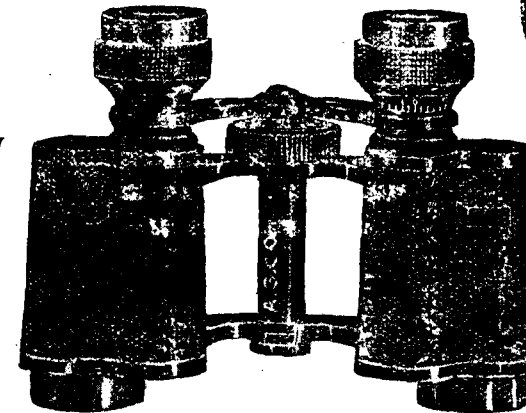


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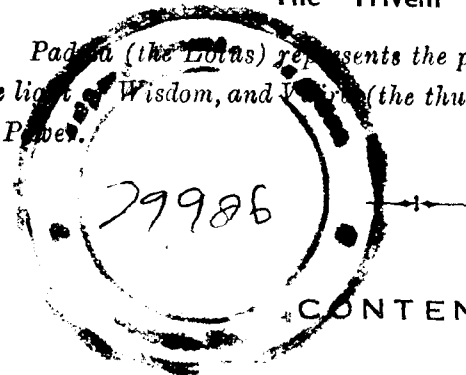
'Triveni' is devoted to Art, Literature, and History. Its main function is to interpret the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects.

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

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

The 'Triveni' Symbol

Padma (the Lotus) represents the purity of Love, Jyoti (the Flame) the light of Wisdom, and Vajra (the thunderbolt of Indra) the splendour of Power.



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.....he that laboureth right for love of Me
Shall finally attain! But, if in this
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure!

—THE SONG CELESTIAL

'THE TRIPLE STREAM'¹

By K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

Fighting the Congress

The stage is now set for the first General Elections in India under the new Republican Constitution. There is a bewildering multiplicity of parties seeking the support of an electorate which is, without doubt, the largest in the world. The Congress, the Party in power at the Centre and in the States, has already published its list of candidates. The rest are finalising their lists, and entering into combinations and 'understandings' among themselves with a view to fighting the Congress. Nearest to the Congress in its aims and ideology, but the most determined in its opposition, the Praja Party of Kripalani, Ghosh and Prakasam has gathered momentum in Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, and Andhra. The defection of Kidwai at the last moment has not unnerved his erstwhile leader Kripalani, who is more intent on the defeat of the Congress than on the success of his own Party. His slogan seems to be, "Vote for anyone except a Congressman." There is a touch of fanaticism in this attitude,—an eagerness to depict the Congress as a monster of iniquity, an evil power which must be exorcised from the body politic. Apparently, the Acharya would like even the Communists, the Justicites or the followers of Dr. Ambedkar to be returned to the legislatures in preference to candidates set up by the Congress!

It is easy to do propaganda against a Party which has run the administration during a period of acute trouble, and to point to its many lapses. It is easier still to make large promises of a new heaven wherein the utmost rectitude and devotion to the people's interests will prevail. It is not necessary to attach great importance to election speeches of this type. The real value of the Praja Party lies in that it affords a chance to Congress-minded electors to cast their votes in favour of candidates who, till the other day, were within the Congress

¹ November 9.

organisation and played a heroic role in the fight for Independence. The choice really is between two groups of Congressmen, divided not by principles but by personalities. And in every constituency where the official Congress candidate is deemed unsatisfactory on account of inefficiency or alleged corruption, the voter has an alternative choice provided by the Praja Party, without being thrown perforce into the arms of rank communalists, reactionaries, or violent revolutionaries. To people who have been satisfied with the general objectives of the Congress but felt disappointed by its actual achievement in certain directions, it must be disquieting to realise that a vote against the Congress must only mean a vote for reaction or revolution. The balance between these extremes is held by the Congress, the Praja Party, and the Socialists. The hope for ordered progress at home and for the maintenance of our status abroad lies in the wielding of power by legislators belonging to these three moderate sections.

With the experience of the coming elections and of the actual administration during the next few years, a new alignment of parties is bound to shape itself. In that alignment, progressive Congressmen, both official and Praja Party, will coalesce with Socialists of the Jaya Prakash complexion, and form the great Centre Party of India corresponding to the Labour Party in Britain. The right-wing Congressmen will then merge in an Indian Conservative Party of landlords, capitalists, and communalists. Whether the Communist Party will make any headway and become a powerful Opposition group in our legislatures, now or hereafter, will depend largely on the successful functioning of the three elements composing the Centre Party envisaged above. If they can deliver the goods, they will crowd out the Communists from our public life or absorb them. From this analysis it will be clear that, whatever the slogans of the parties contesting the forthcoming elections, the cause of peace and progress demands that the electors should either vote Congress or support the Praja Party-Socialist alliance. The only feasible alternative to the Congress is this alliance. In a majority of cases, the voter's choice will depend not on the party labels of any candidates belonging to these three important sections, but on the individual merit and antecedents of the candidates. If a forecast may be ventured at this stage, the Congress is likely to be returned by safe, but not overwhelming, majorities to the Central Parliament and the State Legislatures. The Praja Party, in alliance with the Socialists, will form the main Opposition, and keep a vigilant watch over Congress administrations. Bearing this in mind, it would be more proper for the Praja Party and the Socialists to ask for support to either section of their alliance than to insist: '*Anyone but a Congressman.*'

As for the candidates set up by the Congress, grave dissatisfaction has been expressed at the reappearance of legislators with dubious records, and the recruitment of others from powerful monied interests. Considerations based on merit and achievement have not had their due weight. And, despite Nehru's earnest desire, few have been invited to contest on behalf of the Congress, the choice being confined to applicants. But, subject to these unwelcome features, the selection is in the main satisfactory. An organisation which has had the wisdom to select from the South such trusted servants of the nation as Giri, Avinashilingam, Tirumala Rao, Ananthasayanam Aiyangar and Durga Bai, cannot be unworthy of esteem and support. And it has chosen fresh entrants like Sri K. Raghuramaiah, who threw up a Law Secretaryship in Madras to devote himself to public life. The Congress rose to great heights in the past, and, under proper guidance, it will once again prove worthy of the confidence of the Indian democracy. But the drift to a one-party domination has to be checked by a well-knit, intelligent Opposition, which can function efficiently and with due restraint, bearing in mind that it may be called upon at any moment to shoulder the burdens of office.

Churchill in Office

Mr. Winston Churchill is back in office as Prime Minister, with a narrow Conservative majority of less than twenty. He hopes to annex a dozen seats by reviving the representation of the Universities which have generally supported his Party; but this move has been put off for the present. His effort to win over the small group of Liberals under Mr. Clement Davies has not succeeded. It was, in fact, the Liberal voters' swing to the Right which determined the final result of the elections, but the Party chiefs are unwilling to efface themselves by a virtual merger with the Conservatives. A feature of the election was the superiority in number of the total poll in favour of Labour, though Labour's strength in the House suffered a notable decrease. It is yet to be seen for what length of time Mr. Churchill will be able to retain power, in the face of an Opposition almost equal in strength and determined to fight relentlessly. Within the Conservative fold are several who would prefer Mr. Eden to Mr. Churchill. And prophets foresee an early overthrow of Mr. Churchill from the leadership of the Party. Meanwhile this old war-horse is carrying on with his accustomed vigour and enthusiasm. The King's speech gives an indication of the new Prime Minister's domestic and foreign policy. State supervision rather than State ownership of industries like steel and coal is envisaged. In Persia and in Egypt, the British Government will pursue a policy of firmness, while trying at the same time to negotiate with Russia in the interests of peace.

India has cause to rejoice that she won Independence when a progressive statesman like Mr. Attlee was in power. It is difficult to imagine the die-hard Mr. Churchill agreeing to what he once termed as the liquidation of the Empire. Now that Indian Independence is an accomplished fact, Mr. Churchill cannot put back the clock. As for possible Anglo-American intrigues on the Kashmir issue, Mr. Churchill, as a shrewd realist, can be trusted not to push matters too far, for that might involve a risk of India openly aligning herself with Russia and China.

Liaquat Ali Khan

That the frenzy of political assassination overspreading Eastern lands should have taken its toll of a front-rank statesman like Liaquat Ali Khan is very much to be deplored. As the right-hand man of Jinnah and as an architect of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali endeared himself to his Muslim co-religionists. By his suave manner and spirit of accommodation, he won the respect of Nehru and other Indian leaders despite the strained relations between the two new States. He was vehement in speech but moderate in action, so that while he kept his hold on his turbulent followers, he always refused to take the final step that might precipitate war with India. An accomplished scholar and gentleman, and an admirer of India's past, he played a notable part in recent Indian history. India mourns the loss of a great son who served the cause of progress according to his lights. When the dust of acrimonious controversies is laid, and India and Pakistan settle down under normal conditions as friendly neighbours, the memory of Liaquat Ali Khan will be cherished on both sides of the border.

It was feared that, with his passing away, the more fanatical elements in Pakistan's public life would gain the upper hand. But the new Prime Minister, Kwaja Nazimuddin, has adopted a conciliatory tone in his utterances. The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan are anxious to settle all outstanding differences by peaceful negotiation. The concept of a theocratic State has become an obsession with the leaders of Pakistan, and this has coloured their outlook and influenced their treatment of non-Muslim minorities in the State. It is too soon to expect a change in this outlook, but so long as the will to peace is present, the hope of a settlement persists.

Prof. Bhushan

Prof. V. N. Bhushan, Principal of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's College, Bombay, and a distinguished writer in English and Telugu, passed away last month at the early age of forty-two. While yet a

student of the Noble College, Masulipatam, he made his *debut* as a poet in English. Later he was a post-graduate student of English literature at the Benares Hindu University, where he won golden opinions from Prof. U. C. Nay, Head of the Department of English. As Professor of English at Bikaner, Poona, Bijapur, and Bombay, he won the love of his students; they were stimulated by his personal example to admire the classics of English literature as well as post-war poetry and fiction. In a series of volumes of verse, he expressed himself with remarkable felicity of phrase, giving rein to a picturesque imagination. There was an element of heaviness in his early productions, whether verse or prose, but with maturity came ease of craftsmanship. He wrote excellent critical essays, edited anthologies of Indo-English poetry and literary criticism, and lectured to appreciative audiences on cultural topics. His love of English was combined with devotion to Telugu, and he attained a high level as a writer of Telugu short stories.

Prof. Bhushan was one of the group of Indo-English scholars who had a passionate faith in their mission as the interpreters of culture between East and West. He was positive that Indian writers of English verse and prose could fulfil that mission despite the prevailing scepticism about the employment of a 'foreign' medium. He and his fellow literary artists are entitled to the gratitude of lovers of literature, for pursuing the 'vision splendid'.

To *Triveni* and its Editor, Bhushan was particularly close. His original contributions and his renderings from Telugu were highly valued. So recently as September, Bhushan promised to induce his Gujarati and Marathi colleagues at the Bhavan's College to write about their respective literatures to *Triveni*. The Editor hoped that, some day, he could welcome Bhushan at the poet's home-town of Masulipatam, but, instead, it fell to him to preside at the condolence meeting held to mourn his demise. Such is the irony of Fate!

TWO POEMS

IMMORTALITIES

The bud plucked
while in its deep dream flowering,
casts of virgin fragrance
a nostalgic look.

The vision effaced
while in its sudden dawn revealing,
casts on the fretted screen of slumber
a troubling dream of symbols.

The life smothered
while in its brief breath aspiring,
casts in the Creation's soul
a maelstrom of wrong.

*

THE NARCISSUS MOMENT

Amid the mind's drawn shutters,
in the deep snugness, I sit and watch
the glimmers of my day-shy dreams.

Silence-rapt, I listen in
to the soft flood of feelings
by phantom gates sluiced.

Into a beam of sense composed
I sense my thoughts burgeon
like silent shoots at night.

In that Narcissus Moment, strangers
utter my name, their veils slipping,
and I glimpse of my vastness the Vision.

*

— R. C. RAJA SEKHAR

LANDMARKS IN ORIYA LITERATURE

By Dr. MAYADHAR MANSINHA, M. A., Ph. D.

A little more than a decade ago, our language-area could not be easily located on the map of India. It is Orissa's misfortune that the entire period of British rule, which brought glory and prosperity to most other regions of India, was one dark night for her. But the Oriyas are justifiably proud of the fact that, all through this dismembered existence, it was their language which kept the impulse to be reunited, ever green. And so, the Oriyas living in the four different Provinces of Bengal, Bihar, Madras and Madhya Pradesh, were united at long last in the year of grace 1936. Orissa, however, is only a diminutive shadow of the historic kingdom of Kalinga or Utkal, which extended from the Ganges to the Godavari and from the sea-board to the foot-hills of the Vindhyas. Even now several million Oriyas live beyond the boundaries of the present Orissa State. As Educational Adviser to the former Eastern States Agency, I have had the opportunity of hearing Oriya spoken and sung in the entire eastern belt of the Central Provinces, extending from Bastar State in the South to Jashpur State in the North and as far west as the Sakti State.

Hemmed in on all sides by the sea and mountains and forests, Orissa has had a more or less indigenous growth of her own art, culture and literature. If politically it is the Indian State with the smallest non-Hindu minorities in its population, culturally also it is the purest and linguistically the closest to Sanskrit. If one walks in the streets of Sambalpur even today, one would feel as though the figures from the walls of Ajanta and Konarka had suddenly come alive. Those picturesque men and graceful ladies whom we meet in ancient Indian art, do still exist in real life in large parts of Orissa, if they exist at all anywhere in India. It is on this soil that you meet the Hindu architecture and sculpture in perfection and in profusion. The temples of Orissa, gracefully tapering into the blue heavens and adorned with magnificent carvings, have been exciting the admiration of all who see them, the Sun-temple at Konarka being a marvel of beauty in the entire world of Art. In the Oriya language the number of foreign words might be counted on one's fingers, the entire body of the language still remaining almost wholly Sanskritic. And

we have had a continual line of Puritans in the language, ever since the beginnings of English education, who have tried to maintain its original purity against any innovations in style and diction. The battle royal is going on even today, the old guard declaring the western innovations in the language as unnational, unpatriotic and heretical.

The differences between the four East Indian languages, Assamese, Maithili, Bengali and Oriya are so thin, that if one knows one of them fairly well, there will be little difficulty for one to understand others. It is just like the close affinity among the Scandinavian languages, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish which started individual literatures of their own only the other day. Because of the close affinity between the two neighbouring languages, Oriya and Bengali, the Buddhist ballads and lyrics of the eighth century A. D., discovered in Nepal and published by the late M. M. Haraprasad Sastri under the name 'Buddha Gan O Dohan', are justifiably being claimed by both Bengali and Oriya scholars to be the beginnings of poetic creation in either language.

By the 13th century, however, facts about Oriya language and literature began to take clear outlines out of the wilderness of scholars' conjectures and controversies. We see the first prose utterances in Oriya in an inscription of the 13th century on the walls of a temple at Bhuvaneswar, and the first lyrical notes were heard almost at the same time. It is significant that prose from the beginning was employed for practical official purposes, while poetry was the vehicle for the emotional outbursts of mother Yasoda for young Krishna who had left Mathura under royal orders. This lyric, popularly known as 'Kesab Koilee', is still recited by school children in thousands of Orissa villages to the immense joy of aging parents.

From this slight beginning in the 13th century to the 20th in our times, this literature of the Oriyas has grown in dimensions and varieties, as a national literature is expected to, with a rich harvest of epics, Puranas, Kavyas, songs, prose poems and lyrics of all categories. Like the synthetic religious culture for which Orissa is noted, her literature also has been fertilised by streams from all sources. While the language is Aryan, the basis of the entire metrical system and of the musical compositions is Dravidian. Among the Oriya poets and litterateurs are fishermen, weavers and aboriginals, Andhras, Bengalees and Marathas. Bhim Bhoi, the blind Kondh poet of the 18th century, still enraptures millions of Oriyas through his philosophic Bhajans. The aborigines are such an integral part of the Oriya people that they always find a place in our literature from the 14th

century down to modern times, both as authors and as subjects of poetry and fiction. This may be unique among all North Indian languages. In the temple of Jagannath there is a prose chronicle of the country and its changing rulers, which is continually being written by an official chronicler for the last so many centuries. An immense amount of literature also still lies buried in the palm-leaf libraries of villages and important families scattered all over the Province. Almost each village in Orissa and almost each important family still possesses a library of palm-leaf manuscripts with the village or family priest as its custodian. Unaided by the State, unencouraged by jealous and contemptuous Brahmins—the custodians of Sanskrit learning—and without much patronage from the aristocracy, this literature of the Oriyas has grown up through centuries, entirely through the magic appeal of poetic creations that Orissa's poets have made a gift of, to the nation. The Oriya literature, therefore, unlike its neighbouring sisters, is mainly a mass literature, born out of the soil and meant for the soil. I may present the story of our first two giants, who still entertain, dominate and sublimate the minds of vast masses of Orissa more than any other poet, ancient or modern, to substantiate my assertions.

The first to emerge on the horizon is Sarala Das in the 14th century, the poet of the Oriya 'Mahabharat,' the first large book in the language. Almost a contemporary of Chaucer, Sarala Das exhibits to some degree the same rough and vigorous qualities, the same unblushing eye for truth and the same instinct for description and characterisation as the English poet. His descendants are still flourishing in his village in the district of Cuttack, and his birth place and burial mound have become places of pilgrimage. It is incontrovertible that he, a tiller of the soil, was completely ignorant of Sanskrit. Like the Scottish poet Burns, Sarala Das often got the irresistible impulse to write while ploughing the fields. And piecing together what he had heard from Brahmin Pandits, this semi-literate peasant started writing the 'Mahabharat' in a language which till then contained no more than a few folk-songs and which was contemptuously looked down upon by both the rulers of the land and the Brahmin intellectuals.

