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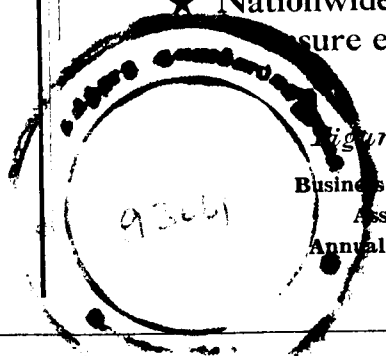
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ON THE COVER:

Sri T. Prakasam, Chief Minister, Andhra State
Watercolour by H. V. Ram Gopal

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the ryot when prices are low and does not benefit the State during times of high prices, when government expenditure is bound to go up. An agricultural income-tax, moreover, lends itself to graduation according to the size of the income. If, however, the current move to fix ceilings on land holdings prevails, there would be little point in switching over to an agricultural income-tax. Ceilings on holdings would wipe out high agricultural incomes altogether and there would be little or no yield from an income-tax on small incomes. The whole logic behind the move to fix ceilings is misconceived. If the primary consideration is whether land is being put to the best possible use, the position of large holdings should be viewed only from the point of view of production and not from a doctrinaire stand of equal sharing of land among all. At a time when all the available capital is required for new industrial and other development schemes, the diversion of capital for paying compensation to landowners for acquiring surplus holdings would be a waste of public funds. The argument which weighed with the A.-I.C.C. in going slow with nationalisation of industries applies equally to land nationalisation. The acquisition of so-called surplus land has no meaning unless it is intended to bring uncultivated land under the plough.

If the Andhra Government, instead of getting bogged in a doctrinaire egalitarian agrarian policy, concentrates its attention on the development of the State's water, power and mineral resources, it can within the next ten years completely change the face of the country. The State's industrial development in the past has suffered from the fact that it had no source of cheap fuel or power. When power from the Tungabhadra and Machkund schemes starts flowing in from next year, the

first really big impetus for economic development will have been provided. But this will only be a small trickle compared to what the State can enjoy when power becomes available by the harnessing of the waters of the mighty Krishna and Godavari. Political and other differences have held up for too long commencement of work on a project for the Krishna. If, as seems imminent, the Nandikonda project is finally approved and work is begun on it from next year, it will be a great gain. The narrow parochialism, which views big projects in terms of benefits to particular areas, is sorely out of place in the context of a national development plan, which seeks to develop the resources of the country wherever they may be found in the interests of the nation as a whole. The sites for the location of dams or big industrial plants should be determined primarily on the advice of experts on the basis of their suitability from the economic and technical points of view. We do not for a moment suggest that there should not be an even development of all areas in the country. But in matters like selection of sites for the location of particular industries, there should be as little as possible of political controversy. It is to be hoped that the politics that has figured in connection with the Nandikonda project is all now a matter of the past and that work on this great scheme, which will bring benefits to millions in the Andhra and Hyderabad districts, will begin without further delay.

With four out of the five years of the first Five-Year Plan nearly gone, Andhra has to look upon the second Five-Year Plan as the earliest opportunity for laying the foundations for major development of the State's economy. Considerable investigation has already been made and schemes can be quickly prepared for implementation under the second

Five-Year Plan. The basic pattern is clear enough. Irrigation, power, industries are the first priorities. Transport, banking and insurance, co-operative marketing, are in the second order of priorities. The irrigation and power schemes already investigated and approved are sufficient to occupy the Government for the next ten years.

On the basis of the power that will become available from 1955, a considerable degree of industrial development has to be envisaged. There is immediate scope for the starting of cement, sugar, cotton spinning, chemical, ceramic and paper manufacturing factories. Without this development, it may be that a good deal of the new power that may be generated in the next few years will remain unutilised. The Andhra Minister for Industries has complained that the "private sector" is not playing its part in the development of industries. If this refers to the hesitation of entrepreneurs to start new ventures, it is a correct statement. But the reason for this apparent lack of enterprise should be sought in the fact that several of the new concerns floated during the war and immediate post-war years have been in a state of suspended animation. The Andhra Government should conduct an enquiry into the history of these abortive enterprises—particularly in the Vanaspathi field—and ascertain the reasons for their failure so that the mistakes committed in their promotion may be avoided. The entry of purely speculative elements into the field of industry should be prevented. It is clear that in the climate that is prevailing today there is no hope of high and quick profits in any industry. A large degree of governmental participation in industry has become inevitable. In the circumstances, the Andhra Government should be prepared to play a more

active part in industrial development than they seem to envisage. A State Industrial Finance Corporation should be set up without further delay and a Development Board, with adequate representation of non-official elements from industry and business, should be established to study development possibilities and advise the Government on specific projects.

Considering the immediate potentialities for development, there is every reason for taking a very hopeful view of the economic outlook in Andhra. The problem is more one of organising the human material than of securing the material resources for development. Finance for development cannot possibly be raised all within the State, though the internal resources have as yet been barely scratched. Central aid will have to play a large part, but there is no room to think that this will not be forthcoming. For one thing, projects for the Krishna and the Godavari are the only major river valley projects that can be thought of in the south and they are of immense importance from the national point of view, not only for the power they will release but also for the immense increase in food production they will bring about. Andhra, moreover, occupies an important strategic position because of the fact that it is the seat of India's major shipbuilding enterprise and a centre of one of the three great new oil refineries. It is a great link connecting the north and the south. Central investment in Andhra in the second Five-Year Plan will therefore be considerable. But much depends on how the State Government makes use of it. We have seen from examples in Assam and Orissa that lakhs of rupees can easily go down the drain without the State or the people benefiting to the slightest extent. This should not happen in Andhra.

Sotto Voce

★

CHUCKING THE DOUGH



THE Public Accounts Committee, with unwearied assiduity, goes on digging up the cabbage patch of the London High Commission and uncovering new skeletons. We knew that the "jeeps scandal" had a sequel. The Committee shows that it was no less bizarre than the original adventure. The monkey in the nursery rhyme that exchanged its tail for a sword and proclaimed it by beat of drum was a mere tyro in the art of "Let us pretend" compared to the authorities who proposed to recover a loss of twenty lakhs of rupees by the simple expedient of transferring the contract to another firm.

Actually less than fifty out of the thousand odd vehicles due and paid for had been delivered by the new contracting firm, when it quietly repudiated any further responsibility for fulfilling the contract. The Committee draws up an impressive list of the faults of omission and commission which the purchasing authorities had been guilty of in entering into the original contract. But the commonsense rule of "once bit twice shy" is apparently not for Government departments. The High Commission entered into the second contract with absolutely undiminished faith in the innate goodness of human nature.

The offer of a new firm to underwrite the loss caused by the old one, without any *quid pro quo*, should have excited suspicion, observes the Committee. But the High Commis-

sion breezily accepted a bank reference which can only be described as a scream. The Committee of course doesn't use such impolite language. It contents itself with the observation that no one conversant with banking and business procedure would have looked at such a 'reference' a second time.

How high this new firm stood in the favour of our purchasing agencies in London comes out in the story of another transaction. On December 22, 1950 the Indian Government made known to the High Commission, confidentially of course, their requirements in the matter of defence purchases. Within eight days from that date the firm above mentioned had got itself appointed as the agent of the manufacturers for the supply of the identical materials in the identical quantities specified in the Government's indent to the High Commission. How did the firm come to know the Government's requirements? The Committee suggests an independent enquiry into the leak. It might as well suggest ploughing the sands.

The Committee, referring to the jeeps scandal, rather pathetically observes that though it had pointedly recommended disciplinary action in its second report none had been taken against the persons who had "transacted such an unbusinesslike deal in disregard of the administrative and financial procedure." No wonder that irregularities have been proliferating

amazingly. The Committee reports an Air Adviser in London as having gone "out of his way" to suggest the name of a particular firm not even on the approved list of contractors. Even more odd was the nonchalance displayed in the destruction of the entire departmental files relating to the purchase of blankets in the U. K.

The blankets had been ordered for the winter use of the Indian army; they arrived in midsummer. But that was not such a misfortune after all. Possibly a few had perished of the cold. But many more might have been carried off by the bugs and the lice with which the blankets teemed. And the Government were able to cut the losses by disposing of the infested and unserviceable blankets by public auction in India. Mercifully the report is silent as to what happened to the civilians who no doubt went home hugging their bargains.

Budgeting in the Defence Department seems to follow a law of its own. A trifling sum of a crore of rupees was provided for twice for the purchase of the same stores.

After this revelation the Committee's observation that the Financial Adviser, Defence, "had had to make reservations in his certificate" regarding the standard of stores accounting prevalent in the department seems a masterpiece of under-statement. And it is, to say the least, curious that the London agency of a Government which is resolved on unremitting war against all "intermediaries" from zamindars to managing agents should have delighted in planting an intermediary in every one of its crazy deals.

The Committee wants an inquiry by High Court Judges to bring the defaulters to book, and I for one cannot see how this reasonable demand can be ignored. The Government of India, we are repeatedly assured, is resolved to end corruption and waste. But the public is not impressed. It is all very well to send a few bureaucrats to prison for taking mamool and to threaten others with an elaborate inquisition into their private affairs. But why are the blue-eyed allowed to chuck the dough in fistfuls and no questions asked?

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SIDELIGHTS ::

A YEAR ago the Andhra State was inaugurated in a frenzy of excitement over the martyrdom of Sri Potti Sriramulu. The area included in the State was blessed with many of the requisites of prosperity. It had abundance of mineral wealth waiting to be exploited. Industrially it was in a virgin condition. The prospects of fruitful fecundity were therefore enormous. Its soil was rich and fertile, irrigated by perennial rivers that yielded only to the Ganga in mightiness. Its potential power resources were colossal. It was unburdened with large cities, so that the scope for urban planning and construction, utilising the latest knowledge and developments, was immense. Above all, the people were of a splendid malleability. Often Sri Roy Chowdhuri, with his keen eye for the structure of flesh beneath the facade of habiliments, used to regale me with glowing accounts of the beauty of face and form of the peasants and labourers dwelling between the Pennar and the Godavari. In this region, he said, were to be found the choicest specimens of bodily perfection in the country, and it was here he wished to be born and live if the choice were his, as an artist revelling in the joy that comes from the vision of a thing of beauty. Leaders of great national movements found also that the sturdier virtues were not less striking in the Andhras. They were the mainstay of the Gandhian effort for freedom until it got dissipated morally in the testing hour of power and victory. Excitable, quick to take offence, extremely sensitive to gentle cajolery, densely impervious to the subtle arts of getting on in the world, defiant, high-minded, proud, robust, restless, normally indolent but given to phenomenal energy spasmodically under congenial direction, the Andhras are difficult to manage, but capable of the highest feats of self-forgetful public spirit, rising even to

dizzy pinnacles of heroic sacrifice, when their emotions are stirred deeply by an inspiring leader. They are easily ennobled by a lofty example. But they are just the people to be driven wild by precepts of virtue revealed as spurious in the absence of corresponding practice

This rich human material that like clay in a skilful potter's hand could be moulded into any fine shape, what shape have the leaders at the helm of the Andhra State given to it in this first year after its inauguration? There has been prodigious advertisement of 'projects' undertaken, lavish spending, appointment of innumerable committees to go into this subject and that, a hectic expansion of secretariat files, perpetual laying of foundation stones, and mighty feats of peripatetic exertion and self-righteous boosts on the part of the Ministers. But the gulf between the rulers and ruled has become visibly wider even in so short a period as a year. Faith in good government and a fair deal have declined, so far as the common people are concerned.

The secret of influence over a heterogeneous population stands illustrated for all time in the life of the Mahatma. It consists in taking humanity as such into a fold of affection, rising superior to other loyalties like family, caste, clan and tribe. People in Chittoor still remember with gratitude a remarkable educationist of the place who when he lost an only son said he was not so bereaved as others thought because in every student of the school whom he had in charge he still had a son left. He did not merely say it but felt and acted likewise. That is the stuff of which the character of a real devotee to public duty is made. Contrast with this the behaviour of a

(Continued on page 41)

MEDICAL RELIEF IN ANDHRA STATE

By Dr. P. TIRUMALA RAO, M.B., B.S., M.S. (U.S.A.)

ANDHRAS are labouring to build a Welfare State. The first step in a Welfare State is to provide adequate nutrition and prevent communicable disease amongst the population. This is of utmost importance in the care of the health of the children. Child health is given top priority in all the schemes of the World Health Organisation. What strikes me most when I compare the East and the West is the tremendous attention the public health departments in the West have paid in the past and are paying at present towards prevention of diseases. Whereas we are in a stage of infancy in the matter of preventive public health measures. The importance of preventive measures could be realised from the efforts taken in Philadelphia (population 3 lakhs) where they eradicated typhoid and bacillary dysentery by providing good protected water and milk supply. In the whole of the United States with 157 million population, there is not a single case of smallpox. In a thousand-bedded hospital during my stay of one year there was not a single case of diphtheria or typhoid amongst children.

The need of the hour is:

- (1) Improved public health measures
- (2) State medical aid through poly-clinics and
- (3) Training of specialist personnel.

Improved public health measures: We should improve the sanitary condition of our towns and the sanitary consciousness of our villagers. At least where the resident population is tremendously growing, underground drainage and protected water supply are the two essential things. It is a matter of regret that in Andhra, an area where nearly 2 crores of population live, there is not a single town

with underground drainage. Even where funds are available our municipalities have not taken adequate steps due to causes known to all. As long as the mosquitoes and flies are born and bred up in our bosom, there is no salvation for us. An American doctor who addressed the American Medical Association at New York on the subject of "Medical Aid in Tropics" last year said: "The individual hygiene of a Hindu is the highest in the world but his community hygiene is the least in the world." Schemes to provide underground drainage and protected water supply should be given top priority and must be placed on a war footing in national and provincial planning.

State medical aid through poly-clinics: In planning for national health we have to evolve a scheme which will suit our conditions. Ours is not a compact area. Our literacy is not as high as Britain's. Hence our sense of civic responsibility is not high. We are not economically so affluent as to be able to adopt the health insurance schemes of the United States and our health conscience is not yet tuned to preventive care. Hence the immediate response from the people who really need an insurance for health care—I mean the middle class—will be poor. We have to adopt a via media between the two schemes of Britain and U. S. A.

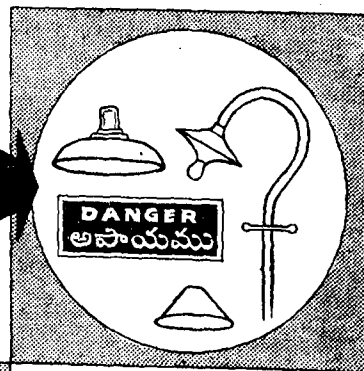
We have to divide our population into cities and villages. In the cities and towns, people above say the hundred rupees per month income level should be encouraged to join a sort of health scheme where they register their names and pay a nominal amount of Rs. 5 annually. When a large membership is obtained we can call it a "Co-operative Health Unit." This can provide all the modern scientific methods of investigation such as the laboratory, X-ray

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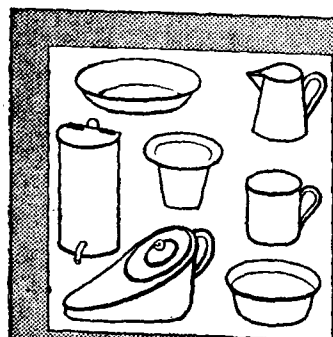
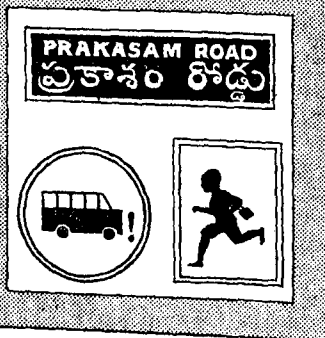
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facilities and specialist consultation at nominal rates. Further this unit should examine only the cases referred to it by the family doctors. It will not then come in the way of the general practitioners and on the other hand will be a great help to them. Every general practitioner will co-operate to promote this scheme. This "Co-operative Health Unit" in a city like Madras can provide the middle class people with modern medical facilities at very moderate cost. In-patient hospital facilities also could be provided at half the usual rates for members of this unit. Government aid also may be forthcoming for a voluntary health scheme of this kind. Those whose incomes are below Rs. 100 per mensem avail of the usual opportunities in the Government hospitals.

With regard to the rural parts, we have already started our community projects and accepted them as the basic units of our national planning. There is a medical officer in this scheme. If we want the medical aid in the community projects to be real, we should organise poly-clinics in these centres.

A clinic generally means in the West a place where a group of practitioners attend to the various needs of the patients. A surgeon, a physician, a pediatrician and a radiologist may constitute that unit. Thus by co-operation and specialisation we will be doing better quality of service. To begin with, all our headquarters hospitals must be well organised poly-clinics.

THE Government can leave the individual practice to the private practitioners. They must concentrate on the organisation of poly-clinics. These poly-clinics may be coupled with ambulance service which could transport patients from the surrounding villages.

With this type of impetus given by the State to the poly-clinics, I am sure private enterprise also will be forced into organised medical

relief, in place of the present disorganised individual competition. In the rural areas we have to promote medical aid through the three following means:

- (1) Medical cess for each area under cultivation in that area. Thus the landless are exempted from the tax and yet get free medical aid.
- (2) Contribution by the Central and Provincial Governments.
- (3) The charitable instincts of people should be exploited and utilised for medical relief.

We have to promote more voluntary effort but keep the initiative in the hands of the State. The poly-clinics make the medical aid real and scientific.

Training of specialist personnel: The third urgent problem is to have proper trained personnel to serve in our medical college hospitals and headquarters hospitals. There are eleven districts in the Andhra State. The specialities in the various branches of medicine on the whole may not be more than 6 to 7. For this we need only about 60 or 70 well trained specialists in their respective lines, such as medicine, surgery, pediatrics, ear, nose and throat, eye, midwifery and gynaecology and about 5 or 6 ultra specialists like neuro-surgeon, thoracic surgeon, radiologist and psychiatrist. Even if we send them abroad for training for a year or two, it won't cost us more than 15 to 20 lakhs of rupees. But you will have first class personnel to render medical aid and these men in turn can train more doctors. What counts for proper medical aid is well trained personnel who could tackle complicated problems with confidence. We want optimism and dynamism in our profession and the only way is to create dynamism amongst our young men.

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH OUR YOUNG MEN?

(Sri S. Krishna Rao, the writer of this article, retired recently after giving thirty years to teaching. He is held in the highest esteem by all who know him. In the fatigue of routine he has lost nothing of his zest for service or interest in the problems of the young. His wise and mature analysis of the trials and difficulties of the youth of our time deserve the earnest attention of educationists and administrators)

By S. KRISHNA RAO

IT has become almost common to hear some one or other complain every day about our education or the educational institution, maybe about the content of education, the poverty of the standards, or the behaviour of our youngmen who are the products of our educational system. Discontent will exist no doubt in any system that is designed to serve large numbers of people, and it is also welcome to prevent stagnation or departure from the goal aimed at. But when it has become loud and persistent for years, and when a person of the authority of the Prime minister of the land feels that our education has become useless, and that it would be better if the universities are closed for some time, then there is not much room for complacency. At least the problem requires to be seriously looked into.

Lack of efficiency in any sphere of human activity is a grave national handicap. The charge of inefficiency against most of the products of our educational institutions is something substantial which cannot be hidden by any argument. That does not at all mean that our schools and colleges have not produced efficient men in different branches of knowledge. They have, and we are proud not only of such men but also the institutions that have produced them. But the complaint is that their number is very small, so small that it is seriously affecting national strength and progress. Inefficiency has resulted in wastage of time and money, and has become a day to-day head-ache to men at the helm.

Likewise the behaviour of our young men in schools and colleges is causing grave anxiety sometimes. Reports of indiscipline among students and resort to strikes on every conceivable grievance are fairly common. The part played by our boys during examinations in certain schools, especially in the Andhra State, is nothing very creditable to them and is still puzzling parents, teachers and administrators beyond the hope of any solution.

From the educationalist's point of view, both efficiency and good conduct strike their roots in the early habits which children form at a very impressionable age. But that is just not happening. At a time when the children require the largest amount of well-informed attention, they are mostly treated with indifference and sometimes with contempt by the elders both at home and at school. Very few realise that a child educates himself more than others educate him. He sees much and hears much and tries to codify his knowledge. He does plenty of imitation until he succeeds and thus gains confidence in himself. But he often understands wrongly and acts wrongly. He has thus need of guidance which he generally misses.

In poor homes he hardly gets enough to meet his physical needs. In rich homes he is pampered. In either case, he is drawn away from his natural hunger for knowing and the impulse for action. In some cases he lacks the physical sustenance and opportunity; in other cases, he is held prisoner at home

lest his experiments with the world around him might injure him and cause anxiety to his parents.

At school, he fares no better. Most parents unfortunately equate education with the passing of examinations and they are satisfied if this aim is achieved. In a country where poverty is the only inheritance of most children, and where a certificate in hand provides hope for employment, why should any one bother to read more into the term 'education' than the mere passing of an examination?

The whole edifice of education in its various phases is built on this understanding or misunderstanding. A person passes for an educated man if he is literate enough to express himself in writing, and for a 'qualified' man if he passes an examination. Of course, in dealing with millions of men and children, you cannot have more complicated tests. But that is just the spot where the evil of inefficiency and improper behaviour creeps in.

LITERACY and passing of examinations cannot be ends in themselves. They are the by-products of an endeavour for a more complete purpose, viz. the development of the full personality of the child, which is education. Owing to various historical causes, mostly political and economic, this higher and more complete aim was lost sight of and the child's personality and natural talents have been used by the rulers and the home for their own ends, the former for establishing their rule by bribes of posts and salaries, and the latter for keeping the wolf off the door. And the seats of learning have been fashioned accordingly. It is significant that these institutions were mostly filled till very recently by children of those classless people who are neither rich enough to live by incomes from their estates nor poor enough to live by the sweat of their brow. In other words, only children who needed a job to keep them going have set the standards both of efficiency and conduct for our present day schools

and colleges, during the last few generations.

In recent years, crowds of children from backward groups have sought admission into them not of course for getting enlightened but again to become eligible for salaried posts. Living has become a problem to many and a salaried service carries with it a security and therefore a glamour both for the parent who is too poor to educate the boy, and to the boy who hopes for a decent chance of living. The parent is anxious to get the boy through his courses in the minimum number of years, for he cannot afford to keep him long at school. For this purpose he would not hesitate to adopt any means. He often succeeds in putting a boy in a class higher than the one for which he is fit, and seeing him through any examination, be it a Government or a university examination. Is there any wonder that the boys and girls do not and cannot set their minds on standards?

To add to the difficulties of the young men in this regard, a new agency other than the rulers and the parents came into the field to claim their allegiance and exploit their youthful indiscretion. And that is the political philosopher. When he strikes out a new line of thinking, especially when it relates to politics, he gives little time to allow it to be examined, and accepted or rejected. He has a supreme confidence that he must be in the right and others must fall in line with him. For this purpose he generates a storm of propaganda in the din of which very little thinking is possible and everything goes forward on the crest of emotion. And young people who by their very age are more emotional than thoughtful get engulfed in this upsurge, and educational institutions become passive spectators to the whole scene. It is really surprising what great hold these divergent political philosophies have on groups of children of tender ages even in schools, not to speak of grown-ups at college. How the votaries of these political creeds are able

to spread their tentacles among innocent children and hold them tight in their grip is a matter that requires close investigation.

There is another factor that has to be considered in this connection. And that is the importance given to English in the curriculum of studies. Of necessity a high standard is aimed at in this language, as it is the principal Government language and the medium of instruction in all college courses of study. With the growth of knowledge and therefore curricula in other subjects, such as social studies and sciences, it has become increasingly difficult for our boys to give adequate attention to this rather difficult language with its peculiar idiom and structure of sentences. They are unable to do the wide reading which is so necessary to enable them to use it correctly. When any attempt is made in this direction other subjects cannot receive the required attention.

To add to the pressure that already existed before the advent of independence, at least one more language is now claiming their attention, viz. Hindi, as a compulsory subject almost. With this large demand upon the time and attention of our boys, especially when most of them are too poor to give an additional year at school, it is no wonder that standards of efficiency have fallen, bringing about, in turn, a fall in standards of conduct.

IT WILL thus be seen that the young men who so often come in for admonition and blame at the hands of elders are more sinned against than sinning. First of all, they are in the midst of an adventure—the adventure of youth when, during every minute of their lives, they are trying to discover themselves. Then there is the economic condition of the home and the lure of salaried jobs. These do not permit the child to put as much reliance on self-effort and straight dealings as on short cuts, to obtain certificates. Thirdly, there is the heavy burden of the curriculum, especially in the languages, without corresponding increase in the number of years of

study. Lastly, there is the distraction of political propaganda that aims at claiming votaries even from tender age groups.

There should be nothing to complain against our young men, ordinarily. They are better informed and react more quickly to treatment than young men of two or three generations ago. There is no doubt that their hearts and heads are quite sound. They are lovable still. If they are at fault, sometimes, it is natural with them to be so. But what have we done to help them do better—the State, the parent, the teacher and the politician?

Many commissions have sat to improve conditions for them and many remedies have been suggested. They may perhaps succeed in some measure. But of one thing, one can be certain: that unless our attitude towards children and young men in general changes nothing worthwhile can be achieved by way of improvement.

It cannot be gainsaid that the child is the most neglected creature in India to-day. To the parent he is a nuisance, when he cannot be an object of enjoyment. To the teacher he is an offender, when he cannot carry out the former's orders. To the State he is a potential agitator, when he cannot sing its praises. All seem oblivious of the fact that during his whole career until he finishes his education, the child is an adventurer in a strange world, struggling to discover himself and understand his environment. It is unfortunate that very few sympathise with him in this endeavour. Unless and until the elders extend to the child and young men a very large measure of sympathy, we cannot get the best out of them.

It should not be forgotten that, after all, the real wealth of a nation is its children, who are its future citizens. We lavish so much attention upon ourselves to secure all the comforts we need. But we treat the child as an unavoidable appendage to the family or the State and not as the inheritor of a long past, and

the only support in the future for all that has been best in the traditions of the past.

It is still a common sight in villages and even in towns to see mothers and fathers beating young children mercilessly for small foibles or for evading to go to that most uninteresting place, the school. The schoolmaster still brandishes the birch which is often his only resort to maintain order. The conscience of the State is not yet roused to the fact that children are the only people for whom it exists ultimately. It is prepared to use them and their talents when they grow old as public servants. But it is oblivious of the fact that a very large majority of them constitute its future electorate from whom it obtains authority. We hear of Health Weeks, Compost Weeks, Courtesy Weeks, and even Education Weeks being held for the purpose of enlightening the public on various topics of interest but the child is nowhere in the picture. No attempt is made to keep the public informed as to how a child between say five and eighteen, the most important years of his life, should be treated.

In the first Five Year Plan which involves an expenditure of two thousand crores of rupees and odd, there is hardly any item that concerns children directly. No provision is made to stress the value of

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE PHYSICS EXHIBITION

At a general body meeting of the Presidency College Physics Association held recently, it was decided to conduct the eighteenth Physics Exhibition from October 8 to 10. It was also decided to invite Sri C. Subramanian, Minister for Finance and Education, to inaugurate the Exhibition. A portrait of the late Dr. H. Parameswaran, formerly Professor of Physics of Presidency College, will be unveiled at the time of the Exhibition.

a child to the home, society and the State, and the need to assist him in every way to come to his own. One sad feature of the post-war experience is the very large number of children that not only beg by themselves but are taught to beg by their parents.

Even educated young men beyond the age of eighteen are not safe from the evil of domination by elders. A price is set upon their heads for marriage. In certain districts, the dowry constitutes one of the chief aims of education! The position of girls is still worse. In most homes, they are made to feel that they are sources of misery to their parents every minute of their lives.

But for the fact that the children are endowed by nature with a surprising sense of forgiveness and forgetfulness to insult and injury, we would have the very worst of treatment at their hand for the utter disregard with which we deal with them.

Everybody professes concern and love for them. But it is a love like that of King Lear striking a bargain in exchange for the giving of that love. We have to search our hearts whether the love we bestow on them is of that enduring nature which concerns itself only with their progress and welfare and not with our vanities and the so-called inherent authority we wield over them—which is, in fact, a responsibility we owe to them.

A child not treated properly at home, at school, and elsewhere, gets out of sorts occasionally breaking his natural shyness, or misled by the din of political and other slogans. And we call that indiscipline. The whole society, the educational authorities and even the Government get perturbed and severe steps are taken only to make matters worse.

I PLEAD that these future moulders of the destinies of the nation be given a little more space in our hearts and thoughts, and steps taken to make their life at home and at school more livable, more interesting and more free.

THE STORY OF THE POST OFFICE

From Chandragupta To The East India Company

THOUGH India now celebrates the centenary of the postage stamp, a postal service existed in this country from very ancient times.

In the Arthashastra of Kautilya, Emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya's Chief Minister, popularly known as Chanakya, references are found to the semblance of a postal system which was in existence in or about 322 B.C. Chandra Gupta's empire stretched from Persia to Southern India and was governed from his capital Patliputra (Patna). He split the vast area into units and placed each of them under a provincial Governor. The difficulty of communication between the capital city and various provincial capitals was solved by the use of the pigeon post. Letters in little cachets were hung from the necks of pigeons which were trained to fly to their proper destinations. This system also continued in the time of Asoka, grandson of Chandra Gupta. Simultaneously, an internal communication system was developed by the bankers who in their efforts to promote trade, sent private couriers with bills of exchange between important banking centres. This was probably the genesis of the "Mahajan dak" of the 17th and 18th centuries.

A later reference to the postal service in this country occurs in the writings of Ibn Batuta, the great traveller of the 14th century, who describes the existence of a courier system in the reign of Mohammed Bin Tughlaq, then ruler of Delhi. According to Batuta, there were two kinds of couriers—horse and foot. The horse couriers were drawn from the Sultan's cavalry and were stationed at distances of four miles while the foot couriers were placed at a pace of a mile. Sentry boxes were set up at a distance of every three miles. Each courier was provided with a whip about two cubits long

with small bells attached to its head. Whenever the courier left the precincts of a city, he carried the mail in one hand and the whip in the other which he shook as he approached his relay counterpart. On hearing the jingle of bells, the latter emerged, took over the despatches and proceeded to the next station.

Sher Shah's mounted post

The great historian, Farishta, has given a vivid description of the mounted post system which was in vogue during the reign of Sher Shah in the middle of the 16th century. Sher Shah was the first ruler to construct a trunk road of 2,000 miles from Sonargaon in Bengal to the banks of the Indus. He placed two horse couriers on the road at distances of every two miles to run the communication line.

Later on, Emperor Akbar is reported to have established a courier system of 2 horses and some *newias* (runners) every ten miles for the carriage of Government letters. About a hundred miles were covered by these couriers daily making it possible for a letter from Agra to reach Ahmedabad in five days. The roads then traversed through sylvan areas exposed to wild animals and brigands who contributed in a large measure to the irregularity and insecurity of mails.

Even in the early stages of British domination in India, no regular system existed for the conveyance of mails. The East India Company, originally founded in 1600, for carrying on trade between Great Britain and India soon established itself in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. The extension of their commercial activities made it necessary for the Company to carry on correspondence between these three cities and other places where their offices were located. The Company continued to

use the existing organised dak system even a hundred years later. In 1688, a scheme was introduced whereby the Company started a service with their own paid postal runners. A post office was set up in Bombay where all despatches were brought in and delivered.

Different systems

In 1766 Lord Clive wrote his minute on the better regulation of 'dawk' and ordered that all letters should be despatched from Government House; a postmaster then called postal writer and an assistant were stationed at Government House every night to attend to the receipt and despatch of dak. With the introduction of this system for the carriage of official dak, the zamindars and landholders along the routes were held responsible for the supply of runners to carry the mails. But private persons and zamindars, who ran the runner services were not conceded the privilege of using them and had to depend mostly on other dak conveying agencies, which were both costly and uncertain. The Government runners, however, stealthily carried, for a consideration, private letters. These underhand transactions gave birth to the idea of "selling this service". Apart from the Company's dak, the bankers ran their own runner services called the "mahajan dak".

During these days, the post office was also entrusted with the task of catering to the transport needs of those travelling on state business. 'Staging' bungalows were under the charge of post office officials who were responsible for their upkeep. The provision of horses, palanquins and mail carts or tongas was also their responsibility.

On March 31, 1774 a regular system of post was brought into force by Warren Hastings. A Postmaster-General was appointed and postage charged for the first time on private letters. But this system existed only in those parts of India where the Company had its establishment so that private post still flourished in other places till 1837 when the carriage of mails became a monopoly of

Government. In 1789, the first regular weekly postal service was started from Masulipatam to Bombay, Madras and Calcutta.

Towards the end of the 18th century, mails in Bengal were conveyed by 'hurkaras' or 'runners' whose beats were of eight miles. Each runner was accompanied by a drummer who beat a loud tattoo while passing through forests. In dangerous tracts, an escort of two torch bearers and two archers was also supplied after nightfall.

District Postal system

Since the imperial postal service did not embrace several towns and cities, there developed a parallel organisation, namely, the district postal system connecting the headquarters of each district with police and revenue stations. This service was controlled and run by district officials and was supported by a cess levied on the zamindars or on the local people. The primary object of the district post was to deliver official correspondence but it undertook on behalf of the Imperial Post Office to provide for the collection and distribution of letters in circles of villages which were visited at intervals by runners. The delivery of letters was effected through the police and village chowkidars but the results were unsatisfactory—about 15% of the letters remaining undelivered. There was no central authority to co-ordinate its activities and the services varied from area to area. The charges for the conveyance of letters were levied in cash.

Government monopoly

In 1837, the postal regulations were revised and Act XVII which gave the Government the sole right of conveyance of mail made necessary the establishment of post offices within the Company's territories. All the private postal services were banned excepting a few which ran under licence. At this period, the post office had also under its management the Government carrying agency, known as the Government bullock train, with a main communication line from Calcutta to Peshawar branching out to Darjeel-

ing, Nagpur, Lucknow, Faizabad, Fatehgarh, Simla and Murree. The post office had occasionally to organise a military transport train for conveying annual military relief for which these bullock trains were used.

In 1850, a Commission of three persons was appointed "to enquire into the methods for making the post office more efficient and more conducive to the convenience of the public than it had been hitherto." The three members were Messrs. Courtney, Forbes and Beadon. In 1851, the Commission presented its report and on this report, which was implemented the following year, has been based the whole fabric of the present postal administration.

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From The First Stamp To Independence

The publication of the Courtney report in 1851 and the introduction of the Railway in 1853 marks the end of an epoch in postal history of India and the beginning of another. Dr. O'Shaughnessy's electric telegraph, introduced in 1853, was also to play an important part in the transmission of messages.

On October 1, 1854, the first postage stamp was issued on an all-India basis. In the same year, the post office was placed under the unitary control of a Director-General of Post Office. A manual of rules was issued governing the collection, conveyance and delivery of all postal articles consigned to the care of the post office.

Use of Railways

The authorities were quick to take advantage of the railway developments in the country. On September 9, 1853 Lord Dalhousie by his minute imposed on the railway companies an obligation to carry free both letters and banghy mails. Though in 1854, the railway mileage was less than 100, it is significant that the foundations were laid of the modern R. M. S. organisation with its country-wide ramifications and route mileage of 36,790. There was also another development which had

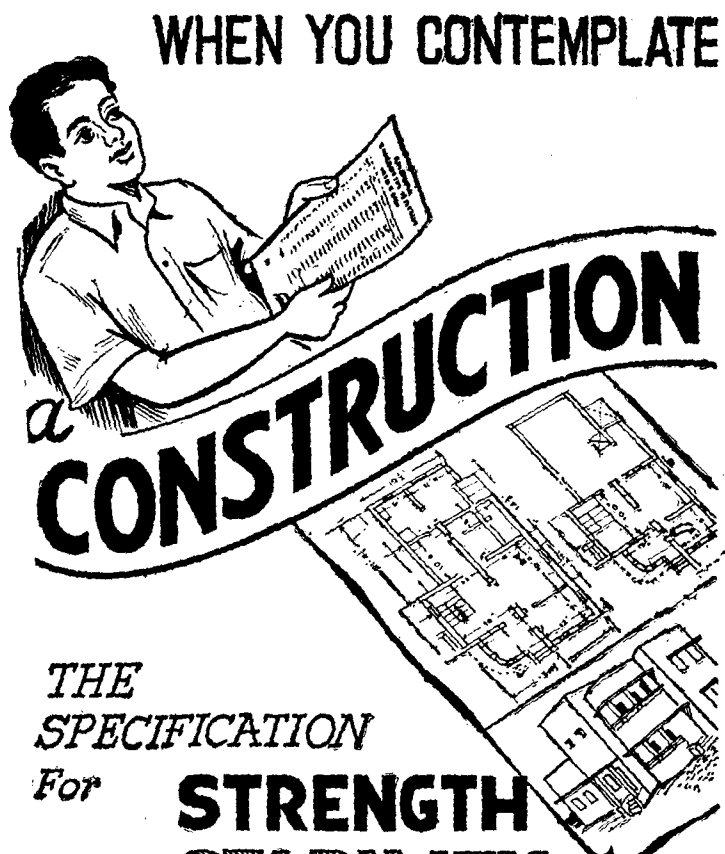
an important effect on the overseas service. In the same year, the Government implemented a contract signed with the P. & O Steam Navigation Company in 1853 under which they ran a sea mail service from Great Britain to India via Alexandria reducing the transit time from 60 to 28 days. This service was started on July 7, 1854.

Perhaps, the most revolutionary change which had an immediate effect on the distribution of postal traffic and revenue, was the introduction of a system by which postage stamps then called "postage labels" were to be affixed to letters which were thus pre-paid. Bearing letters were charged double the postage at their destination. The calculation of postage due was based on elaborately prepared polymetric tables. Before the introduction of the half-anna postage, the proportion of bearing to prepaid letters was almost two to one. In a year, the position was reversed.

During the first decade after its re-organisation, the extension of postal services synchronised with the expansion of British commercial and military interests. Postal lines either followed military routes or the army took advantage of the expanding postal facilities for locating their cantonments. To travel from Madras to Bombay—a distance of 836 miles—the military-cum-postal route passed through Nellore, Ongole, Mulakapur, Secunderabad, Gulbarga, Sholapur, Poona, Khandal and Panvel. The journey was covered in 72 stages of an average length of 11 miles. Six post offices and nine tappal stations ran runner lines all along the route, the entire journey being accomplished in 10 to 12 days. There were 'staging' bungalows at convenient distances and the average speed of a runner was about 3½ miles per hour.

The advent of the railways brought about many changes. The first railway line was opened on 16th April, 1853 between Bombay and Thana, a distance of 30 miles. Ten years later, postal communications along the railway lines reached a mileage of 2,473 while that by cart and horse

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was 5,156, runners 33,853 and sea 5,137. Conveyance of mail by railways meant increase not only in the speed of transmission and in the weight of mails carried but also a saving in transportation costs until the clause, under which the railways carried mails free, was abrogated. In 1863, it took five days for the mail to reach Madras from Bombay. By 1871, every town with a population of 5,000 was provided with a post office. Towns with smaller populations were equipped with letter boxes which were served by itinerant messengers attached to the nearest post office.

Money Order service

The year 1880 marks another advance in postal progress. Till then, money orders were issued and paid at Government treasuries only which numbered 283. This caused considerable inconvenience to the public. In that year, 5,500 post offices were authorised to receive and pay money orders without requiring the presence of the payee at the office. The introduction of this system for revenue and rent transmission saved the public from undertaking long journeys to pay these charges in person simultaneously making it possible to specify the particulars of debts or charges for which money orders were sent. The remittance of money through the post office constituted evidence of payment and thus prevented fraudulent entries being made in the registers of landlords or their agents. This system was also a boon to the small cultivator as payment in absentia by money order freed him from the obligation of 'nazrana' or giving the customary present to the creditor at the time of paying back his debt.

On December 1, 1883, a scheme was launched by which all post offices became receiving offices for telegrams. By the end of the year 55, combined offices were opened and twenty years later their number rose to 2,029. With a large increase in telegraph work being done by the post office, proposals were made to combine the post office and telegraph departments. After protracted consideration, the two departments

were amalgamated on April 1, 1914 into a single department with a Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs at its head.

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Post-Independence Period

An important feature of the post-Independence period was the 'All-Up' Scheme which was launched in 1949. For a service which had started with the runner, the palanquin and the tonga and had advanced through its century to the railway and motor, the idea of using the aeroplane was a logical development. But utilising the service for all ordinary first class mail without any surcharge was a unique step. And the service has, indeed, made communication quicker. A letter from Delhi to Madras, which before 1949 took three days by train, is now received in Madras the next morning after being posted in Delhi the previous evening.

In a hundred years, the Indian Post Office has grown from 700 offices to over 45,900 of today spread all over India. A hundred years ago, 38,000 postal articles were handled by the post offices annually. To-day, through these post offices about 7 million postal articles addressed in 36 languages are posted and delivered every day. The Indian Post Office is one of the largest organisations of its kind in the world and with a rise in the percentage of literacy, it will become the largest public utility service in the world. The communication lines consist of 186,961 miles of surface routes and 20,486 miles of air routes.

The Director-General of Posts & Telegraphs not only runs a vast and intricate postal service; he is responsible for the telegraph and telephone services, which have made phenomenal expansion, during the last five years. He is a banker, gives indispensable co-operation in the working of social services in the country like selling quinine, paying old age pensions and dispensing licences for wireless sets. He is the second largest employer in the country with a staff of 234,000 persons.

ATTLEE'S SECRET MISSION

By ANDREW ROTH

CLEMENT ATTLEE has denied, with amused vehemence, the report that he undertook for Sir Winston a secret mission in Moscow and Peking to arrange a new 'Big Five' meeting.

His amusement may very well have come from the fact that the questioner came very close to the truth. While not on any mission for Sir Winston, he almost certainly was engaged in concealed soundings of his own.

