he picked up the ink-stained pen they had left on his table

and looked at it wondering to himself how anybody could use such a dirty pen. Va. Va. Na. strode in just then and with a curt nod went into his office from where presently he sent through an office-boy a proof of his regular feature for that Saturday's issue. The office-boy told Sesha that he was to read the proof. "Read the proof?" Sesha who had never seen a proof before, queried. The office-boy explained.

After that Sesha was given the proofs of not only Va. Va. Na.'s weekly rigmarole but of other journalistic jargon to read. Sesha's eyesight was none too good and this new work not only caused an acute eyestrain but made his head whirl round. He came to his desk now from habit and no sooner had he sat down than they found him work to do. A month passed like this and the same office-boy brought him fifty rupees in notes at the end of the month and made him sign in a book.

Sesha had been in the habit of keeping a journal. Hitherto the things he had written in it were of a joyous nature. There were notes about birds and the seasons and the sights of field and hill, and occasionally an observation about Pushpa or Malati. He opened his Journal for the first time after coming to Madras and wrote:

How town life demoralises a man! Vasudeva is such a hollow, insincere man. He has not a single true sentiment. He is overwhelmed by his own self-importance and wealth.

If the cramped life they were living in that insanitary "hotel" in Park Town (so-called) had had its depressing effect upon Sesha it had ruined entirely Pushpa's young life. Like her husband she had lived all her life away from the atmosphere of towns. Fields and streams and the clean air of the village had sustained her from the day of her birth. Here she wilted, under Sesha's very eyes. A slight cough became a persistent hacking cough and one day she developed a high temperature. Sesha went to see Va. Va. Na. and waited long before he could get at the man. When he saw him he said that he must leave for Gokulpuram at once and needed some money.

"Will you wait? I'll ask the cashier," Va. Va. Na. replied in a

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businesslike tone. Sesha came out and waited at his desk. He had waited at least an hour when the office-boy came along and dangled a cheque for fifty rupees before him and asked him to sign for it. The cashier took pity upon him and cashed the cheque for him. Sesha hurried back to his hotel, packed, and took Pushpa and Malati to the railway station and caught a train for Salem. Pushpa survived the journey but died within a week of their return to Gokulpuram. Long after her death Sesha opened his Journal and filled up a page. It was the first bitter comment he had written upon humanity. It was a comment upon Va. Va. Na. But it was not severe enough.

A year passed; then two, and he wrote nothing. His one joy was Malati. However, one day, after the rains had come and gone and the fields looked green he wrote on the top of a clean sheet of paper the word **PUSHPAMALA**.

All educated Tamilians know what a haunting beautiful lament *Pushpamala* is. It struck an altogether new note in Tamil literature. Sesha's fame grew. But this made little difference to his mode of life. One or two film-producers approached him and asked him to write "theme songs" and offered what they considered were handsome fees. But he had no use for filthy lucre. Aged before his time, still stricken with grief for the loss of his wife, a loss which he attributed to his folly in listening to Va. Va. Na., his eyesight nearly gone, Sesha led an eventless life, his only joy consisting in watching Malati grow from day to day, unfolding each day unexpected beauty.

Then one day a chance article in a Madras weekly, written by a free-lance journalist who claimed that

Sesha was the supreme living poet of South India started the ball rolling until a "Committee of Admirers" formed itself, moved the Government and obtained that munificent award and organised the Sesha Celebration Meeting. Three members of the Committee went to Gokulpuram and after hours of entreaty persuaded Sesha to accept their invitation to come to Madras. But Sesha did not know until the last moment that Va. Va. Na. was to preside on that occasion. It was too late for him when he found out.

Everybody knows how Va. Va. Na. got the maximum publicity for himself out of the affair and how he referred, with tears streaming down his cheeks, to the humble part that he had played in encouraging Sesha to persist in his literary work in those dark days of despair when he was unknown and unrecognised. "It was my humble good fortune, nay proud privilege," Va. Va. Na. said in his speech, "to watch the great Master in the throes of creative effort." Then changing from his tearful voice to a hollow smirk he added, "I may indeed claim to have been at the accouchment of the Master's brain-children". The *Dakshina Ravi* which appeared the following morning carried on its front page the photograph for which Sesha posed with Va. Va. Na. on his first visit to Madras. And there were three columns of the speech that Va. Va. Na. made on the occasion.