This 'Mahabharat' of Sarala Das is a grand composition. It could not be a translation of the original in the very nature of things, as the poet was ignorant of Sanskrit. And so it has become more or less an original creation. The poet has upset the order of Books in the original and the continuity of its narrative. He has narrated the story in his own unhampered way, giving full freedom to his unbridled imagination, grafting new stories, new situations on the old tale and throw-

ing away incidents and stories of the original as he pleased. The whole epic is written in the vital, vigorous, straightforward language of a rustic, caring little for embellishments, indulging often in hyperboles and mixing up the realities with the figures and happenings of the imaginary world. And significantly enough, the realities were invariably based on the poet's limited experiences within his environment, thus turning the whole poem into a picture gallery of men and matters of contemporary Orissa. The poet throbbed with patriotism for the land of his birth. He makes the Pandavas visit the important holy places in Orissa on their way to Heaven, and tries through a half-satiric and half-morbid story, in which Yudhishtira had to marry again in his old age during this pilgrimage, to prove that the soil of Utkal is the most heroic and creative in all the world. Indeed it would naturally have appeared so to the poet, as Orissa in his time was still vigorously independent, while the entire North India and the major portions of the South had by that time been conquered and ruled by Mohamedans for over a century.

After finishing the 'Mahabharat,' Sarala Das, it appears, wished also to reproduce the story of the 'Ramayana' in Oriya. But the story of the 'Ramayana' given by Valmiki had not much appeal for this peasant who had enjoyed and admired the zest for life in all its crude and unhampered vigour in the characters of the 'Mahabharat.' The poet, because of his peasant-like realistic attitude to life, had dragged the demigods of the Sanskrit 'Mahabharat' from their olympic heights and made them appear as common men and women battling over petty things and yielding to the common temptations as we all do. To such a poet the wholly idealistic tale of Rama and Sita must have appeared tame enough. And so he wrote a new 'Ramayana' in line with his unique 'Mahabharat'. While Valmiki had made Ravana rule over a kingdom called Lanka, Sarala Das created an imaginary land called Villanka whose ruler Ravana, instead of having ten faces, was given a thousand. The thousand-faced Ravana repeatedly defeated Rama and his brothers and his generals. He was at last killed, however, by Sita through the power of her purity and virtue. Such a conception, depicting woman's subtler powers as superior to the crude physical energy of the male is certainly unique, considering the age at which it was born.

Attempts have been made to place before the Orissa public authenticated translations of the original 'Mahabharat' in prose and verse by Rajas and Maharajas through the help of Pandits, as a counterblast to the poetic hotch-potch of Sarala Das. But the nation has rejected the offers of Pandits and Maharajas, and still keeps

adoring the rude, unpolished, yet vital production of a semi-literate peasant of the 14th century. The 'Mahabharat' in the neighbouring language, Bengali, was first written about two centuries after Sarala Das whose epic, therefore, was translated into Bengali to satisfy the masses of Bengal.

The next giant on the scene is Jagannath Das, an absolute contrast to the peasant-poet Sarala Das, being a Brahmin by caste, a son of a minister to the king of Orissa, and a thorough scholar in Sanskrit. But to the eternal blessing of the race, this intellectual and social aristocrat determined in early youth to abandon the pride and prejudices of his class and caste, and to make his life and learning a complete dedication to God and his people. Defying the contempt of the Court, friends and critics, Jagannath started writing the 'Bhagavat Puran' in the language of the masses, to show them a path of faith and virtue which is difficult for an Indian to find out with a sense of certainty without a fair knowledge of Sanskrit, of which the masses were then, even more than at present, completely ignorant. Jagannath Das not merely wrote the 'Bhagavat' in Oriya but wrote it in the most elegant, mellifluous and lucid diction as yet possible in the language. He invented a new metre, the nine-lettered metre, better known as 'Bhagavat' metre, for this literary adventure, which too has turned out to be the handiest instrument for versification in Oriya. It is said that while young Jagannath Das was busy translating the 'Bhagavat' canto after canto, he, as a test of his success, used to sit under the famous banyan tree within the precincts of the Jagannath Temple and recite the verses to the crowds of pilgrims which daily visited the shrine.

The pilgrims from all corners of Orissa heard spell-bound this new religious poetry which was so long a sealed book to them, in the language they spoke daily among themselves but with the magic touch of a poet and a saint added to it. Young Jagannath was satisfied that his translations were after all successful, and his fame and that of his book spread far and wide through pilgrims in a short time. Scribes started copying it as holy labour, and villages vied with one another for possessing a complete set of Jagannath's 'Bhagavat' with a house of its own, where the village elders could assemble in the evening after the day's toil to listen to it being recited by the village priest. So, almost each village in Orissa began having a 'Bhagavat' house which was a multi-purpose institution, combining in it the village assembly, the village school, the village library and the village church. It appears now that the birth of Jagannath and his 'Bhagavat' in Oriya were matters of destiny. Not long after Jagannath passed away,

the dark night descended on the prosperous and independent kingdom of Orissa, which had defied repeated Moslem and non-Moslem invasions for centuries. The land was attacked and conquered bit by bit from the North, the South and the West. The Moghuls, the Pathans, the Marathas and the British overran the country one after another. The kingdom was dismembered, brothers killed brothers, and through misrule, extortion, famine and internecine battles, the peasantry—the back-bone of the race—was almost dehumanised. These dark days continued from the 16th century right up to 1936. But this long night of misfortune, however, could not kill the Oriya people. In dismembered and exploited misery, the great cementing force among them was Jagannath's 'Bhagavat' as it still is. Through three centuries of misfortune the 'Bhagavat-ghar' continued to be the rallying point for the masses in Orissa. It is still the simple literary ambition of the average unsophisticated Oriya peasant to be able to read and recite the 'Bhagavat' in his old age, or listen to it being read and recited by his children. In fact he sends his child to school with the main objective of giving him as much literacy as will enable him to read the 'Bhagavat' which has so far been the greatest incentive to the spread of literacy in Orissa.

Jagannath was a contemporary of Chaitanya who spent the last 18 years of his life at Puri. The poet and the saint liked and respected each other as soon as they met. But as Jagannath and his Oriya literary friends and disciples, who are now described as 'five associates', had already been moulded in their own processes of spiritual and literary strivings, they were unaffected by Chaitanya's religion. Up till then Orissa had a religious culture of her own. It was an indefinable combination of the Vedic, the Buddhistic and the aboriginal or Tantric streams of thought and all were symbolised in the Lord Jagannath. From widely current legends it has been asserted that Jagannath was originally a tribal God of the Savaras. Later on this God has had Buddhistic and Brahmanic metamorphosis in which stage he lasts till today. As a Brahmanic God, Lord Jagannath at Puri represents the reappearance of Krishna in Kali Yuga. So the Krishna-cult had practically turned out to be the Jagannath-cult in Orissa, and the Beatific Realisation, till Chaitanya came on the scene, was through a sort of Vedantic self-examination and Buddhistic self-purification as also through esoteric Tantric processes. That is what we find being held out in the writings of Jagannath and his associates.

But the tempting process of sublimated sex-love as the way to Divine realisation as preached by Chaitanya, and the cheap austerity of 'Kirtan' as practised by him, now began to have the most baneful

effects on Orissa's society, literature and politics. Misunderstood by feeble and untrained minds, the sublimated sex-love as a spiritual practice has produced a huge mass of pornographic literature, both religious and secular, that did not exist before in Oriya and has considerably vitiated society. In politics also Chaitanya's stay at Puri hastened Orissa's day of misfortune. Charmed by his magnetic personality, his religious ecstasies and his erudition, many high officials of the kingdom resigned their posts to enjoy his divine companionship at Puri; and while the great Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagara was knocking at the southern gates of the empire, King Prataparudra of Orissa was spending sleepless nights in his palace at Cuttack, sending emissaries to the young mendicant Chaitanya to be favoured with a 'darsan'. The inevitable happened. Orissa was soon trampled under the feet of invaders after centuries of glorious and vital independence. And after this, we reach the second period in Oriya literature with the background of subjugated and dismembered political existence over centuries.

(To be concluded)

THE LOVE POETRY OF TAGORE

By M. C. GABRIEL

The 'Gitanjali' envisages a merging, by mystical elevation, of the human in the Divine, the impermanent in the Permanent. It gathered supreme importance, both in the public mind and the Poet's immortality, to the neglect, comparatively, of his other works and their range.

Among the latter are Tagore's exquisite love-lyrics, which are only referred to, by authors, in passing. Much of poetry expresses the passion of love in a kind of ecstatic outburst. The poet, in the capacity of a lover, sings the feelings of his heart in a burning poem. He tells the beloved of his distress in her absence, his consuming desire to always have her in his sight, his fear and trepidation at her silence, his soul's threnody at being rejected or crossed. But the poems of Tagore are a class by themselves. They may not be startlingly new in the Indian tradition, but, in the West, save for a hint in Thomas Hardy, there is no tradition of writing poems in his style, whose characteristic beauty—a beauty which finds greater definition and dignity in his mystical verse—is, what may be called, the capture of a moment or a phase of emotion.

A guileless youth may fall a prey to Cupid's dart when still a boy of fourteen or even younger, and try to soar to Parnassus for help. The early poems of Byron, some of Shelley's juvenile scribblings, are a couple of instances in point. They are romantic ravings of transparent sincerity, heightened by the blind sexual effervescence of adolescence, and cramped in the trappings of an ununderstood idealism. But with age, in fact with every minute, the emotions change, having gained by experience and introspection what can be within the space of that time.

"But I can tell—let truth be told—
That love will change in growing old,
Though day by day is naught to see,
So delicate his motions be." (Bridges)

And so, at a later date, the person begins to discover how differently the text of love then reads. That, perhaps, is one of the reasons for a prevalent idea that a person falls in love but once in his life, his other *affaires d'amore* being considered purely on the basis of sex.

Tagore's love poetry not only brings out this difference in the growth of feelings with remarkable insight and subtlety, but also captures the fleeting moments of the passion as it expresses itself in a certain state of mind with a multitude of associations. For love is a state of maximum expansion of the ego. In that state of intoxication familiarly called love, the entire atmosphere becomes instinct with life and meaning. The lover (man or woman) projects his or her heightened consciousness on all things animate and inanimate. The stars, the sky, its colour and clouds, the trees, the birds, the flower and fruit, the winds and weathers, all suddenly acquire a meaning. The stars are either cruel in their courses or benevolent and worthy of trust; the sky changes its colours either with cold, indifferent beauty or with consoling regard; the birds are calling forlornly to their mates or are merrily wafting from branch to branch, at peace with the rest of the world.

The poems in the 'Gardener', as the author himself tells us in the Preface, are of 'love and life' and written much earlier than the 'Gitanjali'. As an illustration of the point stated above regarding the changes in love at different times 'we may compare the poem' (25) "Come to us, youth, tell us truly why there is madness in your eyes", with "We are to play the game of death tonight, my bride and I" ('Gardener' 82). In the first the youth ends the poem by replying, "my feet are languid with the burden of my heart." The entire poem suggests the indolent and the idealist languor of all love at an early age. The youth has a great and enjoyable burden in his heart, and that is enough.

In the second poem, the lover speaks of his bride and himself realising love in the terrors of a storm. "The night is black, the clouds in the sky are capricious, and the waves are roaring at sea." "Her hair is flying in the wind, her veil is fluttering, her garland rustles over her breast."

"The push of death has swung her into life.
We are face to face and heart to heart, my bride and I."

Again, poems Nos. 7 and 56 ('Gardener') show two very different phases of love which Tagore tries to express. In the first it is all a mere adolescent love at first sight. "But the young Prince did pass by our door and I flung the jewel from my breast before his path." From her window the girl sees the Prince pass and flings both her necklace and the jewel from her breast (i. e. her heart) before him.

In the second, love is an old acquaintance with strange vagaries in his behaviour. He comes like a harsh light, drags the trembling

heart into the open, tears all reserve and modesty to shreds and then abandons the once beloved, leaving greater darkness and sorrow behind. The woman who had been working with others has fallen a victim to his ruse. She responds and perhaps enjoys. And then, "I hoped my love would be saved from the shivering shame of the shelterless, but you turn your face away." Here are lines spoken not by a chit of a girl, whose heart is borne away by the splendour of a Prince, but spoken by a woman, who has known all the pleasures of womanhood and love in their maturity. And suddenly he has turned away his face. In the closing lines, how clearly and with what unbearable poignance—poignance intensified by the resigned and hopeless spirit in which they are spoken—all this and much more are brought out:

"Yes, your path lies open before you, but you have cut off my return, and left me stripped naked before the world with its lidless eyes staring night and day."

Both in the 'Gardener' and the 'Lover's Gift' (the latter is unfortunately not translated by the author himself) several poems can be found which bear out the idea given above. However, there are a greater number of matured poems and comparatively fewer of the adolescent, perhaps because, at the time of translation, Tagore preferred the reality of the former to the nebulous beauty of the latter.

We shall now illustrate at some length what we meant by Tagore's capture of the moment and the mood.

"The two sisters glance at each other when they come to this spot and they smile.

"There is laughter in their swift-stepping feet, which makes confusion in somebody's mind who stands behind the trees whenever they go to fetch water." ('Gardener', 18)

Here is not a mere poetic expression of the feelings of a particular person. It may be that the poem brings out the characteristic shyness of a maiden, who knows she is within her lover's sight. But then, there are shades and shades of shyness. In poem No 8 of the 'Gardener' when she is seated by her window, the young traveller comes to her 'in the rosy mist of the morning' and asks her, with an eager cry, "Where is she?" The answer is known to her but—

"For very shame, I could not say
She is I, young traveller, she is I."

Again, in poem No. 20 of the same book, the woman remarks,

"Day after day he comes and goes away.
Go, and give him a flower from my hair, my friend.
If he asks who was it that sent it,
I entreat you do not tell him my name—
For he only comes and goes away."

How delightfully absurd that her name should not be revealed to him, "for he only comes and goes away!" But it is only in such meaningless little absurdities that Tagore manages to capture the fleeting moments of betrayal of a woman's heart, by herself. In the above quoted poems, the woman betrays her secret by her shyness, but in various phases of its expression. The shyness in the glance between two sisters and their meaningful smile, because somebody stands behind the trees whenever they go to fetch water, is incomparably different from the shyness which successfully stifles the rebellious words just behind her lips, "She is I, young traveller, she is I!" And without the entire context in which the idea is expressed, the feeling would lack completion and the subtle differentiating shade.

Let us take another poem as an illustration:

"When she passed by me with quick steps, the end of her skirt touched me.

"From the unknown island of a heart came a sudden warm breath of spring.

"A flutter of a flitting touch brushed me and vanished in a moment, like a torn flower-petal blown in the breeze.

"It fell upon my heart like a sigh of her body and whisper of her heart." ('Gardener', 22)

The poet intends to convey the sudden emotion as it sprang in him. The words employed are exquisite and expressive. The emotion is healthy and animal, awakened to life by the touch of the end of her skirt. As a painter, with a few strokes of his brush, brings his figures into bold relief, the poet, by a few unforgettable metaphors, prepares the reader for a complete and sympathetic appreciation of the pathetically stormy feeling of the last line, "It fell upon my heart like the sigh of her body and whisper of her heart". (Incidentally, the sound of this line is marred by the too close repetition of the word 'heart').

At the end of this poem the reader feels it, not as a vague and general idea of love, but as a robust and expressive phase or mood of emotion. It is that that I have called the capture of the fleeting moment and the mood. The emotion expressed may return but always

with a change, and in a new moment and a new mood. The world is full of sunshine half the time of the day, and yet a lonely ray stretches itself and strays into dark corners and is caught and imprisoned within a diamond. So also in this poem, out of the multitude, a fraction of human life and feeling is singled out and incarcerated in a cell of colour and sound.

It must have been noticed, even from the few examples we have given, that Tagore often attempts to express what passes within the minds and hearts of women. This, I believe, is another very important and contributive part of his poetry.

For various reasons women, all the world over, have been subject to social slavery. They have not been given a chance to express their personalities with freedom. Though conditions in the West have changed greatly, in India women are still in a position of social subordination. In fact the ideal of wifehood in India is the adoration of her husband as a god. Similar conditions have prevailed till very recently in China. Free talk, hearty joking and loud laughter by women, even in their homes, are still a matter for grave concern. Whatever the desires that may burn within a woman's heart, she ought, if she would be considered moral and modest, to refrain from expressing them. So, half the world has spoken, the other has yet to speak, and naturally woman has been made a mystery. "Who knows," the protagonists of this social injustice and cruelty wonder, "what unknown and unknowable wells of love and hatred bubble within a woman....." and so on *ad nauseam*, as if, given a fair chance, she could not be as inhumanly human as man generally is! Mankind put her on a pedestal, adored her for a goddess and neatly muzzled her mouth. It is extremely absorbing to analyse why this has been so and how it has evolved, but this is not the place for it.

Against this background Tagore attempts to explore 'mysterious woman', and makes her express her innermost thoughts. There is no such practice in poetical literature of any respectable proportion. Man has always spoken of himself, his love, his ardour, his achievements and what not. Here and there we find a stray poetess or woman-painter, trying her best, in the ridiculous guise of conventional forms, to express herself vaguely and with restraint. The poems spoken by women in India are largely of a religious character. The only notable exception is found among those whom we complacently allude to as the tribal peoples: the Ghonds, the Pardhis etc. Their poems, both by men and women, are extremely free in expression and direct in thought. Tagore also has tried to make

woman articulate and has achieved astonishing success. He almost gets beneath their skin. Their coyness, their vague fear of love, their utter and perilous abandonment in moments of passion, their confusion at the glance of their lover, their predilection for flattery, their betrayal through care to conceal, are all brought out with remarkable insight and delicacy, with an eye to womanly restraint.

Somewhere, in one of his prose writings, Tagore himself deploras the paucity of such poems. Though, in his translated works, the proportion of such poems is very small in comparison with others, yet it sets a tradition worth emulation, both in method and character. It must be remembered that it is a particularly difficult type for men poets to attempt. Lyric poetry being the communication of very intimate and personal experience, objectivity is difficult to attain. A love lyric is therefore bound to be ecstatic and subjective, endeavouring to communicate a certain phase or mood of our emotion or mind towards love. It is for this very good reason that lyrics are mostly written in the first person. Although, all the poet does, in writing love lyrics spoken by women, is to express his own feelings as if they belonged to the 'fair sex', or to express in a particular state of mind what ideas or emotions he presumes are theirs, yet such an attempt demands objectivity enough to consistently use the woman's code and symbolism and to maintain certain fundamental differences between man and woman. And the poems of Tagore are worked out even in this respect to a nicety.