So well can the enigmatic leader of the Labour Party conceal his plans and intentions that his intentions may well still be hidden from not only his Soviet and Chinese hosts, but from the fellow members of his touring party. Mr. Attlee has that peculiar characteristic; he has complete confidence in his own judgment and timing and feels no necessity to confide in others or to show his hand until the decisive time for action has arrived.

This time he is quietly playing for the biggest stakes in the world. If his judgment is as sound as he is sure it is, he may very well seize the peace initiative completely from Sir Winston Churchill.

It may very well be because the Soviets and Chinese have half guessed at Mr. Attlee's intentions that Malenkov and Mao have broken every precedent and extended to the delegation headed by Mr. Attlee a type of hospitality never before extended to Westerners.

No spice needed

The Communist leaders had no need for their offensive intelligence network to estimate Mr. Attlee's intention. All they needed was a subscription to *Hansard*. There, in the verbatim proceedings of the House of Commons, the logical and consistent Mr. Attlee has pointed

the direction in which he wants to move.

In Mr. Attlee's mind there are four fixed and fundamental lines of action if the world is to avoid the holocaust of H-bomb warfare:

1. The United Nations must be made to work for all nations.
2. Communist China's admission to the UN is the test case of 'peaceful coexistence.'
3. Peace is best stabilized by regional groupings, capable of defending themselves and linked with neighbouring groupings in some sort of non-aggression agreement.
4. The H-Bomb makes it necessary for world leaders to meet soon to eliminate differences which have now become petty.

It is generally agreed that Mr. Attlee's speech of April 5, on the H-bomb, was the most brilliant of his 52-year-long parliamentary career. It moved all who heard it because it expressed in clear and reasonable terms the need for urgent action to cope with the menace of H-bomb warfare.

It was clear that Bikini had been the bell of doom, ringing out its warning to Mr. Attlee. Unlike Sir Winston, Mr. Attlee is a practitioner of the English art of understatement and there were none in the House who doubted that he meant it when he said: "We believe that civilization today is in grave danger . . . In our view, we face today a new situation in the history of the world . . . I think the broad fact is that scientists working under the direction of Governments have evolved a weapon which is capable of destroying the great cities of the world, or, if not of destroying them, at least of putting them out of action . . . It could devastate the area of London, and it could, equally, devastate Moscow, Paris, Sydney or any other of the great cities of the world."

"It appears that this new instrument of destruction can be made greater even than the bomb that was exploded the other day, and it can be made in quantity . . . Further the means of delivery of these weapons by aeroplane or by rocket are constantly being improved . . ."

"We have reached a culminating point in the development of warfare. At one time, war was waged between armed forces, and the suffering of the civilian population was generally incidental . . . Attack on the civilian population has now become primary."

With ruthless logic he destroyed the contention of those, like Sir Winston, who claim that "the threat of instant retaliation by the use of this weapon can be employed to prevent a resort to armed action anywhere . . . This is a profound delusion . . . The threat of its use is very dangerous because it may provoke anticipation . . ."

"The danger here is that in the use of this weapon there is obviously immense advantage for the side that gets its blow in first . . ."

No sympathy for totalitarians

Those Americans and Australian legislators who have suggested that Mr. Attlee has gone 'soft' on Communism clearly did not read his words: "I cannot think of any democratic statesman initiating this warfare. One must always remember the difference between democracies and authoritarian States. The advantage of unexpected, immediate action is always with authoritarian States. The attack on the American fleet by the Japanese is one example. We could not imagine a similar un-notified attack by the United States of America against the Japanese fleet."

At the same time he warned the Russians that they, too, were running risks: "Russia is engaged in building up her social system and an economy which we do not like, very different from our own. It is not our way of life, but it is their concern. I am sure that Mr. Malenkov and the rulers of Russia do not want to see their experiment blasted with

hydrogen bombs. After all, they have gone a considerable way in developing it. They have large, well-to-do classes interested in its survival, and I am sure that the view of the ordinary citizens of Russia, and, I think, of the leaders of Russia, is a feeling of the fear of what may happen."

He thought that this fear may be the proper lubricant: "I want every man and woman in the world to be acutely aware of the danger in which they stand, the danger that affronts civilisation . . . The only way open to us seems to be to make a new approach to world problems with the consciousness of this great danger. After all, all other problems are really dwarfed by this . . ."

He used every form of persuasion to underline the historic urgency of the time: "I suppose that most of us in our time have read of the great civilisations of the past, and reading with a knowledge of the event we say, 'What fools these people were not to realise what was happening' . . . Would not a visitor from another planet say just the same of us, 'What fools to keep quarrelling in the face of this danger?'"

He strove to assure Sir Winston and the Conservatives that he was making his request "in no party spirit; I seek no party advantage; nor do I offer any criticism of this or any other Government. I move it without any feeling or expression of panic—because we do not panic in this country—but because I believe there is need for a calm and realistic appreciation of the position of the world today, and often a realistic approach means that urgent action is necessary."

Mr. Attlee asked, in the motion which he had composed on his own battered old typewriter, that "an immediate initiative" by the British Government should be undertaken to convene the chiefs of state of Britain, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. to consider "anew the problem of the reduction and control of armaments" and to strengthen "collective peace through the United Nations Organisation."

His peroration was significant: "It is not too late . . . More than once Britain's courage and British initiative have saved Europe. British initiative may well save world civilization."

Summit to cesspool

Having urged Sir Winston to the summit of world diplomacy, Mr. Attlee was surprised and shocked to have the Prime Minister tumble the discussion into the cesspool of party controversy of the most squalid type.

Instead of looking ahead to the dangerous future, Sir Winston chose to take a squint-eyed look at the past. He came up with the unsupported allegations that Attlee had not adequately defended British interests in negotiations with the U. S. on the exchange of atomic information. "When, after the Election in 1945, I quitted the office of Prime Minister which I held during the war," Sir Winston said revealingly, "our position was very different"

Pressed by a mass of indignant Labourites to specify what Mr. Attlee could have done to prevent the passage of the McMahon Act, which barred the U. S. from imparting information to Britain, Sir Winston lamely unveiled for the first time—the secret Quebec Agreement on atomic matters which he signed with President Roosevelt in 1945. He suggested that Mr. Attlee should have shown this secret agreement to Senator McMahon who, he had discovered, had not known about it when he sponsored the Act.

"What possible reason had I to suspect that the United States Government . . . had not informed their own supporters and Senator McMahon?" When Sir Winston insisted on this gutter-level muck-raking he stung a livid Mr. Attlee to add: "I never mentioned the Quebec Agreement and (your) giving away the industrial advantages. I was too loyal." The last four words were given with furious emphasis of a man who ordinarily hates to show his emotions.

On his own

This incredible spoiled-child demonstration by Sir Winston apparently convinced Attlee that the Prime Minister would delay bringing pressure on the Americans until he was sure of a favourable American reception. He himself was sure that there was little time. "I feel it is my duty to warn the peoples everywhere," he told a Social Democratic meeting in Copenhagen on June 5, "on how brittle a foundation our civilization rests today. Is it to fall through human lack of wisdom, when human invention has made possible a united world?"

It is clear from Mr. Attlee's speeches in Parliament and out that he began to think through, in the interim between the H-bomb debate and his journey to China, the possible foundations of world peace. This happened, it should be remembered, against the background of the Geneva negotiations.

He appears to have reached conclusions, tentative or otherwise, on the following points:

1. *The United Nations must be made to work as originally conceived.* Mr. Attlee has long been a strong supporter of the United Nations, at whose birth he assisted in San Francisco. It is no accident that he quotes, in his recently-published autobiography, his address to the opening session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in London in January 1946. "The United Nations Organization must become the overriding factor in foreign policy. After the First World War there was a tendency to regard the League of Nations as something outside the ordinary range of foreign policy . . . We must all now today recognize the truth proclaimed by the Foreign Minister of the U. S. S. R. (Maxim Litvinoff) at Geneva, 'Peace is indivisible.' . . ."

Always anti-Communist, Mr. Attlee's postwar irritation with the Soviets derived substantially from what he considered to be their abuse of the UN. "Instead of its proceedings being objective and businesslike, there is obstruction, there

are propaganda attacks on flimsy pretexts, and a variety of episodes which have tended to bring the organization into disrepute," he complained in November 9, 1946.

Of late, however, he has come to think that the United States is tending to abuse the United Nations more. "The sheet-anchor of our policy is the United Nations," he told the House of Commons on July 14, 1954, "and we stand on those principles. The United Nations are composed of States of varying ideological conceptions. There seems to be a body in the United States, and a fairly influential body, which seems to regard the United Nations as primarily an instrument in a war of ideologies, as primarily a taking part in an attempt to combat everywhere the theory of Communism."

He then quoted Sir Winston, who had said on July 12: "What a vast ideological gulf there is between the idea of peaceful co-existence vigilantly safeguarded, and the mood of forcibly extirpating the Communist fallacy and heresy." "The trouble is," added Attlee, "that there seems to be a large number of people across Atlantic who hold that second view."

2. *The United Nations cannot reinforce 'peaceful coexistence' unless Communist China is admitted to it.* "It is really a farce still not to recognize the present Government of China as the effective Government of China," he insisted in the June 25 debate on foreign affairs, just before Sir Winston and Anthony Eden flew to Washington. "I think the real obstacle to a settlement in Korea is the failure to recognize the Chinese position and to allow China to have her proper place in the United Nations . . . If China were in the United Nations, I think we might get greater acceptance of the kind of provisions set up (in Korea) for demilitarisation, armistice and all the rest of it, but as long as China is obstinately kept outside the United Nations, she always and inevitably regards that as a hostile bloc."

"I understand that the Americans fear the occupation of Formosa," he

added on July 14. "We have thrown out the suggestion that for a period of years Formosa should be held in trusteeship by the United Nations."

"There are some hotheads undoubtedly—I hope not many—who still think of a war against Communist China and the putting back on his throne of Chiang Kai-shek. I think that is militarily foolish and politically it ignores all the lessons of history. The history of revolutions shows that revolutions are consolidated and made more extreme by external attack. The outstanding examples, of course are revolutionary France and Communist Russia. But if one rules out the idea of an all-out war against Communism, then one comes back, as the Prime Minister did, to peaceful coexistence and the hope that, if peace can be preserved over the years, intercourse may gradually modify ideological fanaticism. That is what we want in respect of Russia and China."

Before he left, Mr. Attlee tended to think that bringing China into the UN and otherwise reassuring her with, perhaps a security pact with South Asia, might prevent Chinese thrusts into Southeast Asia. On June 12 he told a Yorkshire Labour Women's Rally that he would try, in China, "to get rid of conditions which may make for the extension of the Iron Curtain all over Asia."

"One hears about Chinese imperialism," he told the House of Commons on June 23. "There is a danger. There is always a danger that a flushed nationalism may turn to imperialism. We saw recently that they have 603 million people to look after." Then he added with typically Attlee dry humor: "Surely that is enough for any Government."

3. *Peace is best stabilized by the development of regional groupings capable of defending themselves and linked with neighbouring groupings in some sort of non-aggression pact.*

On June 23, even before Chou En-lai's trip to New Delhi, Mr. Attlee was turning over in his mind some-

sort of agreement between Communist China and a South Asia under Indian leadership. He had clearly abandoned his earlier support for SEATO.

"I am quite sure that the key to many of the problems of Asia lies in keeping in close touch with our Indian friends. I was attracted by the idea which was hinted at by the Foreign Secretary (earlier in this debate) of a kind of Locarno in Asia, on all-in pact, not with two great blocs lined up against each other but a kind of security pact among all these countries of Asia so that they should avoid what happened so often in Europe—the tearing up of the whole continent by war . . . an Asia which is peaceful and joined in a pact is a far safer defence than any outside barrier of islands. It is a different conception."

It may well be that Mr. Attlee's support for EDC and German rearmament within EDC comes from his conviction that a strengthened and more United European grouping is needed to hold the balance between the Soviet and American colossi.

The picture of Britain as a balancing force comes up repeatedly in Attlee's thinking. In a very revealing letter to the late Harold Laski on May 1, 1944, Mr. Attlee pointed out that "for better or worse this country has got to play a big part in shaping the post-war settlement and geographically and also ideologically we are situated between the U. S. S. R. and U. S. A. I believe that it is of primary importance for the peace of the world that these three great powers should work in harmony . . ."

Since a weakened post-war Britain has not been able to pull its weight in international negotiations, Mr. Attlee has gone back to another conception which has long influenced him. "Europe must Federate or perish" was a key statement in his speech of November 8, 1939, which was one of the first efforts to state the Labour Party's aims.

"The creation of a Europe in which its many nations may henceforth

live in peace together, enjoying together its matchless heritage of thought and culture, is essential to the peace of the world, and the settlement of the future of Germany is a crucial factor in the solution of the problem," he said on November 9, 1946.

Today he prefers Germany re-armed within a European community, rather than within NATO, in which the U. S. has more say. Without a rearmed Germany within this community, he feels, Western Europe will be too weak to play its role of defending its own interests.

4. *The H-bomb makes it necessary for a meeting of world leaders at the highest level to eliminate differences which have now become petty.*

Just before he left for Moscow Attlee was asked what he would do, in view of the H-bomb, if he were in Churchill's position. "I would publicly invite Eisenhower to accompany me to Moscow," he answered. "And if he refused?" "Then I would go myself," was Attlee's spirited retort.

"We want these three men of great experience—there is no one of greater experience in these matters than our Prime Minister," he told the House of Commons on April 5, "to have a frank discussion of the whole problem. No one exceeds the Prime Minister in his appreciation of history. He will recognize, I think, that we are standing at a vital moment in the history of the world."

Although he received a petulant rebuff on that occasion from Sir Winston, he returned to the same theme on June 23; Sir Winston and Anthony Eden were about to take off for conversations with President Eisenhower. "One thing which I hope will flow from that is . . . a talk, also, with Mr. Malenkov. I should like to see that take place here in London. After all, it is a very central situation. Why should we always have to go abroad? I think (Sir Winston) is fully entitled to be host. It would be an enormous advantage if in this country, the centre of the Commonwealth,

fixed between those two great land masses, there should be a meeting of at least the three—perhaps a wider meeting, but at any rate of the three—leaders of their countries at the present time to deal with those vital questions . . . which lie at the back of so much of the fear which obsesses the world."

He doggedly returned to the theme on July 19, winding up his speech: "Finally, I come to the question— which I am afraid I shall tire the House by mentioning often—of the hydrogen bomb. It does still remain the outstanding menace hanging over all civilization. I am sure that the Prime Minister discussed that with the President. I think it is time, if he can possibly arrange it, that he should discuss it with Mr. Malenkov. I am quite sure it is no good putting this thing off . . . I believe that a practical plan can be worked out with good will, but we shall not get it unless we get a more overall understanding. . . I am sure

it is a matter that we must keep in our minds all the time, as people the world over are worried about this menace to our civilization."

When Sir Winston answered this and his plea for the eventual admission of Communist China to the United Nations by describing his speech as "one long whine of criticism against the United States" Mr. Attlee knew that Sir Winston would not take any initiative independent of the United States.

Supremely confident of his own judgment and motivated by a deep belief in the urgency of avoiding an H-bomb war, Mr. Attlee set off on his own effort to sound out the Communist leaders. He left here in a framework of sceptical curiosity, saying: "I have been exposed to lots of eyewash in my time. I know it when I see it." It remains to be seen with what views he emerges from an unprecedented series of conversations with the controllers of the destinies of almost 900 million peoples.

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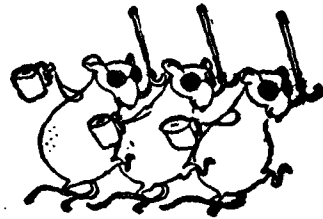
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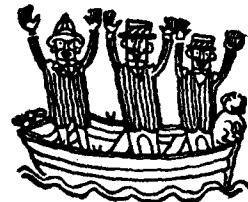
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SOCIAL WELFARE AND THE CITIZEN

By SANTHA RUNGACHARY

THE expression Social Service has a fine ring about it. Like the word Freedom, like Patriotism, like Self-Sacrifice. Once upon a time it used to be called Charity or Dharma and involved two parties—the giver and the receiver. Now it has come to mean many things. In Britain, for instance, it means Family Allowance, Old Age Pension, the National Health Scheme and eight kinds of milk. In a great many instances in our country it has come to mean congratulatory meetings, flower garlands, names and photographs in newspapers.

But why Social Service? As a people we are fatalistic by heredity. Along with our mother's milk we imbibe the belief that everyone gets what he deserves, that if we are well off it is because we deserve to be, and some others are badly off because of their past sins. Fatalism is a very comforting philosophy to believe in, especially if one has money in the bank. But at some point, if one bothers to think deeply about it, it falls to pieces as a conviction. It cannot stand reason. No logic of mere deserts can explain away the monstrous disparities in our country. Determinism is the refuge of people who are afraid to complete their thoughts. To explain it less romantically, it is merely the 1/8 of any enterprise which is taken out of our hands and becomes subject to extraneous forces over which we have no control.

The present-day scientific equivalent of Fate is the Theory of Cause and Effect. It is not a philosophy. It is a mathematical formula. It works better. It can be pursued to its logical end. Its arguments are free of sentiment. Our country cannot survive one-tenth free and nine-tenths slave. Slave to disease, ignorance, squalor, superstition. The pull of its accumulation of dis-

trepreneur and misery and want, if left unchecked, can put us back centuries and make all progress impossible for generations to come. Let us have no confused or sentimental thinking on the subject. Social Service, without the halo and without the martyrdom, is a means of survival. It is not to help to tip the balance in our favour on Judgment Day. It is not to please or propitiate the gods who work our destinies. If you and I want to live we have to see that others can live too. If you and I want to be healthy we have to see that others are healthy too. We are all bound together whether we like it or not. We had better learn to like it. It is inconceivable how people who take adult franchise for granted, still consider the duty of cooperation—which in its essentials social service is—as an imposition on individual liberty and neutralisation of personal judgment. The Hebrew prophets before Christ have warned us not to harden our hearts against the poor for the poor shall never cease out of the land. The Hebrews, we shall hope, have learnt better by now. The aim in our country should be to see that the poor cease out of the land altogether. The philosophy of the survival of the fittest might have suited the Greeks. Our problem, on the other hand, is to seek to make life better for all the unfit who do survive.

A general picture of the nature and extent of our social needs will perhaps make the position clearer to those who still continue to think that the world ends at their door-steps. Perhaps many of us look around at our wide city broadways, our gracious parks, our new houses coming up bright and beautiful all over the place and say to ourselves, *Well, we don't seem to be doing so badly, do we?* In that case many of us are



A villager takes an injection at the Alamadi dispensary.

thinking of about ten percent of our whole people. To such of us the how and the where of the life that the other ninety percent live is a closed book. We know less about it than we do about the atom-bomb. That ninety percent of people live in about 650,000 villages on one meal a day and when the time comes are glad and relieved to die. The village to many of us is still a romantic illusion, where there is peace and quiet and the singing of birds and cows grazing on green pasture land and milk and green vegetables. It stopped being all that quite two centuries ago. The village ceased to be the economic, cultural and administrative unit that our history books tell us or our poets have sung about. It has now become in the words of Sir Manilal B. Nanavati, *a home of dissensions, party factions, disease and filth with hardly a redeeming feature*. Less than five percent of its people can read and write. The caste system, driven out of our urban areas by law and legislation and public opinion has taken refuge in our villages turning them into conservative strongholds of communalism and caste prejudices. Agriculture is a deficit economy. If India should ever have a revolution it would generate from our villages as the French Revolution erupted out of the bourgeoisie middle-class.

India has, in addition, fifteen lakhs of blind people, six lakhs deaf-mutes, and about 250,000 mental defectives. There are, besides these, the orphans, the cripples, the destitutes, the socially handicapped people, the old, the unemployed, the prostitutes, the misfits. And why should we not mention the criminals and the juvenile delinquents? It is only a Chicago that has time and countenance enough to make a fine art of crime. Crime in our country is, more often than not, just the escape-valve from squalor.

There is a tribal population of 26 millions. Eighteen millions of them belong to 245 scheduled tribes. Tribal population has ceased to be merely the happy hunting-ground of anthropologists. It has become a minority problem. Politically, socially, econo-

mically, culturally they operate on a civilisation radically different from the rest of Indians. Then there are what the British called the Criminal Tribes because of certain peculiar customs they practised. There are two and a half millions of them.

We suffer, apart from all these, from a series of recurring national disasters. Two million people die every year of malaria, half a million of tuberculosis, a quarter of a million of cholera and a tenth of a million of small-pox. Predictable, seasonal floods carry away unnumbered people and livestock, destroy houses and crops.

THERE has been a net birth-rate of four million every year since 1941. We have less than .7 acre of land per capita for the production of food whereas the accepted minimum for self-sufficiency rests around 1.5 acres per capita. Want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness, the five giants in Sir William Beveridge's road to reconstruction, are so much part of our blood they are coming out in the bone.

Since 1945 we have added to our misfortunes the Refugee problem. According to the 1951 census one out of every fifty people in the Indian Union is a displaced person. In West Bengal it is one out of every 12, in the Punjab one out of every five. In the country's capital every third man is a displaced person. As of today there are about seven and a half million of this floating population all over India.

No government worked by living men can meet problems of such magnitude as this. It took Britain three centuries to pull herself out of want, ignorance, crime and idleness and offer its citizens a decent, self-respecting standard of living. It is true the State is the biggest and the most authoritarian of institutions. It is vested with more compelling power than any other body of living men but all bureaucratic machinery is heavy and slow-moving. It thinks in terms of numbers, not of people. It can only organise, coordinate, legislate, provide facilities to train, lay down objectives, offer model programmes, distribute resources, do research, give



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emergency relief and provide the publicity. We in India have not yet achieved the goal of the Welfare State. Only when the state of the nation reaches a certain level of homogeneity and relief can be considered in terms of certain classified conditions of want would it be possible for the government to take over. To bring the country to that level is the individual and collective responsibility of the people. It is in the realisation of the *reverence for life* that Dr. Albert Schweitzer talks about. *It has been one of Gandhi's teachings*, says Rajen Babu in his foreword to Mr. Birla's book on Gandhi, *that those who are blessed with wealth should regard themselves as trustees and treat their wealth as trust-property for the benefit of others*. Social Service, in other words, is the wise man's way of going down on his knees in thankfulness for his own good fortune.

I DO not think there is a correct or adequate appreciation of the amount of social welfare work already being done in the country. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research, an inheritance from the British regime runs the government farms and works constantly towards the improvement of agriculture and the organisation of the rural cooperative movement. The Planning Commission which said in its Report that economic planning has to be viewed as an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow and technical sense but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people, has now created the Bharat Sevak Samaj which is to organise and coordinate various social services, train workers and operate in conjunction with yet another experiment in cooperation between government and people, the Community Development Projects. There are on the whole about 7,000 large and small organisations in the country which are concerned with social relief at the rural, social, medical, refugees and maternity and child welfare levels though we have less than two dozen

schools to train the enormous body of workers necessary to man these agencies. In the first 5-Year Plan in which Rs. 2069 crores are going to be invested, Rs. 340 crores go for social service and Rs. 85 crores for rehabilitation work. The Plan has earmarked Rs. 25,00,00,000 for the welfare of backward classes. Gandhi's Harijan Sevak Sangh has 35 State branches and more than 300 district committees and runs 200 hostels and spends Rs. 15 lakhs a year on 500 lakhs of Harijans. The Bharatiya Adam Jati Seva Sangh caters to the needs of tribal populations through 30 tribal welfare organisations. The National Council of Women and the All-India Women's Conference provide information and advice regarding the women's point of view on national questions in addition to contributing actual service in other directions. There are special agencies, both governmental and private, helping the physically handicapped. There are Vigilance Homes and Women's Protection Leagues.

If all these organisations do turn out as much social welfare work as they claim to, they would only be touching the fringe of the problem. If ten times as many men and women dedicated themselves to the service of their fellowmen it would still be woefully inadequate. The greatest scope and need for social welfare work exist in rural India. It is an unhappy fact that till very recently, either because of indifference of the Government or oversight or by strategic damming of administrative channels at a lower level, urban areas have been the prime beneficiaries of all State aid and subsidy. Rural communities need more roads and better roads, they need protected water-supply, they need guidance about soil conservation, compost-making, co-operative marketing and distribution, about sanitation. Their conservative outlook must be broadened, their minds must be cleared of prejudices, fears and superstitions and their community consciousness re-kindled. Above all, they need more doctors, more hospitals. Britain has a doctor for every thousand of its citizens. To reach that level we need about 300 lakhs of doctors more.



There is considerable tuberculosis in the villages on the outskirts of Madras.

In Madras City, the place of the veteran Gandhian workers who have found themselves cosy niches in legislative bodies and tribunals and commissions, is rapidly being taken by young students between the ages of 18 and 26 who are now passing through our colleges. The Social Service Leagues of some of our colleges run night schools, adult education centres, workers' camps, children's classes and first aid dispensaries. And the two Medical Colleges in the City have taken over the responsibility of providing medical relief to villages on the outskirts of Madras.

THIS vast and intense output of youthful energy and selfless dedication to work which is not in their curriculum deserves popular notice and appreciation. It is proof of the realisation at least by the youth of our country that we simply cannot afford to have sick people and poor people and ignorant people in our

midst if we as a nation wish to have any kind of future.

For instance, every Sunday about two dozen students and a sprinkling of doctors from the Stanley Medical College go to Alamadi, a village a few miles outside Madras to conduct a dispensary there from half past two in the afternoon up till an indefinite time in the evening. Their weekly summer attendance has gone right up to 900 patients coming from about a dozen surrounding villages. Alamadi is a village of about a few thousand people living in small, dark, ill-ventilated homes. The nearest district hospital is five miles away. The medical centre run by the students is housed in a huge, ramshackle building which had once been a military cinema house.

"We need dozens of dispensaries like this," said one of the students who took me around.

"If it comes to that," I agreed. "every slum in the City needs a dispensary like this."

"Yes," he said, "but medical help is not inaccessible to them. The point in our working here is to give medical relief not merely to those who want it but to those who need it and can't get it."

These students are the first to admit that what they are doing is a fraction of what the villagers need, but their main aim, they argue, is to awaken in them a health-consciousness.

"They must first learn to *want* to be healthy, to *want* to seek medical help," said my student-guide, "and not merely throw the responsibility on God or Fate."

The patients come to the dispensary from miles around, on foot, in oxcarts, by bus. They humbly queue up

before the doctors and students, waiting to be examined, or to be given a bottle of medicine which is to last till the next Sunday, waiting to receive instructions, waiting to be given an injection. The children, small, dark and pitiful, queue up with mugs for their weekly ration of powdered milk. On one day of the week for six hours the old military cinema house is a beehive of activity.

OFF the main village is the Harijan hamlet. For three years now these young students have paid weekly visits to this little colony of 'untouchables', inspecting, assessing, surveying its medical needs, teaching them sanitation and hygiene, cleanliness and orderliness. They have dug a well for the colony. They have brought the leprosy patients to the dispensary for a weekly injection.

The greatest obstacle in the happy working of this plan of voluntary



Examination by the dentist at the dispensary.

medical service is money. The students have tried benefit cinema shows, amateur theatricals, and the Central Social Welfare Board. About forty medical firms and companies help with free medicines and drugs. Still the need continues, in fact grows. Hence the Stanley Medical College Exhibition next week.

The Old Guard among us who complain about the deteriorating standards of our young people have only to look round our college Social Service Leagues to wonder if occasionally even they could be mistaken.

All of us, of course, might not have the temperament to throw ourselves heart and soul into social welfare work. Because it is work. It is work in which there is no niceness, no accolades, no recognition. It is dirty work, like fighting a war. It means giving, giving, giving of yourself till it becomes part of your blood and bone. It is fatigue. It is an endless, exhaust-

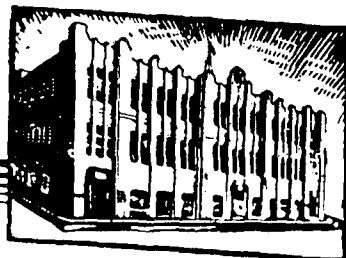
ing, single-minded pursuit which will sap your vitality and get a hold on your conscience. It is self-effacing, self-annihilating. It demands all or nothing. And when you fall in sheer weariness, nobody might even notice you. There is no place for by-lines in the business of Man helping his brother.

All of us, as I said, might not have the temperament.

"But if every family in the City," said one of the medical students, "which employs a servant takes care that the servant is healthy, happy and contented and encourages him or her to be a decent, self-respecting citizen, the work of social workers would be halved. Think what it would be," he said, growing excited, "to be the citizen of a country in which every family is a social welfare unit!"

If there is the will there certainly would be a way.

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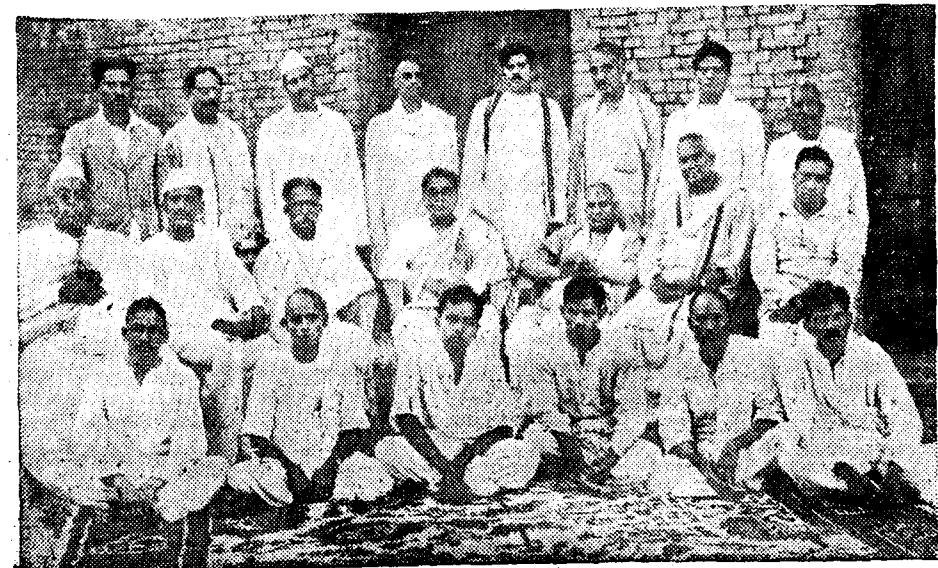
committee set up by the Andhra Government to fill a high educational post. As the chairman started analysing the comparative merits of the applicants, a spokesman of the majority section in the committee got up and said, "We have settled for whom we will vote. This (naming their nominee) is our man. If you have time to waste, you may consider the other applications." And the matter was disposed of as the majority dictated!

The integrating principle of treating the near and dear on a par with the unfamiliar in the discharge of public duties has been conspicuous by its absence in Andhra, and the bad examples set by the rulers have torn the State into factions. Merit has gone into disgrace. Preferment goes by family relationship or caste affiliation. A terribly devitalising clannish narrowness has become rampant. There is an eternal fight between district and district, Rayalaseema and Circars, Reddis and Kammas, and overlooking all conflicts, there is the pitiable dedication of the power of the State by those wielding it nepotistically for the advancement of family fortunes and

relatives' interests. The examples set by the highest in the State have percolated down to every level of government and nothing moves now in any office in automatic discipline. Even the elementary courtesies of the administration are reserved only for parties who can make their influence felt in some tangible way.

Our first year's experience of government in Andhra is symptomatic in an intense form of the Congress debacle throughout the country. A leader builds for himself a gigantic position with years of unremitting toil in the service of the community. A grateful public exalts him to a sovereign status of authority that a king might envy. But in the heyday of victory he reveals not the stature of a hero but feet of clay. An entire people in whom he could have evoked superb response to any grand social aim leading them to a destiny of glory is by his fall and folly cast into lingering perdition. Andhra must look to other leaders for its salvation as in the present set-up the impetus is all towards regional and communal disintegration and not welding the people together in hope and joy for constructive purposes on acceptable principles of justice and human dignity.

SAKA



Andhra Congress leaders: Before the quarrels began.

ENGLISH, A PRECIOUS POSSESSION

"We Are Busily Engaged In Destroying It"

WE are busily engaged, at present, in systematically destroying a precious possession, the knowledge and use of the English language.

We who protest against the deliberate sacrifice of English in this country are no diehards. We too hold firmly the general view as to the future functions of our Indian languages. But that view is not incompatible with the preservation of English, for the many uses in which it will always be indispensable to India. We want to stop the wanton destruction of a national asset.

For a considerable period English is still to be the all-India administrative language. But recent degeneration in its study (the result of deliberate policy) has been so rapid that already even the graduate commonly finds himself helpless in English. In administration, and in the other kinds of communication for which English must be used, language must be a precision instrument. But those who are now receiving responsible appointments can hardly write even a grammatical sentence.

And what of the plight of students in the universities? English is still the medium of teaching. Moreover, it must continue to be so for a considerable time. Some universities are impatient about this, and have even fixed quite an early date for change of medium to an Indian language. They know quite well that this means the abandonment of even the faintest pretension on the students' part, to be able to read English. But they have made plans for the provision of text-books in the vernacular—hundreds and hundreds of text-books, to be produced

at breakneck speed and to be printed with the accuracy and charm for which our Indian presses are famous. Have these people, these university people, no conception of what is meant by university education? Has it been their custom to approve, as a university man, the person who has never read beyond his text-book? For a long time our university studies, both lecturing and reading, must be in English if they are to have the scope and validity that the term implies elsewhere in the world.

By

Sir Mirza Ismail

In spite of all the pedantry and misdirection that have so often marred the study of English literature in India, the direct study of English literature has meant much to many generations of our educated people. It should be extended, not abolished, now. But in policy and practice we have already done a great deal to make English literature a sealed book to the Indian student. There is no room for doubt about this. Unless a proper foundation is laid in school, ability to read English will not come by magic in college. Our policy-makers are deliberately debarring our future citizens from much of the precious heritage that should be theirs.

Of equal importance is the absolute necessity of English for every kind of relationship with the rest of the world. Can any one imagine that our representatives abroad could have bought India to her present international stature if they had had to write or speak in Hindi (as indeed some of the best could not do) instead of directly in a world language, used with precision and full expressiveness? And while language is so important in documents

and in public speeches, one must remember that the real settlement of international affairs depends very greatly on personal contact and conversation, which would be paralyzed by the necessity for a translator. We have become accustomed to easy intercourse with the people of western countries through English; not only with Englishmen and Americans, but with people of the continental countries, for they have long realized that a knowledge of English is part of the essential equipment of an educated man. Should we not pause to consider how easily and quickly we shall lose it if present educational policies continue?

It has been constantly asserted that "Basic Education" has been definitely, finally adopted as the educational policy of India and it is of no use to say a word against it, and opponents are charged with political motive. The truth is, rather, that innumerable people who see how ruinous this scheme is have been kept silent by political fear. I wish that they, and in particular the educationists to most of whom the fallacy must be apparent, would have the courage to speak out in the interest of the country and its children. Some little time ago, I roused indignation by describing this Basic scheme as "a retreat from civilization." That is just what it is.

What is most disastrous is the idea that a craft, (or crafts), is to be the core of the system, and the chief means of learning other things. The planners say "The basic craft will be the chief centre of correlation for the 'tool-subjects' of language and mathematics, and for the study of general science." A fine idea has become a fetish. Any craft, of course, will illustrate and exercise arithmetic, and we need language for everything, but to make craft the necessary approach to arithmetic and language (not to speak of history and geography!) is a most artificial device, and its unnaturalness and difficulty will be felt at every moment. The idea is a fad, and the planners' pleasure in it will be dearly paid for by the children and the

country. Let us by all means have craft work, and all the good that most pupils, no doubt, can get from it; but we must give up the idea that this is the right (or even a possible) method of general study.

The prime object of study for children must always be language—the ability to read and to speak and write correctly. The Basic scheme makes this impossible. The teaching of language is minimized, and is approached in an impossible way. And the planners do their best further, to stultify even such direct teaching of language as is permitted. There is a terrible candour in the statement that the power to use language correctly and well is (I quote) "a matter of habit, not of reasoning, and knowledge of grammatical 'rules' has very little to do with it." They are deliberately planning an ungrammatical people.

One would like our own country to present a more cheerful picture than it does at present. There is a sad lack of happiness and contentment. We count not our blessings but our woes. There is considerable activity in all fields of national endeavour, but taxation is high, too high for a poor country—a direct result of Government overspending. There is urgent need in India for independent investigation into the various channels of national expenditure to point the way to national economies. We must not, as we are prone to do, judge our progress by the amount of money spent rather than by the results achieved. One of the gravest problems facing the country is that of population. It has to be solved somehow. Unless that is done, the future is gloomy indeed.

The greatest need of the hour is a spirit of unity and tolerance for the views and acts of others. Every group or community must be prepared to make some sacrifice, sacrifice of self-interest and self-esteem, in the furtherance of our common aims and ambitions. The law of sacrifice is the ethical principle that

dominates all life, the only light that guides human conscience. It is an essential element in the realization of our national destiny. Take the cry for a redistribution of the States on a purely linguistic basis as a case in point. This movement has gathered strength. It merely creates problems, but it was all to be expected as part of the inevitable march of history. We should not allow it to get the upper hand and weaken the essential unity of the country on which progress ultimately rests.

The middle classes, in general, are having a bad time, perhaps especially the educated middle classes—the unfortunate race of teachers, for example. There must needs be classes and levels to the end of time. Destroy them and immediately they emerge again, in new forms but with as clear definition as before. Men are equal in the fact that they are men, but in no other way; and the various gradations of ability, character, social

inheritance, and so on, must always have some financial implication. I think it is perhaps an exaggerated idealism to despise those who wear fine and beautiful clothing. That is not a social crime, if it is within limits, and certainly it is no economic crime, when one remembers that such things also must be made and help to provide employment. In every sphere of thought and life, there is such a thing as *quality*, the antithesis of the common; and excellence of quality, in people, in materials and workmanship, in the arts, where quality is the only measure, is indeed a priceless possession for a nation. The doctrine of the "common man" in its desire to make the common, the ordinary, the average, the standard of all judgment and action, has already brought about a sad lowering of quality in our country. Surely, it is not our aim or desire to make India a land of austerity, inhabited mostly by sadhus, fakirs, and sanyasins. —Excerpts from Convocation address at Poona University on 30th September 1954.

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FILMS

By V. P. SATHE

ON 10th October 54 for the first time in the history of Indian films, a State award of merit will be conferred on an Indian motion picture. As far as I know, in no other country except perhaps Soviet Union such an honour is conferred on a film producer.

By the time this is published the name of the winner of both the awards would have been known; and the producer who wins this first award from the hands of the President can feel justly proud. On the 10th, 11th and 12th, this historic ceremony will be held at the Government theatre in the National Physical Laboratory, Delhi. On the opening day, it is learnt that the President will come to the theatre in all stately pomp and glory and the lucky producer will be presented with the award by the President himself. Next day, or on the 12th, the Prime Minister will present the award to the best producer of a child film. Though officially the names of the winners are not known, it is learnt that either Ashok Kumar (*Parineeta*) or Bimal Roy (*Do Bigha Zamin*) are likely to win the President's medal and Raj Kapoor (*Boot Polish*) may win the Prime Minister's medal.

This recognition of film art is the first positive gesture by the Government to encourage production of good pictures. But this gesture can be of real help to the producers of quality films, if the awards are not confined to mere medals but are in the form of cash prizes for substantial amounts—like Stalin prizes. Even if the entertainment tax collected on the pictures that have won the awards is refunded to the producers, the producer would be substantially benefitted.

While making this suggestion, I do not want to belittle the significance or importance of the State awards which are bound to start almost a new epoch in our film industry.

Picture of the week

Among the novels that Sarat Chatterji wrote in his youthful days, *Biraj Bahu* is considered to be the most poignant and moving. It is also at the same time very orthodox in its attitude; in the latter novels we find a distinct change in Sarat Chatterji's social and religious outlook. Hence it is rather surprising that a progressive film creator like Bimal Roy should have chosen such a novel with most of the characters rather fatalist and frustrated in their attitude.

But having once chosen the subject Bimal Roy has done the best of the job. He has captured the atmosphere and spirit of the story to the minutest detail; and though he has made certain variations in the original story in his screenplay, especially in the concluding portions, he has in essence told the story as conceived by Sarat without trying to interpret the characters in the present context of reality.

As a result, *Biraj Bahu* has all the tenderness, poignancy and emotional impact of Sarat Chatterji's novel and the character of Biraj portrayed exquisitely by Kamini Kaushal who gives an award winning performance is presented with even greater nobility and restraint than in the original book.

While, in the original story, when turned out by the husband, Biraj goes herself to the zamindar and realizes her mistake later, in the picture Biraj is almost forcibly taken to the zamindar. This little difference adds strength and nobility to Biraj's character. But, the long trek back from the hospital to home as presented by Bimal Roy is less dramatic and too long-winded compared to the original dramatic meeting of Biraj and her husband in yatra. Indeed, the slow tempo which is at times unbearable is the main shortcoming of the picture; and especially there was no point in wasting so

much footage in Biraj's return journey. The end itself is again glorious.

Most of the original dramatic scenes and even dialogues are not only retained but presented brilliantly by Bimal Roy who has proved that he is as adept in handling Sarat Chatterji's purely sentimental tragedies as he is in handling social progressive themes. He has been helped by his technicians, especially the art director who has created wonderful realistic sets, and cameraman. The cast has also done justice to diverse roles, with Kamini at her best. Abhi is good, but in certain scenes he falls short of expectations. Randhir as the younger brother, Shakuntala as his wife who understands Biraj best, Manorama, Pran have all given a good account of themselves.

Salil Chowdhary's music is haunting, but the 'Bhajans' could have been better. Only the last song about Sita is most apt.

Biraj Bahu is a fine work of film art worthy of Sarat Chatterji and Bimal Roy's reputation.

Personality of the week

Twenty-five years ago Mehboob began his career in Imperial Film

Company almost as an extra. Today he is one of the leading producer-directors with a beautiful studio of his own at Bandra.

In all these years he has travelled a long way on the road of success. From a mere extra, he became a feature player in Sagar's *Meri Jan* in which he played Zuebada's brother; from a feature player he became a director with *Al Hilal*. As a director in Sagar he made action pictures and social drama, the most striking of which was *Ek Hi Rasta*.