When Sesha got back to Gokulpuram he opened his Journal in which he had not written for a long time. For a long time he reflected, the Journal open in front of him. Then he wrote "**HYPOCRITE**." A minute later he scratched it out and wrote: **SWINE**.

Fondly the parents looked into the cradle of their delightful child.

"I think he is going to be a politician," said the father.

"Oh, how can you say that?"

"Well, he says more things that sound well, and mean absolutely nothing than any other human I ever saw."



I have an idea that the capacity to invoke and retain the loyalty of servants is one of the genes that are transmitted in heredity along with such specific characters as the colour of one's skin and hair in accordance with Mendilian laws. One cannot help wistfully envying those who with a mastery and unconscious technique assume and retain an aura for their valets which is proof against familiarity despite the proverb. Although implicit clockwork responses can be wrenched out by whip lashes counterpoised with lavishness as one Croesus to my knowledge is doing, in the manner of a circus lion tamer, the question of money seems to play but a minor part in this nexus; for I have known capable, intelligent and mature servants follow blindly in the wake of spendthrift bankrupt blackguards who, however willing to throw out money by the handfuls on their orgies, would be niggardly with the servants whose loyalty would be taken for granted and what more, would be given.

Whatever be the basis—unfortunately there is no school for potential masters and mistresses—I in my humble way have been experimenting with different methods. A sweet comradely manner, crisp detachment and distance, modulated supervision, companion servants, simple undiluted suzerainty over the kitchen and a variety of side attractions like evenings off, cinemas and socials. I can't say that I have exhausted possibilities. For one thing I haven't tried being a millionaire nor for that matter, becoming a maharshi. My very latest attempt has lessons which may well be useful to fellow experimentors and tormented travellers in this communistic vale of tears. On a foundation laid in solid wages, feeding and clothes, I gathered about me the ministrations of two youngsters: one, a boy of 12 and the other of 18, the former an indigenous mercurial product living with his parents in an adjacent shack and the latter an imported one, a little dense alike as to capacity and to civility. The

relationship between the two, starting in bickerings in the early days of association, soon settled to a mutual tolerance and by and by became very adhesive.

My idea was to catch them young and sublimate the parlous relationship of master versus servants to the plane of teacher and pupils even at some sacrifice of discipline, and so to overlay an increasing layer of fertile soil of esteem and affection on the basic lava of wages and tasks. No doubt I was considerably influenced by a desire to contribute my small portion towards lessening the ignorance of the future voters of this newly won land of ours, as I sought last year to further the grow more food campaign, when I planted a bushel of a seed grain in the garden and after 3 months of steady digging up of root worms reaped a harvest of half a bushel! When I was about it, I felt that I should do one better than the professional educationists and try and invest the barebones of academic knowledge with a clothing of relationships, values, nuances, that would add colour and attractiveness and set the youngsters on the road to independent quest for more. I bought books and slates and pencils and borrowed old picture books and books of knowledge from friends. Apart from the nightly instructions in the 3 R's, I took them with me in my walks, drawing their attention and interest to things beautiful and good in nature. I gave them selections of their choice in the radio programmes. I imparted special interest to historical episodes of our land and the geographical wonders of the world, bringing out my stocks of photographs, picture post cards and magazines. I must say, I felt elated when either of them of their own volition, sought flower or plant or picture which they considered would interest me and when they capped one of my stories with one of their own. May be my mental elbows struck a little outside the pattern of my far simpler juvenile era. Wafts of memory of my own budding perceptions and sensibilities would drift in and modulate the tenor of my teaching. Nostalgic trifles—how on a scorching day in Madras, I chanced on the sparkle of fern fronds aligned

round a fountain in the ornate front of a church and felt such an emotion that never since could I pass by a fern without a quickening of the senses; how overlooking the moving brushes of an artist I saw for the first time with amazement the play of colours in what until then seemed drab mud walls and dirty dingy streets; and how even under the shadow of impending examinations the voices and songs of the old world musicians, Pushpavanam and Thayi could exalt and thrill me.