"I try to weave a wreath all the morning, but the flowers slip and they drop out.

"You sit there watching me in secret through the corner of your prying eyes.

"Ask those eyes, darkly planning mischief, whose fault it was."
(*'Gardener'*, 39.)

But such subtlety characterises almost all the poems of Tagore, whether of love or any other feeling. Every stanza ends in this pointed manner, only to attain greater intensity in the subsequent stanzas. His poems move in a crescendo, the final stanza ending in a great wave, which soars to its full height and is left there. Perhaps it is an urge for a climax or the modern trend to bring all things to a crashing finish for effect.

Although I do not intend to deal here with the outlook of Tagore on, or his attitude to, love, yet in connexion with his love poems. I might risk a few remarks on the idealist disappointment in some of them. The experiences of the body are shorter if tangibly more in-

tense, while those of the mind or heart are more enduring, and perhaps because the mind is a more specialised form of matter than the body, its experiences are on a more specialised if not higher plane. It may be that the passion of love has its origin entirely in the appetite of the body and is a subtler and more restrained form of their expression, but it is also an attitude of the mind developed through ages under the pressure of certain socio-sexual inhibitions functioning for the solidarity of society, which inculcates the idea of the sanctity of monogamy, to finally assume the dignity of a hunger for intellectual companionship.

This attitude of the mind is foredoomed to disappointment, for the limitations of a personality are precise, permitting of negligible elasticity, but the illusions of the mind are illimitable. It is not so much familiarity that breeds contempt as the inflexibility of our preconceived notions. The pious virgin may turn over a shameless and incorrigible voluptuary, and the implacable misogynist the ideal husband. But all these risks are a part of the perilously delightful game of love and marriage, and only the brave deserve the fair. The disappointment of Tagore which is not very unique (it is in fact a fairly common experience among poets), is the failure of a union in love above mere mating; a kind of spiritual oneness.

"Love, my heart longs day and night for the meeting with you—
for the meeting that is like all-devouring death.

"Sweep me away like a storm; take everything I have; break
open my sleep and plunder my dreams. Rob me of my world.

"In that devastation, in the utter nakedness of spirit, let us be-
come one in beauty." ('Gardener', 50)

He tries to possess the loveliness of the beloved, only to discover that he is shadow-grasping. "How can the body touch the flower which only the spirit may touch?" That again is the disappointment of the mind or spirit to unite, through the body, with the mind or spirit of the beloved.

"I hold her hands and press her to my breast.

"I try to fill my arms with her loveliness, to plunder her sweet
smile with kisses, to drink her dark glances with my eyes.

"Ah, but where is it? Who can strain the blue from the sky?....
(Gardener', 49.)

The words used express the desire to possess abstractions in the concrete, to plunder the beauty of a smile by kisses, or the beauty of

form by touch. The cumulative effect of the parts of a personality is its attraction or repulsion. Tagore, not satisfied with the personality, is striving to capture within his hands the effect and naturally is disappointed. "Who can strain the blue from the sky?" It is ultimately the scientific failure of matter to explain its effect upon the responsive and sentient organism!

It is obviously difficult to make an essay exhaustive within certain limits. Every poem in the 'Gardener' and the 'Lover's Gift' is exquisite. The more one reads them, the more is one inclined to read them again. It is worth pondering what the poems that in the translation (which, as someone remarked, is at best wearing a coat inside out) convey so much and thrill the heart, must be in the original. In his Introduction to the 'Gitanjali', Yeats incidentally mentions that his Indian friends tell him, these lyrics, "are in the original...full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention..." But we might be grateful that Tagore translated his poems at all. The translation itself is so well done, in fidelity to the spirit of their original, that Yeats did not scruple to include in his compilation of an Oxford Anthology of Modern English Verse, a couple of poems from Tagore.

It is, on the whole, superfluous to praise Tagore. He is securely ensconced in the Pantheon of the world's immortal poets. But his immortality has been severely one-sided. One reason for this is that Tagore's religious and mystical poems borrow the symbolism of the lover and the beloved. It is usually contended that it is bound to be so, because human expression, which is conditioned and limited to the five senses, is insufficient for the communication of experiences beyond mind and matter. It is not without reason therefore that there are critics who claim a mystical character and import for the otherwise popularly downright epicurean 'Rubaiyat' of Khayam. Although Tagore is clear as to the nature of his beloved or lover, and the very first lines are enough to differentiate a poem of mystical ecstasy from one of mundane human love, yet there is at times not a little cause for confusion. For instance, the poem referred to earlier, which speaks of the young Prince and the maid who threw the jewel from her breast before his path, lends itself perfectly to mystical construction. Again, critics of varied skill and insight have tried to assess the philosophical content and contribution of Tagore's poems and have invariably laid so much stress upon his greatness as a mystical poet, that in the common mind he has come to be associated with message, vision, intuition and other not very easily comprehensible ideas. His other writings also bear the stamp of his genius. If they do not convey

messages and sing to you of those moments of communion with an eternal and immanent spirit manifesting itself in every item of creation, to the eye that has the power to see and the mind that has the breadth to conceive, they still are close to the heart, for they speak of the commoner experiences, the joys and sorrows, the laughter and tears, which are the lot of every man.

It is true that these poems do not have that which so pleases the distracted minds of the old and broken, and also there is not in them the mellow richness which comes with age. These early poems are full of the faults, if one would care to see, of the unreasonable dementia of the youthful mind. In his exuberance of heart, the poet crowds his early poems with decorations in simile and metaphor, and colour and language, not common to ordinary man. There is talk of princes and pearls, chariots and horses foaming at the mouth, bodices of the colour of the peacock's throat and mantles green as young grass, kingdoms and queens, drunken bees and dew-drops on lotus leaves, moonlit nights and jasmine wreaths, that thrill to the heart like praise in a riot of extravagance. What among these can match the simplicity and sparseness of the poems of his 'Gitanjali'? In the latter, the fever is gone, the flesh is as good as dead, and only the spirit or mind in an ecstasy soars and sings. And yet, to those of the common run of humanity, the poems of love and life touch a more sympathetic chord, for they (poems) do not speak of the realm of experiences of the spirit, but they bring back to the mind the more commonly shared joys and the more widely known disappointments and sorrows of all men. The ordinary man, uninitiated in the mysteries of spirit, is naturally impatient of mysticism, as so much high-brow pedantry. Poetry, which is not taken to very kindly by most men because it is not straightforward and downright prose, becomes anathema when all it conveys is beyond normal experience. It beats men's understanding, and beaten men have no praise for their opponents, though they may be awed into respecting.

Tagore's reputation as a mystical poet scares away the more humble and less gifted if not less sensible men, who would like their poet to be their own selves articulate. It is enough if the thoughts that are, or might be, theirs in a conceivable situation, are clothed in gorgeous words and figures, or set to music, for then is touched within them a kindred chord. I am one with the general opinion regarding the greatness of the religious poems of Tagore, and it is not my intention to either speak disparagingly of them or to detract from their greatness, but only to add to that well-deserved coronal a yet unnoticed wreath, which might meritedly crown his head!

THE INDIAN SCENE

(July - September 1951)

By Prof. D. GURUMURTI, M. A., Ph. D.

The third quarter of the year 1951 has been in many respects a momentous period for the country. The two major events have been a higher tempo in the strained relations with Pakistan and the turmoil in the Congress organisation.

In the month of July, Pakistan leaders unleashed a tearing propaganda of hate and worked up their people to a white heat of mass hysteria. The clenched fist was adopted as the symbol; black-outs, drills of home-guards, defence measures on a war footing, mass gatherings for preaching hate of the enemy, became the order of the day in Pakistan. All the bigger towns and cities witnessed a series of excited assemblies for the Jihad that they were proposing to embark upon. Side by side the Prime Minister of Pakistan, with an eye to the international news-market, indulged in a series of letters exchanged with the Indian Prime Minister, purporting to prove to the world the peace-loving intentions of Pakistan and the unreasonable attitude of India according to the Pakistan point of view. The letters make an interesting study and reveal the psychology of Pakistan leadership. Their main effort is to malign India and the Indian Government before the eye of international opinion.

The immediate cause of the fresh spate of hostile propaganda is given out to be the massing of India's military forces near the borders of Pakistan. But the occasion for this step was similar prior action on the part of Pakistan. This fact is conveniently obscured. When Pandit Nehru asks for an unequivocal and unconditional mutual declaration that in no circumstances would war be resorted to, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan wants all his objectives to be gained as the prior condition of a no war declaration. And the correspondence had to end inconclusively. The only purpose gained by Pakistan was one more occasion to create prejudice against India. International opinion on the Indo-Pakistan differences has unfortunately shown itself inept, and the patent fact of Pakistan's aggression and unlawful occupation of a good part of Kashmir territory, though judiciously investigated and recorded by the U. N. Representative, Sir Owen Dixon, is deliberately left out of account in assessing the situation.

The real reason for the intensified hostile preparations and threats of Pakistan in July last would appear to be connected with the preparations for elections to the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir and Dr. Frank Graham's visit. Pakistan has very strong objection to the crystallising of opinion in Kashmir and has made screaming appeals to the Security Council of the U. N. O. to intervene. Dr. Frank Graham, busy with a first-hand appraisal of the whole situation, obviously declined to be deviated from his task. So by creating the excitement of the whole populace of Pakistan against India, the leadership wanted to create in the mind of the observer a strong impression of the need of Kashmir for Pakistan's prosperity.

The manner in which India's leadership tackled this explosive situation ought to evoke the admiration of impartial observers, if there are any such available in the modern world, where interested motives are allowed to dominate the outlook to the detriment of calm judgment. The psychosis of fear and hatred, suspicion and deliberate dishonesty, has polluted international morality to its very bases. The Indian Prime Minister, in his masterly handling of the crisis, made it clear to Pakistan and to the world that his country would in no case indulge in war, but firmly made it clear that if Indian territory, including Kashmir, were attacked, it would be defended with all available strength. At the same time the Prime Minister kept a cool control over the temper of the whole country. The ardent communalists and rabid extremists were told off and normal life went on uninterrupted in India. The Muslim community of India, who represent a very considerable minority in the State, responded admirably and have firmly stood by the Government, refusing to be made pawns in the Pakistan game.

Pakistan leadership has sought further to reinforce their claim to Kashmir by making it appear to international opinion that the river-system of Pakistan is in danger of being depleted of its waters by hostile action, if an unfriendly power were to be in control of Kashmir, because the main rivers flow from there into Pakistan. This has been definitely shown to be a geographical impossibility. Further, Mr. David Lilienthal, the ex-chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the biggest river project of the world, has, after a recent visit of inspection, pointed out that over eighty per cent of the waters of the Indus System are going to waste into the sea, and that by constituting an international authority to organise joint control and utilisation of the waters, both the countries of Pakistan and India could meet their maximum needs, without the prosperity of one country involving the sacrifice of the prosperity of the other. The truth of the matter is

not heeded by Pakistan. What they want is one more argument, plausible to uninformed opinion, to claim Kashmir as integral to its prosperity.

The reaction of Pakistan opinion to the successful progress of the elections to the Kashmir Constituent Assembly has shown a new turn. Now they propose to ignore it, having already exhausted themselves in excitement and futile condemnation. The latest phase of the anti-Indian propaganda has turned on an imaginary oppression of Muslims in India. The Pakistan Press recently has flooded their country with stories of mass conversion and oppression; some newspapers indulged in red banner headlines of their latest mare's nest of a monster or master plan for the conquest of Pakistan. "Blind mouths, the eager sheep look on and are not fed."

It makes one feel sad for the future of humanity when a whole nation can descend to the levels of feeding upon falsehoods and distortion of facts to gain self-interest. The pathetic faith that what has paid profits in the past will continue to be profitable in future is to be deplored; for one day the world will wake up to the truth.

* * *

The second major event of this quarter has been the churning up of the Congress organisation. The secession of prominent old-timers like Acharya Kripalani, P. C. Ghosh and T. Prakasam, set Pandit Nehru thinking seriously of the rot that had overtaken the Congress organisation. In the middle of July a session of the A. I. C. C. was held at Bangalore with the avowed object of forging unity and achieving purity in the Congress ranks. The facile readiness with which Pandit Nehru's Unity Resolution was passed and his report of four years of Congress rule was accepted, and the outlines of the programme for the future was adopted, gave a false sense of security and solidarity. Soon after, Pandit Nehru, with his well-known power of introspection and objective analysis, discovered that the rank and file of Congressmen so readily accorded support to his moves with mental reservations of their own. He had been feeling restless and dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the Congress ever since the Nasik Congress. His analysis showed that a shaking up was necessary. After demanding an overhaul of the Congress Working Committee as a token of an inner shaking, and after the obstinate refusal by the Congress President to yield to the demand, Pandit Nehru administered a deliberate and well-timed shock to the Congress organisation by resigning from the Working Committee. This had the desired effect. The Congress Executive *en bloc* resigned, and the President, stickler for principles

that he was, found himself obliged to resign. Pandit Nehru now found that the only logical course for him was to assume formal leadership in addition to the actual leadership that he has been exercising for some years. Ever since the memorable meeting of the A. I. C. C. in August which conferred the Congress Presidentship on him, Pandit Nehru has been bravely going about his task of cleaning up the Augean stables and improving the moral tone and idealism of purpose of the Congress. His constitution of the Congress Executive, the election board, the advisory committee, has all been in the right direction. He has issued certain directives to the Pradesh Committees with regard to welcoming the recent dissidents and with regard to selection of candidates for the forthcoming elections. Four years of Congress rule in the Centre and the States has shown that, while the top rank of leaders have been absolutely devoted servants of the people with undoubted ability of a high calibre, there has been no evidence of any superfluity of men of ability and integrity among the various Pradesh leaders. It is in this context that the directive of the President, that men of ability should be invited to stand on the Congress ticket, gains significance. There is not the least doubt that this is going to prove to be the acid test of the success of Pandit Nehru's endeavours.

In many States the Pradesh Committees are already busy with selection of candidates for the new elections. It is possible to glean how far the directives of the idealist President are being implemented. In the South one leading Pradesh Executive has already declared that among the applicants for the Congress ticket there are more than sufficient men of integrity and ability to fill every seat. The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee has already prepared its list of candidates. It will be clear from a perusal of these lists that the directive of the President is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. All the previous group of worthy Congressmen who have been entrenched in seats of power and influence with their loyal band of followers, have again found themselves safely allotted to seats for the forthcoming elections. Communalists and selfseekers who had gained central positions in the election committees and executive of the Pradesh Congress have planned out everything to suit their purposes. If Pandit Nehru is to achieve his objective of putting fresh blood into the ranks of Congressmen that will enter the legislatures, he must take courage in both hands, call for the various lists of selected candidates and mercilessly prune them, deleting all elements who do not fulfil his standards and replacing them with the required number of eligible public men with a record of service and unselfish pursuit of the common good. Otherwise the worthy executive heads of Pradesh

Committees will neutralise effectively all efforts at purification of the rank and file by the great leader of the nation.

The recent decision of Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai to rejoin the Congress is a welcome sign of the appreciation of Pandit Nehru's efforts. This is expected to lead to several other returns to the Congress fold in the near future. The session of the Congress being held at Delhi will doubtless provide the right opportunity to the President to drive home his point of view and convert many Congressmen to the need for placing the country before self. The transition from being in the Opposition to the custody of power found most Congressmen not ready for the positive tasks of nation-building. While during the struggle for freedom the cause was greater than the individual, the accession to power made the individual more important than the cause, with disastrous consequences. The whole nation will stand by Pandit Nehru in his efforts to recapture the soul of the great national organisation.

Bangalore

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THE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF

(A Short Story)

By 'BUTCHI BABU'

(Rendered from *Telugu*)

(1)

"How long—and why—should I remain a good man?" loudly soliloquised Ramamurti, incidentally addressing his wife, Shanta. It may be said that with this query a storm swept over their placid family life.

And what, she asked herself, was the crime she committed that morning. She had mixed jaggery in the coffee. And later, when he had emptied the cup, she bashfully announced, "This is the fourth month." That was all.

Accompanied by the oldest boy Raghu, she retired into the kitchen so that she might brood over her husband's startling remark about his being a 'good man.' A mother of three children—all of them boys—Shanta never liked discussing intimacies in the presence of the boys. In another month Raghu will be ten years old. And what is 'goodness' anyway? Feeding the wife and the children? Hard times are yet to come. There is the schooling of the boys and, if the next baby is a girl, there is the hunt for the son-in-law. It is not as though he had never tasted coffee mixed with jaggery. Family life entails so many handicaps and difficulties. During the last nearly seventeen years of their married life, they had encountered several hardships, and they had smilingly faced them all. Never did he show vexation.

"How long—a good man"—a fatuous remark! It made no sense.

As she crossed into the hall, Shanta caught a glimpse of her face in the mirror which hung on the wall. Hers is not a dazzling beauty. She has comely features and a quiet bearing which ripened into fullness with experience. Only those who watched her closely would know how beautiful she could be when she smiled. Hers is beauty which never draws attention to itself.

She smiled now—a slow, wistful smile that curved her lips, suggestive of a sense of pathos, as though a thought which she dared not utter crossed her brain. Before the smile faded, she approached her husband, and apropos of nothing, remarked: "Maybe it is only the third month."

Murti felt a gurgle in his throat. He made a dash into the drawing-room, closed the doors with a bang and attempted reading the newspaper. He wanted to say aloud, once again, "How long should I remain a good man!" He put aside the clumsy pages of the newspaper and looked into the mirror on the table. The wrinkles beneath the eyes are deepening; the number of grey hairs is growing. Gone were the days when he could put off shaving for another day. He counted them. There were sixteen grey hairs in the beard. He counted them once again. Only fifteen. Something touched his feet. It was the second boy Setu playing on the floor with an emptied ink-bottle. These ugly brats are the cause of it all! Each child meant five more grey hairs. He pulled up the boy, gave him a smack on the back and pushed him out of the room. He shot the bolt and resumed the struggle with his true self.