When Sagar merged into National, he became a producer-director and made that remarkable film *Aurat*. It was in 1942, that he started his independent concern, producing seven pictures in the last fourteen years and attaining the pinnacle of success in *Aan*.

During the making of *Aan* he felt the need of a studio of his own. And so he purchased land in Bandra, and in two years the deserted land has been transformed into one of the finest studios in India.

When last week I visited the studio which from the entrance looks like just a building—for the studio is covered with the two-floor building of offices in the front—I found that it has all the facilities and equipment that a producer of the status of Mehboob needs. Already one floor of huge dimensions is complete and another is being built. The stages are sound-proof and air-cooled; the technicians have their separate rooms. The sound room is by far the best I have seen. The editing room and the make-up rooms are most upto date. The music hall and the theatre are being built; the generator to supply extra electric power for colour production is installed. A special vault to store films is being constructed.

Elaborately planned, efficiently constructed, it is just the ideal studio in many ways and soon a receptionist will be installed at the entrance to greet the visitors. The studio is not yet fully complete, though it is in workable condition. But it is undoubtedly one of the finest things in the film industry—a

fitting monument to Mehboob's twenty-five years' glorious career. Mehboob can really be proud of this achievement.

News of the week

Usha Kiran and Bhagwan have been signed to play the stellar roles in M. P. E.'s new Hindi picture *Aaram Haram Hai* to be directed by Ram Gabale.

Barati, *Badshah*, *Amar* and *Tilottama* are the four new pictures

selected for countrywide release before Dusserah and Diwali.

Silver Jubilee week celebrations of *Aulad* will be held on Thursday 30th September night when the artistes and technicians who made the film will be presented with golden rings with the trade-mark of Kuldip Pictures engraved on them.

Tees Mar Khan is Kwatra's next picture in Hindi starring Agha, Geeta Bali and Roopmala.

That Little Kicking Island

By CEYLONESE

VIGHNESWARA'S reference to Burghers and the Sinhalese way of flourishing foreign Christian names in double and treble array in the adjoining Island of Ceylon may be better appreciated by your readers with some explanation of the conditions ruling there.

This Island having in the last four hundred and odd years passed through Portuguese, Dutch and British rule, its peoples had to face denationalisation, especially under the earlier rules. Some had to forsake their faiths, others had to flee the country. The geographical situation of the Island on an ocean highway and the frequent touch with western peoples passing through helped this process. No less important was the introduction of western education by the American missionaries. Some racial admixture and the impact of the ruling races made it quite the thing for many Sinhalese to take on foreign Christian and surnames—Portuguese, Dutch and English. The Burghers, however, were descendants of the Dutch and formed a distinct community. Their numbers have grown less, one is told, since the advent of Independence, because quite a few have emigrated to British and other colonies for better existence. Many others have begun to merge themselves with the Sinhalese. Though the most advanced educationally and politically the Burghers may, in the

not too distant future, become extinct as a racial unit in Ceylon.

Some Tamils also having come under the influence of western education adopted the Christian faith, while quite a few were given or took on Christian names to take advantage of the higher education given by the American missionaries. Among the first graduates of the Madras University were Tamil students from Ceylon.

The aping of western manners and ways of living, though commonly prevalent, was more pronounced among the Sinhalese than among the thrifty and conservative Tamils who occupied the northern and eastern portions of the Island mainly. The higher classes who could, or thought they could, adopt outlandish ways of living set the pace, and the middle classes were tempted to copy them, with disastrous effects on their economy.

Thus came about the high standard of living which Ceylon flaunts in the face of immigrants, a more or less inflated sense of superiority accompanied by a struggle to maintain it. Living there has been pretty expensive, and the visitor from India often found himself at a disadvantage both in regard to keeping step and finding the wherewithal for it all.

The advent of the Donoughmore Reforms deliberately placed power in the hands of the majority community of Sinhalese whose politicians

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grabbed it with avidity. The minorities—Tamils (Ceylon and Indian), and Moors—became powerless to stand up to political competition. Before the Reforms the Jaffna Tamils and Indian Tamils formed more or less distinct groups, but after their political eclipse the racial affinity of Tamil land, known for ages, began to assert itself. The Moors also were Tamil speaking. The Malays formed only a small but distinct community who resigned themselves to the political dispensation.

Governmental power and its use and abuse and misuse brought about stresses and strains in which the potential value of the Tamil loomed large. The new found freedom of the Sinhalese in positions of vantage, however, felt it unsafe to rely on their mere numbers as against the stamina and resilience of the Tamils. Across the Straits were herds of Tamils, and they had been intercommunicating with Ceylon since the dawn of time. The Ceylon Tamils had so much to do with South India in their every day life. This developing affinity should be sundered or at least made difficult—here is the clue to the chain of disabilities in the life of the Tamil population in Ceylon. If the Indian section could be kept in check by any means, then the fewer Ceylon Tamils, though they match in merit to the ruling group, could be managed. The Sinhalese fear the association of the Indian Tamil with Ceylon more than they dislike the capitalistic onslaught of the North Indian. The core of the Indo-Ceylon problem is here, though for strange reasons it is not mentioned in public. Now and then an angry Sinhalese blurts it out.

About those foreign names. Many Sinhalese who till the other day bore Christian names and passed for Christians, have thought it more patriotic and profitable to adopt the easier Buddhist faith, and some Sinhalese-Buddhist surnames, though the temptation to flourish the foreign Christian names is too insistent to be resisted. Hence the bewilderment of Vighneswara. Of course you can

meet a William Velupillai among the Tamil Christians or a V. Williams among the Hindus according as they choose to be known. Pandit Nehru's commendation of the cosmopolitan way of life in Ceylon derives from the appreciation of the modern popular passion to fall in line in public life and follow prepared patterns. Thus it is that one finds in the same family, Tamil or Sinhalese, in Ceylon Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and what not.



TRACE NOT YOUR ORIGIN

IN this age when Eve laughs at Adam who has lost his heart, trace not your origin in promiscuity and paradise, and weary not the dust-ridden minds troubling the tribes and the totem.

In this age when the ways of Eve strike terror in the heart of Adam that has lost its beats, and doubts the sincerity of the source of life interrogating Eve's beginning and her first conception, trace not your origin in the silence of the graves and the spirits standing sentinel.

In this age when atoms explode to shatter what is not of God, and while shattering His own reflection in sound and shape, see how Eve struts, forgetting her Abel and Cain, while anthropologists measure skulls.

It is humiliating the way we look on Eve who made us, men; but trace not your origin.

MUKUNDA

SEASCAPE

WHERE the lucent skyline Fringes the sea, Expanding sapphirine Unwrinklingly,

A cloud, gossamer gold, Glimmers awhile Dreamwise . . . do I behold The Mermaids Isle?

MANJERI S. ISVARAN

SWATANTRA

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TRIUMPH OF REGIONALISM IN WORLD AFFAIRS

REGIONAL groupings or pacts have become targets of vehement attack in recent weeks by our Prime Minister and Sri Krishna Menon our delegate to the U. N. O. This was their reaction to the Manila Conference which was held against their strong and severe protests and which resulted in the South-East Asian Collective Defence Treaty. The attack was based on the view that regional groupings offended the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations Organisation, the implication being that nations which considered that their security was endangered should rely on the U. N. O. for the safeguards they needed and not on narrow regional alliances. Similar views are being expressed now and then by others also. But before one can accept those views one should try to understand how in the post-war world regional groupings and alliances have become a necessity and even those who may express an intense dislike for them are compelled by force of circumstances to become parties to such groupings.

Let us first note how numerous are such groupings today. By 1951 there were twenty three treaties of friendship and mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and the East European Peoples' Democracies. There is next the pact between the U. S. S. R. and Communist China. Next came the numerous pacts sponsored by the United States. Among them are the Rio de Janeiro pact for the defence of the Americans; the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation under which an attack against any one of the four-

teen States in and around the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean basins which are members of the organisation would be considered an attack against all; the Tripartite Security Treaty between the United States, Australia and New Zealand known as the ANZUS pact; the mutual defence treaty between the United States and the Philippines and similar treaties with Japan, South Korea, Nationalist China and Pakistan. It is said that the United States has now entered on some kind of regional grouping with about 45 States. There are other groupings to which neither Soviet Russia nor the United States are parties. Among them may be mentioned the Turkey-Pakistan alliance to which Iraq now proposes to adhere; the Arab League; and the alliance recently concluded between Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. The (British) Commonwealth of Nations is very similar to these groupings. The same may be said of the Colombo Powers. The Afro-Asia Conference on which the Indonesian Prime Minister is so keen may develop (when it materialises) into a regional grouping. Any arrangement entered into by a group of States and distinct from the whole membership of the United Nations is a regional arrangement. It need not have a complicated machinery or set of institutions to carry out its objectives. Consultations may even be informal. The Arab-Asian group which functions in the United Nations under the leadership generally of India is such a group. It also becomes clear from this survey that it is not only or pri-

marily under the auspices of the United States that such regional groups have come into existence. Soviet Russia has been as busy as the United States in this connection. Other States also have taken the initiative in the matter.

It may be argued that the groupings attacked by our Prime Minister were groupings whose purpose was military and that he has no objection whatever to regional organisations which aim at the maintenance of peace or the promotion of cultural understanding. There is however one flaw in this line of argument. It is very hard to draw a line between economic alliances and military alliances. At the present day the two have become completely interlocked wherever the economic aid received or given is substantial instead of being nominal or symbolic. Even the so-called cultural alliances are cultural only in name. Their purpose is really to draw the members of the group closer and closer not only in cultural but also in other respects. It is very difficult to separate the culture of a modern State from its political ideology.

Even assuming that the objection is only to regional alliances of a political character the question that arises is whether the objection is sound. Several points have to be kept in mind in this connection. One is the desire for leadership which is as instinctive with States as with powerful personalities. Many States in the world are not satisfied with arranging their lives in their own way. They are anxious to leave their impress as it were on the general affairs of the world, to demonstrate to others that they have influence and that they can give a good lead in many matters on which controversies and disputes have arisen. In many cases the whole world will not accept their leadership. They consequently strive hard to create for themselves a smaller world—a region—over which they can exercise their influence. And this desire becomes all the stronger when they see any of their rivals aspiring to such leadership and realising its aspirations. The desire of Egypt to become

the leader of the Arab League, that of Pakistan to create a Pan-Islamic group, that of India to lead an area of peace as distinguished from the belligerent area of the two power blocs are instances in point. It will be unrealistic to ignore the existence of such instinctive desires. The regional groups which result from the operation of such desires are bound to assume a political character.

Another point is that in the world of States as constituted today there are some which are big, some which occupy a middle position and a large number which are small in size and which enjoy only limited resources. The category of small States have their problems of security and defence. It is quite possible for a State like the U. S. S. R. stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific with a capacity to raise and fully equip even a eight million army and bring thousands of all types of airplanes to the battlefield without help from outside to condemn regional pacts like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. But what about a small State like Belgium or Holland or even France and England? How long can they defend themselves from the attacks of a great power without entering into pacts with neighbouring States or with some other great power even though it may be at a distance? If Thailand or the Philippines find that their security is being endangered there is nothing surprising in their efforts to enter into a military pact with the United States. This necessitates regional groupings.

It may be asked whether there is any power today which is bent on a policy of aggression? There cannot be two answers to a question like this. All history tells us that at all times there are States which are not satisfied with what they have and which are anxious to add to their territories. Much of human history consists of stories of conquest. And there is nothing to show that human nature has undergone any great change in this respect. This desire for power and aggrandisement is universal. It is found in Asia and

it is also found in Europe. There is no need to elaborate a point like this. There is as much danger today of weak countries being conquered by the stronger ones. One should not be too ready to accept the thesis that the mere enunciation of principles of political honesty and morality—even the five principles on which so much emphasis has been laid in the talks between the Prime Minister of China and our Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Burma—is synonymous with adherence to those principles in practice. Have not the members, for instance, of the United Nations Organisation subscribed to the principles of sovereign equality of all nations, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States and respect for fundamental human rights? But how many of the member States adhered to these principles in practice during the last eight years—the years of the cold war? The problem of a country's security is as real today as at any time in the history of mankind and it has become much more serious because of the new weapons of warfare which are at the command of States. Nations therefore which feel threatened by the activities of other States are obliged to enter into regional pacts for purposes of defence.

We now come to the last point. What about the United Nations Organisation? Was it not established to settle all international disputes by peaceful means, to enforce military and other sanctions against an aggressor and to afford collective security to States attacked by others? Certainly, it was established for these purposes. But it has utterly failed to fulfil them. The history of the last eight years of its existence proves clearly its utter

incapacity to peacefully settle disputes or to enforce measures based on collective security. It has ceased to be an instrument for action. It has become a mere debating society, a channel for propaganda. No action for putting an end to aggression is possible in the United Nations unless all the five great powers agree. It was on the assumption that the friendliness which prevailed among them when they had jointly to carry on the war against Germany and Japan would continue during the period of peace that the U. N. O. was built and the great powers were given the right of veto. But this assumption has proved false. On no matter would the two States—Soviet Russia and the United States—agree. Nothing therefore has become more futile than to look to the United Nations Organisation for help when a State is threatened by an aggressor. Every one understands this to-day. This is the reason why those who are in need of security have to get it from organisations outside the United Nations. This is the justification for regional groupings, alliances and pacts. It is Utopian to still have faith in the capacity of the United Nations Organisation to put an end to aggression, to afford security to those who are in need of it and to work for and maintain international peace. If there has been no third world war the credit for it should go to other sources and not to the United Nations. And one of these sources is the series of regional pacts that have come into existence. In the conflict between universalism and regionalism the former has been defeated and the latter has been victorious and has therefore come to stay. Every country has to adjust itself to these regional groupings.

PASSAGE TO INDIA!

Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
The races, neighbours, to marry and be given in marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
The lands to be welded together.—WALT WHITMAN

Sotto Voce

BADRINATH



ONE of my many undischarged commitments to the reader is that I should tell him something of what I saw and heard on my visit to the Himalayan shrines of Kedar-nath and Badrinath. Constitutional indolence has been but partly responsible for this remissness. I am, emotionally speaking, a slow coach. I don't react powerfully to first impressions. They have a habit of sinking down into the unconscious and suffering a sea-change before they turn up in odd shapes. And that Himalayan trip, so full of physical weariness and apprehensive thoughts about a night's lodging or the need for avoiding a drenching, was merely punctured with vivid visions which vanished before I could pin them down.

But, long after, daydreams, soft as snow-flakes, have surprised me in the midst of work with the many-coloured glow of Roman candles. I find myself thinking of the setting sun caught like a vast orange in the cleft of sky between the steep ascent from Patala Ganga, up which we strove, and the perfectly parallel side of another hill far away which the purple air seemed to bring close to us. Or of that unforgettable morning when, reluctantly passing by the austere Tunganath—the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak—I walked up hill and down dale, crossed the high saddle of the last spur that divides the Alakananda valley from the Mandakini and found myself gazing down the fearful sides of a ten-thousand-foot triangular precipice thrust like a wedge into the deep romantic chasm that yawned at my feet.

Of all the memories that thus steal upon the conscious mind none has a more insistent haunting quality than the sudden view of Badrinath as one rounded the shoulder of a hill. The little township, gathered as in the hollow of a hand, was a warm streak of colour by the Alakananda glittering like silver foil in the frosty evening sun, and the cupolas of the temple were luminous fingers summoning the weary pilgrim to rest. That fantastic one-street town meandering by the turbid river lies, alas, under sentence of death. Avalanches down the Nara Parvata had engulfed outlying parts more than once even before my visit. Plans for a holding wall have apparently not been found feasible. And the Government are thinking of building a new township on the thither bank of the Alakananda.

But to me Badari will never be the same again. The more or less even ground on the left bank of the river—perhaps they are thinking of building in the direction of Mana, where the Saraswathi joins the Alakananda—may allow a bigger and better town to be built. It will lie under the green shadow of the lower slopes of the Narayana Parvata whose snow-crowned peak holds silent converse with its companion across the river. Even if it is not done immediately, the shrine too will have to be shifted sooner or later. And I suppose they will establish a new Brahma Kapala on the left bank. But it will be the end of a Kalpa, all the same—the resistless march of the mountain will have engulfed

the most holy square mile of earth haunted by the spirit of man.

"Oblivion scattereth its poppy." And the Himalaya is still growing, still aspiring Heavenward. We shall never know whether the temple, from which the footsore pilgrim returns with a strange light in his eye, as of one who has sojourned for a while in Swarga, shouting "Badri Vishal Lal ki Jai"—stood where it stands today when Sankara, that marvellous youth, trudged his way thither from far Kaladi and gave the shrine its magical hold on the Indian imagination. The unity of India, underlying its endless distances, races, languages, theologies, is marmoreally fixed in the tradition of worship that vests the sacred office of Badari Arayana Archaka in a Nambudiri. When you go up the flight of steps on the hot spring, Tapta Kunda, to the road just under the shrine a discreet woman attendant shows those

who seem receptive a dark crypt as the last resting place of the Bhagavatpada. Those blessed feet may well have rested awhile by the side of that well of amenity.

Possibly the Badari of Sankara lies a hundred fathoms deep, as the Badari I cherish in my heart may a hundred years hence. Well, what of it? All Badari Vana—the enchanted ground between the two guardian mountains—is sacred. In the background lies, and ever will, the inviolate majesty of Nilakantha. The Inseparables, Nara-Narayana, the first of the Rishis, are eternally established in *tapas* here. They are the guardian saints of Bharata Varsha. Fountains of Grace for the hero as aspirant—*anugrahaaya aatmavataam anukampayaa*, in the stately phrase of Suka. And here Uddhava, the footstool of the Lord, bears witness to the Divine mercy that endures for ever.

VIGNESWARA

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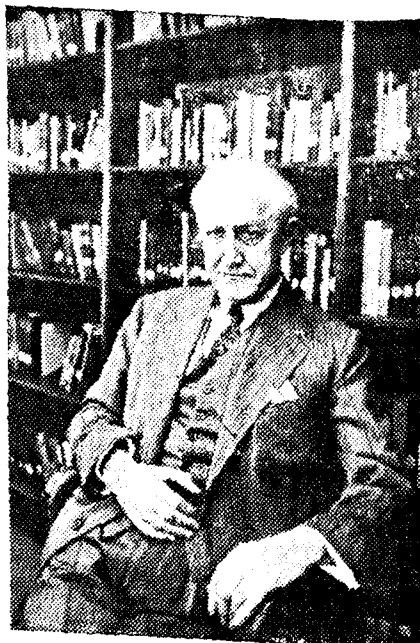
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Kaempffert's writing style varied with the subjects he tackled. He would write colorfully, and in proper vein, about subjects ranging from space ships to cure of foot troubles. His latest book *Explorations in Science* has been hailed as an important contribution by reviewers the world over.—USIS

IN THE PATH OF TWO WAYFARERS

By BHIKKU

THEY are wanderers from the rudderless futilities of post-war France, this young couple in their early twenties, whose teen ages had been seared by the horrors of the last war. They were old enough, to realise in their youth camps in different places in Europe that whatever be the differences between the power mad rulers of different countries which caused periodical carnage by prostituting the idealism of the common man, there was nothing but fellowship and sympathy amongst the youth of all nations. In their drift towards Asia this feeling of a common humanity has been the magnetic background. Robust, cheerful, keen of mind and artistic in temperament, they are just youngsters on foot as sympathetic on-lookers and responsive participants of a kaleidoscopic world, rather than seekers after any fundamentals, whether Eastern or Western. They had hiked through many cities and country parts of Asia before they found their way to Delhi and Har-dwar. They carry their little store of belongings in a travel bag strapped to their backs. They are on the ancient pilgrim route to Rudraprayag and Kedarnath. Clad only in singlets and shorts they walk with the straggling crowd of sadhus and beggars and the host of old and middle aged men and women, sore souls dried by time or misfortune, smouldering to be set on an ecstatic fire by mighty Kedarnath. Dirt and lice, rags and knavery were inevitable attendants on the pilgrimage and the plastic chords inside them which had not yet been deadened to cynicism were frequently stretched taut by the companionship of such want and misery.

They had left one of the halting places in the darkness of early

morning and saw the day break in shafts of glory across the hills to the chant of Ram, Ram, Sitaram and Har-Har-Mahadeo. The boulder strewn roughness of the path had eaten away the footwear they started with and the jagged edges of the sharp shale and broken ground cut into the insteps of the young woman. The sun beats fiercely and perspiration soaks their clothes and pours out in streams from their forehead. The next halt is at Shreenagar some distance away on the banks of the Alaknanda river. They sit a while on the side of the path as the young woman ties up with a piece of cloth the raw cracks in her blistered feet and the young man loosens the chafing straps of his pack to shift the weight a little before resuming the journey. The chant of Ram, Ram and Har-Har-Mahadeo echoes every-time a group of stragglers pass by. There now, there is the bairagi who had started later but had overtaken them with his lengthier stride and hefty limbs. Horny feet to which



With the Bairagi—Kedarnath way.

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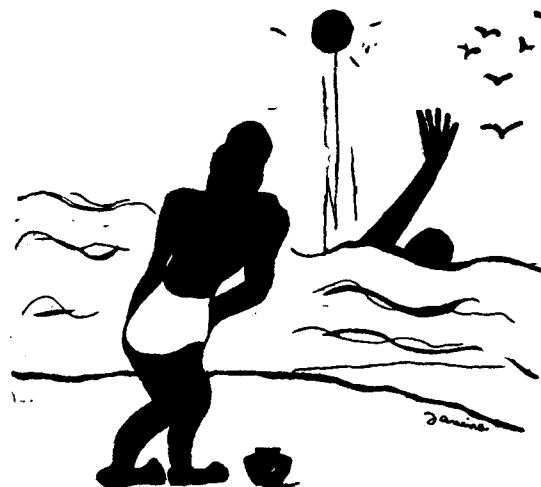
C. P. DORAICKANNU,
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heat and gritty rubble are small change are at premium. And now they in their turn overtake the ailing man borne on a chair. He is so obviously in distress, hard breath coming out in gasps. The pilgrims around tell him "Babuji, do go back. You are too ill for this journey. The way further on is harder still and the climb is very steep and you will not survive it." No! The Lala will not go back. No, not for anything. What is death compared to the unutterable sanctity of the living Mahadeo in the heights! Salvation and beatitude are far more real to these dazed souls than life and its symbols, pleasure and pain, weeping and laughter. And the Lala goads the hearers to quicker steps with promises of rewards alternating with threats of short payment for lagging. To the two young wanderers who thought they were refugees from a complex and hurtling civilisation now pacing a simpler and calmer land, values are gradually changing as they quicken with uncharted emotions. Natives of a continent where religion had come to be much of a polite convention, their habits of thought would not liquify easily. Here was an unsuspected world where toil and trouble, sweat and grind are not merely borne in sufferance but are eagerly sought for and triumphed over, not in the wake of war and dominion, success

and riches but for an elusive concept that is beyond all sense perceptions and reaches to a different dimension. Was it chimera—this intoxicated longing towards a transcendent godhead mystically coalesced with a geographical location? Is the apotheosis of human aspiration the deity of the grinning skulls presiding over burning corpses, smeared with ashes and dancing to the rhythm of life only on death?

THEY are at the river ghat at Shreenagar. Water is flowing cold and strong. It is near midday. They are foot weary, hungry and somnambulised with a welter of emotions. Before they make their meal of coarse wheaten flour bread washed down with Ganga water, they dip into the cold stream to bathe and refresh themselves. But what is this half submerged dark thing bobbing along the river margin that makes for the girl and brushes her legs! A corpse—a sadhu's corpse, with matted clammy hair, emaciated, bony, nakedness with claw like fingers with long nails. The girl screams. The hefty bairagi steps in, takes hold of the thing by its legs and lifting it with a swing flings it far into the coursing waters with a cry: "Chalo-Maharaj!" The girl falls down in a faint into her companion's arms.

The scene shifts. Many and varying are their experiences in their travels through the Indian continent. Sensibilities had hardened with too frequent prodding by beggars, pretentious religious heads and high class mendicants peddling religious twaddle and sponging on the people. They would slip into the security of the work-a-day world of dingy streets, shouting tonga-wallahs, dustbin raking cows, mangy pie dogs and cheating tradesmen, fusing their individuality with the motley crowd for weeks together and suddenly the hard scab of human squabble would give way and a world of a different and unfamiliar content would break upon them. One



"Chalo! Maharaj!"

such revelation was when they were guests for some time in a mutt where a young student was the ward of the mahanth, the head of the institution. Prasad was an orphan boy who had drifted into the mutt very young and was a healthy, if religious lad, given to students' ways of fun and frolic. It happened one day that a strange sadhu stepped into the room where the strangers were with their student friend. Prasad quietly said that it was his father who had become a sannyasin when his mother died and whom he had not seen for many years. The father and son sat looking at each other for what seemed a long time. Words appeared unnecessary. Some instinctive biological bond had drawn the not very consenting steps of the holy man towards a sight of his offspring. Dark and spare, his quiet luminous eyes seemed to envelope the boy in an aura of benediction. After a while the sadhu stood up and went his way as silently as he came. Verily,

"Ships that pass in the night, and
speak each other in passing,

Only a signal shown and a distant
voice in darkness

So in the ocean of life we pass and
speak one another

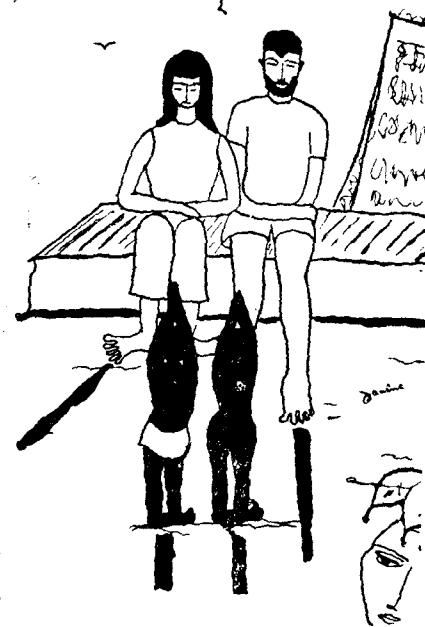
Only a look and a voice, than
darkness again and a silence."

IT is fully six months after the trek to Kedarnath. The couple had seen the Krishna-intoxicated dances at Mathura, had bathed in the confluence at Prayag, seen the burning ghats of Kashi, visited Kajursho, Shantiniketan, Jagannath and others, laquering every place and event with the added glamour of their imagination. The Indian spaces were wide, the Indian sun, fierce, its night sky vivid with stars and moon light and its misery and squalor phenomenal. But with all, the seductiveness of this land of kindly and congested humanity had grown on them. They would wander at night fall and at midday into the precincts of a village. If their foreign appearance scared the simple folk, the young man would take out his flute and play a few lively airs of his native

French mountains. The children would gather and by and bye, the village folk behind them and soon they would be taken into their huts and given a meal and be set on their way. It was only when they strayed into towns that they occasionally found themselves shelterless and had to resort to tree shades and their sleeping bags in the open, for it is only in towns that a man can lie easy in his bed and sleep while a wayfarer lies on stones in the street and starves. Their natal French and European lore is thickly overlaid with Bhagwat Gita and the thousand and one tales of puranic Hinduism. They had learnt the rhythms of breathing and of Kundalini. Their obvious poverty and simplicity in spite of their white skin was a passport to consideration and kindness. Their halting English has an irrepressible French cast. A smatter of Hindustani terms helps them pass over hurdles of communication. They are now in a sacred place in South India. Once again it is midday, once again they are weary with the long trek of the forenoon. They unsling their packs in a side mandap on the tank steps of the temple, intending to light a fire of twigs and cook their meal. But before doing so they have a look round. The artistry of the scene, the tiers of the temple tinted in sepia and ochre and mauve and the tank with its stepped symmetry reflecting the towers of the temple swamp their souls. They stand together gazing at the gopuram and at the large peepul tree shading its little image of snakes and snake-gods and at the wavy reflections in the greenish waters, while the burning sun pours its scorching rays on the few stragglers going in and out of the main gateway. As the two stand alongside the slender mandap reflected whitely in the waters, they themselves make an exotic unearthly picture; a fair young man with a shock of unruly hair and golden beard standing on long strong limbs, which seem poised on springs and by his side a white young woman with a fringe of dark curls falling over the forehead and

two short pigtaails flung forward on both shoulders framing a face of sensitiveness and charm.

Two urchins, a boy of eight and a girl of five, darkly brown and beautiful in their childish roundness wending their way homewards from the temple are arrested by the pictures. The boy had white caste marks on his forehead and a short towel about his waist while the girl was clad only in a silver (fig) leaf. The boy gravitates slowly towards the strangers as if drawn by an invisible force. The girl follows with lagging steps and round eyes ready to flit if occasion arose. The boy stands before the strange pair with eyes closed, hands raised and clasped in worship. The girl follows the lead and does the same! A whole minute of wonder and electrified tension! The strangers are astounded and thrilled and they become aware that these simple little children scarcely out of their cradles have taken them for Siva and Parvathi in their peregrinations and sought to please them with their worship! The contrast with the rollicking little ones of their own homeland whose dreams are of lollipops and chocolates and these God-obsessed wee things exalting in simplicity a living faith even while lisping, precipitated once again a tumultuous emotion of the kind which frequently assailed



Startling Worshippers

them with a sense of mystery and sublimity in this land.

THE lady nudged the gentleman and pointed to the near by shop and he stepped noiselessly away and fetched some plantains. The goddess bent sweetly on the children, raised her hands in blessing and gave one plantain each. The spell was broken. The boy ran in glee and the girl gurgled after and fled.

Music in the Soul

THE weary wheel of Endless Becoming
Has me in its thrall;
And like the bird in the winter darkness
Flying through a lighted hall,
I pass through Illusion
And seek Eternal Fusion
With the Ultimate Reality of Truth.

This spark, a flower on the corpse in the tomb,
An atom in the grossness that is me,
Seeks its source, the Eternal mother's womb,
From the Seven Veils of Bondage to be free.
And thus in Ending
And in Beginning
The Atman was and is; will always Be.

E. R. JAYAPAL

Wherever
Fleets
Operate



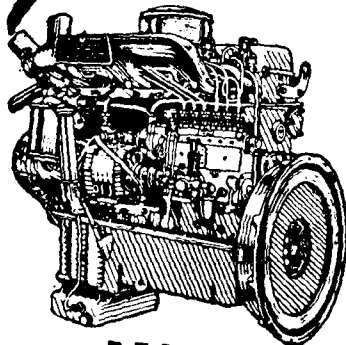
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An ugly old woman, a harridan, was dragging a half-naked girl by her hair along the gravel drive, beating her with a cast-off old sandal and shouting . . .

.....A Deepavali Story.....★

GAP IN THE WALL

BY MANJERI S. ISVARAN

THE gap in the wall was friendly. Heavy monsoon rains had loosened some of its bricks for any chance blast to knock them out, and the blast was not long in coming; but to the little black girl from the *cheri* it seemed as though nothing but the hand of a kindly god could have made that opening. Timidly, cautiously, she pushed aside the temporary patch-work of prickly shrubs and tattered coconut matting put up to cover the gap; then thrusting a tiny basket in through the hole she crawled after, just as a dog on its belly.

The sun burnt at its zenith, but here in this compound it was pleasantly cool; tamarind and mango threw the twilight of a coppice all around; and where the sun filtered through the leafy branches, butterflies flitted about; the caw of a crow sounded occasionally and the shrill chirp of pigeons. All else was silence.

With the basket resting on her hip, in the crook of her left hand, the little girl stood watching the bungalow for a while; watching the small porch on the side and the verandah in the rear, to see if the coast was clear. Her heart missed a beat when she thought of the mastiff which guarded the house; it must be chained to its post in the pentshed and be dozing away; also the people within; and she mustered up courage while she watched, put the basket down and tightened the rag round her waist. Whether this symbolic girding of her loins was to meet anything untoward or in expectation of some pleasure hoped for and anticipated, one cannot say; but what she set herself shortly to do was proof of what she

had come poaching for; she began to pick up the dry twigs fallen from the boughs overhead and fill her basket. The stones crunched under her feet and the withered leaves rustled as she stooped, gathering the twigs, and snapping the bigger ones to bits so as to get them into her basket. Suddenly she paused in her task for something clammy had hit her shoulder, spattering; preliminary to a flight from its perch on a branch a crow had shed its droppings; she looked up and heard it caw as it flew away; she cursed it muttering and flicked off the fluid dung and wiped her fingers on the rag about her waist.

Meanwhile, she was not aware that a window in the upper storey of the bungalow had opened and shut noiselessly. She resumed her work, interrupted for a moment by the nasty crow.

PRESENTLY a very fair girl of eight or nine came running into the compound and hid herself behind a clump of henna, a few yards away from where the black girl was collecting twigs.

"Ay, Sokki! Sokki!" a voice called softly. It seemed scarcely to rise above the sigh of the wind among the light-leaved tamarind and mango trees.

The girl from the *cheri* raised her head in surprise and misgiving, but before either of the feeling could obtain ascendancy over her, the fair girl had darted out of her hiding-place.

"Were you frightened?" she asked, smiling.

"Just a little," answered the dark

one, holding the basket of twigs firmly at her hip.

"Why didn't you come these last three days? I was waiting for you."

"I had gone to Sembiam, to my *maman's* house."

"Alone? And where's this place?"

"It is not far off. I went with my grandmother. We returned yesterday evening."

HER eyes rested admiringly on the lovely, lady-like person of the girl who spoke to her with all the warmth of her little heart; and her memory went back to a certain day more than a month ago when they had met for the first time and taken a liking for each other. She saw nothing superior or condescending in the aristocratic girl from which to wince mortified and know and keep her distance; she was a lonely creature, her mother was dead, and she was under the care of her grandmother, her father's mother, an ill-natured old hag who often beat her for no reason whatsoever, called her by the foulest names, and starved her. Her father stayed away from their hut for days on end; he was a millhand and drank away his wages, and in the brief intervals he came home, he broke the pots and pans, bawled obscene abuse, and attempted to break the head of the old woman, his mother. Sokki was in mortal fear of her father, but she hated her grandmother and wanted to run away from them, run away somewhere and beg for her food, as she had seen the tramps and paupers do in railway trains and at bus-stops, or if need be, beg for a mouthful of rice from door to door. The girl born in the purple, on the other hand, had not the slightest notion of the purple. She was fascinated by this small black untouchable, of her age, or a year older or younger perhaps; her dry short hair which had never known the gloss of oil, her quick-glancing animal eyes, the dirty rag about her loins, drew the fair one with a strange power, and although at times she did not understand her words, the quaint drawling accent of her speech, she felt her kinship with this wench of the *chert*

as strong as that she bore to her own people.

The gap in the wall had introduced them to each other; and as the days passed it intensified their friendship.

The gap in the wall was a godsend, a hope, a habit.

They met almost daily, she coming to pick twigs and accepting gratefully to eat whatever she expected for certain she would get. Such nice sweetmeats! Such fine rice-cakes, so different from the *appams* which the woman baked at the wayside and sold two for an anna! One afternoon the fair girl had brought a life-sized baby-doll and invited her to play; the harijan watching the high-born play at mother, prattling to the baby-doll gently, putting it on her lap and pretending to feed it with milk, kissing it on its cheeks, was greatly amused; for never in all her life had she witnessed such tenderness, and as she looked on unable to take part in it for all her friend's urgent invitation and her amusement slowly changing into an earnest concentration, her quick-glancing animal eyes softening under feelings that tried to break the hard rind of her ignorance untouched by sympathy as yet, quietly, unexpectedly, the lady of the house had burst upon them and shattered their illusory little play-world.

"What are you doing here?" sharply asked the lady, addressing the fair girl with the baby-doll. "What are you doing here, Amrita? Didn't you hear me calling you?" she repeated, after a moment or two of shocked surprise.

The girl grew hot all over, her face went blood-red, and she hung her head in shame.

"And who's *this*?" she snapped angrily; "who are you?" turning to the dark girl, "and how did you get into this compound?"

Sokki stood bewildered, looking beseechingly at her friend who still hung her head in shame, and without a word, lifting the basket of twigs onto her hip tried to edge away towards the gap in the wall.

"Fine companion to play with! A low-born stinking pariah dog! Go

into the house this moment," she cried to her daughter; then raising her voice at the trembling little culprit: "Get out of here at once. If I see you here again, I shall have your legs broken. Lord, what has the world come to!"

Sokki tried to edge away towards the gap in the wall, and the lady following her movement, cried again, her anger unabated:

"Empty down the twigs and get out through the main gate. Quick."

"Mother, let her have the twigs," cried Amrita, pleadingly. Her eyes were moist bright.

The maidservant who stood behind the lady grinned in apparent delight, moving her gaze from mother to daughter, and from daughter to mother; then at a brusque order from her mistress led the trespasser out through the gates.

For a week or more after this unlucky accident Sokki hadn't dared to show herself, she grew a trifle afraid of the gap in the wall, of the prickly patchwork that covered it seeming to thicken itself tenebrously. And Amrita—she was overcome with grief at the secret of her friendship with the low-born being discovered; her mother was indignant and rebuked her; she reported to her father who grew so indignant that he failed to rebuke her; and the poor girl was placed under surveillance, she was not allowed to venture into the compound—an unhealthy zone to her moral growth.

But with a strange thrill in her heart, though overcome with shame and sorrow, Amrita hoped that Sokki would come again. And Sokki came at last. The maidservant who was in charge of Amrita was taken with the goodness and kindness of the girl towards the lowly, and she played the role of abettor, willingly.

II

THE gap in the wall was friendlier than ever.

"Sokki," said Amrita, "let us go behind that clump of henna and sit awhile and talk. I want to say something important to you."

"Suppose your mother comes as she came the other day, I am afraid," cried Sokki, the words trembling breathlessly out of her mouth.

"She won't come, she is asleep," Amrita assured her companion blithely.

"Suppose the dog is about," said Sokki, in a whisper of terror.

"It's lying in the pentshed, chained to its post," answered Amrita, smiling ingenuously.

They chose a dry patch of earth behind the henna and sat with a sense of security.

"Tomorrow is the day of the Deepavali festival," said Amrita, with all the gravity of revealing a mystery.

"What festival?" asked Sokki, failing to catch the words properly.

"Deepavali. Don't you know it?"

"Oh, Divali!"

"Hm. When we take our oil-bath very early in the morning, wear new clothes and burst crackers and eat nice things—*halva* and *jilebi* and *boondi*," Amrita said ebulliently.

Sokki shook her head in ignorance, looking intrigued. "*Halva* and *jilebi* and *boondi*—" she repeated mechanically. "What is it?"

"Oh, they are sweetmeats. And such delicious stuff too! Do you know why we celebrate this festival?"

Sokki shook her head puzzled, looking more intrigued. What a lot of things did her friend know, she wondered and gazed in admiration at her, waiting to hear further about this 'Divali'.

"Once upon a time," began Amrita, in the accredited style of the ancient story-teller, "there was a demon in this earth. He was very, very wicked, he troubled the people and killed them. He killed and killed and at last unable to bear the wickedness of this demon, God came down from the heavens . . ."

"Who?" asked Sokki, curious.

"God."

"What is it?"

"Oh, don't say God as It. God is great. We worship Him in our temples. Haven't you ever gone to a temple to worship God, Sokki?"

Sokki remained silent, her knowledge of God and temple was the tiny hovel at the end of the *cheri*, with its thatch flapping in the wind and a small stone inside it, smeared all over with the red dust of vermilion. "Mari Atha is God?" she asked, not sure of herself.

"Hu-hum," continued Amrita, "the God of whom I am talking to you is not *Mari Atha*. He came from the heavens and killed this wicked demon. The people of the earth were happy. They sang. They praised God. And God was very tired after killing the demon, so he took an oil-bath, wore new clothes, and ate nice dishes as God did. This is Deepavali," Amrita concluded with a triumphant sparkle in her eyes.

"God did not let off crackers?" asked Sokki, who had followed the story with intelligent interest.

For an instant Amrita's sparkling eyes clouded with doubt; then with all her naivete, she said:

"He must have, that's why we are also doing it."

Sokki was satisfied obviously, she didn't question her friend further. "But we are very poor, we don't celebrate Divali," she added.

"Never!" said Amrita in amazement.

"No, not never. Last year when my mother was alive she bought me a new piece of cloth. It is all torn now."

"Oh, don't worry. You are going to celebrate Deepavali this year."

Sokki was mystified.

Amrita moved closer to her and whispered: "I've a big box full of new clothes. I shall give you a pretty frock. You will wear it tomorrow."

Sokki was astonished into a state of parted lips and glittering eyes. She did not look like an animal now, she was transfigured with the glow of gratitude—a flower that was the fulfilment of the humus in a moment when it thrilled under the noble touch of an innocent child.

"And I shall give you a small bottle of oil for your bath and some sweetmeats," Amrita continued, "and

I want you to have as nice a Deepavali as I am going to have."

"But—" began Sokki and broke off abruptly, for they heard the loud purr of a motor-car gliding into the bungalow along the gravel drive, and stopping in the front portico, its purr subsiding suddenly.

"My father has come!" cried Amrita, "he will ask for me. I must be going."

And as though her surmise was correct she saw the maidservant walking rapidly towards her, and beckoning her to come into the house quickly.

"I shall put two packets near the gap in the wall, in the evening. Don't forget to come and take them, Sokki," she said, getting hot all over in her excitement and was gone.

III

THE morning of the Deepavali dawned. Even before the rise of the sun the family had finished their auspicious bath and dressed in their newest and best. Amrita and her brother let loose a lot of crackers, shot with toy-pistols, burnt endless multicoloured matches which in the dusk of dawn tinted the crotons in pots along the verandah with their flaming hues—a silent foil for their own active though ephemeral splendour. The girl was unusually gay, for her thoughts were with Sokki, who too would be celebrating the festival as gaily as she. The gap in the wall would surely have delivered the packets; it was a trust, a reliance, an assurance.

The family were about to sit for their elaborate Deepavali dinner when they heard a commotion outside. Annoyed at the interruption the master of the house came out followed by his wife, and behind them their two children.

