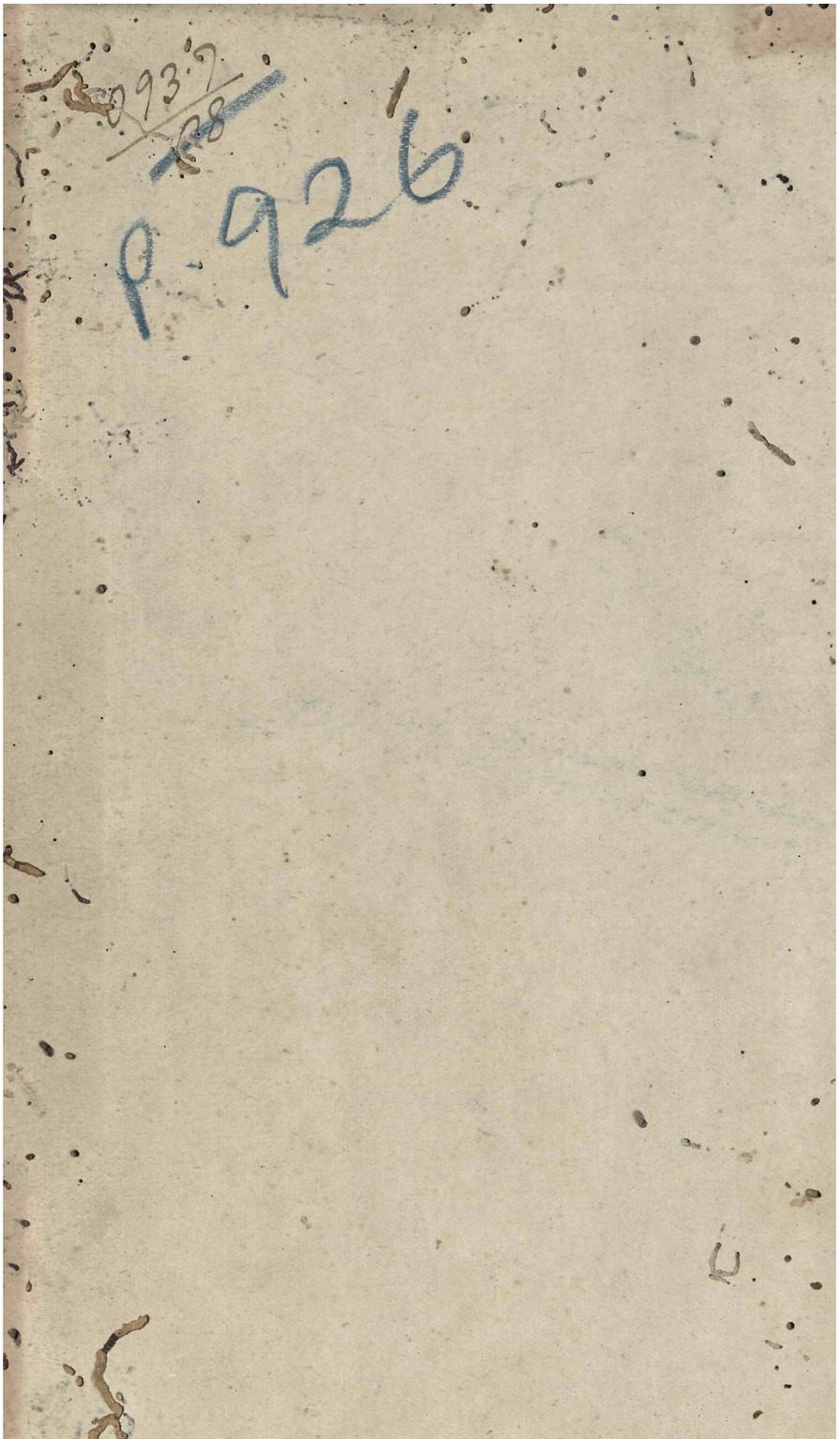


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THE
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE
MAGAZINE

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EDITOR : ARDHENDU BAKSI

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of past students and past and present members of the staff of Presidency College was held in the College under the chairmanship of Principal B. M. Sen, on the 10th January, 1934, and it was unanimously decided to start an Association of past students and past and present members of the College.

A Provisional Committee with Mr. S. N. Mallik, C.I.E. and Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis as Secretaries was appointed to take necessary steps for organising the Association.

A second meeting was held in the College on the 10th April, 1934, under the chairmanship of Mr. Basanta Kumar Bose, M.A., B.L., the seniormost ex-student of the College. Draft Rules prepared by the Provisional Committee were considered, and the Provisional Committee was authorized to enrol members. The Inaugural Meeting of the Association will be held after not less than fifty members have been enrolled.

ALL PAST STUDENTS AND PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE STAFF ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN.

Life Membership Fee.

Rs. 15/- in one instalment, or Rs. 20/- in four instalments of Rs. 5/- each.

Membership forms and information regarding the Association may be obtained from Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, Presidency College, Calcutta.



Syama Prasad Mookerjee

OUR NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR

(Ex-Editor, Presidency College Magazine, Session: 1921-22.)

FOREWORD

WE re-opened this year in an atmosphere of joy and hopefulness for the future—the College had done well at the University Examinations. We obtained a glimpse of the College of twenty years ago or more when it had almost the monopoly of the high places in the Examination list. Yet let us not feel elated over this success even if this state of things has come to stay; we have still to reckon with the competition from other Universities and re-establish our position in the Indian educational world.

But while we set a great store on academic success, we must not forget the ideal of the College. It will not do to overlook the great ideal of knowledge and character without which mere instruction through lectures becomes fruitless toil. It is not given to every one of us to achieve high academic success any more than high athletic distinction however hard he might try. But there are other walks of life where knowledge, intelligence, character and general abilities provide the key to success. And we may regard the few years we stay in the College, profitably spent, if we can acquire these. The College will then impress an indelible stamp on our lives—a stamp we shall be proud to bear.

We cannot close this brief foreword without exhorting every student to make better use of the facilities for sport offered by the College. It would be difficult to realise at twenty the discomforts and handicaps of ill-health later in life, but let us remember, while yet there is time, that Nature will have her revenge for breaches of her laws of health—whether of omission or of commission.

B. M. S.

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Vol. XXI.

SEPTEMBER, 1934.

No. 1.

Notes and News

NEARLY twenty years have passed since the appearance of the first issue of the PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE on a November morning in 1914. A long tide of change has swept over the face of the world since that date, change in the ways of politics and commerce, in the society and in the general outlook on life. The war, then presumably a struggle of a few months' duration, has passed on with its troubled terrors and its devastating consequences; and out of the ruins of great monarchies have sprung up independent republics. Scientists, too, have led us into a new era through their momentous discoveries; radio and television, things unknown at that time, are fast coming to be essential requisites in every cultured home; and aeroplanes, crude machines for amateurish flying, have developed into a most convenient mode of communication and transport.

Along with the revolution in the world of matter, the mind of man has also spun down the ringing grooves of change. The generation born immediately before or during the war marks in many respects a remarkable transition from its predecessors. The traditional beliefs which young men cherished two decades ago are in many cases regarded by the present generation as outworn prejudices, fit only to be cast off; and the amusements, which their fathers shunned as barbarous and immoral, are known among them only as mild relaxations. Even in our country where the processes of change have been much slower than in

Europe, values have changed to a remarkable degree. Study, at one time the sole object of a young man coming to college, is now only one of his many occupations ; and curious as it is, he takes a keener interest in Hitler and in the Test Matches than in the immediate prospect of examinations. The reason is not far to seek ; we have shifted our glance from within ourselves and our limited circle to the wide world beyond.

It is, therefore, with a pang of regret that the present editor thinks of the ideals which Principal James of reverend memory set before our journal twenty years ago. " Rightly understood," said Mr. James, " a college magazine is an organ of the corporate life of the college." Hence its first and foremost duty would be " to keep closely in touch with the actual work-a-day life of the college. It should chronicle events ; it should communicate views ; it should afford opportunities for the free discussion of college affairs and interests. These things it should do first and foremost ; and if it fails to do these things, it is no college magazine." The second natural function of the magazine would be " to find space for news from other colleges and keep its readers informed of matters of common interest in the University. A third function is to foster literary and scientific interest by printing contributions from members of the college."

It is needless to point out what a long way our journal has drifted from its original track. The function which was relegated to the third place, " quite a long way after the other two," has ostensibly come to be the most important ; and the internal affairs of the college on which Mr. James laid such special emphasis have to go with only a few pages in small print. The new editor is, therefore, faced with a difficult problem,—whether to continue the standard set up in recent years or to revert back to the ideals with which the magazine had been originally started. To accept either of these courses to the total exclusion of the other is neither possible nor advisable at this date. To go back to infancy, when our journal has just come of age, would be but folly in the eyes of many ; while to others, Mr. James' words have an appropriateness which demands a strict obedience. The only possible course, therefore, would be to keep along a golden mean, to co-ordinate the two functions so far as possible. The editor hopes that the readers will pardon him if his attempts seem to be useless and unwarranted.

* * * * *

Coming to the College in July, the first thing that strikes one's notice is the band of newcomers thronging everywhere about the College, in the corridors, below the staircase, in the common room and especially about the Library counters. There is something about

the looks of these young men which at once marks them out as freshers, a look of shyness, timidity and a jovial inquisitiveness. Looking at them, one wistfully recalls one's own schooldays and remembers the many-coloured webs of fancy which one used to spin, leaving one life behind and facing the closed gate of another. Of course, when the gate opens and one is allowed to enter, things often present themselves in altogether different and unforeseen colours and one has soon to realise that it is not wholly a change for the better ;—a transition from servility to independence, but at the same time from carefreeness to responsibility. The ardour and joy which lighted the faces of our young friends in July will, we know, soon fade away and merge into an appearance of commonplace familiarity. Despite all this, however, we extend our heartiest welcome to them all, students of Calcutta and the mofussil, as well as those from other universities, and hope that on the whole they will find college life an exhilarating one. Personally the editor feels they need not be reminded of their great responsibilities, the expectations they are to fulfil, and all such sentimental commonplaces. There is something in the very atmosphere of the College which invigorates and inspires. The building itself, the memorable stairs, the faces of the professors, the queer, musty smell hanging about the rooms, all conspire to make him feel the glory of which he is the inheritor. And unknowingly he finds himself proud of his Alma Mater's tradition and striving his best to preserve the laurels fresh and fair on her brow.

* * * * *

A mother of many children has to suffer bereavements more often than the mother of a few. Presidency College, we believe, has to mourn the demise of her alumni more often than any other educational institution in the country. This time also we have to record our sense of bereavement on the death of a number of our illustrious ex-students. The late Mr. P. N. Bose whose name will be remembered as long as the Tatas exist, apart even from his geological researches and his illuminating writings, was a Lecturer here in Geology from 1901 to 1903, and to him the present Geological Institute owes its foundation. The late Sir B. B. Ghosh, in whose death Bengal mourns the loss of a distinguished Judge of the Calcutta High Court and a member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Bengal and for a time of the Viceroy of India, passed the whole of his college life in this institution during the years 1883 to 1889. The late Rai Bahadur Nistaran Banerji of Dumraon fame, who rose to be a Judge of the Small Cause Court here, was also a student of the College for six years, from 1870 to 1875, and served for a time as officiating Lecturer in English.

We would fain close our list with these names, but the sudden death of Sir C. C. Ghosh prolongs our unwelcome task. A student of this institution from 1890 to 1894, Sir Charuchander rose to an eminence that comes to the lot of very few in our country. A Judge of the High Court of Calcutta for fifteen years and officiating Chief Justice on four occasions and a member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Bengal even at the time of failing health, he had the unique reputation of commanding the respect of the Government and the people simultaneously. His qualities of head and heart—his fearlessness as an exponent of law and his amiability and benevolence as a man—had endeared him to the nation, and in his death Bengal mourns to-day a loss which she knows will not soon be fulfilled.

* * * * *

Coming to the narrower circle of the College, the most noteworthy things during the past few months have been the examination results. Though better than those of the past three years, taken as a whole, they still leave much to be desired. In the I. Sc. Examination, our College had the satisfaction of securing the first five and the seventh places, all these men being placed, moreover, in the First Grade scholarship list. In I. A., however, we could claim only two men out of the first ten, the topmost place secured being the third. In the B. A. Honours Examinations again we had only five first classes, one in English, one in Economics, two in History and one in Persian, our men standing first only in Economics and History. The B. Sc. Honours results were comparatively better. Out of the fifteen first classes in the whole University, nine were from our College,—three in Mathematics, one in Physics, two in Chemistry, one in Botany and two in Geology, and in all these subjects except Physics we had the satisfaction of seeing our men topping the lists. The results, though incomparably better than those of any other institution—as against our fourteen first classes the largest number claimed by any other college was three—are in no way flattering to us. Presidency College has seen days of glory compared with which our present distinction pales into insignificance. It should, therefore, be the duty of every Presidency College man to strive his utmost to revive that glorious past rather than be satisfied with the none too glittering present.

There has been a voice abroad for the recent few years that Presidency College is hopelessly fallen from its old standard of excellence. We do not choose to answer that charge as it has been answered time after time by the previous editors. But an unsavoury hint which appeared in one of the popular dailies of Calcutta about the

time of the publication of the B. A. Gazette this year requires attention. The paper noted that for the last few years the results of our College in the English Honours Examination have not been what they ought to be. The inference drawn from this was that the English staff of the College was a batch of do-nothing people pampered at an enormous cost. We are sorry for these men who judge from outside without any knowledge of the actual circumstances. The age of the old Titans, Tawney, Rowe, Webb, Mann, Percival and James is no doubt past. But the present teachers are by no means unworthy successors to them. The head of the department does for the students all that is possible for a man with the limitations of time and power, and the other members also co-operate with him in a manner which leaves nothing to be desired. If in spite of all this, the results are not satisfactory, it is the authorities who should be held responsible. So long as the present abnormal scale of fees is maintained, the College will not get more than a fraction of the best students of the University, and the results will fall far short of what they might have been. Our professors, after all, do not practise spiritual alchemy ; they cannot change mediocrities into geniuses.

* * * * *

Presidency College follows the practice of nominating office-bearers instead of getting them elected. The only events which are decided by ballot are the representation of the classes in the Sports Committee and the selection of the captains and secretaries of the different games. It is, therefore, quite natural in these times of democracy that we should see a bit of scheming and party-forming and canvassing on this occasion. As usual, this year also the College was a scene of wild enthusiasm ; the Library was for a few days almost converted into a debating room, though, of course, the orators were cautious to escape the vigilance of the authorities ; the owner of the College restaurant found it quite a difficult business to cope with the increasing demands of generous customers ; and, as one can well imagine, professors had to lecture to unusually thin classes. To our friends, who finally emerged successful from all this preparation and battle, we extend our congratulations, and we hope sincerely that the energy and attention which they have spent on electioneering they will now divert to their more proper duties in order that the College games may be successfully managed.

* * * * *

The College Union this year has entered on a new phase owing to its division into two sections, the one for socials and parties and the other for meetings. The Autumn Social, as usual, will be celebrated in October by the performance of a play, and the management has already

been entrusted to worthy secretaries. We hope our friends will all lend their support to make the function a successful one, as the money raised at the gate will go to the Students' Aid Fund, an institution which has enabled quite a number of poor and meritorious students to enter this College. The proposal to hold competitions in music and recitation, which the Secretary makes in his report, is also a welcome news to us and we are sure it will prove to be the same to all students of the College.

We are glad to learn, moreover, that the debating club, the want of which we have been feeling keenly all these years, is going to be revived. The usefulness of this institution, if properly managed, cannot be over-estimated. We hope that under the management of the new secretary, our debating society will dispel the present languor of the College and bring into its stagnant backwaters a brisk current of life and animation.

* * * * *

The football season is almost at an end, but we note with satisfaction that it has been quite as brisk as in other years. In the Elliot Shield, unfortunately, we could proceed no further than the third round. In the Inter-Collegiate League, however, we are still—at least up to the time of writing—going unbeaten, and this, we believe, is a better criterion of football, for the chance element here plays a less prominent part than in tournaments where the fate is decided in only one match. We are glad, moreover, to bring to the notice of our readers the fact that three of our players have been selected to represent the Calcutta University in the ensuing Inter-'Versity Tournament at Patna.

* * * * *

Passing now from the students to the staff, our hearts fill with exultation and pride as we extend our welcome back to the Collège to Dr. Mahendranath Sarkar, our revered professor of philosophy. His tour in Europe, his stay in Italy as Mussolini's guest, the receptions he had in Germany and elsewhere and the admiration which his learning and amiability won from the hearts of European savants—all should prove to the critics of our institution that the old College is not yet fallen from its pristine glory. We can still boast of men of international reputation among our staff. We expected to be able to present our readers with an account of the tour from Dr. Sarkar's own pen, but as he is now lying in bed due to an accident, we are afraid our friends will have to wait for the next issue. Our best wishes go to Dr. Sarkar who is now on the way to recovery.

In this connection we must not forget to congratulate ourselves on Prof. Rezwi's visit to Persia. Prof. Rezwi, we may note, has been invited by the Persian Government to attend the millenary of the great poet Firdawsi.

It is also a joyful news to us that Prof. Asokenath Bhattacharyya of the Sanskrit and Bengali Department has been awarded the Premchand Roychand Studentship in literary subjects for the year 1933. His thesis was entitled 'Brahman and the World.'

* * * * *

There has been quite a number of changes in the staff since the Magazine was published last time in April. The English Department has been replenished by the arrival of Prof. Bijay Ranjan Dasgupta from the Chittagong College. Prof. Somnath Maitra has gone on a long leave after a sad bereavement in his family, for which we extend to him our heartfelt condolence. His place has been taken by Prof. Taraknath Sen of the Dacca Intermediate College. Prof. Sen needs no introduction to the students, as his brilliant career and his services in the cause of the Magazine have already made him a well-known and admired figure. We are happy to welcome him back to the old surroundings, though in a new position.

It is now quite a long time since we have last seen the well-beloved face of Prof. S. C. Majumder in the College. It is needless to describe in full the void which his absence has caused in the life of the College, as it is one of those things that are better felt than told. We hope he will soon gain back his lost health and join the College with renewed enthusiasm and vigour.

Prof. Majumdar's place has been temporarily filled by Prof. Sacchidananda Sinha of the Sanskrit College, an able teacher and an amiable gentleman.

Among other changes we have to record the appointment of Mr. A. S. M. Ayyub in place of Dr. M. N. Sarkar, gone on leave, and of Babu Gaurinath Bhattacharyya, a distinguished ex-student, in place of Babu Sivaprasad Bhattacharyya, sent on deputation as Librarian of the Bengal Library. The latter has returned and Babu Gourinath Bhattacharyya is now serving in the vacancy of Dr. R. G. Basak, gone on leave. Dr. U. N. Ghosal of the History Department is also on leave and his place has been temporarily filled by Mr. Santosh Kumar Chakravarty, one of our recent ex-students. As Prof. Nareshchandra Ghosh, Senior Professor of Mathematics, has had his leave extended, the department has been strengthened by the services of Prof. Karunamay Khastgir from the Chittagong College. In the Chemistry

Department, Dr. P. Niyogi and Prof. A. Maitra are on leave, and Dr. Q. Khuda is now acting as the Senior Professor. We must not also forget to mention that Mr. Manindranath Mitra of the Physics Department has been transferred to Krishnagar after a long service in this College.

* * * * *

Passing now into a wider region, we note with delight the distinctions earned by our ex-students in the various walks of life. The year has been rather a lean one for us, so far as the Birthday Honours go. The most remarkable event in this line has been the conferring of Knighthood on Rai Bahadur Dr. U. N. Brahmachari, M.D., an ex-student and now a member of the Governing Body of the College.

The appointment of Mr. Justice M. N. Mukherji as the acting Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court is a welcome news to us. One of our most distinguished ex-students, he has all along taken the keenest interest in the affairs of our College. We further rejoice in the appointment of Khan Bahadur Maulavi Azizul Haque, M.L.C., as the Minister of Education. A graduate of this institution, he had already achieved considerable renown in the Legislative Council, in the Senate and elsewhere through his keen analytical faculty and his remarkable powers as a debater. His elevation, therefore, comes to us only as a fitting recognition of true worth and ability. We further extend our congratulations to two other ex-students, Mr. Roopendra Coomar Mitter, recently appointed a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, and Mr. Kshitishchandra Sen, I.C.S., the first Bengali to sit on the Bench of the High Court of Bombay.

Coming nearer to the College, we are glad to find Mr. Apurvakumar Chanda officiating as the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal. We feel proud to note that our well-beloved teacher Mr. Chanda, whom we shall always hold as one nearest to our hearts, is the first Indian to occupy the post. The appointment of Mr. Bottomley as the Secretary to the Education Department, Government of Bengal, is also a glad news to us.

Among others we congratulate Mr. S. C. Mitter on his being selected for the new post of the Deputy Director of Industries and Mr. S. C. Sen on his appointment as a special officer in the Commerce Department in the Government of India. Our congratulations go also to Mr. Hirendranath Mukherji, one of our most brilliant ex-students, on his joining the History Department of the University of Andhra.

Our greatest cause of rejoicing, however, which we have postponed so long for separate discussion, lies in the appointment of Mr.

Syamaprasad Mookerjee as the Vice-Chancellor of our University and also as President of the Post-Graduate Council. His brilliant academic career, his outstanding capacities as a debater and an efficient organiser and the wonderful skill with which he had directed the affairs of the University for the last few years from behind the Vice-Chancellor's chair are all too well-known to be recounted here. It was, therefore, with an exclamation of joy, though with no surprise, that we hailed his appointment. His arduous youth, his brilliant ideas, his grand resources and his wonderful power of work will, we believe, improve the standards of our University by infusing into its life the great inspiration which once came from his illustrious father.

* * * * *

We have told the tale of the College and the University. Extending now our gaze beyond this immediate horizon and looking across the vast expanse of the motherland, the first thing which attracts our notice is the wail of misery coming from the flood-areas in Sylhet, North-East Bengal and Bihar. India is a land of floods and the mighty rivers across its plains play their pranks heedless of the woes of men. The stories of suffering of which the newspapers have been full for the past few weeks are too awful to be forgotten and they need not be recounted here. We hope our country will realise the dire nature of the calamity and contribute its best to mitigate the sufferings of our unfortunate brethren.

* * * * *

The staple of the local newspapers a few months back was the Mayoral tangle—that shameful affair brought at last to an end by governmental interference. Now it is the dissension in the Congress camp. The Congress has set its heart on council-entry, though not unanimously. But even among those who support the policy, fresh seeds of dissension have been sown by the Communal Award. We are not politicians, and we do not profess to understand and appreciate fully the reasons which have kept Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Aney away from the main body of the Congress. We only ask in perplexity, “What good comes of it all—all these conferences and communiques and exchange of views?” Only one more division in the Congress, perhaps, and more heated discussions and extensive propaganda than we are having at present!

* * * * *

The football season this year has seen Muhammadan Sporting emerging as the League Champions, an event welcome to all Indians, irrespective of caste and community. The other notable incident in

football, viz. the deadlock over the Shield final, is, however, a source of uneasiness to all lovers of the game, and the sooner the present atmosphere is cleared up, the better it is for Calcutta.

* * * * *

We are glad to welcome back the team which has returned from its series of uninterrupted successes in South Africa. We rejoice specially to think that one of our own men, Mr. Nasim, was a regular player on the Indian side.

* * * * *

Passing from India to the wide world outside, one is at once puzzled by the variety of news pouring daily from the Press in Europe and America. The floods and heat-waves in different quarters of the globe, the Davis Cup Tournament and the Test Matches, the monetary changes in America and the widespread strikes have all occupied headlines in the dailies, have furnished materials for discussion, have threatened to be of permanent importance and then given place to others. Of these, however, the most interesting have been the Test Matches. After a few weeks of tense excitement, grand speculations and vague rumours, Australia has inflicted a severe defeat on England in the deciding Test. The Ashes—though only mythical name, for the real embers of the old stumps still lie in the clubroom of the M. C. C.—have been carried off across the seas, to the delight of some and chagrin of others. Britain has seen sparkling cricket—in Verity's glorious average, in Bradman's wizard strokes and in the record-breaking partnership of the two giant Australians,—but in spite of all, she is not satisfied. And indeed, how can she be, when the side which represents her does not include Larwood and Voce? It is really high time that we should find a settlement arrived at as regards the leg-theory and the old atmosphere of sportsmanship restored to Cricket.

* * * * *

Things have been moving fast during the past few months in the realm of politics, especially in Central Europe. There was that grand meeting between Mussolini and Hitler in the picturesque city of Venice, and men hoped for a time that peace would be established as the order of the day. But soon came the massacre of June 30 with its shocking brutality, the death of President Hindenburg, the cowardly murder of Dr. Dollfuss and lastly, Hitler's assumption of the powers of the President and the Chancellor. However loud may be the Nazi leaders' professions of peace and neutrality at this date, the obstinate questionings in the mind of the world can never be put to rest. The way in which he has seized the highest power in

the state passes even the extremest limits of autocracy ; and the method in which he has butchered General Schleischer with his wife, Von Strasse, Von Bosse and Ernest are reminiscent rather of the crude devices of the middle ages than of the civilised ways of the twentieth century.

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We cannot better close our long-drawn chronicle than in paying our tribute of respect to the memory of the great Otto Von Hindenburg. Europe has seen great generals during the past few centuries, Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein, Napoleon and Wellington. Of great rulers and organisers, too, she has seen not a few,—Richelieu, Cavour and Bismarck among others. But few indeed are the cases when history has seen one man combining these grand powers to such a remarkable degree. At the end of the war, people revered Hindenburg as the victor of Tannenburg and the Masurian Lakes, and as the grand commander who could lead the defeated hosts back into Germany in peace and orderliness. His work was ostensibly finished and he retired to his peaceful home at Neudeck. But when the call came again in 1925, the old man of seventy-seven rallied once more to his task, and it was only his wonderful power of control that saved Germany from the yawning mouth of ruin. The country which Hindenburg loved and fought for from the age of seventeen to eighty-seven is fast changing and who knows where it will stand a few decades hence. Germany is a country where memories receive but scanty respect, as Goethe's centenary showed well, and we shall not be surprised if Hindenburg is some day dethroned from his high pedestal. The world will, however, always remember him as one of the greatest men of the twentieth century,—great as a fighter, great as a leader, and great as the builder of a ruined nation.

Urvasi*

RAI BAHADUR LALITMOHAN CHATTERJI, M.A.

(*In the Presidency College, 1891-92.*)

Nor mother thou, nor daughter, nor art new-wed bride,
O Urvasi, O Nandan's pride!
When tired eve came down in golden garments' fold
Not thou to light the cottage lamp wert ever told ;
Nor—while breast heav'd and lower'd eyes a smile suppress'd—
Were to a bridal bed thy timid steps address'd
At midnight's hush'd rest.
Nay, like the dawn art thou reveal'd
Unshrinking and unveil'd!

O uncaused loveliness, O sweet rootless flower,
When began thy perfect power?
On what primeval morn didst rise from churn'd main—
Thy right hand nectar held, thy left hand deadly bane?
The charm'd sea before thee softly broke and fell:
His million-hooded wrath thy loveliness did quell
And bow'd to its spell!
Desired of Heaven, flawless fair—
All in thy beauty bare!

Wert thou never bud, a sweet maiden fair and free,
O ever-youthful Urvasi?
Sole darling of thy dark-roof'd house, didst thou never play
With pearls for toys and with jewels in bright array?
In what gem-lit chamber, by whose mothering side
Didst sleep on coral bed, lullabied by the tide,
Thy face smile-glorified?
Nay, to the world thou camest full-grown
In youth and beauty's crown.

*From the original version of Rabindranath Tagore's famous poem.

From age to age the world's beloved thou hast been
 O Urvasi, O beauty's queen!
 For thee the holy saints the fruits of penance yield ;
 And at thy glance's urge the worlds with youth are thrill'd ;
 Thy maddening fragrance far the blinded winds do spread ;
 Like, bees by honey drawn, poets to thee are led
 In singing entranced ;
 While, with anklets' jingle, skirts' sway,—
 Flashing dost turn away !

Before th' assembled gods dancest in ecstasy
 O swaying wave, O Urvasi!
 In rhythmic swell the deep-sea waters follow thee ;
 Earth's golden scarf of corn-crests waving flutters free ;
 The falling stars are jewels from thy necklace shed:
 In self-forgetful dream the hearts of men are led—
 The dancing blood is sped ;
 Lo, in the offing bursts thy zone—
 Ah, wild in abandon!

Like Dawn on Sunrise Mount all fresh and fair to see,
 O world-enchanting Urvasi,
 The tears of men do wash thy body's comeliness ;
 Their red heart-blood doth dye thy twin feet's loveliness ;
 Behold those shining limbs thy loosen'd tresses greet ;
 The world's impassion'd soul blossoms to hold thy feet—
 So light, so flower-sweet!
 In ceaseless revels dost thou move
 O nymph, O world's dream-love!

Hark, on every side they weep, they weep for thee,
 O cruel heedless Urvasi!
 Will that primeval age visit the world again?
 With dripping hair wilt thou arise from out the main—
 That primal form that rose the primal dawn to greet
 To bear the eyes of men alas! too tender-sweet
 Weeping them to meet—
 While Ocean heaves in music deep
 And waves do toss and sweep?

No more! O never more! Thy orb we shall not see
O sunken star, O Urvasi!
So still on earth, e'en on the glad spring breezes borne,
Whose sigh comes floating, as if lonely Love did mourn?
When the moon's bright laughter fills north, south, east and west
A strain of memory comes with a strange unrest,
A strain that tears doth wrest.
And still the heart hopes on and sighs
For thee that knowest no ties!

Fifty-Six Years Ago

SIR DEVAPRASAD SARVADHIKARI, Kt., M.A., LL.D.

(*In, the Presidency College, 1878-83.*)

FOUR years more will witness the completion of the sixth decade of my admission to the Presidency College. Four years more will see the Jubilee of my joining the vocation—long time both these. Five or six decades are as much as the allotted span of human life in these changed—call them degenerate if you like—days. There is reason, therefore, for personal gratification and gratitude for such long life.

Some experiences and reminiscences of my college days have been recorded in a previous number of the Presidency College Magazine which the magazine authorities have been unable to trace. Some more were recorded in a well-conducted periodical called the Bengal Educational Journal under the capable editorship of Mr. Griffith, Dr. West and Mr. Gilchrist. Further reminiscences have appeared in the Dacca Review. Both these journals are now defunct and copies cannot be procured. I summed up some of the reminiscences in my Bengali book “স্মৃতিরেখা” or the line of memory—which has found considerable favour. When the present management of the Presidency College Magazine asked me to say what I remember of my college days, I had naturally to move with caution, for plagiarism, even from one's own self is to be deprecated and avoided.

In the last number of the Magazine was published a group photograph of a Presidency College trio of 1878—1883—myself, Rai Bahadur Krishnakali Mukherji and Rai Bahadur Ramsaran Bhattacharyya, both distinguished members of the Provincial Civil Service. They are about the only members of the College of my class who could be traced when the idea of the group photo was mooted. Some members of the classes above and below me are still luckily with us. Among them the most notable are Principal Herambachandra Maitra of the City College, Mr. Narendra Lal Dey, the erudite mathematical, Greek and Latin scholar, long a professor, and a leader of the Police Court Bar, Prof. Jyotiprosad Sarvadhikary, Rai Bahadur Jogendra Chandra Ghosh and Mr. Amulya Chandra Mitter of the Calcutta Small Cause Court.

Among those that have passed away some of the most notable were Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup, Mr. Narendranath Sen, his Dewan, Mr. Bhupendranath Basu, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, Member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India and Member of the Executive Government of Bengal, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, Judge of the High Court and Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri, Judge of the High Court also, Mr. Kalisankar Sukul of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, Mr. Amulyacharan Mitter of the Provincial Judicial Service, Mr. Ramnath Bhattacharyya and Mr. Bhupati Chakravarty—both of the Provincial Executive Service, Mr. Jnansankar Sen and Mr. Abinashchandra Mukherji of the same service, Babu Jadavchandra Dutt and Mr. J. C. Dutt, Solicitors, Mr. Ghanaballav Set, author, Mr. Lakshmanchandra Chatterji, Pleader, Babu Ramchandra Majumdar, late Officiating Judge, High Court, Mr. Hemchandra Mallick of the Wellington Square Mallick family, Mr. Ramendrakrishna Dev of the Sovabazar Raj family, and Mr. Hemchandra Mitra, Vakil.

Sir Prafullachandra Roy, in whose favour I stood out at the Gilchrist Scholarship Examination at his request, had been with me at the Hare School, but joined the Albert College as he had joined the Brahma Samaj and did not come to the Presidency College. The students of the College who joined soon after and distinguished themselves were Mr. Hirendra Nath Dutt, Mr. Upendralal Majumdar, Mr. Manmathanath Bhattacharyya, Mr. Nriyagopal Mitter, Mr. Jyotishchandra Mitter, all of the Financial Service, Sir Brojendralal Mitter, Member of the Government of India and the Executive Council of the Governor of Bengal, Sir Charuchunder Ghosh, late officiating Chief Justice, Sir Nripendranath Sarkar, Law Member of the Government of India, Babu Dwarkanath Chakravarty, late officiating Judge of the High Court and others. A great galaxy of talents these, that would do honour to any institution in any country. I am afraid my list is in many ways incomplete and inaccurate. It would be a great help and encouragement to Presidency College men, old and new, if some were to supplement this list by personal inquiries or reference to the University Calenders and other authoritative publications. The College Register, which was started some time ago, has not been brought up-to-date which is a great desideration. The late Mr. Krishnachandra Roy, one of the best of men and ablest of teachers that I had ever known and at whose feet I have sat with much profit and great pleasure, had brought out a list of graduates with addresses and particulars of occupations. I have lost sight of this useful publication and would suggest someone taking up a

venture like this, which, apart from everything else, would be some solution to the vexed question of graduate unemployment. The Founders' Day of the College to which I look forward every year is a great institution which may be utilised for the preparation of the much-needed list of our men in the different walks of life. On arrival, guests are supposed to sign a register which is of a perfunctory order and which in future might be much more orderly and useful.

One reason and a great reason of my anxiety to trace and place our men is that my long-standing scheme for presentation of a College hall by old students is nowhere near crystallising. Out of the requisite sum of a lakh of rupees for this very necessary College appendage, only three thousand are promised—one thousand by the late Rai Bahadur Debendrachandra Ghosh, an additional thousand by his son, the recently departed Sir C. C. Ghosh and one thousand by myself. I have no doubt if the balance of Rs. 97,000 had been found, Sir Charuchunder would have redeemed his own and his father's promise. Presidency College men, many of whom are well-placed in life, can hardly stand behind in an affair like this.

Talking of high placed Presidency College men, one's attention is naturally turned to the Rt. Hon'ble Lord Sinha of Raipur, my fellow-student for four years, who rose to be Under-Secretary of State for India and a Provincial Governor. Then we have a number of High Court Judges, Sir Rameshchandra Mitter, Sir Gurudas Banerji, Mr. Saradacharan Mitter, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Sir Ashutosh Chaudhuri, Mr. Digambar Chatterji, Mr. Ramchandra Majumdar, Mr. Dwarkanath Mitter, Mr. Dwarkanath Chakravarty, Sir Naliniranjan Chatterji, Sir C. C. Ghosh, Messrs. M. N. Mukherji, B. B. Ghosh, S. N. Guha, Nasim Ali, Khondkar and R. C. Mitter among others. Among members of the India Government and Executive Councillors and Ministers of the Government of Bengal may be mentioned Sir Atul Chatterji, Sir Abdur Rahim, Mr. Bhupendranath Bose, Sir P. C. Mitter, Sir B. N. Mitter, Sir B. L. Mitter, Sir B. B. Ghosh, Lt. Col. Sir B. P. Sinha Roy and Khan Bahadur Moulvi Azizul Haque.

Among Indian Vice-Chancellors of the Indian Universities rank the names of Sir Pramadacharan Banerji, Sir Pratul Chandra Chatterjee, Sir Bipinkrishna Bose, Sir Gurudas Banerji, Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, Mr. B. N. Basu, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, and last, but not the least, Mr. S. P. Mookerjee. Among Privy Council Judges we may claim, as connected with the Presidency College, the names of Sir Amir Ali and Sir B. C. Mitter.

Among those who have taken high positions as leaders of men will be recalled the names of Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. J. M. Sengupta, Babu Rajendraprasad, Mr. Saratchandra Bose and Mr. Subhaschandra Bose.

Among authors and journalists may be mentioned the names of the late Mr. Bankimchandra Chatterji, Mr. Hemchandra Banerji, Mr. Rameschandra Dutt, Mr. D. L. Roy, and among the living those of Mr. Hemendraprasad Ghosh of the "Basumati" and Mr. Hirendra Nath Dutt, the great leader in Theosophy.

Among men of Science connected with the college rank the names of Sir J. C. Bose, Sir P. C. Roy, Dr. Meghnad Saha and Mr. Satyendranath Bose.

Among lawyers we can claim the towering names of Sir Rashbehari Ghosh, Sir Taraknath Palit, Sir B. C. Mitter, Sir N. N. Sarkar, Mr. A. K. Roy, Mr. B. C. Ghosh—only a few out of many.

Let me now attempt another list of no less importance and interest,—that of our principals and professors who have shed lustre on the College. I recall the great figures of Mr. Maheshchandra Banerji, Babu Pearycharan Sarkar, Babu Prasannakumar Sarvadhikary, Babu Rajkrishna Mukherji, Principal Sutcliffe, Mr. Clarke, Mr. John Elliott, Sir Alexander Pedlar, Mr. Gough, Mr. Parry, Mr. Mann, Mr. Paulson, Mr. McCann, Mr. Percival, Mr. Hand, Sir J. C. Bose, Sir P. C. Roy, Dr. P. K. Roy, Messrs. Tawney, Booth, Rowe, Webb, and Little, Babu Rajkrishna Banerji, Nilmani Mukherji and Harishchandra Tarkaratna of the Sanskrit Department, not to mention some of the later teachers and existing members of the staff.