Shanta would never know that her husband had been wrestling during the last three or four months with a vast mental upheaval. Barriers are erected between man and man; that is not all. In each man's mind there is a thin screen, held tightly from falling by society. At some unguarded moment—maybe while soundly asleep on a sultry summer night, or when the earth thrilled to the rainfall—for some unknown reason, the screen sags and falls down, revealing the frightful skeleton of the true self—the self which is smarting and chafing, banging and biting. There was a fire in Ramamurti's inner life—one of its sparks being the morning's vexation; the sea had heaved and the remark he made had been but the foam on a wave; the earth had quaked somewhere and the smack he administered to the boy had been its crack.

Ramamurti is in his early forties, and the chain which bound him to the family had snapped. He now ceased to be a husband, a strand in the social pattern and a mere citizen discharging his duties. The eternal man burned in him leaving behind the core of individuality which defied and transcended religion, custom, and tradition.

In his younger days, Ramamurti had nursed high ideals. Contact with Western thought and culture had rendered him sensitive to the shortcomings in his own society and infused in him a zeal for reform and the spirit of revolt. About love, marriage and children he

had ideas which are considered progressive and modern. And what had happened to those visions of the complete life, those dreams of perfect bliss? Like most of his friends, he married young—a tame, loveless marriage to a country girl. Had Shanta ever discussed love? Shanta 'falling in love'—the very notion is absurd. Like everybody else, he brought up a family, never bothering about the growing population of the country! The passion for art, the devotion to a cause—the worship of culture, and the grim purposiveness that governed all—all these had died out. His life was devoid of glory, beauty or freshness, or the joy of fulfilled ideals. An alien culture in the native soil—that in a sense is the tragedy of Indian youth. All those who failed to fulfil themselves have turned into truly tragic figures; they either sank into oblivion or plunged into notoriety. Ramamurti had forsaken the path of easy living and chosen to be a broken-hearted romantic.

(2)

Within a month, Shanta had begun to find proofs of the change that had come over her husband. That day Ramamurti was not at home; he was away on camp. The post brought a cover addressed to her husband in Telugu. Shanta kept it on the table. Sometime in the evening, Gopi the youngest boy had embarked on his usual destructive campaign and few things escaped his survey. The cover fell into his hands and Shanta retrieved it in time. It never occurred to her that she should not read her husband's letters. Her husband had even approved of the practice. It was a luxury which betokened mutual trust. The letter was un-dated and without address:

"Dear Murti—I make bold to write this. The knowledge that you have a wife and children has till now checked my wish to write to you. Sooner or later we have to cut the knot. To have been able to keep ourselves in check thus far, I believe, is a sacrifice we made for the sake of society. I knew long back that you were in love with me. I suppose you are not fully aware of my desire and of my affections. A Hindu woman does not go a-hunting. Looking through the slit in the door, she keeps waiting for all time. You knocked at the door and I had no choice but to cross the threshold. I know that one day you would take me away into solitude. I shall not await your reply. It is not letters that I want; and what that is, you know—Your *Priya*¹ Bharati."

Shanta wondered for a while who this lady might be. During the seventeen years they lived together, the name 'Priya Bharati' or any

¹ Beloved

individual bearing that name had never come to their knowledge. A shade of surprise flickered in her eyes.

Soon after his arrival Murti asked her about the torn cover.

"Yes. Gopi was about to tear it. I took it," she said.

"Did you read it?"

"Yes."

They had nothing more to say about the letter, that day. A fortnight later, while tidying the bedroom the servant girl found another letter underneath the cot, which she handed over to Shanta :

"To me you always appear young. Although advanced in years, you have the heart of a child. Sometimes I feel like fondling you. I suppose as we grow old in years we become young in mind. In old age the fruit ripens and falls; by that time the flower in my hair withers too. The fruit and the flower perish and the bare trunk remains. That trunk is your wife and those bare branches your children.—
— Your *Priya* Bharati."

Shanta folded the letter and gave it to her husband.

"Some paper here—I suppose it is yours?"

"Yes, yes," said Murti snatching it eagerly. Nothing more was said about it.

A month after, while rummaging among his books, Raghu picked up a third letter which he tried to read. But he was too frightened and gave it to his mother.

"What is it, mother?" he asked innocently.

"Oh—office papers."

"It looks different."

"Surely you can't presume to know!" she chided him.

"I mean, it looks as if some lady wrote it," persisted Raghu.

"You see, our country attained Independence and women look to their own affairs," Shanta assured him.

"Shall I ask father?"

"You need not. He will ask for it himself."

Raghu, satisfied, ran to the playground. Shanta read the letter which ran thus :

"I hear that your wife is a very good woman—good and guileless. I have a feeling that she would gladly put me up. If so, what more do we want! Our dreams will come true.

I am prepared to endure any bitterness and agony for your sake. As you know, there is nothing which love finds unendurable. The tears I shed in my dream last night wetted the pillow; the flower in my hair has shrunk to a bud waiting to blossom through you.—
Your *Priya Bharati*."

Shanta placed this letter on the office table and put a paper-weight on it.

By the end of the second month the fourth letter was found just in front of the kitchen. Ramamurti had been busily moving about the house as though searching for something.

"Did any of you see my papers which I kept here?" he asked addressing nobody in particular.

"Is this it?" Shanta said as she picked up the letter.

"This is it..." he said taking the paper with him.

Ramamurti could not sleep that night. The terrace was flooded with moonlight. He took up a mat and sat there. He felt suddenly that his wife was a stranger to him.

His experience of married life enabled him to disprove the popular saying that women are mysterious. He knew the innermost thoughts that crossed Shanta's mind; he could predict, accurately, the reactions of his wife to any situation; he could foresee what she would say on any occasion. He knew her so well that he was invariably right. Such completeness of understanding might be fatal to harmony. That was a different matter. He satisfied himself that the existence of dark chambers in a woman's mind is a myth.

But today, he had to accept defeat. It looked as though he knew nothing about her. Panic seized him.

They say women are jealous. How is it Shanta does not show the slightest hint of jealousy? Dash it all! She could at least be inquisitive. "Who is this fairy—this *Priya Bharati*?" she could at least have asked! None of the letters had troubled her. For all the concern she expressed, they might as well have not been written at all. He began to conjure up excuses for her disinterestedness. She had no culture; modernism had not touched her. She was a creature of instinct completely immune to intellectualised concepts. "This is the third month," is all the poetry and music she was capable of. An old-fashioned woman,—Mother India gone hoary and grey with age.

Why not I myself broach the subject of '*Priya Bharati*' with her? thought Ramamurti. "For Heaven's sake, please exhibit symptoms of jealousy. If you are not jealous, pretend to be so," he had to ask

her! How silly! Murti was craving for excitement, for drama. It was possible Shanta was not interested in what another woman thought of her husband. She was interested in what the husband thought of the other woman.

He had written those letters with his left hand, in the name of an imaginary woman, '*Priya Bharati*,' addressed to himself. He now conceived the plan of penning a reply to those letters. Bharati had served as a muse for inspiration. Now he should reciprocate her ardours. But who is *Priya Bharati*? What does she look like?

Analysed, the modern man's ideal of beauty would be found to be composed of the features of the leading film actresses, of the pictures illustrating the newspaper advertisements, and their mental make-up very much like that of the heroines in the popular novels. A combination of the various elements unfortunately does not yield the perfection of beauty. The beauty of anything beautiful is its uniqueness. A thin oval face, fishlike eyes with large lashes, a long high nose, and a mouth curled to be kissed, a blade of grass come to life in the human form—Hope without hunger, Divinity without torture,—the illimitable source of experience—that is *Priya Bharati* as imagined by Murti.

He wondered if there was a spark of poetry in him. And why not? he asked himself. Poetry is not a thing that can be learnt. It is like a waterfall—a cyclonic storm; or a volcano that bursts. It is the secret which does not bear discussion in public. It is truth which refuses to be exposed in the work-a-day world.

Bharati is like the unknown, the Absolute after which the great seers of the world hanker. She wears all your beauty; your unreal existence can be made real through her; she could keep all your secret thoughts. Ramamurti is hungering after adventure, power and glory. What opportunities does the common man today have for attaining any of them?

Ramamurti completed the letter he addressed to *Priya Bharati* and it ran thus:

"I am happy that you are able to take the first plunge. I was so sure of your courage to do so. That is part of your charm. I did think about my wife and children. I believe that fundamentally man is anarchic; society put him in chains wrought by marriage. You snapped them. I am not even capable of love which I must learn from you. My being had its existence in and through you. That day when you looked at me, it was as though the stars had strayed from their orbits. Hope, solace, invitation—like Humanity opening its eyes—all were there.

"I cannot agree that this is tantamount to deceiving my wife and children. Suppose a middle-aged man, with wife and children to support, fell under a car by accident and died; who would dream of accusing him of deception? The same argument should hold good for a man who died under the wheels of the chariot of love. Nobody shall be blamed for it. Birth, love and death—they simply happen. That is all.

"All these years I had lived up to the social ideal of a good man and stuck to my wife. This meant great strain on me—almost like martyrdom. Men and women no doubt are monogamous by choice but 'poly-erotic' by instinct. They skim the surface of the circumference but come back to the centre. The same thing might happen to us tomorrow. But today, we shall merge and become the centre.

"I repeat that I am a good man; but I have no wish that goodness should be synonymous with imbecility. I am not ashamed that, at my age, I should succumb to the raptures of love. It is a matter for pride that there are forces out to conquer me and I have still the selflessness sufficient to be vanquished by them. The dark cloud moves altogether to the call of the south-wind, because it holds somewhere a drop of rain clamouring for release. You are my south-wind and you shall destroy the dullness, the lethargy and the heaviness, and clear the debris of the shattered pedestal erected by matrimonial purity."

Ramamurti was not satisfied with this letter. It looked more like a thesis on love; he little trusted the verbal elegances and polished phrases, and his was not the adolescence that sought release through letters. His mind was becoming a blank. Momentary impulses, lasting affections, sudden ecstasies and slow rational processes,—they race through the brain and refuse to get caught up by language. His mind was like the bare trunk, bereft of fruit, leaf and flower.

The next day Shanta read the letter and smiled, as though she were seated by her husband while he perused it and given a few suggestions towards improving it!

"There should be some papers here..." said Murti pointing to the desk. "Has any one seen it?"

"Is this it?" asked Shanta holding the folded letter in her hand.

"Where did you find it?"

"It was found at the foot of the staircase."

"Did you look into it?"

Shanta nodded and went into the kitchen. Murti suspected that she indulged in a smile, gradually broadening into laughter.

Ramamurti was piqued. He decided to ask her about it and elicit her reactions to the whole affair. He waited for nightfall. But it was not to be. By evening, Shanta's aunt had arrived and they were preparing to take Shanta to her native home for confinement. On the day of departure, Murti went to the station to give his wife and children a send-off. There was still another ten minutes for the train to start. Several times he attempted to speak, but did not know how to begin. He fidgeted, cleared his throat, and wrung his hands.

Shanta spoke:

"The washerman will bring your clothes. Please take the help of Das to count them. Remember that he has yet to bring a couple of towels and a saree. And most important—don't pay even an anna over the six rupees. Two of your shirts were torn because of his carelessness, you know."

Ramamurti suppressed a smile and made gestures indicative of impatience.

"Don't be silly..." he chided laughingly. The guard blew the whistle; there was a general scramble for the open door of the carriage and the train moved.

"For Heaven's sake, see that you fasten the latch securely and lock the doors of the verandah whenever you go out." That was Shanta's parting message. With that she settled down into her seat, looking devoutly at her husband's receding form. She smiled, knowingly. Simplicity or subtlety—which of them predominated in the smile Murti did not know.

(3)

That night he could not sleep; feelings of shame, disgrace and humiliation possessed him. He read those letters over and over again. He knew, and was therefore frightened, that although he was able successfully to imitate a woman's writing by using his left hand, he gave himself away through the 'style' of the letters. Does a woman write in that style? he asked himself. Dash it all, is a woman capable of those ideas? Why not? An educated and cultured woman, brought up in polished society, certainly, should be able to write like that. Of what avail is this knowledge? He knew that she knew—oh! women have a sixth sense which enables them to scent and intuitively apprehend such things. Shanta knew that he was the author of the letters. The humiliation of it all!

Even if she knew, he told himself, she could have put on a mask of innocence and kicked up a row expressive of jealousy. They say

that hate, as much as love, can strike the chord of matrimonial harmony. That is the explanation of the many scenes between husbands and wives. The wife, like the heroine in the modern novel, should give him hell. Murti yearned for drama; he pined for excitement. It was clear that Shanta had ignored and dismissed the romantic episode as being beneath her notice. It was trivial and unworthy of her attention. Shame shook his frame.

Shanta, obviously, was not prepared to believe that her husband could inspire love in the breast of any woman. She could gauge the extent to which other women would be susceptible to his charms. She was sure that no woman would lose her head over him. Anybody could see, Murti ruefully realised, what Shanta thought of her husband as a lover. How contemptible and disgraceful!

Murti wanted glory and adventure so that he might prove to himself, how wonderful, how unique, he was. And thus began his walks along the streets. Release of emotion, through letter-writing and imaginary escapades, was insufficient and childishly absurd. He must run into something more tangible, something solid, imbued with flesh and blood.

Ramamurti thought of an eligible woman,—one able to understand a man's love and capable of responding to it. It was obvious that no married woman would fit into the role. The husband would complicate matters, if he came to know of it. There might be a scandal and even a crisis. Murti was not prepared to stake his social standing and reputation, for love. A woman without matrimonial entanglements, not in her teens but young enough to take love seriously—that should be his choice. He found such a one on the balcony of a two-storied building at the turning of the Bank Road. Seated in a chair on the balcony and looking down the passers-by on the road—there she is! Not too young by appearance, just about twenty or twenty two years old. He walked along the street for four days, and all the time he saw she was there; she looked at him; even stared at him. A broad, round face—he preferred an oval face, but what could he do?—wide eyes, her complexion pure as the sky cleared of clouds; in her hair, white, red and yellow flowers; clad in a green saree elegantly folded—there was no doubt that this was she! The woman who stepped out of his day-dream, waiting to melt into his night-dream. It was quite common for respectable middle-aged men in western countries to run away with their maids. That appeared crude to Murti. It was devoid of beauty, distinction or culture. What he wanted was imaginative exuberance, not physical satisfaction.

It remained for him to ascertain whether she was a married woman. Supposing he asked the washerman? or the Postman of the locality? He saw a group of school children returning home. Two of them, a boy and a girl, walked into the two-storied building. By cajoling and coaxing them he could obtain the information from them.

Four days later the opportunity came. He fell into conversation with them; he gave them chocolates and lozenges; he accompanied them to school. He pieced together their disjointed prattle and elicited that she was unmarried. Why she remained unmarried, how she was related to them, he could not know. Day after day he walked along the street and, every time, there she was looking, as he thought, pensively at him.

Ramamurti's imagination worked itself to a fever-pitch and he became restless and apprehensive. He must pour out his heart to her. If there was some hitch, some unforeseen and embarrassing development, and people came to know of it, what would he say? Yes, sir, he would tell them: "I am planning to write a novel and I wanted to study from real life the behaviour of an individual so as to evaluate its correspondence to fiction—that is why I did it." But then, would they believe him? He ignored and even chafed at the possibility that they might give no credence to his story. If society thought the intentions of a middle-aged, respectable citizen and a responsible husband were dishonourable, then surely it showed how degraded our present-day society had become. Such a society had no right, could never claim any right, to assess his conduct and judge him!

(4)

It was past six O'clock and the sun began limping down the western sky as though wounded. There was a splash of twilight, scarlet like blood. The row of lazy clouds at last combined to melt, revealing the first star that twinkled.

Ramamurti pushed open the front door of the two-storied building. He climbed the stairs and found himself on the balcony. The woman was there, seated on the chair which was familiar to him. She did not stand up, and there was no other chair. It irked him to keep standing and make his 'declaration'. He looked into her eyes steadily and began to recite his 'set speech'. At places he lost the thread, his memory failing him, and he eschewed certain statements.

Ramamurti looked at his watch and noted that the speech took exactly three minutes. He stood awaiting her reply. The woman had nothing to say. There she was, seated on the chair, fidgeting, and

tying the folds of her saree into a knot round the forefinger. Twice she made attempts to stand up, but she did not speak.

"Won't you say something...?"

There was an awkward pause.

"Of course, you need not reply at once. You can think over the matter and let me know. Shall see you again tomorrow about this time."

She fingered the loose coils of her hair, and a flower fell down. He picked it up and handed it to her.

"Shall I get along...?" he asked in a tone implying that he was prepared to stay any length of time.

She said nothing.

Ramamurti hastily climbed down the stairs; in the hall, he thought he heard a footstep. He looked up. Standing behind the closed door in the hall was an elderly woman.

The hurricane lantern shed a dim light and he could not see her features distinctly. She was saying something. He fell back a step and listened to her:

"I heard all. She is my sister's daughter. Shall be ever obliged if anybody related to you, say a son or younger brother, could take her as wife. What can we do? It is her fate—her Karma. She is dumb—born mute. Could you please fix up a bridegroom—someone known to you?"

Ramamurti caught his breath and hopped into the street.

The body would gladly brave a sword-cut, or a gunshot, or a lathi charge; but a word could annihilate the Ego. He was not fit to marry even a dumb girl!

A wounded ego lets the imagination loose. Impulses and thought processes run amuck. He wanted to resign his job, to tour round the world hopping on one leg, to renounce life and turn an ascetic, or shave his head and ride a donkey. He felt like murdering someone.

Shanta was the central source of evil. Oh, she was the cause of it all—the silent architect of his damnation! She it was who ordered him about, to sweat and slave for her motherhood. Women have no responsibilities—they have only rights; the right to motherhood! Feeding and serving them is man's duty!

Ramamurti reached home without his knowing it. He saw the postman getting down the bicycle with a telegram in his hand. He

wished it contained news of some mishap to Shanta during her confinement!

The sender of the telegram was Shanta's uncle.

"Shanta labouring. Your presence desirable. Start at once," said the telegram.