An ugly old woman, a harridan, was dragging a half-naked girl by her hair along the gravel drive, beating her with a cast-off old sandal and shouting. The girl shrieked in the torments of agony, while the sandal descended all over her body.

The hag stood near the portico and bawled:

"You big folks! Why d'you come perverting the children of the *cheri*? We don't want anything of your snivelling sympathy. You will call us thieves and set the police on us. Keep your noses out," and muttering obscenely she threw a frock smudged with dirt, and a bottle and a paper packet through which the oil had seeped, onto the steps of the verandah where stood the scandal-stricken family, then flung herself out dragging the howling girl after her.

The master of the house stood petrified in perplexity. The mistress of the house was frozen into an image of stone, for quick had been her recognition of the pariah girl whom she had driven out a few days ago. She came back to life as a lashing fury.

"Where's Amrita, where's that little pig?" she shouted, shivering with rage, and her eyes swept in a blazing survey all over the verandah and the living-room.

But Amrita was nowhere to be seen; she was panting like a wounded bird, a ball of fluttering feathers, underneath the canopied cot in the upstairs of the house.

"What's the meaning of all this?" the master of the house asked, turning to his wife; "and on such an auspicious day as this. They were pariahs!" And he gulped the words, his mind at a loss to measure the enigma and enormity of the scene he had witnessed.

"Where's that little pig?" the lady shouted, ignoring her husband.

"Calm yourself, dear; tell me what's the meaning of all this," cried the man in impatient submissiveness.

"I shall," she choked, and strode into the living-room to be followed equally precipitately by her husband.

The dinner waited.

BY evening the next day, hostile hands had filled the gap in the wall with brick and mortar.

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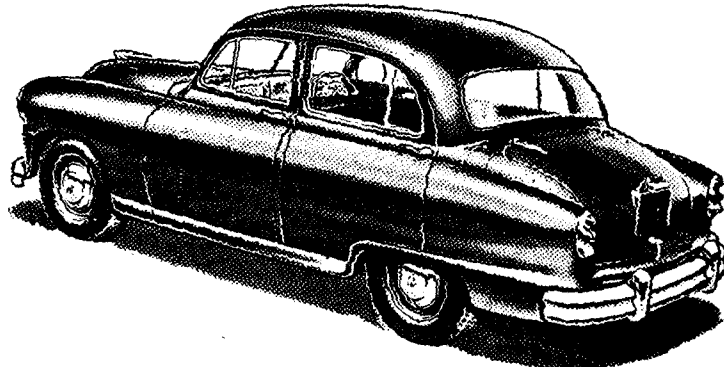
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Kannada Literary Miscellany

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

P. Ramanand, by profession a Professor of Chemistry, is a penetrating, yet restrained and generous critic of Kannada letters . . . G. P. Rajaratnam is a renowned Kannada poet and an excellent biographer and critic . . . Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, a distinguished member of the Mysore Civil Service, now retired, is the leading man of letters in Kannada, and editor of the popular Kannada monthly, "Jeevana" . . . V. K. Gokak is the Principal of the Karnatak College, Dharwar, and a well-known scholar and writer in both English and Kannada—prose as well as poetry . . . A. N. Moorthy Rao, Professor of English, Central College, Bangalore, is a respected critic and a creative author in Kannada; he is also the President of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat . . . N. Kasturi, Professor of History, Maharajah's College, Mysore, retired as Principal of the Arts College, Devangere, is foremost among the Kannada humorists . . . D. V. Gundappa, famous as a first-class publicist and constructive politician is also a poet and critic of distinction . . . K. Sampathgiri Rao, Vice-Principal of the National College, Bangalore, and a distinguished educationist in the Mysore state and an M.L.C., is Associate Editor, "Triveni" . . . Krishna Kumar Kallur, Principal of the Patuck Polytechnic, Santa Cruz, Bombay, is a Kannada author and poet of note in the Bombay State . . . Navaratna Rama Rao, an illustrious member of the Mysore Civil Service, now retired, is a master of simple, dainty, Kannada.

What Follows

The Kannada Literary Miscellany like its predecessors, Telugu and Tamil, aims at giving glimpses of the development of Kannada Literature in its imaginative, journalistic, critical, and other aspects.

The old Classical Literature in Kannada is usually divided into three great epochs—the Jaina (800-1300), the Veerasaiva (1100-1500), and the Brahmana (1400-1800). This rather unhappy nomenclature for these three epochs has been adopted partly for the sake of convenience, and partly because of the fact that the majority of the makers of the literature in those periods happened to belong to the particular religious denominations.

The modern renaissance in Kannada may be said to have commenced at the close of the last century, and it is still going on with some vigour. The loosening of the grip of Sanskrit on Kannada and the simultaneous impact of western thought and culture on it seem to have been mainly responsible for this new development. Save for a few vigorously written patriotic pieces in poetry, whose literary value is unquestioned, the Freedom Movement in general does not seem to have contributed much to this development, although the Kannada country as a whole was in the vanguard of the struggle.

What follows is not a representative anthology. It only presents in a trailer-like fashion a few of the highlights in the picture of new Kannada thought and writing.

For some of the material used in this Miscellany we are indebted to "Triveni" and its Editor, Sri K. Ramakotiswara Rau.

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KANNADA LITERATURE: MODERN TRENDS

By P. RAMANAND

KANNADA LITERATURE had flowed in an unbroken stream from the 9th century A.D. down to the 19th century, passing successively through various epochs—the Jaina, the Veerasaiva, and the Romantic. During the entire 19th century, however, the springs of Kannada literature seem to have dried up, excepting for a little trickling here and there. The cause for this is not far to seek. British power in India had been well and truly consolidated in that century, and the intelligentsia of our land had begun to look to English, not as a language of thought and culture, which could be used to enrich our own languages, but as a means of securing our daily bread. Our languages, including Sanskrit, fell into disfavour, and those learned in them slid into unblissful quietude. Kannada was probably the hardest hit in this manner, because in addition to this general demoralising effect, the Kannada country itself has broken up into more than a dozen fragments and put under as many different Administrations—a state of affairs existing even to this day. But it is darkest before dawn, and the dawn of the 20th century saw a new burgeoning of the spirit of Kannada literature.

This was mainly due to two forces at work. One was the vision of a few far-sighted men in the first decade of this century, who, with a missionary zeal, sought to bring about a re-unification of Karnataka at least in the domain of Art, Literature, and Culture. This vision took tangible shape in the establishment of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat in 1915 with its headquarters at Bangalore. This All-Karnataka institution has been, ever since then, the rallying point for the literary, artistic and cultural pursuits of all Kannadigas, be they of Mangalore or Mysore, of Karwar or Dharwar.

The second force—a much greater force—responsible for the new spirit in Kannada, was, of course, the impact of English thought and culture on the educated youth of Karnataka, the very impact under which Kannada had reeled only in the previous century. Down the ages, Sanskrit and its thought and literature had been the sole fountainhead of inspiration for all our poets and writers, who had drawn upon it freely with never-ending variations. But, as we have just seen, this inspiration had burnt itself out in the 19th century as far as Kannada was concerned. Only the life-giving waters of a new stream of thought, as great and sweeping in its scope as Sanskrit had been till then, could give life to the drooping spirit of Kannada literature. And this new life-giving stream came with full force from English literature and thought in our present century.

And that is why we find that all the makers of our Kannada literature during the past four decades have been precisely those who have drunk deep at the springs of Western thought and culture, either through our Universities or otherwise.

AND that is why, also, all the modern trends in Kannada literature are precisely those trends with which we are familiar in the literature of the West today. The short story, the lyrical poem, free verse, the social play, the essay, the novel, the satire, biography, humour, criticism etc., are the predominant forms in which our creative artists have expressed themselves. Their writing has been less and less objective, and more and more subjective. Their themes have been mainly concerned with the life of the commonman and the interplay of his emotions. Even if the great names or incidents in classic literature or of the past are utilised, it is more with the inten-

tion of giving them a new orientation in the light of the present, or of stressing an emotion which is still predominantly playing its part in our lives today. Their form of expression, whether it be in poetry or in prose, has been shorn of all traditional conceits and incrustations, and has been simple and direct, pellucid yet forceful. The literature that has been produced in Kannada during the last four decades is, in fact, the literature of Realism—a natural successor to the Romantic literature of the previous age.

THE harbinger of the new mood was Muddana's *Ramashwamedha*, a magnificent work, which appeared in the dawn of this century. The author was unknown, and Muddana was obviously his pseudonym. The work, garbed as it was in old-style Kannada prose, appeared to be an ancient classic, and got published as such. But it bore a refreshing originality and modernity of treatment, possible only for a 20th century author. The bold and telling imagery, the glowing spirit of love and romance, and the rollicking humour in its interludes made this work a masterpiece and a classic in no time. It was only after the death of one Nandalike Lakshminarnappayya, an inconspicuous drill-master in a High School at Udipi, that the public came to know that it was he who was the author of this magnificent work, which critics had been feverishly, and with much argument, trying to place somewhere in the 14th or 15th century A.D.!

The fact that even in this century an outstanding work of the stature of the *Ramashwamedha* could be written, made a great impression on the young educated men of the time. It quickened their creative literary impulses and inspired them with an irresistible desire to create a new era in Kannada literature, an era, greater and more glorious, if possible, than all the previous ones.

The output, however, came in a shy and halting manner at first. No doubt, mediocre translations of novels from Bengali and Marathi came in with unabashed frequency. But the short story, the lyric, and

the personal essay began to appear only slowly and hesitatingly. The output for a time was hardly of a quantity or a quality to sustain the dream of a new era in Kannada literature.

But all at once the flowering came. It came with the intensity and the suddenness of a cloudburst. Authors and poets arose, almost in unison, from all parts of Karnataka, and bore with them a rich harvest of song and poetry, drama and fiction, to be laid at the altar of Kannada literature.

The short story and the lyrical poem were the first to take the field. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar became famous overnight with his charming and impeccable *Rangappana Dipavali*, and *Other Stories*. Although he had soon a large number of followers and imitators, he remains to this day the supreme master of the short story in Kannada. The output of short stories during the last forty years has been naturally prodigious. While most of them are of necessity of the 'boy-meets-girl' type a great many are marked by a rare artistry, sincerity, and imagination.

SIDE by side with the short story, lyrical poetry has held the field for long. But unlike the short story, whose quality has been rather uneven, excepting in the hands of a few master artists, the lyric has risen to unprecedented heights in the hands of quite a large number of our poets. Bendre of Dharwar, for instance, plays upon our heart-strings as on a harp, evoking whatever emotion he wants. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar's poetry possesses a wealth of feeling and warmth of heart, of which only he is capable. V. Sitaramiah's lyrics are delicately sensitive and exquisitely beautiful. Govinda Pai's poems are in the grand manner and are characterised by great depth of thought and feeling. D. V. Gundappa's poems are full of charm and impeccable beauty. K. V. Puttappa plucks the stars from the firmament and offers them to his Muse. Prof. Gokak's poetry is earnest, sensitive, and thoughtful. G. P. Rajaratnam's *Songs of the Drunkard Ratna* are unique in any literat-

of the world, compelling our admiration and homage by the sheer boldness of their thought, expression, and structure. The late Panje Mangesh Rau's lyrics, though few, have an immortal quality about them. And these are not all our poets; and, neither does our modern poetry consist of lyrics only; free verse and blank verse of great beauty and power have also been written. At this moment, a host of younger and newer poets like P. T. Narasimhachar, K. S. Narasimhaswamy and others are tugging at our heart-strings, enthraling us by the freshness of their imagery, expression, and execution.

IN the field of the Drama, the name of the late T. P. Kailasam stands supreme. He revolutionised the Kannada drama of our times by taking up our everyday common life onto the stage and making us see for ourselves what we really are. His deep insight into the character of men and women, his irrepressible sense of humour, and withal a boundless sympathy outgoing to them from an overflowing heart, have made his plays bristle with men and women we meet in the home, in the office, in the club, or in the street. We are afraid to laugh at the characters or the situations in his plays, lest we should be laughing at ourselves. And too often, while our laughter is on our lips, a tear invariably glistens in our eyes. Such is the consummate artistry of this master dramatist, who has been rightly called the Father of the Modern Kannada Drama. Prof. R. V. Jahgirdar of Dharwar is another of our well-known dramatists. His plays are characterised by clever, quick-firing dialogues, trenchant humour and a keen analysis of human motives and action. K. Shivaram Karanth of Mangalore is still another of our great dramatists. His dramatic genius has flowered in many ways. In a number of his One Act plays he is a powerful realist, but in most of his full length plays he combines high idealism with a vein of satire. He is unique among our dramatists in that he has written a number of operatic plays—operatic, not in the Indian

sense, but in the Western one. And these are not all our dramatists. The One Act Play, in both its prose and verse forms, has been a prominent and supple instrument in the hands of quite a large number of our literary artists, too numerous to mention. Among the longer plays, the late B. M. Srikantia's *Ashwatthaman*, modelled on the Greek tragic plays, was a landmark in our dramatic literature when it was first published. And so was C. K. Venkataramiah's classic, *Mandodari*. Kannadised versions of English and French farces are also largely coming in nowadays to serve our dramatic literature on its lower levels.

In the field of Fiction, the outlook was rather bleak in the beginning of this century, the works published being mainly translations of novels from other languages. However, Shivaram Karanth's remarkable novel *Chomana Dudi* (The Drum of the Pariah) and another equally good one, although in the satiric vein, called *Devadootaru* (The Messengers of Gods), were early exceptions to this state of affairs. But the ground has been broken anew. K. V. Puttappa has given us his magnum opus, *Kanuru Subbamma Heggadhi*, a novel with 'Malenad' life as its background. A. N. Krishna Rau's brilliant novels of the middle-class social life are highly idealistic in outlook and deeply emotional in content. Shivaram Karanth himself has turned again to fiction, and has given us some superb novels of life in South Kanara. Novels dealing with our struggle for freedom as the main theme are also fast coming into vogue. But novels of deep psychological insight into affairs of men and things are yet to make their way into our literature.

The serious Essay has not yet taken root in Kannada literature, probably because the quick tempo of our 20th century life is hardly conducive to the growth of the leisurely essay. But the growth of the humorous sketches have taken light, humorous sketches have taken deep root in the soil. Humour in our ancient classics, although scanty, has always been of a high order. But humour in the prolific manner is a distinctive product of the 20th cen-

tury, and Kannada has not lagged behind. Dr. Shivaram, N. Kasturi, Gorur, and a host of younger writers are keeping us in our proper moods today by their sparkling perpetrations in this field.

On the non-creative side, literary criticism of a high order has been largely fostered by our leading writers. C. K. Venkataramiah and G. P. Rajaratnam have given us historical biographies, and the latter also an autobiography, the first of its kind in Kannada. A. N. Krishna Rao has specialised in Veerasaiva literature, and G. P. Rajaratnam in Buddhist literature, based on which he has given us some outstanding works in Kannada. Other religious and devotional literature also has largely come into existence. Folklore has been revived, and a large amount of a delightful 'Literature for Children' has been written, chiefly by the late Panje Mangesh Rau and by G. P. Rajaratnam and Hoysala. Shivaram Karanth himself has given us single-handed a magnificent Encyclopaedia for Children, called *Bala Prapancha*, probably the first of its kind in any Indian language. Political literature also is fast making its way into

Kannada. Popular books on Science are slowly trickling in, but we are still at the beginning in this field.

THESE, in brief, are the main trends in modern Kannada Literature—trends which have been caused, as one of our writers has graphically put it, by the intermingling of the waters of the Kannada Kaveri and the Sanskrit Bhagirathi with those of the English Thames. The cry everywhere now is for 'Progressive Literature,' but the term is a misnomer, for no literature deserves to be called literature unless it is progressive. And most of the literature produced in Kannada during the last forty years is definitely of a progressive kind. The river of literature flows on. Its course may be smooth or ruffled, wide or narrow, straight or meandering. Its water may be fed at various points by powerful tributaries, and the scenery on its banks may progressively change. But it is still the same literature coursing down the ages, changing and progressing according to the dictates of the Time-Spirit.

(By Courtesy: AIR, Madras)

The Drunkard's Greatness

By G. P. RAJARATNAM

Essaying not to gauge his greatness
Do not the drunkard scold.
Who knows which pearl is in the oyster?
Aye, break it open, and behold!

Turns not the muddy water pure
If it is filtered well?
What boots it who it is that says
When truth from life he tries to tell?

Smile not at these as nonsense rhymes,
For I sing them—a sot.
He that takes pains to pry below
Shall find a mine of hidden thought.

The poet spies what th' sun doth not,
Runs the saying, and it's true.
But drunkards are a keener sort,
For they look deeper than the two.

(Rendered from the Original KANNADA by 'Shyama')

Short Story

VEERA LAKSHMAMMA: OR, MY UNCLE'S STORY

By MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR

SOME years ago I was stationed at Santaveri in Kadur District. This is a small village on the road between Chikamagalur and Tarikere, built on one of those little hills which form the foot-hills of the Bababudan Range. It is a pleasant enough place for a day or two, but the pleasure palls on the third or fourth day. The peaks of the Bababudan feast the eye, but life in the village is fairly difficult and one has to exert a lot even to get the ordinary necessities of daily life.

One of these is milk and that is precisely the one thing that you cannot get in Santaveri. With no milk, you have also no curds, no butter, no ghee. We had little children in the house. What kind of life could they have without these things? My wife bought the exceedingly diluted milk which could be got in the place for three days, and decided on the fourth day that we should have a milch cow or buffalo of our own. I looked out for a cow or a buffalo and after some time was able to get a very good buffalo with a calf some four months old. The mother was young and strong and, though a buffalo, really beautiful. It had big, lustrous eyes and the tenderness with which it licked the young one, it was a delight to see. We allowed the calf to drink all the milk it needed and yet had enough for the needs of the household. My wife was greatly pleased with the buffalo and, as it brought happiness and prosperity to the house, called it Lakshamma.

As is usual in all villages, the buffalo had to go out to pasture during the day. A boy whom they called Bimla was the cowherd in Santaveri. We sent Lakshamma out with him. My wife proposed to send the calf with the herd. I thought that this might not be desi-

table. But she said that the calf was so young that it would be unhappy, away from its mother, and would deteriorate in that cold place if tied up in the stall all the time. After some discussion, we decided that the calf might also go to pasture. They were duly provided with bells to their necks. These are bells made out of cocoanut shell and help the cowherd to place straying cattle. My wife warned Bimla to be specially careful about the calf and, of course, he promised. Though I objected to the suggestion when it was made, I must admit that it was a pleasure to see the proud mother stepping with grave dignity on the journey to the pasture with the little one walking close at her heels. It was very like looking at a young human mother walking proudly with her little son up the village street.

FOR nearly two months, the buffalo made this trip to the pasture and back, with the calf, regularly and safely. So regularly and safely indeed that we lost any feeling of danger to the buffalo or the calf. They would go out in the morning along with the other cattle and come back in the evening well before sunset. As the herd reached the outskirts of the village, Lakshamma and the calf would turn homeward and come straight. Lakshamma would walk into her stall and stand in her place and look towards the mistress, almost as if she invited her to come and milk.

One evening at the end of about two months, the buffalo and calf did not come in at the usual hour. My wife noticed this after some time and wondered why and went out to enquire. The cattle belonging to our neighbours had come back. Lakshamma and the calf seemed to be the only two that had not. M-

wife enquired for Bimla and learnt that he had come with the cattle into the village and had gone back again to the jungle. Why had he done this? He should have noticed the absence of Lakshmamma and her calf and returned to search for them. What a fellow to have gone by himself and without telling the owners! He could have taken help and we should have been spared anxiety. My wife did not know what to do and sent word with the children to me, in my office, of what had happened.

I CAME to the house in much anxiety and spoke to our neighbours. It was clear, they said, that Lakshmamma and her little calf had been left behind and that Bimla had gone again to look for them. He did not wish to get a scolding; so he had gone back after leaving the other cattle in the village. It struck me that this must be so; also that if any of us should go to search for the cattle, we should wait for Bimla. The search would be useful only in the area where the cattle had grazed in the day, and to go there we needed Bimla as guide. So we decided to wait for Bimla and, in the meantime, got hold of good stout sticks and some lanterns and persuaded a friend in the Police Station to accompany us with a rifle.

One hour we watched for Bimla. I could not believe that any hour could be quite so long as that one was. Every second of it seemed to insist on having all its value and move in slow deliberation. The boy, however, turned up at long last with a face that was the picture of despair. My wife wanted to scold him for his carelessness and for having gone away again without telling us that the cattle were missing. I restrained her. The boy was already sufficiently upset. To scold him would have merely upset him more, and that might make the search for the cattle more difficult. She agreed and desisted.

In a few minutes the four of us who had decided to go out on the search, with the Police friend with his rifle, and with Bimla for guide, set out to the forest where the cattle had grazed that day.

We reached the place soon, but saw that the search was likely to be long and not easy. The cattle could have gone in any of twenty directions. We went down a number of ways and came back, unable to make out where the buffalo and calf had gone. At one particular instant, I thought I heard the buffalo's bell and proposed that we should go in the direction of the sound. But it was then rather late and, before we had stepped ten yards, one of our friends said: "I do not believe it is a buffalo's bell. Any moment, going down these lanes in the forest, we might come face to face with a tiger. We have only one rifle for the five of us and should be in danger if a tiger came along. We do not know if the buffalo and calf have not, after some wandering, gone back to the village. Our wandering in the jungle cannot help them and meanwhile our womenfolk would be feeling anxious about us. I think we should get back to the village now and come in the morning and search." One man said this. And the others seemed to concur. The buffalo and calf were mine. How far should I insist on these friends risking their lives in searching for my property? If they were prepared to search, I could be with them. If they were not, I could not force them. As for leaving them to return and searching for the cattle by myself the thing was simply out of the question. So, after a few minutes of deliberation, we all turned back home.

THE night was a very sad one for our household. "What a silly thing I did," said my wife, "sending the calf with the buffalo! That foolish creature must have strayed into the forest and then, because it went, the mother must have gone after it; and now, in all likelihood, they have been killed by a tiger. What an intelligent creature Lakshmamma was! How pretty the calf was! They finished the time that they were destined to spend with us, and have now gone to pay their debt to some wild beast."

The position was bad enough without this vivid picturing of what had

happened to the buffalo and calf. What their loss meant was brought fully home to us in the milk that again perforce was bought from outside. The children were so unhappy that they would not take their meals. With great difficulty we persuaded them; and, as for ourselves, I, in order to satisfy my wife, and my wife, in order to satisfy me, both pretended to eat a meal; and, with our sorrow for pillows, lay down to a rest that was no rest. Throughout the night I seemed to myself to sense Lakshmamma and the calf feeling the claws of the tiger. I suppose my wife had the same feeling.

In the morning, as soon as it was light enough, I got up and called to our servant and started out with him for the jungle. My wife came out, looked disconsolately towards the buffalo's stall, and stood near the doorway watching us go out. Not knowing what was in store for us, or knowing for certain that it was nothing good, neither of us had the heart to utter any word of cheer to the other.

REACHING the jungle I walked again with the servant down the paths which we had explored the previous evening. The result was no better. As we stood undecided, I fancied I heard a buffalo's bell. It was the same kind of fancy as I had had the previous evening. "There," I said to the servant, "I heard the bell." The servant gave me a look compounded of some pity and a good deal of wonder at my stupidity. How could a buffalo and calf, left in the beat of a number of tigers in the jungle for a whole night, be alive in the morning to sound their bells? There was no need for him to say this to me, as I knew it myself. Yet there was this illusion.

Over a furlong we travelled in the direction of the sound, crossing a somewhat thick belt of trees and shrubs. Beyond the belt was an open space. As we stepped out of the belt into the open space, I saw a buffalo right in the middle of the circle. I could not believe my eyes. I thought my illusion was persisting and looked again. No it was not an illu-

sion. It was a buffalo sure enough, and a little beyond it there was lying on the ground something very like a calf. As I stood for a half minute, taken aback by the vision, the buffalo, which at first had its face away from us, turned in our direction and I saw it was Lakshmamma. I was overcome with joy. I do not suppose that I would normally run to meet any one. I ran then, calling out "Lakshmamma!" Previously I had not thought of the buffalo as anything more than an animal that gives milk. But that moment I realised that we were two fellow-beings and that I was deeply interested in Lakshmamma's joys and sorrows. I had not previously touched Lakshmamma. But in this auspicious moment I walked up to it and touched it with the joy with which I might have touched a friend.

Lakshmamma was a grave and dignified creature. It was not given to show its feelings. But that morning it also seemed to feel unusual. Just after a moment's hesitation, it responded to my greeting and extended its snout towards me. I noticed several injuries on Lakshmamma's body and its horn-tips were stained with blood.

THE servant was dumbfounded when he saw the buffalo alive and standing. He looked all over the place and made out what had happened the previous night.

"Sir," he said, "this is a miracle. A tiger came here last night and the buffalo fought it. Here is the circle in which the tiger and the buffalo moved, we do not know how many times. It should have been a small tiger. In any case it preferred to attack the calf as the surer prey. If the buffalo had been here alone, it would have attacked the buffalo. Also, the buffalo would have been half dead from fright when the tiger appeared. But because the calf was here the mother took courage. Who would believe this, Sir? The mother kept the tiger away from the calf, going round and round and round, and must have gored the creature once or twice. After this, the tiger should have thought better of it and decided to come again later. See

here, Sir," he said, running his fingers along the tip of one horn of the buffalo, "this blood on the horns, and here is the tiger's hair sticking."

This surmise seemed quite correct. We could see the marks of a tiger having gone all round the calf, and just beside these marks were the marks of the heroic mother's hoofs.

If the surmise was all correct, it was also not merely a case of the mother having saved the calf but the calf having saved the mother too. For, if the calf had not been there to tempt the tiger and stiffen the mother, it would have been all over with the buffalo.

The thing was indeed a miracle. The servant brought the calf to the mother, and together we brought them into the village.

The whole village trooped to our house to see this heroic mother buffalo and the young one which she had saved. My wife cried for joy

and, lest the mother or the calf suffer from the evil eye, put some saffron on their faces and waved red water before them and burned broomsticks. There was no need for this, however, for every household felt as if the buffalo and calf belonged to it and had returned from the jaws of death to make it happy.

LATER in the day my wife said: "What a heroic creature our Lakshmamma is! I have heard of Veera Thimmamma, the heroic mother of the royal house in our village, having saved her state from enemies. That is why she came to be described as 'Veera' (Valiant). Our Lakshmamma is like Veera Thimmamma. Not mere Lakshmamma but Veera Lakshmamma.

And we called our buffalo 'Veera Lakshmamma' from that day.

(Rendered by the Author from his Original KANNADA story)

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The Shield Of Life

By NARAHARI-TIRTHA*

I have been foolish in this wise;
For nothing have I laboured thus foolishly.
Save me my God.

In words I have been God's servant;
In discourse greatly learned;
The mind has, however, loved money and worldly pleasure
And wronged God and the teachers, and felt no fear.

As the years have passed I have grown more covetous
And am loading myself with error;
I have gathered stone and shell like a child
And given up the shield of life.

I have toiled and toiled and got money;
And have married young women;
And worshipped low gods;
Yet shown myself as a servant of Vishnu.

For whom is it, soul, that you are so anxious?
For whom do you hoard this wealth?
Wife and children, friends and others,
None of them will go with you when you leave the world.

For giving in charity a pie has been a thousand;
For improper expenditure a crore has been a pie;
In doing good you have felt no interest;
In doing evil awake and active.

If people abuse my wife I abuse in return;
If they abuse God I hear and smile;
Straying from the path and immersed in desire,
I have lost God and fallen.

Call on God to whom all creation submits;
Give up the enemies within the self;
Call on Him whom all righteous men worship,
The Lord of all good, the King of the Universe.

* The beginner of the 'Haridasa' movement in Karnataka.
(Translated from the Original KANNADA by
Masti Venkatesa Iyengar)

Life, The Lily Maiden

By V. K. GOKAK

One night when I sat deep in meditation,
Life, the Lily Maiden, came to me—
Life, the Lily Maiden,
With streaks of roses on her cheeks,
Led by the light-aspiring guide
Rejected by the maidens seven of heaven,
For he had dared them all to test his love
When they had wished him one from them to choose.
And Life, the Lily Maiden, stood before me
While the guide waited silent at the door
And I, with bated breath,
Asked her why thus she stood revealed in glory
When aeons of prayer kept her still concealed:
Whereunto the Lily Maiden answered:
"I am the beloved you loved, oh, lover!
I am the destination and the guide!
You loved my rainbow colours and my flowers,
And worshipped all my gold of morn and eve.
You treasured up the saffron robes I wore
And hugged the rose-red prints of crimson feet.
Then did I whisper to myself:
'Will not he love me who has loved what's mine?
Will not he set the crown upon my head,
The crown inset with crescents of bright stars,
The crown of his soul-flame, of sweet consent?'
And unto you I fled like the sunbeam
That, crystal-clear, enfolds the rainbow-colours."
And unto her I spoke all quivering,
And said: "Oh, Lily Maiden! now I know
You as the moon that moulded all my dreams.
I will dare all you bid me, set the crown
Of my consent upon your head and be
Your second self to you; but tell me, maid,
Is that your only quest and dear desire?"
And unto this the Maiden answered, saying:
"I am the beloved you loved, oh, lover!
I am the destination and the guide!
But to this day my birth has been a riddle.
In whose laps I lay, and in whose womb
I felt the stir of being, is all surmise.
But you have traced all matter to the root
And bathed amid the springs of being. Mankind
Lays bare its prodigies before your eyes
And yet its millions vanquish not your thirst!
You, who can read into the hearts of men
And find what star will glow above their heads,
Can well reveal to me whose daughter I am
And kiss my forehead as you crown my head."
At which I wondered to myself
Whether I could imagine or divine
Her mystery. The light-aspiring guide

Well knew my mind and spoke in solemn tones:
"Oh, youth! whose hand has held the jewelled crown
Of this enchanted maiden, listen to me!
The goldsmith who has known his metal, designs
Out of the same, a hundred patterns of gold.
The wind makes branches meet in many curves.
And one who knows the springs of being can fashion
Things wondrous-wise. Thus to have fashioned them
Is to have known the secret of all things."
At that I rose and seated the Lily Maiden
And crowned her with the crown of all my stars,
And said, kissing her forehead: "Live with me
And be the inspiration of my song,
Queen of my home and friend of my desires,
My enemy on the field, god of my fane,
Sadness and mirth and sorrow and joy by turn,
The weariness of life, its spring and summer—
I crown you with the crown of all my stars!
And to have lived thus measures half the truth."
And so the Lily Maiden came to me;
And so I crowned her queen of all my being;
And so the light-aspiring guide retraced
His steps towards the maidens seven of heaven.

(Translated from his Original KANNADA poem by the Author)



Consecration

By KANAKADASA*

My God! this body and this life is thine
And all the joy and sorrow that is mine.
This love to hear the murmurs of a bard,
This love to hear the Vedas, all is thine;
This lingering look on maidens that are starred
With eyes of supreme loveliness is thine.
This body that doth love to lie all steeped
In the sweet mist of perfume, that is thine;
This tongue that hath with greed at rich food leaped,—
This taste for that taste—that is also thine.
This taste of passions fallen in the net
Of Maya's dreams like these, 'tis also thine;
Are ever men free though they sit and fret,
And not Thou, Oh my Lord! when all is thine.

* A Kannada Vaishnava poet and philosopher of Bedar caste who lived in the 16th century.

(Translated from the Original KANNADA by V. K. Gokak)

THE DRAMA AT THE CROSSWAYS

By A. N. MOORTHY RAO

THE drama in India seems to have fallen on evil days. The Theatrical companies which flourished in the early years of this century have been driven out of the field. It is usual to father the blame on the films and say that they have vulgarised the taste of the public and that consequently we are now satisfied with a kind of dope instead of drama. I hold no brief for the films; but I suggest that they are only partly to blame for the decline of drama. It is worth while enquiring whether there are not deeper causes at work. I am basing my remarks on my experience of South Indian drama; but probably they apply to regional literatures all over India.

Early in this century, our drama selected its themes from epic and romantic legend. Episodes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the story of Harischandra, of Prahlada, of Savitri and Satyavan—such were the themes the people liked. These stories were accepted at their face value and treated objectively. Freud and the new psychology were still far away; the playwrights did not try to put any new wine in the old bottles. They were content to allow the heroes of epic and romance to perform the same old tricks over again—and apparently the tricks had vitality enough in them to hold the audience.

I am not claiming much for these plays. They rose but rarely to the height of their argument. Their sense of plot was crude. The audience wanted broad comic effects along with the old story, and the playwright lugged them in by main force though his plot swore against it. The stock figures of comedy—the overfed Brahmin, the greedy Vaisya, and drunkard growing songful over his cups—all duly made their appearance; and the serious and comic scenes were thrown together higgledy piggledy without much regard for coherence. The stage-carpenter's

naïve devices were much in evidence, and the willing audience was treated to cut scenes, gods materialising from nowhere, saints rising to heaven in celestial chariots and so forth.

Music was rampant. I remember a play in which the heroine was abducted by bandits who proposed to put out her eyes. The husband went in pursuit, and paused on the way—not to take breath—but to sing in heroic vein of what he would do to the bandits when he caught them. It was lucky for the lady that the bandits were rather slow about their job. A mother with a child at the point of death would sing a pathetic song in two or three ragas keeping perfect time the while; and it must be said to the credit of the child that it very obligingly refused to die till the music also came to a dying close.

Not much could be said for the dialogue either. The heroes ranted and tore the passion to tatters. Whatever the emotion it was put across in one continuous monotone with no variation of mood. The intonation was stagey and one missed the suppleness and changing rhythms of the speech of life.

The Theatre itself, even in big cities, was a ramshackle affair with a crazy roof of thatch.

THUS far the Devil's Advocate. But the strange thing was that in spite of these shortcomings the theatre was instinct with life, and hundreds of people, drawn from all classes, flocked to it. Even the highbrow who had been fed on Shakespeare, had read his Aristotle, and could talk glibly of plot, characterisation and dialogue—even he bought tickets for the season. Of course he contrasted these plays with those of Ibsen and Shaw, by way of throwing a sop to his artistic conscience. But the popular stage held him none the less. In what I have been describing so far, I see something analogous to

theatrical conditions in Elizabethan England.

About the second decade of this century a literary revolt swept full blast all over India. It led, in poetry to romanticism *a la* Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats. But in drama it led to realism and to the humorous and satirical prose play. The older playwrights had been innocent of any design on their audience, with the exception, of course, of the design on their purse. The new drama grew up outside the popular stage, and was wrought into shape by amateurs, mostly University men. They ostentatiously claimed that they were indifferent to box-office receipts. This meant that they were independent of popular taste, and could therefore formulate and put into practice their own theory of drama. Their creed was that drama had lived too long on epic heights and in romantic mists, and should be brought down to dwell among men and women. The Kings and Queens, Gods and Demons, the saints and their world-ling foils, the romantic lovers—all must yield place to the average man and his day-to-day life. The language had to be that actually spoken by men.

DRAMA was definitely not the amusement of an idle hour. It should become the instrument of national regeneration. Humour and satire were to be its weapons. Music had no place in it—though you might not penalise a man for occasionally humming a tune to himself. Normally man does not sing his way through life. When you are writing about a girl who was awfully simple before marriage and became simply awful after it—well, you can't set that play to music, unless you invent a new music for it.

The new drama concerned itself with the futility of modern education, the evils of snobbery, the dowry system, the aggressive modern woman, and so forth. The intellectuals patted themselves on the back, smugly conscious of the feeling that they had invented the drama of ideas and were well on their way to remoulding society nearer to heart's desire.

BUT soon it appeared that something had gone wrong with their plans. The argument for the amateur stage is that it is indifferent to money and can set new standards in taste. Our amateur stage did well in being indifferent to money—it did not get it anyway. Setting new standards is effective only to the extent to which the standards percolate to the common people. Otherwise we would be converting only those who are already converted. The new social play was a success only on the amateur stage. It never achieved the status of a national entertainment. It formed little more than an addendum to the variety entertainments given in connection with college days, Association annuals, and other such sophisticated groups. Even the highbrows went there not so much to see a play as to be present at the social gathering though when the play came up, they thought they might as well enjoy it. "The play is the thing," said Shakespeare. But here the play was incidental. Even among the intellectuals a few irreclaimable sinners persisted in their liking for the old drama. I know one Professor of English who declared roundly that he detested the drama of ideas. As for the common man—he just refused to touch the new drama. The older variety was no longer there; but at a pinch he could always go to the films which were not above giving him his music and dance, his gods and demons and saints. The social reform play has never become a possession of the people. It has remained a hot-house plant and is anaemic at that. That is where we stand now.

So the intellectuals who set out to bring drama nearer to life, find themselves cut off from the main stream of that very life. They have defeated their own purpose. What is the lesson of all this? Have the amateurs given us great art, and is their failure to be attributed to the depraved taste of the public? Shall we believe that the reformers and their casual highbrow patrons are right and all the rest of society wrong? The cocksure critic of demo-

cracy would unhesitatingly reply: "Yes, great art is never for the common people; it is always for the elite."

BUT with all respect to the elite, this contention seems to be belied by the history of drama elsewhere. We are told that 20 to 30 thousand people assembled to see the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles—and we cannot accuse these dramatists of playing to the gallery. Shakespeare's patrons were not merely Essex, Southampton and the like, but the average Londoner also. His great plays did of course signify more to the Elizabethan courtier than to the yeoman. But the fact remains that the yeoman did, by choice, go to Shakespeare's theatre to see Hamlet and Lear. The Elizabethan playgoer liked rant, sensational action, low comedy, ghosts and marvels—granted. But if in the hands of a great dramatist, the rant became soul-stirring poetry, he liked it all the more, though he would have been puzzled if you had asked him to draw the line between rant and true poetry. He asked for clownery, and liked the fool in King Lear not knowing that Shakespeare had given him more than he asked for. He wanted to have his nerves set a-creeping; and when Shakespeare gave him the witches and Banquo's ghost, he gulped them down in innocent faith. I believe that he was very much the better for taking in all this, even though he did not realise the richness of the fare he had been given.

In such drama, even when it is in a crude state, there is vitality and power. There are passions which stir the depths of the heart. After seeing King Lear or Macbeth, even the groundlings of the Elizabethan theatre must have gone home in a chastened and reflective mood. Shakespeare did not set out to reform the world. But by studying the taste of the people and working along its grain while at the same time enriching that taste, he did what our amateurs have not been able to do. In his art he gave sympathetic concessions to the people, and in return the life of the people

informed and enriched his art.

This, I submit, should have been the path chosen by our dramatists. Our intellectuals started with indifference if not contempt for the ordinary man. The moment we put ourselves on a pedestal and say 'we are not as other men' we lose the sense of our common humanity, we lose humility, and more than all, we lose the nourishment given by the main stream of life. Now we have lost touch with the people, who have let the new drama severely alone. There should be a current continually flowing from the people to the artist and back again from the artist to the people. In our drama we find that current interrupted.

WHEN our amateur playwrights talked of taking drama back to life, they seem to have understood the word in a very restricted sense. The strong passions, the soaring idealism, the faith in man's lofty stature and his proximity to the gods of the upper air, the bewildering mixture of the serious and the ludicrous—these things were prominent in the old drama however crude its form was. Now we find that these things also are life, and life in a sense, far truer sense, than the passing problems of day to day life. At any rate that is what the common people seem to think; Man has not outgrown strong passions as the advocates of the light satirical touch would have us think. More than the strength of the passions, the great virtue of the older drama—let us use the term Shakespearean in a loose sense—was that somehow it managed again and again to touch the basic, primeval, fundamental things in human nature. These things manifest themselves in local and temporal modes; but they themselves defy time. The great dramatist has to pierce through the local mode, which is only the outer crust, and give us a glimpse of the thing underlying. This is true of comedy as well as tragedy.

IN our modern social drama, have we not been stressing the surface manifestations rather than the impulses beneath them? Have we

(Continued on page 43)

RAJASUYA

A Skit

By

N. Kasturi

IT is a big event, every year, the school Day at our Girl's Middle School. Preparations begin as soon as the school doors open after the summer recess and the children troop in. The person who is afflicted with headache earlier than all others is, of course, the Music Teacher, for she has to select the play. Modern prose plays are too short and too drab for mofussil audiences. Besides, like processions before mosques, they avoid music. (And, they revel in widows. No girl dare play that role in our town, as elsewhere.) An up-country stage without a harmonium to raise a curtain of cacophony for the play to break through, will attract only as many fans as a naphthalene ball can gather ants! So, the story has to be pre-Kailasam,* preferably Puranic. Even then, the choice is severely ringed by the devious laws of politics and sociology. They are tough critics, the elders of our place, and their skins are of the stuff of gossamer. Some plays, for them, are too ungodly and others too erotic. Harischandra is too Gandhian and Prahalada too revolutionary. Mudrarakshasa is pro-Brahmin, Parasurama is anti-Kshatriya; Sadarama is anti-Vaisya; Uttarama Charita is anti-Sudra(ka); Sakuntala introduces fishermen; Lava-Kusa traduces washermen; Krishna Leela elevates cowherds and Choodamani sanctifies monkeys! Aswamedha goes against the grain of the half-dozen jutka-

wallahs of our town. The choice, last year, therefore fell on Rajasuya. This play had another argument in its favour; its cast was so numerous that every single girl in the school could be thrown in, somewhere. This was an important consideration, for, if any tot, was dropped, her parents would go to pieces and prevent the Music Teacher from raising her voice in the town, again.

For some years now, the tradition has taken root in our town that some girls shall appear as some characters in the school play, whatever the theme. Doddapapanna's daughter is a hardy annual as Krishna. The audience cannot escape her and her only song, *Nagumomu*. Break that unwritten law and you start a fusillade of irresponsible, anonymous missiles against all responsible. Rajasuya had, thank God, Krishna in the regular cast. The Post Master's daughter had on her the stamp of the heroine, and who but the Police Sub-Inspector's daughter had the make up of the hero? The daughter of the Ration Officer was a born Bhima; the temple priest contributed a Bhishma; a jutkawallah's family contained the needed Aswathama... About thirty girls who were 'extras' could assist as Rishis on the occasion of the great sacrifice.