I advisedly do not refer to the sporting side of our activities which were not inconsiderable, because they have been treated in my previous article and also in my article in the 'Calcutta Review' on "Cricket, the King of Sports." I received inspiration for this article from Major Nayudu—the Test Match Captain, his brother and his colleague, Mr. C. S. Nayudu, who honoured me by being my guests for fifteen days when they visited Calcutta last cold weather. The Presidency College was shining in football, hockey and other sports, but my regret is that the College has never taken seriously to cricket. One wonders, though hardly hopes, if this serious error will be soon corrected.

(To be continued).

The Place of Geology in Science*

PROF. W. D. WEST, M.A. (Cantab.)

IN deciding upon the subject for a Presidential address on an occasion such as this, I have thought it best to avoid a subject which might be of interest to the expert geologist only, and to choose instead a subject of more general appeal. I have accordingly put together a few disconnected thoughts on the place of geology in science and in life generally, with special reference to its cultural value.

When, recently, I asked a number of students why they had decided to take geology in their B. Sc. course, those that could recollect their reasons mostly thought that they had selected geology because it seemed to be the easiest subject! Of others, who had in the end decided not to take up geology, some had apparently gone as far as to peep in at the geology department before deciding. But the sight of long rows of glass-cases, containing hundreds of specimens of rocks and fossils, had effectively disillusioned them, and they had fled away from the place never to return. To my mind the only conclusion to draw from this is that there is something fundamentally wrong with the teaching of geology, and perhaps also with the attitude which geologists themselves have towards their science, that it can give rise to the view so commonly held that geology is a minor science dealing mainly with the musty contents of museum cases. A similar impression to that received by the students was evidently in the mind of one of our Patrons when, at a former annual meeting, he congratulated our Institute on being a live society in spite of its dealing with lifeless stones. It is difficult to understand how this attitude of others towards our science has arisen. It is probable that geologists themselves are largely to blame for it. Too frequently they become immersed in the details of their own specialised line of work, with the result that others outside get the impression that geologists are only concerned with rocks and fossils as museum specimens, and altogether miss the grander implications of our science. So far, however, from this being the truth, it is my purpose this afternoon to try and show you that geology is not only a premier science, but that its study is

*Presidential Address delivered at the 29th Annual General Meeting of the Geological Institute held on Saturday, the 25th August, 1934.

to be regarded as on a level with the study of the humanities, and having a comparable cultural value.

Geology has been described as the cement-stone of the sciences. But in so far as this implies that geology merely connects up one science with another it is a gross libel. Nevertheless, the phrase is of value in drawing attention to the all-embracing nature of geology. It is not, however, in this passive role that I look upon geology, but rather as the science which makes use of the conclusions of all other sciences to further its own designs, and with which to build up a complete understanding of life and matter. It is hardly necessary for me to point out the extent to which it utilises the resources and conclusions of such sciences as zoology, botany, chemistry and physics, to attain this end. In that it has the whole earth for its study, not only as it is to-day, but as it has been in the past, and all that has dwelt upon the earth, geology may be said to be the culmination to which all other sciences contribute their quota. In the temple of science in which we worship, geology is clearly represented by the central dome, the surrounding pillars and other structures being its associated sciences from which it derives support. That this is a true estimate and no exaggeration becomes clear when we recall to mind the dominant part which geology played in the great scientific revival of the 19th century, and in particular the part it played in those scientific controversies which shook the whole world of thought, both in science and religion, during that period. To show that this was so, and to illustrate the important part which geology plays in scientific theory, I will select just two examples.

You may remember that Charles Darwin, when he went on his voyage round the world in the 'Beagle,' took with him a copy of the then recently published first volume of 'The Principles of Geology,' written by Charles Lyell, the father of modern geology. In his autobiography Darwin has recorded the effect produced on his mind by the reading of this first volume; and Judd, who knew Darwin well, has written, "Were I to assert that if 'The Principles of Geology' had not been written we should never have had the 'Origin of Species,' I think I should not be going too far: at all events, I can safely assert, from several conversations I had with Darwin, that he would have most unhesitatingly agreed in that opinion." And that other protagonist of the origin of species by natural selection, Alfred Russel Wallace, wrote in his autobiography that the fundamental idea of the origin of species was formulated by him from a consideration of the facts of geology as stated in Lyell's 'Principles of Geology.' And so

we see that both Darwin and Russel were directly indebted to geology for their inspiration. And although at the present day few naturalists would regard natural selection to be the whole cause of evolution, yet the whole world, as some one has recently remarked, has not been able to find a better explanation. But quite apart from the indebtedness which the theory of natural selection has to geological science, the whole idea of evolution itself is entirely dependent for its acceptance on the evidence of geology, which is able to show many of the earlier forms of life which preceded those now living, by producing their fossilised remains and showing by actual demonstration how present-day species have originated by the gradual modification of earlier forms. If one excludes the evidence that geology provides, what else remains? The evidence of comparative anatomy, of embryology, and perhaps of geographical distribution, evidence which by itself any lawyer would immediately tear to bits in a court of law as being entirely adventitious. But geology, by producing the goods, and actually exhibiting the earlier forms of life, provides evidence which is very difficult to dispute, evidence which is in fact the sole cause of the general acceptance of the principle of organic evolution throughout the world to-day.

I will refer to just one other scientific controversy of the last century, in which geology played an important part, namely the problem of the age of the earth. The means of calculation which the geologist has at his hand are various. And though none of them is by itself very accurate, taken together they enable him to arrive at broad conclusions. The geologists of fifty years ago were not furnished with so much evidence as we have to-day. Nevertheless, it enabled them to say with some confidence that the time that had elapsed since life first appeared upon the earth (at which time, of course, the earth's crust must already have solidified) could not be less than 250,000,000 years. And then came Lord Kelvin, who, on the assumption that the earth had steadily been cooling from a molten state, made calculations to show that the age of the earth since it first solidified could not be more than 40,000,000 years. And since his calculations appeared to be sound, and were formulated by a mathematical physicist of Lord Kelvin's eminence, geologists were compelled to accept his conclusion, however unwillingly. Then came the remarkable discovery of radium by Madame Curie, with the subsequent observation by Lord Rayleigh of the abundance of radium in the rocks. With this extra supply of heat available, the assumption made by Kelvin that the earth had been a steadily cooling body was

shown to be unsound, with the result that his estimate of 40,000,000 years became lengthened out to 1,710,000,000 years, and the geologist once more had almost unlimited time at his disposal. Kelvin's argument had appeared flawless ; but unfortunately he had not taken all the factors into account. This has been a lesson to geologists not to accept the so-called proofs of the mathematician when they are directly opposed to their own observations. One is reminded of the analogy between the mathematician and a flour mill. The quality of the flour which a mill produces is directly dependent upon the quality of the corn which is fed into the mill. Likewise the conclusions which the mathematicians, out of their wisdom, arrive at are entirely dependent upon the premises with which they start. If these are inadequate, then the soundness of their conclusions must be correspondingly lessened.

I have selected two problems which had a surpassing interest for the thinking world of the last century. But a moment's consideration will show that geology must have a wide bearing on many scientific and philosophical problems, if only indirectly. Its investigations extend in place from the centre of the earth to the summits of the highest mountains, from the depths of the ocean to the uttermost parts of the earth ; while in time it is limited only by the imagination. It is clearly a very great factor in the complete appreciation of such subjects as zoology, botany, anthropology and geography, while to the cultured man of no particular scientific attainment the view which it provides of man's place in nature must have a sobering effect upon his views on life in general. It is this comprehensiveness of geology which marks it apart from all other sciences, and which gives to the man who studies it an outlook on life in general which he could hardly come by in any other way. And my suggestion that the study of geology should be regarded as on a level with the study of the humanities will thus be seen to be not the exaggerated view of a biassed partisan, but the logical outcome of the realisation of what is included within the science of geology.

But this very universal nature of the science has its own inherent weakness. Modern geology has become so comprehensive, and its various aspects have become so specialised, that it has been said that there are no longer any geologists, but only specialists in various branches ; while specialists have been defined as those who know more and more about less and less. This development of geology was perhaps inevitable, if none the less unfortunate, and there is clearly room for a modern Lyell, a man with vision and courage, who will

be able to synthesise the diverging branches of geology into a comprehensive and intelligible whole once more. It is only when our science is viewed as a whole that its grander aspects can be seen. The great paroxysms to which the earth has been subjected from time to time, and which have manifested themselves as periods of great mountain formation of world-wide aspect, which the Americans have so graphically termed the 'Revolutions,' followed by periods of quiet and rest, also of world-wide extent; and the remarkable manner in which periods of denudation of the land, which have tended to reduce the surface of the earth to one uniform level, have apparently never been able to complete their work, but have always been interrupted by another great paroxysm of mountain formation, show that the earth too is subject to the same rhythmic forces which pervade all life. But such views of our earth as this are only to be obtained by the geologist who is prepared to keep his vision of geology as a whole, clear and undimmed, and are largely obscured from the museum specialist working along some narrowly confined line of research. And this brings me on to my last point, which is that while research work of this nature undoubtedly has its own attractions, it is the general field geologist, continuously in contact with the rocks as they occur in nature, who alone is able to get a completely satisfying view of his science. And in addition to his own experiences, he is in a position to utilise the work of the specialists, and to obtain an understanding of geology as a whole which is denied to them. I have always thought that one of the greatest charms of geology is that it is essentially an outdoor study, a science of the open fields, of the villages, and of the mountains. No one who has experienced the exhilaration of an early winter morning in the highlands of Central India, or has seen the rising of the sun over the paddy fields of Bengal, or has let his eyes rest on the lovely satisfying green of a fertile Himalayan valley, can ever wish to return permanently to the laboratory or the drawing table. It is at such moments that one thanks God that one is not as other scientists, spending their lives bending over unhealthy retorts, or probing into the lifeless carcasses of pickled specimens. Fortunately, it is by a combination of field work and laboratory work that the study of geology is most fully pursued; and the time spent in the laboratory is happy in the very contrast which it offers to the ensuing freedom of the open air.

Let me now say a few words to those of you who are beginning, or have only recently begun, your geological studies. I would ask you to try and approach our science with a fresh vision, looking not so

much to its possible immediate utilitarian value, as to the likelihood of its opening up vistas of new and unexpected interest. Unfortunately, at the very start you are handicapped by having to learn your science in a place wholly unsuited to the study of geology, since Calcutta is surrounded on all sides by miles of uninteresting alluvium ; and it is inevitable that the museum specimen must loom large in your view for some time to come. But if you are in any way infected with an enthusiasm for our science, realising to the full the way in which an understanding of geology may lead you to a fuller appreciation of life in general, then you will certainly manage to find some way or other of getting away into the country and studying the rocks as they occur in nature, and experiencing to the full the joys of a geologist's life. Later on, should you be so fortunate as to be able to devote some of your time to original work and to unravelling the mysteries of Indian geology, never allow yourselves to forget that, whatever success you may attain in your work, you are all along immeasurably indebted to those pioneers in Indian geology who laid the foundations of our science in India, chief among whom must be numbered H. B. Medlicott, W. T. Blandford, and, in more recent years, C. S. Middlemiss.

The majority of you here this afternoon belong to a race of high culture and fertile imagination. But this latter quality, while providing you with the vision that surmounts all obstacles, may also lead you astray along devious paths of speculation unless it is controlled by a strict adherence to facts of observation. Geology is not an exact science in the way that Chemistry and Physics are, and there is ample opportunity for uncontrolled speculation, which may have a certain superficial glamour, but which lacks the satisfying sense that work based on careful observation and a full regard for the known laws of nature will always give. The student of geology, of whatever age and experience, who is endeavouring to carry on the work of his predecessors, and to seek out the truth, may well take as his motto the exclamation of the Hebrew psalmist, "Thy law is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

A Brief For Ophelia

MANORANJAN CHATTERJI, B.A.

(*In the Presidency College, 1917-21.*)

WHILE reading a novel or a play and perhaps marvelling at the ingenuity of its construction and the mastery of its diction, we are often, however, left with a vague sense of irritation and disappointment, because a character or an actor behaves or talks in a particular way instead of as we would like him or her to do. This is also evident amongst the audience of a play. It is not a judgment on the author or the dramatist. It is perhaps the result of there being something of a sense of justice and goodness inherent in every man.

While Hamlet procrastinates and with excessive introspection and over-analysis puts off the task to which the spirit of his murdered father adjures him, we are apt to cry out, "Oh! Why can't he kill Claudius and be done with it?" "Why can't Macbeth be satisfied with what he has got? Why must Lady Macbeth be so unselfish and commit the moral self-violence which wrecks her so completely?" "Why should'nt Henry the Fifth be a little kinder to Falstaff even if he has a kingdom to rule?" The readers of a book can but impatiently ask these questions of themselves. But an exasperated member of the audience of a play has been known to hurl a shoe at a particularly revolting villain on the stage and bouquets of flowers have often descended, not on the most gifted actor, but on one that depicts the sweetest nature.

All this, of course, is futile, Their only utility lies in their being an unconscious compliment to, and the surest indication of, the genius of the author. Hamlet was meant to be a tragedy of thought, Macbeth of ambition, and the above questions go to prove how well Shakespeare succeeded in his task. A painter who paints some cabbages should be more pleased when a bull attempts to eat the canvas than when it is hung in the Royal Academy. The ethics of poetic justice may be sound ethics, but in reality "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

But nowhere, in the whole range at least of Shakespearean literature, are we more revolted than at the treatment and sad fate of

Ophelia. Critics also, blinded by their love of Hamlet, have been hard on her and have tried to justify the brutal, almost snarling rudeness of Hamlet in the great scene (where they are alone together) which drives the poor girl out of her senses and ultimately to her death. "Hamlet is genius in love—genius with its great demands and its highly unconventional conduct," says Brandes. "Here," says Coleridge, "it is evident that the penetrating Hamlet perceives from the strange and forced manner of Ophelia that the sweet girl was not acting a part of her own, but was a decoy; and his after speeches are not so much directed to her as to the listeners and spies. Such a discovery, in a mood so anxious and irritable, accounts for a certain harshness in him." Again, to quote Brandes, "If he shows himself harsh, almost cruel to her, it is because she was weak and tried to deceive him. . . . Perhaps the inner meaning of his reproaches to Ophelia is 'you are like my mother! you too could have acted as she did!'"

But in spite of all these niceties of criticism one cannot but mourn over the sad fate of the poor girl. What had she done to deserve such unkindness and come to such a sad end? She was silly, perhaps, and untutored in the cruel, enigmatical ways of the world, and she may have failed to understand the soured idealist who once whispered "music vows" to her. She may also have yielded in her submissiveness to the cunning craftiness of her father to such an extent as to play a decoy. But must she for that reason be made the plaything of a remorseless and relentless destiny? Polonius treats her as a fool, Hamlet with a barbarity and harshness hardly in keeping with his otherwise delicate and sensitive nature. She is made the epitome, as it were, of the frailty of her sex and the butt of Hamlets' weary, distrustful melancholy, until her mind is completely unhinged. And if sorrow's chiefest crown of sorrow is remembering happier things, the memory of the once devoted and charming prince must have made the poor girl's cross doubly heavy to bear. If only Hamlet had spoken one gentle word when alone with her—and he had really no reason to be so harsh—one feels that at least one needless waste of life would have been prevented. One can very well picture the wounded surprise and gasping wonder of the trusting, innocent girl at the spectacle of her loving prince, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form" standing there before her and showering maledictions and harshness like a common boor, and one is not surprised at the glimpses of heartache and poignant sorrow that one gets through her subsequent incoherent babblings. The dramatists' art must be very

exacting to have to pile on an innocent girl's head the trials and sorrows which Ophelia is made to suffer.

A scene like the following, one feels sure, might have leavened the stark and grim tragedy with a pleasanter tone and redeemed, to a certain extent, Ophelia's hard lot which, she so little deserves. Interpolations have often murdered Shakespeare—should not one save Ophelia's life? But alas! it takes a Shakespeare to alter what Shakespeare has written!

* * * * *

A Forgotten Sheaf from "Hamlet."

ACT III. SCENE 2. Elsinore—The Castle Grounds. Enter Ophelia.

Ophelia. A nunnery—aye—a nunnery, stern and grim
Whose sepulchral forbidden walls conceal
Ruthless recompense for future woes
And enforced expiation of uncommitted wrongs.
To love were no crime, my Lord ; and to love
The very star that sets the currents in
The heaving maiden breast would be a crime
In its neglect. Should my best virtue prove
My poorest claim? When disaffection
Robbed not the loving pleasance from your eyes
Methought I dwelt in your tenantless heart
The never-to-be-dethroned queen:—
Now some cause, obscure and unexpressed
Must banish me to pitiless exile
'Midst lonely maidens soured with the ills of life.

ENTER HAMLET.

But soft! here comes the star and disaster
Of my life. My Lord!

Hamlet. Ophelia! the sun denies not
The largesse of luxuriance—giving warmth
To the rankest weed or stubble in the woods.
Wherefore should not the rays of yonder moon
Rain on this form that loudly doth yearn
For such ravishment?

Ophelia. What moon, my Lord?
The night is yet too young to wear a silvery crown.

- Hamlet. Your eyes, sweet maid! your eyes, Ophelia,
That erstwhile used to hint of one empire
That waited not the caprice and the wile
Of lust-led kinsmen to allow to hold.
Robbed of my rightful crown and sometime mother
By tortuous ways to whose discovery
Quick and dead alike induce me—yet would I
Deem the world not wholly ungracious
If through the gathering gloom unclouded smiled
Your love upon me.
- Ophelia. (Aside.) Do not jump my heart
At this re-echo of forgotten notes
In the music of thy life. This raving may yet prove
The empty shell of dreams—the pleasant breath
Rising from unheeding depths—the graceful custom
Of a noble mind.
My Lord! for pity
Forbear to sneer at one who ill deserves
Such shuffling in your hands. Heart-aches enow
I have without the taunt of unintended love.
- Hamlet. If you discern th' whisper of a heart
Torn by a thousand fears and doubts in which
The foremost duty sits like a load, pause
Ere you value me at my spoken word.
I speak not with a natural tongue, Ophelia,
Nor look through natural eyes. If perchance
I seem cruel and harsh to you, believe not
What I seem. In all this flat and dishonest world
My love for you sweet maid! is th' eternal
Changeless theme. Were that to die
Then were life bereft of the only ray
That still in the darkness shines.
- Ophelia. My lord!
Forgive the foolish thought that awhile ago
Did to your bounteous nature attribute
A falling off of old affections. What cheer
Remains for me in life were it lost—
Your love—the only elixir that can cure
The all-besetting ills of a woeful age.

Fain would I forego my kith, my kin
And all the wiles that crafty wisdom prompts
Were I assured of your sheltering love.
It was my father, sweet Lord, who—
But soft, here he comes.

ENTER POLONIUS.

Polonius. (Aside.) Ah! still with my daughter. This is strange
Persistence!

My Lord! The king your audience seeks
In his private chamber, and to that end
Has sent me seek you and convey to him.

Hamlet. Good sir! If his title deeds are clear,
the conveyance should not be a heavy task
—and yet I turn the scale at fifteen stones.

Polonius. What mean you my Lord!

Hamlet. That if every knave turned ambassador,
Denmark would be full of them. But come, I
am all ready.

(To Ophelia): Get thee to a nunnery! Go!
And stay there till all marriages are annulled.

(Exit.)

(Exit Ophelia concealing a smile.)

Polonius. Alas! quite distrait!

(Exit.)

Three Testimonial Scholarships of Hindu College

G. N. DHAR, B.A.—*Librarian.*

ON page twelve of the Presidency College Register, mention has been made of the scholarships attached to the Hindu College. Three of these were "testimonial" scholarships,—the capital having been raised by public subscription, and the scholarships having been provided out of the proceeds thereof, in testimony of the high esteem entertained by the public for the gentlemen whose names they bear.

The first was the Bird Scholarship. A meeting, it appears, was held at the Town Hall on the 13th September, 1844,—soon after Mr. William Wilberforce Bird had laid down his office. It was resolved "that a subscription be entered into for the purpose of endowing one or more scholarships in the name of Bird, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of the sense entertained by this meeting and the inhabitants of Calcutta of the great exertions of William Wilberforce Bird in the cause of Education." A Committee composed of the following gentlemen was appointed to carry out the Resolution: James Pattle, President; R. H. Rattray, D. M. Gordon, J. E. Lyall, Col. W. N. Forbes, Dwarkanath Tagore, Rustomjee Cowasjee, John Allen, Captain T. E. Rogers, Henry Torrens and Col. R. Powney.

The Committee met on the 16th September. Captain T. E. Rogers accepted the office of Secretary. It was resolved that a subscription list be circulated in furtherance of the resolution of the main meeting "in order that the Civil, Military and generally the inhabitants at this presidency, and of the Mofussil, be thus afforded opportunity of giving their support." It was further resolved "that subscribers be requested to forward their contributions to the Union Bank, or to the Secretary, or to any member of the Committee, and that the amount collected, be deposited in the Union Bank." The subscription came up to a total of Rs. 6,000.

The second testimonial scholarship bore the name of Sir Edward Ryan. The subscribers to the Ryan Testimonial Fund raised a very large sum for a portrait. It was painted by Sir Martin Archer Shee,

President of the Royal Academy and Author of "Rhymes on Art" and "Elements of Art." It may be interesting to note in passing that it was to this eminent painter that Lord Byron paid a tribute in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* in the following lines:

And here let Shee and Genius find a place,
 Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace ;
 To guide whose hand the Sister Arts combine,
 And trace the Poet's or the Painter's line ;
 Whose magic touch can bid the canvas glow,
 Or pour the easy rhyme's harmonious flow,
 While honours doubly merited, attend
 The Poet's rival, but the Painter's friend.

The portrait did indeed cost a considerable sum ; still there was a surplus left of the collection, amounting to Rs. 4,283. This money was made over to the Council of Education for the purpose of endowing a scholarship in the Hindu College.

With reference to the two scholarships named above, the General Report on Public Instruction for 1845—46 made the following record:

"The sum of Company's rupees 6,000 has been placed at our disposal, and duly invested in Government Securities to found a scholarship in the Hindu College to be named the "Bird Scholarship," in perpetual testimony of the great interest taken by Mr. W. Wilberforce Bird in the cause of education in India.

"The trustees of the Ryan Testimonial Fund forwarded to us a sum of Company's rupees 4283—6—6 to be invested in Government Securities for the support of a senior scholarship in the Hindu College, at rupees 16 per mensem, to be styled the "Ryan Testimonial Scholarship."

"The sum has been placed at compound interest until it shall be adequate to yield sixteen rupees a month, when the scholarship will be included in the schedule of the Hindu College."

Brief biographical notices of Mr. Bird and Sir Edward Ryan have already appeared in Vol. XI of this magazine. It will be worth while to sketch the activities of Babu Dwarkanath Tagore in whose name the third testimonial scholarship stood.

Born in 1794, Dwarkanath was well versed in zemindary accounts and tenures. He became a Law Agent, and afterwards Commercial Agent. He served also as Dewan of the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium. In 1834 he established the firm of Carr, Tagore & Co. He

was closely connected with the party that founded the Hindu College and took considerable interest in the welfare of the Medical College. "There was no educational, social, political, or charitable institution which did not receive co-operation or substantial help from him." He went twice to England where he had the rare honour of being presented to, and dining with Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, of sacred memory. It has been observed by a well-informed author that the ancient family of the Tagores "was raised to the prominent position, which it has since always maintained, by the political talents, the social qualities, the great wealth, and, what is still better, the large-hearted liberality of the celebrated Dwarkanath Tagore." Dwarkanath died in England in 1846.

At a meeting of the subscribers to the Dwarkanath Tagore Testimonial held in the Town Hall on Tuesday, the 10th July, 1849, it was resolved that the funds collected, viz., Rs. 6,000 should be devoted to the foundation of a scholarship in the Hindu College, and the amount was transferred to the Council of Education. "A first-class Scholarship of Rs. 40 was instituted and designated the Dwarkanath Tagore Scholarship; the difference between the interest yielded by the amount of the subscriptions, Rs. 25 monthly, and the full value of the scholarship, being made up from the funds assigned by Government for the endowment of scholarships in that College."

From the Departmental Reports of 1861—62 it appears that the amount of the scholarships bearing the names of Sir Edward Ryan and of Mr. Bird was raised to Rs. 40 each, while the Dwarkanath Tagore Scholarship was increased to Rs. 50 per month.

Keats's Idea of Beauty¹

Keats's idea of beauty is one of those things that are easier to talk about than to understand. The vagueness of the term beauty is no doubt largely responsible for that. What did Keats precisely mean by his exaltation of Beauty? Does it denote a purely aesthetic attitude like the following:

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great
to be told (Yeats)?

In other words, does it (according to a common and popular conception of Keats) stand simply for a love of what we call beautiful things—of the physical and sensuous beauty of things? If so, what then are beautiful things? Is a beautiful thing equally beautiful to all men? Standards and tastes vary according to individuals; and what is beautiful to one may not be beautiful to another. Wordsworth prefers the stock-dove to the nightingale; Keats sings of the nightingale. If now we say that Keats prefers the nightingale because the nightingale is more 'beautiful' than the stock-dove, that would be imputing to him a notion of Beauty very crude indeed—Beauty with a creed of untouchability.

But the great and beautiful poetry which Keats wrote could not have evidently had its origin in a notion so crude as that. And Keats's notion of Beauty itself could not be so crude. For, observe, he speaks of Beauty which is also Truth. He uses such phrases in his letters as "essential Beauty,"² "the hieroglyphics of Beauty,"³ "the eternal being, the principle of Beauty,"⁴ and finally, "the mighty abstract idea of Beauty in all things,"⁵ and "the principle of beauty in all things."⁶

II

Let us then turn to that poem of Keats which abounds in 'beautiful things,' opening indeed with the declaration that "A thing

1. To Mr. J. M. Murry's wonderful study of Keats the writer is indebted in more ways than one.

2. Letter to Bailey, November 22, 1817.

3. *On Edmund Kean as a Shakespearean actor*: article in *The Champion*.

4. Letter to Reynolds, April 9, 1818.

5. Letter to George Keats, October 29, 1818.

6. Letter to Fanny Brawne, February, 1820.

of beauty is a joy for ever," and see whether it justifies such a notion of beauty. As Keats was finishing *Endymion*, he wrote a letter to his friend Bailey⁷ and referred him to the poem for the poetical expression of the thought contained in the letter. "I am certain of nothing," he says in that letter, "but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of the Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth." What Keats means by that crucial and much misunderstood last phrase becomes at once clear from what follows: "I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning . . . Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections?" It is clear that Keats is contrasting his beauty-way of achieving truth with the rational mode of attaining it. The beauty-way of achieving truth is therefore the intuitive way.⁸ It is significant that Keats speaks of his certainty of "the holiness of the heart's affections" along with that of the truth of the imagination. Of these 'heart's affections' he further says (in the same letter): "I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty." These heart's affections, these passions, this love, are, in short, man's instinctive impulses. These, together with the Imagination, form an instinctive, spontaneous attitude of the being which, in its sublime, is creative of essential Beauty. This attitude is contrasted with the rational attitude which is exclusive, involving as it does even in the greatest philosopher 'putting aside numerous objections.' The intuitive attitude of mind has no exclusions; it comprehends every sort of experience,⁹ denying truth to none. It is now elaborately clear that Beauty means with Keats not an externally existent, physical and sensuous entity. Nor does it mean what Keats calls in one of his letters "an exquisite sense of the luxurious." It is an act of the mind. It is simply the pleasurable of intuitive apprehension. And this Beauty is Truth because intuitive perception is the only means of achieving the Truth which in its wholeness cannot be reached by "consecutive reasoning" with its "putting aside numerous objections."

Keats refers Bailey to *Endymion* for the poetic expression of the same thought. Now, towards the end of *Endymion*, Book I, there is a

7. Letter of November 22, 1817.

8. "The Imagination might be compared to Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth" (same letter).

9. ". . . takes in all beauty with an easy span."—*The Human Seasons*.

passage—the speech of Endymion to his sister Peona—to which Keats seems to have attached considerable importance, writing of it to Taylor, his publisher, as “a regular stepping of the Imagination towards the truth.”¹⁰ The passage discloses a similar vein of meditation. Wherein consists happiness? asks Endymion. In that, he answers, which becks the mind to “fellowship with essence” (the “essential Beauty” of the letter to Bailey) which is ‘fellowship divine.’ One instance of this fellowship is that ‘sort of oneness’ into which we pass when some, absorbing sensuous experience fills our being—“the rose-leaf [folded] round thy finger’s taperness,” or “when the airy stress of music’s kiss impregnates the free winds.” But there are “richer entanglements”—richer because “more self-destroying.” “The crown of these is made of friendship and love”—love the highest of them all, the final “fellowship” in which ‘life’s self is nourished by its proper pith.’ Again it is the same thought as in the letter to Bailey: “I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty.” Again we have a vindication of the instinctive impulses of the heart, which constitute a far richer fellowship with essential Beauty than even the communion with things of beauty—the airy stress of music’s kiss or the folding of the rose-leaf round the finger’s taperness. Observe again the distinction of the essence of Beauty from the thing, and the conception of Beauty as a matter of instinctive comprehension.

III

The whole conception is in a line with Keats’s conception of poetry and the poetic character. Keats’s ideal poetic character is Shakespeare—he who could conceive an Iago with as much delight as an Imogen. The quality of the poetic character, as he says in one of his letters,¹¹ is “Negative Capability” (“which Shakespeare possessed so enormously”), i.e., the capability of “being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” “Coleridge,” he continues, “would let go by a fine isolated versimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge.” Then comes the significant statement: “This pursued through volumes would perhaps take us no farther than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather

10. Letter of January 30, 1818.

11. To George and Thomas Keats, December 22, 1817.

obliterates all consideration" (i.e., all consideration of 'fact and reason'). Observe again the contrast of Beauty with 'fact and reason.'

• The true poetic attitude is therefore the intuitive which is the Shakespearean attitude—the giving oneself up to 'the instant feeling.' Thus, "the acting of Keans is Shakespearean . . . Other actors are continually thinking of their sum-total effect throughout a play. Keans delivers himself up to the instant feeling, without a shadow of a thought about anything else. He feels his being as deeply as Wordsworth, or any other of our intellectual monopolists."¹² Here Keats gives us the opposite of the true poetic attitude—the Wordsworthian—the rigid, determined, intellectual and dogmatic. He calls Wordsworth 'egoist' in another letter¹³ and also in that letter to Woodhouse containing his famous pronouncement about 'the poetical character itself'—"that sort of poetical character of which, if I am anything, I am a member, that sort as distinguished from the Wordsworthian or egoistical sublime." "The poetical character has no self, simply because it has no determined character. It lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated. It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. It has no fixed rigid identity: it is continually in for and filling some other body."¹⁴

The same philosophy of 'feeling one's being deeply' in an instinctive spontaneous attitude of the mind ("easy span") as opposed to intellectual self-determination and 'irritable reaching after fact and reason,'¹⁵ underlies such statements as "The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one's mind about nothing,"¹⁶ or again "I care not to be in the right when in a proper philosophical temper."¹⁷ It lies behind his advocacy of 'Diligent Indolence' ("Let us not go hurrying about and collecting honey . . . but let us open our leaves like flowers and be passive and receptive");¹⁸ and behind his conception of Poetry as "unobtrusive"¹⁹ and "coming

12. *On Edmund Kean as a Shakespearean actor.*

13. To Reynolds, February 3, 1818.

14. Letter to Woodhouse, October 27, 1818.

15. "O fret not after knowledge!—I have none

And yet the evening listens."—*Lines to Reynolds.*

16. Letter to George, September 24, 1819.

17. Letter to Bailey, September, 1818.

18. Letter to Reynolds, February 19, 1818. Cf. "ardent listlessness": *Endymion*, i. 825.

19. Letter to Reynolds, February 3, 1818.

as naturally as the leaves to a tree,"²⁰ as "might half slumbering on its own right arm" (*Sleep and Poetry*). It explains his dissatisfaction in *Sleep and Poetry* with the contemporary poetry (Wordsworthian and Byronian?) of 'themes' and of 'strength' (i.e., intellectual self-assertion).

-This spiritual attitude manifested itself on the moral side in Keats's own life in his attitude of tolerance and forgiveness towards his fellow-men: witness his beautiful letter to Bailey on the discord among his friends.²¹

• And the whole thing (we may say in the words of Keats), being pursued through volumes, would perhaps take us no farther than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration, all 'irritable reaching after fact and reason.'

IV

• Keats then is pleading for an instinctive, spontaneous attitude of the being and for the intuitive apprehension, as opposed to rational knowledge, of reality. What thus and thus only is apprehended is Truth, and the pleasurable of such apprehension is Beauty. Truth can only be known by its Beauty—by the pleasure, 'the sense' of 'feeling one's being deeply,' which it brings to the imagination, the intuitive act of the mind.

• So far, so good. But then, are all instincts equally pleasant? Is the instinctive experience (as unmodified by rational speculation) of everything in life equally pleasurable—equally creative of essential Beauty? If instinct creates Friendship and Love, if, in the poet, it 'takes in all beauty with an easy span,' is it not also instinct which produces, among animals, the mutual preying upon one another; among men, the quarrel in the street? The hawk preying upon the robin, the robin upon the worm—are they not following an instinctive spontaneous attitude of their being? And is not the experience of such things likely to be accompanied by pain? ✓

Keats had to face the problem himself. He had faced it even before writing *Endymion*, in *Sleep and Poetry*. In that poem he had passed through the realm of Flora and Pan, the realm of 'beautiful

20. Letter to Taylor, February 27, 1818.

21. Letter of January 23, 1818.

things.' Then he had asked himself: "And can I ever bid these joys farewell?"; and had answered:

Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
Where I may find the agonies, the strife
Of human hearts.

In *Endymion*, however, he returned to 'the realm of Flora and Pan.' He was still a natural inhabitant of that realm. Of 'the agonies, the strife of human hearts' he had not yet had any direct experience. And to Keats 'a proverb was no proverb till life had illustrated it.'²² The same is true of the next poem *Isabella*.

But at that very moment pain was approaching him. Darkness had entered the Chamber of Maiden-Thought. His beloved brother Tom, lingering to death under his very eyes—Tom with his 'exquisite love of life'; his own incipient disease; premonitions of the shortness of his span²³; the best work of his life, his poetry, 'fly-blown on the review shambles'—he was to see and have all these. And Love—the Love that kills—he was to know it too—a love prevented from fulfilment by poverty, a love whose very subject seemed herself to fail him. He felt too 'the burthen of the mystery' (a phrase of Wordsworth dear to him), for he 'saw not the balance of good and evil.'²⁴ He bids adieu to 'golden-tongued Romance' and sits down to 'the bitter sweet of the Shakespearean fruit,' *King Lear*. On the top of Ben Nevis, life reduces itself for him to 'mist and crag'. In the *Epistle to Reynolds* he suddenly breaks off from visions of romantic beauty and sees 'beyond his bourn' into 'the core of an eternal fierce destruction'—the Shark at savage prey, the Hawk at pounce, the gentle Robin ravening a worm. That 'seeing beyond' mars his happiness; it forces him, in summer skies to mourn and spoils the singing of the nightingale. He is 'lost in a sort of Purgatory blind' and despairs of attaining to 'high reason, and the love of good and ill'—the acceptance of life with all its joy and pain, its beauty and ugliness.

V

All these contradictory implications of living Keats faced unflinchingly. And, what most concerns us immediately, he found his way into an acceptance of them as necessary, and true, and beautiful.

22. Letter to George Keats, March 19, 1819.

23. Cf. *When I have fears that I may cease to be*.

24. Letter to Reynolds, May 3, 1818.

That *Epistle to Reynolds* was written in March, 1818. In March, 1819 he writes a letter to George Keats. In that letter, a year after, he has passed into that *love of good and ill* which he had despaired of attaining in the *Epistle*. Mentioning how life would be impossible if disinterestedness were to prevail, Keats goes on:

In wild nature the Hawk would lose his Breakfast of Robins, and the Robin his of the worms—the Lion must starve as well as the swallow. The great part of men sway their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk This is that which makes the amusement of life to a speculative mind; I go among the fields and catch a glimpse of a stoat or a field-mouse peeping out of the withered grass—the creature hath a purpose, and its eyes are bright with it. I go among the buildings of a city and I see a man hurrying along—to what?—the creature hath a purpose and his eyes are bright with it I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest animal you can think of yet in this may I not be free from sin? May there not be superior beings, amused with any graceful, though instinctive, attitude my mind may fall into as I am entertained with the alertness of the stoat or the anxiety of the deer? Though a quarrel in the streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine: the commonest man shows a grace in his quarrel. By a superior Being our reasonings may take the same tone; though erroneous, they may be fine. This is the very thing in which consists Poetry.

That letter was written during what appears from his letters of the time to have been a crucial period of Keats's life, lasting from January to April 1819. During that period he was mostly confined indoors owing to sore throat, and passed into a state of quiescence—'idle fever' he calls it in a letter,—'tasting the satisfaction of having great conceptions without having to express them in poetry.' Clearly Keats is brooding over his experiences of life and gradually approaching towards the position he reaches in that letter to George. That period ends into the serene melancholy, the serene joy, the warm and chastened humanity of the *Odes*; the singing of the nightingale that had once seemed spoiled by the experience of the pain of life now becomes all the richer for that experience. During that period, significantly enough, is written, at intervals, the third book of *Hyperion*, where with his eyes fixed upon Mnemosyne's face Apollo 'dies into life.' Mnemosyne is Memory: her face is the record of all life: on it are 'agonies, creations and destroyings.'