The relationship between the boys and myself by and by became perhaps a little overscented and unreal. A world splashed with reds and blues and yellows as in geographical maps is, I dare say, incompatible with boot blacking and wood chopping. I had finished one reader, one history book and half the geography, having traversed all the majestic river valleys of India with the elder boy and had waded past the quagmire of multiplication tables with the younger, when the whole thing collapsed suddenly, for the police intervened on the unexplainable loss of a valuable watch from the premises and marched the boys away in spite of their stout denials, buttressed with invocations of 'Sathya' and by and by discovered with them before my incredulous eyes duplicate sets of keys to my bureaus and demonstrated how tools and valuable books missed from time to time have all been finding their way systematically to a local handy market for such goods. I realised that I was only a new, an odd and an easy kind of dud to get squared with in the inequalities of possession, a serai for the caravan of their lives. The brazen confessions of petty pilferings ascending by graduation to the crescendo of watch stealing revealed to me a discordance of outlook which was basic. According to codes absorbed by them whilst yet not past the suckling stage, theirs was not a serious fault. They had done things only according to honoured precedents. Meanwhile the capacity for evoking loyalty amongst servants, whether it is a matter of heredity or acquisition is still moot and remains to be considered by such men as Haldane and Vavilov.

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THE GODS LOOK ON

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

I have no other choice
 than to raise my poet's voice,
 and raise it to a pitch so high
 that it may pierce the callous sky,
 and shake the gods if they exist,
 topple their cosy kingdoms, twist
 their crowns and knock them out of shape,
 such crowns as theirs as should be hurled
 headlong into our bleeding world
 where ruin and rapine and rape
 continue while, from dawn to dawn,
 from day to day, these gods look on,
 look on unshaken and unstirred
 and never never say a word.

I'VE no alternative
 if I want to breathe and live
 than to make my pen a sword to slay
 whatever tyrant comes my way,
 my body change into a cloud
 laden with thunderbolts, endowed
 with lightnings sharp and fiery-eyed
 which shall not cease to reconnoitre
 every province, far and wide,
 to spot out every base exploiter,
 every oppressor, every wronger,
 rip them up until no longer
 even their shadow dare to loiter!

I'VE taken up my pen
 in the cause of broken men,
 of men who have no right to speak,
 no right to think, no right to raise
 their voice except, of course, in praise
 Of those who rule and rave and wreak
 vengeance on those of us who dare
 to lay the heart of falsehood bare,
 flinging an open condemnation
 on the corrupters of our nation;
 vengeance most vile in dastard manner
 wreaked on the people through whose toil
 and courage now on India's soil
 proud-planted floats our freedom's banner.
 Banner of freedom, tell us true,
 are we to kneel and worship you

inspite of all the grab and greed
 existing under you? indeed,
 you do not seem to be aware
 of millions who groan and bleed
 in this free country that you boast!
 each hour you drive us to despair,
 you haunt the people like a ghost
 and render life more stark and black
 than ever did the Union Jack!
 you say you have brought freedom through,
 yes, surely—only for the few.

A storm brews in my breast
 and now I cannot rest,
 I dare not rest, or day or night,
 my pen is roused and I must write
 poem on poem, song on song
 against injustice, hurt and wrong;
 each sentence that comes dripping from
 my heart shall be an atom bomb,
 dropping without or love or pity
 upon the tyrant's vulgar city
 wherein a handful reign on thrones
 made of the people's flesh and bones.

The way of life we cherish



A myriad lamps shed light
 and cheer in simple homes
 and sacred temples on a
 darkened night. Diwali—a
 great festival of India—
 stresses the need for faith and
 confidence in the ultimate
 destruction of evil.

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WITH the Muslim League out of the picture after the coming into being of Pakistan the Indian National Congress enjoys the unenviable position of being the sole political party in India which counts. This fact throws the heavy and difficult burden on the principal leaders of this party to function as leaders of the country as a whole and to this end subordinate all traces of party bias that existed in the days when Congress was functioning as the main opposition to the foreign Government that ruled this country prior to September 1946. That its detractors do not hesitate to dub the Congress as a fascist totalitarian organisation is well known. It is also recognised that Congress leaders have consistently resisted lending any support to this type of calumny on every conceivable occasion when exercise of the authority vested in them approaches the fringes of authoritarianism. It is the intention of the writer to examine in the succeeding paragraphs how far the Big Five of the Congress have succeeded or failed in this endeavour.