Ramamurti sank on the stairs at the foot of the pial. He could not imagine life without Shanta. Shanta alone, he knew, could console and comfort him at the present juncture and counteract the feeling of humiliation that had overcome him. He could not help telling her of his foolish escapade. Even if he did not tell her, she would know. She would laugh away as trifles matters which had for him a tragic import; and things like the washerman's account, which appeared trivial to him, claimed her serious attention. That was the secret of Shanta's charm. Was it love that was at the bottom of their intimacy, and their understanding? He knew not what it was. She never discussed love with him. She was never romantic even in her letters. There were few things he could say to her without feeling that he was making a fool of himself. Yet she never said a word that struck at his vanity or humbled his conceit. Shanta simply *is*. If she is not, a void would form in his life which nothing could fill, not even thoughts of her.

Ramamurti packed a few things and started immediately to Shanta's home. The train journey put him in the frame of mind which vividly recalled past memories. The day after marriage,—Shanta's bashful smile slyly displayed behind the thin white saree, the odd way in which she yawned—her limbs carelessly stretched and a far-off, sleepy look in her quiet eyes—there was beauty in her very clumsiness and oddness, charm in her very weakness.

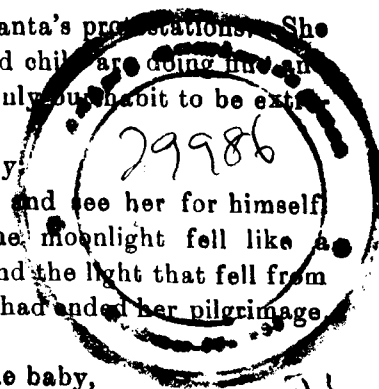
The day dawned and the journey by the bullock cart took the whole day. When he entered the home of Shanta, the clock in the drawing-room struck seven. Shanta's uncle greeted him.

"I sent the telegram myself, despite Shanta's protestations. She gave birth to a female child. Mother and child are doing fine, and there is nothing to be anxious about. It is only your habit to be extra cautious," he said.

"A girl!" exclaimed Ramamurti vaguely.

"Yes," he said, and added he could go and see her for himself. He stepped lightly into Shanta's room. The moonlight fell like a silken mantle on the objects in the room, and the light that fell from the roof lighted Shanta's forehead. Beauty had ended her pilgrimage and slept at last that day.

Shanta feebly smiled and pointed to the baby,



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He moved the wick of the lamp, and saw. He could not believe it. Was it illusion? A faint smile feebly curved Shanta's mouth, which momentarily disturbed the still vision of her eyes.

The freshness of a wild flower which, unable to withstand the heaviness of its own fragrance and the intensity of its colour, drops down; the purity of a flake of snow separated from the main mass in its descent from the mountain top; the central fire which life is in the midst of the cosmos; the dumb pain of dreams in the middle of the night—Shanta's look had them all.

Like a man who stood facing Truth, Ramamurti's frame shook. What could he say? He turned to go.

"Please," said Shanta enjoining him to remain.

He stood.

She signed to him to come nearer.

"Uncle was a bit hasty. They called you away from your work I am sorry."

"It is all right," he assured her with a smile. "You know I was myself very anxious to see the baby."

"It is here—look," she said. Then she wanted to say something.

"Yes?" he said.

"It is nothing." And Shanta turned aside and drew the sheet over her.

Ramamurti came out and began to pace the verandah. A few minutes after, Setu, his second boy, brought him a scrap of paper.

"Look, father! Mother gave it." The boy ran inside.

Ramamurti went into the drawing-room and threw a beam of light from his torch onto the paper:

"Our dream has come true. I shall name my girl 'Rama-Priya'—yourself and myself. You need not strive, any more, to be good. Your *Priya Bharati*."

Ramamurti ran into the open and laughed at the moon. Suddenly he ran into Shanta's room and looked at the baby. There was no doubt about it. The baby resembled the 'Priya Bharati' of his imagination. The delicate oval face, the long, dark eyes, the beautifully pursed lips—same as those of Priya Bharati!

THE NEW FICTION

By E. NAGESWARA RAO

How small a part
of Universal Mind can conscious Reason claim!
'Tis to the unconscious mind as the habitable crust
is to the mass of the earth;

— Robert Bridges.

It is generally believed that the world underwent an intellectual revolution round about the beginning of the present century. Drawing its inspiration chiefly from Darwin and Marx who stand in the remote background, this revolution took new turns. The rapid progress of science and technology caused much distress and destruction. The scramble for political domination, and national animosities, culminated in that terrible catastrophe of the first world war. Terrible indeed it was—but it seems to be only a beginning in this final act of, what Wingfield Stratford would call, "civilisation's all but complete suicide". The world echoed and re-echoed with the humming of air raids, the booming of machine-guns, and the helpless cries of millions of innocent people who were tortured to death. The paradox of untold misery overtaking a mighty nation like England, soon after her tremendous victory over Germany, puzzled every one. In every home in Britain, there was at least one casualty due to war. The immediate past was agonising, the imminent future a blank. There was a deep sense of frustration and disillusionment in the minds of the people.

The first world war testified to the spiritual barrenness, moral anarchy, economic instability and scientific superstition of the modern age. The literary artists felt the shock in all its intensity. They were already fed up with conventional themes and techniques. There was a steady reaction against nauseous Victorianism. To express the new experiences a new technique was felt necessary. Under these circumstances a new literature sprang up. Wilfred Owen declared, "the poetry is in the pity"—"in the pity of war." Disillusioned ex-servicemen became the heroes of many a novel overnight. Trench warfare was the epic theme of many poets. Presently Dr. Sigmund Freud appeared on the scene with his brilliant thesis on psycho-analysis which violently shook the foundations of human thought.

That man has got a sub-conscious—a reservoir of suppressed thoughts and desires—was an eye-opener to many. Freud declared that every little action of man—even his dreams, reveries, half-expressed and unexpressed thoughts—could be traced back to his sex instincts. People now began to look at things from a new perspective. Experiments were commenced in the light of psycho-analysis. 'Stream of consciousness' was one such experiment.

It is possible to trace back the origins of the exploration of the consciousness to the *Upanishads*, to Shakespeare, to Wordsworth, and to Dostoevsky. The famous sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth* where Lady Macbeth laid bare her guilty conscience, is a splendid portrayal of the sub-conscious feelings. The complex thoughts of Hamlet, the victim of indecision, are also fathomed by Shakespeare successfully in his soliloquies. Wordsworth exploited the same process in his *Prelude*, an autobiographical poem. Dostoevsky dissected his characters with an incisive psychological penetration. We may come across excursions into the subconscious realm in the novels of Samuel Richardson (*Pamela*), Laurence Sterne (*Tristram Shandy*) and Henry James. The last named, in his *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) told the story almost fully in terms of the inner life of his protagonists. His characters register impressions rather than set about deeds. Charles Lamb in his well-known essay, *Dream Children: A Reverie*, gave us a classic example of this method. There may be some other writers who experimented with this process occasionally. But as an effective and full-fledged technique in fiction, it was only in the nineteen-twenties that it became important. In the work of James Joyce, Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf, it attained perfection. Broadly speaking, we may say that this was a simultaneous innovation made in Ireland, France and England, by Joyce, Proust and Miss Dorothy Richardson respectively. But Prof. B. Ifor Evans contends that the real originator of this technique was Edouard Dujardin to whom James Joyce himself acknowledged his debt.

Some technical aspects of this method may be considered briefly. Now, it is no longer the plot, characterisation, story and external actions that mattered. The temperaments, moods, fantasies, associative memories, momentary observations and subconscious thoughts of the leading persons in the novel assumed a greater significance than before. "It is an axiom with this kind of writer," says Frank Swinerton, "that all reality lies in the consciousness." He realised that the soul or Psyche is like a "a vast fluid, or even vaporous mass, wide-spreading, far beyond the feeble village lights of our conventional reading of character, deep-sounding into our nervous animal organi-

sation, into childhood." Our consciousness which is part of our soul does not proceed logically or coherently, except at certain times and for certain periods under the pressure of some urgent practical need. Generally it follows a frankish association of ideas whose progress cannot be charted. The soul is singularly indifferent to the past and future, near and far. The exponents of this new technique also believed that Psyche is the focus of all our experience of life. In their thirst for fresh technical devices, they had to trespass the conventions. Instead of regularity of form they showed a "tendency to deformalization". Diversity and complexity supplanted the former uniformity and simplicity. A continuous action seemed to them quite unlike ordinary experience. "They feel that the sense of life is often best rendered by an abrupt passing from one series of events, one group of characters, one centre of consciousness to another." So they deviated from the convention of chronological continuity. They broke up Time into atomic bits and scattered them as they liked, whereas the Victorian novelists "clung on to the calendar and clock". They believed that "Time has no positive quality; its value and duration are relative to their fluctuating factors; one person's whole life-story may have no greater time-value than twenty-four hours in the life of another." This annihilation of the tyranny of Time necessitated the minimisation of plot, almost complete elimination of action, and sometimes even the eschewing of thought, which as A. C. Ward tells us, is also "susceptible of a certain fixity". But the consciousness remains—bottomless and endless.

If the destruction of the time-factor is the sole criterion of this technique, then Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* and Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza* also belong to it. But this technique is also concerned with, as James D. Hart puts it, "the depiction of the mental and emotional reactions of characters to external events, rather than the events themselves; as opposed to the usages of conventional plot-structure, description, and characterization, the action is presented in terms of images and attitudes within the mind of one or more central figures." That is to say, the mental and spiritual life is presented in these novels. Our thoughts, nebulous and complex and inexpressible as they are, are photographed as it were and placed before us in the album of a novel. The inner life of man—the growth and development of his mind and the glorification of his soul—is much more important than his outward movements and actions. It is the quintessence of life. Other things are there only as a framework. These innovators do not specially care about neatly finishing off a given action, following it through to the fall of the curtain. The imagination has the faculty of filling up the gaps in an action present-

ed in fragments, of getting the impression of an entire life from a mere hint of the high moments. Though there is a want of continuity, there is a sort of rhythm—rhythm constituted by repetition, by recurrence of themes—and a wave-like progress.

Generally, the narration in these novels is rhetorical. Often the real and imaginary accounts slip into each other like the colours of a rainbow. There is no clear dividing line between them two, so much so that the reader is at pains to distinguish the one from the other. It is said that William Faulkner uses italics for all imaginary digressions. This mixing up of real and imaginary narratives indiscriminately, is borrowed from the modern 'flash-back' technique in cinemas which is perfected in Germany, Russia, France and other European countries. These innovators do not care very much for sentence structure and grammar. They try to use words in their original picturesque sense, and they do not mind interchanging a verb with a noun, if it suits their purpose.

These novelists have great fondness for dissonances which originated in the symbolist school of poetry in France. The swift change from the elevated and poetical style to the familiar and ironical, appears as a sardonic commentary on the meanness and prosiness of life. A similar effect is produced when there is a change-over from the real to the ideal. There is also a not-too-harmonious mingling of tones as in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

There is yet another aspect—the linguistic—of which James Joyce was the greatest master. Two or more words are taken and each is split up into two. Then the split-up pieces are re-assembled to form a new word with a greater significance. This may be called a sort of linguistic double decomposition which is evidenced in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and Edward Lear's *Book of Nonsense*. In James Joyce's *Work in Progress*, a character says 'alcoherently' which obviously is a product of reassembling 'alcohol' and 'incoherently'. Added to this linguistic gymnastics, are bits of conversation as in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* which reflect the meaningless babble of our modern society.

Now we may, in passing, consider the work of the chief exponents of this technique. Miss Dorothy Richardson, in her twelve serial novels with the common title *Pilgrimage*, deals with the life of a single woman. Marcel Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past," also in twelve volumes, seems to be a far more lasting work than the former. James Joyce in his *Ulysses* (1922) depicts the life of a single man—an Irish poet and school-teacher called Stephen Dedalus—in Dublin

during twenty-four hours. He tried to picture the "obsession of the soul's secret life" and "express the subconscious in terms of the new aesthetic laws." He takes us along the "flow of images in the consciousness" and shows us the "chaos of human experience" by means of a series of episodes, incoherent, but still convincing. "*Ulysses*," says a famous French critic, "is the powerful confused synthesis of all the mental disturbance, and all the quest for new forms, that stirred in the post-war literature." *Finnegan's Wake*, which took seventeen years to complete, gives us a clear picture of Joyce's deep erudition and great linguistic attainments referred to earlier. A. C. Ward tells us how, "distorted sound echoes of sense-making phrases can be caught from time to time, while the whole may perhaps be better considered as a kind of musical notation for the communication of profundities incommunicable in standard language." It is said of Joyce that he pursued his technique beyond the point where it can serve the ends of art.

Mrs. Virginia Woolf following in the footsteps of James Joyce, as far as technique was concerned, wrote *Mrs. Dalloway* in which she portrays the life of an aristocratic lady in London during the course of a single day. Here is a slice of life bearing the impress of the richness, variety, colour and intensity of the whole life which goes to prove that, in a single moment, a whole life-time may be re-lived as it were. Mrs. Woolf explored the kingdom of the subconscious with a delicate poetic sensibility in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*. Her work is a splendid counterpart of Joyce's work. Joyce's characters—also Miss Richardson's—are all normal people in the full possession of their faculties. But Mrs. Woolf depicted even abnormal types, such as Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*, whose agonising story leading to his shocking suicide is really heartrending. And Mrs. Woolf is not alone in this venture. Conrad Aiken and William Faulkner have found this technique particularly suitable for the portrayal of abnormal states of mind. In one of Aiken's novels, a man suffering from a schism in his nature and feeling inferiority complex is shown. In Faulkner's famous novel *The Sound and the Fury*, there are sane and mean characters as well as an imbecile and a victim of suicidal mania. To return to the contrast of Mrs. Woolf with Joyce: Where the latter is "static, masculine, egotistic, rational", she is "fluid, feminine, impersonal, emotional". But both of them—in fact, every one who succeeds with this technique—are poets, or 'prose poets' as J. B. Priestley would call them. They are poets in the sense that they envisage "the communication of personality with personality, by an extension of their own personality".

This technique is quite akin to surrealism. Whereas the former is generally restricted to the sphere of fiction, surrealism envelops the whole domain of Art. The surrealists or super-realists, as Waddington tells us, isolate an object completely from all its normal associations, and thus bring to the surface of the mind a whole set of other associations with a peculiar emotional intensity. A work of surrealist art has the "quality of a dream-image, when things are so often incongruous and slightly frightening in their relation to time or place". Just as every one can dream and have irrational notions, we may get into an 'unmatter-of-fact frame of mind'—and the expression of such a state is surrealism.

'Stream of consciousness' has weathered the storm and come to stay. It is being used in other literary forms like the drama, the biography and the essay. Elmer Rice in his *The Adding Machine* endeavours to project the inner workings of the mind into the theatre. Likewise, Eugene O'Neill in his *Strange Interlude*, tries to reveal the subconscious by coupling soliloquies and asides, indicating what the characters are thinking, to the dialogue which they are speaking. These soliloquies and asides are media for the images and reflections which reveal "hidden half-conscious motives and help to illumine the contrast between the inner and the outer life". In this respect they are unlike the Elizabethan soliloquies which are often poetic declamations and nothing more. As regards biography, we have Virginia Woolf's *Flush* dealing with the life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Mrs. Woolf, instead of narrating in a straightforward fashion, told the story as it passed through the mind of Mrs. Browning's dog. She tries to make us see the world as a dog's world which requires a substitution of human values by canine values. "Smells and tastes are more important than sights and sounds, instincts dominate thoughts."

We have said that this technique has come to stay. But people like Galsworthy are sceptical about the survival of any of the innovations. They think, it is only the novel of character and manners that will outlive these methods. We can only leave this "imaginative shorthand" to Time and await its decision.

MOUNTBATTEN AND KASHMIR

By P. KODANDA RAO, M. A.

In his book "Mission with Mountbatten", Mr. Alan Campbell-Johnson gives a fascinating account of Mountbatten's Mission in India, including Kashmir. As regards Kashmir, Mr. Campbell-Johnson gives credit to Mountbatten for the following steps. While pressing the Maharaja of Kashmir, along with other Indian Rulers, to make up his mind about accession prior to the transfer of power, Mountbatten exerted his maximum influence to prevent the Maharaja from making up his mind about accession without ascertaining the will of his people in the first instance, either by a plebiscite, referendum, or election, and if these be considered impracticable, by representative public meetings. Secondly, when in the face of grave and imminent danger, the Maharaja pleaded with independent India for help to repel the raiders, Mountbatten pressed the view that accession of Kashmir should precede India's help. Thirdly, when the Maharaja signed the accession document, Mountbatten persuaded India to make a unilateral declaration that the accession was temporary and was subject to a plebiscite to be held when peace was restored. Fourthly, when Mr. Jinnah insisted that the plebiscite should be preceded by the suspension of the administration of Sheikh Abdulla to ensure an impartial plebiscite, Mountbatten suggested that the United Nations should be invited to supervise the plebiscite to ensure its impartiality. Fifthly, when India and Pakistan could not agree on the terms precedent to the plebiscite, Mountbatten suggested that the dispute should be referred to the United Nations as a third party. Sixthly, when the United Nations side-tracked India's main complaint that Pakistan was guilty of aggression and concentrated attention on the conditions for the plebiscite and appointed the Kashmir Commission, Mountbatten persuaded India to accept it.

Why was Mountbatten so particular that in the case of Kashmir alone the Ruler should consult the people before making up his mind about accession? He did not insist on such consultation in the case of other Indian States. It is obvious that he was not influenced by the democratic sentiment that the people alone, and not the Rulers, should decide the issue of accession. Did he anticipate or fear a

difference of opinion between the Kashmir Ruler and his people? If so, would he have backed up the Ruler or his people? Were Mountbatten and the Maharaja unaware of the overwhelming influence of Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir or of his preference for the secular democracy of India as against Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory and Islamic Pakistan? Were they not aware that Abdullah had politically chased Jinnah out of Kashmir, and Jinnah wept bitter tears over his expulsion? Knowing Jinnah as they did, were they unaware that one, if not the main, reason for Jinnah's cupidity for Kashmir was to avenge his defeat at the hands of Sheikh Abdullah? The Maharaja and Mountbatten could not have been in any doubt that the prevailing representative opinion was that of Abdullah and he would join India rather than Pakistan. If there were a conflict between the Maharaja and Abdullah, it could only mean that the Maharaja wished to accede to Pakistan, while Abdullah wished to accede to India. If such were the case, should not Mountbatten have backed Abdullah as against the Maharaja?