RHEARSALS were held every evening till the sun went down, for over six months, in the school gymnasium. Every word and note was drilled into the children. The townsmen put up with all that noise, hoping that a decent show would finally emerge. Many of them stealthily peeped through the windowbars and learnt the lilt and the cliches and made them the property of the public. You could hear even elderly men, at their desks in the shops, discuss the *samgita* and the *sahitya* with their customers and pompously prognosticate the finale.

At last, a President was secured and the date fixed. Subscription lists went round and came back. The pandal rose up proudly in the school compound, with its fringe of green mango leaves.

* A famous modern playwright in Kannada, who died in 1948.

The drama was definitely not a 'failure'! Indeed, it could well have been worse, as many remarked, considering the talents of those who trained the girls. The criticism of others was moderated by the thought that the children were young and they could only do their best.

Before the curtain fell, the President, no less a person than the *Amildar* of the Taluk, scrambled on to the stage and made a speech. That speech and the distribution of prizes that came later marked the beginning of the end.

THE speech conformed strictly to standard. The President began by confessing that he was utterly incompetent to preside over the function, for the obvious reason that he had never attended a Girls' School. He then elaborated, for the benefit of a restless and gradually emptying house, the basic principles of education (especially female), the burdens of parenthood (especially male) and the mysteries of Divine Dispensation. While distributing prizes, the *Amildar* melted somewhat. He condescended to stroke some winners on the head, smiled equinely on others and sought to educe the names of a few. He was a young man who had been turned out of the University but a few years ago, and he had a habit of grinning blandly at all and sundry. He congratulated Bhishma with the words: "Your beard is quite natural;" he complimented the Headmistress on her twins; he said it was unlucky that the Harmonist could not be seen by the audience and that the Music Teacher deserved a long rest. He asked all the actors to give up the Stage and take to the Silver Screen. When, finally, he dangled a silver medal before Sisupala, he stood up in his shoes and spouted three complex sentences, full of adjectival clauses, praising her vituperative venom and, believe it or not, her musical voice.

After he left the town, we reaped the whirlwind. The girls whom he stroked and to whom he spoke

became so swellheaded that they taunted the others into unrighteous indignation. All the noses of the school were either up in the Appleton layer or down under the teakwood desks. Those who did not get the prizes attributed their fate to ignorance, partiality, or communal prejudice. They refused to attend a school in which they were insulted and others prized.

Bhishma went home weeping, at the head of a giggling crowd, and her prospective groom cancelled the marriage, for, as he said, "Her cheek was astounding!" This news alarmed other parents and many marriageables withdrew from schools.

But, it was Sisupala's mother, the Second Assistant, who suffered the worst. People wondered in whispers why the *Amildar* had dilated so fulsomely on her daughter's meagre accomplishments. The silver medal too was a surprise, pulled out of the President's pocket at the last moment, by his own tainted hand. Constant repetition made even the waverers accept the stories as authentic. Whiffs of suspicion from the main cloud cast ominous shadows, even on the other *Mistresses* and the Music Teacher.

THE local M.L.A., who is a puritan in public affairs, branded the entire bunch as undesirable, and led a delegation to the higher regions of Government. The Inspector of Schools attempted to assuage the fury, which only added another chapter to the adventures of scandal. Finally, the teachers were all transferred to other institutions, but no one dared take their places, under the pitiless floodlight of small talk.

Thus Rajasuya, in our town too, sowed the seeds of discord and yielded a harvest of hate.*

*The Rajasuya performed by King Yudhishtira sowed the seeds of the war in the Mahabharata.

(Rendered by the Author from his Original KANNADA skit)

WANTED—WORLD CONTACTS

By D. V. GUNDAPPA

IN this world there are two classes of people whose destiny it is to be in a state of perpetual discontent. The one is the artist, and the other is the statesman; and their discontent springs directly from their raw material which is the psychology of their fellowmen. The quality of the material and the excellence of the preparation must be suited to each other. If that has not happened they can hope for no credit.

Who sighs for beauty is the poet,

Who strives for it is the statesman.

The satisfaction of having found efficient, human instruments and appropriate public situations to give body and shape to the beauty glimpsed by the mind's eye is rarely available to the statesman. Similarly, the satisfaction of having found proper verbal instruments and adequate ways of adjusting them to give external shape to the vision of beauty seen in the cavity of his heart is difficult of attainment to the poet. For both of them the internal is subtle and refined, the external is rough and crude. And arriving at a harmony between the two is the problem for both. If they are people of introspection they can never escape a certain feeling of discontent over what they have been able to achieve. But it is a holy discontent.

(Continued from page 40)

really come to grips with human nature, and tried to explore the strange byways and alleys of the heart? The social reform play seems to be digging its own grave even while it appears to be most successful. If it is successful the reform is effected and then the play ceases to interest us. Ibsen's brilliant play, *The Doll's House* does go a little beneath the surface of things. But none the less it is definitely dated while *Hamlet* is not. The doll has walked out and became a free woman. If there are women who are still dolls, it is by choice and with an eye to strategic advantage.

The lack of it is no matter for compliment to them.

We are having a fairly plentiful crop of literature on the secrets of the poet's workshop, also plenty of a creative work of a certain grade. All this has its own importance. But if the bone and thews of our literature should grow stronger it should fill its lungs with the fresh air blowing from all quarters of the wide world. Classes of literature which will help us here are histories, biographies, stories of adventure, accounts of travel, descriptive sociology, and popular treatises on these several social and natural sciences. If our creative literature should have in it the life-giving spark of truth, that truth can be derived only from universal contacts. Our minds must become externalized—*bachirmukha*. The healthy man does not give his thought always to his own diet and digestion and physical exercise. A certain non-consciousness about oneself is a sign of good health. Our literary workers would be doing good to themselves and to their object if they turn their attention from themselves and their workshops to the broad horizon at the distance and refresh their spirits with what lies at a distance. (Rendered from his Original KANNADA by the Author)

I am not arguing that the social play has no place at all in literature. As a reaction against the excesses of the old type of drama we may even welcome it. In our country the revolt has done some good.

SOMEONE will say: "But you are really asking for Shakespeare and Kalidasa. It is a tall order!" I would ask,—and on bended knees—for Shakespeare and Kalidasa. But I know they can't be summoned to order. I suggest however that the path they trod is the path for us today.

(By Courtesy: AIR, New Delhi)

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KAILASAM: HIS ADVENT ON THE KANNADA STAGE

By K. SAMPATHGIRI RAO

THE advent of Kailasam in the world of Kannada letters was truly a literary phenomenon. He came, he saw, and he conquered.

He was universally acclaimed as the foremost writer of social dramas and farces. The title "Karnataka Prahasana Prapithamaha" (The Great-Grand-father of Kannada Farce) stuck to him. He had used this phrase in his prologue to *Tollu Gatti* (produced in 1918), the first and perhaps the most enduring of his Kannada plays. It was to parody the phrase in a Telugu verse which referred to D. Krishnamacharlu as "Andhra Nataka Pithamaha," the grandfather of Telugu Drama. This verse used to be sung and a portrait of the Telugu dramatist garlanded at the commencement of the Telugu plays usually enacted by the Amateur Dramatic Association, which enjoyed its heydays of glory between 1916-1930. The late T. Raghavachari of Bellary, one of the most versatile and talented amateur actors South India produced in the last generation, used to play the leading roles in these dramas. Kailasam was an active member of the Amateur Dramatic Association, and had his own earliest dramatic efforts produced by the Association. Indeed, the writing of *Tollu Gatti* was stimulated by a Drama Competition graciously instituted and endowed by the late Kanthirawa Narasimha Raja Wadiyar, the then Yuvaraja of Mysore, who was for many years President of the Amateur Dramatic Association. Kailasam was at that time serving in Shimoga District as a probationer in the Geological Department.

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THE fame that came to Kailasam unsolicited caused no little surprise—and misgiving more than surprise, in orthodox literary circles. It

was feared he was mangling the Kannada language, and his insistence on having the speeches of his characters printed phonetically, that is exactly as they were spoken in daily conversation, was a sore trial to the reader as to press compositors. And then there was the free hotchpotch of Kannada and English which greatly disturbed the peace of mind of Kannada literary men accustomed to old traditions. But this was no more than a reproduction of how English-educated people actually talked. In spite of the croakings of scandalised literary pursuits, Kailasam captured public imagination by the fresh breath of life and vitality that he brought on the Kannada stage.

It would not be wrong to say that Kailasam himself was more surprised than any one else by the triumph he had achieved. Kannada was not his mother tongue. He spoke Tamil at home—and a pure form of it, judged by Mysore standards. But he had never aspired to be a writer either in Tamil or Kannada. He had been lured by English like all the brilliant young men of his generation, and had a rare command of that language. His college studies had been Science, Geology and Chemistry; and after graduating from the Presidency College, Madras, he had proceeded to the London Royal College of Science. He graduated from that college with Geology as his special subject. Kailasam had no predilections to carving out a career for himself as a Kannada writer. But when he was widely acclaimed as one, he had the humility and sanity to realise that it was in recognition of something new he had done, some pioneering effort on which he had stumbled, in the way of realistic writing which seemed to supply a real need in contemporary Kannada literature. He looked upon his efforts as mere

pointers, and indications which, he earnestly hoped, others would take up. And when he came across genuine efforts in that direction from any quarter he was greatly gratified, and gave all such efforts his warmest encouragement. His was an amateur's detached outlook; he had never desired to enter the lists as a professional.

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IN writing and producing his plays Kailasam showed a knowledge of stage-craft and histrionic abilities that were the result of inborn aptitude and a memory of things he had seen in England. He had a powerful voice with a resounding metallic timbre, which he used with remarkable effect in singing English and European songs which he had picked up in his student days in England by his frequent visits to music halls and theatres. He had, besides, an extraordinary mimetic faculty and a phenomenal memory. These inborn traits had made him even in his younger days something of an irrepressible character, overflowing with talk and song and gaiety. He had distinguished himself as a sportsman and athlete during his college days—as a champion mile-runner, and goal-keeper in football and hockey. It was fortunate that Kailasam went to England not merely with his academic degree but with his accomplishments as a sportsman, a wit and an entertainer.

Kailasam was a good mixer and during his six years' stay in England he not merely secured a Degree, as most Indian students do, but stored his mind with all that he saw and heard, with Cockney sayings and rhymes, music-hall hits, and declamations of the classical theatre, as few Indian students ever manage to do.

Kailasam's career, according to human calculation, was designed to be that of a geologist—and if he had behaved and conformed himself to official routine, he would doubtless have risen to be the head of the Geological Department, and retired as such "with a cheap car, a neat

house and a 'compound wall' thrown round it"—as he used to say. But fate willed it otherwise.

It was early in 1919 that the Amateur Dramatic Association organised a festival of Fine Arts Week and succeeded in getting down Rabindranath Tagore to inaugurate it. This was the poet's first visit to South India. Music, lectures and dramas were arranged every day. Those were pre-loudspeaker days, and often it happened that the musicians who had been on the programme could not hold the audience—and were booed off the platform. It was on one of such occasions that Kailasam stepped into the breach, and delighted everybody with his songs and parodies and stories. He discovered his abilities as a *raconteur* and was in daily demand during the season.

Kailasam felt he had found his vocation, having had to give up his job in the Geological Department for his unabashed Bohemian ways. He started on an uncharted career as a votary of Art and Drama.

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FREED from the trammels of office, Kailasam felt free as a bird, and his earliest efforts at dramatic compositions reflect his buoyant spirit and exuberant imagination. *Home Rule* the sketch of a blustering lawyer and demagogue who is henpecked in domestic life—followed *Tollu Gatti*. The movement for Home Rule inaugurated by Dr. Besant which preceded Gandhiji's movement for *Swaraaj* after 1921 suggested the title for the piece. Its devastating satire, the sharp contrasts of characters, the diverting conversation among people speaking different varieties of Tamil and the brilliant dialogues bristling with alliterative effects (for which Kailasam showed a pronounced weakness) all provide fine dramatic entertainment and make *Home Rule* a successful acting play, ending in a dramatic climax with the remarks of the lawyer's widowed mother whose wise and sturdy commonsense exposes the double life of her lawyer son with telling sarcasm. Kailasam's widows are a class by themselves, and

into their delineation (and representation on the stage, often by himself) Kailasam put all his heart and wit.

A second play belonging to the early days was *Bandvaalvilladbadanyt* (Empty Bluff) and was written under interesting circumstances. A Lawyer's Conference was to meet in Bangalore, and The Amateur Dramatic Association was to enact a drama to provide entertainment to the delegates. One of the English plays of the late V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar (whose recent demise we all mourn) was taken up for rehearsal. He had many such plays to his credit which were being successfully produced by the Sugunavilas Sabha of Madras. Kailasam who watched the rehearsal of this play was not much pleased with it, and, in a mood of mischievous challenge, offered to produce something better in Kannada on the same theme. There was hardly a week left for the drama to come off. Kailasam produced the play overnight (with the help of a faithful and long suffering companion who took it down to dictation) and presented it the next day for rehearsal. The play has since undergone considerable elaboration but the basic plot and characters were as Kailasam originally conceived them that night. The play is broad farce, with more of caricature, in the Dickensian way than real characters, providing endless laughter, and is an example of Kailasam's exuberance of imagination and expression. Unfortunately he failed to provide it with a fitting climax in keeping with its mounting tempo and the play peters out at the end with a pun on the word 'fool-cap' (paper).

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DURING this period Kailasam composed an Anglo-Kannada recitative jingle, *Up-to-date Chap*, for which he got specially prepared pants and sat out of a carpet (colourful imitation of a sports blazer!) and cap it of footrug which looked like a r cap! Similarly he composed and cited *Up-to-date Ammayya* dressing himself as a modern girl with ludicrous foppery. *Tippaarahalli* which

was a perfect adaptation in Kannada in theme and tune of the well-known, *It is a long way to Tipperary*, was also one of his most popular raconteuring hits. The exaggerated farcical effects achieved by all those compositions were the outcome of what he had seen in the music halls of Western countries from professional singers and entertainers; and their very outlandishness proved amusing and attractive. Kailasam was an adept at parody and he produced without effort songs in Carnatic music with English words, and *vice versa*. His knowledge of the technique of music—Western, Hindustani and Carnatic—was not merely that of a dilettante; it was competent and often surprised even experienced musicians.

All this bubbling effervescence, this playfulness and this outlandishness were however, only on the surface. There were deeper currents moving within him, not apparent to those who only watched his performances as a light entertainer and comedian.

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SANSKRIT, and the Sanskrit epics and classics made a profound impression on Kailasam. He was not deeply learned in Sanskrit, perhaps, but he had a working knowledge of the language; and had inherited from his father Justice T. Paramasiva Iyer (author of *Riks* which interprets the Rigvedic hymns as poetic descriptions of geological and chemical changes in the glacial period) something of the originality and independence of approach to these ancient works, and from his saintly uncle Justice T. Sadasiva Iyer of Madras, something of the reverence to these classics and an appreciation of the spiritual truths of Life as set forth by ancient Hindu seers. We get an indication of this in the Dedication of his English play, *Karna*, to his uncle which runs to the following effect: "Sacred to the memory of Sri T. Sadasiva Iyer, M.L., Diwan Bahadur, Kt., in the halo of whose immaculate life the humble author ope'd his baby eye to this wonderful world of the Lord's marionette play, The Mahabharata."

Kailasam was known as 'paapa' (baby) by relations at home, and he considered himself more specially one in respect of his revered uncle who was one of god's own good men, for him as well as for those who knew him.

Almost contemporaneous with his early efforts in Kannada, his mind was dwelling on themes from the Mahabharata; and he was beginning to conceive, in his own uniquely vivid way, the great characters of the epic: Ekalavya, Arjuna, Drona, Bhishma, Karna, Krishna, and others. The character of Ekalavya, the forester—generally remembered as the *beau ideal* of a perfect disciple, who by dint of his unswerving devotion to his *guru* ('Guru-bhakti') became a master archer, greater than even his *guru*, exercised a fascination on Kailasam, and provided the theme for *Purpose*, his first English play. About this time he was drawn to Pandit Taranath of Tungabhadra.

Taranath's deep knowledge of Vedantic thought, versatile accomplishments and charming discourses in mellifluous Kannada had made him one of the most effective and respected of apostles of the national awakening in the Gandhian era. Panditji took kindly to Kailasam and gave him that understanding, sympathy and encouragement, which means so much to creative artists. Kailasam's *Purpose* thus came to be first published in *Prema* a quarterly magazine edited by Pandit Taranath—with an appreciative note and comment by the editor. This and subsequent writings in English—plays and sonnets—possessed his whole being and stirred him to his depths. Both in conception and artistic execution his English writings reveal such rare originality of approach and profundity of thought and feeling that as a dramatic artist he was indeed justified in looking upon these as the acme of his achievement.

The Lost Friend

By KRISHNA KUMAR KALLUR

One morn when I sat with downcast eyes
And my back was turned upon thee,
When I was drowned deep in my own musings,
Then fell thy shadow upon my limbs
And I felt a light touch of thy presence.

Like a proud woman that would not listen
To the entreaties of her lover,
I hugged my pride and made a show that
I never cared for thee; but still, within my heart
There was yearning for thee and thee alone.

The curtain was raised—
To my utter shame our eyes met and lingered.
There arose a thrill of hope and a tremor of joy,
While thy hand lay upon my heart, kindling
An eager desire to fly to thy side.

Still I feigned to cast indifference at thee;
But, perchance, my heart did greet thee!
Is the light of love come upon me?
Shall I meet thee face to face once again, that
I might offer my pride to thee in one eternal devotion.

(Translated from his Original KANNADA poem by the Author)

MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR: "SRINIVASA"

By NAVARATNA RAMA RAO

RAJASEVAPRASAKTA M a s t i Venkatesa Iyengar will, I trust, permit me to claim to be one of his intimate friends. His acquaintance with me goes farther back than mine with him, for as a boy of ten he must have been in the group of merry urchins that watched me ride in state along the narrow streets of Krishnarajpet to take charge of my first taluk as *Amildar*—now forty-seven years ago. I first heard of him as the bridegroom elect, who was shortly to receive the hand of my friend the late Mr. Krishnaswamy Iyengar's daughter—God's blessing on the day—and as one who expected to stand first in the competitive examination for the Mysore Civil Service for which he had sat recently. Both events came off happily. I was not

present at the marriage, but a friend of mine who attended, described the bridegroom as a brilliant young man, who had a good deal to say for himself, from which I gathered that Masti was impressively clever in a stentorian way, for my friend as a "below-Ghats" man was chary of praise to Mysoreans, and was also rather hard of hearing.

I first met Masti when he reported himself for duty as Assistant Commissioner in the General and Revenue Secretariat at Bangalore when I was working as an Assistant Secretary. I was attracted to him at once, for he was overflowing with piquant good nature—and as I was not deaf, he did not have to shout at me. We were a good deal together, and discovered we had much in common, in

My Heart Has Put Forth Flowers

By KRISHNA KUMAR KALLUR

My heart has put forth flowers
Blessed with the grace of scent and colour;
They have fiery petals of gold,
They sparkle with pure radiance.

Their fragrance longs to travel on high
Beyond the range of their affluence,
To greet the distant light of their longing
Still hidden in the depths of future.

In joy and pain they bloom and fold
Their petals to the tune of my panting heart;
Their dreamy life is a living beauty
Which awaits a purpose and fulfilment.

I hide my flowers from outward view
And keep them in bloom ever fresh and sweet;
They have a message of their own
Which the world may never know.

(Translated from his Original KANNADA poem by the Author)

taste, outlook, ideals, and achievement. We had sat at the feet of the same beloved master, and learnt from him reverence for great and noble things in life and literature. We became great friends—and speaking for myself I can say I never read a good book or saw anything which pleased or uplifted me but I thought of him and wished to share my joy with him.

I well remember the occasion when first I knew how dear Kannada and Kannada literature were to him. He had left the Secretariat, and had been posted to some charge in Kolar District, but we still met occasionally—and this time we were spending a day together in the 'Travelers' Bungalow at Srinivasapur. He gave me a paper he had composed in English, reviewing a Kannada work *Ramasvamedha* by a poor genius who wrote under the pen-name of Mud-dana, because his own was too obscure to get a public, and to whom recognition came as a tear-offering for a sad and early death. I am no great judge of archaic Kannada, but *Ramasvamedha* was a thing of beauty in the kindly light that Masti's tender appreciation cast on it, and the English essay itself was a masterly piece of prose and criticism.

OUR mutual regard grew and refined with the passing of the years—a matter of less interest to the world than ourselves, and I shall skip over a few years and come to the rather dramatic revelation to me of Masti as one of the masters of Kannada and explorers of new ways in literature.

We were travelling together from Kadur to Chikmagalur, and had halted for food and rest at Sakkarepatna. We whiled away the hot noonday hours in carefree talk about men and books—conversation with Masti was never far from the men and books he loved—and presently I made a remark about the poverty of Kannada in short stories—which had become quite a feature of recent literature in Bengali and Marathi. Masti looked thoughtful for a moment, then said it was true and it was a pity—but had I seen some

work of the kind in Kannada which had come out quite recently? No? He was glad he had the book with him, if I would care to let it lighten the tedium of waiting till we started on our way. I accepted the book—a slim, well got-up volume, modestly entitled *Some Short Stories* by "Srinivasa." I opened the book at random and happened on the story 'Indira?'—which is the gem of the collection, and in my opinion unsurpassed for a tenderness sad as remembered kisses after death. I read it aloud, for the sweet Kannada of it was honey on my tongue, and I wished to share my enjoyment with Masti—but the pathos of the tale drowned my voice and I could read no more. I asked Masti who Srinivasa was. He said he knew, but was under a promise not to reveal. I borrowed the book and read it that night, and the stories charmed me and the characters haunted me, till in the small hours of the morning, it was irresistibly borne in on me that it was Masti himself and none other that was the sorcerer. When I met him later in the day I charged him with the wizardry which had robbed me first of tears and then of sleep—and he pleaded guilty, without any expression of regret. That was how I discovered that Srinivasa was Masti, and I should not wonder if the future remembers Masti chiefly as Srinivasa.

It is a joy given to few to watch the gradual unfolding of genius and the growth of recognition—and this joy has been mine. I do not here propose to give a list or critical estimate of my friend's works, or an analysis of his gifts or character, but I am sure that a few slight reminiscences may not only interest his public, but throw a passing light on certain phases of his personality.

One night, we were resting after a journey in bad weather, in a roadside Traveller's Bungalow at Nelligere and, after a sketchy meal, we lay awake listening to the Mosquitoes on the hard ribbed rest-house beds. After some desultory talk, and a brief silence in vain wooing of sleep, Masti started up and whimsically asked me to tell him a story. I

said story-telling was his gift and not mine; however, I would essay it for once, and hoped it would be sleep-compelling unlike his. I then concocted a ghost story from scraps of remembered tales which had thrilled my childhood—I put the scene in the Malnad, no doubt under the suggestion of the weather outside—and even in the telling of it, I succumbed to its soporific effect. Masti however had no such luck, for he told me next morning that my story had made such an impression on him that it had hagridden that night, and his sensibility was still on edge with the weirdness of it. I was reminded of the reaction of Burns to some pretty but commonplace lines of verse—there was not much in them but they had struck some sensitive chord in his heart. So with Masti my hotchpotch of a ghost story had chanced on some responsive sensibility, and it later on inspired one of his finest short stories.

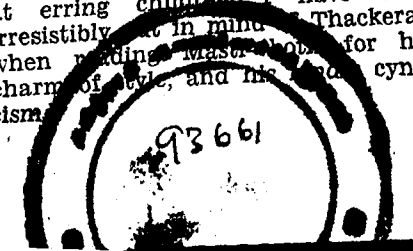
AT another time, I told him the life story of a rather rare old gentleman from whom I had taken lessons in playing on the violin. Masti was greatly touched by its sadness, and humble heroism, and asked me to make a story of it. While I was wondering if I could, and how I should set about it, Masti solved my problem by taking it from me, and gave to Kannada literature his *Subbanna*, which is one of the most moving long short-stories I have read.

Masti has written a good deal of both poetry and prose, songs, ballads, sonnets, narrative poems in the manner of Chaucer and Wordsworth, a grammar of criticism, and a historical novel. I am not a competent critic of Kannada poetry, but I like Masti's verse, and I think his prose some of the best I have read. His short stories are some of them as good as any in literature. I translated one of them—'Masumatti'—for our master Mr. Tait, who was inclined to think my praise of Masti more affection than judgment. Mr. Tait admired the story—he said it had features which always moved men strongly—love of country, reverence for its past, and hope for its future;

and would hardly believe that the original had lost and not gained in the translation. The story in its English guise so won Sri Rajaji's heart that he did it into Tamil for South Indian readers.

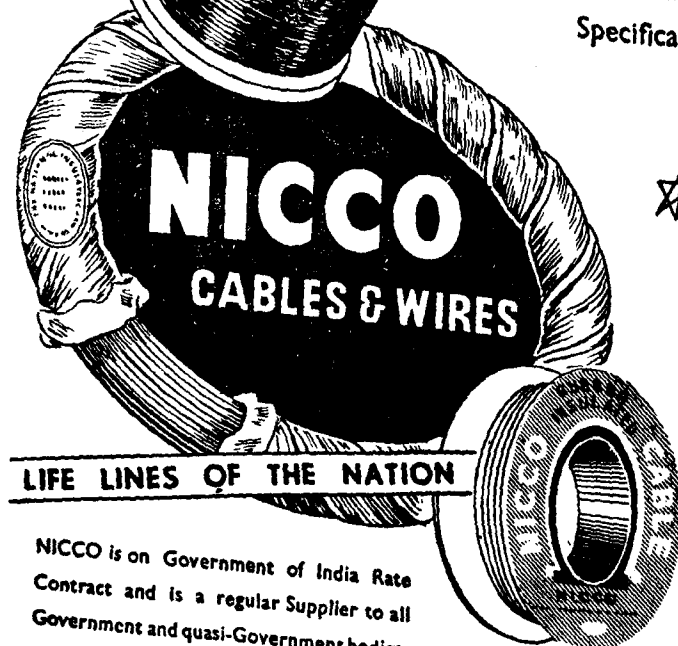
Masti, for all his mastery of English, and love for its literature, strongly—almost fanatically—holds a view from which I—with perhaps equal strength and fanaticism—disagree. He believes that no enduring or even very good work can be done by an Indian in English because—if I understand Masti rightly—the structure of one's thought is based on one's mother-tongue, and English is to us a foreign language learnt mostly from books. I do not agree that our knowledge of English is so wooden as that argument assumes. It is a living language, and has permeated our lives and culture. We have thought some of our best thoughts, learnt some of our best learning, in it; we have used it in our most intimate intercourse with our friends in joy and sorrow. It has been so long with us now that it has become an Indian language by naturalisation. It has of course acquired certain characteristics from the environment here as it has in America and Australia—peculiarities of idiom which are racy of the Indian soil, and which make it different from King's English or the dialects of England or Scotland or Ireland—but it is English, and very live English at that. I am convinced that if an Indian has in him things worth saying and has adequate command of Indian English, it would be folly for him not to employ that vehicle. He would, in fact, reach more people that way than by any other.

I MUST refer to one great quality of Masti's outlook on life—his intense love for his fellowmen, which gives him at once insight and tenderness. He laughs at human weaknesses, but not in scorn. His smile is kindly—like the smile of an indulgent uncle at erring children. I have been irresistibly drawn in mind to Thackeray when reading Masti's story for his charm of style, and his cynical-



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SWATANTRA

53

CITY BY NIGHT

By SANTHA RUNGACHARY

DEERPAVALI is to most of us and our children merely a Festival of Lights, a festival of new clothes, a festival of sweetmeats. It is just a day with an excuse for excitement and over-eating. According to our legends Deepavali marked V-Day, the day when Satyabhama slew Narakasura with a single arrow while Krishna lay fainting beside her. Deepavali is the celebration of that victory, it is the welcome that the victors received when they joyously re-entered Dwaraka. It is allegorically the triumph of Good over Evil.

V-Day for 20th-Century India, however, has not yet dawned. The characters are slightly different, the weapons have changed, the arguments of war vary but the struggle is essentially the same. Only it has acquired certain subtleties, the conditions and rules have had to be redrawn. The one clean arrow through the heart has been replaced by the technique of give an inch and take an inch. The complexion of the adversaries has changed because years ago a man called Freud was born. Moreover, they are not merely two. Each side has acquired a multitude of ramifications. But the battle goes on. All of us, you and I and your born children and, aye, your unborn children, belong to one side or the other. It is a collective fight. But, oddly enough, it is an individual fight too. Fundamentally, it has become a battle between Happiness and Unhappiness. They are like the Day and Night which part Life itself. Will this dreary, dragging war end? Probably never. But can we at least someday achieve a compromise, make a bargain, take time off to negotiate, pause just long enough to recognise our adversaries as—ourselves?

But before we can recognise we must look. So many of us do not see because we are too afraid to look. If we look by day and we look by night, we look when it is raining, and when it is shining, when we have eaten, when we are in hospital, when

we fondle our children, when we pay our debts, when we turn a beggar from the door, when we go on a journey, when we read a book, when we wipe our tears—if we would only look! It seems to me most of us gasp out our lives in a world of make-believe.

We live in a city, a bright, wide city full of houses, cars and shops. The sun shines on it all day clothing its beauties with a white radiance. The people are working, hurrying, their minds too full to think, their bodies too tired to rest. There is no time to stand and stare, no time to lean over a bridge and watch the boat laden with firewood go down the canal, no time to hold up your child so that he can look over the heads of the crowd at the wizened little magician who makes the little grey bird pick out your destiny. There is only time enough to know just as much of life as one can contemplate from a door-step or through an office window with a tidy, inelastic mind. No time to see more. Have you ever seen the City at night? When all its life is asleep and resting itself to be fit for another inevitable day? What would be there to see, you may ask? When the last cinema house has closed, when the last restaurant has poured out its last cup of coffee, when the last housewife has washed her kitchen, what would be there to see? What else but closed houses, empty streets, silence?

You would be amazed. Under the twinkling stars, in the soft, reflected glow of the moon, the city throbs to a life which most of us die without ever coming to know. The city by day is dominated by the Machine, by Time, by Fear. The city at night is man-made. There is no rush. There is no noise. Man is not striving. Going through the city at night is a tour not only through Space but through Time and Mind as well.

Perhaps you go to sleep at ten. Eleven? But you retire into the house, lock your front door and pre-



On a taxi two tired men pass the night . . .

pare for the night. By midnight you are asleep. At midnight, do you know, the streets are still full of people hurrying home from the cinema-houses. They disappear into cars, into cycle rickshaws, into some conveyance or other. A few are left behind. One crosses the street briskly to walk home. The others, vaguely, indecisively loiter looking wistfully around them . . . Where do they go? Which side is Home?

THE houses are closed, looking like tightly-shut mouths. Through the window of one comes a beam of light. *Close your window, student, you are obtruding into another life.* Desultory footsteps ring sharply on the pavement. Is life only the accumulated noise of the human tread? Road-repairers work by a red flare beside an awning, quietly, heavily, without speech. The street lights are off. A bright moon spatters the tree-lined roads with puddles of light.

You have never heard such silence. The tall buildings stand wan and pale, the grace of their contours obscured by the half-shadows. The *pan* shops are like little pockets of light in the dark ensemble of the city at night. The *pan*-wallah sits amidst his array of soda-water bottles, packets of cigarettes and mounds of betel like a god in a trance. A hotel here and a hotel there is partly open. Funny. All the shutters have been closed. But through a single shutter in the middle pours out a cascade of light. A well-dressed man and woman come out through the beam of light, somebody whistles for a taxi, they drive off. Nobody speaks. It is like a scene in a movie.

It is a half past one o'clock. At home you would have been asleep at least two hours. In the newspaper offices are a few lighted windows, the muffled tap-tap of a typewriter. The custodians of your thoughts are

planning what you should read tomorrow. Down Mount Road comes a hand-cart full of red metal sheets drawn by a team of eight workmen chanting a weary song. Eight workmen doing the work of eight horses. It is a sight which indeed must be obscured by the night. Beside the single taxi in the stand, on a Turkish towel stretched neatly on the ground sleeps the driver looking even in his sleep unrelaxed and alert. Has he no home, no wife waiting for him, no children expecting his return? Or is his taxi his bread-winner by day and his home by night?

MOORE MARKET, that round red mass of wonder, is closed. But the corridors echo the metallic ring of the watchman's footsteps as he goes on his hourly round. And inside the still brightly-lit gate of the Zoo, stretched out on the ground, sleep a dozen people. Are the animals

asleep too? Or are they standing contemplating with bleak eyes the long road from here to eternity in a steel cage? Or are they half-dozing with their heads on their fore-paws dreaming of other nights under trees in the friendly silence of the forest?

Down the roads running towards the markets, trundle double-oxen carts loaded with vegetables, plantain leaves, cocoanuts. It is nearly two o'clock. A little rain is falling. The men driving the oxen make a pretence of covering their heads with the thin white towels thrown on their shoulders. The elements and they respect each other. The vegetables don't matter. They will be fresher for the rain.

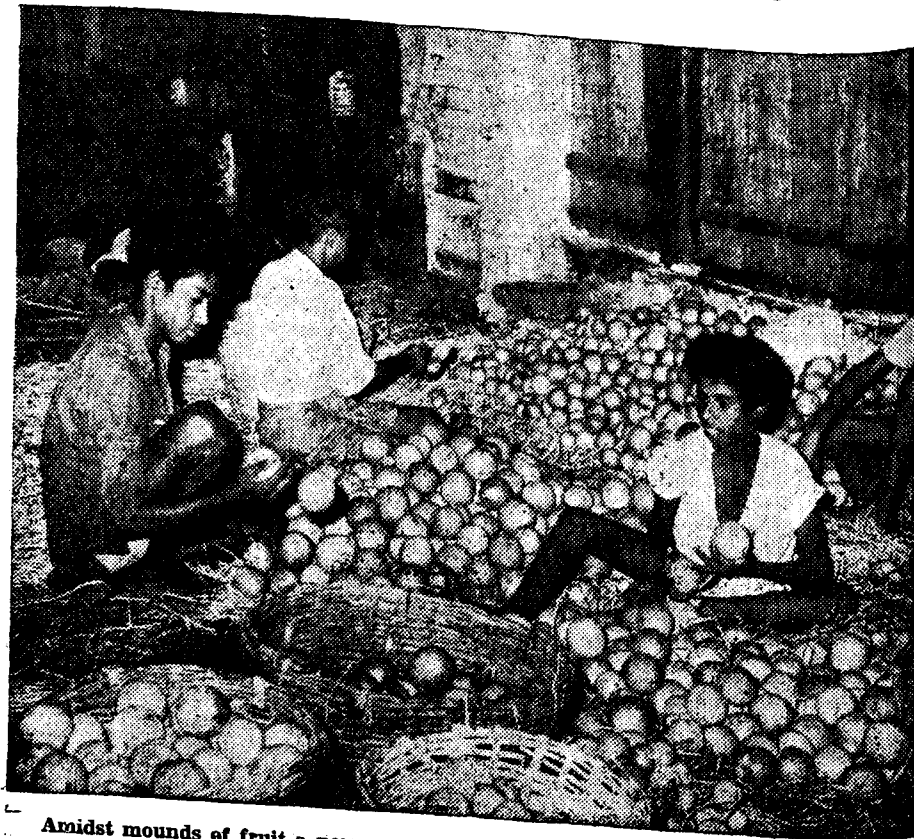
The dust has settled. There is no glare. There is only the hum of the flies and mosquitoes, the cockroaches running about on the pavements. From long ago, the Market, Broad-



On the pavements sleeps a whole population . .

way, the jewellers' shops, the Flower Bazaar has been the Town. Behind this facade of prosperity now lie the narrow lanes and obscure streets where you touch the fabric of a life lived on a plane different from anything you have seen or known. On the pavements, on the very streets, almost in the gutter sleeps a whole population. Who are these people? Where do they come from? Where are they going? Are they the poor people of Madras? No. The poor are peacefully, emptily asleep in their huts in the slums. They have worked hard all day, they have quarrelled with each other in the hot, incoherent way that hungry people quarrel, they have made love thoughtlessly, they are now asleep. No, these are not the poor of Madras. These are the destitute. These are the people with no Law, no Government, no God. The Census ignores them. The

politicians would not know how to talk to them. They belong to no classification. The streets are their home. The food picked up from the dust-bins and rubbish heaps, the food scrounged from used plantain leaves thrown on the way-side, is their mess of pottage. These people are the living proof of God's fallibility. *As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport.* In a quiet mental stupor they drag on from day to day, without desire, without impulse, with the darkness of death enveloping them like a shroud. If their hearts could only speak, a wail of anguish would rise from the pavements of our city, from the wilderness of lost souls in our obscure lanes, loud enough to drown the majestic, ceaseless eloquence of our sea. They do not sleep—these people. Always there would be a man coughing into the gutter beside



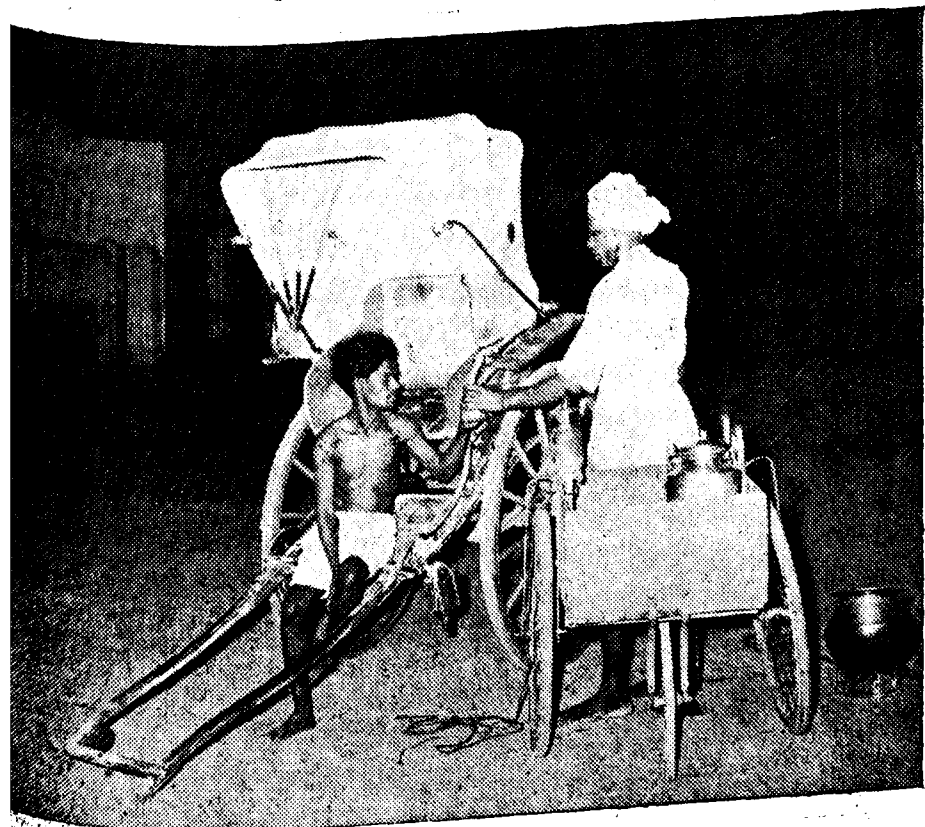
Amidst mounds of fruit a new generation learns its trade at dead of night . . .

which he lies, always the whimpering of a baby, always some woman sitting up all night with her back to the wall as if suspended in existence. These are the pilgrim souls mortgaged to the life we have made. These are the sediment of civilisation. When we plan our Utopias, in the blue-print of the worlds we are going to build, where are we going to put them?

IT is two o'clock. Flower Bazaar reeks of dead flowers and stale tea. Godown Street lies grim and silent its very air heavy with the awareness of the rich hoards which those massive doors and gigantic locks conceal. On the roads leading to the Market lie mounds of fruit and vegetables. Under hand-carts drawn round the corner, on beds of dry, pale hay now filling the air with a warm, moist smell because of the rain, sleep the men who have brought the oranges

and brinjals and the plantains and the flowers and the spices from villages on the outskirts of the city. Other men who have been at work unloading and arranging the produce have fallen asleep in their places. Except one old man who sits counting the oranges which lie before him scattered all over the roadway. Not far from him sprawled on the green fruit sleeps a little boy of about ten. Perhaps it is the grandson who would one day sit and flip the fruits back into the cavernous mouth of the doorway behind him with a motion of the hand as swift and dexterous as that of his grandfather.

Life in the city at night is men prowling about in search of satisfaction and a girl standing at a street-corner under a lamp with red and black bangles on her wrists. There is a rickshaw standing nearby. On the face of the rickshawman is an



On the face of the night rickshawmen, acceptance . . .



Watchers of the night, what of the dawn?

acceptance of life untouched by judgment. It is not actuated by greed, it is not the joy of the opportunity to exploit a situation. It is just acceptance. On the road at regular distances in little hand-barrows lit by Petromax lights which turn the friendly darkness into a vulgar, gaudy night are sweetmeats and ice-cream. Who on earth are the people who eat milk-sweets at two o'clock in the night?

TEN minutes later the road is empty. The vendors have gone, the young boys who have been sticking posters on the walls by the light of hurricane lanterns have laid themselves down beside their work. The City is asleep.

But Telephone House is awake. The postal sorting office is working. Round the corner you come head-on against two policemen. The gates of the hospitals are constantly opening and shutting. Young workmen are half-dozing in brightly-lit petrol bunks ready to spring to attention at the sound of a horn.

The city is sleeping. The barking of a street dog pierces the air sharply like the cut of a blade. There is around you utter silence. Only the sea frothily laughs to itself all night.

Before the first rays of the dawn even illumine the rim of the horizon, the city wakes from its brief, nervous, exhausted slumber. The hush of early morning rests like a benediction on the rooftops. You hear the sweet, fresh warbling of a bird. A church bell rings for prayer. Cows jingle by. The market lanes have already been swept clean. Where is the little lad who slept on the green fruits, the men who slept on the beds of hay, the boy with the ice-cream under the Petromax lamp? Where is the

woman who slept in the gutter, where is the child who cried in the night? It is as if the earth has absorbed them.