Jawaharlal Nehru by virtue of his position as the Prime Minister of India and also because of the fact that he had assumed leadership long

before September 1946 by a gradual process of devolution has to be considered first. Heredity, environment, time process and not the least the affection of Gandhiji had marked him unmistakably as the leader of a Free India. But these do not mean that he had shown indications that he would be fully equal to the task when called upon to undertake the responsibility. Jawaharlal's training was largely acquired in the school of Congress politics during the intervals he was out of jail. Of any specific administrative experience he was singularly innocent unless we take into account his brief incursion into the field of local government in his home district. Early in life he had developed an international outlook but specific indications of his deep appreciation of affairs concerning countries outside India were conspicuous by their absence. Nor had he shown during the days he exercised control over the provincial Governments in the first attempt of the Congress to play at practical politics that he had developed tolerance for the humdrum activities that usually go with the practice of a parliamentary form of government. In fact it was generally known that he threw the full weight of his influence to

terminate the existence of the provincial Governments during the early months of the last war. How then did Jawaharlal become the success that he undoubtedly is as the First Prime Minister of Free India, a fact which even his worst enemies would not deny. It is a generally accepted maxim that opportunity often makes a man. It is also said that the handling of responsible work brings out the best in any person who is above the average. In fact Jawaharlal took to secretarial work almost with the same avidity with which a duck takes to water. Accustomed as he was to long spells of intense activity he threw in a powerful spurt of energy into secretarial work. And the fact that during the first eleven months of his getting into office he had to deal with a bureaucracy which had a powerful British element in it with its obvious defects and nonetheless inherent strength had operated as a stabilising factor in his first essay at handling power. A revolutionary, with an innate abhorrence for procedure and red tape the institution which enveloped him made him respect conventions. It is said that in his relationship with the first Indian Governor-General, a person of his unilateral choice and intended to be no more than a conventional head of the State, he not only meticulously follows convention but painstakingly tries to establish conventions. As a party leader Jawaharlal is supreme. It is not that he does not have to face opposition within the party. In fact he often provokes an opposition. It is not uncommon to hear his old friends averring that they had loyally followed him for thirty years but in some particular matter they propose to depart from that habit. Nor does he avoid wordy exchanges with his followers. He so to say invites such exhibitions. But in the ultimate Jawaharlal has his way. In the legislature he is not such a pronounced success. He is far too high strung to fit into the niceties of parliamentary debate. His forthrightness looks out of place in an atmosphere which always is reminiscent of shadow fencing. He is too preoccupied to take kindly to the dull routine of parliamentary life. On occasions when he is present in the House as a spectator he more often

than not indulges in a much needed forty winks. In the early years of his career as a Prime Minister he was oppressed by the hang-over of his association with the National Planning Committee and Professor K. T. Shah. This found expression in his appointment of a committee to examine the various schemes of planning then extant towards the fall of 1946. It is no reflection on the report of the committee—a report which nevertheless had no particular merit about it—that Jawaharlal outgrew his jejune enthusiasm for the intricacies of Shavian economics. A great success all round as a Prime Minister, Jawaharlal's outstanding quality is something far apart from what he has been able to achieve in the governmental field. A bitter opponent of British rule in the past he persistently refuses to indicate even a trace of anti-British feeling in his actions or utterances. A determined resister of League politics and its claim to Pakistan, he would not allow the continued annoyance caused by Pakistan to his Government to vary in the slightest degree his attitude of concern and friendliness for the Indian Muslims. Destiny of which he speaks so often, it seems, has not only chosen him to play the leading role in Indian affairs in the most critical and momentous time of the country's history but has also equipped him with the qualities that are demanded by the function he is called upon to fulfil.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, nearly a decade and a half senior in age to Jawaharlal, is perhaps one of the most misrepresented amongst the Congress leaders. Not that much that is said of him is not to his credit, but that practically all that is said of him distorts his real qualities. Strong, silent, ruthless, unforgiving, a friend of capitalists, an enemy of Muslims, the very reverse of Jawaharlal, the iron dictator, these and many others are the legends that circulate about the Sardar. Sardar is not a complex character. His approach to problems demanding solution is always a direct approach. There is very little of hesitation in his make-up. But that does not mean that he is a dictator. In fact he is the reverse of it. With his master Gandhiji he shared the quality of quick perception of what the people