According to Campbell-Johnson, India, with the full consent of Sardar Patel, put no pressure on the Maharaja to accede to India; indeed, India went so far as to assure the Maharaja that if he decided to accede to Pakistan, his action would not be considered an unfriendly act. On the other hand, Pakistan was putting pressure on the Maharaja to accede to it, and even after signing the Standstill Agreement, applied economic sanctions to that effect. All the pull was exerted by Pakistan and none by India. If the Maharaja was himself inclined to accede to Pakistan, there was nothing to prevent him, particularly when Abdullah was still in jail. Nevertheless, the Maharaja would not make up his mind.

Campbell-Johnson blamed the Maharaja for his chronic indecision, and noted that in the three States of Hyderabad, Bhopal and Kashmir, which had not acceded, the Rulers and their peoples belonged to two different religions, as if there was some correlation between the two. In so far as religion influenced the situation, was it likely that the Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir would have preferred to accede to Muslim Pakistan than secular India, particularly when Muslim Sheikh Abdullah was himself in favour of the latter? Why, then, did Mountbatten use his maximum influence, when he was still Viceroy, to prevent the Maharaja from making up his mind about accession without a plebiscite? Did he anticipate that, in spite of Abdullah, the Muslim majority in Kashmir would plump for Muslim Pakistan? Or, did he desire it for other reasons? *And did Mountbatten himself advise or press the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan?* There was a strong rumour

in Delhi at the time that Mountbatten had so advised the Maharaja, that the Maharaja lacked courage to reject the advice and therefore marked time with a Standstill Agreement. If this be true, it was Mountbatten, and not the unfortunate Maharaja, that was responsible for the chronic indecision that led to the subsequent tragic developments.

Events subsequent to the transfer of power also indicate that the Maharaja was not likely to be in favour of accession to Pakistan. On the 24th October 1947 Mountbatten was told in Delhi that Kashmir was invaded by raiders from across the Pakistan frontier, and that they travelled along the Rawalpindi Road in Pakistan. On the 25th a message from the Pakistan Army Headquarters notified that about five thousand tribesmen were within thirty-five miles of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, and more were following. The Maharaja sought the help of India to repel the invaders. Pakistan was in a better position to help him, if only by denying passage through her territory. Nevertheless the Maharaja did not seek the help of Pakistan. He would have done so if he had any good feeling towards Pakistan or was convinced that Pakistan was unconcerned in the tribal invasion. He turned to India for help, though time and terrain made it more difficult for India to respond.

Mountbatten also must have realised that Pakistan was neither neutral nor friendly towards the Maharaja. In fact, he came to know that Jinnah had ordered the Pakistan army to march into Kashmir and was himself waiting at Abbottabad to march in triumph into Srinagar, and that he was prevailed upon by Gen. Auchenleck to desist, because in the meanwhile the Maharaja had acceded to India and thereby legalised India's help to Kashmir.

When the helpless and hapless Maharaja appealed to independent India for help to repel the invaders, Mountbatten took the legalistic view that it would be improper for India to send troops into Kashmir without the accession of Kashmir to India. Without accession Kashmir was a neutral country, and if India entered neutral Kashmir, Pakistan might plead the same excuse and enter Kashmir. He seems to have overlooked the vital difference between the two. After the transfer of power, and before accession, Kashmir was an autonomous State. Was it not open to an autonomous State to invoke the help of another autonomous State in case of need, without any previous commitment or by a temporary alliance and without accession? Further, India responded to a request from the Ruler of the State, while Pakistan would trespass against the wish of the Ruler. North Korean entry into South Korea was aggression, while American

entry into South Korea was a friendly act. Insistence on accession at that moment as a condition precedent to help was perhaps unnecessary. Even if accession had satisfied the legal conscience of Mountbatten and Acheson, it made no such impression on Jinnah. It only provided him with a handle which he exploited to the full against India and Mountbatten himself. Jinnah promptly repudiated the accession as based on fraud and violence, and stuck to it, notwithstanding Mountbatten's protestations that the fraud and violence were on the side of Pakistan, and not India.

Jinnah was influenced, not by the legal implications of accession, but by the military achievements of the Indian Army and Air Force. Incidentally, it may be noted here that, according to Mr. Campbell-Johnson, both Mountbatten and the Army High Command, mostly British, opposed on professional grounds the proposal to rush help to Kashmir, but were over-ruled by the Indian Cabinet, which took grave risk in doing so. But the events justified the civilian as against the military view. Mountbatten gallantly acknowledged that the brilliant performance of the Indian Army left his own SEAC operations standing.

When, in order to satisfy the legal conscience of Mountbatten, the Maharaja acceded to the Indian Union as a condition precedent to India's help, Mountbatten returned to his earlier insistence that accession should be conditional on a popular plebiscite. But, as the rush of events did not permit of a plebiscite preceding accession, it should follow it. And, according to Campbell-Johnson, he persuaded the Indian Cabinet to volunteer the unilateral statement that accession by the Maharaja was temporary and provisional, and was subject to a plebiscite after normal conditions were restored. Neither the Maharaja nor the Indian Cabinet suggested it or wanted it, but Mountbatten did. Campbell-Johnson was positive that the legality of the accession was beyond doubt. Nevertheless, Mountbatten threw moral doubts on it and persuaded the Indian Cabinet to do likewise, and walked into the parlour of Jinnah, who promptly seized on it and exploited it to the full, to the discomfiture and disappointment of Mountbatten himself. Mountbatten's insistence on a plebiscite was a windfall in favour of Mr. Jinnah, and his moral doubts of the validity of the Maharaja's accession was another. Foiled in his effort to conquer Kashmir by force of arms, Jinnah turned to his special brand of diplomacy to secure the practical annulment of accession by laying down conditions to that effect, namely, the withdrawal of Indian troops and the suspension of Abdulla's administration as a preliminary to an impartial plebiscite.

Mountbatten took yet another step to appease Jinnah, notwithstanding the latter's 'impossible' diplomacy. He offered that the

plebiscite would be held under the supervision of the United Nations to ensure its impartiality. But Jinnah insisted that Indian troops should be practically withdrawn and Abdulla's administration suspended. Mountbatten then realised that he was no longer acknowledged by Jinnah as a benevolent, neutral, and judicial third party with the necessary moral authority to compose differences between India and Pakistan, that his mission as a bridge between the two failed. He appealed to the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, to intervene, but received a polite refusal. Finally, he threw up the sponge and passed the problem to the United Nations as the highest third party, with the reluctant consent of Nehru.

Mountbatten suffered another defeat at the hands of Pakistan in the United Nations. The original complaint of India that Pakistan had committed an act of aggression which threatened international peace was side-tracked, and attention was concentrated on the plebiscite and its precedent conditions. Mountbatten was disappointed with the attitude of Britain and America at the United Nations which vindicated Pakistan and discredited him and India.

When the United Nations ignored India's complaint of Pakistan's admitted aggression, and appointed a commission to promote the plebiscite, Nehru, indignant with disappointment, declined to receive the Commission. Mountbatten persuaded him to receive it. The Commission left the problem worse confounded, and widened the gulf between India and Pakistan.

With regard to Kashmir, Mountbatten's mission was to link accession with a plebiscite and to keep the peace and prevent war between India and Pakistan. In retrospect, it would seem that, if he had not been obsessed with the plebiscite idea, and had not prevented the Maharaja from making up his mind about accession without a plebiscite, the Maharaja would in all probability have acceded to India well before the transfer of power. His conduct gave room for the view that he had pressed the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan, much against the latter's wish. If even at the stage of the Maharaja's accession, of the legality of which he was satisfied, Mountbatten had not tagged on the plebiscite and thereby thrown moral doubts on the validity and finality of accession, his mission might have been more successful.

Jinnah would have greatly hesitated to try an armed conflict with India then. Pakistan was militarily weaker than India and would have suffered more by the withdrawal of British officers. The brilliant performance of the Indian Army in flying troops to Kashmir

and rolling back the invaders at the nick of time must have sobered Jinnah's ardour for a military clash with India. Today Pakistan is in a much better position; she is better equipped and has besides the moral support of the Anglo-American bloc, and may even get their military support if the United Nations frown on India.

Mountbatten sacrificed himself, Nehru and India to appease Jinnah and Pakistan, and failed to appease them either. It is easier to be wise after the event and speculate on might-have-beens. But statesmen are judged not only by their intentions but also by their prescience in anticipating events.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS : A SURVEY

By Prof. M. VENKATARANGAIYA, M. A.

Among the developments of the quarter, the conclusion of the Japanese Peace Treaty at the San Francisco Conference, the oil crisis in Iran leading to the complete evacuation of the Abadan oil refinery by the British and its consequent closing at least for the time being, the denunciation of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 by the Egyptian Government and the resort to military measures by Britain with a view to enforce the terms of the Treaty, the admission of Greece and Turkey into the North Atlantic Treaty organisation, and the suspension of the truce talks in Korea for nearly two months and their resumption deserve to be noted. The quarter has also seen at one stage the probability of an actual war breaking out between India and Pakistan which, fortunately for all, has not become an actuality. There is no change in the general world situation. The crisis continues and atomic explosions are becoming as common in Soviet Russia as in the United States. The phenomena associated with the Atomic Age are taking a more and more definite shape.

The Treaty which forty-eight of the nations assembled at the San Francisco Conference signed on September 8, 1951 is an event of great importance for a variety of reasons. Japan has ceased to be an occupied territory and has once more resumed her place as a sovereign independent State though with reduced territory and resources. She lost all her dominions and dependencies, and even some of the small islands which for ages have been regarded as part and parcel of the Japanese State have been taken away. Two criticisms have been directed against the terms of the Treaty—one that it was too severe and one-sided and another that it was too lenient and that the terms should have been harder. But both criticisms are highly unrealistic. It is true that Japan has not in consequence of the Treaty become really independent and sovereign. The Treaty provides for the stationing of the American forces in and around Japan, the lease of military bases to the Americans and the virtual continuance of the American hold over the country—the hold which was obtained by the victory gained in the second world war. All this means that Japan is as much a satellite of the United States as Bulgaria, Roumania, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia are of

Soviet Russia. Critics therefore ask, where do the independence and sovereignty of Japan lie? The question is relevant and one has to confess that the Treaty itself is based on the American view that Japan should serve as her satellite so far as her foreign policy is concerned, and that she should not be in a position to remain either neutral or work on the side of the Communist bloc in the cold war that is now going on. The Japanese are conscious of all this, but they considered this position to be much better than the continuance of American military rule and have reconciled themselves to it. There is also the large amount of internal freedom that they can enjoy as a result of the Treaty. The argument that the Treaty is too soft and that it enables Japan once more to become a great military power and a source of aggression to the neighbouring countries, also contains some truth though there is no fear that all this will happen in the very near future. Though no limits have been placed on the extent to which Japan might rearm herself, it will take a long time for her to become a source of threat and aggression to others. With the loss of her empire she is not in a position to get the raw materials needed for her industrial expansion, and without a high degree of industrialisation she cannot hope to become an aggressive military power. That she is bound to rearm herself goes without saying. This is the very purpose of the Americans in bringing about the Treaty. It is their determination to use the potential military resources of Japan in any future war with China and Soviet Russia that has brought about the Treaty, and such a purpose will not be served if Japan is kept completely disarmed. Another reason why the Treaty has been regarded as too soft is that it has not provided for the payment of any reparations by Japan to the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma and other countries which suffered damage at her hands in the war. Here again American pressure and influence have brought them round—except Burma which has not signed the Treaty. They can, if only they are loyal to the United States, get any amount of economic aid—much more perhaps than what they can expect from a defeated and economically ruined Japan.

Among those who did not sign the Japanese Treaty are India, China, Soviet Russia, and those States in Central and Eastern Europe which are included in the Soviet bloc. There is no need to go through the arguments put forward by the Government of India against the terms of the Treaty. But there is a real difference between her attitude and the attitude of the Communist States. India is prepared to enter into bilateral Treaty relations with Japan, and negotiations for this purpose have already been commenced. Though India had serious objections to the terms of the Treaty, and though she did not

sign it, she is quite willing to recognise its results and adjust herself to them. But this is not the position of the Communist States. They do not want to have any kind of friendly relationship with a Japan which for all practical purposes has become, in their view, a dependency of the United States. Here is what a Chinese newspaper has to say about the Treaty: "The peoples of South-East Asia realise that the Peace Treaty with Japan worked out unilaterally by the United States and Britain holds in prospect for the peoples of South-East Asia not peace but war. They understand that only the unanimous support of the proposals advanced by the Soviet Government, their discussion by representatives of all countries which participated in the war against Japan, and the conclusion of a Peace Treaty with Japan based on the declarations of the United Nations, the Cairo declaration, the Yalta agreement and the Potsdam declaration will make it possible to ensure peace everywhere in Asia and will answer the aspirations of Asia. The Peace Treaty signified still more intensified remilitarization of Japan and her conversion into an instrument for carrying out the criminal policy of war and aggression pursued by the American reactionaries in the Far East."

What exactly is it that the Japanese Peace Treaty registers in relation to the world as it is situated today? Japan has entered the American bloc as against the Soviet bloc. The Treaty has added to the strength of American defences in the Pacific. Taken along with the pact which America has entered into with the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand and also along with American control of Formosa, it has given to the United States an unbroken line of fortified territories in the Pacific on the Asian side into which it will be difficult for the Soviet bloc to enter. This completes in a way the steps taken by the United States to build up her Pacific defences. There is no question of right or wrong in this connection. The cold war is a fact. It is a fact that there are two rival worlds. And the Japanese Treaty is an inevitable step that the United States could not but take to strengthen herself in the cold war.

Every one realises that the Treaty has not brought real peace in the Far East nearer. It has not solved any of those questions which have created tension there. The dispute regarding Formosa and the representation of the Communist Government of China on the Security Council are still there. Above all, the war continues in Korea. It looks as if the truce talks will be resumed. But will they lead to a permanent settlement of the Korean question? This is doubtful. Neither party is anxious for a negotiated peace. Each believes in a military triumph. Peace based on undisputed military strength and

irresistible armaments has now become the watchword of the Americans. Rightly or wrongly they have come to the conclusion that right and justice do not prevail out of their inherent strength. They must be backed up by force. So a peace in Korea will be possible only when a complete victory is obtained in the battle-field and this will take a long time.

... ..
A new crisis has meanwhile developed in the Middle East or the Arab world. Iran has driven out the British from the Abadan refinery; and the nationalisation of the oil industry which has been the cause of dispute between Iran and Britain is now an accomplished fact. Oil is the main source of wealth for Iran; but its exploitation has rested with the British Oil Company all along. The Company no doubt has been paying large royalties to the Iranian Government. It was even willing to recognise the nationalisation of the industry and share half and half of the profits with the Iranian Government. But the Government wanted to make the industry a wholly national concern, and reduce the British technicians to the position of Iranian employees, paying them the salaries they wanted, it is true, but controlling the whole concern themselves. The British at one stage threatened that they would fight to defend what they considered to be their legal and legitimate interests; but wiser counsels prevailed and they did not resort to arms, which would have meant the flaring up of war not only in Iran but in the whole of the Middle East—a war which would have converted it into another Korea. There are in England many critics of the Labour Government who feel that war should have been resorted to, and that the Government made a mistake in appeasing the Iranians just as Chamberlain appeased Hitler at Munich. It is their view that British surrender in Iran is today responsible for the crisis in Egypt and in the whole of the Middle East.

In understanding the situation in the Middle East two or three factors have to be kept in mind. In the first place all the countries of the Middle East—the whole Arab world—are now dominated by nationalism. People there are not prepared to tolerate any kind of external control or influence. They want to get rid of the last foreigner—the last Englishman in this case—having any influence whatever. The English know this; so also the Americans. But why do they still want to exercise control over these countries? It is mainly for strategic reasons. In the cold war between them and Soviet Russia, they cannot afford to ignore the strategic importance of this area. If they leave it—as the nationalists want them to do—a power vacuum will be created and it will be immediately occupied by Soviet Russia.

Communist Governments will be established throughout this region and this would be a decisive victory for Soviet Russia and an equally decisive defeat for the Anglo-American bloc. Something is added to all this tension by the presence of the State of Israel in the midst of the Arab world. It is a State whose existence is anathema to the Arab States. They are not yet reconciled to it. And if the Anglo-American influence is wiped out completely from this area, and if Soviet Russia takes their place, no one can say exactly what will become of Israel.

It is thus clear that, in the strategic defences that the Anglo-Americans are building up with a view to prevent further expansion of Communism, the Middle East occupies a dominant position. If the Middle East is lost everything else is lost.

This is the reason why the British have resolved on defending their treaty rights in Egypt at the point of the sword. There are two grounds of dispute in this area. The Egyptians think it derogatory to their national self-respect that any British army should be in occupation of the Suez Canal Zone which is a part of their territory. Secondly they want that the British should leave Sudan, and that Sudan should be incorporated in the Kingdom of Egypt. This is behind their cry of the unity of the valley of the Nile. The British are not prepared to yield on either of the two grounds. If the Middle East is important to them from the point of view of world strategy, they must fight for retention of control over it, even if such a course brings them into conflict with Egyptian national sentiment. Nationalism they know is a strong force and has to be recognised. But in the modern age extreme nationalism has its dangers. It is only some kind of co-operative nationalism that deserves to be encouraged. So they say that some device has to be adopted which will reconcile the Egyptian nationalism, which is opposed to the presence of foreign armies in their territory, and the nationalism of the British and the nationalism of the Americans which equally feel that, unless their armies are stationed in the Canal Zone, there is no prospect of their defending the Middle East against Russian aggression which, according to them, is not an imaginary fear but a reality. With a view to bring about such a reconciliation they have proposed to create a common system of Middle East Defence, in which Egypt would have the same place of equality with Britain, France, and the United States, and any army stationed in the Canal Zone would not be a British army but an international force organised for the defence of the Middle East area. It would be something like the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation under the command of the Americans, but

consisting of regiments supplied by all the Treaty Powers. The Egyptians however have not accepted these proposals. They fear that this would amount to joining the Anglo-American bloc as against the Soviet bloc, and they do not like any such alignment. They would prefer an independent line of foreign policy. Of course the argument between the two sides can be carried on indefinitely. Can Egypt afford to pursue an independent line of foreign policy? Can she maintain her independence if threatened by Soviet moves in the Middle East? She could not even fight successfully against a small State like Israel. If the British withdraw from the Suez Canal Zone she might become independent of Britain, no doubt, but she would, the next day, become dependent on Soviet Russia. None of the small nations in the world can stand on their own legs with the two giants, Soviet Russia and the United States, striding over the whole globe. There is therefore no prospect of the British appeasing the Egyptians. They have already begun the war on the Canal Zone, and if in the general elections the Conservatives under the leadership of Winston Churchill come into office, more warlike efforts will be adopted to strengthen the Middle East Defences.