— Here then is Keats's final vindication of instinct. He had conceived in *Endymion* of beauty resulting from an instinctive and spontaneous attitude of the being. He is thrown into doubt by finding that instinct also wrought the mutual destruction among

animals, the quarrel in the street among men. Now he attains to a love of good and ill, and finds himself in a position to declare to Fanny Brawne, after his first hæmorrhage, that if he should die, although he would leave no immortal work behind him, he has "loved the principle of beauty *in all things*." Beauty is Truth—he had known that; now he completes his knowledge by finding that Truth is also Beauty. The maiden-thought Beauty, tested on the touchstone of life, is not found wanting. The security of knowledge and conviction is added to it—the knowledge and conviction of that simple inevitability that lends to the totality of life the truth and grace as of a piece of art.²⁵ He passes into the temple of Life, and finds in the face of the presiding spirit, Moneta, not only "an immortal sickness" but also an Impersonal Benignity. Into that temple those only are admitted "to whom the miseries of the world are misery, and will not let them rest," and those come not who seek "no music but a happy-noted voice."²⁶ The vision of Moneta's face is perhaps Keats's crowning vision of Beauty.

Keats's idea of Beauty, as it finally stands, is therefore not merely æstheticism but a great human and spiritual idea.

VI

If then Wordsworth prefers the stock-dove to the nightingale, Keats's answer to him would be not that the nightingale is more beautiful than the stock-dove but that beauty is in all things, 'foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated,' and that our varied intuitions of beauty should not be subordinated or sacrificed to intellectual preferences. In the induction to the second *Hyperion*, Keats draws a distinction between the fanatic and the poet. A fanatic, he says, weaves a paradise for a sect; and then he asks whether the dream he is going to rehearse is a poet's or a fanatic's. Wordsworth was a fanatic for the stock-dove, but Keats was not a fanatic for the nightingale. He was not a fanatic for beautiful things. He was a poet of beauty.

25. Cf. the *Odes*, the second sonnet on *Fame*, and *Why did I laugh to-night?*

26. Second *Hyperion*.



THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION
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By Courtesy of the "Publisher"]

The Philosophy of Sphota

PROF. GAURINATH BHATTACHARYYA, M.A.

TO obviate the difficulty, it has been averred that impressions will not directly express the sense but will serve the purpose through the medium of recollection (smṛiti) To be explicit, the sense will be expressed by the last letter which is perceived together with the preceding letters which are recollected.¹ It may be pointed out that this policy of sifting ground has proved to be of little avail. It will be a fair question to ask whether the last letter will be perceived at the same time when the preceding letters are recollected or whether the recollection of the preceding letters will follow the perception of the last letter ; and we shall prove that either of the alternatives is not a safe plank to take one's stand upon. If it be maintained that the perception and the recollection happen at one and the same time, we may be permitted to point out that this leads us to admit a concurrence of cognitions at their birth (jñanayaugapadya); and we all know that such a concurrence is hardly accepted by philosophers. If it be maintained on the other hand that the recollection will follow the perception, the question of sequence comes in once again, and with it all the difficulties standing in the way of obtaining an aggregate of letters. We may further point out that even if the preceding letters are recollected, there is no reason why they will be recollected in the same order in which they are perceived.² Vacaspati clearly states that it may be assumed that the recollected letters are expressive of sense, but there is hardly any justification for the assumption that they will be recollected only in the same order in which they have been perceived before ; for, they may as well be recollected in a different order. The Sankarabhasya therefore says that under the circumstances, such words as *jara* and *raja* or *kapih* and *pikah* will denote the same thing.³ But when in the two cases cited above, we notice the same letters but find a difference in meaning, we must admit that something besides the letters expresses the sense and

1. Smṛitidvarena tarhi arthapratyayako' sau bhavisyati—N. M., p. 368

2. Smṛitisamarohino varna vacakas tanna gauravamiti cenna.

Kramakramaviparitakramanam tatravisesena-rthadhisamutpadana-prasangat—T. B., p. 7.

3. Tato raja jara kapih pikah ityadisū visesapratipattir na syat—Sankarabhasya, p. 327.

if this is once conceded, we have practically no difficulty in establishing Sphota. But let us turn to see how our opponents propose further modifications of their statement which we have been criticising so long.

In order to obviate the difficulty, it has been proposed that the different impressions, resulting from the separate cognitions of the various letters in succession, will give rise to *one* collective recollection, and all the letters that have been cognised before, will flash in the mirror of this recollection and because the successive letters can thus be collectively recollected at one and the same time, it will enable us to affirm the co-existence of letters and to uphold that these letters may be looked upon as being expressive of sense.¹

But let us point out that this modification is of little or no avail on the ground that the theory, as it thus stands, is still exposed to some serious defects.

First of all, if we accept the aforesaid exposition, we shall be constrained to say that the sense is expressed by the letters, as they are recollected (smrita) and not heard (sruta). But it is a matter of common knowledge that the sense is expressed by the letters as they are heard and not recollected. Secondly, it is contradictory to our experience that the recollection of these letters intervenes between the perception of letters and the cognition of sense. Thirdly, granting for the sake of argument that in order to achieve the co-existence of letters, we must posit a collective recollection between the perception of letters and the cognition of sense, there is practically no authority to say that this is a recollection at all. We cannot even say that when this is not an apprehension, it must, by the method of residues, be regarded as recollection. Further discussion on this particular point will be taken up at a later stage. In the fourth place, it is not possible to have a collective recollection of the type which the exponents of this theory have suggested; for, it is rather well-known that the particular contact of the mind with the soul, which is regarded as being the non-inherent cause of the perception of the first letter, cannot be regarded as also being the non-inherent cause of the perception of the second letter, because, a difference in the product should be accounted for, by the difference in the nature of the non-inherent cause. It should be noted that in the

1. Pratyekapadapadarthanubhavabhavitabhavananicayalabdhanma-smritidarpanarudha varnamala ityanye—T. B., p. 2.

Also:—S. V., sl. 112.

Anyais tu sakalavarnopalabdhinibandhananikhilabhavanabijajanma yugapadakhilavarnarupaparamarsi caramavarnapratyaksopalabdhisaman-antaras smaranaikarupas sangiryate—Sphotasiddhi.

second moment of the particular contact of the mind with the soul—the contact which is required for the perception of the first letter—we cannot have another contact of the mind with the soul which will cause the perception of the second letter ; the *raison d'être* in this case being that the second contact cannot arise unless the first contact is destroyed and in order to destroy the first contact, we are to suppose an action in the mind which will lead to division causing the destruction of the previous contact, and it is only when the previous contact is destroyed that we can contemplate the birth of the second contact. Thus we see that we cannot have the perception of the second letter in the second moment of the perception of the first letter. In the fifth place, we may point out that the impression arises only when the cognition has died out. Impression is only a subtler form of cognition and hence, so long as cognition is present, we cannot think of any impression caused by it. If it be maintained, however, that an impression may be had at a time when the particular cognition, which causes it, has not yet died out, we may point out that those who believe in the permanent knowledge of God, will be compelled to admit that God also 'recollects'—a viewpoint to which they do not obviously subscribe. Now, from what we have said above, it is clear that only when the perception of the last letter has died out on the third moment, the impression of the same caused by the perception referred to above, remains in us; and if we are to suppose a recollection resulting from that impression, we shall have to posit that the collective recollection happens long after we have heard the letters. But it is admitted on all hands that the cognition of import does not come at such a long interval. We may further point out that in positing the collective recollection, it is also necessary to posit an entity which will invariably arouse the impressions lying in us to effect the said recollection. And as we do not find any tangible (*drista*) entity before us, which will serve the purpose, we shall be required to assume an *adrista*. But the difficulty does not end here ; for, an *adrista* may at least arouse the impressions occasionally but not regularly and hence, we shall have to posit a number of *adristas*. Moreover, it is not possible for one *adrista* to arouse a number of impressions which are different in their nature. So we are required to admit a number of *adristas*. But even now the difficulties are not absolutely solved. There is no guarantee why these different *adristas* being invariably combined, will serve to arouse the impressions. So, in order to account for the invariable combination, we shall have to posit another *adrista*. Moreover, it is not reasonable to hold that different recollections will not accrue from different impressions, but that there will be one collective recollection invariably arising from them. Jayanta explicitly states that

each letter being in its nature different from the rest, the impression of each of them is different, and this difference in the nature of impressions will bring about a difference in the nature of recollection, and it is, therefore, quite natural that we should have different recollections, instead of one collective recollection.¹ We may again observe that in all cases of recollection, the object of recollection (tattvamsa) is invariably mentioned. But, if we maintain a similar reference to the objects of recollection in the case of recollection of letters, it will be difficult to obtain the cognition of oneness pertaining to word. Hence it becomes necessary on our part to concede to a recollection in which the object of recollection is lost (pramustatattvakasmriti). And we all know that such a recollection has invariably a reference to the inborn fault (dosa) to which intellect is subject ; and as such, it is not regarded as recollection proper.

Thus we succeed in proving the weakness of the assumption that all the letters will flash in the mirror of one recollection after each one of them is separately perceived. But our opponents do not as yet lose ground. They suggest that the impressions due to perception of the preceding letters together with the contact of the auditory organ with the last letter will give rise to one single cognition in which all the letters will appear.² But a supposition like this, instead of meeting all the difficulties pointed out above, involves further complications which cannot be satisfactorily explained.

It is an admitted fact that a perception of the type of recognition, is caused by the sense-organ along with impression ; but, the cognition supposed in this particular case is, in its nature, different from recognition. In the case of recognition, it is the cognised objects that alone are cognised. But in the present case, this is not possible. For, in the case of a word, which consists of four letters, we have the impression of the first three letters and the contact of the auditory organ with the fourth one. Moreover, if we admit such a recognition, it will only contradict our experience (anubhava). It is a matter of common

1. Bhinnopalabhasambhutavasanabhedanirmitah.

Bhaveyus smritayo bhinna na tvekanekagocara—N. M., p. 368.

2. Paramarthikapurvavarnapadapadarthanubhavajanita-samskarashitanyavarnavijnanam ityeke—T. B., p. 1.

Atha vadet sankalanajnanamekam sadasadvarnagocaram bhavisyati taduparudhas ca varna artham pratyayayisyanti—N. M., p. 368.

Citrarupanca tam buddhim sadasadvarnagocaram.

Kecidatur yatha varno grhyate'ntyah pade pade—S. V., sl. III.

Sa caisa pratyayas smaranapratyaksabhyam ubhayatma sadasadvarnarupavabhasyantyavarnagocara isyate kaiscit—Sphotasiddhi.

knowledge that the cognition of sense is obtained immediately after the perception of letters and not after the recognition of the same.

Jayanta, however, suggests that this cognition will be in the nature of a mental *anuvyavasaya* (perception of cognition).¹ We beg to put in a few words by way of criticising this observation of Jayanta. At the outset, we like to lay stress upon the fact that *anuvyavasaya* is not admitted on all hands. The Naiyayikas say that 'the knowledge that I know' is technically called *anuvyavasaya*. We know that the contact of the soul with the mind is the non-inherent cause of cognition. Now *anuvyavasaya* being in its nature a perception, is also caused by such contact. It must be admitted, however, that the same contact cannot cause both the cognition and the perception of it (*anuvyavasaya*). It should be noted here that in order that *anuvyavasaya* may be possible, it is required that it must be obtained immediately after the cognition is obtained; otherwise, the cognition which is in its nature transient will be destroyed and there will be no scope for the *anuvyavasaya*. We have already said that some moments will elapse before a second contact may be obtained. That being so, *anuvyavasaya* can hardly be justified. And consequently, the Naiyayikas find themselves in great difficulty. For, to say that it is not possible to obtain *anuvyavasaya*, is to admit that our cognition dies out without our knowledge of it. It may be further pointed out that even if *anuvyavasaya* be assumed for the sake of argument, we are landed into the same difficulty. For it is a fact that our mind is busy in apprehending one matter after another. The perception of a book is obtained now and the next moment we hear a melodious tune. There being no interval of time between these two cognitions, it is not possible for us to obtain the perception of our knowledge of the book. Thus we find that we cognise the book but we do not know that we have cognised it.

We have so far discussed the propriety or otherwise of positing *anuvyavasaya*; and now a few words about Jayanta's statement. *Anuvyavasaya* being the perception of cognition, cognition (i.e., matter of perception) must be present at the time when the *anuvyavasaya* is obtained. Unfortunately, in the present case, the perception of all the letters excepting the last one having died out, it is not possible to have the same when we require it at the time of the *anuvyavasaya* which is supposed by Jayanta. Jayanta might have anticipated this difficulty, and so he argues that in such cases as "I have eaten a hundred mangoes," we have an *anuvyavasaya* in which the matter of *anuvya-*

1. Athava kramopalabodhesvapi varnesu manasam anuvyavasaya-rupam akhilavarnavisayam sankalanajnanam yadupajayate—N. M., p. 368.

vasaya is not present. But we may here question the fairness of Jayanta's illustration, for this is a case of recollection and not *anuvyavasaya*.

Even acknowledging that an *anuvyavasaya* of like nature is possible, we may further point out that there is absolutely no reason why the letters will appear in the *anuvyavasaya* in the same order in which they have been perceived. Jayanta asserts that the element of sequence must be present in the *anuvyavasaya* for the reason that letters are perceived in succession and not simultaneously. But we may point out that it is common knowledge that the letters are perceived in succession, but the knowledge of sequence is not obtained with the perception of each letter. To say, therefore, that sequence will flash in the mirror of *anuvyavasaya*, is only to posit a new function of *anuvyavasaya*. When *anuvyavasaya* is nothing more than the perception of cognition, it is natural that the matter (*visaya*) of cognition will appear in the *anuvyavasaya*. To insist that sequence is cognised with the perception of letters is to disown experience.

Thus we find that we cannot conceive of any one collective cognition—be it in the nature of one in which we have all the letters recollected or the last one perceived and the rest recollected—in which we have all the letters at one and the same time. And we have already shown that we cannot suppose two different cognitions to arise simultaneously or in succession. Thus we conclusively prove that we cannot posit any one or two cognitions between the perception of letters and the apprehension of import.¹

(To be continued.)

1. Anenaitadapakritam bhavati:—S. V., sl. 108—Sphotasiddhi, p. 70.

“The Persian Odes”

SYED MAQBUL MURSHED, B.A.

(*Ex-student, 1930.*)

AS we meander slowly browsing on the lovely meadows of Persian odes, the thing which attracts our attention most is the abundance of graceful ideas, delicate fancies and beautiful imageries. Great as the thoughts are, they are expressed in a language which is greater still. The cooing of ring-doves, the smiling corn-fields and the bloom of spring are described with a sweetness that attracts our sense of wonder and admiration. The ghazals of the Persian language or to use the English equivalent the “odes” are sometimes discursive and flighty, touching upon miscellaneous matters of interest, but the sweetest ones are those which give expression to the sorrow of disappointed love. They sing with a melody that is peculiar to the Persians on agreeable subjects such as the delights of spring, the tuneful note of a nightingale as he pipes his sad querrela from a bush and the beauty of a rose-garden. Yet we need little be surprised at the purity of thoughts, the simplicity of diction and the rhythmic flow of the language, that characterise the odes of the Persians. They are natural out-flows of hearts full to the brim with poetic zeal and fervour. The environments in which a Persian poet is reared illuminate the horizon of his thoughts, while the village-girls, who possess the simplicity and grace of Shakespeare’s Miranda, supply ample inspiration for his poems. He grows in the loveliness of his beautiful native land, the wholesome influence of which penetrates into his vein and makes him an inveterate worshipper of beauty. The dawn as it gleams through the Persian trees, the sweet-scented breeze that rustles through the beds of jasmine and narcissus, and the peep of the field-bird through the thick foliage to catch a glimpse of the smiling rose—supply the necessary food for his thoughts. He lounges on the grassy bank of a murmuring brook, sees the glory of a charming landscape and a blue sky, and is lost in a reverie. His imagination wells up and overflows in natural and unrestrained poetry. His poems, therefore, have that ring of sincerity and naturalness about them which are so sadly wanting in some of the odes of foreign language. What a charming note does Hafiz strike in the following extract:—

Thus spoke at dawn the field bird to the newly wakened rose:
 Be kind, for many a bloom like you in this meadow grows.'
 The rose laughed: ' You will find that we at truth show no distress,
 But never did a lover with harsh words his love to press.
 If the ruby wine from jewelled cup, it is your wish to drink,
 Then pearls and corals pierced with eyelash you must strive to link.
 Love's savour to his nostrils to entice, he never can seek,
 Who on the tavern's earthly floor has not swept dusty cheek '

It is a poetry of soul that sings elate of love. It bears the impress of simplicity and sincerity, and reveals the power of Hafiz as an ode writer. The atmosphere is to be seen in the soothing light of the poet's imagination. Early in the grey of dawn when the whole atmosphere breathes the spirit of the spring, the poet is awakened from his sweet slumbers, and comes to saunter in the garden blooming with flowers. It is the sweetest hour of the morning and nature presents a wonderful sight. The landscape faintly lit by the rays of the rising sun lends charm to the scenery of the moment. Buds have blossomed into full-blown flowers diffusing their fragrance far and wide, birds hop and play on the grassy field of the garden and a refreshing breeze gently blows by. As the poet strolls on, now looking at the branches laden with fruits, now stooping towards the rose-beds to inhale their fragrance, the plaintive strain of a field-bird attracts his attention and produces a sad echo in his heart. Like a star-crossed lover who does not find a sympathetic response to his love, the field-bird heaves a long-drawn sigh, and wounds in a moment of despair the pride of the rose. The indifference of the rose to his attention has almost turned him mad, and therefore he has little respect left for her feelings. He rudely asks the rose to shake off her pride as many a bloom like her grows in the garden. The rose laughs away the uncomplimentary remarks paid to her and reminds the bird that the path of a true lover is fraught with difficulties. He has to experience a little hardship, before he can ever hope to reach the Palestine of his heart's journey.

The poet then proceeds to describe with pathos his discourse with a " fair hyacinth " in the following remaining extract of his ode:—

In Iran's garden yesternight, when, in the grateful air
 The breeze of coming day stirred the stress of hyacinth fair,
 I asked: "Throne of Jamshid, where is thy world-revealing cup?"
 It sighed: " That waking fortune deep in sleep lies muffled up.
 They are not always words of love that from the tongue descend:
 Come, bring me wine, O taverner, and to this talk put end."

Resignation to the torture of the beloved is the keynote of the verse. In the depth of vision and beauty of imagery, it stands incomparable. It delineates the sorrow of disappointed love and finds a ready echo in our hearts. The morning breeze played havoc on the delicate petals of a hyacinth and scattered them all over. The poet is struck with surprise, and innocently asks it the reason of this state of affairs. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, the hyacinth does not make any disclosure but prefers to brook the pangs of disappointment in silence.

There are some people who try to give a mystic colour to the above verses of Hafiz. They think that whatever comes out from his pen, must bear some hidden meaning which a reflective mind can alone appreciate. They endeavour to show that the verses are to be understood in a mystic sense—just exactly what a Christian would do to prove the spiritual importance of the "Song of Solomon." But we may venture to say that it is a mistake to suppose that Hafiz thinks of nothing else in his verses but of Divine Love. We can say with confidence that most of his odes, like the above one, have a decided leaning towards sensuousness, or at least there is no mystic element in them. We must not think of Hafiz as simply a preacher of the dry doctrine of Sufism, but also as "a priest to us all, of the wonder and bloom of the world."

Though odes are mostly delineations of love and sensuous pleasure, yet there are some which are wrapped with mystic glamour. The mysticism, which forms the subject matter of some odes, is not dull or dry, but has that dim light which charms the thinking mind.

Before an attempt is made to delineate on Sufistic or mystic odes, it is quite in the fitness of things to describe in a nutshell the essence of the Sufi doctrine. The Sufis concur with the adherents of the Vedanta School of Hindu Philosophy in believing that man is but a particle of God, and differs from Him in degree and not in kind. A man reading the mystic odes, would often come across with the terms, "Beloved," "Wine-bearer" and "Idol." But he must not suppose that these terms convey their ordinary meanings. They represent the Supreme Being that permeates all nature, the Being whom the sense cannot touch, but reverence alone can appreciate. A Sufi poet would often indulge in railleries, go on carousing and listen to the songs of damsels dancing to the cheerful melody of a flute. But these are only mystical ways of expressing an ecstatic Divine Love. His tavern is not a bazar wine-shop but a sacred place, deeply canonised by Divine glory, while his "Wine" or his

“inebriety” represents the rapturous love of God. This is, in brief, the cult of Sufism. Strange as is the religion of the Sufis, their language is stranger still. All is mystery within mystery. A Sufi will not fret and worry about the forms of religion. He will not make any distinction between a Hindu and a Moslem, so long as they do justice to their Creator by worship and devotion.

A free translation, given below, of an ode of a Sufi of Bukkhara, would make clear to us the beauty that often lies hidden in mysticism:—“Yesterday, half-inebriated, I passed by the quarter where the vintners dwell, to seek the daughter of an infidel who sells wine. At the end of the street, there advanced before me a damsel with a fairy’s cheeks, who, in the manner of a pagan, wore her tresses dishevelled over her shoulders like the sacerdotal thread. I said, “Oh thou, to the arch of whose eye-brow the new moon is a slave, what quarter is this, and where is thy mansion.” She answered, “Cast thy rosary on the ground, bind on thy shoulder the thread of paganism; throw stones at the glass of piety, and quaff wine from a full goblet.” Abandoning my heart, and rapt in ecstasy, I ran after her, till I came to a place in which religion and reason forsook me. At a distance I beheld a company, all insane and inebriated, who came roaring with ardour from the wine of love—without wine or goblet,—yet all incessantly drinking and merry-making. I desired to ask one question but she said, “Silence. This is the banquet-house of infidels, and within it all are intoxicated; all from the dawn of eternity to the day of resurrection, lost in astonishment. Depart then from the cloister; and take the way to the tavern, cast off the cloak of a dervise and wear the robe of a libertine.”

Of the two forms of odes—erotic and mystic—it is difficult to say which is the better. It all depends upon the temperament of a reader. A man with a natural buoyancy of spirit, who never tries to lift the solemn veil of life or peer into the great unknown, would revel in an erotic ode, whereas a contemplative mind would find in a mystic ode a source of immense pleasure. Both forms of odes are good—only the mystic odes are more susceptible to the defects of over-wrought imagery. True poetry, the poetry of soul, should be free from the twists and turns of expression, and should sing in a lucid language, like a sweet bird that sings with joy at the break of day. The poetry, which finds a ready response in our heart, is one which is simple and transparent or, in the language of a critic, is “frail as a butterfly, delicate as a blossom.”

Unfortunately, some of the mystic ode writers, Rumi being one of them, have so overladen their poems with similies, metaphors and a display of their scholarship, that they lose the flavour of real poetry.

We condemn most emphatically such over-ornamentation and artificiality in poems, and implore our budding poets to shake off all conventions and sing in a language at once clear and crystal.

Modern Alchemy

ROMARANJAN BHATTACHARYYA—*Fifth Year, Chemistry.*

EVER since the dawn of Science the idea of transmutation of matter has been ingrained in the minds of men. One after another, many a scientist took up the problem but in all cases failure seemed to be the only meed of their labour. It has been said that Nagarjun, the famous Hindu chemist of the age of Kanishka, was able to convert mercury into gold by processes, which, as have trickled down to us, are but vague and unintelligible. Indeed, there was an age—the age of Alchemists—when this problem of transmutation absorbed all the interest of the scientists. Searches were made very extensively for the “Philosopher’s Stone” whose magic touch would convert baser metals into nobler ones. But it was a wild-goose-chase and the magic wand could not be obtained.

Time went on: new ideas were coming—ideas so novel and startling that they revolutionised the entire outlook of the scientists. People understood that with a surface knowledge of the atoms as they had, it was idle to talk of transmutation. Then came the year 1896 when Baequerel discovered Radio Activity. Before this, the idea was that the elements were composed of minute indivisible particles, similar for the same element but different from those of the other elements. Researches on Radio Activity showed, for the first time, that certain elements were spontaneously undergoing disintegration and that this change could not in any way be influenced by man. It was found that, along with this disintegration, three types of rays—the alpha, beta and gamma—were emitted. Rutherford and his co-workers found that the alpha rays were positively charged He atoms, while the beta rays were merely electrons with high velocity and the gamma rays were nothing but ethereal waves. This, together with the fact that electrons were obtained by discharge through various rarefied gases, led to the view that the ultimate “building bricks” in Nature are electrons and the positive constituent or proton (discovered by Rutherford in 1911). The electron is negatively charged and $1/1850$ times that of a proton which is positively charged and of unit mass.

Rutherford and Geiger found that a narrow beam of alpha particles in vacuum produces a band of light with sharp edges at any distance from the source ; but when a thin sheet of gold foil was interposed in its path the band of light spread out and became blurred. This has been believed to be due to the scattering of alpha particles in their

passage through the foil. From this experiment they concluded that the atom is a hollow structure having the mass and the charge concentrated at the centre called nucleus around which the electrons are moving.

It is evident from the electro-neutrality of the atoms that the nuclear positive charge must be equal to the number of electrons revolving about the nucleus (extra-nuclear electrons). Then came the year 1913, most memorable in the history of atomic physics from the point of view of the number of laws discovered. In this year Van der Broek suggested that the nuclear charge was equal to the Atomic Number* of the elements. In the same year Van Lane discovered that X-rays diffracted in their passage through crystals and W. H. and W. L. Bragg utilised this to construct an X-ray spectrometer and Moseley from the study of the X-ray spectra of different elements came to the conclusion that the frequency of a given line in the spectra was related to the atomic number in a very simple way. Meanwhile, the famous physicist Niclo Bohr developed a theory of the origin of spectra according to which the frequency of a given line in the spectra of different elements should vary in the same way as the nuclear charge. Hence it was concluded that the atomic number is equal to the nuclear charge.

Next came the momentous generalisation of Fajans and Soddy who from the study of the products of the radio-active disintegration formulated in 1913 the most useful law that 'by the expulsion of an alpha particle the atomic number of the element is lowered by 2 units and its mass is four times less than the parent element, while by the loss of a beta particle the atomic number is raised by 1 unit but the atomic weight remains the same as the parent element.'

The study of radio-activity pointed out another very important thing, viz., the existence of the elements of different atomic weight but having the same atomic number. These have been called Isotopes by Soddy.' As early as 1886 Sir William Crookes speculated that in an element there might be present some atoms having atomic weight different from the accepted atomic weight of the element. These he called "meta-element." After some forty years Aston and his co-workers have been able to obtain these "meta-elements" in the case of most of the elements of the Periodic Table. He has established the fact that atomic weights, as determined by ordinary chemical and physical methods, only represent the average atomic weight of the atoms of the element.

When advancements were made so far, the problem of transmuta-

*Atomic number is the number in which the elements are arranged in the Periodic Table.

tion was again taken up but this time from a different point of view. It was found that the physical and chemical properties of the element depend on the atomic number and not on the atomic weight. If, therefore, by some means the atomic number, i.e., the number of extra-nuclear electrons could be altered, transmutation might be effected. Moreover, the Rutherford-Geiger experiment showed that swiftly moving particles such as the alpha particles could penetrate into the inner sanctuary of the atoms. The modern alchemists, who had seen the blowing up of parapets from buildings fired with shots, adopted the similar policy of knocking off extra-nuclear electrons by bombarding the atoms with various swiftly moving particles which they had at their disposal. The particles generally employed are* (1) alpha particles (successfully employed by Joliot), (2) proton (by Cockroft, Gilbert and Walton), (3) deuteron or hydrogen isotope of mass 2 (discovered in 1933 by Urey, Murphy and Washburn and employed for artificial splitting of atoms by Crane, Lauritsen, Hendersen, Livingstone and Lawrence). The classical problem of transmuted mercury (at No. 80) to gold (at No. 79) becomes apparently feasible and many of the above missiles were employed. In 1925 Dr. Adolf Miethe of Berlin and Dr. H. Nagaoka of Tokyo independently announced the production of gold from mercury by knocking off the one extra-nuclear electron from the latter. But their claim could not be accepted as other chemists failed to obtain gold by their methods. The decisive case of artificial splitting came from the Cavendish Laboratory of Cambridge in 1932 when two young scientists, Dr. Cockroft and Dr. Walton,† bombarded Lithium atoms by swiftly moving protons when two alpha particles were obtained. This fact may be represented as $\text{Li}^7 + (+) = 2\text{He}^4$.

But one of the main hindrances to the successful application of Cockroft's method is that a very large amount of energy is necessary. This may be put in Cockroft's words as "only one particle breaks up for every 10,000,000 volts we use to bombard it; we are producing from these atoms 100 to 160 times of the known energy but only once in 10,000,000 times." Dr. E. O. Lawrence of California sought to obviate this difficulty by "constraining the atoms to move in a circle by a magnetic field. They are urged round the circle by the application of an electric field. They receive a push during every revolution like the armature of an ordinary electric motor. The revolving atoms are given a push of several thousand volts twice in each journey round the circle; when they have been round the circle 100 times they are moving

*Nature 133, p. 898.

†*Ibid.*, 129, p. 649; Proc. Roy. Soc. A. 137, p. 229, 1932.

with an energy of a hundred thousand volts. The production of swift particles by a repetition of small impulses satisfies the engineering sense better than the shock method of producing them.*

Subsequently it was found that the missiles mentioned before are, however, ineffective in the case of heavy elements owing to coulomb repulsion. But in 1932 Dr. Chadwick discovered a new particle called neutron having a unit mass but possessing no electrical or magnetic field. Owing to its neutral nature it is a very serviceable tool for atomic disintegration. E. Fermi and his co-workers have made extensive application of this particle in their researches on the disintegration of heavy elements.

In three cases (Al, Co, Cl)† it was found that the atomic number diminished by 2 units; in four cases (P, S, Fe and Zn) by 1 unit and in two cases (Br, I) the active element is an isotope of the parent element. This seems to show that the following three main processes are possible—(1) Capture of a neutron with the instantaneous emission of an alpha particle. (2) Capture of a neutron with the emission of a proton and (3) Capture of a neutron with the emission of gamma rays to get rid of the surplus energy. Fermi bombarded uranium with neutrons and obtained evidence of the formation of an unstable radioactive element of atomic number greater than 92, possibly the element No. 93. This new element has been found to be analogous to Manganese and Radium and has an average life of 13 minutes. This "Fascists' victory in the field of Science" is, so to say, rather outrageous, for it has at last modified the Periodic Table which has withstood oppositions many a time. For this new element has been proposed the name "Musolinium." But the die-hards amongst scientists are not very much inclined to accept this production of element No. 93, and one young physicist Mr. V. V. Narliker showed by brilliant mathematics that there could not be an element No. 93 or higher.

Scientists have realised that in such processes of artificial disintegration they are practically trying to get the enormous energy constrained within the atoms and these problems are, therefore, tending gradually towards the realisation of that vast store of energy with which they can destroy the Universe in no time. But as yet their success has not been remarkable. But whereas the grandfathers of the scientists only gathered "pebbles on the shore of the ocean of knowledge" the modern adventurers are trying to sail beyond that region where the heaven and the sea seem to meet in an eternal bond of love and joy.

*Nineteenth Century, February, 1934, p. 212.

†Nature 133, p. 898.

A. E.

SAILAJANANDA BHATTACHARYYA—*Fourth Year, Arts.*

WHILE reading the poems of A. E., we are constantly reminded of the truth that this earth is crammed with divine essence and our existence is suffused with spirituality. We attach a new meaning to *our life—the least sound of the fall of the yellow leaf* seems to be pregnant with infinite possibilities. It is worth while to pass a few moments with a poet who can achieve this.

* * * * *

A. E. is essentially a poet of joy. Few have found this earth so sweet and existence so glad. The earth melts in his blood. The air he takes in, is 'like the enchanted wine poured from the Holy Grail.' Every blade of grass is aureoled in joy. The rudest sod is 'thrilled with fire of hidden day and haunted by all mystery.' Joy encircles the entire creation.

'The whole of the world was merry,
One joy from the veil to the height,
Where the blue woods of twilight encircled
The lovely lawns of the light.'

Pain is an aspect of the eternal unfolding of joy. In it is symbolised the possibility of perfection. God can hurt the poet only because He is the fountain of all sweetness.

'Of my God I know this much
And singing I repeat,
Though there's anguish in his touch
Yet his soul within is sweet.'

How near it is to Tagore's song, 'I shall know you by the sudden delight of my heart melting into sadness of tears!'

Of course, the poet has moments of despair. The pain and sorrow are too poignant not to be noticed by so sensitive a poet as A. E. In the midst of people trying to crowd one another off the face of the globe, the poet feels lonely.

'Our true hearts are for ever lonely:
A wistfulness is in our thought:
Our lights are like the dawns which only
Seem bright to us and yet are not.'

Men no longer look upon Nature with a sense of wonder verging upon awe. The old enchantment is lost.

‘ The wonder of the world is o’er ;
The magic from the sea is gone :
There is no unimagined shore
No islet yet to venture on.’

Man is the eternal adventurer, the great traveller beyond bournes, into perilous seas—in fairy lands forlorn. He is a ‘ kinsman of the cherubim.’ But ‘ how has the fire Promethean paled ’ and how has man got ‘ chained in this pit’s abysmal mire?’ The ‘ iron-clang ’ of the modern civilisation has made us forget the inherent power of our soul. For

‘ The hidden light the spirit owns
If blown to flame would dim the stars
And they who rule them from their thrones ;
And the grand sceptred spirits thence
Would bow to pay us reverence.’

This belief in the potentiality of self which seldom fails the poet lifts him above all gross abuses of this world. He urges us to ‘ keep the secret sense celestial of the starry birth ’ though about us rises the clamour of ‘ the bestial voices of the earth.’ He asks all to follow the sinking glory and win the old glow again. His dream is ‘ to conquer the heavens and battle for kingship on high.’

In spite of all ills prevailing in this world, the poet is not stranded on the rock of pessimism. The sweetness, the colour and the glory of life have thrilled his being ; the varying phases of natural beauty and mystery have given him immortal joy.

‘ And all I thought of heaven before
I find in earth below.’
Life to him ‘ is sweet, is sweet!’

* * * * *

He keeps company with Nature. Subtle influences emanating from her overwhelm him. Sights and sounds enter through the door of his senses, the beauties of varied richness enthral him, but through all multiplicity runs a principle of cosmic unity which binds everything in a silken tie of coherence. It has been the poet’s attempt to bring the heterogeneous complexity of materials into harmony by inner adjustment. Facts are without number, but truth is one. In his search for One, A. E. has found out that this One embraces all. This is what has been called Ultimate Reality. The poet seeks it. His

The poet is thrown back on the world of reality. The question arises in his mind whether the vision has any undying significance. He answers, 'yes.' The experience is a permanent possession. Each heart-beat is noted, each impulse is carefully preserved. Everything is treasured up, nothing is forgotten.

' Each dream remembered is a burning glass
Wherethrough to Darkness from the Light of lights
Its rays in splendour pass.'

The gentlest, frailest dreams, even those that were born and lost in 'a heart-beat,' are 'become immortal in shining air.' The innumerable lights, 'the mosque of Time ended,' will all glow into one.

' I who sought on high for calm
In the ever-living find
All I was in what I am,
Fierce with gentle intertwined.'

It reminds us of Tagore, of all poets, whom A. E. has most affinity with.

' I know that my dreams that are still unfulfilled, and my melodies still unstruck, are clinging to some lute-strings of thine, and they are not altogether lost.' (Lover's Gift).

There is a fundamental difference existing between A. E. and other Western mystics. Their final goal is not experience which our poet exults in, not vision, not ecstasy but the Unitive Life, the life lived in conscious union with the Absolute. From it arises a passion, a strain—the soul is torn between religious dualism and the acute emotional longings for the consummation of the love of God. Living union with this One is a definite state and form of the exalted life of the mystics. A. E.'s mysticism, however, is completely free from the turmoils 'of the soul and springs from the sense of Oneness of all things in God. He breathes a subtler and purer air. 'The Light of Godhead . . . does not flow; it is strong and very still.' He experiences 'no intense and amorous impetus' like St. John of the Cross, no 'impetuosities' like St. Teresa.

The duality is no hindrance to A. E. He is in love with this world and knows what it is all about. He does not renounce the continual miracle of life ever repeating itself. He feels 'freedom in a thousand bonds of delight.' To him the outer world is inextricably intertwined with the Being of beings. 'Ever and anon a trumpet sounds from the hid battlements of eternity.' (Thompson). The poet feels that 'our heart are drunk with a beauty, our eyes could never

see.' He is clad 'with mists of silver,' and 'is bright with burning gold.'
 He is filled with home-yearnings. He sees the mystic vision flow,
 'And live in men and woods and streams
 Until I could no longer know
 The dream of my life from my own dreams.

* * *

At last, at last the meaning caught—
 The spirit wears its diadem ;
 It shakes its wondrous plumes of thought
 And trails the stars along with them.'

A. E.'s expression of love is to a great extent coloured by his spiritual imagination. He soars beyond the region of the senses and is seen winging his flight in an atmosphere far above the reach of common men. He is addressing his beloved:

'So in thy motions all expressed
 Thy angel I may view ;
 I shall not on thy beauty rest,
 But beauty's self in you.'

The loved one is looked upon as a portion of the Eternal Beauty. The poet proposes to bring an offer to his beloved which sums up his whole attitude towards love.

'I thought, beloved, to have brought to you
 A gift of quietness and ease and peace,
 Cooling your brow as with the mystic dew
 Dropping from the twilight trees.'

One looks in vain for warmth of heart and passion of flesh and blood. But it throws a flood of light on the inmost recesses of the poet's heart. While he gazes at the light and the beauty and loses himself in peace, he still feels all the heart-pangs, love-ties of life. The voices of sorrow appeal to him for succour. 'Tranced in the innermost beauty, the flame of its tenderest breath,' he would still go down to the people who weep in the shadow of death. He would communicate the secret of joy to his less fortunate brethren.

'I would go as the dove from the ark sent forth
 with wishes and prayers
 To return with the paradise blossoms that
 bloom in the Eden of light:
 When the deep star-chant of the Seraphs I hear
 in the mystical airs,
 May I capture one tone of their joy for the
 sad ones discrowned in the night.'