Into the day in the City comes a different race of men, men with coherence in their lives, men who can draw the line neatly between the personal and the impersonal, men with work to do to keep up a civilisation they have built and dare not let slip. The first bus appears like a red flag in the distance. A cyclist drops a newspaper on a doorstep. From a hotel come the calm voices of men who have gone through the night on their backs, and the aroma of coffee.

It is another day. But forgetfulness is not easy. Drowned in your consciousness but bobbing up and taking you unawares, bringing you to a stop in the middle of a sentence, slowing your walk into another room, obscuring suddenly your vision as you look out through the window, will come the little maggots of your memory of the quiet, jagged, mindless, insistent face of the City By Night.

NATURAL - - ENEMIES

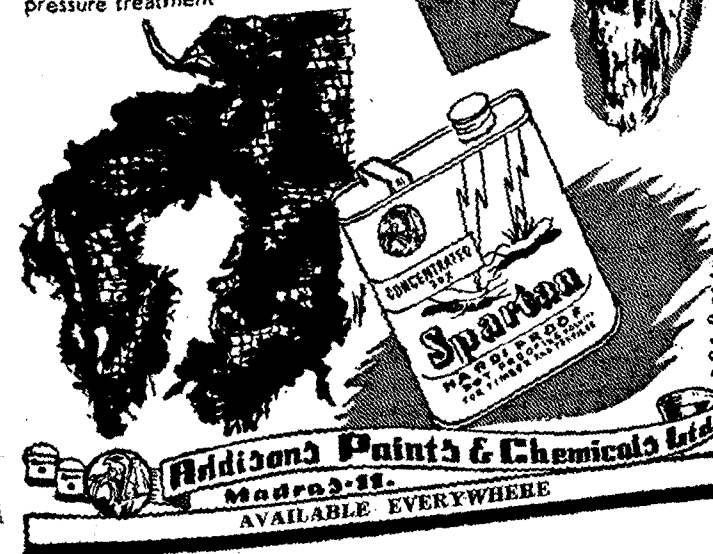


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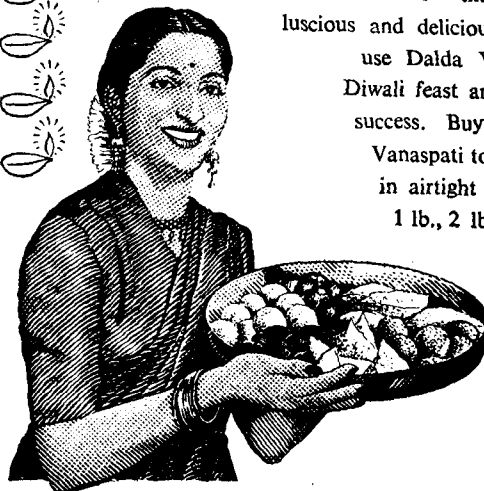
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THE VISIT TO CHINA

PANDIT NEHRU received in China a magnificent welcome on a scale that probably never greeted a visiting statesman in the history of that country. The importance of India as an independent country in the new world set-up contributed no doubt to this welcome in a large measure. Part of it should also be attributed to the personality of India's Prime Minister. His freshness and charm, his broad human outlook, his imperviousness to narrow, sectarian prejudices, his passion for peace, his loftiness of aspiration and his immunity from the normal acquisitive urges associated with the wielding of power, all these have made of him a fascinating international figure full of attractive glamour to millions of people all over the world. He towers over all his contemporaries as one that has transcended the boundaries of national influence and attained an international significance with a unique status of world leadership. This sort of eminence was reached in our time by only two or three statesmen, but none of them achieved it with the completeness of Pandit Nehru. Churchill, the most distinguished veteran in modern world politics does not have much hold in the Soviet Zone. None of the great Russian or Chinese leaders has much influence in the West. Pandit Nehru is almost alone today in exercising an appeal of worldwide sweep over people both in the East and the West. And he owes nothing of it to military power, as for example, Stalin did.

For these reasons, though the ovations that awaited him in China were of terrific grandeur, Pandit Nehru received them naturally and gracefully, and with ease, as well within his stride. If similar gigantic outpourings of welcome were not in evidence in his visits to other countries like the United Kingdom and the U. S. A. it was not because the people of these countries were less responsive in their hearts to the importance of Pandit Nehru's objectives and achievements as a world leader. In democracies the power of the State to get up impressive demonstrations is limited. The tradition of freedom leaves such matters to the spontaneous initiative of the people. In totalitarian regimes executive authority from a million centres is tightened up to produce grand spectacular demonstrations at the behest of the rulers; and there is no possibility of any popular greeting to a visiting statesman if it is not endorsed by the regime and its size and tempo are regulated strictly in accordance with carefully considered State policies.

Pandit Nehru's reception in China may be due to some extent to mass Chinese feeling, but in a larger degree it is an indication of the Chinese Government's attitude to India in the present conjuncture of world conflicts and confusions. Both Russia and China are now extremely anxious for India's goodwill. Western nations like Britain and U. S. A., are no doubt equally anxious for it, but they have neither the inclination

nor the temperament for seeking to secure it with massive emotional mobilisations, with millions of citizens joining in for parades of honour. Neither Churchill nor Eisenhower has the capacity to greet an august guest with an embrace as Mao or Ho might have. Western civilization has packed into the handshake the maximum permissible exhibition of cordiality. Its ways of restrained expression of greeting and goodwill have to be balanced against the effusiveness of crafty Communist strategists purposefully wearing their hearts on

their sleeves, for a correct estimate of the worth of the respective standards of behaviour of the two styles.

In Communist countries State dictation is the primordial factor. The pageantry of pomp there has no meaning except as an indication of permitted or engineered State policies. Pandit Nehru should disentangle the superficial features of his experience in China from the underlying intrinsic realities if he is to preserve the distinction on which he used to take pride, of being an apostle of dynamic neutrality.

Sotto Voce

MUSIC AND MEANING



PAPANASAM SIVAN had a grueling training as a vocalist under Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer. He is not gifted with a natural singing voice—which was not altogether a misfortune, since he has not had any temptation to bring off facile effects. The richness of his music finds integral expression in his *kritis*. These came long before the cinema music which brought him fame of a kind. But, great as his achievements as a composer are, it is as a moving singer of devotional songs that he has impressed his personality on a large and appreciative public.

He gave young musicians the other day the sound advice that they should learn the meaning of the *sahitya* and strive to express the *bhava*. It is elementary that the singer should throw himself into the mood of his song before he can hope to make his audience partakers of the emotional experience the compo-

ser was intent on communicating. When music seeks the aid of words, its message is expressed partly through the words, though it may not be the most important part. If the renderer does not understand the words the consequences may be diverting—as when a man, singing a Mukhari piece and knowing the *raga bhava* as little as he does the *artha bhava*, looks daggers at his audience: that is his idea of *bhigu-sugu*!

He is in the same case as the man whom the word 'carminative' sent into a rapture of ecstasy because it vaguely reminded him of Carmen or of Shakespeare's 'incarnadine.' In the *bhajana* type of music emotion is mainly communicated through the verbal meaning. So it is all important for the singer to be faithful to the meaning. It makes no difference whether the piece is in the Tamil of the Tevarams or the Telugu of Tyagaraja if the man is equally in the dark as to the import of the words.

The Tevarams, the Prabhandams and the Pillai Tamizhs are composed in language much of which is already archaic, and which in the next few centuries may become even more completely divorced from the common speech of the day. But we may safely hazard the guess that they will never lose their musical appeal if they are sung in the traditional mode. From the hearer's point of view, it would of course be an advantage if he could understand the words. But he would not lose much if he did not, provided the singer fully entered into the *artha bhava* and the *raga bhava*.

Tradition represents the accumulation, little cell by cell, of the insights of unnumbered generations of artists adventuring among masterpieces. The taste that is securely grounded in tradition is catholic but discriminating. It does not confuse different orders of excellence or seek to make a *chou-chou* of them. It will no more tolerate elaborate swara pendants to a *devar-nama* than put up with the Philistine claim that a simple edificatory *keerthana* in Tamil of the recitative Rama Natakam type is superior to a Dikshitar *kriti*—that fairy pleasuredome of *raga*—because the words of the latter are hardly more than a *namavali*.

Raga bhava and *artha bhava*, of course, are two very different things, though the chauvinists of "Tamil music" cannot see the difference. The analogous case of poetry and prose will be helpful. Compare the same words, as found in these lines of Wordsworth, for example,

"But she is in her grave, and O!

The difference to me!"

and as rearranged by uninspired me thus:

"But to me, O! the difference!"

How the soaring swan falls flopping to the ground, his wing broken! And while a great composer's *sangita* and *sahitya* fit like hand and glove, the *sangita* adds to the emotion implicit in the *sahitya* subtleties of refinement which mere words can never convey. Those who cannot see this know nothing of the magic of Tyagaraja's *sangatis*.

The ecstasy that scorns the scaffolding of words is even more markedly communicated in its pristine purity in the *Natya*, not merely in the *abhinaya* part of it, but no less in *Nritta* (pure dance). Bharata in the *Natya Sastra* raises the question and answers it squarely. "If *abhinaya* produces its effects by conveying a meaning, what is the specific function of *Nritta*, which conveys no meaning, has no intellectual content whatsoever?" And Abhinava Gupta, in his great commentary, elaborates the point. He says it has been observed that a *kavya* gains by the addition of *gita*: "*Yattu kaavyena no-ktam syaat tad gitena prasaada-yet*." Likewise *abhinaya* too makes its own contribution though of a different order.

But *Nritta*, he goes on, serves neither the same purpose as *gita* and *vadya* nor the purpose of *abhinaya*. What then does it contribute? Bharata says "It generates *sobha*." And the Abhinava *Bhaarattee* elaborates this as meaning '*ranjana-yogyatvam*.' And it is careful to explain that this *ranjana* is different in kind from that produced by *gita*, *vadya*, and so on. Thus the *prasaadana*, the uplifting of the heart, which music brings is *sui generis*. It is not dependent on word and sense. So it is that music speaks to the common heart of all things living.

VIGNESWARA

Redistribution of States

Redistribution should not militate against the organic unity of India.... If each province began to look upon itself as a separate sovereign unit, India's independence would lose its meaning and with it would vanish the freedom of the various units as well.... It would be fatal if it (linguistic redistribution) led to narrow provincialism, mutual bickerings and rivalries. The world outside does not know us as Gujaratis, Maharashtrians or Tamilians, but only as Indians. We must therefore resolutely discourage all fissiparous tendencies and feel and behave as Indians.—MAHATMA GANDHI.

SIDELIGHTS ::

ABANDONING a post of power is not in the Indian political tradition. The normal habit is to hold on till mortality intervenes and cuts off the career, or to be forced out compulsorily by circumstances beyond one's control. It was unique on the part of Pandit Nehru even to pose as a possibility the question of his retirement, albeit temporarily. It is evidence of his assurance—of a sense of power, of being superior to the thing renounced, and of not being possessed by a possession, as is too often the case with leaders blessed by fulfilled ambitions.

Political strategists sometimes threaten to go away in order to be pressed to stay. It is their way of consolidating their hold just when they suspect it to be waning—like heads of Governments demanding votes of confidence from the legislature when they become apprehensive of having lost its confidence. Pandit Nehru does not belong to this category. He is at the peak of power. There is no rival anywhere on the horizon. The nation's leadership, along with everything that goes with it, is his, for as long as he cares to hold it. It was a sense of responsibility for the nation's welfare that extracted from him the suggestion of temporary retirement. As such, it deserves to be considered seriously instead of being met by the usual, cheap, routine protestations of his indispensability.

The Prime Minister has been burdened with too much work. It would have broken the back of any other person long ago. The hard task of application to difficult and complicated public problems engenders fatigue, but it is quite different from the paralysing tensions that pursuit of self-interest under cover of office brings. The great shield of Pandit Nehru protecting him in all situations has been his absolute indifference to any sort of self-interest. All loves to which human nature is susceptible have in him been subdued by supreme love of country. It is a

condition of exaltation in which the strain of overwork is itself transformed into an exhilarating elixir. But the penalties that nature inflicts when energies are overtaxed are irrevocable, and to save its hero for itself for as long as possible, the nation should see to it that this excessive taxation is immediately reduced. Especially now that Kidwai who was a tower of strength, is no more.

Kidwai was a comrade of indefatigable fidelity who was quick to sense any danger that threatened Nehru and gave himself no rest until it was scotched. He kept the party machine in order by countering incipient intrigues with masterly moves that checkmated them effectively. His courage was boundless. He was totally free from any stigma of communalism. Hospitality and kindness were second nature to him. He took delight in covering his good deeds and political activities under a cloak of mystery. He combined great ability with dynamic energy and no odds ever daunted him. Though a friend like him is irreplaceable, the Prime Minister should draw on the assistance of unused talented administrators to make up for the loss to the extent possible. Sir C. P. will make an excellent Defence Minister, and Sir Mirza Ismail will be admirable for town and country planning. A man of inexorable honesty like Sri Morarji Desai is badly needed to tone up the anti-corruption drive of the Centre. Sri Rajagopalachari will do very well as Congress President. There is also Sri S. K. Patil, virtually the uncrowned king of Bombay who, with the attainment of freedom, ceased to play a part in national affairs commensurate with his capacities as he had done prior to it. The experiment of divesting himself of portfolios and other responsibilities that can well be discharged by others is worth attempting by the Prime Minister as an alternative to retirement.

SAKA

G. O. M. of Bharata Natya

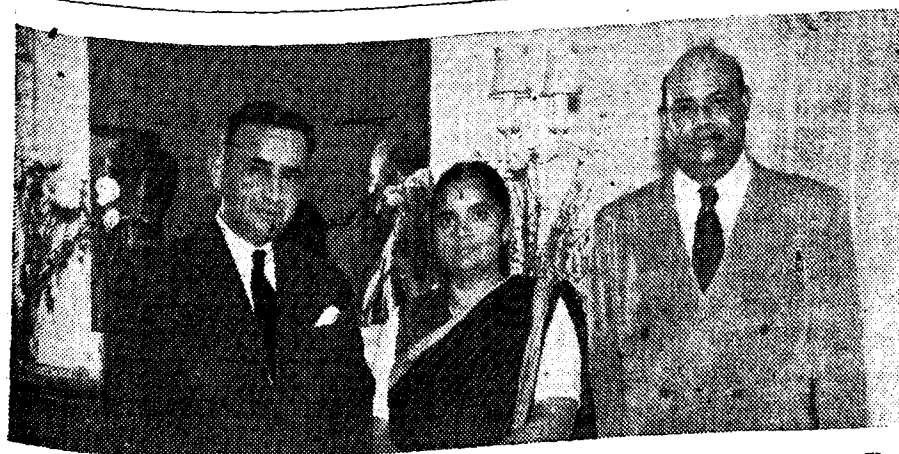
By "ART LOVER"

IN the demise of Pandanallur Sri Minakshisundaram Pillay, the world of Bharata Natya has sustained an irreparable loss. The Grand Old Man of South Indian dance art, as he has been known in international art circles, and "Thatha" as he has been called affectionately by the scores of dancers who have come out of his university, Minakshisundaram is the last of the great generation which believed in uncompromising classicism, conventionalism, deep study, strenuous practice, and effortful exposition. Though 86, he was still actively engaged in training artistes, and his demise even at this age will be deeply felt not only by his many disciples and friends, but also by the many young aspirants in the sphere of dance, who had hoped to have a spell of training under the veteran.

Born in the family of the Ponniah brothers of Tanjore Court, disciples of Sri Dikshitar and contemporaries of Thyagiah, and of Sri Vadivelu, the associate of Sri Swati Tirunal Maharajah in his musical compositions, Minakshisundaram represented a century-old tradition and improved upon it. An authoritative exponent (like his learned son-in-

law, the late Sangita Kalanadhi Tanjore Ponniah Pillay) of the violin, the vina, Bharata Natya and of the vina, Bharata Natya and of course vocal music, Minakshisundaram Pillay was a scholar in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit, and was indeed the most learned and qualified teacher our generation has had. In fact when the interest in Bharata Natya revived in the second quarter of this century all eyes were turned on the Pandanallur Nattuvanar, and Shrimati Rukmini Devi brought him to Adyar to learn from his treasure house, followed by Ram Gopal, Shanta Rao, Tara Chaudhri, and Mrinalini Sarabhai. And ever since then Pandanallur village has had a guest learning the art at the ancient home. The little village in Tanjore District has during the last two decades been a regular place of pilgrimage to artistes and connoisseurs from many countries, who have seen and heard of the old man's great style from his world famous disciples.

With the particular importance it gives to pure dance (Nrta), the variety of adavu jathis it offers, the angasuddha it insists on, and its conservative selection of compositions, the Pandanallur style which Minakshisundaram Pillay moulded and polished undoubtedly represents the most beautiful, chaste and authentic exposition of Bharata



Sri C. D. Deshmukh and Srimathi Durgabai Deshmukh photographed at New York with Dr. P. G. Krishnayya during their recent visit to the U. S. A.

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Natya. Indeed the dance art of South India owes its present popularity and international status to the products of the Pandanallur school, who have carried its charms to all corners of the globe. But the greatness of Minakshisundaram Pillay was in his capacity as a teacher. To those who have had the proud privilege of seeing the veteran squatting on the floor and making a student dance, the experience will remain a fragrant memory.

Fortunately for the world of art, Minakshisundaram Pillay leaves behind a talented and learned son, Muthiah and a nephew and son-in-law Natyakalavisarada Pandanallur Chockalingam Pillay, to carry on his great tradition. Muthiah has been closely associated with his father in his work for some years now, and is quite fit to step into his father's shoes. As for the 61 year old Chockalingam, he is already a great teacher himself and has to his credit a number of eminent disciples like Kumari G. Kousalya, I.A.S. and Srimati Indrani Rehman and has been second only to the Natyakalanidhi in his capacity as a Nattuvanar. The family has also a learned descendant in K. P. Kittappa, Nattuvanar and musician. We can be sure they shall not fail to keep up the glorious tradition of the family, and the great standards set up by the veteran in the teaching and exposition of Bharata Natya.

Pandanallur Minakshisundaram shunned publicity and city life, and a fortune could not lure him to shift his abode from the village to Madras. Never seen in a shirt, the Grand Old Man was very proud of his disciples. Like all great artistes of ancient India, Minakshisundaram Pillay was proud of his profession and believed in maintaining the prestige of his art, and his self-respect as an artiste, both of which he would never barter away. The passing away of Natyakalanidhi Pandanallur Minakshisundaram Pillai leaves in the world of Bharata Natya a vacuum hard to fill.

MALADIES OF THE FOURTH ESTATE

By K. SUBBA RAU

RECENTLY there was a conference of journalists in the city which was attended by some three hundred delegates from the districts. It was presided over by a doyen of the profession and it discussed matters of grave importance to the Press. But not a word of the proceedings of the conference appeared in one of the prominent local newspapers. It was a case of the proprietor blacking out an event, not because it was not important enough, but because for some personal reason of his own, he did not wish it to be publicised. As one's likes and dislikes do not regulate the course of the world, their interposition to determine the news to be permitted to appear in a paper will create a gap separating it from reality. It follows that a series of such departures from reality will establish the paper concerned as unreliable in its news presentation.

Unreliability in news presentation, and, as an inevitable corollary of it, a low standard of discussion, are the major journalistic maladies. By unreliability I do not suggest lack of accuracy in news presentation. Our reporters have learned their art too well for that. A fair degree of correspondence between report and reality distinguishes most Indian newspapers to-day. But it is in the proportion of emphasis and the choice of events for publication that they violate the essential objective spirit of journalism. The reason for this defect lies in the fact that the professionally qualified editor, with laurels won in a career of distinction, is fast disappearing from the editorial control of newspapers. His place is being taken by industrial magnates and men of property. One consequence of this is that the laws of commerce, which are quite different from the laws of journalism, have been transported predominantly into the newspaper world.

The commercial men owning Indian newspapers have developed them very successfully as valuable properties yielding high profits. But as, with business success, they developed editorial ambitions also, they ousted from the editor's chair journalists trained to the craft, and occupied it themselves. The staffs of newspapers have had a hard time taking orders from these newcomers. When they look for leadership in their calling they are confronted with the standpoint of the retail salesman. Apart from being a purveyor of information, a newspaper can also be a work of art, it can be fashioned into a thing of beauty. But the art of it is not of the superficial variety. It is of more intrinsic calibre. It illustrates in an exquisite manner the synchronisation of character and skill. In the higher reaches of journalism there is no room for low motives, for interested suppressions and boostings, for taking sides, for party and class feeling or for the rapacities of self-aggrandisement.

IN the sphere of politics, the method of consolidation is by invocation of party loyalties. But in journalism, just the reverse is the case. Party newspapers make no appeal to the general public. Communist Party papers, for example, go round and round among members of that party and provoke little interest in others. An excessively partisan attitude is repellant to public opinion and gets discounted as the result of a sort of balancing censorship which is set up by its very extremism. To get confirmed in public estimation as pro-this or anti-that is to be rendered ineffective to the extent of that estimation. Efficacy in the craftsmanship of writing depends therefore on ability to avoid too close an identification with a partisan attitude in any matter of controversy; and in journalism, unlike in politics, power and influence come from detach-

ment, disinterestedness and capacity for objective analysis. These qualities, the commercial owners of newspapers have been totally unable to provide.

The whole world is there to draw upon for matter to be presented in a newspaper. But while the world is vast, newspaper space is limited. The art of the journalist is essentially one of selective competence in fitting the vastness of news coming up from every part of the globe into the limited number of columns available to him each day. His character comes into play in avoiding the trivial for the sake of the important. But the challenge to the integrity of journalism comes in the form of interested pressures demanding the enthronement of the trivial over the important. The ideal newspaper will concede nothing of its journalistic integrity to any of these pressures, but the commercial owner delights in making compromises with them for the sake of some advantage or other to be gained thereby.

IN a tribute to C. P. Scott on the occasion of the centenary of the *Manchester Guardian*, the great Massingham observed that "no instrument of opinion can become so responsive to the personality of its operator as a modern newspaper which calls each day for separate acts of judgment and reflection." The British Press owes its greatness to a great race of editors. They dedicated themselves to the papers they served with a devotion that was exclusive. The standards they set were built up into the traditions of the newspapers they directed. Every great newspaper therefore developed an individual character of its own, that was different from that of other newspapers, and the Press as a whole came to be distinguished by a rich variety.

Under the tutelage of these editors, journalism in England rose to great heights of skill, artistic grandeur and intellectual and moral achievement. They trained their staffs to regard their papers as sacred shrines calling for the very best they had to give as offerings at their altars. Work was both sacrifice and joy. The idea

of desertion was like blasphemy. The editors gave honour where honour was due, campaigned against cant and humbug, and often rendered unique national service by courageous defiance of mob passions based on superstition, prejudice and defective education. It was said of the greatest of English newspapers that often they served the nation by rendering a type of public service that was deemed incompatible with survival by competitors of inferior vision who looked to only commercial objectives.

THIS sort of service is rarely performed in India. There is little in common between the single-minded devotion of a great editor whose whole life is spent in the service of one newspaper in undivided loyalty, and the modern pattern of the commercial owner-cum-editor who gathers newspapers as property and deals with them as instruments for further acquisition of property. The multiplication of newspapers under the concentrated control of a single owner has disturbed the individualistic basis of the professional conscience of Indian journalists and set it on wrong and untenable foundations. No journalist who is in harmony with the spirit of his vocation can serve two newspapers. The service of a newspaper calls for as much absorbing attachment and exclusive attention as having a wife, and in these days of legally imposed monogamy it is a pity that no protector has come forward to save the profession of journalists from the multiple loyalties sought to be compulsorily imposed on them by a certain class of promiscuous employers.

It is also to be noted that multiple ownership has led to unjournalistic practices that have hit adversely the finer elements in the Press pledged to social purposes and standards of quality. In the forefront of these practices must be placed the award of cash prizes of hundreds of thousands of rupees in crossword puzzle competitions. These competitions have ceased to be exhilarating intellectual exercises of a harmless or innocent kind. They have become a scandalous device for

the spread of cupidity and its enlistment on a mass scale to boost up circulations to capture advertisers. And the advertisers themselves seem to be taken in. If one person buys twenty copies of a newspaper for the sake of the crossword puzzle coupons, he reads only one copy and the publicity worth of the twenty copies bought by him is no more for the purpose of sales promotion than one-twentieth of their face value. On the other hand if a journal is bought by one person and is read by nineteen others, its publicity value is twenty times the figure revealed in circulation statistics. It is also worth noting that while so many "fool-proof" guarantees are advertised in connection with the puzzle competitions, there has not been a single case of any attempt to guarantee a fraud-proof contraption. It is time advertisers ceased to take a too limited view of their interests and responsibilities. They should promote clean journalism which insures the orderliness so essential for trade expansion and economic prosperity, by declining to attach any importance to deceptive circulation boosts engineered by enormous cash prizes.

Outstanding commercial success is not a sure test of a good newspaper. The ideal newspaper of my conception would owe nothing to hectic proclamations of its net sale certificates. It would concentrate on quality in the faith that quality will tell and provide enough means to make ends meet. It would be tied to no party. It would have no pre-conceived policy to suit all occasions. It would not twist facts to suit any pre-conceived policy. It would refuse to be a replica of other papers, repeating their blemishes lest otherwise it might lose in the competition for public favour. It would not court the mighty to gain an advantage or for any other reason. It would not tire its readers with lengthy reports of inconsequential utterances by Ministers. It would refuse to make office-holding the criterion for accord of publicity. It would not be blind to happenings at home and magnify events abroad. It would have no black lists of persons and causes.

Importance of content and nothing else would determine its allocations of column space. It would not trade in headlines. It would not sail with the current to avoid the unpleasant duty of speaking the truth when the public interest demands it, for fear of losing circulation or advertisements. It would have a soul of its own.

SUCH a paper would live and let live. It would be content with publication on six days a week, leaving the seventh, Sunday, free for a weekly Sunday press to develop in. In England the restraint of the owners of the dailies has enabled the Sunday press to grow into gigantic proportions. Such a development has not taken place in India. It is time it did.—Talk broadcast from Madras Station, A. I. R.

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WHY DRINK?

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

Notes culled from a Report by the Regional Officer of WHO for Europe

EVERY page of the report reflects the idea that prolonged excessive drinking with harmful effects is not a vice, but a disease. Note the distinction. Vice will suggest punishment, policemen and prisons; but disease calls for doctors and hospitals, medicines and psychotherapy, and reorganization of the alcoholic's life.

"Just keep on the move, and the drink won't affect you." "I can take any amount of whisky at a dance and feel none the worse." The fallacies in the above oft-quoted statements must be noted. Dancing is not done with a glass in hand and so considerable intervals occur between one drink and another. Further, dancers are under more vivid and constant stimulation of different and other kinds than those who sprawl in an easy-chair doing nothing.

As long as the liver has not done its work of breaking the alcohol into such compounds like acetaldehyde and acetic acid, the drinker will continue to be 'under the influence' to some degree. Experiments have shown that the rate at which alcohol is broken down in the body is not increased by strenuous muscular exercise.

Only very small amounts of alcohol are eliminated as alcohol from the body directly in the breath; and the rest undergo oxidation in the body. The first stage occurs in the liver and never in the muscles.

The rate at which the alcohol content of the blood is reduced may be deemed to be constant, although there may be trivial variations between one person and another. In other words, a given amount of alcohol takes a certain fairly definite time to disappear from the body. Note this simple formula—that roughly one tenth of the body-weight in kilograms gives the number of grammes of alcohol oxidised per hour.

Example: 150 lbs weight of an average individual is equivalent to roughly 68 kilograms. So one-tenth of it in grammes is 6.8 grammes; and this is eliminated in one hour. If a man with a healthy liver takes one ounce of whisky he will have completely eliminated all the alcohol from his body in four hours.

"The one for the road is responsible for most accidents. It is the last drop that breaks the camel's back." There is considerable truth in this statement. If the man, who is properly lit, takes some more, the alcohol content in the blood increases, and the rate of oxidation is not able to keep pace with the intake.

Body-weight plays an important part in drunkenness. Alcohol is absorbed rapidly from the intestines and spreads to all parts of the body. Two-thirds of the body-weight is the weight of water in the body. The alcohol imbibed dissolves in this water and it consequently follows that a glass of whisky drunk by a big man will result in a weaker alcohol solution than if the same quantity were drunk by a small man: the big man will 'take it' better.

Water in the drink also counts; for the more the alcohol is diluted, the less will it intoxicate. Whatever six small whiskies and soda may do to you, six small ones neat will do more—you will get under more quickly.

Food reduces the effect of alcohol. What happens is that food in the stomach slows up the rate at which the alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream. As oxidation proceeds apace, it follows that the alcohol in the blood does not reach as high a concentration as it would on the rapid empty-stomach rate of absorption; in other words, the steady oxidation process can cope with alcohol that is not being absorbed too rapidly. Experiments and measurements have also established the extreme effect that 'the one for the road' may have. As the alcohol content of the blood rises, it becomes increasingly difficult to co-ordinate one's movements. The error of incoordination does not increase at the same steady rate as

the blood-alcohol concentration, but develops by leaps and bounds. A small increase in blood-alcohol may result in a proportionately larger degree of impairment—two-fold or even more. That the extra drop can bring on sudden and surprising drunkenness is an effect that many drinkers must have noticed.

Blood-alcohol concentration is the yardstick employed by the police in different countries to find whether a particular individual is under the influence of liquor.

Why drink? The main reason is the specific anaesthetic action of alcohol upon certain complex functions of the nervous system. Alcohol covers up unpleasant feelings like fatigue, cold and hunger. But on a somewhat higher level of mental functions, alcohol will have the effect of temporarily solving even emotional conflicts. It does so by more or less paralysing the inhibitory nervous function. It gives one an experience of complete mastery of the situation, of an overflow of strength and activity. One might describe what happens as a descent from a world of serious responsibilities, heavy tasks and difficult adjustments into another world of pleasant play and gay phantasy and where things seem to adjust themselves willingly to our demands.

There are people who suffer from feelings of inferiority and insufficiency with frequent depressive

spells. Alcohol has an almost specific effect on their personal difficulties by giving them confidence and helping them to overcome inhibitions and making it possible for them to associate with people without shyness and feelings of inferiority.

If a man can note the danger-signal and not go beyond it there is no harm in drink.

Beer is the least drunk-making beverage.

★

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ARUDRA

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HONG KONG: "PIMPLE ON 'CHINA'S FACE'"

By Prof. K. C. PETER

AS the plane neared Hong Kong, small islands rose in front, faintly visible dots on the blue expanse of the sea. To port lay the island of Formosa or Taiwan, from where, with American support, Chiang hopes to recapture Red China some day. Soon we were over a blue bay with a town on either side—a delightful city, as pretty as a picture postcard. Imposing skyscrapers, gleaming white many-storied buildings, box-like structures amidst lush green vegetation, smiling ribbon-like white roads climbing Hong Kong Peak in daring curves, castles on precipitous crags—'Hong Kong' shouted my neighbour, Mr. Wilkins, an English businessman. "Eighty years back, the city was in shambles, its business firms, banks and shopping centres looted, its harbour blocked with sunken ships, its business overloaded with the dirtiest of paper money, its finest buildings in wreck and ruin, its dignity lost" he said. "Resurrected Hong Kong of 1954, more beautiful than ever, stately, majestic—see, look" he persuaded, his voice as soft as silk. The plane circled over the Kaitak airport, took a slow nose-dive—and on to the spacious runway. The airfield was spacious, neat, ultramodern, with special arrangements for planes to land at night.

Britain's best showpiece

Incontestably Hong Kong is Britain's best Asian showpiece. It represents British colonial spirit at its best, an excellent mixture of tradition, commonsense, confidence and enterprise. Hong Kong, the New York of the East, with brand new big blocks of flats, schools and hospitals rising, is busier today than it has ever been in its 100 years of history. This lively, handsome, rich city, this British pimple on China's face, has come to stay. Will it go behind the Red Bamboo curtain? British capi-

tal and organisation, English mercantile skill and Chinese energy and enterprise made Hong Kong a healthy bejewelled city.

The Americans hasten to write off Hong Kong as lost. Months back, the US Consul asked his countrymen to pack and quit. The British think the other way; they are blasting and quarrying into the steep hillsides for expansion-space. "This pimple will some day turn out to be the dimple on China's beaming face" a fat Chinese merchant, richly endowed with tough-mindedness, talent, an out-sized ego and a glutton's craving for hard work, told me. "Should it happen?" he quizzed, knitting his brow, seeing his own future stretched out helplessly in the future.

Victoria and Kowloon

The island town Victoria has several avenues running parallel to the coast, cut across with numerous narrow streets that climb up the hill. The shopping centres are close to the waterside. The big companies, export-import business houses, the tall multi-storied buildings, the banks, cinemas, restaurants, department stores, cabarets—a forest of modern buildings of diverse architectural styles crowd this area. The gleaming towering skyscrapers, the HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION and the newly built BANK OF CHINA sneer down upon the puny humans on the road. Neatly painted, attractively streamlined double-decker trams and buses, shining motor cars and man-drawn rikshas (the small man's transport), cycles and motor-cycles run this way and that. You walk into the central streets of Victoria, throbbing with life, bursting with humanity. Rush hours. What a crowd? The population is predominantly Chinese.

The sidestreets and alleys bustle and seethe with poorly dressed peo-

ple; beggars aren't rare. Cars and rikshas bar your way often. Shops and stalls, too small and without elbow-room, line the streets. Sellers are too many; buyers too few—the sellers requesting, cajoling, coercing, entreating, persuading and even forcing the prosperous-looking sailors and tourists, mostly Britons and Americans, to buy their cheap goods.

A riksha sped past us, the young well-built Chinese rikshaman running, his mighty thighs lifted alternately like the pistons on the Delhi Express. An English lady with time on her hands and face and dry beds of old smiles around her eyes sat in it, holding big paper parcels. "Riksha is cheap. Plenty of rikshaboys with their vehicles hang around here. But taxis (cars for hire) are too many. Tourists are so many that they get into each other's snapshots. Yet the rikshaboys have too much of the day at the end of their money" commented Wilkins who kept me company.

Right across the bay, Kowloon looked more modest than Victoria. Beautifully painted ferry boats hurry back and forth between Victoria and Kowloon with clockwise precision. It takes just 7 minutes to cross the straits. Every day the ferry boats help 500,000 persons to go across. Freights flying the flags of many nations, British and American warships and hundreds of junks of various sizes lie anchored or move about in the bay. The view all around is amazing. On either side, shining white buildings stand up silhouetted against tall mountains with razor-sharp ridges. In Kowloon, three or four commercial streets aside, there are wretched slums, ugly pockmarks on Hong Kong's fair body, providing cheap housing to underpaid labourers.

Just near the ferry wharf, you can board a train to Low Ru, the border station, 30 miles up. Decades back—before the Russian and Chinese revolutions—any one could buy from here a ticket straight to Victoria station in London via Trans-Siberian Railway and the Channel ferry. Those days are gone beyond recall. It takes

over an hour to cross the border. You cross a bridge, after getting your passport stamped by the Hong Kong police chief, and step into the Kwangtung province, Red China territory. Armed with the necessary visa, you board a train to Canton and places north.

At night, Hong Kong is brilliantly lit up. Cantonese Chinese write from top to bottom. Hence Hong Kong shops' top-to-bottom white-on-black or black-on-white vertical flood-lit signboards shine bright. Neon signs grin everywhere, mostly in Chinese and English. All shades in the rainbow are pressed into service for sky signs. Hong Kong's night-life is famous though Manila's is no less; night-clubs and cabarets keep open all through the night. Prostitutes are busy, plying their trade. "Two kinds. Just 'cash and carry' business if one is busy. Or if one wants to take a night out, he goes through it slowly—cocktails, music, striptease dances and so on" Wilkins informed me. "Americans are fond of Hong Kong's night-life. Every year, 120,000 Americans visit Hong Kong" he said, laughing.

Past flashbacked

Trade. Christianity. Warships—these three words sum up the story of British imperialism in Asia.

In 1840, the first Opium War, fought in the name of East India Company's sacred right to make Chinese opium-eaters (the Chinese call opium 'foreign mud'), forced the Chinese to open their ports for trade. Lord Palmerston dispatched 10,000 British soldiers (from India) and a score of warships to capture Chusan, a big island off the Chinese coast, a base to threaten the recalcitrant Chinese. The Chinese Emperor felt ashamed and Palmerston furious when it turned out that the British had captured the small island of Hong Kong, about which Palmerston never heard. From the 10th century to the 16th, the Arabs sold opium to the Chinese and later the English took over from them. It was smooth-sailing. But in the 17th century, the Pope sent a group of scientific Jesuits to the Peking court; these scholars

The war left a wake of economic chaos. Trade fell in the first half of 1952 to about 50% of the peak figure of March 1951. There was a short-lived upswing in July 1952, when the Chinese government allowed private industrialists a freer hand. Trade with China fell from \$155 million in August 1951 to \$68 million in March 1952, sprang up to \$122 million in July 1952, and suddenly declined. Soon more industries sprang up in Hong Kong. New constructions rose up—the new city hall, the sports stadium (an amphitheatre fashioned out of natural rock at Sookunpoo to seat 60,000), the Tai Lang Chang reservoir, the central police HQ, the 13-storey Alexandra House, the mammoth Hong Kong Hotel and Mercantile Bank buildings and the squatter colonies housing 3 lakh refugees from Red China. With the opening of England-China trade, Hong Kong's prospects may look up.

Despite the business lull, the 2,000-strong Indian community there is happy. The 2-storey temple in Happy Valley overlooking 'Race course' is excellent and ideally located. The Parsis have no 'Fire temple' or 'Tower of silence' there. But the Sikhs have their own 'Gurudwara' for prayers and feasts. Often one meets Sikh and Punjabi policemen here and there. Urdu and Hindustani notices glared at me from the walls, though wear and tear had played mischief on them. In Hollywood and Wyndham streets, Indian children played with Chinese kids talking in Cantonese dialect. The Chinese, who eat any living animal, bird or reptile, love the 60-hours old slimy Indian-shark-fin soup, and love vegetarian Indians too.

Peep into Red China

Eager to have a peep into Red China, we motored up the 27-mile highway, running almost parallel to the railway line. We left behind a few settlements as the car climbed hills. A tall typical Chinese temple flit passed us. Lush green rice paddy

fields, where the Chinese with large straw-hats on work around the reap-and-mow plough-and-sow agricultural calendar, greeted us. "This region produces delicate quality-rice, once the choice food of the Chinese Emperor" Wilkins told me. "And now?" I asked. "The peasants eat the rice" Wilkins laughed. On the other side, the hill curves down to the sea, spotted with junks and fishing boats.

The frontier disappointed me. A narrow iron bridge spans the Shum chun river at Mankantao. Nothing more. No bamboo curtain was there, nor an iron one. A man-high criss-crossing of barbed wire begins right from the centre of the bridge and runs along the dividing line. On this side, half a dozen blue-uniformed Hong Kong Chinese policemen with revolvers asleep in their glistening leather holsters check the stream of passengers for arms or gold. On the far end, six Red Chinese soldiers in crash helmets with sten guns at the ready check the goods passengers bring. Lorries on either side wait to be loaded with goods carried across the bridge. A man carrying wicker baskets, packed with squealing pigs, slung from a pole, comes from the other end and throws them inside a lorry. No wheeled traffic is allowed to pass the bridge. On the other side, a kiosk blurted out martial music at intervals. No trace of the 12,000 Red Chinese troops stationed at the frontier is seen even with the help of powerful binoculars. Pointing to a big hole in the barbed wire, I asked the British police officer, whether there is smuggling. "Of course, there is, but not much. Hong Kong is short of rice, eggs, dairy products etc." he said. "Don't you think of a day when the 12,000 tough Reds stationed there marching into Hong Kong to capture it" I asked. "Well. Yes. Mao has bit off more than he could chew. So it will take time. And if it comes to a showdown, we are tough too" he replied, shrugging his shoulders.

ALWAYS A CROWN PRINCE?

By ANDREW ROTH

WHEN Sir Winston Churchill said the fatal words at the end of his speech, everyone knew what Anthony Eden knew in advance. The words were: "There is quite enough for both of us to do at the present time . . ."

This meant that Sir Winston has again put off his retirement from the Prime Ministership in the hope that he can cap his historic career by some gigantic and dramatic feat of world statesmanship.

Even before Sir Winston spelled this out publicly at the Conservative Party's annual conference at Blackpool, he had given advance indication of it in a false story which was floated at the time of the Nine Power negotiations in London. According to this story, which was fed, among others, to the French press, the Cabinet was reported to be unanimous in support of committing British forces to the Continent except Sir Winston. In view of Sir Winston's whole record since the end of the war, this was only explicable on one of two grounds. Either Sir Winston had been attacked by galloping senility or he was putting out a phoney story in order to encourage the Russians to believe that he was not wholly committed to the scheme and was open to offers.

His speech to the Conservatives demonstrated two things beyond doubt. First, that although Sir Winston has occasional lapses which send visitors who see him during that period away with the idea that he is approaching senility, he is in excellent form at present. His speech at Blackpool lasted for almost an hour before not only an eagerly enthusiastic Conservative audience but also inanimate batteries of microphones and Television cameras, an ordeal for a very much younger man. In fact he seemed younger than he did at last year's Conservative Party conference.

Second, he convinced most experienced observers that he is still determined to see Malenkov in some Big Three meeting at some time to cap his own career as a world statesman. Until then he is happy to let Eden use what he called "his knowledge, experience, tact and skill" to make the preliminary preparations of eliminating points of tension and strengthening the bargaining position of the West.

Sir Winston's desire to go to Moscow—and his rumoured jealousy of Attlee's mission—was reflected in the humour of his carefully prepared speech:

"I am sorry Mr. Attlee did not have more success with his trip abroad. But even our football team came a cropper in Moscow—and they never meant to go to China. They did not of course, represent the full strength of Britain—but that may apply to Mr. Attlee's team also."