On Sudan also the British are not prepared to yield. It is a very important area for them from the economic as well as the strategic standpoint, and it is their argument that the Sudanese have to be consulted before they are incorporated in the Egyptian Kingdom.

There is one factor in the situation in the Middle East which has added to the inherent complication characterising it. It is the attitude of the United States. The Government of the American Republic has not taken any firm line of action in Iran or in Egypt. There seem to be misunderstandings between Britain and the United States. Even if there are no serious misunderstandings, the United States is somehow hesitating to make its position clear. She must be prepared to shoulder the responsibilities which have so far been borne by Britain. If Britain withdraws and if Soviet Russia takes her place in the Middle East, the policy which Truman has all along followed to arrest the further expansion of Communism will be a failure. It is true that taking up the side of Britain in the Iranian oil issue would have created difficulties for the Americans in Saudi Arabia and other parts of Western Asia where they have similar oil concessions; but yielding to the Iranian Government would also mean encouraging the Governments of other Arab States to put forward schemes of nationalisation. In this situation the Americans would have done well in adopting a more positive line of action in Iran and Egypt which they have so far failed to do. The sooner the Americans enter into an understanding with

the British and the French on all the Middle Eastern issues the better it will be.

This is all the more necessary as supplementing the action which they recently took in admitting Turkey and Greece to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, though they are so far away from the North Atlantic. This was done in the interests of strategy. The next few months are bound to be critical. Everything depends on the course of the resumed peace talks in Korea and on the way in which the war situation in Egypt develops. If the talks fail or if the situation in Egypt takes a turn for the worse, the war area of the world will become more extensive and the hope of a better life for humanity will become more distant. There is an old saying that man's life is controlled by unseen forces and that the triumphs which he seems to win by his intelligence are only seeming triumphs. Perhaps there is a great deal of truth in this saying.

Bombay,
Oct. 24, 1951.

HINDU LAW REFORM

By Prof. S. VENKATARAMAN, M. L.

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When H. J. Cunningham compiled a Digest of Hindu Law in 1877 in the form of 392 numbered sections "in such a form as may indicate the possibility of enactment in a Code if at any time hereafter the Government should consider this desirable", Mayne observed: "The age of miracles has passed, and I hardly expect to see a code of Hindu Law which shall satisfy the trader, the agriculturist, the Punjabi and the Bengali, the Pandits of Benares and Rameswaram, of Umritsur and of Poona. But I can easily imagine a very beautiful and specious code, which should produce much more dissatisfaction and expense than the law as at present administered." The statement is almost prophetic, having regard to some of the criticisms directed against the Hindu Code Bill, that has now been put off. A just assessment of any proposals for the reform generally of Hindu law—a *fortiori* for its codification—will be possible only if some facts forming the background of the application of Hindu laws to Hindus are clearly grasped. Warren Hastings' plan of 1772 provided in terms, of which the substance regulates even today the greater part of India, that in certain matters only Hindu law was to be administered to the Hindus. These matters were family relations and succession. It was assumed that these laws were religious laws ascertainable by a study of the sacred books. Even at the threshold of such study it became clear that the ancient texts could not be the last word in modern practice. It was realised that the texts had been superimposed by mediaeval speculation and later day usages. If Hindu law is at present administered as a system, it is due altogether to judicial development on lines followed in England, with disinclination on the part of Judges to deviate from established principles and distaste for abstract reasoning. Even in the restricted spheres where Hindu law was to operate, it was found that *sastric* rules were neither harmonious nor always complete, and that one set of rules afforded guidance in Bengal and a different set of rules elsewhere in India. The differences were often fundamental. Outside Bengal, following the teach-

ings of the Mitakshara, the joint family institution with its special features—of property being held in commensality by a person and his lineal male descendants within the third generation, of ownership arising by birth, of the interest of a member passing on his death by survivorship to the remaining members, of inalienability of property etc.—had come to occupy an important place in the social economy of the country. In Bengal, property was held in full individual ownership in accordance with the teachings of the Dayabhaga. Again, while heirship was regulated outside Bengal on the basis of blood relationship, within Bengal it stood linked up with the principle of spiritual benefit. It was also clear that everywhere diverse customs were followed by the Hindus in preference to the rules given by their jurists. So much so, it was declared by the Privy Council that under the Hindu system of law clear proof of usage will outweigh the written text of the law.

The need for a "well digested code of laws compiled agreeably to the laws and tenets of Gentoos" had been grasped by Warren Hastings. The task was however impossible in those days, as the laws of the Hindus had not then been ascertained. In 1833, in the course of his speech on the Bill which became the Charter Act, Macaulay had to admit that codification was not then possible. He said: "We do not mean that all the people of India should live under the same law; far from it. We know how desirable that object is; but we also know that it is unattainable. But whether we assimilate those systems or not, let us ascertain them, let us digest them." The policy was thus to have ascertainment first, then consolidation, and finally reform. The first Law Commission presided over by Andrew Amos looked forward in 1840 to the preparation eventually of three codes, one for the Hindu, one for the Muslim, and one for the English laws. The Commission appointed under the Charter Act of 1853 however recommended that "no portion either of the Mahomedan or of the Hindu law ought to be enacted as such in any form by a British legislature." It was felt that a code would stereotype the law and arrest development which, it was felt, must happen and would be desirable. It was also thought that the Hindu law was a religious law and that a British legislature ought not to deal with it. The association of Indians later on in the task of legislation and the advent of representative government took the sting out of the argument. In fact, notwithstanding the above considerations, the Hindu laws were by no means left untouched, and, in the words of a learned writer, "there is scarcely any principle of the orthodox law that has not been eaten into either wholly or partially by the legislature." It is true that in the past, to an oriental mind, a personal law appeared more familiar and

natural than a territorial law.¹ The impact of western ideas and concepts of law has however come to be felt. Changes in the political, economic and social conditions of the country have had repercussions on laws and brought modifications steadily if not spectacularly. The case for reform and codification is strengthened rather than weakened by the existence of innumerable customs at variance with the sastric rules. Custom was of value in early days in adapting primitive rules to suit the requirements of advancing civilisation and progressive opinion, particularly at a period when there were no regular legislatures functioning. As was remarked by a learned lawyer, "the vitality of custom today as a law making factor is a myth," inasmuch as its legal title to recognition depends on its being ancient, which at the present time would result in the petrification of outmoded practices. Most of the customs have outlived the conditions and needs which gave birth to them. So if legislation is not to step in to get rid of these outworn rules, to "ring out the old and ring in the new," Hindu India will remain in a museum of dead things. The needs of a strong Hindu society require a fusion of their divergent laws and their replacement by a single and easily ascertainable law of property and succession uniformly applicable to all, without distinction of caste or sex.

The Preamble to the Constitution of India promises equality of status for all the people of India. Article 14 provides for equality before the law. Article 15 provides against discrimination on the ground only of religion, race, caste or sex. Article 25 (2) expressly states that the right to freedom of conscience and to profess, practise and propagate religion shall not affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law for social welfare and reform. It is true that Article 44 declares that the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. This provision cannot however derogate from the competency of Parliament to enact laws for Hindus, nor can it serve as an argument against the desirability of reforms for them. The Muslims have achieved solidarity for themselves by the *Shariat Act*, the *Wills Act*, the *Shariat Act*, and the *Cutchi Memons Act*. The Christians have achieved homogeneity through the *Indian Christian Marriage Act* and the *Succession Act*. The Hindus alone present the spectacle of a house divided. The Hindu laws alone are characterised by wide and considerable diversities and are liable to be controlled by customs. If Hindus achieved unity, then the switch over from personal to territorial laws will become feasible without much

jolt, as they will be strong at the bargaining counter. The influence of law on the family and social life of a people and on their outlook is considerable, and, in the widely differing conditions of present day Hindu society, if discordant legal environments are added to other social differentia, they will produce a distinctly centrifugal effect. It is thus clear that from all aspects a reform of Hindu law is desirable.

In undertaking the task, the only course to adopt, consistently with the factors mentioned *supra* is to take whatever is most progressive and reasonable in the *Mitakshara*, *Dayabhaga* and the *Mayukha* and weld them into a single body of rules. To allow customary law to operate alongside of such rules would be unthinkable. To do so will be to consign some of the communities to perpetual social inferiority and to the maintenance of out-of-date standards. It will verily be a betrayal of trust. Legislation affecting Hindu law since 1850 has reconciled most Hindus into thinking that their laws are not so inextricably mixed with religion as not to allow change by legislation and that there is nothing sacrosanct about them. A systematised code speaks at once in all its parts, not contradictorily but in harmony or orchestration of principles. It means the formulation of rules characterised by lucidity, certainty and uniformity and would materially reduce the risk of injustice. In any scheme of reforms violent breaks with the past should be minimum. Antinomies of all kinds should be eliminated. The reforms should be planned to promote social improvement and economic sufficiency and must come up to modern standards of justice.

Hindu life in the past presented a bewildering array of conjugal relationships, from the highest forms of monogamy to the grossest forms of polyandry bordering almost on promiscuity. The sastric rules concerning marriage have been radically modified by legislation enacted from time to time. What is found today is an unattractive mosaic of ancient rules modified by legislation and a mass of confused customs. Identity of caste is no longer necessary for a valid marriage (Act 21 of 1949). 'Sagotra' and 'Samanapravara' marriages are made competent (Act 28 of 1946). Impotency has been held to preclude marriage (52 *Calcutta Weekly Notes*, 142). Monogamy has been made obligatory for men as well as women in the States of Bombay and Madras (Bombay Act 25 of 1943; Madras Act 6 of 1949). The law is different on this last matter in other States. The Sastras had allowed a man to take a second wife if the first wife was barren or vicious, and, if diseased, with her consent. Legal justification was needed for taking a second wife. In the spacious days when Hindu law was yet in the process of ascertainment, judicial decisions took

¹ Hall: *Foreign Jurisdiction of the British Crown*, 1894, p. 133.

the view that no such justification was necessary. The result has been to have two standards, one for men and another for women. It is not in accordance with enlightened public opinion or the provisions of the Constitution to have such different yardsticks. It is useful to note that marriages contracted by Hindus under the Special Marriage Act are monogamous and marriages contracted by persons governed by Maronakkathayam usages have become monogamous by statute. In these circumstances the Hindu Code Bill has provided for monogamy being equally obligatory for men and women all over India. Surely there can be no objection to so reasonable a proposal.

Though Hindus in general believe that marriage is a very sacred institution and a 'samskara', a considerable section do not have any faith in the ceremonies of marriage. Custom has made deep inroads and a marriage without observance of the 'vivaha homam' or 'saptapadi' would yet be valid. Even the mere tying of a *tali* round the neck of the bride in the presence of an idol in a temple will suffice, and there is no necessity for the presence of a priest. There are also many Hindus who would like to marry without observance of rituals but who are unable to do so in the absence of custom. A purely civil marriage is now possible for Hindus, only when they marry as such under the Special Marriage Act. Resort to the Act attracts however certain special results. Provision for a purely civil form of marriage for Hindus side by side with dharmic marriages is thus a desirable step to take. The Hindu Code Bill has provided to that effect. To have a provision, altogether optional in incidence leaving it to the parties to decide whether they would like to be married with all the ceremonies and rituals of marriage as practised in their community or whether they wish to treat marriage purely as a contract, can be open to no reasonable objection. Now that inter-caste marriages both in the direct as well as indirect order of caste are allowed, observance of ceremonies, if insisted upon, may become a matter of conflicts and controversies.

The Hindu marriage has been through the years a venerable institution. It has been regarded with great sanctity. Consistently with it, it could hardly be disputed that alliances where no formalities, either civil or religious of even a minimum kind, are observed should continue to be tolerated on the ground of usages merely. It is an unfortunate feature of Hindu law that alongside of polygamy, concubinage also should have been recognised as carrying a legal status. Neither religion nor morality can countenance the practice. It is also anomalous that while among the *dwijas* an illegitimate son does not have rights, he is invested with heritable capacity among Sudras. The

maintenance of such a distinction has no justification, having regard to the facts of Hindu life, and is only irksome and irritating. The Hindu Code Bill, in so far as it provided for the abolition of the status of concubine and illegitimate offspring certainly took a step in the right direction.

Hindu opinion in the past has not been in favour of the dissolubility of marriages. Divorce was no doubt practised by a number of communities by way of custom. Those communities were however looked down as being socially inferior. Kautilya and Parasara among the ancient writers had provided for dissolution in certain stated circumstances, but Hindu tradition had generally been against the institution of divorce. Nevertheless, dissolubility of Hindu marriages became possible since 1866, when the Native Converts Marriage Dissolution Act was passed. If one of the spouses in a Hindu marriage subsequently became a Christian and followed the procedure prescribed by the Act, that person's Hindu marriage could be dissolved and both the parties thereto would acquire liberty to marry again. If intrusion of divorce had to be resisted, it should have been done then. The vista then opened up has gradually gathered momentum and there have now been enacted laws in Bombay and Madras (Bombay Act 22 of 1947; Madras Act 6 of 1949) providing for dissolution of Hindu marriages. Divorce by custom is prevalent among large sections of Hindus. Outside custom, in the States of Bombay and Madras, Hindus can have dissolution of marriages by virtue of provincial legislation. The framers of the Hindu Code Bill have, probably not unreasonably, thought that a uniform law should be provided for all Hindus all over India. Surely the authors of the Bill cannot be charged with making an innovation. Whether it was realised or not, the legislature as early as 1866 had sanctioned dissolution of Hindu marriages, even if it was only incidentally and on one ground only. Is it not also desirable that divorce on altogether fantastic grounds, which would be possible under customary law, should be prohibited and dissolution allowed only for reasons conformable to justice and equity? On the whole the grounds on which dissolution may be sought under the Madras Act are reasonable. The Hindu Code Bill has added two other grounds, the wisdom of which is questionable. To some extent it may be due to the anxiety of the framers to provide for matrimonial relief in the form of judicial separation. This is a type of relief which was not found necessary at any time. If the parties live apart for justifiable reasons, law does not interfere. If living apart is not warranted, a decree for restitution is made. Such being the case, provision for judicial separation is a relief of doubtful utility. Having provided for it, the Bill has sought to allow

a suit for dissolution on the ground that the other party has not resumed marital intercourse for a period of upwards of two years after a decree or order for judicial separation has been passed against the respondent. This provision is really not wanted and it would be advisable to drop it. Dissolution of marriages should be allowed only to a minimum extent, and that too only where the justification for it is of the plainest description and to allow it would be to promote morality. It has been said that if customary divorces are abrogated it would hit the poorer classes, inasmuch as the cheapness and expedition associated with such divorces cannot be had if divorce is to be through court only. Plausible though the argument is, it is dangerous to accept it. There cannot be a raising of the standards of marriage if at the same time crude divorce customs are allowed to be perpetuated.

The law relating to prohibited degrees in marriage has often become a matter of mockery. In theory at any rate, girls within five degrees through the father and three through the mother should be avoided. Custom has eaten so widely and deeply into the matter that even marriages with the sister's daughter have come to be countenanced. It would conduce to clarity and certainty if the rule as to prohibited degrees is replaced by an enumeration of prohibited relations for purposes of marriage compatible with modern outlook. The Hindu Code Bill has rightly attempted to give such a list. Its insistence however on the observance of the prohibited degrees also, subject to any customs, and the option it gives to a party to avoid the marriage on the ground of violation of the rule are clumsy and cumbersome. If simplicity is to be achieved as well as certainty, the best course will be to give a list of prohibited persons and not to insist on the observance of further rules of prohibition.

The Hindu Code Bill provides for the registration of Hindu marriages. For civil marriages registration is compulsory. For dharmic marriages it is optional, power being reserved to a State to make registration of such marriages also compulsory. No doubt registration will be valuable from the point of proof of such marriages. If registration of dharmic marriages is made compulsory, it is bound to be resented as an irksome requirement. Also public opinion has not advanced so far as to appreciate the utility of the provision. It may therefore be dropped so far as marriages other than civil are concerned. The provision in the Hindu Code Bill for registration of dharmic marriages already celebrated is also not likely to be received with favour. It will not be proper to give a new turn and significance to a marriage contracted by the parties under different auspices.

The law of adoption as it stands at present is very unsatisfactory and has been responsible for a lot of avoidable litigation. A widow in Mithila cannot at all adopt to her husband. One in Bombay can do so unless her husband had prohibited her. In other States the law has taken an intermediate course. In Madras a widow not having her husband's permission may adopt if duly authorised by his kindred. A mass of rules as the result of prolific litigation caused by this latter doctrine have come to be laid down. Surely there can be no objection to make the Bombay rule one of general application. Again in the selection of boys fantastic positions have been revealed. The adoption of one older than the adopter and of even a married man are practices hardly to be reconciled with the doctrine that adoption is the acquisition of a substitute of a son. Also in the selection of boys full scope should be available for feelings of natural love and affection. There is no reason, in that view, to prohibit the adoption of a daughter's son or a sister's son in the absence of a custom. It is also salutary to prohibit adoption by minors. The provision in Section 2 (a) of the Indian Majority Act may be abrogated. The Hindu Code Bill has accepted most of these principles. It has, while laying down that any Hindu widow who has completed eighteen years of age has capacity to adopt to her husband provided the latter has not expressly or impliedly prohibited her, stated at the same time that a male Hindu may authorise his wife to adopt a son or prohibit her from doing so. It may be argued that this means that the husband's authorisation is necessary in every case. If that be so, there is not much merit about the provision. Again the Hindu Code Bill contains provisions for registration of adoptions and a short time-limit within which adoptions should be avoided. These are needless restrictions.