The quality, the haunting melody and the essential spirituality of A. E.'s poetry are akin to India's thoughts and strivings. He has awakened many to the possibilities of spiritual life. It should be the special privilege of India to interpret the poet far more than 'fiercely-pulsed' Europe. He has sung of Sree Krishna. He has spelt the charm of 'Om' backward.

' Sounds the deep Om, the mystic word of might ;
Forth from the heart-hold breaks the living stream
Passed out beyond the deep heart music-filled.
The kingly will sits on the ancient throne
Wielding the sceptre, fearless, free, alone
Knowing in Brahma all it dared and willed.'

Scientific Trend of The Modern Universe

RABINDRA GUHA RAYE—*Fifth Year, Geology.*

FROM the very dawn of Science its exponents have been busy engaging their best attention to know exactly how this earth and the material world first came into existence. The combined efforts of the various branches of Science have materialised so far as to make us believe that before the creation of the Universe there was nothing in the unlimited space—no sun, no moon, no satellites, no nebulae ; stars, air, wind, water, life—all material substances were completely absent. The whole space was filled up by the all-pervading Ether, and had no end and boundary. But quite recently the German scientist Einstein contradicts this assumption and proves by rigid mathematical calculation that though the Universe is endless, it is not unlimited. “ The results of calculations,” he says, “ indicate that if matter be distributed uniformly, the universe should necessarily be spherical or elliptical. Since in reality the detailed distribution of matter is not uniform, the real universe will deviate in individual parts from the spherical, i.e., the universe will be quasi-spherical. But it will be necessarily finite.” The illustration of an ant creeping on a cricket-ball will serve as a good example of what he means by the terms “limit” and “finiteness” of the universe. The ant will move on the ball through eternity but will never come to an end, though the dimensions of the ball are quite limited. And, strange it seems when we find that Einstein’s theory gets a strong support from a more recent one propounded by another genius,—Sir James Jeans. But before this let us first try to have a glimpse of the old conception.

As has been said before, the unlimited space where the solar and the whole galactic system of stars and the more distant nebulae now exist was first pervaded by the imponderable and intangible medium Ether and was completely wrapped up by eternal darkness. “ First there was no light.” Those things which do not exist on the Universe at the present time were absent before the creation ; those which do were also absent—there were no sky, no water, no material substances ; there was no difference between day and night—no difference between life and death.

At first the darkness was wrapped up by darkness and the whole space was in an ethereal condition. And then by evolution there came into existence the Higher Soul—the Supreme One in the whole Universe.

During this condition of the Universe somehow or other a great number of electrical particles appeared ; and as soon as these particles appeared, they moved haphazard at their own sweet will in the electromagnetic space. They are classified into two sets, each set having distinct and different qualities—one class is Positive and the other Negative. As a result of the vibration and linear motion of these two sets of electrical particles the Light energy first came into existence. The ninety-two atoms—or should I say ninety-three?—were also the results of the combination of these two sets of particles ; and it is from these atoms that all the living beings as well as every kind of matter with which we are familiar had developed.

And then millenniums passed in this way until some of these particles combined together to form a compact mass, acquired a greater attractive power and attracted other particles towards them with the result that the compact mass grew gradually larger and thus a certain universe first sprang up. It is difficult even to surmise how many such universes are there in the eternal space, what are their mutual distances apart and how many planets and satellites are travelling around them. Sir James Jeans gives us only a rough idea about the number and relative distances. “ The total number of stars or universes is probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the seashores of the world. And if we reflect that an universe is reduced to the size of a ship, and distances in space correspondingly curtailed, we need not wonder that each ship would still be a million miles from its nearest neighbour.” There is another way to get an idea of their relative distances. Every star which we see from this earth—whether by the naked eye or through the high-power telescope—is itself an Universe. And the velocity of light is 186,000 miles per second. Now, the light of the nearest star from the earth takes at least an odd million years to reach our eye. Sounds pretty fabulous!—yet it is as true as our daily existence.

So we find our Sun was at first nothing but a small mass of those electrical particles. These particles, due to their rapid motion, were exceedingly hot and gradually began to change into atoms in the gaseous condition. This is the history of the creation of our Sun. Then, once it happened that one of the stars, moving with an enormous velocity into the endless space, accidentally came so near

the Sun as to raise, by the force of attraction, tidal waves upon its surface ; and some of these gaseous waves being detached from the surface of the Sun by vigorous force of attraction moved to join with the great mass of the star. These gaseous waves are termed 'nebulae' which are almost spherical in shape. But the star, due to its enormous speed, moved far away from the Sun before these gaseous spheres reached it ; and these spherical nebulae, instead of drawing nearer or coming back to the Sun, attained a considerable motion according to a certain law of Dynamics called the law of centrifugal force and began to revolve round the Sun. Our beautiful earth is one of these gaseous waves. Physicists have calculated that the temperature of the interior of the gaseous earth, when it was first formed, was more than ten million degrees measured on the centigrade scale. Since then for millions and millions of years it has been radiating its heat to the surroundings ; consequently its upper surface has been gradually cooling until it has attained the present temperature and climate. And the various atoms which were at first in the gaseous condition, by chemical action and physical force have built up the present stratosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and any other sphere, if possible. But this is altogether a different tale to be told.

Life can exist only on a planet ; but planetary systems are few. According to Sir James Jeans, the zones within which life is possible, all added together, constitute less than a thousand million-millionth part of the whole of space. " Into such a Universe," he says, " we have stumbled, if not exactly by mistake, at least as the result of what may properly be described as an accident. . . . It seems incredible that the Universe can have been designed primarily to produce life like our own ; had it been so, surely we might have expected to find a better proportion between the magnitude of the mechanism and the amount of the product. At the first glance at least life seems to be an utterly unimportant bye-product—we, living things, are somehow off the main line." A second careful glance, however, leads to a modification of this statement ; we shall soon come to that.

The conditions favourable to maintaining life must come to an end. The Sun, lacking the means to replenish its heat, grows ever colder ; and the earth, instead of drawing nearer to the Sun, by a law of Dynamics withdraws ever further from it. And the Universe itself is threatened with a " heat death." Its total energy having been uniformly distributed, all its matter will be reduced to a uniform temperature—a temperature far too low to support life. On the other

hand, the recent discovery of the liberation of tremendous amounts of energy from the disintegration of atoms together with the spectacular phenomenon of radio-activity has complicated the matter to a marked degree ; and the scientists are at a loss now to reconcile these two contradictory principles. True it is that the formulation of the Quantum Theory by Planck has revolutionised the basic principles of Physics and freed it from its dependence on the Law of Causation. This law had been accepted ever since Man ceased to attribute the seemingly erratic and unordered course of the Universe to the whims and passions of the gods, or of benevolent or malevolent lesser spirits. The whole course of events had been unalterably determined by the state in which the world found itself at the first instant of its history. Nature could move, said man, only along one road to a predestined end. Out of this theory resulted a movement to interpret the whole universe as a machine—a movement which steadily gained force in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was then that Helmholtz declared that the final aim of all natural science is to resolve itself into mechanics ; even Lord Kelvin confessed that he could understand nothing of which he could not make a mechanical model.

Professor Planck's tentative explanation of certain phenomena of radiation and the theory arising out of it that the course of Nature proceeded by tiny jumps and jerks, like the hands of a clock, did not at once sound the death-knell of this time-honoured conception of Physics, for nothing is more strictly mechanical in its action than a clock. But in 1917, Prof. Einstein showed that this theory entailed consequences far more revolutionary than mere discontinuity. It appeared to dethrone the Law of Causation from the position it had heretofore held as guiding the course of the natural world. Science could not now assert that state A was inevitably succeeded by state B. It could only say that state A may be followed by state B or C or D or innumerable other states. It can, it is true, say that B is more likely than C, C than D. But just because it has to speak in terms of probabilities, it cannot predict with certainty which state will follow which ; this is a matter which lies on the knees of those ultra-cosmic agents—on the knees of the gods, whatever gods these be. So, the old Scienticism of the nineteenth century is discarded.

Sir James summarises some of the experiments out of which was established what Prof. Heisenberg calls the " Principle of Indeterminacy." In spite of Sir James's extraordinary gift for making the rough places of science plain to the lay-mind, these experiments and analogies drawn from everyday life that illustrate them are not always

easy to follow. But the conclusion is plain enough:—"Our man-made machines are, we know, imperfect and inaccurate, but we have cherished a belief that the innermost workings of the atoms would exemplify absolute accuracy and precision. Yet Heisenberg now makes it appear that Nature abhors accuracy and precision above all things." The same thing can be shewn from another standpoint—from the standpoint of Ether. Physicists are beginning to suspect that we live in a Universe of waves, and nothing but waves. These waves are of two kinds—"bottled up" waves which we call matter and "unbottled" waves which we call radiation or light. If annihilation of matter occurs, the process is nearly that of unbottling imprisoned wave-energy and setting it free to travel through space. These concepts reduce the whole of the Universe to a world of light, potential or existent; and so the whole story of its creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in six words—"God said, let there be light."

But it is difficult to imagine a wave which does not travel through something concrete. It must have a medium to undulate in; and this medium is Ether. But Einstein says that modern Physics is pushing the Universe into one or more Ethers. A remarkable saying! and the method by which Sir James expands and illustrates it is one of the most difficult methods. The new Ether, like the old one, is only a hypothesis—a figment of the mind. Its existence cannot be proved; we assume it is there because this assumption can be made to account for certain observed physical phenomena. The "Theory of Relativity" has achieved a surprising triumph in recent years since the German physicist Sommerfeld in Munich succeeded in explaining mathematically the so-called fine structure of spectral lines of Hydrogen and Helium with the help of this theory. In addition to this, Sommerfeld was able to predict certain complicated groups of lines in the Helium spectrum, already elucidated by the Danish scientist Bohr, from calculations based on the theory of relativity—which were subsequently confirmed by Paschen in Bonn by means of very delicate spectral measurements.

So far we know of three phenomena that are bound to turn out differently according to Einstein's theory from what they would according to the older theories. One of them concerns the deflection of light rays in the Sun's gravitational field. Let us begin our consideration by stating that a ray of light moving horizontally outside a vertically accelerated chest—say an electric lift—and entering it by a small hole, will describe a curved path with reference to the

chest. If, according to the equivalence hypothesis, we assume the path of a ray of light in a corresponding gravitational field to be curved in the same way, then this indicates that a ray of light describes the same path under the influence of gravitation as any material body travelling with the velocity of light ; or, in short, the light ray falls in a gravitational field. Now, for bodies in very rapid motion, the Law of Motion resulting from the theory of relativity differs considerably from the Newtonian law. In the present case, we find that rays of light suffer twice the deflection in a gravitational field according to Einstein's theory of what they would according to the Newtonian theory, assuming, of course, that in this latter case, too, rays of light fall like material bodies. Hence the matter stands thus:—Conformably to Maxwell's theory of light no influence of the Sun's gravitational field on the propagation of light is to be expected. The deflection would have to be equal to zero according to that theory. However, if contrary to Maxwell's theory, we assume that rays of light fall in the gravitational field, the result arising out of Newton's theory of gravitation is a deflection of light rays passing the Sun's limb amounting to $0.85''$; whereas the deflection of $1.7''$ results from Einstein's theory of gravitation. The observations of both the British expeditions under Eddington proved the latter value to be the right one.

The old conception of mechanical Ether has also been discarded. If it really corresponded to any physical condition of the Universe ; if, as some thought, it was blowing round and through us at the speed of a thousand miles a second, or as others thought, it was stationary, it could be used as a standard to determine at what rate the Universe was moving. But all experiments to discover the pace at which the Universe moves have failed. In 1905, Einstein propounded the supposed new law 'of Nature in the form—" Nature is such that it is impossible to determine absolute motion by any experiment whatever." Calculation cannot be made, because there is no such thing as absolute rest. A ship which is becalmed is at rest only in relation to the earth ; but the earth is in motion relative to the Sun, and the ship with it. If the earth were stayed in its course round the Sun, the ship would be at rest relative to the Sun, but both would still be moving through the surrounding stars. Again, check the Sun's motion through the stars, and there still remains a motion of the whole galactic system of stars relative to the remote nebulae ; and these remote nebulae move towards or away from one another with speeds of hundreds of miles per second or more. By

going further into space, we not only find no standard of absolute rest but encounter greater and greater speeds of motion. So the idea of a mechanical all-pervading Ether has been dethroned and the principle of relativity reigns in its stead. To get even a glimmering of what this principle means needs a great mental and imaginative effort. The phenomenon of electro-magnetism may be thought of as occurring in a continuum of four dimensions—three dimensions of space and one of time—in which it is impossible to separate the space from time in any absolute manner. In other words—“Continuum is one in which space and time are so completely welded together, so perfectly merged into one, fused into one, that the laws of Nature make no distinction between them, just as on the cricket ground length and breadth are so perfectly merged into one that the flying cricket ball makes no distinction between them treating the field merely as an area in which length and breadth separately have lost all meaning.” When Einstein explained his theory of relativity in the International Science Conference held in Paris in 1923, the German mathematician Minkowski said, “Space in itself and time in itself sink to mere shadows and only a kind of union of the two retains an independent existence. And the continuum must be thought of as something real and objective.”

The physical phenomena of the Universe are to be explained in terms of this space-time continuum. Matter and gravitational forces are represented by “crumplings” of the continuum; even electro-magnetic forces may soon be reduced to the same lowly status. Prof. Weyl has pointed out that the continuum imagined by Einstein and found to be adequate to explain gravitational phenomena is not, in respect of its metrical properties, the most general type of continuum imaginable. A further generalisation is possible, and the new curvatures introduced must, in necessity, bring about new apparent forces other than gravitational. Weyl’s investigation shows that the new forces would have exactly the properties similar to electric and magnetic forces. If so, the Universe will have resolved itself into an empty four dimensional space totally devoid of substance and totally featureless except for the crumplings—large and small, intense and feeble—in the configuration of space itself. As a final figure of the Universe, Sir James offers the soap-bubble. “The Universe is not the interior of the soap-bubble but its surface, and we must always remember that, while the surface of the bubble has only two dimensions, the Universe-bubble has four—three dimensions of space and one of time. And the substance, out of which this bubble is blown, i.e., the soap-film, is empty space welded on to empty time.”

The manner in which Sir James Jeans shows the bearing of those remote and majestic abstractions on the origin and purpose of human life has a poetical quality and tentative tone that one does not usually associate with the utterances of scientists. "Many would hold," he says, "that from the broad philosophical standpoint, the outstanding achievement of the twentieth century Physics is not the theory of relativity or the theory of quanta with its present apparent negation of the forces of Causation, or the dissection of the atom with the resultant discovery that the things are not what they seem; it is a general recognition that we are not yet in contact with ultimate reality." He says that the meaning of the Universe is most likely to be apprehended by the most abstract of the Sciences, i.e., pure mathematics. If the Universe be susceptible of explanation by mathematicians then man is not the anomaly—the accident—that he appeared to astronomers and physicists, nor are his processes of thought irrelevant in the final sum of things.

If the Universe is a Universe of thought, then its creation must have been an act of thought. Indeed, the finiteness of time and space, as shewn in the Theory of Relativity, almost compels us, of themselves, to picture the creation as an act of thought; and, time and space, which together form the setting for the thought, must have come into existence as a part of this act. The new knowledge thus compels us to revise our hasty first impression that we have stumbled into a Universe which did not concern itself with life, or was actually hostile to life. The old Dualism of Mind and Matter, which was mainly responsible for this supposed hostility, seems likely to appear through substantial Matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation of Mind. "We discover," says Einstein, "that the Universe shows evidence of a designing and controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds—not so far as we have discovered, namely emotion, morality or aesthetic appreciation, but the tendency to think in a way which, for want of a better word, we describe as mathematical." Even those of us who are not naturally mathematicians can take some comfort from this assurance.

Sunshine and Dreams

ABDUL MAGNI—*Fourth Year, Arts.*

IT is morning. There was rain in the early hours and now the earth looks fresh and lovely. . . . Mild, golden sunshine on the whole panorama of housetops and palm-trees and radio-poles, . . . a gentle breeze caressing the broad palm leaves, . . . a dreamy white mist rolling away gradually . . . reluctantly, as it were.

Oh God! how I love sunshine! I adore it! I feel it in all my nerves and capillaries . . . It is my "Pied Piper" . . . my "Peter Pan." . . . It entices my mind away from my works and surroundings away into distant lands of rich aromas and happy dreams and multi-coloured skies. . . .

. . . It whispers into my enchanted ears "There is in store for you a greater life . . . a life throbbing and pulsating with joy . . . Come with me right out into the sunlit world and you will enjoy it . . . Leave your rotten home and friends and come away . . . brave boy! . . . come away! . . ." Where? oh where! alas! I don't know! The sunshine drugs me, intoxicates me, . . . overwhelms my senses with its gentle caress . . . its rich, golden warmth . . . my mind gets lost . . . in a world of sunshine and dreams . . . a world heavily perfumed with roses and poppies and narcissus!

Dreams of a world all lit up with sunshine . . . —hazy, . . . mystic, . . . illusive as the sweetest of dreams always are. . . .

Sunshine in the Boi-de-Bologne of Paris . . . mellow, morning sunshine . . . men sitting on benches under trees with legs crossed . . . seeing people and smoking with half-shut eyes . . . Self-conscious-looking ladies with perambulators walking smartly . . . a solitary man, here and there . . . rambling . . . like vagabonds. . . .

Sunshine in the parks of Berlin . . . The Ulter de Linden and the trees by her side . . . fresh and lovely in the morning sunshine . . . gruff Germans walking along. . . .

Sunshine on dreamy Iceland! . . . an enchanting waste of soft, white snow glistening in the sunshine . . . sunlit wavelets lashing her shore. . . .

The snow-covered fields and forests of Sweden . . . looking glorious in the sunshine . . . Maybe, through one of these very forests Queen Christina galloped on horseback . . . majestic . . . yet lovely. . . . sad and serene . . . yearning for a life she was not meant for Maybe, . . . in these sunlit fjords of Sweden naughty boys still go out a-fishing on bright mornings . . . without their parents' knowledge. . .

A cloud of sorrow passes over my mind. God! why hadn't I been born in some far-away . . . dreamy sea-side village where people go out in the morning in boats . . . —to fish . . . far, far out into the sunlit sea!

The deserts of Arabia bathed in sunshine a limitless waste of undulating sands . . . dotted with hillocks and thornbushes. . . . no sign of life anywhere no sounds. . . .

An aeroplane sweeps into the horizon . . . lovely graceful . . . throbbing with life . . . resplendent in the sunshine! now it is disappearing in the distant horizon . . . where the blue sky and the arid desert embrace one another. . . . It's drone comes fainter and fainter till I can hear it no more. . . . Perfect silence again! . . . deep, sublime . . . uncanny in its unbrokenness! Sunshine shimmering on the sands. . . .

The forests and glades of lovely Hellas bathed in strong, tropical sunshine Sunshine too on her rivulets dancing through ages their merry march to the seas. . . .

. . . Perhaps in one of these very shady bowers overhanging the rivulets Goddess Diana—along with her divine companions—came to bathe . . . of a moonlit night. . . . Their marble-white bodies half visible in the silvery streaks of dreamy moonlight . . . filtering through the dense foliage overhead. . . .

Sunshine in the vineyards of northern Italy the land of poetry and blue skies and bright days, . . . of ideas and imagination, the land which drew into its rich, warm bosom the Brownings . . . and Byron and Shelly . . . and Keats . . . the land which inspired Dante and D'Anunzio. . . .

. . . The very air seems to be perfumed with love and romance . . and poetry of days gone by!

Blonde Italian damsels with their little brothers and sisters round them working in the vineyards gathering grapes a train thunders along the rail-track through the vineyards the maidens stop in their work and look up a blonde

girl looks conspicuous among them all . . . standing with her arms akimbo . . . smiling . . . like Goya's " La Véndee "

. . . A man in the train keeps looking at her till she can be seen no more and then heaves a deep sigh Why? ah! why? may be, memories of his distant home . . . far away in the tropics . . . flood his mind . . . memories of his mother and little sisters and brothers . . . and one whose memory is sweeter still The train thunders on, leaving the vineyards behind . . . the snow-capped Alps . . . visible in the distance . . . sunshine in the prairies of Central America a limitless sea of tall, thin grass . . . swaying to and fro in the wind Far, far away in the distant horizon, the blue sky melts into the green sea of grass The rail-tracks running through the prairies sparkle in the sunlight. . . .

France! . . . sunshine on the graves of the youths who laid their lives down in the Great War a lily or a daisy . . . here and there by their graves . . . swaying in the breeze . . . Sunshine too . . . on the grave of Rupert Brooke . . . in distant Crimea. . . . Brave young men . . . full of life and love and ambition . . . leaving their homes . . . their loved ones . . . , and getting killed like dogs. . . .

" Patriotism!" . . . they call it;—the wise men. . . .

The snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas . . . mighty Everest . . . towering above them all . . . majestic, sublime, resplendent in the sunshine standing through ages and ages . . . unperturbed by the storm and stress . . . the toil and turmoil of mankind. memories of Mallory and Irvine . . . they strove to reach it and did not come back! . . . of Shipton and Wyn-Harris and Smythe—men who strained the utmost limit of human endurance to conquer it but failed. . . .

. . . The memory of James Ma'tern . . . may be in some dark crevasse . . . miles deep . . . there lies in eternal rest the brave dead!

. . . Every morning the sun's rays kiss him there . . . caress him . . . and whisper into his ears " Brave hero! . . . noble hero! . . . I love you! . . . I adore you! . . . you died for a great cause The world may soon forget you . . . but not I! . . . not I! . . ."

Again I look around from where I am . . . nothing but sunshine . . . everywhere . . . on the housetops and palm-trees Is there sunshine on my brother's grave in my distant home five hundred miles away? Will there be sunshine too on my grave . . . when I am dead? who knows!

. . . Ah! let me die in some distant desert . . . far . . . far away
from my home! Death coming slowly . . . radiant sunshine
. . . full on my face and limbs . . . memories of my mother, my little
brothers and sisters coming into my mind . . . hazily . . . dreamily. . .
. . . and then when I am dead let some poet sing for me some-
thing in the vein of—

“ For my home is in distant Binzen,
Fair Binzen on the Rhine!”

Napoleon and the French Revolution

SAILENDRANATH GHOSAL—*Fourth Year, History.*

THERE are not a few English writers who level the charge of betraying the cause of the French Revolution against Napoleon. Mr. H. G. Wells' picture of Napoleon suggests the existence of a sort of personal antagonism between the author and Buonaparte. Mr. Wells even says that Napoleon could not at all grasp the spirit of the Revolution. We hold a sort of contrary view, and shall, therefore, try to explain our contention.

We should ask ourselves two questions before we proceed to discuss how far Napoleon was the "Child of the Revolution" (as he said of himself). These are (i) what were the principles of the Revolution of '89 and (ii) to what extent did Napoleon follow them:

"Liberty," "Equality" and "Fraternity,"—these terms have always been used in respect of the French Revolution, and they suggest that the French people stood for these principles for all mankind. But observers of the French mind have maintained that the demand for "equality" was the strongest factor among the French from the beginning to the end of the Revolution. "It is one of the commonplaces of history" says H. A. L. Fisher, "that the passion for equality is stronger in France than the love of liberty. Liberty involves taking trouble, and any large delegation of political liberty imposes a burden, which, in default of tradition, training on the spirit of self-sacrifice, individuals or communities, may be unwilling to bear. Equality on the otherhand is so closely connected both with the democratic passion of envy and with the philosophic passion of distributive justice, and the principles of equality so glaringly violated by the social contrivances of the ancient régime, that it became at once and ever since remained the *cardinal axiom of the revolution*. Wherever the principle of liberty conflicts with that of equality it is the principle of liberty which has to yield." From Hearnshaw again, "The watchword of the French Revolution was Equality. True the words "la liberte" were often on French lips; but their connotation was different from their English counterpart. They meant a deliverance from fetters * * * they expressed a demand for removing

social barriers and class-restrictions, for the suppression of obsolete feudalities, for the emancipation of serfs, for the "throwing of careers open to talent," * * * when they had attained to equality they showed how little they cared for and understood liberty in the English sense by establishing a more strict and all-embracing subordination of the individual to the state than had ever been known before even in France." Allied with these, we must also reckon another important aspect of the Revolution. From its very beginning the Revolution was associated with war,—“a war for the acquisition of natural frontiers—for the propagation of natural rights. Almost from the very first, French democracy in spite of pacific professions was connected with war.”

Out of these principles Napoleon came about the close of the eighteenth century. He was, as he maintained, “the Child of the Revolution.” We shall see afterwards on what points he was not faithful to the Revolution, and we will have to consider whether these points were essential or not.

As a product of the Revolution, his duty it was to preserve intact its fruits, and if we carefully judge, we may, until Mr. H. G. Wells find out some truth in Napoleon’s claim that he “closed up the chasm of anarchy and put an end to chaos—cleansed the revolution from the filth it had accumulated.” Nobody in France ever wished to see the continuation of the Reign of Terror, and so the emergence of this masterful personality at this critical time was most welcome. Without Napoleon the principles or expectations from the Revolution would have been lost in the air.

The few closing years of the eighteenth century were passed in conquest and they do not supply us with materials for judging whether Napoleon’s ideals coincided with the revolutionary spirit, this we must seek in the periods of the Consulate and the Empire. “We have done,” said Napoleon, “with the romance of the revolution, now we shall commence its history.”

We have seen that the cardinal spirit of the Revolution was the spirit of “Equality” and this sentiment was so strong that it would not be very wrong if we identify it with the revolutionary sentiment itself. Indeed, the most intolerable and painful thing for a man is to be compelled to regard himself as inferior to a group of men or a particular man either socially or politically. And the absence of distributive justice becomes all the more unbearable when economic disadvantages are added to it. These were exactly what prevailed in

France. The Revolution, then, was the natural outcome of this disregard of the right of equality. The fine sentiment of the French people had been deeply wounded, and it burst forth in full fury.

Did not Napoleon satisfy the thirst of the French for equality? Did he not make popular sovereignty and equality in all their aspects the basis of his government?

The blessings of equality were secured. The principle that career was open to talent was fully assured. In the social order, Napoleon rigidly maintained the abolition of privilege, of serfdom and feudalism, and sought to guarantee to all Frenchmen equal justice, equal rights and equal opportunity of advancement. The basis of his government was the plebiscite. Says Fisher, "The State which Napoleon founded was an autocracy based on the plebiscite. Despotism was essential to his own purposes and to the needs of France as was the support of the nation duly and patently expressed. "Confidence," according to the famous dictum of Siéyès, "must come from below, power from above." Again, democracy was defined to be a "career open to talent, and in this sense it might be contended that the Napoleonic state was democratic. The principle of *social equality*, which was the most precious conquest of the revolution, was secured, not indeed with logical completeness, but more fully than in any other European country in the institutions of the Consulate and the Empire." That confidence came from below and that it came in a surprisingly large measure, had been fully demonstrated by the popular votes which sanctioned the appointment of Napoleon at the head of the state. Napoleon was backed by the people even to the last moment of his residence in France. Whatever may it be due to, we are not in a position to level the charges of either demagoguery or tyranny against him. He grew from republican ideas, he maintained his position by their help and he carried the most needful and beloved principle of the French to its logical conclusion.

We shall now treat of the points in which he was not favourable to the Revolution. He broke with the revolutionary traditions in many ways—he restored Catholicism to its lost position and also aristocracy. He did not accept the idea of constitutional limitations, and denied civil rights to individuals in the fullest sense. Furthermore, (i) he set up an Empire instead of a Republic, (ii) he continued the policy of war, which he ought to have given up when he obtained the supreme power in the state. Of all these charges it would, of course, be wrong to absolve Napoleon, yet by close observation, we shall have some truths revealed in his favour.

As to these charges, let us first see what he himself had to say. "Every future historian will have to allow my share * * Facts speak for themselves * * * I ennobled the people and stabilised the throne. I encouraged all who had talents, I rewarded every merit and widened the boundaries of fame and glory. Could not the historians protect me against many grave charges? If I am accused of despotism, they can claim that Dictatorship was necessary in the circumstances. Is it freedom I attacked? They can answer that anarchy was still threatening on our very threshold. Love of war? I was never the aggressor. Striving for world-dominion? This arose accidentally because of the conditions of the time. Too ambitious? Yes, true indeed. But my ambition was of the sublimest."*

Thus if we do a little justice to him, we can find out some justification for his Empire, his suppression of liberty and his war-policy. As to the first—the Empire—Napoleon had his own views on it. He did not believe, like Burke, that anything can be made permanent or meant for social good if it has no history of its own. Slow growth seems to have been his ideal. He would shape the same substance according to the necessities of the time. Thus he maintained that in France he could not have been President Washington. Conditions in America were different from those in France—the home of Grand Monarchy. Moreover, the French people had no serious grievance against the system of kingship, and if Louis XVI had possessed any strength of mind he could have himself become the champion of the Revolution. Writers like Montesquieu, Voltaire and others also had no prejudice against monarchy—against what they protested was the absolutism of the kings with its evil effects on society.

Nor was the Empire of Napoleon at all unpopular among the French. "I did not usurp the crown," said Napoleon, "I found it in the gutter, and the French people put it on my head."

His suppression of political liberty will also find some defence. During such a transitional period in a country every government in the world would have followed the same course. For example, let us take into the consideration the conditions of England during this epoch. The liberal Pitt, who had once advocated Parliamentary Reforms, turned into a reactionary. English liberty was thoroughly suppressed. If we read the happenings in England, we will reflect

*Emil Ludwig's "Napoleon."

how desperate the Government of Pitt became ;—and the judges, who were made the engines of oppression, had themselves doubted in their sanity long after the peril of the revolution was over. Napoleon wanted twenty years but he got only thirteen. We must remember he got little time to consolidate his empire. We can understand that the spirit of law and order dominated his mind more than the spirit of conquest. The latter was the means, the former was the end in view of Napoleon. He wanted to create a peaceful atmosphere in Europe ; but unless he possessed supremacy in the Continent, he held, it was not possible for him to do what he pleased. His was a view, a completely antagonistic view when compared to the old system of Government. Great men like Goethe viewed in him a great world-spirit whose mission it was to destroy the evil and plant the good. Late in life he expressed that his boasts were not for his conquests, for, he said, “ Waterloo will smash such boasting,” but his “ laws were his treasures.” When we consider the list of his constructive works within such a short space of time, we cannot but regard Napoleon like the late Mr. Gladstone as “ the Greatest Administrator of History.” He expressed a fact in the evening of his life that he desired peace ; but the powers of Europe, he added, prevented him from realising his ideal. This, in some measure, is true, for we find him writing to the King of Prussia before he attacked him, “ Do not sire, plunge your children into such horrors and misfortune. * * * * I warn you, you will be defeated.”

Restoration of Catholicism and an able aristocracy, or the suppression of civil liberty for some years—years full of excitements and intrigues—or the extension of French frontiers to propagate revolutionary doctrines in distant lands, even all these cannot form the grave charge Mr. H. G. Wells would like to accept. Napoleon had many limitations, and the greatest of them seems to be his *ambition*. But had there ever been a conqueror like himself who maintained a balance between conquest and national well-being? If we weigh the true ideas of the French Revolution and its antagonistic tendencies which dominated Napoleon’s mind, the balance, no doubt, inclines in favour of the former. And hence we say that Napoleon was in a greater measure the product and propagator of the spirit of the Revolution than its destroyer. Only such writers, who expect perfection in things and wander in the realm of theories and speculations, would be dissatisfied with Napoleon’s measures. But Napoleon was, after all, a man of action, and he knew realities in things. He knew that it is all very good to nourish sublime ideas

about man and his relations to the state, but that when one is faced with the work of actual administration, one finds what a great problem it is to guide and tackle human affairs.

* * * * *

Take a famous man's career and you will find there is much to praise and much to denounce in his dealings with men and facts. We do not always form an impartial view of his character ; either we overrate his actions or we underrate them. Why? Does it not seem that each one of us possesses some sort of opinion on life, the frustration or fulfilment of which draws our aversion or applause respectively? Every person sees things from his own angle of vision. This is why impartial judgment is so rare in the world. From start to finish Mr. H. G. Wells was determined to blacken Napoleon—he sought to find out some ultimate evil motive even where he was forced to acknowledge Napoleon's good actions. For instance, the constructive works of the Consulate was meant, according to Mr. Wells, to enable France to encroach on others' peace and happiness! This is the way in which the author of the "Career of Napoleon Buonaparte" draws his picture! When great writers indulge in dogmatism and sweep away everything by their powerful pens, we millions of dumb readers are forced to accept their statements, for the voice of protest against them will only sound ridiculous in the ears of the public!



International Intellectual Co-operation and Children's Education

SUDHIR KUMAR GHOSH—*Third Year, Arts.*

TO-DAY we live in a world in which the interests of all the nations are intertwined. One cannot live without another. No nation of the modern world can be self-sufficing in the truest sense of the term. We live in a world of co-operation. The Great War has taught us the lesson that the misery of a particular country will not keep itself confined within the four corners of that country alone. It will affect others. The chaos in Russia affects the trade of the whole world. The poverty of Germany and Austria, after the War, caused hardship even to the paddy cultivator of India. If there be some disturbance in far off Peru or Chile, the reverberation will be felt even in our own country. The civilisation of the twentieth century is a civilisation of co-operation, and international relations are everybody's concern to-day.

The problem of international relations is indeed a very difficult problem—difficult because of the selfishness and greed displayed by most nations in their relations with one another. This selfishness and greed are the causes of the failure of all international congresses and conferences. The World Economic Conference has failed. The annual Disarmament Conferences have so far failed and all attempts made by the League of Nations for world co-operation have also proved futile, because of this spirit of national egoism. No Disarmament Conference can disarm the nations so long as this spirit of selfishness and avarice exists in the national mind. The problem of international relations is, therefore, a problem of removing this evil spirit from the minds of the nations.

Knowledge is the greatest bond of unity between human beings. The unity of the scholar, who is searching for knowledge sitting at his silent work in a Bengal village, with the educated citizens of the farthest corner of Europe, is far truer than his unity with his unlettered neighbour who lives next door. The light of knowledge and understanding unites the human race and the darkness of ignorance severs the bonds of co-operation. The unity that knowledge and education bring about extends beyond the limitations of time and space. This unity—this

unity of mind and intellect—alone can wipe out the spirit of selfishness and greed from the national minds.

The child of to-day is the citizen of to-morrow. Let all the “citizens of to-morrow” who are living to-day on the face of the earth imbibe the spirit of international co-operation through the education they receive. Let not the evil spirit of national insularity enter into their plastic minds. Let them have a broader and more generous outlook. If we can do that we may hope that there will really come this “to-morrow” in the history of mankind when we shall have no longer to solve international problems with aerial bombs, poisonous gases and other more deadly explosives.

To come down to the world of practice from the world of ideas: how to develop the spirit of international co-operation among children and young people, is the problem that faces us all. The solution of the problem lies in sound education. To imbue the child with a deep and lasting affection for its family and country remains to-day, as in former times, the first principle of sound education. But a true patriotism understands the patriotism of others; and a recognition of the necessity and omnipresence of co-operation, both within and without the State, must be emphasised in any education that is to fit young persons for modern life. Such instruction cannot be carried out merely as a subject or part of a subject in the school curriculum. It must permeate all the child’s surroundings.

Now, in order to tackle the problem we have to adopt various methods of promoting two kinds of contact—direct and indirect—between the children of different nations. Let us first consider what methods can be employed for promoting indirect contact.

Children’s games of foreign lands may be introduced and suitable films and pictures may be exhibited. Lectures, displays of foreign handicrafts and visits to historical and artistic museums may also be arranged. Fêtes and pageants and performances of music should also prove helpful. In fact, appeals should be made to the artistic sense that will encourage a mutual appreciation of different civilisations and peoples.

Arrangements can be made for inter-school correspondence being carried on between classes or other homogeneous groups, under the supervision of qualified teachers. These kinds of correspondence might include exchange of pictures, photographs, postage stamps, specimens of work and any object suitable for the purpose. This inter-school correspondence should be associated, where possible, with the work done in the school and the exhibition of materials thus collected.

Translation should be undertaken of suitable foreign masterpieces including national folk-tales and arrangements made for their publication in juvenile periodicals. Valuable results might be obtained at a conference where editors of important juvenile periodicals could discuss the possibilities of encouraging these contacts. Studies of different civilisations and the scientific and comparative study of present-day events should be encouraged. There may be other methods suitable for the various countries, by which solidarity between children and students of different nations may be outwardly manifested, e.g., a badge or certificate of international co-operation.

The scope of direct contact is, however, very limited. There are, of course, some methods which may prove advantageous and useful. The most important methods of direct contact are international camps and international holiday colonies. The institution of international camps by the promoters of the Scout movement can be taken as a model. The best examples of international holiday colonies are the health resorts of Switzerland. Interchange of pupils between schools of different countries may be arranged. Some co-ordination of the standards of school-work in different countries might greatly facilitate these exchanges. Lastly, vacation courses and international children's gatherings may also be tried.

These are only a few of the many suggestions that can be put forward for the solution of the problem of instilling the international spirit into the youthful minds of children. Children as future citizens should be brought up, for the sake of their own mental balance and for the general good, to appreciate their duty and learn that they must manfully fulfil all their obligations towards their family, comrades, village, town and State. They should further be taught that this essential solidarity must not and cannot end at the frontiers of each State. The child must learn that civilisation has been, and still is, the common work of all peoples, even of those who, as history shows, have been brought most forcibly face to face ; that it is this common bond—and the desire to maintain it and strengthen it in spite of inevitable differences of opinion—which has led to the creation of the League of Nations.

The Call

ASOK MITRA—*Third Year, Arts.*

DRIP, drip, drip,—all the live long day! Black masses of clouds lowering on the earth, dense and immense, lowering still, and still more, threatening it, as it were, with a deluge. What has it a mind to, I wonder; will it stifle us, choke us with its huge mass, its water-logged strips! What does it mean by all this! I grow quite dizzy as I look at them, they numb me almost. It is rather uncanny to see clouds lowering upon the housetops, entombing them with its downpour, coming down and down, and down.