wanted and unlike Jawaharlal he never develops any mental resistance to the will of any group of people if he should initially disagree with them. Nor does he, like his master, attempt to seriously deflect such opinions on the ground that they are ethically untenable. Nor is it correct to say that he is hard. It used to be said that his love for Gandhiji had almost the feminine quality of possessiveness about it. It is also a fact that the main contributory cause of his recent illness was the manner of the passing away of the Mahatma. His life amongst the people like the peasants of Bardoli has helped to obliterate all traces in him of English education which culminated in his becoming a member of the British Bar. But what remained, however, is the atmosphere of orderliness that is even present about him. At his famous lunches or while receiving visitors at No. 1 Aurangzeb Road he displays characteristics that would do credit to a highly cultivated English aristocrat. He never had any patience for the tactics pursued by Jinnah though in 1936 he took the initiative to come to terms with Jinnah, an attempt which failed thanks to certain Hindu Mahasabha leaders. He was quick to perceive that the sequel arising from the partition of India should be firmly and unhesitatingly dealt with. But that did not mean that he had any illwill towards the loyal groups among Indian Muslims. The part played by him as the chairman of the minorities committee of the Constituent Assembly and the fact that the members of the minority communities cheerfully accepted his lead ought to give the direct lie to such talks. It is true he speaks out the blunt truth without attempting at sugar-coating it when the occasion demands it. Nevertheless he can be charming and affectionate to friends amongst whom can be counted people from all parts of India. A stickler for proprieties, he is equally polite and attentive to all that approach him, whether in his residence or at the legislature or while he is taking his constitutional. His greatest contribution to his motherland was the integration of the Indian States, a task which not only called for great firmness and tact but also an infinite capacity to persuade the princes that

they were only doing their duty to themselves and to the people over whom they ruled by the supreme act of sacrifice they were called upon to make. The Sardar is a stabilising factor in Indian politics but his main contribution to the history of the country in its early years of freedom was that he was all that Jawaharlal was not and thereby supplied the deficiency that the country needed in its leadership. In a sense Jawaharlal and the Sardar are the perfect pair, one so utterly unlike the other but each so completely complementary of the other.

Babu Rajendra Prasad, the third biggest amongst our leaders, has little in common with the other two. Attracted by Gandhiji during the formative years of his life it is said that he thereby missed the leadership of the Patna Bar and perhaps a judgeship of the Bihar High Court. President of the Congress several times over, it was on more than one occasion because there was none better fitted to take up the responsibility during difficult times in the history of the Congress. It is no exaggeration to say that in outlook and conduct he was nearer to Gandhiji than any other of the top ranking leaders. Devoted to the constructive side of Gandhiji's life work, he did not attract the glamour that was noticeable in the lives of the other two. An orthodox Hindu, like a true Gandhian he was a genuine friend of non-Hindus. As a member of the Indian Cabinet for Food and Agriculture he impressed all those that had to come in contact with him, and must be considered an outstanding success notwithstanding his pronounced bias against control and rationing of food articles, which brought the country well nigh to the brink of disaster.

The task of finding a President for the constitution making body was solved by the most popular choice that could possibly be made. Unaccustomed to parliamentary procedure and harassed by an acute bronchial ailment, his courtesy, sympathy, fairmindedness and absolute impartiality have contributed to making his Presidentship a great success. To know him is to love and respect him. It was felt when he gave

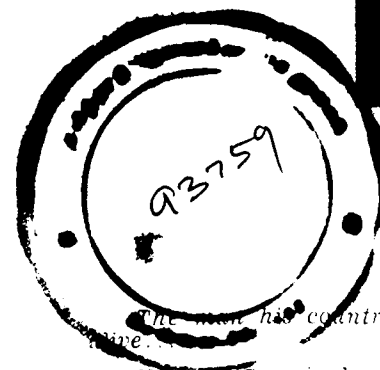
up his office as Minister to undertake the responsibility of the Congress Presidentship that the country could ill afford to do without his services as a Minister. It is to be hoped that means will be found to continue to utilise his ripe wisdom and rich experience.