The field of inheritance is yet another part of Hindu law where considerable reform is needed. To link up inheritance with competency to confer spiritual benefit is hardly compatible with modern conditions. It does grave injustice to women in particular. At the same time to make heirship dependent mainly on agnatic relationship will be out of tune with considerations of justice and equity. Cognatic relations are also entitled to come in. It is desirable that in arranging the heirs regard must be had to ties of natural love and affection. The Hindu Code Bill has suggested that certain heirs like sons, widow and daughters should take simultaneously. This is a step strongly to be commended. That a daughter should take along with a son has evoked strong criticism. This attitude is to be deplored. The days when marriage was the only prospect for a girl are over. The apprehension that if the daughter takes a share it will pass into another family is sentimental rather than rational. Also career for women

has become a normal feature and there might be a large number of girls who may prefer to remain spinsters. Also the extra expense occasioned by a daughter's marriage has its counterpoise in what the daughter-in-law brings, and in that way equilibrium in the family is sure to be maintained. Whether the daughter should have an equal share with a son is a matter of detail, not one of principle. According to Manu, "a son is even as one's own self and the daughter is equal to the son; and so long as she is there as the father's self how then can another take the property?" The sentiment will find an answering echo in every heart. The logical response must follow. The Hindu Code Bill has proposed an equal share for the daughter. The Bill has also suggested the abolition of distinctions maintained between a married daughter and a widowed daughter, between a relatively rich daughter and a relatively indigent daughter, between a daughter having male issue and a barren daughter. These distinctions cannot be justified at the present time and have to go.

It is a sad feature that the doctrine of limited estate in inherited property has been imposed in the case of women. The doctrine was the result of judicial misconception about the importance of the Mitakshara and an apprehension that Vijnaneswara's definition of 'stridhana' as including inherited property may be the subject of restrictions in other parts of the Mitakshara which were not then before the Privy Council. The theory of presumed incapacity of women for independence and their perpetual tutelage are no longer valid. A similar principle existed in Roman and other systems of jurisprudence in early times and has been given up. Among Christians and Muslims women take property absolutely. No harm has happened thereby. Even among Hindus, in the State of Bombay, daughters take absolutely. In Mithila, a widow takes her husband's movable property absolutely and can bequeath it. And everywhere a widow is competent to surrender her estate. Such being the position, is there any justification for the continuance of the doctrine of limited estate for women? Except tradition and prejudice nothing stands in the way of justice being done. The Hindu Code Bill has not maintained the doctrine. It has accepted Vijnaneswara's view as to 'stridhana'. That view is at once simple, enlightened and discerning. It is all the more acceptable, because Vijnaneswara was a great and scholarly ascetic who could be trusted to do nothing contrary to Hindu religious principles, or unjust. Apart from every other consideration the reform would eliminate a considerable amount of litigation by persons with reversionary interests.

The Hindu joint family laws have to be treated even more radically. The institution was based on excellent ideals. It was a study in

co-operation. In the past, it has played an important part in the economic structure of the society. The integrity of the family could be broken by mutual agreement only. Family property could not be alienated by any one member in any degree. On the death of a member of the joint family, his interest survived to the rest. Till partition there was common possession and enjoyment. A woman had no place as a sharer. She, as a member of the family, could have only maintenance rights. Every one of these features has been cut across. Any member may now by unilateral declaration sever himself from the family. In Madras and Bombay, a member can convey for value his share. With the passing of the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act in 1937, even the operation of survivorship is controlled and a wife is substituted in the place of the husband with the right to call for partition at any time. It is also open to a creditor to obtain a decree against his debtor coparcener and attach his interest in execution during his lifetime, in which case also on the death of the coparcener survivorship cannot operate to the prejudice of the creditor. Of the joint family institution the shell or frame alone now remains. The spirit has fled. The features that once made it unique are no longer there. The large urban life of modern times no longer permits male members of the family to stay together. Competitive conditions take the members away to different places in quest of a living. Trade and commerce have taken the place of agriculture as the fulcrum of society. Commercial pursuits require freedom to alienate and facilities therefor. In such a set-up, the joint family tenure becomes an outmoded ideal. The institution today is a stumbling block to economic planning, and, except for sentimental reverence to an ancient institution, there is nothing in favour of its continuance. The Hindu Code Bill has suggested the abolition of the institution. Sober thinking will be in favour of the proposal.

The rules relating to the devolution of 'stridhana' are now chaotic. A set of simple rules uniformly applicable to all cases is a desideratum.

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST

By M. SIVAKAMAYYA, M. A.

Sri Katuri Venkateswara Rao is well known in the Telugu world of Letters as a poet of the first order, especially as one of the joint authors of *Soundaranandam* whose place among the Telugu classics is assured. His poetry is distinguished alike for its rare richness of substance and exquisite workmanship. It is a pity therefore and a misfortune that his muse should have remained silent, almost mute, for such a long time.

Listeners of All India Radio (Vijayawada) were therefore agreeably surprised when they heard the other day, in the course of a symposium, in Telugu, of artists, poets, critics, journalists, etc., a talk from him on "The critic's experience of aesthetic delight". It was an illuminating discourse, delivered in an exceedingly entertaining style, and incidentally dealt with the claims of the critic to the status of a creative artist. In the humble opinion of the writer of this note, the poet-critic's exposition of the nature of creative criticism is peculiarly interesting and deserves wider publicity. A brief English rendering of it is therefore presented to the readers of *Triveni*.

"The sensible world consisting of nature and the life of human beings in society constitutes the basic material of every kind of artistic creation. This world is a blend of truth and falsehood, virtue and wickedness, happiness and misery. But the artist gives it beautiful form and significance. He eschews the undesirable parts, modifies the disagreeable features, fuses the material chosen in the fire of his imagination and invests it with a novel shape. Every work of art is thus necessarily an act of interpretation of the world, a criticism of life. There is no creation out of 'nothing'.

"If the artist interprets the world, the critic interprets the work of art. But then what is the value of this interpretation of an interpretation, this criticism of a criticism? How can it become creative in its turn?

"Experience of life and contemplation of the world give the artist delight and happiness. That which gives him the joy, that which he observes and contemplates, has form; but his joy has no form. But he endeavours to detach it from himself to contemplate it in his imagination and express it

again objectively. Unfortunately the medium which he employs for this purpose of 'expressing' his 'delight' in 'form' so that it might be 'communicated' to others and shared by them—line, colour, sound, or word,—has only a limited capacity for the purpose. The artist has to work under the limitations fixed by the nature of his medium, however perfect his mastery of it. Hence the difficulty, the struggle, which the creation of a work of art necessarily involves.

"Ultimately the work of art is only a suggestive symbol and not a complete representation of the delight experienced by the artist. Every work of art provides only the means for aesthetic experience and not aesthetic experience direct. Through the limited form, it suggests the limitless and formless. It provides the doors and windows through which the formless and boundless can be glimpsed and aesthetic delight experienced.

"The activity of the critic thus begins just where the activity of the artist ends. Through the doors and windows provided by the work of art, the critic enters the region (boundless) of aesthetic delight and there the range of his flight is determined only by his capacity and equipment. By his previous experience, the contemplation of many excellent works of art, he acquires the ability to recognise at once and easily the significant lines and forms, thoughts and emotions, sounds and suggestions. An instinctive awareness of beauty is always awake and alert in him. Through the work of art he enters the heart of the artist and the centre of aesthetic delight. There are no limits to the flight of his spirit in that boundless kingdom.

"There, his freedom is absolute and his flight is determined by the strength of his wing and the aspiration of his soul. Once he enters the domain of aesthetic delight, he leaves behind the work of art and the artist—the ladder by which he has climbed and the friend who provided the ladder for him. His aesthetic experience may be different from and richer than that of the artist who set the wings of his imagination in motion.

"If he then attempts to give expression (form) to his aesthetic delight and succeeds in his endeavour, the result is another work of art. It is a *criticism* of the work of art which has occasioned it, but at the same time, in its own right, it is as much a *work of art*. It is *creative criticism*."

To this supreme category of criticism belongs much of the critical literature of the famous English critics of the period of the Romantic Revival, of Coleridge and Hazlitt, of Lamb and Carlyle, and later of Pater and Swinburne. It constitutes one of the most irresistible

attractions of English literature to Indian students. Lovers of Sanskrit literature and the literatures of the modern languages of India feel hurt when they come across any suggestion that most of our critical literature is concerned with the Philosophy of aesthetics, the enumeration and classification of literary methods, devices, ornaments, and judicial criticism to some extent, but apparently of very little of creative criticism. If this is a wrong impression and an unfair description, they will be doing a great service to literature and literary criticism and contributing to raise the level of literary appreciation and culture among the people, if they bring out and give wide publicity to the existing body of creative criticism in our languages and if they enrich it by fresh additions.

As for Sri Venkateswara Rao who has so ably justified the claims of criticism to the status of a creative art and so clearly explained the nature of creative criticism, the Andhra public will feel grateful for more creative activity on his part, either in the field of poetry or in the field of creative criticism.

V. N. BHUSHAN¹

Poet, Professor, Critic

By A. K. BHAGWAT

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V. N. Bhushan is no more! The full implication of the news I read dawned but slowly on me. Memories of V. N. B. crowded in my mind as the morning paper fell from my listless fingers.

It was in 1937. We crowded in the compulsory B. A. class, agog with excitement and expectation that a new professor was to come to lecture to us. As I settled down with the nonchalance that only an undergraduate can assume, being too sophisticated to show my excitement, a portly figure, rather Chesterton-like in proportion, as he has himself put it, entered. There was the usual scoffing and jeering... some back-bencher whispered, 'Dr. Ambedkar,' and then the Professor slowly ascended the dais, glanced once at the class and began in a low tone, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I am expected to lecture to you on modern poetry. Unfortunately, the book is prescribed for general reading..." Here the words were punctuated by a smile and then followed a few neatly worded sarcasms at the University for prescribing a book of poetry for general reading. The class responded with a laugh—that agreeable noise "like a thousand bees at pasture" clearly showed that half the battle was won. Class-control, the nightmare of many a new professor was to be a sweet dream to V. N. Bhushan. And soon the Professor launched upon a rapid survey of

¹ V. N. Bhushan: born at Masulipatam, 16th July, 1909; passed his B. A. from the local Noble College; post-graduate student at Banaras Hindu University where he took a double first in English Literature at the M. A., Professor of English in Wadia College, Poona from 1937 to 1945. Principal, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's College of Arts from 1947 till his death on 13th October, 1951.

Works: Poems—Silhouettes (1928); Moonbeams (1929); Flute Tunes (1931); Star Fires (1932); Enchantments (1934); Horizons (1937); Foot-falls (1938); Dramas—Anklet Bells; Samyukta; Mortal Coils; Anthologies—The Peacock Lute; The Moving Finger; and a number of miscellaneous critical essays and annotated texts.

modern poetry, thus lifting us soon to the higher, ethereal regions of Mount Parnassus. The victory was now complete; V. N. B. had beguiled our ears and captivated our hearts.

But he was to do more. To my utter surprise he called me after a week or so and asked me to contribute an article to the College Miscellany. I was flattered. This was a rare experience. Never before had a professor stepped down his pedestal so easily and naturally and broken the barriers that separated the teacher from the taught. This was only a prelude to many a long afternoon and evening that I was to spend at his small but artistically furnished flat, with the pictures of literary luminaries looking down from the walls, lined by bookshelves. I literally drank deep at this fountain of poetic imagination and literary fervour. Prof. Bhushan impressed one as much by his keen interest in English literature as by the ardour with which he spoke about literary problems and personalities to a mere 'undergrad'. Truly, if a University is formed by an association of the teacher and the taught, here was the true University born. Even in the star-studded English Department of the Wadia College of those days, that boasted of such luminaries as Professors G. H. Kelkar and K. M. Khadye, Bhushan shone with a radiance all his own. His enthusiasm and ardour were unequalled and he had a unique gift of inspiring others with a like spirit. Bhushan was a very successful teacher. He has very ably outlined the difficulties facing an Indian teacher of English in his article on Lafcadio Hearn: "The task of teaching English to Easterners is fraught with many difficulties. Through the medium of a language not our own, we have to be acquainted with and initiated into literature alien to us in every way. The barriers of race and the differences in national tastes and temperaments are indeed difficult hurdles. It is not everyone who can surmount these and make the teaching of English a success." It was his love for literature and literary problems, coupled with an ardent desire to make his students share it, that made him a successful teacher. If his style at times smelt of the lamp, it was relieved by flashes of his poetic imagination that enlivened the dead matter of a mere learned exposition. A romantic at heart, he was at his best in teaching such authors as Charles Lamb, Shakespeare, and the romantic poets.

As a critic, Prof. Bhushan will be remembered chiefly for his championship of Indo-English literature. To the typical objection of sceptics who cannot understand why Indians should write English poetry, his answer was, "If you understand Indians teaching English, you must understand them writing English." In his review of the

Indian contribution to English Poetry published in the *British Annual of Literature* in 1939, he says: "The worst of all these handicaps (of Indian writers of verse in English) is the crusade against the poets for their sin of writing in English. The Indian crusader has to remember the fact that centuries of attachment and appreciation has made English almost our tongue, and that it will be our loss if we forsake English language and literature," and again, "The question of the possibility of Indians achieving sufficient mastery over English to enable them to be successful writers of verse in the language is now an exploded myth. The writings of some of our common countrymen in the past, as well as in the present, are eloquent answers to the charges of glib-tongued critics." And yet he strongly opposed the view put forth by some 'Anglophiles' to make English India's national language. I remember his vigorous attack on such a view when he presided over a lecture by a certain eminent member of the Servants of India Society.

He brought a very keen, critical mind to bear on literature and literary problems, and his miscellaneous critical essays cover a very wide range of subjects, where he handles almost all the varieties of criticism—comparative, historical, interpretative and appreciative. One of his most significant and original contributions is his illuminating essay on "Elia on Childhood and Children" in which he very successfully brought to light the many observations of Lamb on childhood and children. Another essay of great merit and originality is his "A possible Poetic Retort", contributed to the *Humata* (Bombay) in 1939, where he has with great scholarship convincingly put forth the hypothesis that "Browning intentionally intended his *Rabbi Ben Ezra* to be a sort of reply to the supposed epicurean gospel contained in Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*." His "Pegasus in Caps and Bells—A consideration of Light Verse," shows his keen appreciation of the sprightly humour of light verse. His exposition of Shelley's personality and poetry shows him to be a master of appreciative criticism. His style in these essays varies according to the subject. At times it has extreme simplicity and directness while on occasions it glows with poetic fervour and throbs with emotion.

But Bhushan was much more than a painstaking scholar and able interpreter. He was himself a great creative artist "a poet worthy of the privilege and burden of poetry" and as such had won the highest meed of praise from such authorities as Tagore and Sorajini Naidu, Edmund Blunden and Lawrence Housman, Ernest Rhys and John Galsworthy, to mention only a few. In many an intense lyric he sings of the "colour-fed glory and gladness of life" and donates the

reader with a vital thrill of divine delight. Bhushan is a lyric poet par excellence. He has keen sensitiveness, insight, originality of expression and a gift of couching noble thoughts in honeyed words. Starting with an intrepid faith in his self appointed mission,

My pilgrimage shall be a scented flame on earth
To kindle the beacon fires of Goodness, Beauty, Truth,

the poet hopes, "though alone but undaunted, to be a shaper of his times and tendencies of darling dreams and daring deeds..., a chariot-
eer of the Juggernaut car of vital spirit and vernal song." Many of his lyrics where he sings of Radha-Krishna remind one of the colourful charm of Sarojini Naidu. Bhushan's originality consists in giving a poetic description of the thought realm of a poet, the seedling ground of many a noble idea. At times, through the splendid symbolism of the 'White Bird' or the 'Song of the Tree' the poet speaks of his dreams and deeds—the inspirers of his pure pulsed songs. At times more directly, he speaks how oft a wizard mood of mystery comes over him (*Transcendence*):

In those ripe red moods,
With half-unshuttered visions streaming by,
And delicate wonder mists dissolving
In the Saffron-laughter of the spirit—

the poet beholds the unmasked undertones of life, and then,

The half known and the yet unknown
Shed their mystic aloofness once for all,
And leap to life with the language
That knows not the contradictions of ephemeral things!

As a true romantic, his muse soars "far above the slush of the world's sordid realities"; his sensitive "soul escapes from the body's deathcold clutch" into the final Reality to touch life at an exceptional altitude. Many are his lyrics in which he sings of Man, of Nature, and of God. God to him is a mystery, though

Man made God after his own fancy and faith
As an emblem of his power, prestige and gratitude.

He ever abides a mystery—or else he is no God! In a charming poem 'Processions' the poet sees a marriage procession threading its way through the busy streets and from the opposite side a funeral procession:

"In between the narrow space of the two extremities
God strides up and down with a rapture all His own.

If one of the secrets of great poetry is memorableness, Bhushan has a number of lines, which, according to Dr. S. Iyengar, are "compact of beauty and hence one loves to repeat aloud", lines like:

Far above the slush of world's sordid beauty...
The sceptred symbol of hidden romance...
Ventriloquist moans of the gurgling world...
An argosy of magic merchandise...
A wonder-sense of sweet womanliness...

One has only to read lyrics like 'The Pilgrim', 'Fallen Gods', 'Confidence', 'Snow and Man', 'Lesson', to realise with Mr. V. de Sola Pinto that "Mr. Bhushan is a lyric poet with real vision and originality and gives English poetic forms a new charm and freshness by adapting them to the expression of Indian imagination and mystical thought. Mr. Bhushan's poetry opens up a new field of vision for the English mind and deserves to be better known in Europe." I can only close this personal tribute to one who had been "a friend, philosopher and guide" with the hope that somebody worthier than I would take up this task of spreading the 'exotic strangeness and exalted thought' of Bhushan's lyrics and thus enshrine him among the elect.