At times dull and at other moments fascinating. You lie down straight, flat on your armchair, limbs stretched, looking at the huge black clouds through the window-panes, marking the page of a book on your lap by your forefinger. You have not the mood to read the book, only it is there to make you think that after all you have been reading. Even such we have been! It pains me to think that we have grown so businesslike as to think a moment that has been allowed to lie fallow without any work, as lost. Inconceivable it seems: lying fallow is lying dead, nothing better than that, we think. Grown rather rigid, haven't we? But I have no mind to pour anathemas on this our busy modern age, no.

Only, what I say is that it were good to pause a while at times to catch a stray tune, to luxuriate and ruminate upon it!

For there are so many lovely stray tunes floating in the air; only they await your mood to act upon you. They would not possess you, all that they want is a bit of consideration, a condescending side-glance at the most. They would be off as soon as you wish them off. They are timid, they have not the power to conquer and possess the mind, they want soft moments for their play.

And such a stray note I have just caught, and that is—some one must have been calling me!

It tickles the fancy to think of this. Some one calling!—an absurd thing, and yet it does not sound half so absurd to my ears. The ear-drum must have been put out of the right sort of tension then. I must have been half-dazed, otherwise why, I can't think of it soberly.

But this idea: how fascinating! I read them from my mind,—some one must have been calling me; I read it, and read it over

again. A strong beat accompanying each word: it grows quite musical. I once caught a tune from a record—there is something nice about your smile, mademoiselle! Very much like that, yes, exactly. I might almost give my words a tune. And yet! It seems as if these words would spread a cobweb of tunes over me. Would it make me gasp, I wonder!

And still that drip, drip, drip ; and drip, drip, drip. All at once I grow restless, perhaps without cause. I crane my neck to look at the street, my eyes directed upon the passers-by. Men shuffling along in raincoats, with fervid steps. 'Holla,' I cry out from within the room to an acquaintance of mine, he stops, a lot of clothings on him and a big umbrella on top of all. 'Holla,' he says and stares at me questioningly, evidently annoyed. I greet him with a smile and no words. He gets increasingly annoyed, the wet clothings sit so tight upon him ; he stamps his feet upon the ground. 'Do you mean to say anything?' Pause, no answer. Then he turns his back in a huff and grumbles, 'it's all moonshine, that fool of a fellow sitting cosy in the room, and crying out to people for nothing ; an exceedingly pretty business this, if ever I catch him,' and etcetera ; and gradually he moves off. Strange, I think, men can have no sense of fun, they are so funny, they miss the right mood at the right time: pooh. And then I sink into the chair again.

Everything has lapsed into a torpor ; and outside, the wind does not howl, only it gives an angle to the falling rain as it strikes softly against the window-panes. The cocoanut trees stand erect, their branches drooping under the rain. No more of this disturbing, stifling quiet, I exclaim. I am almost fed up with it. Were I a knight-errant, a new knight dubbed by no less a person than Sir Lancelot, a Sir Gareth with a squire like Sancho Panza I would have asked for nothing more. Rushing through the green woods, following a green maid to save her fustress, caring for no calamity, quaking at no danger but galloping straight on. Suddenly a tall knight, a huge giant, sprouts up from round a corner and challenges me forthwith. With a proud bow and a flourish I pick up the gauntlet ; what should be its colour? red? well, never mind what it be, I don't exactly remember. We part, and on we rush at each other shaking the very trees of the forest. And such a crash! My spear shivers in two just at the joint of the breast-plate and the collar-plate of the other knight, he falls, he gasps. My Sancho rushes forth, to hold him tightly, violating all the laws of knight-errantry, evidently an untutored squire. I hold him off, and gradually the knight succumbs, and I ride victorious on and on.

Topping victory, but only at the expense of a rap at the knuckles striking against the handle of the chair. It's a pity! we don't get any opportunities for the fulfilment of our youthful desires. Our knights are nipped in the bud before they can tell their tales. Nowadays we lie famished. And so I suffer from a relapse into a void.

After all, might not some one call? Is it so absurd? Somewhere, some one, something at least, might, for the matter of that, beckon to me and invite me. Might there be anything here in this chair?

A problem indeed, even for the laughing philosopher. It seems something must be calling me, may be the chair, the table, the ant crawling up the chair-handle, or the black clouds surging to and fro in the vast dome of the sky, or the sea which is quite as vast.

May be it is the sea that calls: the sea! I have never been to the sea; but what of that, there is no reason why it cannot call me. Why, it is obvious that the sea calls, the very thought that the sea might be calling convinces me that the sea is calling. What object, other than the sea, can call me so passionately? The surge of the sea has already found a corresponding surge in me. I feel like a perfect sea-dog, a sea-farer, and it seems as if I must cry out:

Let me go
The sea calls me everyday, every minute,
And the call echoes in my veins:
Stronger than hardships is the subtle call of the sea.

We go, we know not where,
Until we happen to spy the distant land,
And our heart divides between
The land and the sea, I know not which part wins.

Until we launch again
Out into the open sea, the brine salt my lips
When like a free sea-wolf I feel,
My breasts seem as tho' they'd burst in joy.

Strange sounds, strange smells, strange sights
Of the ocean deep, I hear, I smell, I see,
And they in turn fill me with a passion, a dream
Queer and dizzy, as if I had been in a drowsy sleep.

For I am the sea, the sea is no deeper
Than my heart which knows no bottom:
The billows which surge in my veins
Are no less than those the sea heaves up;
And the inner and the outer seas need communion.

A passion. But some moments afterwards, the rumble of the sea dies away in the distance, never to return save as in a dream, as a stranger whom I may chance to meet again one day.

And suddenly bright volumes of sound, increasing in pitch, gathering up strength and clearness float around me from a record. A piece of shellac with furrowed surface once stored up an immensely large number of tones and now they give them out, release them one by one. They float about me, very close ; it seems as if I could catch them by the handfuls, so dense and systematically they come forth. I lie as within a mist, an enchanting envelope. They take me to a region of bright colours and mellow colours, bright sunshine and soft moonshine, cloying odours and faint perfumes ; they rock me from one to another, never allow me to take root in any one of them and vegetate. Gradually they die away, and I am left for another wind to play upon me.

And so it has been drizzling all day long, patter, patter, on the roofs, and silently on the over-grown lawns, choking, it seems to me all of a sudden, this stuffy atmosphere ; you can't possibly remain within doors, nor go out, the roads are so muddy. I fling open the window, a soft gust of wind comes, touches me, and goes past me ; a wet, foggy and damp gust, like one in the hills. I notice the peculiar scent in it, a scent of the damp earth, a whole bundle of scents delicately superposed. They roll out, one after another. I can recognise some, and cannot recognise others, and somehow one reminds me of a group of little yellow grass-flowers in the hills. Queer, isn't it, to remember yellow grass-flowers seen long ago, and almost forgotten?

Something must be calling me then. Something, may be from over the hills and far away! Who knows!

Agricultural Indebtedness in Bengal

KALIDAS LAHIRI—*Fourth Year, Arts.*

INDIA is predominantly agricultural and Bengal is all the more so. Yet the nature of agriculture here is crude enough, and the condition of the whole rural population is deplorable. The peasant takes a very bad start in life with his uneconomic holding of land due to endless subdivisions and fragmentations. The present land tenure and land revenue system in Bengal is also a serious menace to agriculture. There is hardly any peasant proprietor ; and the existing system of sub-infeudation eats away a great part of the peasant's income in the shape of land-rent paid to the numerous indermediate tenure-holders. For generations, the cultivator has been accustomed to a ceaseless struggle to extort a bare livelihood from insufficient holding, and has been subject to disaster from drought, flood or epidemic. It is only in the good year that he pays his way without a loan. In the bad, he will have to borrow for nearly everything he wants, for seed, cattle and clothes and even for much of his food. It is then that compound interest swells the amount, and the modest sum originally borrowed assumes unmanageable proportions. The debt once incurred chases the peasant throughout his life and leaves him more entangled at his death. Thus the debt is handed down to the posterity and accumulates through generations. A large proportion of the peasant's debt is in this way incurred by inheritance as ancestral debts. In many cases, these debts would have been avoidable ; for the crushing burden of the ancestral debt is due, in a great measure, to the peasant's ignorance of his legal position that the debts of a deceased person pass to his heirs only when they succeed to the deceased debtor's property and to the extent of such property. ' There is also a strong sentiment among all Bengalees that a debt incurred in this world continues to outweigh the debtor in the next. . . . It is universally considered a sacred duty of a pious son to redeem his father's debt, whether he inherits any property of his father or not, and even when the debt is irrecoverable by the law of limitation or otherwise.'¹ Peasant-

1. *The report of the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee, 1929-30, pp. 33.*

indebtedness in Bengal, therefore, goes on increasing with the mere passing of time.

In 1929 the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee estimated the total volume of agricultural indebtedness in Bengal to be at Rs. 100 crores, and the average debt per agricultural family at Rs. 160. Things have steadily been worsening since 1929, and the Bengal Census Report of 1931 states that in the course of a year the average has risen by Rs. 6 for every family.

The serious feature of the case is that a large part of the debt is unproductive, only an insignificant portion being due to land-improvement. 'One of the disadvantages of unproductive debt is that it tends to increase automatically and leads to a huge amount of permanent debt. Productive debt by improving conditions of agriculture creates its own means of payment, but unproductive debt is apt to be repaid with great difficulty ;¹ it is a sort of dead-weight charge.

The entire economic life of the village is based on a pervasive system of debt from which never a man escapes. 'To a heritage of debt every baby is born, loaded with debt the emaciated corpse is led to the funeral pyre.' The people are so accustomed to be in debt, to take it over from their fathers and pass it on to their sons that they accept indebtedness as a settled fact, and a natural state of life. So much is this the case that 'well-meant attempts to give them a fresh start by wholesale redemption of old debts have proved unsuccessful. Where co-operative societies have advanced enough to repay all the claims of money-lenders, the debtor fails to make the effort to pay regular instalments even when they are well within his capacity, and slips back into the old state of bondage.'²

This is a problem of growing importance, and its solution is a burning necessity for Bengal to-day, as the welfare of her people is so much dependent on agriculture. Expansion of suitable credit facilities and heavy reduction of debt are urgently called for.

Rural credit, broadly speaking, falls into two categories, the current debt incurred annually with the intention of repaying after the harvest, and the standing or the prior debt. 'As a matter of fact, owing to the high, and not infrequently usurious, rate of interest which has generally to be paid on current debt, and various other causes, the whole of it cannot often be repaid after the harvest, and the condition is that the portion outstanding adds to the standing debt.'³

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1. M. L. DARLING—*The Punjab peasant in prosperity and debt.*
 2. *The report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, pp. 435.
 3. *The report of the Central Banking Enquiry Committee*, pp. 61.

Agricultural loans are now supplied by the co-operative societies, loan offices and money-lenders. In the case of loan-operations, the Government directly provides finance in two ways, viz., under the Agriculturists' Loans Act (*takkavi* loans) and the Land Improvement Loans Act. But the actual cultivator rarely receives any loan from the Government under these Acts. 'The Government of Bengal apparently think ordinary loans to be beyond their scopes, and grant loans only in cases of natural calamities, e.g., floods and severe crop-failures.'¹

The money-lender is an indispensable feature in the rural economy. He is easily accessible and in many parts he is the only financing agency available to the agriculturist. The services rendered by the money-lender are in fact undeniable; the charge against him is that these services are rendered at too great a price. The rate of interest charged by the *mahajan* is so high and the conditions of borrowing so onerous that a big share of the *raiyyat's* income is eaten up by interest and other charges making repayment of loans difficult. This state of things produces an almost fatalistic result of the steady transference of agricultural land into the hands of the non-agricultural money-lender, ultimately leading to the creation of a landless proletariat with a reduced economic status. More recently, however, the powers of the money-lender have been directly attacked. The Usurious Loans Act of 1918 and the Bengal Money-lenders' Act of 1933 give wide powers to courts to intervene of their own motion wherever they consider that the terms of the loan are usurious. In the present state of affairs, however, the money-lender is a necessity and, that being so, his calling will not be abolished simply through legal enactments. 'If he is ever driven from the land, it will not be by legislation but by the growth of the co-operative movement, and more specially by the habits of thrift inculcated by that movement. Where thrift is absent, the vagaries of the monsoon drive the peasant to borrow, and until the co-operative movement spreads into every village and includes every inhabitant into its fold, borrowing will continue.'²

The case of the Loan offices at present is also not very encouraging. With their high discriminating rates of interest, they may be regarded as too expensive to the peasant who borrows on his precarious security. The only facility which is now available to the peasant for financing agriculture, and indeed the only effective method, is supplied by

1. *The report of the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee*, pp. 60.

2. *The report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, pp. 433.

the co-operative credit organisations. The Royal Commission on Agriculture rightly recommended that the greatest hope for the salvation of the rural masses from their crushing burden of debts rests in the growth and spread of a co-operative movement on sound lines based upon the careful education and systematic training of the peasants. 'Simple provision of cheap and abundant credit will not, however, solve the problem of indebtedness at a stroke and will not be of tangible benefit, if the borrower does not understand the economic value of the credit and does not exercise prudence or judgment in its use.'¹ The Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee points out that such 'provision of cheap and abundant credit' by the co-operative societies led to the accumulating overdues from the start of the organisation and only swelled the permanent standing debt of the *raiyat*. This sort of credit 'supports the borrower as the rope supports the hanged.'

In recent years the world-wide trade depression has greatly accentuated the situation. The prolonged slump in the prices of agricultural produce, both absolutely and relatively to those of the manufactured goods, has plunged the *raiyat* into still deeper waters. The index numbers given below tell a painful story how the income of the peasant has fallen greatly in relation to his expenditure.²

Cereals	...	...	71		
Pulses	...	...	83	Metals	... .. 101
Raw Cotton	...	...	73	Manufactured Cotton	115
Raw Jute	...	...	35	Manufactured Jute	... 74

The figures indicate the index numbers of wholesale prices in Calcutta. In the village, however, as every grower is equally pressed for cash and has to sell at the same time, the price obtained by the cultivator is naturally depressed lower still by competition. The result is obvious; it has seriously affected the repaying capacity of the members of co-operative societies. It is hardly possible for them to make substantial payments out of the surplus left after meeting the cost of cultivation and maintenance expenses; and a large part of the outstandings of the societies have become overdue. The following table shows the growing figures of overdues in recent years.³

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1. *The report of the Central Banking Enquiry Committee*, pp. 65.
 2. *Indian Trade Journal*, August 9, 1934. (Figs. July, 1934). Prices in July, 1914 = 100.
 3. *The annual report of the work of the Co-operative Societies in Bengal, 1932-33*.

Year.	Amount due at the beginning of the year. Rs. (in laks).	Overdue. Rs. (in lakhs).	Amount repaid during the year. Rs. (in lakhs).	Percentage of	
				Collection.	Overdue.
1930-31	... 4,01,80	1,60,04	56,79	14.1	39.8
1931-32	... 4,32,44	2,43,88	46,87	10.8	56.3
1932-33	... 4,33,08	2,95,80	36,55	8.4	68.3

In view of the low ebb in which agricultural finance is at present the question of providing credit facilities, in the shape of long-term loans bearing a reasonably low rate of interest and repayable in small instalments, has naturally come to the forefront and has been engaging the attention of serious thinkers. The creation of facilities by dispensing long-term loans through an appropriate agency at low rates of interest would not only act as a safety-valve against the individual agriculturer becoming hopelessly indebted, but would also of itself react upon the money-market so as to reduce the general rate of interest charged on the short-term loans. The need for the establishment of a network of land mortgage banks will be even greater for this purpose than the extension of co-operative societies of the ordinary type. One of the chief drawbacks of the co-operative movement is that long-term and intermediate credit is often supplied by societies whose deposits are for short periods. 'Opinion on co-operative credit has now crystallised round the idea that the two varieties of credit cannot be supplied by the same type of co-operative organisation and that two different types of them are indispensable.'¹ Accordingly the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee suggested that 'the existing resources of the rural co-operative societies should be restricted to short and intermediate loans only.'

The Bengal Government has recently thought out a scheme of establishing co-operative land mortgage banks in the province, the area of each to be coterminous with the area of a subdivision. As an experimental measure, three of them have already been started at Pabna, Mymensingh and Comilla, and two more will be added shortly. The object of these banks will be to supply long-term credit at low rates to their members for the purposes of (i) the redemption of mortgages on land and liquidation of other prior debts; (ii) the improvement of land and methods of cultivation; and (iii) purchases of land in special cases on condition that such purchase will enable the *raiyat* to round off his holding and work it more economically. The membership of a land mortgage bank will be open to the members of co-operative credit

1. *The report of the Central Banking Enquiry Committee.*

societies and other cultivators, small land owners and rent receivers residing within the area of operation of the bank and falling within the description of 'persons of limited means' in the preamble to the Co-operative Societies Act II of 1912. The liability of members shall be limited to the nominal value of their shares. Loans will be recovered by instalments or by annuity methods. Effort will be made by the bank to ensure punctual payment of instalments. The working capital will be raised by floating debentures through the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank on the guarantee of the Government regarding interest to the debenture-holders. The Reserve Bank of India, which is shortly going to be started, will also be in a position to render considerable financial help to these institutions.

While congratulating the Government on its laudable, though rather belated, attempt, we cannot help contending that the scheme is not complete and without defects.

The temporary arrangement of financing the land mortgage banks through a separate department of the Provincial Bank is open to objection. The difficulties of such arrangements, as were felt in the Punjab and Bombay, have led to Madras having constituted a separate Central Land Mortgage Bank in the Presidency. This point has been emphasised in the report submitted by the representatives of the Bengal Provincial Bank who visited Madras to study the problem, and again by Mr. V. Ramdas Pantulu.

Moreover, the present system of land mortgage banking will be of help only to those who can produce adequate security based on land and who have got an adequate amount of surplus income which can be used in paying the regular annual instalments, and who will not have to seek the assistance from any money-lender for their current needs. A large number of agriculturists, however, do not possess adequate security for their loans. Again, they do not possess any surplus income wherefrom to pay their annual instalments on loans received. It is, therefore, impossible for them to have recourse to the land mortgage banks. The scheme is, however, a tentative one, and the authorities, we believe, are not unconscious of its inadequacy to deal with the debt-problem as a whole.

The time has come, when steps must be taken to tackle the problem of rural indebtedness in Bengal 'not only in the interests of the cultivators but also in the larger interests of the province.' Measures designed to grant relief to the cultivators from their existing burden should also be accompanied by measures restricting the incurring of new debts.

A vigorous policy of debt conciliation on a voluntary basis should

be adopted immediately. The debt conciliation committees may have a representative personnel consisting of *zeminders* and *raiyats*, *mahajans* and debtors. The purpose would be 'to arrange a sliding scale of debt-payment by easy instalments, to avoid the necessity of protracted and ruinously expensive legal proceedings, to make an end, by peaceful negotiations, of fancy rates of interest.' In fixing the annual instalments to be paid by the borrower, regard will have to be made for his paying capacity after making full allowance for his current expenses both for cultivation and maintenance. Dr. P. N. Banerjee suggests that 'the adjusted debt should be treated as a long-term deposit in a co-operative organisation in the name of the money-lender concerned, and the debtor-cultivator would pay off the debt to it by instalments out of his income.'¹

It need hardly be emphasised, however, that even this method cannot help the large number of agriculturists at present, when their economic position will not allow them to pay anything in annual instalments from their income. The value of their land to be mortgaged as security has fallen almost to nothing. The tone of the last annual report of the Registrar of the Co-operative Societies is not very encouraging. It is, therefore, not at all likely that the co-operative societies will undertake the scheme of conciliated debt-payments as suggested by Dr. Banerjee. It follows that under existing conditions, a large number of agriculturists have no facilities of getting rid of their standing debt. We consider that it is incumbent on the Government to take serious steps to deal with the problem.

The case for a simple Rural Insolvency Act should be considered. 'Just as creditors have the right to insist that all the debtor's assets should be impounded and applied towards the payment of the debts, so also the debtor, who has given up his assets, should have the clear right to be allowed to earn his living if he can and to be free to make a new start in life.'²

The Government of Bengal has recently appointed a Board of Economic Enquiry in order to facilitate co-operation between the Government and representatives of outside opinions in the study of economic problem affecting the province. The result is yet to come ; we shall wait to see if it can give any relief to the peasant in debt. Let us, however, ring a note of warning, in the words of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, that 'it must be clearly recognised that the worst policy towards debt is to ignore it and do nothing,' or worse days endure!

1. DR. P. N. BANERJEE—'Co-operation and Rural Development' in the *Bengal Co-operative Journal*, January-March, 1934

2. *The report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, pp. 441.

OURSELVES

THE COLLEGE UNION

The taking over of charges has provided the best opportunity for uttering time-worn platitudes regarding one's inability when we look upon the high traditions of the premier College, our mind fills with diffidence. The next moment we think of the unstinted co-operation of our fellow students and the able guidance of our revered teachers, and the diffidence is no more.

* * * * *

The Union came into being this year rather late. Its belated birth has naturally affected its activities. We hope to see it after the Pujahs a big buoyant baby.

* * * * *

We are studying in the premier College. It is but up to the prestige of the College that competitions in Music, Recitation and Debating should be organised. Her less renowned rivals have been enjoying these facilities for a pretty long time.

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It is rather painful that the only two meetings we had, were to mourn for the departed. The first meeting was held on the 2nd July with our Principal in the chair, to mourn the death of Sir B. B. Ghose. The following resolution was passed, all standing:

"That this meeting of the staff and students of the Presidency College expresses its deep sense of sorrow at the death of Sir B. B. Ghose, one of her ex-students, who lifted the tradition of the College so high by his services in the manifold fields of justice, politics and nationalism." A copy of the resolution was forwarded to the bereaved family.

The second one was held on the 11th September, and was also presided over by Principal B. M. Sen. The following resolution was passed, all standing:

"This meeting of the staff and students of the Presidency College desires to place on record its deep sense of loss at the sudden and premature death of Sir C. C. Ghose, Kt., a distinguished lawyer and a great judge, who was a student here for four years (1890-94), and expresses its sincere condolence to the members of the bereaved family." A copy of this resolution was forwarded to his son Mr. R. C. Ghosh, Bar-at-Law.

* * * * *

Before the Pujahs, on the 5th October, we will have our Autumn Social. On that occasion the students of the College would stage at the Calcutta University Institute Rabindranath's "Paritran" and Parasuram's "Birinchi Baba." A strong committee with Prof. C. C. Bhattacharyya and S. Bhaduri as Vice-Presidents and Messrs. Punyabrata

Bhattacharyya and Bikashchandra Roy as Joint Secretaries has been formed. We are highly indebted to Prof. C. C. Bhattacharyya and Sadananda Bhaduri who are supervising the rehearsals with untiring energy. The actors are now and again greeted by the smile of our revered Principal at the Physics Theatre, and his able guidance is much valued by the Joint Secretaries. We are missing much the popular face of Prof. Majumdar without whom socials in Presidency College can hardly be conceived of. He is ill. May he come round soon.

This Autumn Social is being held in aid of the Students' Aid Fund. It is common knowledge that there are numerous meritorious students who cannot join the College simply because of their inability to pay the high College fees. We hope that the function would attract the highest sympathy and co-operation of the staff and students alike.

One of the most interesting items of entertainment in the Autumn Social would be the College Orchestra which is being reorganised under the supervision of Messrs. Bidyut Ghose and Robi Mojumdar.

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The Bengali Literary Society have been formed with the following office-bearers:

Vice-Presidents—

Dr. S. K. Banerjee,
Prof. S. P. Bhattacharyya,
Prof. S. S. Bagchi.

Joint Secretaries—

Sudhendujyoti Majumdar, III Year,
Purnendu Banerjee, II Year.

* * * * *

This year there has been an amendment in the constitution of the College Union, inasmuch as we have two Secretaries and two Asstt. Secretaries instead of one. One is placed in charge of socials, the other in charge of meetings. This amendment is perhaps a gesture towards the revival of the debating activities of the College.

Office-bearers—

Principal B. M. Sen—*President*.
Prof. S. C. Majumdar—*Treasurer*.

Secretaries—

Punyabrata Bhattacharyya—*Socials*.
Provas Kumar Das—*Meetings*.

Asstt. Secretaries—

Bikash Chandra Roy—*Socials*.
Bidyut Ghose—*Meetings*.

PUNYABRATA BHATTACHARYYA,
PROVASH DAS,

Secretaries.

MATHEMATICAL SEMINAR

The Presidency College Mathematical Seminar was started on the 21st March at a meeting of the members of the Mathematics staff, convened by Dr. J. Ghosh, Head of the Department of Mathematics and presided over by Principal Sen. It was then decided that for the present the work of the Seminar would consist of arranging for lectures on Mathematical subjects not directly covered by the syllabus of the University examinations. Prof. Bhar was elected the Secretary of the Seminar.

Under its auspices, a course of lectures on the "Tensor Calculus" was delivered by Dr. Ghosh in April last.

G. D. BHAR,
Secretary.

ECONOMICS SEMINAR

The second meeting of the seminar came off on the 18th August with Dr. J. C. Sinha in the chair. Mr. Arabinda Mitra of the Fourth Year, Economics class, read a paper on 'The Gold Standard And Its Future.'

Messrs. Nisith Mitra, Bishnu Ghosh, Kalidas Lahiri, Satijiban Das, and Sudhir Ghosh took part in the discussion that followed.

Dr. Sinha summed up the whole thing in an enlightening speech. He critically compared the merits of paper and gold standards under ideal conditions. He weighed arguments on both sides and remarked that a well managed paper standard was as good as a currency based on gold. Reviewing the future of the gold standard he remarked that it was not likely that the world would return to gold in immediate future.

The third meeting was held on the 25th August in the Physics Theatre, Principal B. M. Sen presiding. Dr. S. N. Ghosh of the Information Section of the League of Nations delivered a popular lecture on 'The World Economic Situation and the League of Nations.' Dr Ghosh emphasised the various economic and political services of the League and remarked that in view of its future serviceability it is worth preserving with great care.

Dr. Ghosh invited questions from the audience and briefly answered them all. The meeting then came to a close after a neat little speech by Dr. J. C. Sinha.

KALIDAS LAHIRI,
Secretary.

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

The first meeting of this term came off on the 16th August in the Seminar room with Prof. Chattoraj in the chair. Mr. Ali Bin Abdul Kader, of the Fourth Year, Economics class, read a paper on "The Position of the Family in the State." The reader stressed the lack of literature on the subject and tried to determine the connection between the family and the state. He said that the family was the one thing needful for the establishment and growth of the state and that the

state was a federation of families, the latter being the federal unit. His paper was pithy and it attracted the attention of all present, among whom quite a number took part in the discussion. The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair.

In the second meeting we were glad to invite Prof. Binoyendra Banerjee of the Calcutta University to his *alma mater* to speak on the popular subject 'The Political Significance of Modern Dictatorship.' The meeting came off on the 8th September, in the Physics Theatre with Principal B. M. Sen in the chair. The speaker with various quotations and expositions of the opinions of great thinkers on his subject mentioned that there is every probability of the prevalence of Democracy as the more or less universal constitution in the future. He said that the dictatorial regime has its basic foundation in the present politico-economic stringency. When these turmoils are over, the path for Democracy will be paved. As Principal Sen could not be present throughout the meeting, Prof. Susovan Chandra Sarkar was requested to preside in his absence. He gave a neat little speech on the topic of discussion after which the meeting came to an end with votes of thanks to the chair and to the speaker.

AMIYA KUMAR BANERJEE,
Secretary.

HISTORICAL SEMINAR

The first special meeting of the Historical Seminar came off on Saturday, the 18th of August, 1934, at 2-15 p.m. in the Physics Theatre under the presidency of Principal B. M. Sen. There was a large attendance. Some members of the staff graced the meeting with their kind presence. Dr. Probodh Chandra Bagchi of the Calcutta University delivered a learned lecture on "Indian Culture and Civilization in Central Asia," with the help of some interesting slides. Our revered guest first made a brief survey of the geography of Central Asia, and then passed on to dwell upon the relations that had once existed between Ancient India and Central Asia. He told us that it was the Buddhist Missionaries, who first started in the second century B. C., that warm contact with the trans-Himalayan regions which was to last for several centuries. Buddhism found its numerous converts in Central Asia and consolidated its claims to be regarded as the first of the great world religions. Numerous Buddhist manuscripts, which have been found in Central Asia, speak of the nature and extent of the influence which India had once exercised over Central Asia. Moreover, the architectural and sculptural remains that have come down to our age escaping the ravages of time, furnish the scholars with ample materials to ascertain the nature of the Indian civilization in Central Asia and the impetus which India gave to the development of a Central Asian civilization. Central Asia not only borrowed Indian technics and designs but also depended upon her spiritual conqueror for the supply of inspiration for new artistic creations. Dr. Bagchi proceeded in this strain to enlighten us on those dark chapters of our country's achievements, which, when fully known through the efforts of earnest scholars like him, will make us proud of the country of our birth.

When Dr. Bagchi had taken his seat after the delivery of his interesting lecture, Professor D. N. Sen on behalf of the Seminar, offered votes of thanks to our distinguished guest and to the chair. The meeting then came to a close. Our guests were treated to light refreshment after the meeting.

The first general meeting of the above Seminar was held on Saturday, the 1st September last at 2-10 p.m. in the Seminar room with Prof. D. N. Sen in the chair. The attendance was tolerable. Mr. Rathindra Chandra Deb of the Fourth Year Class read a paper captioned "Was Richelieu really great?" The writer arranged his arguments in the following way. Truly, Richelieu evolved order out of feudal confusion, but his ruthless policy alienated the people and spread a sense of insecurity throughout the country. He procured for France the blessings of a strong and centralised government but he rigorously excluded all popular elements. Thus he pushed the people unaided in the hands of Louis XIV who would destroy even the vestige of political liberty in France. Richelieu by his intervention in the Thirty Years' War only paved the way for the ascendancy of France in the scale of European politics. It was Mazarine, who really obtained for the country the domination in Europe. Moreover, actuated by a desire to secure supremacy of France in Europe, Richelieu failed to comprehend the true base of national prosperity. He must be condemned for his utter lack of sympathy for the people and his callous disregard for their real happiness. France only achieved under Richelieu a florid greatness. The cardinal showed his lack of political insight by refusing to relieve the social miseries and economic distress of the people. He cared little to organise the confusion of France which was the financial system. He forced France to make needless sacrifices and left her the heritage of bankruptcy. The writer concluded by saying that constructive and beneficent statesmanship was not to be found in the cardinal minister, who must be held partly responsible for the Revolution of 1789.

Mr. Deb finished his paper and a discussion followed in which Mr. Nikhil Nath Chakravartty of the Sixth Year Class took part. An interesting point arose in course of the discussion. Mr. Chakravartty mentioned that Richelieu was really a great statesman, for it was his policy which was faithfully followed, till 1789 and a minister, who gave the direction to the country for so long a period, should be regarded as a great statesman. But Mr. Deb combated this view saying that the criterion of greatness lies not in the duration of a policy, chalked out by a minister, but in the intrinsic merit of such a policy.

Prof. S. C. Sircar then explained clearly Richelieu's position from every viewpoint. The President also spoke on the subject in his inimitable way, laying special stress on the destructive character of the statesmanship of Richelieu.

Then the meeting came to a close in due course.

RATHINDRA CHANDRA DEB,
Secretary.

PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

It is a pity, we have again missed Dr. Mahendra Nath Sarkar so soon after his return from the continent. He sustained injuries in an accident only to be forced to take leave. We hope to get him in our teaching staff after the vacation.

In his absence we have got in Prof. Ayyub a loving young professor, and we are really sorry that we shall have to miss his valuable advice and pleasant company after the Pujas. We wish his future to be crowned with success.

The second meeting of the Seminar for the session 1934-35 was held in the Seminar room, on Saturday, the 17th March, 1934, with Dr. N. K. Brahma, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S. in the chair. Mr. Taraprasad Das read a paper on "The Substance of Spinoza." The essayist gave a comprehensive estimate of Spinoza's Philosophy of Substance. When the paper had been read a general discussion took place. Then the President congratulated the essayist for his excellent paper, and after the speech from the chair the meeting concluded at 3-30 p.m.

The third meeting of the Seminar was held in the Seminar room on the 21st July at 2 p.m. with Dr. N. K. Brahma in the chair. Mr. Ajit Kumar Mitter of the Fourth Year Honours Class read a paper on "The Views of Life." Mr. Mitter began by defining materialism and idealism and ended in supporting the Ideal Realism of Hegal as the proper view of life. A general discussion took place after the paper had been finished. Mr. Sudhendujyoti Mazumdar pointed out 'नारावाद' "optimism" and "pessimism" as the views of life. After the speech from the chair the meeting came to a close at 3 p.m.

The fourth meeting of the Seminar was held on the 18th August, in the Seminar room, at 2 p.m. with Dr. N. K. Brahma in the chair. Mr. Lutfal Kabir of the Fourth Year Honours Class read a paper on "Mechanism and Teleology." The essayist held the brief for Martineau and produced his case in his language and arguments. Then a general discussion took place in which Mr. K. Mallick of Sixth Year, M. A. Class participated. He said that there is no antagonism between Mechanism and Teleology, while one is determined by the past, other is determined by the future. The president supported him and pointed out that they answer different questions of reality. 'When the former answers the 'how,' of the things, the latter answers the 'why.'

ANIL MOHAN GUPTA,
Secretary.

HINDI LITERARY SOCIETY

The first meeting of the Society was held on 27th July, 1934 with Mr. S. N. Lala in the chair when the following gentlemen were elected office-bearers for the current session.

Patron—Principal B. M. Sen.

President—Prof. S. N. Lala.

Vice-President—Prof. H. K. Banerjea.

Secretary—Mr. Badri Das Khaitan.

Asstt. Secretary—Mr. Satya Deva Jalan.

The second meeting of the Society came off on the 9th August, 1934. Mr. S. N. Lala took the chair. A lively debate took place on "Is co-education desirable in India at Present," in which Messrs. Badri Das Khaitan, Surajmull Daga and Mohanlal Baid took prominent part, but after an hour's hot debate no decision was arrived at. Owing to the keen desire of the members to speak more another day and also to give facility to other members, who were absent in major part, to take part in the debate, the meeting was adjourned till 16th instant. But unfortunately owing to the inability of both the President and the Vice-President to be present on the day, the meeting had to be postponed to 20th August, 1934.

Mr. S. N. Lala presided over a special meeting of the Society held on the 9th August to consider the proposal of celebrating the "Tulshi-Jayanti" by the Society. But owing to the indifference of the members present to the subject, the matter was dropped and the meeting terminated.

We have to express here with sorrow that the First and Second Year students, who are members of the Society, have fallen short of our expectation, in showing their sympathy with the Society. We hope earnestly to receive their wholehearted co-operation in future which will be of immense value in raising the prestige of our Society.

BADRI DAS KHAITAN,
Secretary.

GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

REPORT FOR COLLEGE MAGAZINE

The fourth special general meeting was held on the 16th March, 1934, at 4-30 p.m. in the Geological Lecture Theatre with Dr. Manomohan Chatterji in the chair. Prof. Sarat Lal Biswas of the Calcutta University delivered an illustrated lecture on "Earthquakes, with Special Reference to Bihar." He spoke on the causes, effects and prediction, of 'quakes; the nature, type and velocity of the waves produced; mechanism of 'quakes and the interior of the earth as found by various calculations with reference to Bihar, etc. The lecture was very interesting and appreciated by all.

The fourth special General Meeting was held on 16th March, 1934, at 4-30 p.m. with Dr. M. Chatterjee in the chair. Mr. K. K. Sen-Gupta, Consulting Geologist and Lecturer in Applied Geology, Calcutta University, delivered a lecture on "Causation of the Recent North Bihar Earthquakes." He ascribed this to strain on sides of the asymmetrical fold in the Himalayas, which caused a slip along a portion of the thrust plane, below the main boundary fault and entirely covered by alluvium, and discarded the theory of earthquakes due to Isostasy.

During the period three meetings of the Executive Committee were held.

The 29th Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, the 25th August, 1934, at 2-30 p.m., Mr. W. D. West presiding. The Annual report and accounts were read and adopted. The President in comment-

ing on the Annual Report thanked the Secretary for the success he has achieved. Mr. West then delivered his Presidential Address on "The Place of Geology in Science." The full text appears elsewhere. Mrs. Fermor then gave away the Institute silver medal to Mr. H. N. Ganguly. The names of class representatives and the Associate Members' representative being declared the election of office-bearers took place.

With votes of thanks to the retiring office-bearers, the scrutineers and the chair the meeting terminated. Notable among those present were Mrs. L. L. Fermor, Mr. and Mrs. B. M. Sen, Mr. J. B. Ander, Prof. R. R. Sen-Gupta and others.

H. N. GANGULI,
Hony. Secretary.

EDEN HINDU HOSTEL NOTES

A few years ago the sleeper in H. G. Wells rose at the bid of a writer of Eden Hindu Hostel Notes and found this old place of active leanings towards its traditions turn a veritable "dreamthrop." But if Rip Van Winkle wakes up to-day he is sure to be as much surprised as the Sunstruck man in "2032." The noisy meetings of committees, hot discussions of debating rooms, energetic shouts from supporters of the athletes of the hostel have really brought back life and inspiration to "the ghostly remains of a past glory."

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Harold Lloyd played a false role in "Freshman," for freshers in Hindu Hostel do not face any difficulty in making it their second home. Still the old order must welcome the new. Ye freshers, welcome!

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But the pleasantest address of welcome to the Freshers was given by our Principal in the month of August. On that occasion the hostel common room was nicely decorated and the Principal and Mrs. Sen dined with the boarders. Mrs. and Principal Sen entertained the students with sweet songs. Is it not against the laws of nature that a mathematician should be a musician?