The most amusing story to come out of the Conservative Party's annual love-feast at Blackpool is the one in which the Conservative M.P. goes up to Sir Winston and asks him about his health. What of course he was thinking about was: When will Sir Winston retire to make way for Eden? When will there be a major Cabinet overhaul? When will the next General Election be held?

Sir Winston, the joke runs, replied: "My main preoccupation at the moment is that I may have to carry on until Anthony retires."

This subject of Sir Winston's retirement is, of course, ripe meat for all the cartoonists. The *Daily Mirror's* Vicky has Sir Winston disguised as a Gypsy fortune-teller inviting Anthony Eden into her tent with: "Tell your future, young man?"

Vicky had the distinction of being singled out for attack as "that vicious little man Vicky" by one young delegate. The cartoon which offended was one in which he had Anthony Eden, Sir Maxwell Fyfe, Lord Wool-

ton, and Harold Macmillan all standing around patting each other on the back while the phrases which recur time and again at Conservative conferences flew about: "This conference expresses its warm appreciation . . ." "... congratulates the Government . . . etc., etc. . . ." "records its fullest approval . . ."

The young man who attacked the mild-mannered little ex-Hungarian cartoonist who worries about every cartoon he draws, actually agreed with the criticism: "Some people think that, because the Labour Party do themselves a lot of harm by showing off their personal dislikes of each other at their own conference, we must spend our time saying nothing out of turn."

"I believe that we shall do this (Conservative) Party just as much harm by giving the country an impression of unbearable and insufferable self-satisfaction as ever the Labour Party do by their own conduct."

Certainly the tremendous new audience the Conservatives reached by allowing their conference to be televised (the Labour Party refused) was somewhat taken aback by the amazing public display of saccharine-sweet brotherly love displayed after a year in which there have been serious and intelligent differences over things like evacuating Suez, support for GATT, increased pay for M.P.s and the like. "Why that is no political party," exclaimed my wife after seeing her second television report on the Conservative conference, "that's just a club." Its slogan seemed to be "We're all jolly good fellows."

There is an amazing mystical relationship between the platform and the floor of a Conservative conference. This commits the delegates to say one thing, with great politeness, and the platform to do another, with great geniality. And both seem quite satisfied. Typical of the Mutual Adulation Pact was the statement by Mr. Fletcher-Cooke, the M.P. for Darwen. Speaking of Sir Walter Monckton, who was absent from the platform, he sickened most people by

saying: "It is typical of Sir Walter's modesty and self-effacement that he is not here to take his bow. He is on the job." Actually Sir Walter was on the train for Blackpool when these words were uttered.

Ian Harvey, the M.P. for Harrow East, put on another display when he turned dramatically to point at Mr. Eden and exclaimed: "There is the man who never at any time sacrificed principles for expediency, and I for one am prepared to follow his guidance, his wisdom and his leadership."

This sort of organized adulation even stung the *Liberal News Chronicle* into asperity: "The Conservative Conference at Blackpool, so far, has pursued its way with all the spontaneity and spirit of a pit pony."

"What was ordained has been done. The permissible limits within which the Government might be admonished or appealed to (though not, of course, criticized or denounced) have been observed. All real controversy has been excluded: and so has the breath of life . . ."

"The Ministers often sounded like good-humour fathers who, proud as they were that their boys were growing up to be such manly little fellows, nevertheless felt it their duty to explain where errors of fact or reasoning had been committed."

This is not only the opinion of non-Conservatives. Randolph Churchill, the turbulent son of a turbulent father, reviewing the Conference as televised for Lord Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard*, commented: "If I had not to look at the Tory Conference at Blackpool on television so as to write this comment, I would certainly have switched off after a few minutes . . . The representatives who composed the conference did not behave like the (Labour) Party yahoos of Scarborough, but it was unfortunate that though they behaved like civilized human beings, through the medium of telerecording they looked like featureless cabbages."

"... If Mr. Amery had called Mr. Eden a 'liar,' if Lord Woolton had said 'Shut Up' to Mr. Harold Macmillan, if epithets like 'cad' and

'bully' had ricocheted around the conference hall as at the comradely meeting of the Socialists last week at Scarborough, it must be admitted that there would have been a much wider audience appeal."

In addition, one might add, many Britons would think the Conservatives a more democratic party if they had more of their disputes in public instead of behind the closed, secrecy-sworn doors of the '1922 Committee'—the committee of the Conservative M.P.s. The Conservative M.P.s can be quite 'uncomradely' as in the way they attacked Sir Robert Boothby for supporting the £500 increase for M.P.s. But they do not feel they have to win supporters for their point of view within the Conservative Party, which is run from the top down.

The thing that irritated me most about this Conference was the way that the 4000 delegates all seemed to sit at the edge of their seats, with their critical faculties disconnected, ready to laugh uproariously at any feeble witticism from the platform.

This removes all the incentive for real political humour. There was some, virtually all at the expense of Labourites.

Ian Macleod, the Health Minister, who seems to be building his reputation as a Bevan-baiter, had this to say of Aneurin Bevan, who had described Hugh Gaitskell, who defeated him for Treasurer, as a "dessicated calculating machine."

Macleod said: "After all a man who said he could build 400,000 houses a year, and built 200,000; who said he could run the Health Service for £250,000,000 a year and had got up to £400 million when Cripps put his foot down—nobody could call him a calculating machine, dessicated or otherwise."

"Nobody can be surprised that he did not get the Treasurership."

BBC Censorship

Perhaps the Conservative Conference seemed to be a bit dull because the BBC censored it in the interest of good manners. Thus when Health Minister Ian Macleod was attack-

ing the Labour Party's promise to end the practice where a small minority of beds in nationalized hospitals are kept for paying patients, he had this to say:

"If a man pays his pence or shillings into a hospital contributory scheme rather than on football pools, so that his family may have some privacy if they became ill, what on earth is wrong with that?" The BBC, in reporting it, left out the phrase "rather than on football pools" which is a sharp attack on the shilling-a-week gamble of the average working class home.

The Conservative leaders who watched the conference on Friday night on Television must have been very relieved, too, to see that the BBC somehow omitted the criticism of the young solicitor who added the note of asperity by saying: "I have become tired with the constant verbal back-slapping in this conference."

Despite the complete antithesis between Labour and Conservative conferences, there was not all that great difference between the actual programmes adopted by the two major parties, both of which strive for the wavering voter. Their agreement on things like the London Agreement led one tongue-in-cheek 'Bevanite' to write to *Tribune* last week:

"It is reported . . . that next year the Conservative Party and the Labour Party intend to hold their annual conferences on the same week, and I would suggest that the time is now opportune to make these annual events a joint affair."

"The danger of anything offensive to either party being passed at such a gathering is now very remote, and the harmony created would prove conclusively to the outside world that the British people, from Mr. Butler's millionaires to Mr. Jones's miners, are now united in the fight against Socialism."

"A great deal of expense could be saved by the parties if this suggestion was adopted, and it would also save quite a lot of the hypocrisy

which takes place, every year, at the Labour Party Conference.

"There would be no need for certain trade union delegates and Parliamentary leaders even to pretend to be Socialists.

"To safeguard Sir Winston Churchill from any disturbances which might come from the rank and file, it might be a good idea if the constituency parties were prohibited from attending such a gathering. They never win a vote anyhow, so I don't suppose they would mind very much or that anyone would care even if they did.

"Mr. Deakin and Sir Winston Churchill could have lots of fun giving each other the Victory V-sign.

"James McGregor."

The last paragraph is a masterpiece which, unfortunately, can only be fully appreciated by those who saw Arthur Deakin in action. His

V-sign might be called an inverted V-sign, with the palm up and the hand moving up and down. This gesture, which Deakin kept making at Bevan at Scarborough, is a vulgarity which cannot be translated in a family paper. It can be summarized in the French word: "merde."

Amusingly enough, Sir Winston Churchill, substantially confirmed the approach of the disgruntled 'Bevanite' letter-writer in his speech at Blackpool:

"We live in a land where party government has been the habit for centuries . . . Our view is that the Socialist economy is a gigantic fallacy.

"Passions are excited. Powerful organizations work up controversies and attack each other. But, as each party is supported by more than 12 million voters, they must have a great deal in common.

"When necessary, for the safety of our island, we work together . . ."

S. E. A. S.

By V. K. NARASIMHAN

NOW, don't imagine I am setting myself up in competition with the indefatigable Dulles to start yet another organisation to rescue the peoples of South-East Asia from the communists or whoever threatens them. My ambitions are much more limited. I am concerned with things nearer home, things if not exactly at my doorstep, in the next street and the street beyond. To be short, I want a Society for the Exposure of Abuses by the State.

We are reminded frequently that we are steadily moving towards a Welfare State. A Welfare State means many things to many persons. There are some who think in a Welfare State you will have a 30-hour week, holidays for four months in the year, free education, free medical relief, and a nice little pension from the State to carry you over the period of your second "childishness."

All the current talk about the Welfare State seems, in my view, dangerous from one point of view. It

produces the widespread illusion that the State is the primary source of your welfare and that if anything goes wrong anywhere, it is the State that must set things right and it is the State alone that can do it. It seems to me that all this touching faith in the State stems from a mystical glorification of the State, which in its essence is totalitarian and which is based on a refusal to see the reality as it is. I realise that there is a powerful tendency in a modern industrial economy for conditions to be created which inevitably necessitate increasing control by the State over the economy and the social life of the community. If industry creates a miserable proletariat straining at the leash, the State has to come forward with measures for the protection of the workers, for the regulation of hours of work and conditions in factories and for the eradication of slums. That is all very necessary. But I would appeal for a constant awareness of the implications of government control and for limiting its extension each time to the demonstrable needs of the situation. And

what is more, there is need for constant vigilance to see that State power is being exercised only for the purposes originally envisaged and that the extension of the State power does not in fact breed a new tyranny.

And that is where the S. E. A. S. comes in. I can see an endless amount of good work before it as enterprise after enterprise is taken over by the State and more and more of our daily life is regulated by the State. Take, for instance, the public transport. Because the private bus service was not doing a sufficiently satisfactory job, it was nationalised. (The decision was also prompted by a desire to make money for the Government, because it was thought the bus operators were making fabulous profits). But how good is the Government-run bus service? Is it more efficient and cheaper than before? While there may be differences of opinion about efficiency, there can be none at all about cheapness. Within a few months of the Government taking over the service, you find the bus fares going up. And then costs of operating the service also go up in all directions. Everybody imagines he can have a dip into the bottomless public purse and you have at the end of it all a service not more satisfying than the private service it replaced, but costing the public directly and indirectly much more than the earlier service. Now, the passengers using the bus service have an uneasy feeling that things have drifted from bad to worse, but few of them have the time or the energy to find out what is wrong and to bring home to the Government and the public the real state of affairs under the new dispensation. And it is in such matters that it seems to me that the S. E. A. S. should make its presence felt.

It would be the Society's sole job to hold a watching brief for every citizen in his unequal combat with the State and to expose every incident, small or big, in which the individual or the public has suffered at the hands of Government. It will

strive for courtesy and consideration to the public at every point where a government agency comes into direct contact with the public. It will conduct a ceaseless war against red-tape and bureaucracy. Every incident in which a poor man's application for a small piece of relief has been pigeonholed for months and tossed about from department to department will be played up so that the poignant tragedy of governmental procrastination may be brought home. Every exercise of arbitrary official power will be investigated and fully exposed.

THE Society, if it has sufficiently wide backing, I hope, will concentrate on those small pin-pricks of officialdom which are the more exasperating because they are trivial.

Above all, the Society should carry on a relentless struggle against waste and squandering of public money. There has been too much squandering of public money since 1947. In nearly every scheme launched since Independence, there has been a reckless disregard of economy. Ministers whose primary job it is to see that monies are properly spent, have been the worst sinners. Not only have they too often failed to exercise that vigilance that is expected of them, but quite often they have themselves encouraged extravagance.

It is high time the public started asking what exactly the Ministers do besides endlessly touring their constituencies and making propaganda speeches for their party. There should be a definite rule that Ministers should not be away from their headquarters for more than a week in a month and that their tours should be mainly confined to affairs of State.

I admit that a society which does all this and which seeks to bring Ministers to account for devoting to party or personal ends the time and authority that should be expended in public interest will make itself as obnoxious as SWATANTRA. But that will be also its best justification, as it is for SWATANTRA.

A TAMIL AUTHOR IN EUROPE

By KA NAA SUBRAMANYAM

I AM not interested in seeing places. One place to me is very like another. Visiting Rome I thought that it was very much like our own Tanjore—a place of ruins, reconstructions and ruminative splendours. There is of course a difference in the proportions, but the general air of decay, the atmosphere that hangs about the city is much the same. Paris might be the centre of the fashionable world but I am sure I do not belong to the fashionable world. I am glad I don't for if I did, the trip to Paris might have cost me more. London has inspired many, I know, but it did not at all inspire me. The few days that I spent in London were murky, cold and in general uninspiring. I would have much rather preferred to stay on at my own Sathanur. Perhaps that is the purpose of travel. The further you go, the more you realise the advantages of staying at home.

The claim that I can in any sense speak of Europe with authority is only a tall traveller's claim. It is perhaps impertinent also. But the world can take anything from travellers; its puts up with quite a number of impertinences, least among them being statements made beginning, "When I was last in Paris . . ." I am afraid that I am not a traveller in the real sense of the word, even though in these forty years I find that I have been rushing from one place to another. Wherever you go, said Emerson, you carry yourself. I carried myself to Europe and back. Wiser? I doubt it. Sadder? Not exactly, but certainly none the happier except by way of experience.

Why exactly does man move about so much? In search of peace. The principle is the same—whether you go on a pilgrimage or a pleasure jaunt. But peace, the sort of ruminative inactive peace, to which we in India are accustomed is hard to find in Europe today. I found that I was lost in the mad rush that is modern Paris. In London it was even worse;

it was impossible to move out, but everyone was out and moving. You could not see the rush; you could feel it all about you, like in the night in a forest infested by tigers and other beasts of prey.

I introduced myself to most of the writers I met in Europe as a writer in Tamil. It gave me the right perspective when I came to understand that Tamil is a language that almost nobody has heard about in Europe. No doubt a few of the learned round about the universities had heard of the languages of India in general and of Tamil in particular. But invariably I found that everyone of them had time to spare. All of them were interested to hear what I had to tell them about Tamil, its past and its present. It was not an interest born of politeness or boredom. The new-won status of India and the impact of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on the western world had been sufficient to place India on the intellectual map of the world. The European writer generally is not aware of the Indian classics—not even to the extent that he is aware of the Arabian Nights or the Confucian classics. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Shakuntala are just names that he has heard of. He has not yet heard even the names of the Tamil classics.

"You have too many languages," said most of them. And to one I replied: "As many as you have in Europe; perhaps a few less." But the comparison is not effective for them because they are not aware of India in the sense in which the Englishman or the Frenchman or the Spaniard or for the matter of that the Indian is aware of Europe.

Among the writers I met, I should mention a modern Greek writer. I do not remember his name. Anyway it was as unpronounceable to me as my name should have been to him. He was staying in the same hotel and we sat talking over our strange shaped bread and coffee every morning for over ten days. In Paris you get coffee, excellent coffee that delights a Tanjorean's heart. Sipping the hot coffee we talked mostly of the literary life. He had written

and published some six or seven novels—roughly the same number that I have. He had edited two periodicals of a nonpolitical nature. I found that we had much in common. I asked him whether any of his books had been translated into English. "Of course," he said. "All my novels have been translated into English. In fact one or two of them have been published in English first and only later in Greek, though written in the first instance in Greek." And he added after a pause: "This is rather unpatriotic but I shall have to confess that till my books appeared in English I was a mere writer in Greek. But with my first appearance in English, I became a Greek writer." I could understand the distinction, remembering conditions at home.

THIS Greek writer took me to his French publisher. His third novel was on the eve of publication in French. I found this publisher as well as the other publishers I met in Europe enlightened men who could talk of books not only from the publishing angle but from the literary angle as well. Unlike in India I found the publishers in Paris and London sympathetic to unknown writers and often willing to listen to schemes drafted by writers. I had not expected that the ordinary run of publishers would be interested in publishing as a means of cultural contacts. Any scheme that I submitted to a Tamil publisher today after twenty years of writing in Tamil would be looked upon with suspicion by the publisher. Perhaps I shall have to admit also that this suspicion taking into account the past experience of Tamil publishers is normal and quite in order. The publisher in Paris too admitted that most of the schemes for publication submitted to publishers by writers were intangible, airy and more often than not come to nothing. But they are still worth considering, for if generally neglected, a good idea might be irretrievably lost. This particular publisher in Paris was aware of Tamil as a language, as a classical and also as a contemporary one. He had helped publication

of a number of a periodical devoted to the Orient in which had been published a few pieces of Subramanya Bharathi translated from the Tamil. He searched for a copy of that number and gave it to me.

I stayed longer at Paris than in any other city in Europe. I had time to walk the streets of Paris to my desire. The weather on both occasions was pleasant and not overcold. I am of opinion that one can say that one knows a city only after he had walked the streets of the city a hundred times during all the hours of the day and the night. I did not manage it a hundred times nor at all hours of the night; but sufficient to say that I know a bit of Paris. Amusing incidents are bound to happen and they help to keep the memory of the place green. In an open air stall I bought a coconut and tried to break it and eat it then and there as I would at Sathanur. I was not selfconscious about it till I found the crowd that had collected round me. I was more selfconscious about my attempts at speaking French, which, alas, no one in Paris seemed to understand. Nor was I over self-conscious about my figure clad in closed coat or sherwani and topped by my unkempt hair, though they should have had their quota of stares and shrugs. The number of Americans about was large. And the American cinemas that were showing in Paris was also large. I searched for a pure French film, went in and found it as boring and sentimental as any Tamil picture. Popcorn and groundnuts were available in plenty in Paris and I would buy packets of them and walk about the streets munching them. No one objected. I could stop at a place near the Madeleine and watch the stream of people that passed. I could spend an eternity there trying to sort out the nationalities that passed by. I tried deftly to avoid the seller of French landscapes, but the seller was deft too. And like in any other city you can browse among the secondhand bookshops on the other side of the Seine to your heart's

(Continued on page 32)

"SESBANIA": A STUDY IN GREEN

By GORA SASTRI

"THERE we are," said the helpful guide, as dawn was breaking, "our destination has come. Roll up your beds please and as soon as the train pulls up, jump on to the platform with your kit—the train stops here only for a jiffy." We jumped, all the dozen of us. Aduthurai looked just like any other railway station in a mofussil district would look bleak and dreary with a low platform.

"Excuse me," said a voice, "are you the Planning Officers?" We were surrounded by a crowd of officials and their retinue.

"Planning Officers? No. We are Pressmen. The whole lot of us."

"That's it. That's what I meant. Please come along, the jeeps are waiting for you. We are from the Agricultural and Revenue Departments come here to receive you," said the official.

The jeep driver explained the mystery to me on the way.

"It is alright, Sir, all people like you that come here, we refer to them all as Planning Officers; it is a general term and quite convenient too. Anyway, nowadays any governmental activity is called planning, isn't it?"

"Do a lot of people come like this?" I enquired.

"Lots," he said, "battalions of them. The whole of Tanjore district now is full of these touring parties. Right now the Governor is around here, so is the Minister for Agriculture from Madras and some officers from Delhi. Add to them our own firka, block taluq division and district officers constantly on their feet. And what is the result you get? Confusion, exhaustion and dislocation of normal work."

"Comrade Driver," I said, putting all the sweetness I could into my

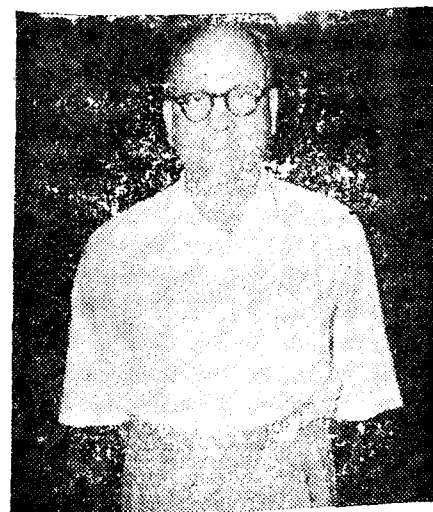
voice, "you should be more charitable towards visitors like us and the gigantic work that is going on here. After all, they are trying to build up a new India, they are planning ahead. You and I should also put our shoulders to the wheel."

The jeep driver was obviously a non-conformist. He didn't say anything more but just drove on.

From that morning started the recent three-day tour programme of a party of Pressmen from Madras, in certain taluqs in Tanjore district, conducted and arranged by the Government of Madras. The object was to show the all-round rapid development in agriculture that was being achieved in that district. It is said that Tanjore with its 13.38 lakhs of acres of paddy has the largest area under this crop in any one district in India, accounting for nearly one-fourth of paddy production in the entire State. Still, as elsewhere in our country, the Tanjore land is no exception in low productivity, yielding an average of less than 1,500 lbs of paddy per acre as against a standard of 1,700 lbs fixed in as remote a time ago as in 1919. The problem is what to do with such stubborn land, our good earth which is so parsimonious towards us? Naturally, everybody looked to the Agricultural Department to do something about it, and by what the party of Pressmen were shown over thousands of acres of paddy fields, the department did seem to have achieved something in the last three years, thanks to a wonder-plant from the land (of all places!) of the Mau Mau.

IN Kenya, we learn, besides the Mau Mau terror and the counter-terror of the British, they have a plant with the botanical nomenclature "Sesbania Speciosa," described as a "cosmopolitan green manure" plant. Why cosmopolitan,

I do not know. Probably the plant has an inherent aversion for orthodox ways of life and hence it has absolutely no objection to thrive on



Sri M. S. Sivaraman

any type of soil and also in the Tanjore paddy fields along the margins of the bunds. This useful truth was discovered three years ago by Sri M. S. Sivaraman, I.C.S., Director of Agriculture, who at once visualised the plant's great potentialities as green manure for our paddy fields. From then on up to now the story of agriculture in Tanjore district is the story of this wonder plant Sesbania Speciosa.

FOR, in a tropical land where the organic matter of the soil is oxidised at a fast rate making the soil deficient in organic nitrogen, even though inorganic fertilisers can help to a great degree, the prime factor in the development of agriculture is green manuring. For decades the agricultural officials have been propagating green manure. But all that spectacular propaganda fell flat on agriculturists for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the supply of seeds was meagre; secondly, the required type of green manure plant that could withstand the droughty conditions of the fallow period from February to June was yet to be discovered. And,

above all, the scarcity of labour (at the time of transplanting of paddy) from trampling green manure into the field was also put forth as an economic difficulty; the poor ryot could not afford the cost of labour and the rich ryot simply did not bother to spend any more money on it and add to the already mounting cost of agriculture.

Formidable obstacles, these. Unless you find a solution for overcoming them, productivity of land will remain low, our good earth remaining stubborn in its yield, a sad example of unimaginative Nature not caring to imitate us Indian nationals in fecundity. It was given to Sri M. S. Sivaraman with his imaginative vision to meet the challenge constructively. He saw great possibilities in the development of agriculture if the Kenya plant could be adopted here for green manuring purposes.

With the birth of that idea (that was nearly three years ago) he set to work, conducting experiments in the agricultural research station at Aduthurai. The output of green manure was stepped up progressively and by 1953 it was twenty times more than what it was in 1948. Consequently, the average yield of paddy at the station had also progressively increased, standing 3,300 lbs. per acre in 1953. Contrast it with the average of 1860 lbs per acre in 1948 and it can be inferred that the resulting improvement is solely due to green manuring. Verily, Sesbania has done the trick.

The next problem was to popularise the plant among the agriculturists and induce them to adopt it liberally. Traditionally averse to new-fangled methods, our agriculturist is a hard bargainer and it requires tact in no small measure, infinite patience and above all, a sympathetic awareness of the practical difficulties and local needs of ryots. Sri Sivaraman seemed to possess all these and also a thorough understanding of the conservative thought-patterns of the ryots, rich and poor. He had also the confidence that if the ryots could be con-

vinced that Sesbania was the most economical of green manure plants, that it would not harm the crop in any way but would considerably increase production, they would adopt it liberally.

THAT was three years ago. Today any casual visitor to the Tanjore district rural areas will be struck by the plethora of Sesbania across the landscape. It has become the farmer's new religion. As we passed along hundreds of miles of paddy fields in jeeps, we could see the pleasing sight of every bund, edge of the field exhibiting a luxurious growth of this green plant; we could also see, as we watched, the happy glint of satisfaction in the eyes of Sri Sivaraman. He seemed to know intimately every inch of that local terrain and its vagaries and the moods of local people. They in turn seemed to know their Director and like him too. Not a small achievement this, for a Government administrator. The Roman Catholic priests who were managing a farm of 400 acres on behalf of a Mission,

a landowner in a far-off village who stopped us, gave us an eight-course lunch and showered a heap of statistics on us concerning his land (he claimed a 50% increase in production after growing Sesbania), and a bucolic Harijan peasant owning a small piece of land, joyfully testified that the plant had helped agriculture immensely. The rich mirasdars, of course, are swearing by Sesbania.

Coming to the economics of Sesbania, with 4 ounces of seeds costing one anna, you can raise enough of the plant for transplanting it along the margins of an acre of paddy field in July and this will produce from 2000 to 4000 lbs of green manure for the Taladi crop in October. By sowing 60 lbs of seeds per acre in February before the harvest of paddy, you can produce, without irrigation, 50,000 to 60,000 lbs of green manure sufficient for 10 acres of paddy fields at the time of transplanting Kuruvai in July.

The Agricultural Department claims that for the first time in the history of cultivation in Tanjore,



Luxurious growth of Sesbania along fields bunds

1.08 lakhs of acres of the Thaladi area will receive in this year a basal dressing of green manure, which will result in an extra production of paddy worth over Rs. 30 lakhs. They say that the agriculturists are showing great enthusiasm for growing Sesbania as a pure crop during the fallow periods and it is hoped to produce 20,000 bags of seeds of Sasbania enough to produce 50% of the green manure required for the paddy area. At the rate of present progress, the entire district will be covered in 2 years.

THIS is the story of Sesbania, the wonder-plant from Kenya, pressed into service here to increase our food production. Tanjore, justly called the granary of the South, will very soon don a vast mantle of green Sesbania on her agricultural landscape and will certainly increase her wealth. That truth was driven home to us as we jeeped through the sea of green for hundreds of miles. But to me, as we were travelling through, other doubts arose. Passing scores of villages, one an exact replica of another with its tank and temple, mud roads, clusters of hutments, dirt and disease, I longed for somebody to tell me why the general run of peasantry looked so hungry, emaciated and benumbed, why village after village looked so deserted with dilapidated, uninhabited houses, mud-hovels partly blown up by winds, scores of urchins whiling away their time on roads, nowhere to go, nothing to do, and why one saw in villages only aged ancient men and women or just children. I also wanted to know how much the revered fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, or the mirasdar who owned 2,000 acres of paddy field, paid to their farm labourers as wages. In a remote village, if the local people tried to build a maternity home with co-operative effort, I could never understand why a Minister from Madras should rush there to lay the foundation stone. But I am digressing. The point is, the Agricultural Department is doing excellent work in Tanjore district and the results of their experiments show

that other States in our country can copy them with profit. Which shows that an able administrator, with faith in his own work, can with rectitude and hard toil do his bit to improve the lot of the people. Sri Sivaraman has done just that and increased agricultural production by at least 15%. Not enough? Of course, not enough. There are many other problems to be considered. As one civilian officer in our party feared, "These Sesbania plants, they will create a problem in future; under cover of these tall hedges, crop-stealing by night would be facilitated. Some cases have been reported already. What are we going to do about it?" I wish he knew that there were also other ways of stealing crops, most of them legal. A Director of Agriculture can only husband agriculture; it is for others to see that the fruit of it is not stolen, usurped or withheld from the needy.

Atomic Electric Station in U S S R

AN industrial electric power station that operates on atomic energy has been put into operation in the Soviet Union, *Pravada* reports in its July 1 issue. According to the newspaper, this is the first time that an industrial turbine operates on atomic energy. The brief report follows:

"On July 27, 1954, an atomic-driven power station (capacity 5,000 kilowatts) was put into operation and generated electricity for use in industry and agriculture in adjoining districts.

"This is the first time that an industrial tribune is working on atomic energy.

"By commissioning the atomic-driven electric power station, a real step has been taken toward the utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

"Soviet scientists and engineers are working on the creation of atomic-driven industrial electric power stations with a capacity of 50,000 to 100,000 kilowatts."

And when his well-reasoned arguments, sharpened by sarcasm, flashed like light on the spearhead, the teacher was amazed, annoyed . . .

..... Short Story

RE-ENACTMENT

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE day had brought unhappy tidings from the battlefield. The melancholy King walked to the palace garden for a stroll.

Beneath the shelter of a tree brushing against the garden wall, he found two little children—a boy and a girl—immersed in their pastime.

"What's the game that you play?" asked the King.

"Today we act the story of the exile of Rama and Sita," they said.

The King took his seat by their side.

"This is our Dandak Forest, here we build the hut," the boy told the King.

Broken twigs and leaves, grass and hay, all lay in a jumbled heap as the child bustled with activity.

In a toy pot the girl cooked without fire bits of unknown creepers and weeds. Rama had to be served and in preparing for it, Sita of course had no time to spare.

The King glanced around and said: "Nothing seems to be missing, but really where is the Demon?"

The boy had to admit his Dandak Forest was not complete in all its details.

"Please let me play the Demon for you," the King came to his rescue.

The boy examined him closely and after a moment's pause said:

"Only if you are prepared to lose."

"I am so good at it. You have just to put me to trial," the King pleaded.

The Demon was killed to such perfection that day that the boy was loath to let the King go. Within the space of a morning, the King had

died the death of several Demons and was by now tired of Death.

In the King's garden that day, birds twittered in the same note that filled the Panchabati in the Treta-yuga and the first rays of the morning sun played the same soft music of their own on the deep layers of the green foliage.

The King felt light at heart again.

Summoning his Minister to his side he asked:

"Who are these children, and to whom do they belong?"

Humbly the Minister informed:

"Ruchira—the girl is mine. The boy, known as Kaushik, is the child of a poor brahmin who is a priest by profession."

The King then said:

"When the time comes, your daughter will be married to this boy. This is my desire."

Listening to the King's words, the Minister dared not speak and hung his head in sullen silence.

II

THE King sent Kaushik for education to the most learned man in the land. Children belonging to all high families came to him to be trained. Ruchira too was among them.

The day Kaushik stepped into the school, the teacher was far from pleased. The other students felt ashamed. But the King's wish had to be carried out.

Ruchira was the most embarrassed of all. Boys gossiped about her and she blushed in shame and shed tears of rage.

If Kaushik sometimes helped her with his books, she would roughly push them aside. When he talked about lessons, Ruchira ignored him.

The teacher showered all his affection on Ruchira. He was determined that Ruchira should surpass Kaushik in all respects. Indeed that was Ruchira's vow too.

Not that it seemed difficult either, for Kaushik studied—but hardly with concentration. He loved swimming and roaming about the forests. His love lay deep in music and in playing instruments.

"You lack devotion to your studies," the teacher would say and often take him to task.

In reply Kaushik used to say:

"My devotion is not limited to books alone. It embraces many other things."

"You must shed them all," the teacher insisted.

"They will take with them my interest in studies too," Kaushik said.

III

TIME thus sped on . . .

And one day the King enquired of the teacher:

"Whom do you consider best among your pupils?"

"Ruchira," came the unhesitating reply.

"What about Kaushik?" the King asked.

The teacher said:

"He has learnt nothing as far as I know."

"I desire Ruchi's marriage with Kaushik," the King told him.

Hearing this the teacher laughed:

"This is like matching the Dusk with the Dawn."

The King sent for the Minister and said:

"You should not delay Ruchira's marriage with Kaushik."

The Minister replied:

"Your Majesty, my daughter is not agreeable to this marriage."

"How can you know a woman's mind from what she says?" the King asked.

"But the tears in her eyes speak otherwise," argued the Minister.

"Does she consider Kaushik as unequal to her," the King looked searchingly at the Minister.

"That is the point—yes," the Minister nodded.

The King pondered for a while and made his decision:

"The two will appear for a test of knowledge before me. If victory is Kaushik's they will be married."

The next day the Minister brought the news to the King:

"My daughter agrees to this condition."

IV

THE Royal Court assembled. The King sat on the throne—Kaushik at his feet.

The teacher arrived with Ruchira. As he entered, Kaushik bowed to him and greeted Ruchi. She cared not to look at him.

At school, Kaushik had never crossed swords with Ruchira even though debate formed part of their studies. Others too disdainfully kept him at a distance. And on this day when his well-reasoned arguments, sharpened by sarcasm, flashed like light on the spearhead, the teacher was amazed, annoyed. Beads of perspiration gathered on Ruchira's forehead, she lost control of herself. Kaushik drove her to the last limit of defeat.

The teacher was speechless with wrath, Ruchira was in a flood of tears.

The King reminded the Minister: "It is time to settle the marriage."

Kaushik left his seat and stood before the King with folded hands:

"Your Majesty, forgive me, I will not agree to this marriage."

The King was surprised:

"Will you not accept the reward for your victory?"

Kaushik said:

"Let the victory be mine, the laurels someone else's."

"Allow me a year more, Your Majesty. After that we can have the

final test," the teacher begged of the King.

The King gave his assent.

V

KAUSHIK left school for good. On some days he would be seen in the forests resting under the cool shade of trees. Sometimes his lonely figure on the hilltops would attract attention.

The teacher's interest now centred all on Ruchira. But Ruchira's mind was no longer hers.

"You will be put to shame for a second time if you don't wake up in time," the teacher would warn her.

And it seemed as if Ruchira prayed for her defeat with all her strength. Aparna had offered penance by abstaining from food. Ruchira did her penance by abstaining from studies. Books of Philosophy remained unopened; Poetry was hardly touched.

The enraged teacher swore in the names of Kapil and Kana:

"Never again shall I agree to teach women. Did I not tackle the most complex Shastras like the Vedas and the Vedanta, But what are they compared to a woman's mind?"

The Minister came to the King one day and said:

"A marriage offer has come for my daughter from Bhabadatta's House. The family's high heritage and prosperity cannot be questioned. Only Your Majesty's assent is needed."

The King asked:

"What does your daughter say?"

"Can you gauge what is in a woman's mind from what she says?" replied the Minister.

"Today what do the tears in her eyes speak about?" the King retorted.

The Minister had no answer to this.

VI

THE King made his way to the garden and turning to the Minister said:

"Would you send your daughter to me here?"

Ruchira came and bowed to the King.

"My child, do you remember the day when you played the game of Rama's exile?" asked the King.

Ruchira smilingly bent her head.

The King said:

"It is my heart's desire to see that play re-enacted once more this day."

Ruchira drew the end of her veil partly over her face and kept silent.

The King said:

"Neither the forest nor the Rama are missing today. Only I hear, my child, the absence of Sita mars the game. If you wish, that can be made up too."

Ruchira did not reply and slowly touched the King's feet.

"But daughter, don't ask me to play the Demon this time."

Ruchira turned her soft eyes to the King.

"This time the Demon will be your teacher," the King said.

(Translated from the Original BENGALI story entitled Punarabrittli by ANJALI SIRCAR)

(Continued from page 25)

content. And then there was the Louvre. But in the Louvre I was like the countryman at the recital of the Ramayana who found the Ramayana heavy on his shoulders. I walked along corridors—miles and miles of them—and the friendly Englishman who accompanied me on this occasion failed to keep me interested. I found the smile of Mona Lisa no more intriguing than the rest.

It is currently fashionable to say to anyone who goes abroad: "Enjoy yourself." I do not know for certain in what this enjoyment consists for other people. But for myself I can say that I had enjoyed myself. The days had been full of work and the nights full of walking. As a Tamil writer I enjoyed meeting most of the notable European writers—among them Sartre, Cocteau, Andre Malraux, Ignazio Silone, Herbert Read, Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden, Manes Sperber. I was glad as a Tamil author that I had been able in my own small way to place a small part of Tamil writing on the map of Europe. It is one of the schemes of a writer. And I am sure that something will come of it sooner or later.

New Books

THE DANCE IN INDIA

By Faubion Bowers

Columbia University Press, New York

Four Dollars

OF late there has been a regular flow of books on Dance and Dancers: by tyros, by dilettantes, by 'art-lovers,' in the nature of travelogues, reportage, and collections of press-notice on the art which are really samples in the art of book-making; occasionally there appears an authentic treatise, citing authorities and packed with footnotes—rather heavy reading; and occasionally, too, are published works which satisfy both the layman and the scholar by their method of treatment.

The Dance in India by Faubion Bowers, while managing to avoid many of the defects mentioned above strikes one as the honest production of an enthusiast of the art of dance, who has had contacts with the pandits and the classical treatises, the knowledge enabling him to have the correct approach to and criticism of the subject-matter. In his acknowledgments he speaks of his indebtedness to the several authorities in the field of Dance; for *Bharata Natya*, to Dr. V. Raghavan of whom he says: "brilliant head of the Sanskrit Department at Madras University, whose penetrating intellect almost shamed me into not writing on so difficult a subject as Indian dance, but whose laborious corrections and detailed suggestions restored my confidence;" for *Kathakali*, to Poet Laureate Vallathol of Cochin; for *Kathak*, to Girdhari Lal Saxena, Professor of Dance at the Lucknow National Academy of Hindustani Music; for *Manipuri*, to Mr. Yumajo Singh, retired Education Member of the State Durbar and to Maharaj-kumar Captain B. Singh, Member of the Royal family of Manipur.

Faubion Bowers is an American, married to an Indian, Santha Rama Rau, and has had considerable

experience as a journalist (having been an Officer in the United States Army), covering virtually the whole of Asia and Africa. While in Japan, he specialised in the Japanese theatre on which he produced one of the best books. He is planning further studies of Indian theatre and dance and is expected to come out to India again for further research. The growing interest and the appearance of expositions like the present one in America about Indian Dance are welcome and all efforts such as the present writer's are to be encouraged for the promotion of greater understanding between nations through culture.

Of all the expositions of the various styles of Indian Dance given in this book, we would like to mention specially the Manipuri—*jagoi*, as it is called in the country's language—"derived from the Sanskrit word *chakra* meaning circle."

"All Manipuri dancing is performed in the form of a circle or the half circle. This basic formation of the dance signifies the circular nature of the Manipuri valley, and by extension, the world, and therefore associates all dance with the creation of the world. Psychologically, dance in Manipur is a creative function interpreting the origins of existence. The movements of the dance itself imitate microcosmically the macrocosmic circle. Manipuri dancing is never angular in any of its movements. Even the most difficult and complicated movements give the impression of rounded ease and fluid simplicity."

The Dance in India is beautifully got up; the many illustrations and photographic reproductions fit into the format exceedingly well. We wish the author all success in his endeavour to describe the theatre and dance-forms in the different parts of the world.

Speak Better—Write Better English

By Horace Coon

A Signet Key Book

The New American Library,

New York 22

25 Cents

THIS is a very informal, informative and useful book and at the same time makes very pleasant reading. It is divided into five sections on Words, Grammar, Speech, Writing and Reading, "each accompanied by its own self-scoring tests and easy practice exercises."

The author is obviously a genuine lover of good literature. He believes in it as one of the civilising forces abroad in the world today and is very keen that as many people as possible should come under its uplifting influence. He speaks of words as if they were things which were alive. He would like people who call themselves civilised to have and to cultivate a sense of responsibility towards words; for words are patent both for good and ill and rightly used can open up new vistas of thought and emotion and experience and remake the world for us.

There is no doubt but that good reading is one of the solid enduring joys of life, and the author is doing a real service when he tells people with sincere enthusiasm that style is something very personal; that clear thinking is fundamental to clear writing; that reading 'maketh a full man,' and enlarges one's horizons and deepens one's awareness of the beauty and sadness and humour and infinite variety of life. Naturally, there is nothing new in what he has to tell us, but these are truths which can never be reiterated often enough. The real adventure and excitement regarding them lies in the never-ending process of their being discovered anew by individuals, through the ages.

The last two sections on Writing and Reading, in parts, are strongly reminiscent of Arnold Bennett's beautiful handbook, *Literary Taste*, which is a minor classic of its kind.

The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gita

Translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood

A Mentor Book

The New American Library,

New York 22

35 Cents

THE publication of this unique and universal Translation of the Bhagavad-Gita in this cheap and most attractively got-up series is a real boon to the people hungering for good reading—'books of cathartic virtue'—as Emerson would have called them.

Competent critics have called the Bhagavad-Gita or, the Lord's Song the Bible of Hinduism. No one, and especially no westerner who wants to understand the fundamentals of Hinduism and Eastern philosophy and culture can afford to neglect this book.

Its message is timeless and ageless and can never be dated. It is old and yet new and always timely and especially so in these days of rampant materialism; for it sets forth with authority and in clear trumpet-like tones the authenticity of spiritual values and preaches a pure and unadulterated doctrine of the spirit. No thoughtful student of human nature, who has brooded long on the mystery of evil can deny that non-attachment which is the central teaching of the Gita, or in other words the 'holy indifference' practised by the Christian mystics is the only medicine for this deep-seated malady of the human spirit. Complete non-attachment is only for the chosen few—God's saints. But it is an imperious necessity for us ordinary people also to practise non-attachment in some qualified form, if we would not wallow in subhuman beastliness. Those attachments the essence of which is selfish desire and possessiveness must be mercilessly destroyed and ruthlessly rooted out of one's nature, if one would be a civilised human being, if one would have peace. Nobody who is sensitive to what experience has to teach him can escape this truth, which is the very core of the teaching of the Gita.

THE CARDINAL CAME

By MOHAN KUMAR

LAST week the city of Madras witnessed some colourful scenes in connection with the visit of Cardinal Gracias, the first Indian cardinal, from Bombay—the pageantry, the colour and the pomp of the Roman Catholic Church added to the bustle and the noise of a grand civic reception and a public reception.