A frail, weak looking, dhoti-shirt-chappal clad figure hiding the light of his eyes behind thick dark glasses, Rajaji was for the major part of his life as a Congressman destined to play the role of a stormy petrel in Congress politics. It was as a no-changer and an inveterate opponent of all compromise with the British that Rajaji attained a high rank in Congress leadership. The leader of a group of Americans who met Rajaji recently remarked that the outstanding thing in Rajaji that struck him was Rajaji's quality of thinking four steps ahead of those with whom he was conversing. It is perhaps this quality that made him the formula-producer in Congress conferences. It is the same alertness that made him the phenomenal success he was as Premier of Madras. It is this ability that made him handle with such great facility and devastating effect similes and parables, the most famous amongst these being the parable of the leaky boat which he used against Subhas Babu. Nevertheless he could not avoid being entangled in the leaky boat Pakistan which he championed in 1942. The four years following were terrible years for Rajaji. His penetrating analysis of the nation's problems failed him where a judgment of his own position amongst his fellow-Congressmen was concerned. Gandhiji and the great healer, Time, repaired the damage to Rajaji's position in the Congress and lifted him from one position of importance to another. Curiously enough, he was not a great success as a Cabinet Minister at Delhi. The secret perhaps was that he was temperamentally unfit to play a subordinate role. But as Governor of West Bengal he charmed black-flag wavers into becoming his admirers and was a great success at Calcutta. But nearness to his peers while functioning as Governor-General has cramped his style. What will be Rajaji's future? It is a question often asked but not always answered. His own

inclinations might point to a preference to leadership in Madras than to a position of solitary splendour in Delhi. One hopes that the position and prestige assumed by Rajaji as the first Indian head of the State would not be lost, to the country by any hasty decision dictated by the narrow or parochial considerations indulged in by our rulers in the Constituent Assembly.

Pantji, as Govind Ballabh Pant is affectionately known, is, notwithstanding the fact that he occupies the status of a proverbial Premier, entitled to be ranked amongst the Big Five. Tall, big-made and sixty two, Pantji, with a pronounced squint in his eyes and his slightly wobbly head, rules over sixty million people with the easy assurance of the proverbial pater familias. It is not that he has no troubles in his province, but only that they are never such as Pantji cannot solve them. Known as the economist of the central legislature when he functioned as deputy leader of the Congress Party in 1934-37, it was as Premier of his home province that he staked his claim for all-India leadership. There is no question of U. P. ever being able to spare his services. But he is always near the centre and the great bond between him and Jawaharlal keeps him in touch with all that happen all over the country. A strong man, he always yields in the interests of the solidarity of the Congress and the well being of his country. Absent minded to the point of forgetting his engagements, never hurrying which results in his being late for several of his engagements, he is nevertheless the one force that holds a difficult and big province like U. P. together and unaffected by the unseemly internal squabbles that are the order of the day in several other provinces. Pantji near one gives the impression of nearness to the stable rock which he really is. It is a great comfort to know that his services are available should the country as a whole need his direction and guidance.

These are the Big Five with whose lives and actions the destiny of India is irrevocably intertwined. May they be preserved long to help the country to rise from strength to strength and from glory to glory.



The man his countrymen think the greatest human being

Nehru is amazingly generous. He has no blood on his hands and there is no bitterness in his nature. Now that power, against which he has fought all his life, is in his hands, he accepts it willingly, but with self-searching. Nothing in Nehru conforms to type, all is paradox and human contradiction.

—JOHN BULL.

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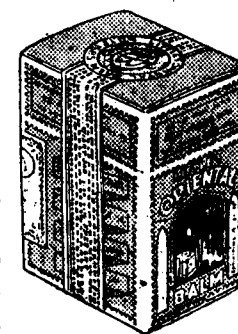
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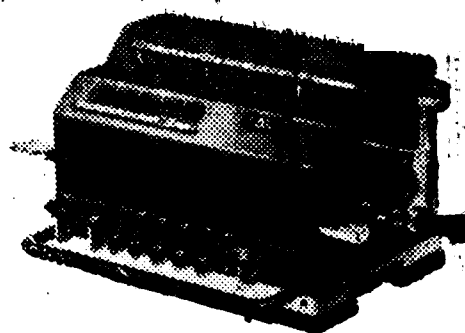
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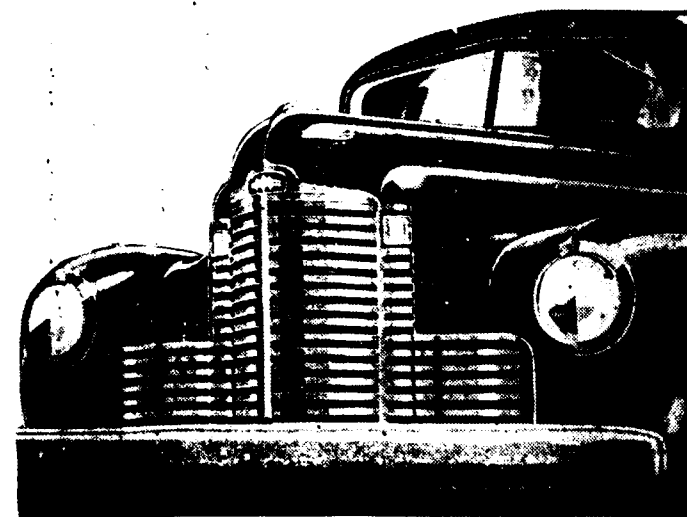