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Hindu Hostel is agog with athletic activity. The boarders have perhaps drawn their inspiration from the first League victory of an Indian team. They have, through keenness in sports, however, lost sight of the fact that the Hostel is becoming full of 'pied pipers.' Every Ward has got its multicoloured uniform. So far so good. * * * * * But the supporters are more excited than the players themselves, specially when Ward II meets Ward IV or V. Ward II celebrated its league victory with illumination. So Ward V must have no light at all. Should not we beware of the familiar Bengali proverb "চোরের ওপর রাগ করে ভুঁয়ে ভাত খাওয়া" ?

The Third Year and the Fourth Year boarders have taken a move in the right direction by starting "Anastika." They deal with world problems by excluding their fellow boarders. Is this fairness?

The Library is one of those departments which works slowly but surely. Fresh additions are being steadily made to the stock. There should, however, be fewer purchases of technical books in the name of books of general interest.

It is a fact that Bengal has contributed the greatest quota of leaders in the field of Indian politics. In Bengal's quota the contribution of the Presidency College is most striking. And if we examine the statistics of leaders a bit more patiently we find that it is under the benign influence of the Eden Hindu Hostel that these leaders walked into life and vigour. A few years ago there was much apprehension that the prestige of the Eden Hindu Hostel as the great foster-mother of leaders would be menaced. But from this year's keenness in the hostel elections we are assured that Hindu Hostel will for years to come hold her position of honour. This year all sorts of election tactics were adopted. Even to cancel a vote a false telegram was sent from Burdwan to one of the members stating that his presence was urgently needed there. This is really a great practical joke. It would win even the best practical joker's prize of past years. But surely the joker was wanting in the sense of humour and proportion. The joke brought tears instead of laughter.

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From the beginning of the session, the Hostel is not enjoying sound health. The influx of Doctor's slips has much increased. Apart from the constant blessings of flues and digestive troubles, we are at intervals being visited by malaria. And unfortunately when the notes are going to the press there has been a case of cerebro-spinal meningitis.

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And this lack of health is not without its cause. Look at the cell-like rooms without light and ventilation and everywhere you will find the germs of disease lurking. Apart from questions of health, there are matters of comfort. It is unbearably hot to sleep in one's room at night—it is more so by the law of contrast. Our neighbours are having fans in their bed-rooms when we have none even in our Library or Common room. And still we are putting up at the hostel of the premier College in the country.

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In spite of the accompanying clause about the depressed government finance, the announcement of our popular Principal to make an attempt to remove the grievances of the boarders is highly welcome. We wish him god-speed in this attempt.

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No hostel report is complete without some mention of the healthy rivalry going on between the day-scholars and the hostellers. The day-scholars consider them to be the sole custodians of the prestige of the College. What is the use of making statements unless they are backed

by facts? Facts will speak for the hostel. Out of 1,200 boys of the College only unfortunate 160 are hostellers.

In Intermediate Science, of the 6 out of the first 10 in the University, two are hostellers.

In I. A. out of 2 one is a hosteller who has also stood first in the College and 3rd in the University.

In B. A. there were only 5 First Classes in the College and out of them the one in English is from the hostel. Besides, the topmost places in the Second Class in Economics and History are also from the hostel.

In B. Sc. out of nine First Classes our hostel has secured three.

So much for academic proficiency. But the hostel boarders have not lop-sided growth. They are as keen in corporate activities as in the class room. The hostel has given the College its Union Secretary (Socials), both the Editor and the Secretary of the Magazine, the Captain and the Secretary of the Tennis Club, the Captain of Indoor Games, the Secretaries of the Rabindra Parishad and the Economics, Political Philosophy and Philosophy Seminars and also one of the Joint Secretaries of the English Seminar.

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At the beginning there was a hopeless insufficiency of materials. At the end the note has run long enough to call for an apology. The only hope is that the note is placed at the end of the magazine which will come out just before the long vacation. The readers might go through this long note when time will hang heavy on their hands during this vacation. *Wish every boarder a vacation of comfortable laziness.*

P. B.

INDOOR-GAMES NOTES

The College Indoor-Games team had a very successful season this year as had been the case also with the last two years. In the Bengal Table-Tennis Team Championship Tournament, our team, represented by Messrs. Manoranjan Das (Captain), Ashit Mukherjee and Arun Ghosh, played a marvellous game throughout and went up to the final stage beating the strong team of the Moslem Institute in the third round. M. Das played a unique game to beat Sultanul Islam, one of the most brainy players of Bengal. The coolness with which he played a formidable opponent deserves special mention. In the final we lost to the very strong team of the College Branch, Y. M. C. A., represented by three best players of Calcutta by two matches to one. Though we played quite a good game, we could not pull them down. Arun Ghosh of our team played a brilliant game and defeated Susil Banerjee who easily claims a very high position in the coming Table-Tennis Ranking.

In the Inter-Collegiate Indoor Games Tournament, we succeeded in bringing the Championship Cup for the third year in succession.

Our Carrom team, represented by K. Jalan (Captain), N. Sadhu, P. Chakrabarty and D. Das, came out with flying colours beating the

Post-Graduates in the final by three matches to two. Jalan and Sadhu played great games throughout the tournament.

Our Chess team was represented by C. L. Mehta. He was playing well, but was unlucky to lose to the St. Xavier's College, which, of course, has been the ultimate holder.

Our sudden and most unexpected defeat in the semi-final at the hands of the Scottish Church College, the holder in Table-Tennis, added to the tricks that luck was playing with us this year. Holders of this title for the last two years and holders of the All Bengal Table-Tennis Team championship last year and represented by players whom any team can boast of, it was really an irony of fate that we went down to the Scottish Church College by three matches to two.

Our best success, however, was in Billiards in which game our College was represented by Kanak Ghosh (Captain) and Ashim Ghosh, of whom the former came out as the ultimate champion. His break of 53 was the highest, made in the tournament. He played brilliantly throughout and in the Final, he beat T. Mitter of Scottish Church College by the huge margin of about 100 points. His steadiness and coolness of brain were admirable; he never forgot that the Indoor Games Championship Cup depended on him. All credit to Mr. Ghosh, to whom, more than to any other, we owe our success in annexing the Inter-Collegiate Indoor-Games Challenge Cup.

No report would be complete without giving thanks to the players of our team, but for whose untiring and sincere efforts our brilliant success would have been an unrealised vision. We also take this opportunity of expressing our hearty thanks to our Principal and Prof. K. N. Chakrabarty for their kind help and active assistance.

MANORANJAN DAS,
Captain, Indoor-Games

EDEN HINDU HOSTEL ANNUAL SOCIAL

With characteristic grandeur and eclat, the Eden Hindu Hostel celebrated its Annual Social on Saturday, 22nd September. This social, which brings the ex-boarders and other distinguished persons in close touch with the new boarders, has been revived after seven long years. At the outset we had had much doubt as to whether it would be possible for us to arrange the function at such a short notice, but owing to the untiring zeal and enthusiasm of the general boarders, the function had such a happy termination.

Sir Nilratan Sircar was our guest-of-honour. A pandel was specially constructed for the occasion in the Hostel compound and it was tastefully decorated. The function opened with a song after which the Superintendent of the Hostel welcomed the guests. The amusements provided songs, dances, recitations, comic sketches and instrumental music, which were all appreciated by the audience. The Presidency College Orchestra Party gave a nice display. Our guests, numbering about 400 were treated to a sumptuous dinner.

After the dinner, Messrs. Girija Sanyal, Nabagopal Das, I.C.S. and Dr. Nalinaskya Sanyal spoke on behalf of the ex-boarders. Mr. Nabagopal Das pointed out the necessity of forming an Old Boarders' Association. Sir Nilratan Sircar delivered a highly instructive and illuminating address, after which the function ended with a vote of thanks to the guests.

Among those present were Lady Sircar, Principal and Mrs. Sen, Dr. Nikhil Sen, Mr. B. Das, Mr. and Mrs. K. N. Chatterjee, Mr. and Mrs. A. Chatterjee, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Sircar, Dr. Saroj Kumar Das, Mrs. Tatini Das, Mr. Radhikananda Mukherjee, Dr. P. N. Ghatak, Mr. M. L. Chatterjee and many professors of the College.

RAMEN SEN,

PUNYABRATA BHATTACHARYA,

Jt. Secretaries.

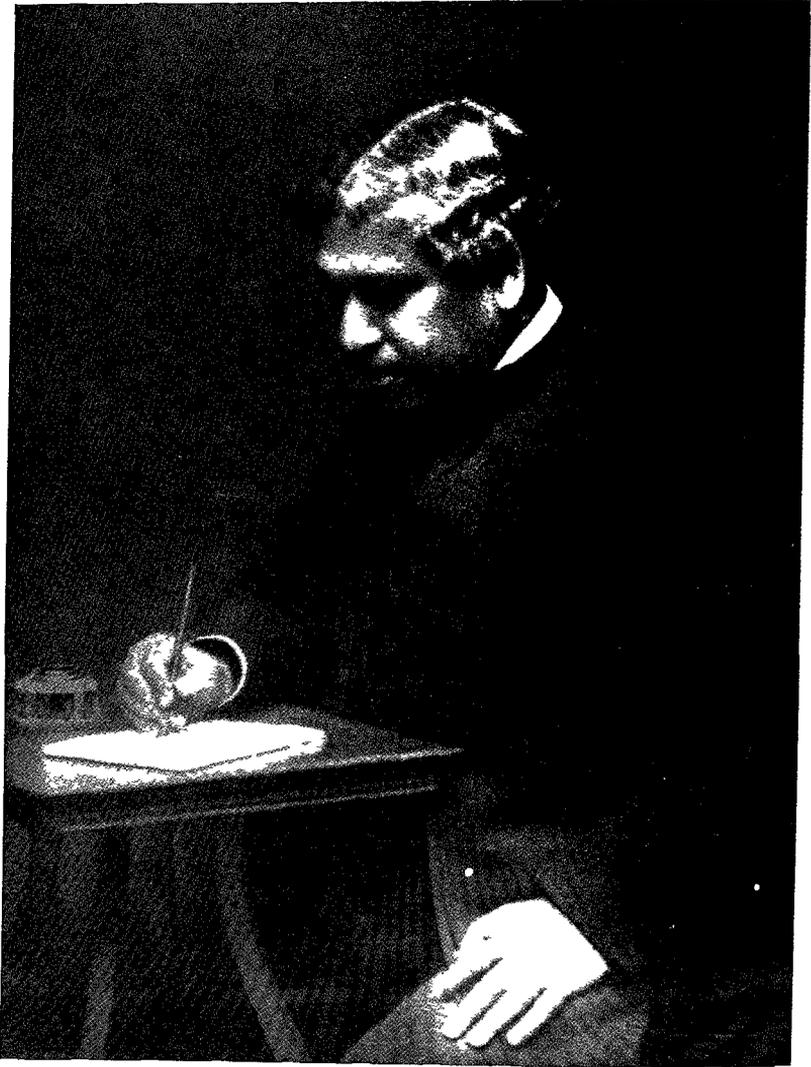
Appreciation of a Bengali Scientist

Students naturally feel a sensation of pride, though not unmingled with sorrow, when they find a foreigner paying a tribute of respect to the memory of a deceased professor. We make, therefore, no apology for publishing the following account of the late Prof. H. C. Das-Gupta given by the well-known English geologist Dr. A. M. Heron, D.Sc. (Edin), F.G.S., F.R.G.S., F.R.S.E., in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society of London, the foremost geological society in the British Empire :—EDITOR.

“ Professor Hem Chandra Das-Gupta died on New Year’s Day, 1933, from heart-failure, at the age of 53. He was born in the Dinajpur District of Bengal and joined the Presidency College in 1895, taking his M. A. degree in 1900 with a First Class in Geology ; he received his training under Sir Thomas Holland, who was then Professor of Geology in the Presidency College. In 1903 he was appointed a demonstrator in Geology in this College, rising to the post of Professor. For 30 years his energies were unsparingly devoted to the furtherance of geological studies, both in actual teaching work and in research. He was connected with the University of Calcutta, as an examiner, as a member of the Faculty of Science, as chairman of the Board of Studies in Geology, as a member of the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching, and, since 1931, as a Fellow of the University.

From its beginning he was an enthusiast in the Indian Science Congress, for many years served on its Executive Committee, and was President of the Geology Section in 1928. He was an active member of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, and of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, before which he read over twenty papers on Geology, prehistory, and folk-lore. For a quarter of a century he served the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (Bengali Literary Academy) with the same zeal which he gave to Geology and academic interests.

A tireless worker, he carried his great knowledge with unostentatious manners and genial simplicity. Colleagues and students alike held him in high esteem and warm affection for his honesty of character and unselfish support for all humanitarian causes.” Vol. XC, Pt. 2. P. li—lii. Issued May 28th, 1934).



OUR EMERITUS PROFESSOR

*Golden Jubilee of his first appointment to the College was
celebrated on Monday, the 21st January, 1935*

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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{ No. 2

Notes and News

A COLLEGE is one of those things that wear a double appearance ; the one remains stable and unmoving, while the other undergoes a constant process of change, though invisibly. To an indifferent passer-by, who may chance to enter the gate now, the College will present much the same spectacle as it did in September last. The building stands just the same ; the Common Room still resounds with the old, well-known tick-tack ; the stairs are still crowded by students every hour ; and even the class-rooms are still full of that old, inaudible murmur of a thousand hushed voices. Outwardly nothing has changed.

But to the students who constitute the life-blood of the institution the College does not suggest those ideas now which it used to do a few months back. The Freshers who, at one time, were haunted by a strangeness and awe are now quite familiar with every nook and corner of the building and with every beat of the pulse of the College. It is nō more the old, awe-inspiring mystery. The glamour has faded and they have settled down in a sort of complacent familiarity.

To the other band too, viz., the examinees, January, 1935, is completely different from September, 1934. The pre-Puja days are now regarded as a sweet, far-off golden time which one has scarcely

any time to think of in these degenerate hours. Care-free jollity was then the fashion of the day and though examinations were not altogether unheard-of monsters, one did not feel disposed to take them seriously. But now the old order has changed. Our poor friends have already had to undergo one serious ordeal and the other—by far the greatest—looms large in the near future. They have, however, we are sure, the best sympathy of all their friends and well-wishers and we hope that this year too they will acquit themselves as worthy children of our glorious *alma mater*.

A few changes have occurred in the staff since we went to press last time. Prof. B. R. Das Gupta, whose arrival we welcomed in the last issue, has been transferred to the Dacca Intermediate College. Prof. T. N. Sen is acting in the vacancy caused by the departure of Prof. A. K. Chanda, now the Assistant Director of Public Instruction. With the return of our esteemed Professor Mr. S. N. Maitra the Department of English has gained back its old vigour.

Prof. S. Bhattacharyya who had joined this College temporarily as a Professor of History had to go back to the Sanskrit College with the close of the Puja vacation. Dr. U. N. Ghosal and Prof. S. C. Majumdar, who were on leave, have joined us again. The College had suffered a good deal during the absence of Prof. Majumdar and we are glad to notice that his presence has already created a stir in the social life of the institution.

The Departments of Philosophy and Sanskrit which were suffering due to the absence of Dr. M. N. Sarkar and Dr. R. G. Basak respectively have now gained back their old strength with the return of the professors.

Prof. T. Rezwi, whose journey to Persia on the invitation of the Government there we noticed in the last issue, is now back to the College. It may be mentioned incidentally that he had the honour to read an original paper at the millenary celebrations of the immortal poet Firdausi. We extend to him our heartiest felicitations and hope that he will enrich the pages of our Magazine by contributing something about his impression of Persia and the great and memorable conference which he had gone to attend.

Like the Arts Department the Science side also has undergone a number of changes. Dr. P. Niyogi, who was on leave, has returned to the College. Mr. S. N. Das of the Mathematics Department has been transferred to the B. E. College and Mr. Yaruddin Ahmed has joined in as an Assistant in the Astronomical Observatory.

The Physics Department which was deprived of the services of Mr. Manindralal Mitra on the eve of the Pujā holidays has now been strengthened on the arrival of Mr. Suresh Chandra Dhar from Krishnagar College.

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We commented last time on the very satisfactory results we had in the Intermediate and Bachelorship examinations. The M. A. results, too, we are glad to observe, are equally brilliant. All the 13 candidates who sat for the Arts Examinations have come out successful, 7 in the First Class, 4 in the Second and 2 in the Third. Forty-six candidates sat for the M. Sc. Examinations of whom 4 took a First Class, 14 a Second and 5 a Third. We had the distinction of securing the first place in five subjects and the second places in two subjects.

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As on the academic so on the sports side, too, the College has done remarkable things this session. In Tennis, specially, we have had a brilliant achievement, viz., the annexation of the Duke Cup, a trophy which comes back to the College after an interval of eight years. We wish our champions a brilliant career and hope they will be winning fresh laurels for the *alma mater*.

The College has had only moderate success in Cricket. Out of the 17 matches played we won 8, lost 4 and the rest were drawn. One of our players was included in the Varsity Eleven.

We are glad to announce further that six of our men have been awarded University Blues this year.

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Looking now at the social side of the College, the most outstanding activity of the Union before the Pujās was the Autumn Social. The drama staged on the occasion was quite successful and we are glad to know that over a thousand rupees have gone into the coffers of the Students' Aid Fund. Our best thanks are due to the energetic Secretaries.

The most outstanding occasion, however, viz., the Founders' Day, came off on the 21st January, the day previous being a Sunday. Apart from the usual functions the occasion was also availed of to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Sir J. C. Bose's connection with the College. It was in the middle of the eighties

of the last century that Sir Jagadish entered this College as a Professor of Physical Science. More than half a century has elapsed since that time and our illustrious Professor has now been acclaimed as one of the greatest scientists of modern times. But, fortunately for us, the glories he has won in other and greater spheres have not made him forget those old days he passed in this College, in lecturing to his students and in researching in the laboratory. After serving for full thirty years as a teacher, he still maintains his connection with us as a Professor Emeritus—a connection of which any college in any country of the world might be proud. The affection in which he still holds the institution and the interest he feels in its life, its expansion and its activities were amply testified in the memorable reply he gave to the address presented by the staff and students. The message he had for the College was indeed worth a more devoted perusal than we are wont to bestow on messages in general. It was, as it were, the voice of a seer coming from above to our troubled sphere of temptations, diversions and half-heartedness, a calm and quieting message of hope, devotion and courage.

Sir Jagadish's name this year drew a larger audience than we have seen on the Founders' Days of the last few years. If greater publicity always meant greater effect, we might have now looked forward to the removal of our permanent wants. The necessity of a College Hall which the Principal never fails to mention in his report has attracted a greater amount of notice this year. One of our honourable guests, Mr. J. N. Basu, supported the Principal's appeal to the Government and to all old students, but though the President—the Hon'ble Minister of Education—most generously replied that if other old students came forward he himself would never lag behind, we had no official assurance. We are well aware that the Government are now economising expenses in every direction. But whatever may be the state of their finances, the most urgent needs never brook any delay. They have always to be fulfilled. What we humbly want to point out is that if the Department of Education have any money on their hands, ours is a cause which should be taken as one of the very first that merit immediate execution. The premier College of the country going without a Hall is an anomaly, the seriousness of which not only the present members and ex-students but also the Government should realise at the earliest possible date.

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The tale of the College is told and now we have to face a sorrowful duty. If in the last issue we had to record our grief at the death

of three distinguished alumni, this time also we have to mourn the loss of four. The late Rai Bahadur Umeshchandra Chakravarty, who retired in 1918 as a Judge of the Small Causes Court, was a student here for four years 1879-1883 and in him we have lost the head of a distinguished family which have now received their education in this College for three successive generations. In the late Prof. Jyotiprosad Sarvadhikari we have lost another student of the early eighties. Prof. Sarvadhikari who took his M. A. degree from this College in 1885 commanded at one time a very large practice at the High Court. With the establishment of the University Law College, however, he joined it as a Lecturer in Hindu Law and Constitutional Law. His later fame, as all lawyers know, rests on his immense popularity as a teacher and on his treatise on Constitutional Law, prescribed as a text-book by the University.

In the premature death of Mr. R. C. Sen, the College has lost one of its most distinguished graduates. After finishing a brilliant academic career by standing first in the First Class both in B. A. and M. A., Mr. Sen was elected for the Indian Civil Service in 1919.

In Mr. N. C. Sen, Bar-at-Law, we have lost another ex-Civil Service man. A double honoursman in B. A. and first in the First Class in M. A., Mr. Sen entered the Colonial Civil Service in 1904. This, however, he resigned the next year and after a chequered career in the University Law College and elsewhere, was acting as a Judge of the Small Causes Court since 1918.

We record our sense of grief at the death of these distinguished alumni and beg to extend to the bereaved families our sincerest condolence on behalf of the College.

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Our lot would have been sorrowful indeed if obituary notices were all the news we had about our old students. Fortunately, however, we have glad tidings to record as well, and these are at least a slight compensation for the losses the College has suffered in the death of its distinguished alumni.

The New Year's Honours List has added two new Knights to the rolls of the College. Sir Manmathanath Mukherji, who was a student here for three years, 1891-1894, has now established a wide reputation as a lawyer, a distinguished Judge and lastly, but not the least in importance, as one of the best of gentlemen in the real sense. The honour, therefore, in his case comes as nothing more than a fitting recognition of his manifold virtues of head and heart.

Another Presidency College man, whose sphere of activity lies outside Bengal, has also achieved the same honour. Dr. Sir Gokulchand Narang, Ph.D. (Jena), Bar-at-Law, took his M. A. degree from our College in 1902. His subsequent career as an Advocate in the Lahore High Court, as a Member of the Punjab Legislative Council for a successive number of times and as a Minister of the Punjab Government are well known and need not be recounted here.

Our congratulation goes also to Khan Bahadur Md. Abdul Momin on his being made a Companion of the Indian Empire. A student here from 1892 to 1896, his later career as a Sub-Divisional Officer, as a Magistrate and lastly as a Divisional Commissioner testifies well to the services he has rendered to the Government for more than thirty years.

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But if these New Year's Honours have made us feel elated, nothing has contributed more to our delight and satisfaction than the election of Sir Abdur Rahim as the President of the Legislative Assembly. Sir Abdur's connection with the College dates back to the year 1886 when he took his B. A. and M. A. degrees both in the First Class with the interval of only a few months between. His later career as a Barrister-at-Law, as a Judge and officiating Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, as a member of the Islington Commission, as an Executive Councillor in Bengal and lastly as a formidable figure in the Legislative Assembly has been amply discussed in the newspapers and needs no further comment at our hands. We are rejoiced to see the tremendous applause which has greeted his election and the tributes of respect and honour paid to him by all sections of the Assembly, not excluding even the Congress.

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Coming to a narrower, but to us a more intimate circle, we have quite a number of congratulations to extend to our alumni. The appointment of Dr. J. P. Niyogi, M.A., Ph.D. as the Minto Professor of Economics in the University has met with glad approval from all circles. A student here for six years from 1907 to 1913, Dr. Niyogi's brilliant academic career, his researches and his wonderful popularity as a Professor all make him eminently fit for the post.

To Dr. P. N. Banerji, M.A., D.Sc., formerly the Minto Professor, we take this opportunity of extending a hearty farewell. He has now

left education for politics and we hope that in the Assembly he will maintain and enhance the esteem in which he is held in this province.

To two other ex-students, Mr. Kamaluddin Ahmed and Mr. J. M. Basu we beg to extend our cordial felicitations on their appointments as Principals of Krishnagar and Rajshahi Colleges respectively. Both are veterans in the field of education and we are sure they will do full justice to the onerous duties laid on them.

Coming to alumni who have passed recently out of the College, we congratulate Mr. Nabagopal Das, I.C.S., on his being awarded the Bireswar Mitra Gold Medal by the University. The thesis submitted by Mr. Das was entitled "Industrial Finance in India." Mr. Das was a brilliant essayist even during his college days, as his Irwin Gold Medal bears ample evidence. We are glad to notice that his habit of study and his literary acumen are still as keen as ever, even when he is saddled with administrative responsibilities.

We congratulate Mr. Sachindramohan Ghosh, a student of the Sixth Year Economics Class, on his standing first from Bengal in the Indian Police Service Examination in 1934.

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Passing now from the College to the University, we cannot but pay our tribute of respectful admiration to the Vice-Chancellor who has already proved his wonderful capacities in the new post. The extension of the Ashutosh building for the provision of a better library and a well-ventilated reading room is an eloquent testimony to his energy and resourcefulness. A reading room worth the name was a long-felt want of the University and we congratulate the Vice-Chancellor on the courage he has shown in undertaking a work of so expensive a nature in these days of financial stringency and budget deficits.

A new spirit of life and vigour has indeed been breathed into the stagnant atmosphere of the University. It had been a matter for regret so long that though more than three quarters of a century old, the University had done very little to infuse a spirit of corporate life among the members of the different colleges. The different institutions had their own anniversaries and celebrations, but there was not one occasion in the year when they could assemble together and feel the greatness of the Institution of which they were but branches. The Convocation was there, no doubt ; but it was the affair of only a select few. The thousands of undergraduates in the different colleges had

no occasion to feel that beneath their superficial differences, there lay a deep and permanent link,—the link of a parental control exercised over them all by the University. This long-felt want has at last been removed. The Foundation Day this year has been a very successful affair, thanks to the energy of the University authorities and to the enthusiasm of the colleges.

The usefulness of such an occasion cannot be over-estimated. It infuses, as we have pointed above, a spirit of camaraderie among the students, a feeling of corporate brotherhood. It tends further to alleviate the spirit of distrust of the Government which unfortunately had been so rampant among certain sections of students for the last few years. The presence of the Governor and his address cast a profound influence on their minds and make them feel that after all the Chancellor is one of themselves, the head of the University and thus their common parent. And lastly, it has its influence on the public too. Recently there has grown among certain sections a feeling that students are but hopeless dreamers and graduates are only the standardised products of a worthless machine. Unemployment may be severe and the so-called University education may count for very little in practical life. Still, occasions like this will serve to teach our critics that the University, whatever else it may be, is not a dead and worthless machine. It has a quivering life of its own, a tradition and a culture which it infuses into the minds of the students and which, however one may flout them, are never useless.

The celebrations this year are the pioneers of many to come. We are sure that next year they will be more successful and more spectacular and the mofussilites who have remained away will come in and join hands with their friends of the metropolis.

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Calcutta has had a gala time this winter, what with conferences and what with visits of royalties. Among the former the busiest and the most outstanding in importance was the Science Congress which held its session in Calcutta after the lapse of many years. Presidency College had a special interest in the Congress this year inasmuch as the Principal was one of the local Secretaries and Dr. A. C. Sarkar, the President of the Chemistry Section. The Baker Laboratory rooms were, moreover, used for purposes of exhibition.

Among the many beneficial outcomes of the Congress the most outstanding was the formation of the Association for the Cultivation

of Science. We are glad that the Government have expressed their readiness to extend financial assistance to this Society whose importance in the national life nobody can afford to overlook.

Looking now at India as a whole, the events of the greatest and the most paramount importance during the last few months have been undoubtedly the Bombay Congress and Mahatma Gandhi's new scheme on the one hand and the publication of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report on the other. The Congress met after a long interval in Bombay under the presidentship of Babu Rajendraprasad who, we may incidentally point out, is a Presidency College man. Two very important changes have occurred about it, one being the rejection of the old policy of non-co-operation and the other Gandhiji's departure from the arena. The policy of entering the legislatures, we may humbly note, should now be both opportune and useful. It is a firm conviction which we share with many that more can be done by co-operation—though not necessarily agreeing in opinions—than by a total secession. The other notable development, viz., Gandhiji's exit from the toil and turmoil of practical politics, is also fraught with consequences. The organisation and uplift of villages is a work which is fundamentally more important than any political propaganda. We hope the leader of the Congress will take to his new work in the right spirit and that this will contribute more largely to the real betterment of the poor and ignorant villagers than all this cry for political privileges.

The other matter of moment, viz., the publication of the J. P. C. Report is history now and after the voluminous discussions it has received at the hands of the press and politicians, we have few original things to say. It is indeed a pity that the Report has come in for denunciation at everybody's hands, from extreme Conservatives down to the Congressmen in India, except, of course, its sponsors and the executive authorities who will be responsible for its working. We must not, however, fail to notice the tremendous nature of the task with which the Committee was faced; and, considering the different opinions they had to consult and the varied interests they had to placate and reconcile, we must confess our inability to see what better solution they could have arrived at. A lot of controversy and ill-feeling has been caused over the omission of the word Dominion Status, over the so-called government by ministers with the virtual reservation of all power by the executive head, over the proposed nature of the Federation and a hundred other minor details. The time has not yet come for us to have an impartial view of the reforms and pass an unbiassed opinion, and so long as theories are not worked in practice one can never say whether they will turn out well or ill.

We may, however, modestly point out that though the Viceroy retains every power in his hands, it may not after all be necessary to exercise them so frequently as the extreme oppositionists imagine. The President of the U. S. A., for example, possesses tremendous powers, but he seldom finds occasion to use the more drastic among them. What is in store for India, however, only the future can show.

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If India is passing through days of controversy, Europe and for the matter of that, the world at large is experiencing days of inquietude. It is now scarcely four months since the dastardly assassination of King Alexander of Jugo Slavia and M. Barthou of France plunged Europe into a paroxysm of fearful apprehension. And though owing to the good sense and the general aversion to war of the nations involved things did not go the way they went in 1914, the political horizon of Europe can never be called free from war-clouds. There are the Disarmament Conference, the undying tripartite naval talks and of late the Five Power Air Alliance, but what good they have actually done and what more they are going to do nobody can relate with optimism. War may not be imminent, but it cannot be called too remote either, with Germany steadily rearming and France madly seeking alliance with any power that may come her way. It is, however, a matter of gratification to all nations and countries that the Saar plebiscite, feared so often as a prospective plea for war, has passed off peacefully, thanks to the League of Nations and the armies of the different countries that helped so gallantly to maintain absolute peace during voting time. We wish the League could exercise the same amount of pacifying influence in every case of international dispute. But will that wish ever be fulfilled?

But though dark clouds may hover above our heads, we have also occasional streaks of light to brighten up our drooping spirits. The world may be a place reeking of war and bloodshed, but at the same time it has its heroes, its pioneers in science and industry, its band of tireless and unselfish workers who try their best to make things easier for man, to make life a more comfortable and easy-going business. And that is some consolation. It is, therefore, with a feeling of grateful admiration that we greet the heroes of the Mildenhall Melbourne Air Race, who have reduced space so wonderfully and have opened up new and bright vistas of commercial and transport development. The competitors, no doubt, entered the race for love of glory and adventure ; but the result they have achieved is not

only fame and honour for themselves, but a general prospect of betterment for the whole world. The benefits accruing from the race are innumerable and this is already going to be exemplified in the bi-weekly flight between Britain and India. We hope that space, one of the greatest enemies of progress, will now gradually be annihilated and trade, commerce and communication will contribute more largely than ever to the cultural development and general well-being of nations.

A Theory of Industrial Fluctuations Critically Analysed*

NABAGOPAL DAS, I.C.S.—*Ex-student.*

WE are all confronted with trade depression to-day, and people, who profess to know the mysteries of it, say that this is but a phase of industrial fluctuations and a very acute phase of it.

Industrial fluctuations are a recurrent phenomenon. But what are the causes? The answers have been many and varied. And Professor A. C. Pigou gives his own answer in his most constructive treatise on "Industrial Fluctuations."

Pigou starts with an initiating impulse which operates upon a certain complex of industrial and monetary relations. "Given the impulse, these will determine the nature of the effect that it produces, and are, *in this sense*, causes of industrial fluctuations. The impulse is the dropping of a match: the consequences are determined by the nature of the material with which it comes in contact." And the fact that successive industrial wave movements are roughly similar in form makes Pigou assume that "in the modern world the conditions which are present when successive matches fall are more or less alike."

His thesis is that impulses towards expansion and contraction of industry come in the main from variations in people's *expectations* of profit. Statistics of price movements and interest rates induce him to reach this conclusion.

This is the crux of Pigou's analysis. "The dominant causal factor is not on the side of the supply of mobile resources, but on the side of expectations of profit. . . . Thus, while recognising that the varying expectations of businessmen may themselves be in part a psychological reflex of good and bad harvests—while not indeed for

*This article is abridged and adapted from a paper that I read before a meeting of *The Economic Theory Seminar* of the School of Economics and Political Science, London, early in 1931. The chair was taken by Prof. Lionel Robbins of the University of London. There were a series of special discussions on the Theory of Industrial Fluctuations that year, and my paper evinced great interest and was examined and discussed very critically.—N. DAS.

the present inquiring how these varying expectations themselves come about—we conclude definitely that they, and not anything else, constitute the immediate and direct causes or antecedents of industrial fluctuations.”

So these are the direct and immediate causes. But these do not—rather, cannot—stand alone. There are impulses behind these changes in the expectations of the businessmen, and Pigou distinguishes three classes of such impulses which he labels for brevity as (1) real causes, (2) psychological causes, and (3) autonomous monetary causes. These are the causes of the fundamental and immediate cause—the varying expectations of profit from industrial spending.

Now, what are these three groups of causes (or sub-causes, as I would like to call them with a view to eliminating confusion)? Sub-causes of the first class consist in changes that have occurred or are about to occur in actual industrial conditions: those of the second are changes that occur in men's attitude of mind. In the actual world of ours, which is neither a state of steady self-repeating experiments nor one peopled by perfectly intelligent and far-seeing persons, both sorts of sub-causes are present: “errors in forecast result from inconstancy of facts.” And these sub-causes react upon one another. These reactions, once set up, may be reciprocating and continuous.

Lastly come the autonomous monetary sub-causes. These, Pigou emphasises, are different from those monetary conditions upon which impulses, real and psychological (and, we might say, autonomous monetary too) act, and which, by the response they make, largely determine the amplitude of fluctuations—the scale of the effect that is produced upon the activity of industry. These “autonomous” sub-causes are such phases of changes in the volume of credit and the level of general prices that come about, not as a response to the real or psychological sub-causes, but through, say, the deliberate creation by, or in behalf of, government of a new currency to cover a budget of deficit, or by the discovery of new mines of a country's metal. These autonomous sub-causes are on a par with the real and psychological sub-causes mentioned already. These are, so to speak, those changes in the quantity of money units that come, not in response to any new real or psychological demand, but from the side of independent supply.

Thus the outline of the picture is set: we have the dominant causal factor of industrial fluctuations (the immediate and direct causes) in variations in the businessman's expectations of profits. And behind this dominant factor are the three types of sub-causes or

impulses—real, psychological and monetary (autonomous) which are the backbone, as it were, of the dominant factor.

The most fundamental fact is that in the modern world industry is folded in a money garment. And when there is motion, "the fact that industry is wrapped in a money garment seems likely *a priori* to render its reactions to the various impulses applied to it different from what they would have been had its limbs been bare." Change in expectations of businessmen does not confine itself merely to borrowings of unusual amounts directly from the public (i.e., the supply of floating capital mentioned before), but spreads to new borrowings of unusual amounts from the banks. And the latter process is rendered more elastic in response to variations in the outlook of the businessmen, owing to the peculiar modern practice of money and banking. This "credit creation" exercises a great influence on the swing of industrial movements by placing in the hands of businessmen a large elastic command over the supply of real floating capital.

Here is another important point. Although the movements of the money garment are themselves caused by other impulses, these former also exercise a causal influence. The new credit creations, the accompanying expectation of a rise of prices (partly as concomitant effects of improved expectations and partly as effects of belief generated by the credit creations themselves that prices will rise higher) and the accompanying increase in the productivity of industry play their part in a highly complicated cumulative process, and give rise to movements in general price level.

The effects of this complex and cumulative rise of the general price-level are many and various. "Price changes wrench the terms of contract for loans and wages away from the terms that were intended when these contracts were made." Moreover, in a reflex way they effect movements on the expectations of businessmen; and further swings of the amplitude—the intensification of the disproportionalities—are caused by the frictional influence connected with the notion of spoiling the market.

I shall not critically analyse Prof. Figou's theory.

What strikes me as a remarkable weakness is that in all his analysis there is a curious mixture of impulses and conditions, causes and concomitants, with the result that confusion is very marked. Although he speaks of the causes behind the immediate and direct cause (my "sub-causes") as the initiating impulses of industrial fluctuations capable of coming into play simultaneously, as it were,

the very fact that these originating forces of disturbance come into play in a world of complex organisation the structure of which conditions the working of these impulses and, in great part, determines their effects, seems to obliterate the differences. Which is the impulse and which the governing circumstance? Can we not use both the terms with respect to both the sets of factors? "The various factors involved are interdependent, so that the effect due to an element cannot be gauged absolutely, but only in reference to some given state of the other elements." "Nor is this all. Several of the impulses or causes which are liable to come into play have the power of generating other impulses. The result is that a proof to the effect that the removal of factor A would reduce the amplitude of industrial fluctuations by three-quarters is not a proof that the removal of the other factors would not reduce it by more than a quarter. . . ."

The net conclusion of Prof. Pigou is that such rhythm or quasi-rhythm as is found in industry is not due to any simple cause, but to a combination of several causes. He attempts a bold "drama of reconciliation," but I do not think he succeeds. He is pluralistic, but then Hobson, Hawtrey and Hayek* are also pluralistic, and certainly their pluralisms do not agree.

On the other hand, Prof. Pigou's theory is mainly a psychological explanation of the business cycle. Remarkable indeed is the importance he attaches to the psychological sub-causes or impulses behind the dominant psychological cause—the varying expectation of profits. And he constantly points out that throughout the economic system with all its movements towards, and away from, equilibrium, psychological factors are intimately mixed up with those less so. The proximate intermediary is the psychology of the businessman standing at the helm of industry, and it is the changes in his psychology that reflect upon the movements of industry.

This I regard as inadequate and incomplete.

He analyses the proximate cause of industrial fluctuations as variations in expectation of profits: the variation in output and volume is brought about by the profit stimulus. But he does not tell us what he should have said as a logical sequence of his analysis. The question of how the expectations of profit mature in practice, whether they are valid or deceptive, and other analogous intricacies as to the nature of profits (on the expectation of which his whole edifice is built) are not dealt with in their fulness and entirety.

*Three pluralistic theorists of industrial fluctuations.