I am a member of the Roman Catholic Church. I knew the cardinal a few years ago in Bombay, when he was only a simple parish priest there. During these few short years, he has risen up to giddy heights in the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and in the international and national publicity front, as the first Indian cardinal. His first elevation was as the Bishop-Auxiliary of Bombay, to assist the Archbishop of Bombay, and when the English-born Archbishop, Monsignor Thomas Roberts resigned his post, soon after India's attaining independence, to make room for an Indian, Bishop Gracias was promoted as the Archbishop of Bombay. A year or two later, the Pope made him a cardinal, the first Indian cardinal.

It is true that the selection of an Indian to become a member of the College of Cardinals, which is the supreme governing body of the internationally spread Roman Catholic Church and which consists of about seventy members, most of whom are Italians, was a unique event, for by numbers and resources the Roman Catholic Church in India is insignificant when compared to the position of the Church in Europe and the two Americas; but was it a recognition of the claims of the Indian Roman Catholics or of the merits of Bishop Gracias? No, it was only a diplomatic demarche from the State of Vatican to the Union of India, a wise step taken by the Vatican in establishing cordial relationship with the newly formed Indian Government and the people of India,

mostly non-Christians, who had become masters of their land and their destiny. Such a move was perhaps considered necessary in the interests of the Catholic Church in India, in view of the fact that the Government of the country was no longer controlled by a Christian western nation. The appointment was thus mainly a political appointment, an aspect which should not be forgotten by our city fathers and political leaders. It could be asked, very pertinently, whether Bishop Gracias or any other Indian would have been made a cardinal by Rome, if India had not attained independence.

In the Bombay Roman Catholic Church politics, there are three distinct groups; the East Indians, as they are called, who are converts from among the people of the place, being of Maharashtrian stock, the Goans who have migrated from Goa and Karachi and settled down for generations in Bombay, and the Mangaloreans who have also likewise come from Mangalore and made Bombay their home city. Of these three sections, the Goans and the Mangaloreans are more advanced in education and resources than the East Indians; they occupy leading positions in Government service, professions, business and industry in Bombay, while the East Indians, originally very rich in material resources, owning most of the land in the islands of Bombay and Salsette, have now sunk low in all fields of activity, mainly because of their extravagant ways of living and feasting. There was always a feeling of competition among these three groups for controlling the politics of the Roman Catholic Church in Bombay, and this came to a head when the question of selecting an Indian successor to the English Archbishop was being actively considered. The Goans won, and Father Gracias, a Karachi Goan was selected by the Pope as the Bishop-Auxiliary with the right of succession to the

Archbishopric of Bombay. Father Gracías was a noted priest, a powerful and fluent speaker in English, and the author of a few good books on religious subjects; but what perhaps weighed more in his favour was the fact that he was secretary to the Archbishop of Bombay, and the close contact thus existing with the Authority recommending names to the Pope in far away Vatican, for selection as Bishop-Auxiliary, decided Father Gracías' destiny more than any other factor.

From then on it was a meteoric rise for Father Gracías. Today he is a prominent member of Bombay's civic life, a conspicuous figure frequently seen and photographed at the highlights of Bombay's social life. He has succeeded in making the Roman Catholic Church known and liked in Bombay's high circles. He has also patched up the bickerings and brought about harmony among the three sections of Roman Catholics in Bombay by a series of politic acts, the first of which was the appointment of Father Dyer, an important leader of the East Indian section, as his Vicar-General. He has thus proved himself a good diplomat in establishing cordial and harmonious relationship with the leaders of other communities, and an able administrator in managing amicably the affairs of his own church politics in Bombay.

It was therefore but natural that that he should have got a warm welcome from the Catholics of Madras, but should there have been so much of fanfare and trumpeting, so much of pomp and glory for a spiritual leader? One could forgive all this and more in the case of political bosses or secular leaders. But why all this in religion? To quite a number of even Roman Catholics, this deification of a religious leader appears a bit jarring. Can't we reduce, if not altogether eschew all such glorifications? Is he a temporal leader or a spiritual leader? If the latter, why all this vainglorious pomp, signifying nothing? Have we not passed that adolescent stage in our social evolution? Whom does the cardinal represent? He repre-

sents 'the poor carpenter from Nazareth,' who had no place among the high and the mighty of the land, whose disciples were mostly humble fisherfolk from Galilee. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," so said Jesus referring to his own utter poverty. In reply to one who wanted to follow him in the hope of getting worldly glory. On another occasion, when sending out his twelve disciples to preach his Gospel, he gives the following admonition: "Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses. Nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff." But look at the contrasting picture of his representatives on earth, with their posh American limousines, their palaces and paraphernalia, their purple and gold insignias and their huge bank balances! What a fall from the high pedestals of perfection reached and preached by Christ; what an anti-climax to the life of renunciation lived by Christ, from the time of his humble birth in the stables of Bethlehem till the finale of his death on the Cross of Calvary!

THE Pope calls himself "the Servant of the Servants of God," but is he in fact so? It is said, one has to meet him genuflecting; one has to walk backwards from his presence. He lives in one of the biggest and the most magnificent palaces of the world, attended by super luxuries which even very few emperors have or had. Personally he may be a good man (though there have been wicked Popes too) and may not be enjoying any of the luxuries provided, living an austere life, but the office is clothed with so much of regalia and pomp and luxury, that his calling himself "the Servant of the Servants of God" and "successor to Peter the Fisherman" appears to be a supreme contradiction.

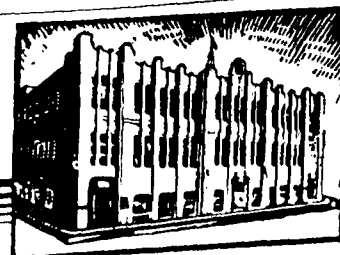
Why deify cardinals and bishops? Except for the fact that they are administrative heads of the church, with power to ordain priests, they have no greater importance in the church's hierarchy than an ordinary priest, dispensing sacraments. In

fact, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals and the supreme Pope himself make their weekly confessions, not to their compeers, but to some ordinary priest, with that confessor sitting down, and the person who makes the confession, even if he be the supreme Pontiff himself, kneeling down before the confessor.

I AM told that in the West, this deification of ecclesiastical dignitaries is very much less than in India. There cardinals and bishops mix freely with the man in the street at his own level, brushing shoulders with him in the tube trains and buses and shopping centres, and even dressing like lay men, their only distinguishing mark, common to all priests, being their white clerical collar, except on religious occasions when they appear in their full pontifical dress. Why should then, we, Indians, show any super-obedience to our religious leaders and make them almost demi-gods? I am sure it would be a discomfort, even to them, at times, to be thus made so much of.

There is another aspect also often overlooked. Indian Catholics are found mainly among the poorer sections of Indians, except for very few who are engaged in professions or in services. Even among these few, the number who are rich is scarce; most of them belong to the middle class. Subscriptions are regularly collected from the Catholic laity for some cause or other, and on the top of it all, the pomp and glory with which the Indian cardinal, the bishops and archbishops and even some top priests are clothed, involve a drain on the catholic laity, who are already poor. May be it is a small strain on each individual, but the strain is positively there. Is it not unwise even in the larger interests of the Roman Catholic Church in India to impoverish still further the poor Catholic laity of India, to pay for all this pomp and glory of their religious leaders? That is a question which thinking Catholics should put themselves, whenever cardinals come.

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JOHN DEWEY Philosopher and Educator

By JAIBOY JOSEPH

JOHN DEWEY, leading philosopher and educator, was born on October 20, 1859, in Burlington, Vermont, U. S. A. For several decades, till his death in 1952, he evolved systems of education and thought which found ready acceptance in perhaps the most formative period of American history.

Horace M. Kallen in *The Philosopher of the Common Man* writes: "That which is noblest in such moral idealism as American life has attained may be read in the works of five men. One is Thomas Paine. One is Thomas Jefferson. The third is Ralph Waldo Emerson. The fourth is William James. The fifth is John Dewey. Of different but overlapping generations, they succeed each other as the phases of the national life succeed each other, and each formulates for and through his own time the vision of its bests."

How did Dewey influence education and philosophy? In the sphere of education, in the words of Max Eastman, "Dewey . . . is the man who saved our children from dying of boredom as we almost did in school." Employing speech and writing he induced authorities to change school from a place where children prepare for life to a place where children live. He insisted that teachers should not only know their job but be interested in it in order to attain this goal.

In the field of philosophy he was a pragmatist much in the manner of William James, another great American philosopher. Pragmatism is a doctrine that estimates any assertion solely by its practical bearing upon human interests. Indeed, Dewey's belief in proper education and stress on practical self-improvement stems from his philosophic outlook which emphasises experience rather than tradition or dogma.

Dewey's writings include many books on education, which have been translated into several languages. He was widely known outside the United

States, and was invited to Mexico, China, Japan, Russia, Turkey and South Africa to aid educational programmes. During his U. S. trip Prime Minister Nehru found time to pay homage to the American philosopher, then observing his 90th birthday in New York.

Dewey's early background had much to do with his later outlook. Doing small jobs in his father's general store, his grandfather's farm, and uncle's sawmill he developed a faith in man's own capacity to better society through constructive work. Dewey finished high school and entered the University of Vermont at 15; he graduated at 19 with the highest marks on record in philosophy.

For a while he was schoolteacher, but his first article in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* made him turn to philosophy. After a year at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland he won a scholarship and also a teaching job in philosophy. Later, he was instructor of philosophy at the University of Michigan, where he fell in love with Alice Chipman, one of his pupils, whom he married in 1886. Except for a year at the University of Minnesota, Dewey spent 10 years at the University of Michigan, becoming head of the department of philosophy in 1888.

In 1894, he was invited to head the combined departments of philosophy, psychology and education of Chicago University where he founded the famous Dewey Laboratory School. There he put into practice his theory of "learning by doing."

Followed engagements with New York's Columbia University and the Henry George School of Social Science of which he became honorary president. He was also president of numerous nation-wide philosophical and educational associations.

Conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters the New York School of Social Research in New York in 1948 described him as the "greatest of living American philosophers."

Death took him away on June 1, 1952.

IGNAZIO SILONE, IDEALIST

By WILLIAM BLUETT

IGNAZIO SILONE joined the Communist Party because he was repelled equally by Italy's pre-Fascist social system and by Mussolini's methods. Like so many other intellectuals, he found that Communism was a more sinister disease than that it affected to remedy.

In the book *The God That Failed*, Silone tells of the passionate sincerity with which he accepted the Marxist creed. "For me to join the Party of proletarian revolution was not just a simple matter of signing up with a political organisation; it meant a conversion, a complete dedication . . . Life, death, love, good, evil, truth, all changed their meaning or lost it altogether . . . The Party became family, school, church, barracks; the world that lay beyond it was to be destroyed and built anew . . . Every sacrifice was welcomed as a personal contribution to the price of collective redemption: and it should be emphasized that the links which bound us to the Party grew steadily firmer, not in spite of the dangers and sacrifices involved, but because of them. This explains the attraction exercised by Communism on certain categories of young men and women, on intellectuals, and on the highly sensitive and generous people who suffer most from the wastefulness of bourgeois society."

Silone, who, despite his self-dedication to Communism, still believed implicitly that "liberty . . . is the possibility of doubting, the possibility of making a mistake, the possibility of searching and experimenting, the possibility of saying 'no' to any authority—literary, artistic, philosophic, religious, social and even political," became increasingly appalled at the dishonest methods used by the Communists to gain their ends. "Between 1921 and 1927 I had repeated occasions to go to Moscow and take part, as a member of Italian Com-

munist delegations, in a number of congresses and meetings of the (Communist International) Executive. What struck me most about the Russian Communists, even in really exceptional personalities such as Lenin and Trotsky, was their utter incapacity to be fair in discussing opinions that conflicted with their own. The adversary, simply for daring to contradict, at once became a traitor, an opportunist, a hireling. An adversary in good faith is inconceivable to the Communists."

At one Executive meeting, Silone recounts, a British Communist interrupted a proposal that a particularly blatant untruth should be published as established fact with the naive comment: "But that would be a lie!" The reaction of the delegates was unanimous. "Loud laughter greeted this ingenuous objection; frank, cordial, interminable laughter, the like of which the gloomy offices of the Communist International had perhaps never heard before. The joke quickly spread all over Moscow, for the Englishman's entertaining and incredible reply was telephoned at once to Stalin and to the most important offices of State, provoking new waves of mirth everywhere . . ."

Silone came to realise that the Communist Party machine in any country exists and operates solely to further Russian political interests.

As an idealist, whose fundamental beliefs even long association with the Party could not destroy, Silone came to the inescapable conclusion that, while he would always be a Socialist, Communism offered no road for him or for anyone genuinely concerned with improving the lot of humanity.

True Socialism, Silone realised, could never be achieved by the methods of Communism. "I do not conceive Socialist policy as tied to any particular theory, but to a faith. The more Socialist theories claim to be scientific," the more transitory they are . . .

Ex-Communist Silone had kept his ideals intact. Because of them he had joined the Communist Party; because of them he left it.

S. P. GUPTA

By N. S. R.

A NEW phase has been inaugurated in Indian cricket with the coming into prominence of Subash Gupte, the spin bowler. Time was



S. P. Gupta

when India's principal cricketers were mainly fast bowlers. When the country was first granted Test match status, in 1932, it was Nissar and Amar Singh who principally held the gaze. Then there succeeded the epoch of batsmen. Merchant and Modi were deservedly outstanding, but even players of limited ability like B. B. Nimbalkar were enabled to compile large scores.

In the present era bowlers have again gained the upper hand. Mankad made himself distinctly felt when he toured England with the national team in 1946. As his illustrious career is almost drawing to a close Gupte, though wielding a different strain of spin, has maintained the supremacy of the spin bowler in Indian cricket. There can be little doubt that in this frail and little figure there resides all the dignity and majesty of the national game.

No Indian bowler has so remarkably imposed himself on his oppo-

nents as Gupte did in the West Indies in 1952-53. His choice for the tour had not gone uncriticised, but most signally did he confound his detractors. If India almost held their own against the formidable West Indies teams, it was mainly due to Gupte. His averages are remarkable and for once reflected quality. He captured fifty wickets for 1,182 runs for an average of 23.64. He sent down 511.4 overs, of which 147 were maidens.

These figures gain significance when it is considered that his opponents were some of the most efficient batsmen in the world, the rapacious Weekes, the suave Worrell, the vehement Walcott, and the graceful Stollmeyer, not to mention Pairaudeau, Rae and Gomez, players only slightly less gifted. When the Indian team first left for the West Indies, it was generally agreed, considering the quality of the opposition it would encounter, that it was a venture of desperation. If, in the end, India gallantly held their own it was mainly due to the splendid spin of the derided Gupte.

Gupte's performances in the West Indies are one of the brightest ornaments of modern Indian cricket. He and that wily and experienced campaigner, Mankad, held West Indian batsmanship in check. The two spin bowlers were a perfect foil and complement each to the other. At the end of the tour it was recognised that they had exceeded the performances of the famous "spin twins" of the West Indies, Valentine and Ramadhin.

The development of Gupte's powers has been striking. I first saw him bowl for Bombay against Howard's M. C. C. team at the Brabourne Stadium. Even on that inimical wicket he spun and broke the ball well, but of the higher qualities demanded of a notable bowler, command of the ball and equable temperament, there were little indications. I thought that he was nervous and apt to bowl defensively at the slightest sign of hostility by the batsman. He did little of note when he played in the third Test at Cal-

cutta against England. Nor did he acquit himself creditably in his few appearances against Pakistan. That such an unsuccessful bowler should have carried everything before him in the most arduous task assigned to him is little short of astonishing.

The visit of the silver jubilee overseas team last season was scarcely satisfactory, but it at least served to show that Gupte can be consistent as well as deadly. He lost no time in establishing his ascendancy over the visiting batsmen, for in the first innings of the first "Test" at New Delhi he captured no less than eight wickets. This strain of success did not desert him, for at the end of the "Test" series he had captured twenty-seven wickets at the expense of 25.03 each.

It is a matter for regret that this great bowler should have placed his great gifts in jeopardy in the rude gladiatorial arena of the Lancashire league. Spin bowling is a precious and fragile gift, apt to lose its efficacy if not carefully nurtured. It is to be hoped that means will be found

of preserving for Indian cricket its greatest contemporary asset.

Gupte in action is an interesting study. A slight and fragile figure, he ambles rather than runs up to the wicket and then releases with a rotatory swing of his arms balls of powerful spin and deadly efficacy. His mastery over the googly is nearly as complete as over the leg-break. Like Ramadhin he bowls with his sleeves not pulled up, probably a device to hinder the batsman from being able to identify the delivery.

The success of Indian cricket's next venture, the tour of Pakistan, will depend more upon Gupte than upon any other Indian player. It is to his advantage that, judging from their total failure against Mankad and Ghulam Ahmed in the first Test match at New Delhi, the Pakistan batsman do not appear to be very efficient against spin of the highest class. If this should prove to be so again, there can be little doubt that Gupte will have added another bright chapter to his splendid biography.

THE ART CRADLE OF AMERICA

By NORMAN SMITH

GREENWICH village, in downtown New York, has for almost the past half-century been considered the American habitat of the "sincere artist"—the poet, the writer, the painter who has determined to express himself as he sees fit.

For the past month or so, some of these artists—those who employ oils, watercolours, and the charcoal pencil—have been on display on their home grounds. The Washington Square outdoor art exhibit, which has just completed its 46th show since its inception in 1932, is their sponsor. And the walls, fences, housefronts and sidewalks of historic old Washington Square are the gallery where they hang their work.

At least two important impressions spring to mind to the observer stroll-

ling around this outdoor display. One is that the era of the starving, garret-housed artists is apparently no more. To be sure, there are a number of bearded, corduroy jacketed types who feel they are carrying on the tradition of the free soul. But they are heavily outnumbered by housewives, businessmen, teachers, clerks and others who have turned to the visual arts for expression, and once having expressed themselves, are eager for others to see their work and quite possibly, purchase it.

The second impression, however, is less positive. The work at this sidewalk show is not really representative of America's professional artists. It shows, for the most part, an interest in getting thoughts and scenes down on paper or canvas, but the techniques are lacking. Another thing, along this same line, is that there does not seem to be any great desire to break away from traditional forms. Of the almost 300 exhibi-

bitors, there were only three or four who presented anything resembling abstractions or the so-called non-objective approach.

But the Washington Square show is quite valuable as a place where artists can mingle, see what the others are doing, and possibly learn from this in an attempt to apply it to their own work. Plus this, it gives the general public—many of whom would not take the trouble to visit an art gallery or museum—a chance to see examples of painting, sketches and the other media. And while they may not learn a great deal from this particular show, the fact that pictures are on display in this colourful and attractive setting does incite more than a spark of interest in the arts, an interest that can lead to more ambitious excursions into the world of culture and art.

The Washington Square exhibit, which has the official blessing and recognition of New York's municipal officials, seeks to embrace artists from every strata. It not only provides a place for display, but offers special scholarship awards to talented exhibitors. On the international side, it selected a group of paintings by New York children and sent this collection to Paris in exchange for a group of paintings by French children.

It was in 1932 that the outdoor show was organized on a rather modest scale. It was set up mainly to enable artists to offer their work to the public for much needed sales, at no expense to them for gallery fees, publicity, commissions or the like. That, one official recalls, was the first outdoor show in the United States. Today the exhibit is unrivalled in size and number of participants by any other in the world.

The sponsors are quite proud of what they have accomplished. They have set up a non-profit organization with the avowed purpose of "stimu-

lating, promoting and preserving contemporary American art."

And they feel that what they started in depression times as a means of extending economic assistance to struggling artists has become a widely accepted institution of contemporary American art.

"The show," one of those who helped organize this year's exhibit told me, "has brought the art gallery out into the sunshine, directly to the public. It has added greatly to the glorious tradition of Greenwich village as the cultural center of this great city (New York). Is it too ambitious to think that what has been accepted as the art cradle of America may become the art capital of the world?"

The judges of the show, for all their sentimentality about Greenwich village and its culture, are still excellent critics who know a good picture when they see one. They awarded the show's grand prize to Manes Lichtenberg for his watercolour "Ibiza," a study of a sun-drenched stucco house.

Another very promising young painter is the Bostonian Don Bloom. He also won a watercolour prize. He has lately developed an extraordinary effective technique of using a thin, white line to outline certain of his figures and views, giving the picture a third-dimensional and somewhat abstract effect at the same time. Ann Truxell Wheeler, although not a prizewinner, also showed some interesting work, in two or three completely different styles. One is relatively abstract; but she also offers some very naturalistic scenes of Pakistan, which she visited for some eight or nine months in 1953. These are somewhat unusual, the subjects and background being drawn and filled in by the use of brush strokes about an inch long. One sidewalk critic was heard to observe that this was not the "pointillism of Seurat, but a new "Dashillism."

FILMS

By V. P. SATHE

THE Films Division's future is being discussed as a result of the Supreme Court's decision declaring the Madras order compelling the exhibitors to screen the shorts as void and the Estimates Committee's recommendation that the Films Division should be made self-supporting and run on purely commercial lines.

For the present the very idea of producing documentaries and exhibiting them on commercial lines appears to be impractical. For our exhibitors are not at all nationally conscious and they do not feel obliged to screen instructional newsreels or documentaries. They are so self-centred and short-sighted that they have no compunction in charging exorbitant hire for screening regular feature entertainment films without which they cannot subsist.

The exhibitors who are not prepared to help the producers of feature films are hardly likely to help the Films Division shorts by voluntarily screening them and paying any hire for them. As it is, even the burden of the hire paid for the exhibition for the shorts is borne by the producer. For, the producer's share is calculated only on the net collection after deducting the entertainment tax, the hire for shorts and show tax. It is wrong to expect the exhibitors to be patriotic and sacrificing for any national cause.

Only the pressure of the picturegoers' demand can force the exhibitors to screen the shorts and newsreels without any Government order. As it is, the picturegoers do appreciate these shorts as is evident from the applause they get after the screening. Not only that, the very producers and exhibitors who are opposed to the screening of such shorts have often advertised these shorts as special added attractions

to draw picturegoers to see their 'flop' pictures. This fact, more than anything else, manifests the growing box office appeal of the short films produced by the Films Division.

But as long as the trade itself does not give a guarantee of making it a voluntary practice to produce and screen instructive shorts and newsreels, the Films Division should and must carry on its present task with the support of both the Government and the public. And the Estimates Committee should not calculate the 'returns' only in terms of money. It should not be forgotten that more than any other medium the documentaries and newsreels are doing the greatest propaganda for the national Government both in India and abroad by portraying in a vivid positive manner what our Government is doing for the welfare of the people.

Indeed, it is only after seeing the documentary films about the various projects undertaken since 1947 that we get a correct idea of the immense work our Government is doing for the welfare of the people. Can the Estimate Committee estimate the value of all this positive propaganda and public enlightenment? If it could, I am sure, it would have come to a different conclusion.

Picture of the week

Victor Hugo's classic "The Hunchback Of Notre Dame" is a very poignant love story of an ugly man who loved a beautiful girl. The ugly man was aware of his deformity; and though there were many who hated him and feared him, he was a very human, lovable person in his own way. While reading the book, you are deeply moved by his character.

Undoubtedly the story has a universal appeal; but it is difficult to imagine the hunchback without the famous church of Notre Dame. Hence it appears almost impossible to adapt the classic to the Indian setting. And yet between Amiya Chakrabarti and Rajendra Shanker they have done the impossible job almost satisfactorily.

In adapting Hugo's classic, Amiya and his collaborators seem to be guided by only one principle—the

principle of box-office and entertainment. So even if the adaptation may not appeal to the readers of the original French classic or its Hollywood interpretation in William Deiterle's picturization with Charles Laughton as the hunchback, the adaptation, it has to be admitted, meets the requirements of the box office formula.

There is only one snag in it; in spite of thoroughly Indianizing it and almost reducing the hunchback to a secondary character, the character itself does not appear to be Indian and as such the whole story fails to be convincing and real in spite of a very excellent performance by Ullhas in the role of the hunchback. His make-up also is too crude and lacks conviction.

But even more than Ullhas, Usha Kiran as the gypsy girl Gulabi dominates the film and gives a truly outstanding performance, running the whole gamut of emotions with ease and consummate artistry. She dances beautifully and steals every scene in which she appears. If for nothing else *Badshah* will be remembered for Usha Kiran's striking performance. Agha's comedy is true to his type and Shanker and Jai Kishen's music is upto the mark. Of other artistes, Mala Sinha somehow failed to impress, perhaps because she was miscast or perhaps because the role itself was too hackneyed and should have been deleted. Achala, K. N. Singh and Hari Shivdasani shine in the supporting cast.

Lavishly produced, technically *Badshah* is a polished production worthy of the standard Amiya Chakrabarty has set for himself.

Personality of the week

Since her return from Switzerland Nutan is very much in the limelight. The stories about her stay in Switzerland where she attended a school are being published in the film press and we are told that she has acquired "an indefinable charm, a certain combination of poise, assurance and self-possession"—and also fluency in French. But what is more important perhaps to the film producer is the fact that she has acquired con-

siderable weight which will give greater glamour and appeal on the screen.

The stay in Switzerland has apparently done good to Nutan's health—physical as well as mental—and she is bubbling with new enthusiasm. Her first assignment, however, does not require her to be enthusiastic as now she is cast as Heer, the ill-fated beloved of Ranza, in Filmistan's picture which is being directed by Hamid Butt. In fact, it is this assignment which forced Nutan to cut her stay short and rush to India.

After playing Laila, Nutan went abroad to return home to play Heer. At this rate, she would be playing all the legendary romantic heroines just as her mother played all the legendary mythological heroines in her heyday.

News of the week

Several new muhurats were performed on Sunday 24th as it was supposed to be the most auspicious day. Lata Mangeshkar launched *Bhairavi* starring Nalini Jaywant, Smriti Biswas and Om Prakash with music by Roshan. Madhav Shinde is the director. Roopnagar Ltd., launched *Fifty-Fifty* also starring Nalini Jaywant with M. Rajan, David, Manmohan Krishna, Gope, Sunder and Om Prakash. It will be directed and produced by R. L. Malhotra. The other pictures to go on sets are (i) Gunjal Productions' *Mohini* directed by Gunjal, starring Rehana, Kamal Kapoor, Gope and Nirupa Roy; (ii) Ismail Films' *Jawab* directed by Ismail Menon with Geeta Bali, Ajit, Achala, Muqri and (iii) Art Temple's *Haroon Al Rashid* starring Nasir, Roopmala, Naina, Gope.

Manmohan Sabir has completed more than half the shooting of Bombay Theatres' new picture *Pahli Mulaqat*, an experimental venture with three new faces, M. Rajan, Sundar and Ram Mohan. The shooting began on 2nd October and is progressing almost daily. At this rate, the picture is expected to be ready by the middle of November. In addition Manmohan's two other pictures *Dildar* and *Grand Hotel* have gone on the floor.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor welcomes letters on subjects of general interest or topics arising out of articles printed in SWATANTRA but reserves the right to abridge them.

Perspective In Andhra

Sir,—The editorial comment and the 'Sidelights' in *Swatantra* of 2nd October 1954, though they contain much food for thought and valuable suggestions with regard to such broad policies to be pursued in expediting projects like Nandikonda which have a statewide and even nationwide importance, appear in other respects to be somewhat unfair and pessimistic. Many of the charges levelled against the Andhra Ministry can, perhaps with equal force, be levelled against the public as well generally. Narrowminded sectionalism or casteism and parochialism exist both at the citizenship level and legislators' level in Andhra as well as the country. It is a national defect which everyone, including the Press and enlightened public opinion, has to combat. If the Andhra Ministry or, for the matter of that, other State Ministries and the Centre too, have not been able to root out the defect, it may mean that they have been helpless. It does not necessarily mean that they have been actively fostering it. Transforming national character may not be viewed as the exclusive responsibility of a democratic government.

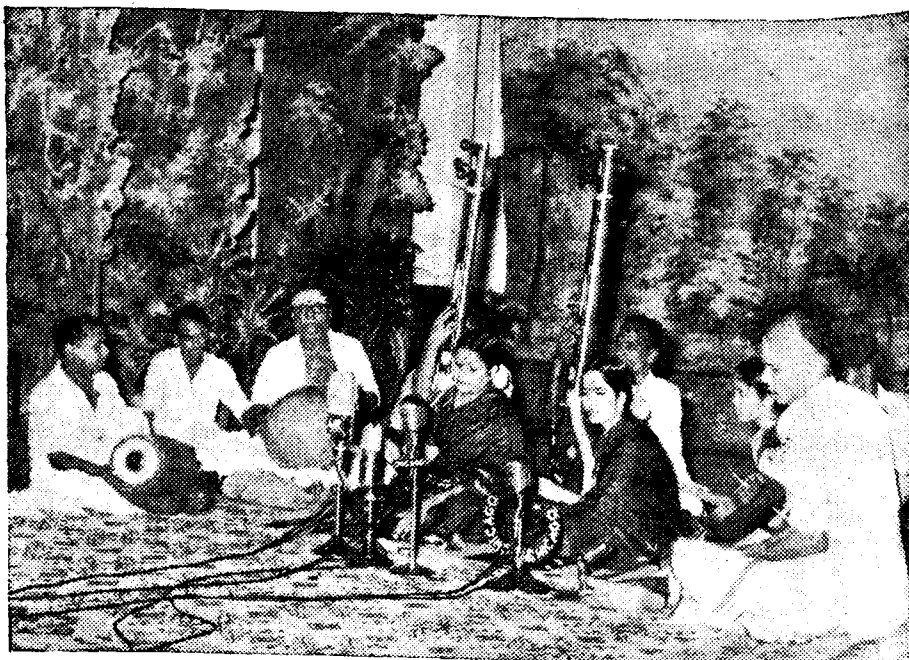
Similarly, as regards "the Andhra Government getting bogged in a doctrinaire egalitarian agrarian policy", the Press and the public too are partly responsible. Barring a few exceptions, neither the Press nor enlightened public opinion came forward in the past with well informed, clear-cut and constructive suggestions in this regard, nor if any were made, was due heed paid to them.

It is hardly apt to describe a representative government in a democratic set-up as 'rulers' or the citizens as the 'ruled'. Albeit individual cases of exceptional talent, high purpose and merit, in a democracy generally speaking, the collective standard of a legislative body cannot be expected to rise far above the citizenship level; nor can the collective standard of the cabinet reach far higher than the general level of the legislature. This is the inviolable limitation of a democracy. The

habit of relying too much on government spoon-feeding for everything including transformation of national character and thereby giving disproportionate importance to governmental leadership even with regard to the socio-cultural aspects of national life is not altogether healthy.

The Andhra Ministry may not be held responsible for Kamma-Reddi rivalry even if it exists to any marked extent. The Kammas in the Circars and the Reddis in Rayalaseema and Nellore constitute large, well-to-do, vital and enterprising communities whose influence cannot but be reflected naturally in all spheres including the political. There appears to be in recent times a socio-cultural awakening as indicated, for instance, by the emergence and writings of scholars like the late Suravaram Pratapa Reddi of Telangana and to some extent those of C. R. Reddi of Rayalaseema and Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Choudhuri of the Circars. It is not at all intended to depict these scholars as persons belonging to particular communities or particular parts of Andhradesa as their works have indeed an Andhra-wide significance. Both these communities played an active part in national and socio-cultural movements unlike some other sections more actively associated in the past with movements representing largely political opportunism based on hatred and envy of a particular community and aspiring for nothing more than provision of select jobs to a favoured few. The above is not said to justify any narrow or unhealthy sectarianism but only to explain the nature of the background. Most, however, would fully appreciate and endorse the timely exhortation of *Swatantra* in this regard and it is to be hoped that in the higher levels of administration especially due caution would be exercised to see that merit is not given the go-by.

It is but fair that the Andhra Ministry too should be judged by the same standards as are applied to other Ministries in the country. Judged by that, under the guidance of an able Governor and with the enthusiastic and efficient response of top administrative personnel like, for instance, the Chief Secretary and the chiefs of the engineering departments not to speak of others, the Andhra Ministry seems to have done rather well in spite of several initial handicaps. Unfortunately, however, the chief sections of the Andhra Press seem to have been playing virtually the role of opposition ever since the inception of the Andhra State. Barring that, the perspective in Andhra and



Srimathi M. S. Subbulakshmi giving the inaugural concert of the Radio Sangeet Sammelan on October 22, 1954

future prospects of the State appear to be hopeful rather than gloomy.

D. V. R.

Berhampore.

Fundamentals Regarding Linguistic States

Sir,—Sri S. K. Patil, is reported to have said that he would never tolerate the gradual Balkanisation of India in the process of reorganisation of States on a language basis. He also said that the partition of Madras on the basis of language was not good in the interests of true democracy.

There are certain fundamental points which we will have to remember when we go into the question of the division of a great country. A study of the history of humanity will tell us that the natural groupings of people took place usually on the basis of the language which the people spoke. Century after century the various groupings were formed on the basis of the common tongue. A language always helps to bring those who speak it into a certain unity of growing thought. It is an intellectual and aesthetic bond which strengthens unity. It may be said to be the power house of the people who speak it. Each language has got its own peculiar spirit, its own peculiar thought-temperament and its own special way of deal-

ing with the problems of life. Those distinctive features do exist not only between Andhras and Tamilians but also between Bengalis and Oriyas, Kannadigas and Maharashtrians. They are all Indians first, but each group has its own national self-expression. The various languages of India are of the utmost value to the nation as a whole. It is not only the preservation but the strengthening of the various languages that will promote national and cultural unity.

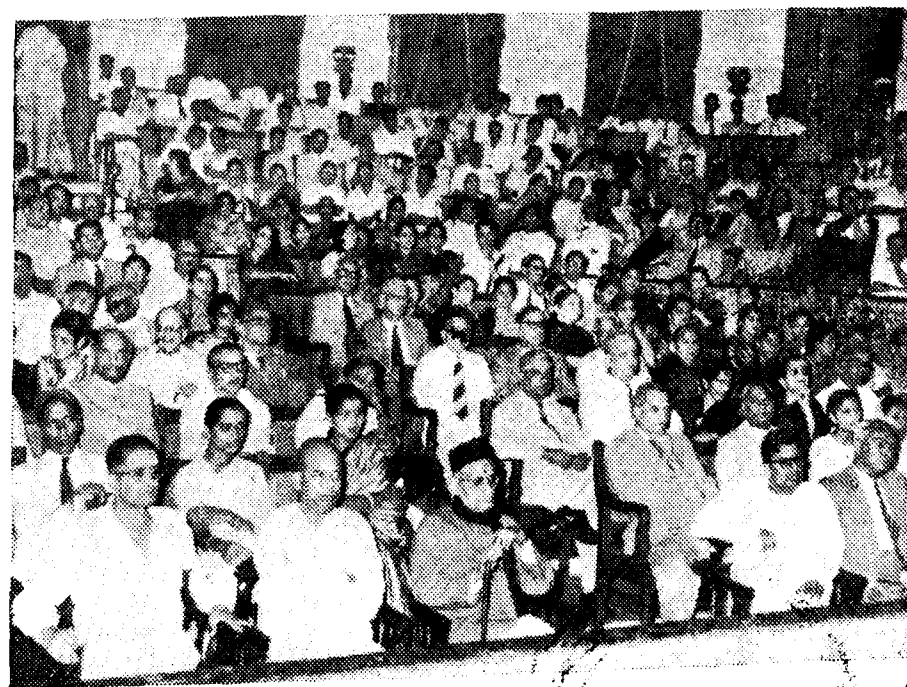
The disadvantages of not having one's own self-expression can be seen rather prominently in the case of the United States of America. The Americans speak the English language, but that is not their national tongue. Many of us know that the Americans have a temperament and a bent of mind quite different from the English people. Their characteristics are not as fully developed as they ought to have been and the reason seems to be that English is not their national language. They may be a great nation both politically and economically but culturally they are still a part of England. America has not yet achieved cultural independence. Neither its literature nor its art can be said to have arrived at full maturity. Although the national mind of America is different from the national mind of

England, America could not evolve a separate and distinctive culture of its own.

Again let us consider the case of Ireland. Although Ireland has its own language, its own culture, its own nationality, for several centuries a foreign tongue was forcibly imposed on it. This imposition had left Ireland culturally stagnant for centuries. But for the forcing of the English language on them the Celtic race with its virile imagination and quick intelligence would have contributed its own quota to the culture of Europe. Ever since Ireland became free she has been striving to recover her lost soul. Let us consider the case of India. In spite of foreign domination of more than two centuries India persisted in retaining her national culture. There are more than half a dozen principal languages spoken in different parts of India. Each language, instead of interfering with the national culture and unity of the land, has augmented the national consciousness to a great extent. For some years the Hindu Moslem unity was at its zenith, but subsequent events which happened were mostly due to the machinations of a foreign bureaucracy. The great and primary languages of India from time to time added to the gene-

ral national culture. Mention may be made of Bengal and the Bengali literature. It was Bengal that compelled the whole world to hear the great spiritual song of India. It was Bengal that produced the great Indian modern poet and the great Indian scientist of world-wide fame. It was Bengal that gave a tremendous social and political consciousness to the whole of India. It was Andhra that rose to the occasion both in social and political matters. Other parts of India followed the lead. So the diversity of languages never stood in the way of the national unity of India. It is not necessary to emphasise how much the literatures of Bengal and Andhra, of Tamil, Maharashtra and Canarese have contributed to the general national culture of our land. It is in the various languages of India that the utilities of diversity can be easily perceived. Without these diversities life cannot have its full play. In the absence of these diversities there will be decline and sometimes stagnation of national life.

It seems to me that the argument of Sri Patil that the division of India on a linguistic basis will disrupt the unity of India ignores the fundamental facts in nature. What is required is not a rigid unity but a living oneness. There



A section of the audience who were present at the inauguration of the Radio Sangeet Sammelan at the Museum Theatre

must be healthy freedom amongst the various States, each having its own language and culture. This will not endanger the unity of the land. The creation of a Visala Andhra State or a Samyukta Karnataka State will add to the strength of India in the social, political and economic fields of activity. I would, therefore, request the States Re-organisation Commission to give due weight to the fundamental facts in nature.

Inaugurating the 37th annual meeting of the Maharathi Literary Conference Sri Nehru said that each main language of India is a national language. He also said that Hindi has been adopted as the official language not with a view to elevating it to a special position or displacing other languages. Quoting Milton, Sri Nehru said that from the language of a people, one can tell whether they are a virile nation or a weak nation.

AVASARALA RAMA RAO
Rajahmundry.

Judges, Then And Now

Sir,—After 42 years of experience of law courts I venture to give out a few impressions on the existing state of judicial administration as contrasted with that of the last generation of civilian and provincial judges.

The Public Service Commission has in recruiting officers set at naught merit and followed communal representation—so much so that the Supreme Court had to lay down rules. The interval of about a decade and half gave room for recruitment as judges of second and third rate men on a communal or personal-favouritism basis.

The present judiciary, with rare exceptions, has its own esoteric section in the bar, to play to their tune and favouritism plays a large part in success at the bar. The bar associations have become effete and no independent thinking is left in them.

Several suits are dismissed for default or decreed ex parte. The same numbers are shown as disposals in more than two or three quarterly returns. Disposals crowd on the last day of the quarter, without time for agreements or reading of case law for the judges.

Oral evidence is strangled—and depositions are not read out or interpreted to the witness. Very often answers material to the case elicited in chief and cross examination are not found in public copies of depositions.

In appeal, both sides, for fear of adverse findings, often consent for a remand and judges obtain a good number of disposals at a very cheap rate. Remanding a case for fresh trial or an additional issue, is a poor compliment to the efficiency of the bench in the lower court.

As Justice Umamaheswaram recently remarked the lower courts do not mention the authorities cited by the advocates, lest they should explain, follow or dissent from them—an arduous task.

It is hoped that the supervising authorities will look more carefully into the returns and check the disposals. Every client cannot afford an appeal.

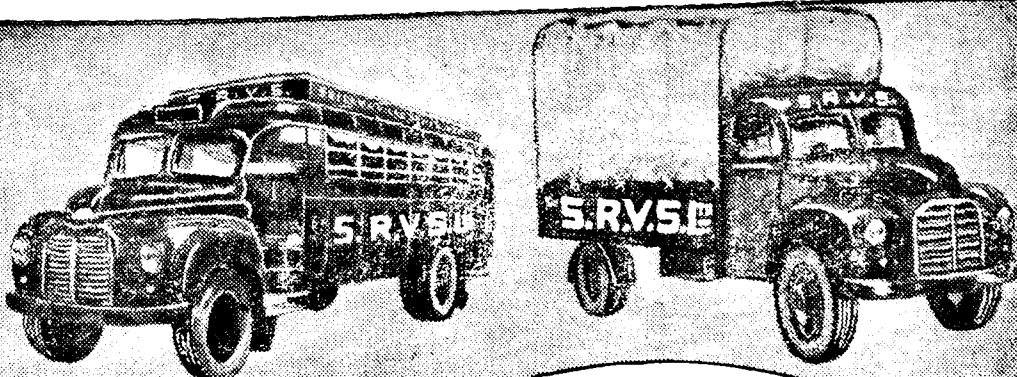
M. V. KRISHNA RAO

Kavali.

P. T. I.'s "Integrity" Impugned

Sir,—The public is aware that a storm is now raging, following certain remarks made by the Press Commission in their report about the objectivity, impartiality and integrity of news coverage by the Press Trust of India. These comments evoked a protest from the board of directors of the P. T. I. who have since urged that all evidence which was tendered to the Commission touching on the above points should be published. I do not know what evidence was tendered before the Commission but I must draw attention of the public and the powers-that-be to the fact that recently i.e., on October 15 last when the Supreme Court delivered a judgment in the famous case of two advocates of the Nagpur High Court, the P. T. I. circulated to the country a highly one-sided version of the Supreme Court judgment. The full judgment is now available and it discloses some critical remarks about judges of the Nagpur High Court and it is these very remarks which the P. T. I. has suppressed. I may add that this is not the first time when such entirely one-sided versions of the Supreme Court's judgment have been circulated by the agency. This incident clearly proves that P. T. I. does not answer the three essential prerequisites viz., impartiality, objectivity and integrity. The time has, therefore come when the present set-up must be scrapped and the agency converted into a public corporation with a non-official majority.

R. V. S. MANI,
Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Civ
Liberties Union.



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