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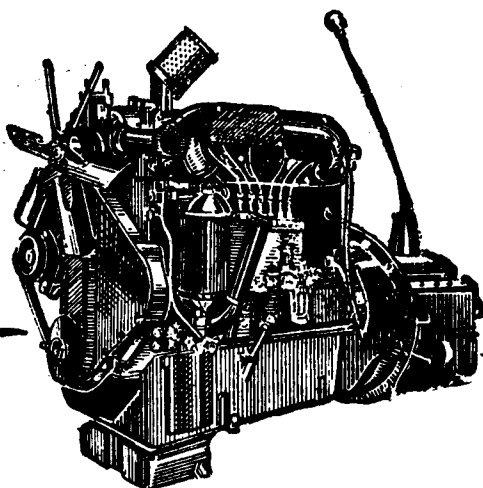


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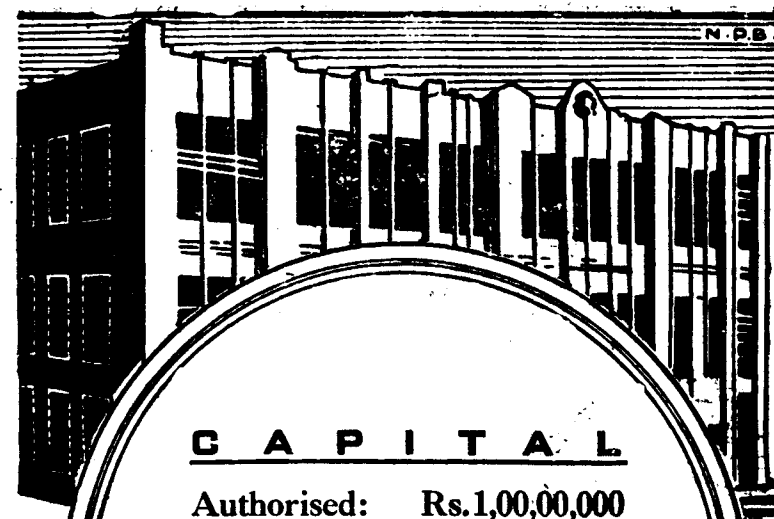
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CAPITAL

Authorised: Rs. 1,00,00,000

Subscribed: Rs. 72,00,000

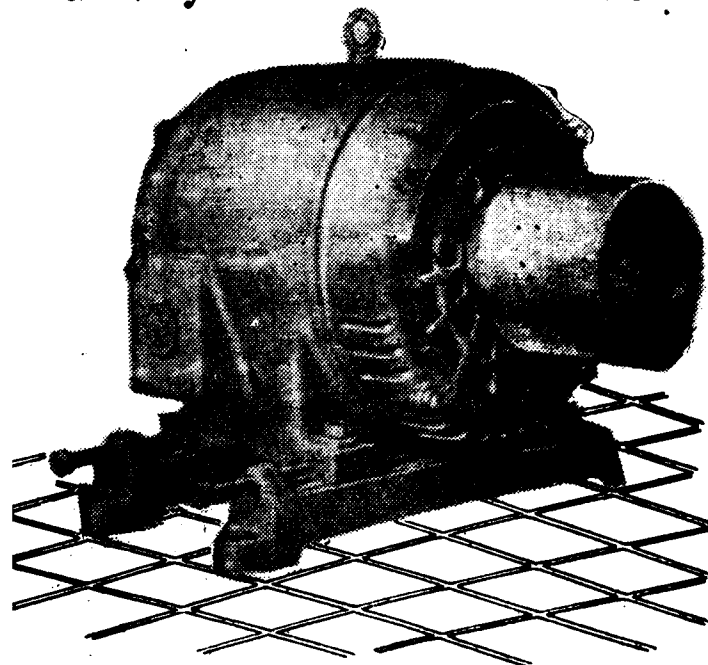
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Deepavali ~ 1949