Moreover, his analysis *assumes* the existence of fluctuations—of disproportionality—as it were, and gives more attention to factors determining their amplitude and rhythm than to the complete process by which the mechanism of the proximate cause (with the initiating impulses behind) acts and brings about the cyclical movement. The crucial point is left unanswered—and we are only left to guess it from what he says in connexion with his analysis of the factors “influencing” the movements. He does not clearly show the connexion between the upward and downward phases of the cycle—how the one leads to, or does not lead to, the other—except perhaps in certain vague terms.

But there is one important inference that we can draw from his analysis. Industrial fluctuations are not automatic or inherent in the nature of things. They are due to the impact of a number of independent factors, which, operating within and without the economic system, bring about the fundamental change in the angle of vision of the businessman—in his expectation of profits. The real, psychological and autonomous monetary impulses are not in any rigid sense inherent in the system: they exert their influence by impact upon the curious complex of industrial and monetary environments. Here is the saving feature of his analysis: there is no artificial simplification—no dogmatic generalisation.

Asoka: A Study in Kingship, Nature and Principles of Administration*

SUDHIR RANJAN GHOSH, M.A., B.L.—*Ex-student.*

ASOKA was the third of the imperial Mauryas and the only philosopher-king that India has produced. He was perhaps the first among men to catch the vision of a world-state—a state obeying not one sovereign and one political system, but one culture and one law of piety. Under him the mighty empire created by the genius of Chandragupta and maintained by the tact of his father, Bindusâra, reached its greatest extent—stretching from the foot of the Hindukush down to the borders of the Tamil states.

Over this vast and extensive area Asoka ruled for forty years (273—233 B. C.) with great distinction and preached in all sincerity his message of love, peace and progress. Even to his neighbouring independent states,¹ he stood in the position of a friend and an ideal reformer, sent his missionaries to preach his Dhamma, and established healing arrangements for men and beasts. Though his thoughts often wandered across the northern mountains and the southern seas, he was not a mere dreamer or an idealist. He was a capable administrator too,—a sovereign equally pious and equally practical. For about half a century he maintained his authority unquestioned within every part of his empire without resorting to a second war, 'barred the way against foreign invaders,'² preserved peace at home, and established the 'rule of law by creating a just administration and an upright judiciary.'

The wise king has left for us a series of his inscriptions engraved on rocks and pillars—the mute, imperishable records of his life and work. These have now been given a tongue and they speak eloquently of the man who was so gentle, so noble, yet so practical.

In the following lines we shall attempt to discuss Asoka's theory of kingship, and the nature and principles of his administration. The

*From '*Maurya India*,' Book II, Chap. VIII, 'Asoka and His Empire,' by S. R. Ghosh and B. K. Majumdar. (In preparation.)

1. Rock Edict XIII.

inscriptions will be our trustworthy guides—for what can better relate the facts than the words of Piyadasi himself?

ASOKA'S THEORY OF KINGSHIP.

Asoka had a very high notion of kingship. The office of a king was to him a sacred trust, and the king the natural guardian of his people. The material and spiritual well-being of the subjects should be with the king, he thought, an esteemed duty and a pious mission. He should be fully alive to his moral responsibilities to his subjects. He should receive and decide the appeals of his people at all places and at all hours, and should work most strenuously for the good of the living beings.

Asoka believed in the paternal theory of monarchy—a theory not uncommon in ancient India:¹ In one of his famous edicts he says, “All men are my offsprings. Just as for my offsprings I desire that they may be united with all welfare and happiness of this world and the next, precisely do I desire it for all men.”² Not only the peoples of his own dominions but even the unsubdued borderers were given to understand that the king was unto them even as a father, and they were unto the king even as his children. He not only practised himself this sense of relationship between the ruler and the ruled, but also called upon his officers to imitate and to act up to this ideal. The entire notion of this paternal responsibility of the king and his officers to the people has been beautifully summed up by Piyadasi (Asoka)—“As a man would make over his child to a skilful nurse and feeling confident says to himself, ‘The skilful nurse is eager to care for the happiness of my child,’ even so my governors have been created for the welfare and happiness of the country (provincials).”³

There are scholars who see even in this paternal conception of kingship a veiled reference to despotism. Just as a child is often left at the mercy of his father, the people may be subjected to the dictation of the king. A paternal attitude is often inconsistent with individual initiative and self-expression, for the king is not always the best judge of his peoples' interests.

1. Arthashastra—Bk. II, Chap. I, ‘King shall favour like a *father* those, who have passed the period of remission of taxes.’ *Ibid.* Bk. IV, Chap. III, ‘King should protect his afflicted people as *father his sons.*’

Mahabharat, Santiparva, Rajadharma Section—56, ‘Like the *mother* king should sacrifice whatever he likes for his subjects.’

2. Kalinga Edict I.

3. Pillar Edict IV.

But the note of royal absolutism, if it rings at all in the above expressions of Asoka, is entirely lost when he further says—"What little effort I make—what is it for?—in order that I may be free from debts to the creatures, that I may render some happy here, and that they gain heaven in the next world."¹ Here we have a sort of direct obligation of the king to the people,—a contract, so to speak, which the king must fulfil. Thus, to Asoka the king was at once a father and a debtor unto his subjects.

Asoka does not seem to have explicitly included in his theory of kingship the idea that the king is the servant of the State (*Gana-dâsa*). But he went so far as to say, "The king loves his people, even as he loves himself and desires for them every kind of prosperity and happiness, both in this world and the next."² "There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world."³ It sounds much like an admission that he was an ideal public servant—whose highest duty was the welfare of mankind. The king's interests were thus subordinated to those of the people. Asoka's theory of kingship, therefore, was something more than a mere paternal conception of monarchy, i.e. the king is a father unto his people. It combined in itself three distinct elements, viz., the love of a father, the obligation of a debtor, and the duty of a public servant.

PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION.

It is no wonder that a ruler who had so exalted a notion of kingship should base his administration on certain enlightened principles. In many of his inscriptions the king Piyadasi has set forth his personal ideal of good government and the ethical considerations that shaped the end of his polity. His state was not a police-state as it did not rest upon fear or force. It was rather a culture-state the highest purpose of which was the material and spiritual improvement of mankind. Asoka, therefore, enunciated certain cardinal principles and governed his empire in strict accordance with them.

The first principle of his administration was *Ahimsa* or the doctrine of non-violence. It defined for him and his successors the general policy of the State. In accordance with this principle he ruled out war within his empire and definitely abandoned all schemes of territorial expansion through the force of arms. He went so far as to declare—"If any one does him wrong, the Beloved of Gods must bear

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1. Rock Edict VI.
 2. Kalinga Edict II.
 3. Rock Edict VI.

all that can be borne."¹ Henceforward he embarked upon no war to extend the limits of his empire, and left instructions on stones for his sons and grandsons to follow in his footsteps. Even to the forest-tribes of his dominions and the unsubdued borderers of his empire was extended this benign principle, and the royal message ran, "The king desires that they should have no fear of me, that they should trust me and receive from me happiness, not sorrow."² They were thus left to enjoy their own freedom subject to a little interference from the king,³ and Asoka used no force to bring them under a superior civilisation. So rang through the country the message, loud and clear, repeated on rock and pillar, the message of freedom, of peace on earth and goodwill towards men. Silenced was the war-drum: the *bheri-ghosa* was drowned in the *Dhamma-ghosa* (R. E. IV).⁴ Even to the dumb animal world went this message of kindness. Restrictions⁵ were put upon slaughter and mutilation of living creatures and the Emperor published regulations for the protection of their lives.

The second principle of Asoka's government was *Maitri* or the fellowship of living beings. "There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world," says Piyadasi, the 'prophet of the third century B. C.,' and it portrays the true ideal of Asokan polity. He strove hard to promote this spirit of harmony and goodwill not only among his subjects but also among those of his neighbouring independent states. This was his *Dhamma-vijaya* or the conquest through his law of piety—a conquest flavoured with love. True to this ideal, Asoka made no attempt to make inroads upon the independence of his frontier kingdoms,⁶ but sought to establish perpetual amity with them. Everywhere in his own dominions and in the foreign countries on his borders and beyond were sent envoys (*Dâtas*) and *Dhamma-mahamatras* to preach the simple virtues of his Dhamma among peoples of all religions and nationalities, and everywhere were instituted two kinds of medical treatments—medical treatment of man and medical treatment of beast.⁷ The object of these activities was not simply the promotion of physical happiness, common to men and animals, but of spiritual well-being too. Thus, "The barriers that

1. Rock Edict XIII.

2. Kalinga Edict II.

3. As regards administration of justices (Rock Edict V).

4. Dr. R. K. Mukherjee, 'Asoka,' p. 58.

5. Pillar Edict V.

6. Four Tamil kingdoms, Ceylon, and the five Greek kingdoms mentioned in Rock Edicts II and XIII.

7. Rock Edict II.

divide nations could not stand before his sense of universal brotherhood."¹ He gave a new tone to the international relations of his time and "spread over an immense area the conviction that peace is better than war."² Thus an Indian emperor anticipated, some twenty-two centuries ago, the idea of international peace and well-being which is even to this day 'the cry of the many, but the game of the few.' So the vision of a world-state was shadowed forth.

The third principle that governed the Asokan State was the *cult of progress or exertion*. Himself the most strenuous of all workers, Asoka recommended to his officials and subjects alike the gospel of work. He always extolled the fruit of exertion and issued proclamations "in order that the subordinate ones and superior ones shall exert themselves to this end (moral progress), that my neighbours may know this and this exertion may long endure."³ He never wished that his people should rust unvarnished and not shine in use, for he constantly exclaimed, "Let great and small exert themselves."⁴ "He who is depressed should rise up, and one ought to move, go forward and advance."⁵ His subjects were repeatedly asked to exert themselves for the practices of Dhamma such as hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to preceptors, following in the footsteps of the aged, seemly behaviour towards Brahmanas and Sramanas, towards the poor and the wretched, and even towards slaves and servants, and to do various acts of public utility—planting trees by roads, digging wells and setting up waiting-sheds for man and beast. Every man, he maintained, must work out his salvation and eat the fruit of his deeds. . . . The government could only point out the road which each man must travel for himself.⁶ He himself practised these measures so that his people might strictly follow him and thus advance considerably with advance in religion,⁷ for he believed in the maxim 'Example is always better than precept.' He was never tired of pointing out to mankind the rewards awaiting the faithful discharge of these duties. "He who does it (Dhamma) in this manner," says he, "accomplishes the worldly life and obtains infinite spiritual merit."⁸ He expected that all men should give up their old ways, their narrow outlook on

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1. Dr. R. K. Mukherjee, 'Asoka,' p. 59.
 2. R. Jones and S. S. Sherman—'League of Nations from Idea to Reality,' p. 37.
 3. Minor Rock Inscription I (Brahma Giri Text).
 4. *Ibid.* (Rupnath Text).
 5. Kalinga Edict I.
 6. V. Smith—Early History of India (4th ed., p. 200).
 7. Pillar Edict VII.
 8. Rock Edict XI.

life, and learn to tolerate their neighbours. While respecting one's own religion one should learn to honour others' faiths too. This is why he desired that all sects should be possessed of wide learning and should occasionally assemble together in order that they might hear and desire to hear one another's Dhamma. They should thus cultivate a spirit of mutual appreciation, which, thought Piyadasi, would put an end to religious bigotry and communal feelings, and pave the way for harmony among men of different sects. This was the cult of exertion Asoka preached to mankind—the maxim of conduct laid down for men's all-round progress—the fruit of constant toil and persistent exertion. "Good is difficult to perform," says Piyadasi, "he who initiates good does something difficult to perform."¹ And in the 27th year of his reign he reviewed with intense delight the results his message of progress had attained: "Whatever good deeds have been done by me, these the people have followed and these they will imitate, and thereby they have been *made to progress* and will be made to progress."²

The fourth principle governing the Asokan State was the *doctrine of ultimate good* or infinite merit (Anantam punya) in the world beyond. "Whatever exertions King Piyadasin, Beloved of Gods, puts forth, are (all) with reference to the other world."³ This was with Asoka the final reward of all true activities in life. From the king down to the lowest of the lowly, attainment of Heaven was to be the ultimate end of all right endeavours. Asoka defined duties for his governors and officials and constantly told them to govern well 'the many thousands of lives over which they were set' so that they might attain Heaven and gain royal favour. Thus he says to the Mahamatras of Tosali,— "You should desire to follow the middle path (moderation or justice) . . . if it is well performed you will gain heaven and also discharge your debt to me."⁴ He made the Rajjukas (a special class of officials in sole charge of judicial administration) self-dependent and instructed them to help the people they were to govern, in the attainment of Heaven. "The Rajjukas will make themselves acquainted with what gives happiness or pain, and exhort the people of the provinces along with the faithful—how?—so that they may gain happiness in this world and the next."⁵ He gave three days' respite to prisoners condemned to death before their execution—so that even during that

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1. Rock Edict V.
 2. Pillar Edict VII.
 3. Rock Edict X.
 4. Kalinga Edict I.
 5. Pillar Edict IV.

time they might 'try to win the bliss of the next world.'¹ Unto himself he said, "What little effort I make, what is it for? . . . that I may render some (of my people) happy here and that they may gain Heaven in the next world."² . . . The Beloved of Gods esteems, as bearing great fruit, only that which concerns the next world."³ To the people he said, "What thing is more worthy of achievement through it (performance of duty) than the attainment of Heaven?"⁴ Thus everybody belonging to the State—might he be the King himself, an official or a petty subject,—had to exert himself for the ultimate bliss in the world beyond. This was the final reward of all pious efforts on earth.

NATURE OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

Thus Asoka's government was based on enlightened principles. The genuine ethical considerations that underlay it aimed at the good of the living beings both in this life and in the life beyond.

Nevertheless, in form, organisation and in actual working of the constitution, Asoka's government appears, at the first sight, to have been an absolute monarchy—an autocracy in the legal and political sense of the term. It presents many features which show that it was not a government by the people, and that it lacked the essential elements of a present-day democracy. Constitutional checks upon the king there had been none. Though in theory the king laid great emphasis on his 'debt' to the people, in practice the royal interference in the shape of persuasion penetrated into the very private life of his subjects. He was not bound by the traditional checks upon the autocracy of Hindu monarchs, viz., the limitations prescribed by the sacred law-books. But he passed laws of his realm on his own initiative, and his edicts were so many royal proclamations. Thus unlike his predecessors, he was himself the source of law. He was the head of the religious organisation too and determined to prevent schism within the Buddhist Church and to promote harmony among different sects. He was at the apex of the bureaucratic organisation of his empire. He allowed little independence to the local governors. Even the royal relatives at Pataliputra and elsewhere were not free from his control exercised through the special class of officials, viz., Dhamma Mahamatras. "I scrutinise them" (all classes of officials), says he, "both

1. *Ibid.*

2. Rock Edict VI.

3. Rock Edict XIII.

4. Rock Edict IX.

those who are far and near as I do my relatives.”¹ The Council of Ministers (Parishad) of which he speaks in his edicts² existed only to assist the king and had no power to override his decision. In cases of division or rejection in the Council the final appeal lay to the king.³ The degree of independence that he allowed to his border peoples and forest tribes was granted on condition that they should give up their old ways and conform to the king’s moral code. “The king will bear us (border peoples) as far as it is possible to bear, (but) they should follow Dhamma for my (king’s) sake.”⁴ He further declared—“The Beloved of Gods is mighty, though repentant.”⁵ Thus Asoka gave his people to understand that he was not a weak king to rely solely upon his policy of persuasion. There is a vague hint even to the effect that persuasion failing, force might be employed, though he loudly proclaimed, “The Beloved of Gods desires for all beings non-injury, self-control, impartiality and gentleness”⁶ and never put into practice the maxim ‘Might is right,’ since his triumphant close of the Kalinga war (261 B. C.).

The above features of Asoka’s government clearly point to royal absolutism of the Maurya period. They present a strong contrast to the notion that was prevalent before the rise of the Mauryan power and according to which the king was considered to be a mere servant of the state.⁷

But when we closely examine Asoka’s idea of kingship and the principles which governed his administration and shaped the end of his polity, we cannot but conclude that his government was a *kind of limited monarchy*. In a regular limited monarchy there are certain external checks on the authority of the king. Either convention, written constitution, Council of Ministers, or the popular assembly curtails the king’s powers. But in Asokan polity there was a powerless Cabinet, no definite force of covention and no place for popular assemblies. Yet his absolute power was limited by a number of self-imposed checks which added to his duties and responsibilities. These restrictions sprang from the very character of the sovereign himself, his moral feelings and the sacredness of his mission. Perhaps he was the only king in history who voluntarily curtailed his own powers in

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1. Pillar Edict VI.
 2. Rock Edict III & VI.
 3. Rock Edict VI.
 4. Kalinga Edict II.
 5. Rock Edict XIII.
 6. *Ibid.*
 7. Bhandarkar, ‘Asoka’ (1925), p. 63.

the interests of his subjects, nay even of mankind. He thus gave little scope to 'the certainty of popular disobedience or opposition'¹ which always exists as an ultimate check even under the most despotic monarchies.

The principal duties and obligations which Asoka took upon himself and which served as so many checks upon his otherwise unrestricted authority may be enumerated as follows.

In the first place, he was always ready to receive petitions and prayers of his subjects. At all places and at all hours, even the most inconvenient, he did his peoples' business. He was never satisfied with his exertions and his prompt despatch of official matters. To him the first duty was to attend to his people. He always ignored his own pleasures and recreations to give prompt hearing to his subjects' requests. "At all places and at all hours," says Asoka, "whether I am eating or am in the closed (female) apartments, in the inner chamber or in the royal stables, on horseback or in pleasure orchards, reporters may report people's business to me."² Thus what could have been the prerogative of the king became, under Asoka, a definite privilege of the people. This served as a check on the king's uncontrolled authority. It is generally maintained that Asoka's procedure in this respect was in accordance with the practice of his predecessors and with the rule of Kautilya. But hardly had any of his predecessors discharged to such an extent his obligations to his people.

In the second place, Asoka's lofty spirit of toleration that saw good in everything was an effective check upon his personal likes and dislikes. He liberally patronised men of various sects and never dreamt of religious persecution. Possessed of unlimited resources and unrestricted power he could have easily, like Philip II of Spain, imposed his own religion (Buddhism) upon his people on the point of sword or like Constantine could have made it a state-religion. But he appears to have done neither. What he preached was but a simple practical moral code that had nothing to do with any particular faith. On the other hand he employed his Dhamma-Mahamatras to deal equally with all sects. Thus, to tolerate others and to do justice to all he clearly subordinated his own interests to his people's.

In the third place, his constant vigilance upon and his occasional instructions to the local governors and city magistrates left no scope to the latter for misuse of their powers. His Dhamma-Mahamatras

1. Dicey—The Law of the Constitution, p. 76.

2. Rock Edict VI.

were employed to prevent miscarriage of justice¹ in any part of his empire and even beyond. His Rajjukas were appointed to ensure uniformity of judicial investigation and punishment—to promote welfare and happiness among the provincials.² Thus the whole weight of royal authority fell upon the state-officials and not upon the poor subjects so that the latter might enjoy the benefits of a just and upright administration. This was, therefore, a sufficient guarantee of popular rights and liberties against the possible arbitrariness of the king.

In the fourth place, by granting partial autonomy to smaller states (e.g., Yavana Raja Tushaspa, vassal chief at Kathiawar) and weaker peoples³ Asoka voluntarily excluded from his exclusive control certain parts of his empire. The area of royal interference was thus considerably narrowed. Only in respect of administration of justice, the royal interference penetrated into the territories of the above peoples. The King's Dhamma-Mahamatras were occasionally sent to revise sentences of imprisonment and execution, etc.⁴ among the peoples of these semi-independent states. Thus, 'many parts of India were left unconquered when they could be easily conquered by a sovereign of Asoka's paramount power and position.'

Finally, the prominence he gave to moral and spiritual life over secular completely changed his conception of kingly office and reminded him of his perpetual obligation to his people. He totally forgot to accumulate power in his own hands and devoted himself to ensure the good of his subjects. He gave up animal food and the pleasures of the royal chase, exerted himself more strenuously than his officers and himself became a living example to his people. He thus entered into a relationship with them which is "more natural and more primary, more direct and intimate than the legal, factitious and consensual relationship. . . . A king with these ideas of his position and responsibility is practically more representative of his people than the so-called representative assembly or legislature in a regular democracy."⁵

Asoka's government was, therefore, a *peculiar type of limited monarchy* in which the king was bound by a number of self-created shackles. It was something more than mere benevolent paternal despotism. It was an autocracy tempered by an all-absorbing eagerness to serve the people and 'to rule by love than fear.' It was even

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1. Rock Edict V.
 2. Pillar Edict IV.
 3. Javanas, Kambojas, Rastrikas, Pitinakas, etc. (Rock Edict VIII).
 4. Rock Edict V.
 5. Dr. R. K. Mukherjee 'Asoka,' p. 49.

more enlightened than the benevolent despotism of the West. Neither Frederick nor Catherine the Great could so completely identify himself or herself with the people. Neither of them did ever work, like Asoka, for the moral and spiritual well-being of the governed. A ruler and a reformer at the same time, Piyadasi's highest mission was the development of virtuous life among mankind, so that the latter might enjoy happiness in this world and gain heaven in the next. As long as he lived he worked ceaselessly in the spirit of this ideal. If the development of good life was the object of the Greek State, the development of virtuous life with the prospect of endless merit in the world beyond was the true end of Asokan polity.

Chartism : Its Glories

PROSAD KUMAR BOSE—*Fifth Year, History.*

'DELENDA est Carthago,' exclaimed Cato the Censor at the end of every speech. Indeed, that spirit of deadly antagonism is rare in the modern world. The Rob Roy principle of 'might is right' is a thing of the past ; but still even now we are often tempted to ignore the weak, as was done in Sparta two thousand years ago. Not unfrequently the social welfare of the economist is limited to the happiness of the already well-off. To the economist it is an age of survival of the fittest and he is ready to leave the mute many to their fate. But sometimes even the dying man gathers up his energy and feels an irresistible desire for existence. He must live, yes, he will. This spirit animates him and he struggles with a might ever unknown to him and the world. Chartism was such an incident ; it was born of the desire for existence, an instinct which is implanted in the heart of every created being.

Chartism was the first movement in the modern world which was conducted by working men. It was the first sustained attempt to throw off the injustice of the capitalistic regime, or rather of middle-class economics. And it might be said that the latest age in English history began with this movement. Aristocracy was in full force in England. Even the much-boomed Reform Act of 1832 was no practical advance in the direction of government of the people, for the people and by the people. But the chartist agitation had supplied the impetus and with the passing of the second and third reform bills democracy came to be established. Thus it was that chartism ushered in a new era in constitutional development and social and economic progress. And although it is arbitrary to draw the line of demarcation between one age and another, yet it might be claimed that most of the ideas which prevail in England to-day were born in the chartist-mind. If the fall of Constantinople is to be taken to mark the beginnings of the modern age, chartism which involved a movement of ideas might certainly claim to mark the burial of modern age in England. It stood at the threshold of the latest age.

But was the movement a bolt from the people? Did it catch Englishmen unawares? No. The ideas were long gaining ground

and they took a definite shape in the days of Queen Victoria. But it is very hard to determine the exact date as to when the chartist thought came into existence. We can only say that the new ideology grew up in the course of the evolution of English mind, or to be more correct, it was nurtured by a combination of circumstances and forces which were at work in the latter part of the eighteenth and the earlier years of the nineteenth centuries. However, we can attempt to draw up a brief history of its origin. "The roots of chartism lay in the old Radical Movement, in the socialist propaganda of Owen, Thompson, Hodgskin and the rest, and in the Trade Union Movement. It gathered all these into a focus and drew strength also from the Ten Hours' agitation in the Northern factory towns, from the opposition to the Poor Law, from the fads and fancies of currency quacks, from the growing thirst for education, from the Temperance movement, from every protest against injustice and every aspiration after public well-being that fermented in the minds of a restless and unhappy people." Such is the view of Ramsay Muir. In simple language we can put together all these—chartism was the outcome of the growing consciousness on the part of the lower classes in English society. It is not improbable that this awakening was accelerated by the revolutions in France and on the Continent. The war against abuse of power and against unconstitutionality perhaps found its echo in England in war against the hardships of the poor, in an attempt to throw off the shackles and manacles which the mass were forced to wear. They refused to submit any longer to the so-called divine dispensation and resolved to see if Providence could be made to change by an active assertion of the inherent right of man, if it could be made to yield even at the point of the sword.

However, chartism as such was born officially on May 8, 1838. It was on that date that the London Working Men's Association published a document commonly known as the Peoples' Charter. This charter, taking cognizance of its importance, may be called the Magna Charta of the latest British constitution. There was certainly no King John in the nineteenth century. The days of absolutism were gone and buried, buried amidst tremendous cheers and wholesome relief to the people. But if the Queen was not unconstitutional, not even an inch, the new aristocracy were yet obnoxious to the people. In the thirteenth century the nation as a whole refused to yield to the tyranny of their king; in the nineteenth century the majority of them rose against the oppression of the minority. In the thirteenth century the idea was latitude, in the nineteenth century it was equality associated

with liberty and fraternity. In King John's time there was no thought of democracy ; during the days of Victoria that was the goal.

Now to turn to the contents of the charter. The points on which it insisted were six in number: Universal suffrage ; vote by ballot ; the abolition of the aristocratic qualification, i.e. of the necessity of holding property, for membership to Parliament ; payment for the services of the members of Parliament ; equal electoral districts ; and annual Parliaments. These six points were drafted by Lovett, and it is believed that some assistance was rendered by Francis Place. "The formal constitution of the chartist movement is commonly dated from the great meeting held on August 8, 1838 on Newhall Hill at which the charter was approved."

This was the chartist plan and it was no new ideal. "The matter of chartism," said Carlyle, "is weighty, deep-rooted, far-extending ; it did not begin yesterday and will by no means end this day or to-morrow." That is apparent. But why? The obvious answer is to be found in an analysis of the situation in the thirties of the last century. The French Revolutionary wars were over and England had found breathing time. The Industrial Revolution had opened new channels of prosperity. Men had grown wiser and more cautious and the philosophy of olden times was melting away before the scorching rays of stern materialism. The world was too much with them. They had by this time imbibed fully the spirit of dominating the affairs of the world. This new spirit reflected amongst all sections of people so that the poor and the deprived, the lame and the sick, now rose up to enjoy "life to the lees." To be more explicit, Englishmen have always fondly clung to the idea of complete independence, independence not only political, but also social and economic. Encouraged by the recent experiments elsewhere, the mass of Englishmen turned round to examine their own position, but to their bitter discontent they found that they were no better than chattels. Independence they had, but independence merely from the control of foreigners. That was no relief to their pain and in their extreme agony they started the chartist agitation. The chartist movement was thus the outcome of three causes: economic, social and political, and we can examine them briefly.

First, as to the economic condition. In no country did the development of industries work greater havoc than in England. Manufacturing industries are the foundation of the greatness of a state in the modern world. Without trade and commerce no country could now even dream of its existence. So the Industrial Revolution was a great

boon to England. Production was much more than consumption and England started on her career of capturing the world market. The employment of science to the aid of industry brought in marvellous results. Wealth was increasing at a tremendous rate. But while the new prosperity was cloud-kissing and hoped to rise much higher even, the depth of economic depression, almost like a paradox, was running straight to the bowels of the earth. National wealth was indeed increasing at geometrical progression, but that national wealth represented no more than the wealth of a particular section of the nation. The majority gained nothing. The Industrial Revolution only swelled the coffers of the rich ; it did no more than carry coal to Newcastle. The purse of the capitalists reached the bursting point, but the poor remained as before. The Industrial Revolution did not help them a little ; it was rather positively injurious to their economic condition. The transition from handicraft to machinery deprived many workmen of their employment, and thus of the means of their subsistence, because the unemployed could not hope to compete with machinery by hand-made goods. Wages fell, but prices rose. Thus the Industrial Revolution worked as a distinct curse to the poor people and in the midst of plethoric plenty the workmen starved. At one pole of the society there was ever-increasing richness, and at another there was extreme poverty. Thus the Industrial Revolution prepared the soil for the conflict among the rich and the poor, among the employers and the employed and the chartists only started the conflict.

Economic condition is inter-connected with social life, and the Industrial Revolution not only emphasised the economic distinction, but also helped the raising of a gigantic wall in society. There were two distinct social camps in England: one was laughing with splendour and pomp, with joy and luxury ; in another crowded together ignorance, disease, vice and starvation. The one was the fountain of bliss and happiness, the other heaped nuisance. In one there was life, in another death. Thus Disraeli wrote of " two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy, who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thought and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets." This invidious distinction was extremely pernicious to the feelings of the 'outcastes,' especially because they were members of a free state. Thus one of the ultimate aims of the chartist movement was " social equality " or, in the language of G. J. Harney's *London Democrat* (27th Sept., 1839) " that all shall have a good house to live in with a garden in back or front, just as the occupier likes ; good clothings to keep him warm and to make him look respectable, and plenty of good food and drink to

make him look and feel happy." This was no obstinate demand of a child ; it was the right of every man. The mass of the people wore the appearance of beggars, with practically no food and clothing ; and their houses were no better than slums and dens. On the other hand the few nobles and rich men looked gay and shining in bright attire and with palatable dishes. This contrast was felt, and felt very keenly. The poor gradually grew conscious of their lot and they would brook it no longer. As there was no hope of smoking the calumet, they swore to amend their condition or end the luxurious buoyancy of the rich.

These were the real causes of the chartist movement. But chartism had yet another side and the immediate cause was the political element. The great Reform Bill had been passed in 1832. To the politicians of the day it was a great triumph for democracy. But to the working classes it meant almost nothing. They had worked vehemently for the success of the reform movement. The chartists, though the name was as yet not formally given, had agitated for electoral reform and universal suffrage. That they were not wrong is proved by the earlier attempts of Lord Richmond, Pitt, Fox and others in that direction during the reign of King George III. Before the final passage of the Reform Bill through the Houses of Parliament, the chartists carried on a vigorous and active propaganda work for its success. They enlisted supporters, influenced public opinion and worked hand in hand with their masters, never suspecting the faintest idea of treachery. But they were bitterly disappointed. They had trusted to the inherent goodness of human character ; they had believed in the simple promises of the rulers only to be simpletons. They had expected that the lot of the poorer classes would be improved and with this pious belief they had furthered the cause of the reform agitation. They hoped that a reform would come to them also, their grievances would be removed. But they were deceived ; their whole calculations were upset ; their dreams were shattered. They looked round and found that they had only ran after the will-o'-the-wisp, that they had built castles in the air. Their hearts sank into their boots, but that was only a temporary collapse. The failure of their hopes only increased their rage and made them more united in their programme of reform. They had learnt, and learnt bitterly, and they were not to be befooled any more. They could now see the true nature of things. They realised that the Reform Bill was the final limit, beyond which the government would not go. But they got ready to see if the line could be pushed to a further distance. And disillusioned as they had been, they refused to support, even denounced, further middle-class

manceuvres. They stood apart when the agitation for the repeal of Corn Laws was started. They had no faith in the false and alluring promises of their masters. They now saw clearly that their salvation was to come by their own exertion, but it was sheer nonsense to expect leaders and guides among the bourgeoisie. They had tried to make a pleasant compromise even at a great disadvantage, but they realised that the point could only be decided by the intermediary of blood and iron. Such an attitude was no doubt the last thing to be expected of any Englishman, and surely the chartists would not have resorted to it had there been any reasonable alternative.

Thus the chartist movement had three sides—economic, social and political. But according to some it had yet another aspect and that was religious. It has been said that chartism meant “irreligion even more than it meant revolution.” That was the verdict of the timid folk *who collapsed at the very sight of a workingman*. They wanted to resolve chartism into terms of both crime and sin, and that was inevitable. The new movement of ideas was daily impressing itself steadily on the minds of the people; it was quite clear to the middle class. So they dragged religion into the arena, and denounced chartism as paganism, as a revolt against Christianity, as a vile attack on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. In this way they wanted to play upon the humour of men and to enlist supporters on their side, as they knew that many would refuse to tolerate irreligion. Indeed “more pigs and fewer parsons” was a famous cry among the chartists; but that was not an advocacy of unbelief. The chartists were not heretics; they were stern materialists. To them meat and bread were urgent necessities; they were not prepared to fill their empty stomach with spiritual food. How could it be otherwise? The poor people cannot undergo the luxury of spiritual salvation so long as they do not get food. Let their hunger be satisfied, and they would again begin visiting the churches. This was the real mentality of the chartists and it is very difficult under these circumstances to accuse them of irreligion.

Such was the chartist movement. We need not go into the details of the agitation; it will be sufficient to say that it led to riots, but these uprisings were finally suppressed by the Government. That was due to the absence of adequate leadership. The working classes had no previous experience in these matters and consequently they did not know how to conduct their campaign. “There are junctures in the affairs of men when what is wanted is a man; not treasures, nor fleet, nor legions, but a man,—a man of the moment, a man of the occasion, a man of destiny whose spirit attracts, unites, and inspires,” and such

a man was wanting. In fact, such a man cannot come all of a sudden, especially because the chartists were mostly unlettered workers, with an enormous capacity of active work, if only there was some one to direct them. But the failure of the movement does not in any way prove the utter worthlessness of chartist ideas which were essentially good and invulnerable. That is really an invalid argument or no argument at all. It may be argued that there was no truth in the new ideas, otherwise why should there be an ascendancy of physical force over moral persuasion? But that cannot be the verdict of the judge, it is merely the argument of an advocate. In these days when morality has been pushed to the background and might prevails everywhere, truth can only be truth if it is backed by adequate physical force. The voice of the weak melts in the air and cannot reach the ears of the sermoner on the mount, unless it is followed by the roar of cannons and drums of war so as to disturb the trance of the political philosopher. And moreover, workingmen are apt to be impatient and violent. Still they had waited for a long time and had done nothing. They had presented petitions to the Legislature, not as a threat, but as a supplication. They had repeatedly appealed to the good sense of their masters and repeatedly were they dismissed unceremoniously. Still they appealed. But patience has a limit. What wonder then that they should take up arms as their last resort? This spirit of rebellion did not lie dormant in them, it was forced on them.

There are scholars who have often declared exultingly that with the Kennington common fiasco, "chartism was literally laughed out of existence." But was it so? Was it only meant to rouse up the laughter of the civilised world? Was it a pathetic exhibition of how great human folly could be? Does it come down to us as a mockery which fills the annals of British history in the last century? We can even laugh at the Russian revolution of 1917, but does it alter circumstances? Does it prove in any way that it was a hopeless failure? That is only a consolation to the aggrieved, an attempt to run away from unbearable truth.

Contemporaries, whether friendly or hostile to chartism, have opined that the movement was entirely fruitless. Some attacked the principles of chartism, others denounced the tactics; but all were agreed in counting it among the dead causes of history. To some it was a brilliant failure; to others it was a shameless defeat. In either case, it bore no fruit. That was the judgment of the contemporaries. But what seemed to be true before is now untenable, and we have enough evidence to prove that it was a success.

To start with intellectual results. Chartism was really a revolution of ideas and it left a deep impression on the minds of the thinkers. The philosophy which had grown up among mill-hands and factory-workers spread to the minds of the thoughtful and they realised what the real position was. So long they had been captivated by the glamour of court-life, by the pomp and splendour of the rich ; now they turned their look to the other end and found what a devastation was there. In the core of their hearts, they felt a sympathy, a sort of agony, to find that the bulk of the nation was in a state of ruin. This touched them. Many literary works of the period abound in evidence that the cup of misery to the worker was full. The distress and sufferings of the workers became the subject-matter of great works and even men like Disraeli and Carlyle admitted the extreme wretchedness of the starving population. It is true that they never dreamt of taking any active part in the chartist movement ; that was too much to be expected of them. It is enough that the chartists had succeeded to bring home to them the justice and wisdom of their demands.

Even the trend of economic thought was changed. We cannot say that the chartist agitation led to the demolition of the so-called bourgeois economics, but there is no doubt that it exposed its defects. The economic theory of that day took no notice of the starving millions ; it only tracked out the path for the future development of the resources of those who had enough and to spare. English economics had up till now only served the capitalists ; it could not have been otherwise. It was the creation of the wealthy and it meant welfare, welfare of the already well-off. National welfare meant only this. It advocated the cause of industrialisation ; it exhibited how factory system coupled with the principles of large-scale production and division of labour could increase the total amount of profit. It did not care to know whether machine-labour tended to wring the life-blood out of the poor, whether it degenerated the morals of the peoples. It swelled the number of the unemployed and helped the growth of vicious habits. Nevertheless machines are the foundation of the modern mechanic civilisation and everyone would have been satisfied if some provision was made for the starving. Under the heavy pressure of individualism, social welfare took to its heels and individual welfare reigned instead. Individualism, selfish and uncontrolled, and competition, unrestrained and wild, were all to be found in the economic life of England at that period. But then came chartism, a bold and vigorous protest against the doctrines of the day. Mill understood it somewhat. It might be reasonably believed that a man of his genius understood all, but that is only a conjecture. However, he did

something to rebuild English economics and pointed out the advantages of socialism against unrestricted individualism. But the socialism of J. S. Mill was nothing of practical use ; it only meant that the chartist doctrine of social welfare was not antagonistic to the best interests of the State. It meant that a change was absolutely necessary, and in the words of Mark Hovell " it prevented the unqualified victory of the economic gospel of the Cobdenites and of the political gospel of the Utilitarians."