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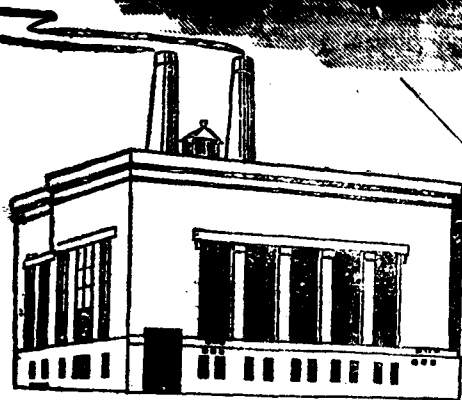
The mind of today—
this holy Deepavali
Day—is illuminated
by the presence of
dear relatives, friends
and well-wishers and
by feasting and good
clothes. The mind of
tomorrow should be
illuminated by the
joy of economic pro-
tection well assured.



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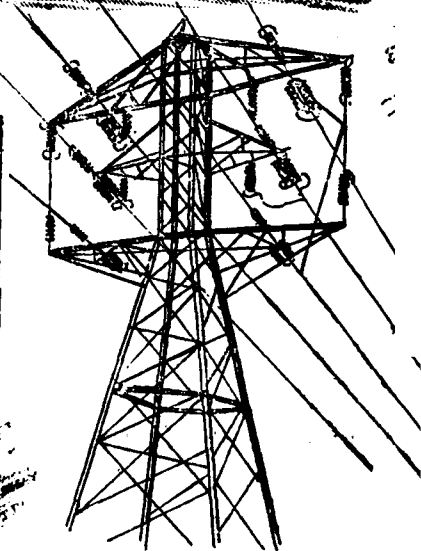
12, ANGAPPA NAICKEN ST, MADRAS-1

POWER

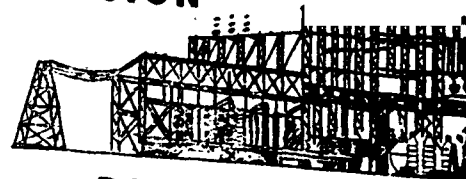


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Central Office:
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Issued and Subscribed Capital	.. Rs. 21,25,000
Paid-up Capital	.. Rs. 18,75,000
Reserve Fund	.. Rs. 10,00,000

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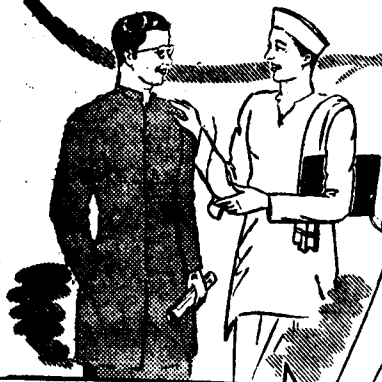
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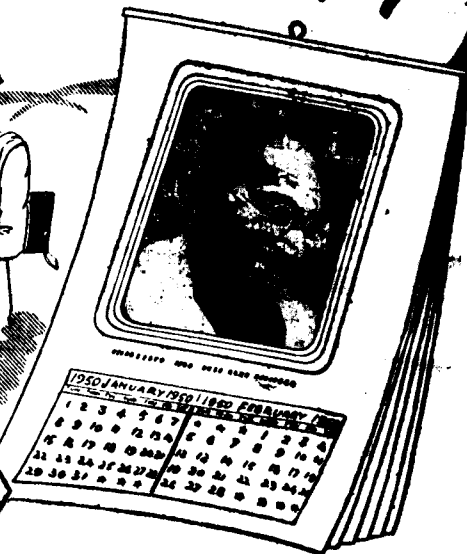
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