This cannot be dismissed so easily. The upholders of Laissez Faire maintained that the old individualistic policy was essentially beneficial, and they held with Mill that " one of the principal ingredients of individual and social progress is freedom of conduct." " Leave everyone to oneself " was their cry, for they believed in the efficacy of competition. They assumed that all men must be placed on equal footing, so that individual worth might be tested. But what was the foundation of their optimism? It does not require much reflection to see that individual equality is a far-off project in the modern world. The theoretical equality of the advocates of Laissez Faire does not exist in practice. The uniformed labourer is often left to the mercy of the capitalist. Moreover, if everybody was allowed to develop his powers and resources, it may not be that a man should direct them to the welfare of the society as a whole. Rather, very often he would pursue selfish motives. Chartism brought out this fundamental truth from darkness and the doctrine of Laissez Faire was exploded. The Government certainly did not adopt a socialistic attitude, but it grew wise. That was seen in the changed outlook of the Government. In former times, it had repeatedly refused to meddle in the affairs of mills and factories ; even Pitt had turned a deaf ear to the prayers of the poor. But that policy was now given up and it was reflected in the Employers' Liability Act of 1880, the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897 and the various Factory Acts of the later Victorian period. That was no doubt a feather to the victorious head of chartism.

These were no doubt consequences of great importance, but what about the famous " six points"? Were they given up? Opponents have denounced the movement in the filthiest tongue. They have represented it as one of the lost causes of history, as an exhibition of utter stupidity, even as irreligion. They delighted that it had failed. But the modern world views it in a quite different light. That there was no fallacy, not even the slightest incongruity, in the logic of chartism is fully demonstrated by the fact that nearly all the points of the charter were given effect to by express legislation. Property

qualification for members of Parliament was abolished in 1858. Next followed vote by ballot in 1872. In 1911 payment for the services of members of Parliament was established. Electoral reforms have also been made. The area of suffrage has also been extended by the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1885, and by the attempt of 1917 to establish universal suffrage. The normal life of a Parliament has also been cut down to five years. Many other incidental reforms, such as the payment of returning officers at the polls for their services, the shortening of the electoral period, etc., are also noticeable. Thus chartism had won.

It may be pointed out that these reforms were granted by the middle-class Parliaments of the late Victorian period. Thus the credit really belonged to the middle-class and not to the chartists. The petty bourgeois class followed the dictates of reason and reformed the English constitution according to the best interests of the State. They were always eager to serve the country and were never blind to her prosperity. This argument, *prima facie*, seems weighty. It is undeniable that the Legislature had at last discarded the policy of *Laissez Faire*; it must be admitted that the politicians realised in the long run that the Reform Act of 1832 could not be the final word in the evolution of the constitution, as Lord John Russell had declared it to be only very recently. This was a triumph of the middle-class and it has been taken to mean that they did by no means desire the ruin of the poor. They had *done all these*. *The Reforms had come from them*. Yes, that is true. But, with all praise to their genius and respect to their memory, it can be most pertinently questioned where did the idea come from? The chartists were the first to expose the evils of the existing regime and to urge for immediate reform. Before that nobody had thought of it; Parliament had repeatedly declared that beyond the Act of 1832 it could *not* go. To the middle-class the final step had been taken, the last word had been pronounced; to the chartists that was only a beginning. They pressed for further reform which came in later days. It was their programme which was translated into legislation by Parliament. But if in spite of this, one would say that the ideas of reform originated in the minds of the middle-class and that to them must belong all glory, that would only be a great pleasure to the chartists now in the graves; they will not come out to complain of plagiarism; they will only boast of their success in converting the middle-class to their programme at last.

But still it may be argued that, after all, Parliament did what was right and refused to yield to physical force. It was only when the evil nightmare that had haunted the Government was over, it took up

the matter in hand, weighed it in the balance, and followed the dictates of reason. This was really necessary to keep up the prestige of Parliament as the sovereign body in the State. If it yields to threatening, how long can it survive? But still it is true that it got a bit frightened. It is true that the Government tried to put up a bold attitude and apparently to take no notice of the disturbances. But this was not so in the later stages of the conflict. Troops were sent to the north of England under Sir Charles Napier. In 1842 the Conservative Government of Peel took alarm at the risings, arrested many chartists, and sentenced some of them to transportation to Australia. But the risings were not serious, and if the Government could laugh at them, these disproportionate sentences were quite ridiculous. Thus the Government was frightened. But if this is untrue, it cannot be denied that the middle-class yielded to moral force. Chartism was really a moral ideal ; physical force was only a temporary phenomenon. In the long run the physical force partly died out ; but the strength of moral force remained as great as before and it had to be taken notice of. The demonstration of physical force was only an accident ; for the chartists had always declared that they were not revolutionaries. Scholars have opined almost unanimously that chartism had no positive ideal or policy. It was only a negative protest against what was wrong. Chartism was the union of those who followed a negative policy of protest. They did not know what to do ; but they knew what they won't allow. They had presented petitions to the Parliament, but they did not know what was to be done if the charter was granted. They had a destructive programme ; but on the constructive side they could chalk out no plan. When the whole of Russia blazed forth into rebellion in 1917, the Proletariat had no definite programme, except the overthrow of the Czar and the landed aristocracy ; but soon they realised what was to be done. Chartism might have also been likewise. Moreover, the chartists really had a positive ideal. In spite of the difference of policy, the creed was the same. There was a unity, a definiteness as to the object though there was a difference with regard to method, and that may be summed up in one significant phrase—suppression of the prevailing abuses and the amelioration of the condition of the poor. This was their positive idea, a goal which they perceived distinctly. They had set out with this definite aim and it was never lost sight of.

The movement, as noted elsewhere, marked a new departure in the social, economic and political history of England. It was the first movement of modern times that was conducted by workingmen. It gave much to England. In the words of Mark Hovell: " Its modest

successes taught elementary lessons of self-discipline and self-government that made the slow development of British democracy possible, without danger to the national stability and well-being. It helped to break down the iron walls of class separation, and showed that the terrible workingman was not very different from the governing classes when the time came for him to exercise direct powers." But we can go further and say that chartism supplied the basis on which the grandest structure of the latest British constitution was built up. And just as the foundation of a building remains invisible and buried under the construction, so also men have come to forget that the development of British democracy is directly traceable to the chartist movement.

One thing has yet to be discussed and that is the relation between chartism and the later socialism. "It was widely imagined," remarks the Cambridge History, "that chartism was a socialist movement; and many were convinced that it stood for an attack on property and the repudiation of National Debt. Such a belief was entirely erroneous." Disraeli also opined that chartism was a crusade against the new aristocracy, the upstart middle-class, and not a war against the old landed nobility. It has also been argued that chartism was pre-eminently a political movement and was a natural deduction from Radicalism. True it was a legacy of the old Radical Movement; but it differed from that in this that while to the Radicals Parliamentary Reform was an end in itself, to the chartists that was only a means to an end. The chartists had apparently adopted a political programme, but the springs of chartism were economic and social. They had declared that they wanted to revert "to the wholesome practice of ancient times." But this statement must be taken with a grain of salt, for it was only in the political aspect that they liked the ancient system. In the social aspect, they advocated equality, a doctrine which had come into existence only during the French Revolution; and in the economic aspect they introduced some altogether novel plans. Herein we find an anticipation of socialistic ideas. The notions of socialism had originated in the minds of Owen and many of the chartists had also been followers of Owen in their early lives. So it was natural that something of Owenism should be mingled with chartism. Owen had no belief in political reform, the chartists also did not think it to be all—that was only to be the beginning of a mighty revolution. Among the chartists, there were some extreme socialists. In his well-known pamphlet—"The Right of Infants"—Thomas Spence explained in the course of a dialogue that land was a property which belonged to the community as a whole; it was never a possession of a particular class. If the landed aristocracy had

appropriated it, that was merely a misappropriation. Bonterre O'Brien also expressed similar ideas. He emphatically declared that private ownership was the cause of untold misery to the poor, and so he advocated the principle of land nationalisation. But the question was more rationally and intelligently treated by William O'Gilvy. He examined the problem from the point of view of value and improvement and came to the same conclusion. The landlord was only entitled to the increased portion of the value which had come to a particular piece of land on account of improvements made by him, but other rights belonged to the nation. It was a compromise in which the claims of the landlord were admitted, but the rights of the community were not waived in any sense. These ideas of land-nationalisation and expropriation are the cardinal points of socialism, and when the chartists had such a motive, it is quite possible to think that chartism was an approach towards socialism. But all were unanimous that this was to be achieved by constitutional means and not by a violent coup d'etat. The germs of socialism lay dormant in their minds and soon infected others. The crude experiments of the working class in England were watched with eagerness by peoples on the Continent and some of them grew conscious of the advantages of socialism and even advocated communism. Thus about this time Karl Marx and others, influenced to some extent by the chartist ideas, turned their attention to the possible establishment of a communistic state in the world. Thus chartism really showed the way to socialism, although in itself it was not a great socialist movement. It marked the transition from individualism to socialism.

Such was chartism—a brilliant attempt towards the establishment of complete democracy and social equality. Laissez Faire was only a fair-weather doctrine and had outlived its usefulness. The Industrial Revolution had changed the whole aspect of British life. The unit of production was no longer the small farm. So it was no longer possible that the State should leave every man free to himself. The Reform Act of 1832 had sought to make a progress towards democracy and in these circumstances industrial despotism could no longer survive. Labour was also learning to organise itself and class war was coming. Chartism saw all these and tried to track out the path of future development. These economic discrepancies lay at the root and the political programme was merely a part of the ideal; politics only came to supplement economics. So chartism must not be looked upon as a political movement; it was through and through an economic problem. But to the bourgeois economists the gospel of chartism was a rebellion against the laws of God, and they denounced it altogether. Later on

they tried to check its progress by granting the political programme ; but the economic plan has been almost left untouched. They tried to veil the real nature of the agitation and declared it to be a political scheme. Even if we do not give our verdict in favour of communism or " political " socialism meaning Dictatorship of the Proletariat, we cannot deny that the economic doctrine of individualism has been exploded. Chartism was the first to discover it and it remains a glorious episode in British history. It was a triumph in itself.*

*Read at a meeting of the Historical Seminar held on the 16th December, 1934.

Cosmic Radiation

V. RAGHAVAN—*Fifth Year, Chemistry.*

THE mysterious 'Cosmic Rays' reaching the earth from the outer space form one of the subjects of active investigation by scientists in various parts of the world to-day. Their existence is only a subject of recent knowledge and a full understanding of the phenomenon seems to open vast possibilities for the future. The frequent balloon ascents into the Stratosphere, i.e., super-high regions of the atmosphere, that have been and are still being carried out, are connected with the investigation of the Cosmic Rays, which in the higher regions are many times more intense. Among such we have witnessed as record-making ones two thrilling ascents by Prof. Piccard in his Aluminium Balloon reaching a height of ten miles. More recently a Russian Balloon reached a record height of over twelve miles although the ascent ended in disaster, while closely following on this American and German Balloons have made similar stratosphere trips, and it seems other nations are getting ready for pioneer honours in stratosphere explorations and high altitude investigations. It is evident that these persistent efforts at altitude ascents, involving more hazards than speed record craze, are actuated by motives of far-reaching consequences.

Although no technical account and data on the results of stratosphere ascents are published it is well known that a study of the Cosmic Rays is not the only object in view. Scientists and Air Line Operators are closely watching the developments and the high altitude experiences are expected to pave the way for future power flights and high speed commercial transport in the super-high thin air regions. The range of long distance commercial flight in transport air liners of the present day is limited to 500 miles or less since the great bulk of fuel and oil carried for the engine curtails the pay load. Non-stop travel at speeds of over 500 miles per hour are possible in the higher regions where the resistance of air is low, and although special machines would be required, commercial transport operations would be much cheapened. Presumably Cosmic Radiation serves some purpose in stratosphere travel either for power or direction, but it is too early to forecast.

The Cosmic Rays are a source of vast energy continuously showering the earth with a rain of corpuscles of energy from all directions—vertical as well as all zenith angles. They were first discovered by Dr. Rutherford in 1903 who found that a few ions can always be found in air on account of the existence of a very penetrating type of radiation. Many experimenters have since made measurements on these rays sifting them out from less penetrating rays by shielding the measuring electroscope with thick walls of lead, etc., or testing them at the bottom of mines and deep lakes or high up with instruments carried in balloons at great heights.

These experiments have indicated that in the neighbourhood of the surface of the earth Cosmic Rays are very faint since the great layer of atmospheric air absorbs a considerable part of them. The electrical impulses from the rays serve to ionize the atmosphere producing an Air-Earth current from the atmosphere to the earth. The potential gradient is high near the earth while it decreases very rapidly at higher altitudes. This explains why the atmosphere at higher regions has greater electrical conductivity. It is very characteristic of the Cosmic Rays that they are the most penetrating rays ever discovered and observations have shown evidence of their existence even at a depth of 240 metres below the surface of Lake Constance. At this depth the rays are of course much fainter than near the earth's surface, and very sensitive instruments are necessary for their detection. In the stratosphere regions their effects are most pronounced and much of the investigations and conclusions are based on observations recorded in the stratosphere.

The exact origin of the Cosmic Rays and whether the physical characteristics of Ether have anything to do with them are problems that have not yet been solved. It is certain that they do not come from within the earth but only from the outer space. It is not likely that they emanate from the Sun, for if they did, we should expect more Cosmic Rays in quantity or quality during the day than the night ; but observations indicate that Cosmic Radiation is the same during day and night. According to one theory of physical scientists, the Universe is continually renewing and rebuilding itself and the Cosmic Rays originate from the vast interstellar space through some process of atom building. A large quantum of leftover energy is sent each time an atom is made, and on this basis it is calculated that if 4 atoms of Hydrogen suddenly combine to form one atom of Helium, the energy released would form a Cosmic Ray.

Quite contrary to this, another hypothesis advances that the Universe is being continuously run down, and that the rays originate

from the annihilation of matter instead of building up, in the interstellar space, each Cosmic Ray constituting, as it were, the death cry of an atom.

Yet another theory holds that Cosmic Rays are Photons, i.e., elemental electrified pieces of matter, attracted to the earth by the earth's magnetic field. These photons are flying around in space ever since the primeval explosion of the Universe millions of years ago, during which, nebulae, stars, atoms, electrons and photons were thrown out. Our globe has been continuously building up under the perpetual infall of these electrified particles, the heavier of them falling earlier and the lighter and lighter ones subsequently. This fits in with the Planetesimal Theory, according to which the Earth separated from the Sun as a cloud of vapours and gases of which the heavier part gathered together to form a solid heavy core. Over this core the lighter part of the vapour cloud built up continuously the outer layers of the lighter material to form the solid sphere—the primeval Earth.

However the Cosmic Rays might have had their origin, they constitute an important element in our physical Cosmos. They have an enormously high frequency and a wave-length shorter than any other ray we know of. As a result of their tremendous frequency they are a source of great energy, hitherto not reckoned by mankind. The total radiant energy in the form of Cosmic Rays, it is estimated by Dr. Robert Millikan, is from 30 to 300 times greater than all other radiant energies put together.

The detection and measurement of Cosmic Radiation requires refined and sensitive apparatus. The rays are invisible like most other rays and can be detected only by their effects, one of which is the electrification they produce in a gaseous medium. When the rays are very faint, as near the surface of the earth, considerable disturbances are experienced from rays emanating from Radium and other Radio-active substances in the neighbourhood. These disturbing rays have to be completely warded off by shielding the apparatus with a thick wall of lead. According to one method the Cosmic Rays can be detected and measured using a steel globe filled with air or argon under high pressure. The rays make the gas slightly conducting and the current flowing through it is measured with a sensitive electrometer. Another method known as the 'Counting Tube' method employs a bulb filled with gas which is made conducting by the Cosmic Rays as in the previous case, but the current is measured in a different way. This current is intensified many many times by an

amplifier and passed on to a loud speaker. Every time a Cosmic Ray passes the gas bulb, a 'plop' is heard on the loud speaker. By counting the number of 'plops' in any measured time the Cosmic Rays can be measured.

Measurements of the Cosmic Rays over different parts of the world and in balloons at high altitudes have shown that their intensity is greater near the Poles and varies with the altitude. This would lead us to infer that at least a certain part of the Cosmic Rays consists of electrically charged particles and more of them are attracted to the magnetic Polar regions. A certain part of the rays is not, however, affected so that no decisive conclusions can be made until further knowledge is available.

The recent Settle-Fordney stratosphere balloon flight measurements favour the idea that the Cosmic Rays consist of two distinct range groups. Group A is confined to the upper stratosphere and consists probably of neutral particles. Group B are protons or positively charged electrons with sufficient energy to penetrate the earth's magnetic field. The results are considered to indicate that most of the Cosmic Rays that reach the earth are probably protons.

Quite recently attempts are being made for harnessing energy from Cosmic Radiation and it seems Cosmic Rays can be made to part with their energy without much difficulty. At any rate it offers a more practicable proposition than splitting atoms and obtaining power from atomic energy. At the Chicago World's Fair an apparatus had been set up to harness the electrical impulses generated by Cosmic Rays and by suitable process of amplification utilise them to light up a Neon Tube bent to form the words "COSMIC RAYS." This may be considered to be the first attempt to bring the phenomenon of Cosmic Rays to public attention, by putting the rays as it were 'on exhibit.' Still more recently, just a few months ago, an American scientist Nicola Tesla, whose name is well known in the scientific world, has announced that he has invented a method of harnessing Cosmic Energy which would drive the machinery of the earth at a small cost and that "there will be no more need for coal, oil, gas or any other fuel" for raising motive power. The idea is radically new and likely to be taken as incredible, but the long record of useful and successful researches of the inventor in the past claims for him the respectful attention of the scientific world. Apparatus for obtaining Cosmic Energy for power purposes is being developed it seems and further progress is awaited with interest.

The Reformation

SAILENDRANATH GHOSAL—*Fourth Year, Arts.*

LIKE all other great events of history, the religious revolution of the sixteenth century had its causes rooted deep into the past. Historians have separately viewed them and assigned to them their different names. We can, therefore, broadly see that there were two potent causes, the secular and the spiritual or religious. It will be our purpose to study them separately and find out their importance in bringing out the final upheaval.

Mr. Henry Charles Lea, the Cambridge historian, lays great stress on the secular aspect of the Reformation. "There has been a tendency," he proceeds, "to regard the Reformation as solely a religious movement; but this is an error. In the curious theocracy which dominated the Middle Ages, secular and spiritual interests became so inextricably intermingled that it is impossible wholly to disentangle them, but the motives, both remote and proximate, which led to the Lutheran revolt were largely secular than spiritual." Although the secular force was not the immediate cause of the final outbreak of the movement, yet the fact that it provoked the popular antipathy for the church and prepared the ground for German reformers deserves to be ranked as the major cause of the Reformation.

Let us then enumerate some of the secular causes. Firstly comes the Renaissance. "The Reformation," writes Johnson, "was the outcome of two forces * * * the Renaissance and the desire for reform in dogma and practice. Of these, the first owes its birth to Italy." Then he goes on indicating the splendid progress the Italians made in different branches of art and literature and revolution in human thought. European mind in the Middle Ages was not only absolutely barren, it had lost the faculty of imagination, reflection and that spirit of enquiry which advances the dignity and progress of human life. The Italian writers who set the medieval mind to motion [for evidently it lacked in any motive power] may be compared to the writer of the "Social Contract" who had much to do with the Social Revolution, a greater event of the eighteenth century. And yet nobody directly attributes to Rousseau the responsibility of causing the French Revolution. We read from Johnson who has very ably stated the influence the authors of the Renaissance exerted on the thought

of the time:—"Medieval thought had striven to sacrifice the individual. It had taught men to crucify the body with its fleshly lusts to check the rebellious passion for independence and individuality. It had bidden men to accept without question the authority of the church and the temporal power. The new spirit revolted from all these doctrines. It preached the dignity of man of this life. It questioned the virtue of asceticism. It proclaimed the right of the individual to think and feel and shape his creed according to the dictates of reason. It inculcated the lessons of enquiry, of criticism, of naturalism. Thus a new paradise was opened to the imagination and men rushed headlong into it with a pleasing sense of freedom."

But the Italian humanists differed from the reformers of religion in one essential respect. While advocating the necessity of freedom of thinking, they led gay and unbridled lives which they represented to be the necessary consequence of independent thinking and the spirit of criticism. From such men the Pope and his order had little cause to apprehend any danger; these Italian free-thinkers were tolerated and in some cases encouraged.

It was only when the "Reformation crossed the Alps, that it became in the hands of the more earnest-minded Germans more serious and more theological, less philosophical and less dogmatic. Criticism they now applied to the church and in another sense to the Bible, with the intention not of destroying Christianity but of restoring it to its primitive purity." This is rather a spiritual aspect, and we shall see it afterwards. Here it is only necessary to refer to the importance of the Renaissance. Johnson said, as we have presently seen, that the Renaissance and the desire for reform in dogma and practice were two different things and he counted them as two separate causes. But his later description shows that the desire for reform came from the influence of the Italian writers. Although the spirit of reform was abroad before the Renaissance, as in the Lollard and Hussite movements, yet, the reforming movement, as it seems from the course of events, was a phenomenon of pure evolution.

What were the other secular causes? We can briefly dismiss them by simple enumeration. Firstly the Pope and the Catholic church had a very large control over the economic and political life of the Christians. When there was no nation-state in Europe, when there was scarcely any organised government, the Papacy steadily gained supreme control over the secular life of the people. The Popes proved much stronger than the Kings and the last representative of this class of Popes—Boniface VIII, in his famous *Clericis Laicos* claimed a Godly

authority over the lives of all men—kings and subjects alike. But this power was steadily decreasing with the progress of monarchical development. "Development leads to specialisation, the functions are divided and the struggle for supremacy * * * between those Brahmans and Kshatriya castes became inevitable." No sovereign could tolerate to see that some of his important functions were exercised by the Pontiff with remarkable partiality to his own interests and to the abuse of justice and morality. Nor the patriotic peoples of a country [whether it is ruled by a centralised and ordered government or not] could bear to see that some of the political and all the ecclesiastical positions were monopolised by a foreign people, notorious for their evil lives. Furthermore, the most painful object in their eyes was the fact that their countries were drained of all their material resources to fill the pockets of Italian prelates who courted a sensual and easy life, not to speak of executing any priestly functions. So long as men stoop to superstition, they can be easily silenced, but when the spirit of questioning the authority appears in the mind of men, the authorities tremble!

But resistance in this respect came more from the princes, though their revolt was essentially an irreligious one. Here also we need to go back to the past to find that, in every age, in different countries of Europe, there were frictions between the church and the State. From King Henry II of England in the affair of Thomas a-Becket down to Henry VIII in his divorce problem there were grounds of friction between the State and the church. But no sovereign had ever contemplated to break away from the church and devise new principles of religion. At best, they wished to have state religion—Gaullicanism, Anglicanism, etc.

Let us, therefore, sum up certain grievances of the lay princes. The liberties of the church in general were the cause of discontent; these liberties consisted in the "exemption from taxation of ecclesiastical property—exemption enjoyed by the clergy from the authority of the secular tribunals. They were punishable only by the spiritual courts which could pronounce no judgment on murder, etc., and whose leniency towards clerical offenders virtually assured them of immunity from punishment. [English Jurisprudence: Benefit of Clergy]. Towards the end of the fifteenth century the Papal jurisdiction spread its ægis over the crimes of the laity as well as the clergy."

At any rate, when feudalism was replaced by national monarchy and when the growth of nationalism found its expression through national institutions—like the Parliament in Britain,—the cosmopolitan

character of the church organisation appeared irreconcilable to the public opinion, and the struggle from this time took the shape of "Nationalism versus Catholicism."

But by far the most important factor on the secular side was the economic grievance of the people and princes alike. Mr. H. C. Lea goes to the length of saying that the Reformation was due more largely to financial than to religious considerations. For example, "the terrible indictment of the Papacy which Ulrich Von Hutten addressed to Leo X on December 1, 1517, contains not a word about faith or doctrine—the whole grievance consists in the abuse of powers—the spoliations, the exactions, the oppression, the sale of dispensations and pardons, the fraudulent devices whereby the wealth of Germany was cunningly transferred to Rome and the stirring up of strife among Christians in order to extend the patrimony of St. Peter."

There were two aspects of the economic situation of the church which provoked envy and discontent among the princes and peoples respectively. They were—(1) the church amassed a huge fortune from different sources and naturally the princes who were embarrassed with the problem of revenue administration cast an envious eye on such fortune of the papacy; and (2) the abuse of the wealth of the church by men of such abandoned character made the people reflect on their own lot who themselves had to maintain this parasitic class. "When we consider that this lavish and unceasing expenditure, incurred to gratify the ambition and vanity of successive vicars of Christ, was ultimately drawn from the toil of the peasantry of Europe and that probably the larger part of the sums thus exacted disappeared in the handling before the residue reached Rome, we can understand the incessant complaint of the oppressed populations—of the hatred which was silently stored up to await the time of explosion."

It is needless to give here the details how the church collected its wealth; suffice it to say that "the means of collection reached to such extent that the church rendered all justice, human and divine, a commodity to be sold in the open market." Their (the churchmen's) princely lives demanded contribution much above the taxable capacity of the people and who does not know their position as great land-owners?

Now, there was a united resistance to all these by men of all sections. The importance of the spirit of resistance by the nobles lies in the fact, that though the kings and princes advocated the cause of the people for different ends, they, nevertheless, found a common

enemy to stand against, and to set up a pact between these two sections of the peoples—the nobles and the commoners.

To increase its wealth the church abused its authority to such an extent that the whole society grew weary in disgust and rose in revolt against the church. Its demands were hateful, but more intolerable was the way in which the church made its fortune. We cannot hold the temptation of referring to some of them. The offices beginning from the Cardinalate down to the lowest positions were sold for money. This was in the language of the church known as the practice of "Simony." Favouritism to the relatives of the Popes (nepotism) was frequent. "The son of Lorenzo de Medici, surnamed the Magnificent, had been ordained to the priesthood at the age of seven, name a Cardinal when he was thirteen and speedily loaded with a multitude of rich benefices and preferments ; this Pope, by his munificence and extravagance, was forced to resort to the most questionable means for raising money ; he created many new offices and shamelessly sold them ; he increased the revenue from indulgences—jubilees and regular taxation ; he pawned palace furniture, table plates, pontifical jewels, even statues of the apostles. Several banking farms and many individual creditors were ruined by his death."

We now dismiss the secular side—the more important of the two forces, and proceed to see the proximate cause,—the bluntness and violence of Martin Luther, who has been styled as the precursor of the Protestant revolt, although the whole credit (if it was a credit at all!) should not have gone to him. For "the ground was better prepared in Germany than elsewhere by the deeper moral and religious earnestness of the people and by the tendencies of the academies and associations with which the society was honeycombed. Germany was predestined to be its scene. There the humanistic influence had not been pagan and æsthetic as in Italy, [we have studied this a little before] but had addressed itself to the higher emotion and had sought to train the conscience of the individual to recognise his direct responsibility to God and to his fellows. But more potent than all these were the forces arising from the political system of Germany, and its relations with the Holy See—the Teutonic spirit of independence—the laws and customs of North Germany maintained resolutely in spite of repeated papal condemnation." Such was the German society, the combustibles were all there ; they awaited for a Luther to set them on for explosion. Luther's importance—the importance of the religious side—consists essentially in this respect. Without possessing any real genius, this man found splendid help of circumstances and was successful.

Luther first met with the conflict in the affairs of the indulgences, and when the high claims of the Popes were advanced, he shifted his grounds of complaints and immediately challenged the religious supremacy of the church. He replaced the church by the Bible as the final authority to appeal to.

Nor was Lutheranism the single form of Protestantism (many people idly speak of Martin Luther as the author of Protestantism). The single fact that there were numerous other sects against the Roman church and that they were not in agreement on vital points among themselves suggests the difficulty of assigning supreme importance to Luther and his creed. Furthermore the fact that all the Protestant churches were not mainly based on the religious grievances against the church of Rome (as for example, the English church) proves how little the religious cause had to do with the separation between Roman and other churches. The English Reformation, as we have seen, was of a peculiar kind. It owed its birth to private affairs, made public, of the King Henry VIII of England, who once defended the papal prerogatives and was created the "Defender of the Faith" by the Pope himself. But the king was himself driven into collision with the Pope for the latter's refusal to allow the king to discard one wife and fill her place by another! In reality such was the proximate cause of the English Reformation. This in itself was a secular cause! In Scandinavia we also find the preponderance of economic and political causes for the spread of Protestantism in that country.

Such upheavals like the Reformation or the Revolution do not occur through the work of a few leaders like Martin Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox or Mirabeau, Robespierre and Danton. They all were backed by the public opinion and the public opinion was formed by long oppression of the clergy, (just as the misgovernment and abuse of power in France in respect of the Revolution) and the spirit of resistance it provoked. There were long lines of writers and preachers who enjoyed less renown than the reformers of religion—whose spirit was also troubled by the unhealthy atmosphere of life. But these men live in obscurity, for we scarcely look back into the past and remote causes of things and find it easier to point out one immediate cause for a remarkable event and attribute much importance to it, forgetting that thereby we commit a great logical fallacy. Great events are seldom the outcome of the work of a single individual or circumstance. Nor do they happen within a short time.

Yet, the religious element in the Reformation was strong and thousands were inspired to try to restore the church to its primitive purity and the question of justification was a vital issue. Nevertheless, did the people find out any avenue to give expression to their pent-up religious discontent? Did not more vital and more pressing problems—economic and political—confront them and stir them up to activity?

"No. 93"

SAILENDRA NATH SUR—*Third Year, Science.*

A FEW months back it was announced by Prof. Senator Corbino before the Reale Accademia dei Lincei and in the presence of the King of Italy that Signor Enrico Fermi had created an element not hitherto known to exist in any form whatever on the earth. The atomic number of the element is 93 and hence this discovery came as a surprise to the scientists who fervently believed that there could not exist an element of atomic number higher than 92. There had been considerable speculation as to the non-existence of an element of atomic number higher than 92. In fact, Prof. Eddington, by some subtle reasoning based on the theory of numbers, tried to prove that there could not exist more than 92 elements ; and Mr. V. V. Narliker also, a physicist of considerable ability, gave a brilliant proof in support of this belief. But the brilliance of these proofs must give way before the realities of stern fact. Here is an element of atomic number 93 in spite of all arguments! The achievement is characteristic and truly has it been thus commented upon by a writer:— "Perhaps nothing yet recorded in scientific annuals is so significant of the mental attitude of the man of science, who takes his destiny into his own hands and fashions a new world after his desires."

To understand how this creation was made possible, a little of the modern ideas about the constitution of matter is necessary. Until recently, an atom was thought of as consisting of electrically charged particles, called protons and electrons. The proton, which is 1836 times as heavy as an electron, contains positive charge and the electron negative and in a neutral atom the sum of the positive charges is equal to the sum of the negative. Indeed, these two particles were believed to be the ultimate constituents of matter and Aston observes that the protons and the electrons are "the standard bricks out of which all matter, living or dead, is built up. (Nature, 12th May, 1921).

The protons and the electrons are combined in an atom in a curious way. In every atom there is a nucleus consisting of all the protons and a lesser number of electrons while the remaining electrons revolve round it in a series of orbits. In fact, the atom was conceived of as a miniature solar system. It was found that the properties of

the elements were functions of their respective atomic numbers which may be defined as the number of the planetary electrons or as the number of units of positive charge in the nucleus. On this theory a hydrogen atom was conceived of as consisting of a nuclear proton and a planetary electron, a helium atom of 4 protons and 2 electrons in the nucleus and 2 orbital electrons and a uranium atom of 238 protons and 146 electrons in the nucleus and 92 planetary electrons. It was found towards the close of the nineteenth century that the heavier atoms exhibited a certain peculiar phenomenon—that of emitting certain radiations. This phenomenon was termed “radio-activity.” The radiations were of three distinct types:—the alpha-particles, the beta-particles and the gamma-rays. The alpha-particles were found to be nothing but helium nuclei and the beta-particles electrons while the gamma-rays were found to be waves of wave-length much smaller than that of the light-waves but similar to them in nature. In order to explain this phenomenon the atomic theory, as has been outlined above, was postulated by Sir J. J. Thomson and Lord Rutherford and afterwards modified in various ways by Niels Bohr, Soddy and other eminent scientists. It was supposed that most of the elements were stable but that the radio-active elements—generally the heavier ones—were unstable, displaying a tendency to disintegrate into simpler atoms. Since the alpha-particles are helium nuclei, each of them consists of 4 protons and 2 electrons and therefore the ejection of one alpha-particle lowers the nuclear positive charge by 2, while the ejection of one beta-particle increases the charge by one. Now, since atomic number is the number of units of positive charge in the nucleus, the ejection of one alpha-particle lowers the atomic number by 2 while that of one beta-particle by 1. This is the reason why radium, the most radio-active element, is constantly being transformed into lead.

From the above it would appear that to increase the atomic number is by no means a hard job if somehow an electron could be driven out from the nucleus. But therein lay the fundamental difficulty. Even if the electron could be emitted, by what was it to be replaced in order to restore stability?

The recent discoveries of Dr. Chadwick and M. Joliot and Mme. Curie have solved this problem. Dr. Chadwick discovered a particle “neutron” in an atom which has almost the same mass as the proton but no charge. This neutron has a very great penetrative power and for this reason has been used by scientists for artificially disintegrating atoms. Very recently M. Joliot and Mme. Curie produced what is called “artificial radio-activity.” They were bombarding some

light elements such as boron, aluminium, etc., by alpha-particles and found that a certain radiation was emitted. What was even more striking is that the radiation continued even when the bombardment had ceased. This they termed "artificial radio-activity."

Struck with this discovery Signor Fermi continued experiments with certain other elements and lastly with uranium, using neutrons in place of alpha-particles. Auspicious was the moment when he began experimenting! The neutron with its great penetrative power made a direct hit on the uranium nucleus and embedded itself emitting a beta-particle, i.e., an electron therefrom. The emission of a beta-particle increased the atomic number by 1 while the neutron in which there is no charge did not affect the atomic number but kept the stability of the atom intact. Thus an atom of uranium of atomic number 92 was transformed into one of atomic number 93.

Since a new element has been discovered, it must be christened. The name "Fermium" is best but impossible, considering the probability of confusion of the symbol of this element with that of Fluorine or Iron. The name "Mussolinium" sounds reasonable.

Very recently a theory about the constitution of atoms has been advanced by Dr. John Tutin which upsets all our ideas about atomic structure. He asserts that the atomic nuclei are built up of some of the electrons only while all the protons and the remaining electrons are planetary. From the mechanical point of view, he adds, there is nothing impossible in this and he illustrates this by an analogy that "a fly-wheel with a heavy rim and a light hub is a far more commonplace conception than a fly-wheel with a light rim and a heavy hub." He claims that his atom explains many more phenomena than what the Rutherford-Bohr atom does. Sir James Jeans had said, "Probably, the majority of physicists expect that in some way the law of strict causation will in the end be restored to its old place in the natural world." The Rutherford-Bohr atom abrogated the law of causation but Dr. Tutin's atom follows as a necessary corollary from this. Thus, two substantially different theories have come into prominence and it is difficult to say which will stand the test of time. If Dr. Tutin comes out victorious it remains for scientists to explain Signor Fermi's experiment in the light of this theory.

Raymond Poincaré

PROF. NIRMAL KANTI MAJUMDAR, M.A., F.R. Econ. S.

—*Ex-student.*

THE death of Raymond Poincaré has removed from the theatre of European politics one of the greatest statesmen of the modern world. For full forty-two years he was a fine figure in the public life of France. He was President of the Republic for seven years, four times Prime Minister, and eight times a Minister. A veteran parliamentarian, a Nestor in politics, he retired from public life in 1929 and died at the age of seventy-four. A devout public servant, he discharged his responsibilities with unflagging industry and unflinching courage. He always was what the National Assembly openly declared him to be, 'worthy of his country.' If myth and legend did not surround him on every side, scandals and episodes did not darken his name. Through the ups and downs of public life, the shocks and surprises of political morality, the sunshine and shade of popular favour, he upheld the integrity of his character. Seriousness and aloofness gave a unique grandeur to his personality. Indeed, Poincaré was a class by himself. He was not, as has been said many a time since his death, 'the epitome of the spirit of France.' "The cynical and crafty Clemeneau had little in common with the simple and upright Poincaré under whom he once served. Neither had the amiable Herriot, the tolerant Daladier, the supple Briand."*

Born in 1860, in a gifted family of renowned scientists, Poincaré was endowed with superior mental powers. His talents were versatile. A brilliant lawyer, writer and speaker, he was an economist and a specialist in public finance. A man of Lorraine, that unhappy battleground of France and Germany for half a century, he had the tenacity and endurance of a borderer. Educated at the University of Paris and called to the Bar, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies at the age of twenty-seven. "Vote for this young man," said an experienced Senator while introducing him to the constituency, "I know him—he will one day be President of the Republic." Indeed, Poincaré was destined for high things in public life. He became Minister of Education, of Beaux Arts, and of Religion when he was only thirty-three.

*Review of Reviews, November, 1934, pages 13-14.

All sorts of humorous epithets have clustered round the President of the French Republic—'a prisoner in an iron cage,' 'a mute idol in a pagoda,' 'an ornamental cipher in public affairs.' This insignificance of the Presidential Office, though to some extent a natural result of the parliamentary system, is due in no small measure to the passive personality of many of its incumbents. Grévy, Loubet, Fallières and Doumergue were mere figureheads. But Poincaré, like Casimir-Perier and Millerand, was not content to play the role of the dummy. A man with a vibrating personality, he asserted his right to exercise the powers conferred upon him by the constitution. In his message of February 20, 1913, to the Chamber of Deputies, he said:—"Without a firm and far-seeing executive authority, the efficient functioning of the administrative services would speedily risk being compromised and at certain times the public business would be menaced. During the whole of my magistracy, I will take care, in collaboration with the responsible ministers, that the government of the republic will keep intact, under the control of parliament, the authority which must belong to it." In fact, Poincaré had a substantial share in the policies and achievements of his time. In the domain of foreign relations his success was conspicuous. Drawing an interesting contrast between France's eighth and ninth President Austin Ogg, says:—"M. Fallières was an amiable gentleman who was content to leave the business of state to others; he contributed little to the policies and achievements of his time. M. Poincaré, a scholar and man of affairs, played a much more active role, and supplied impressive leadership of the nation in its supreme hour of trial."*

There were moments in the life of Poincaré when he was verily the idol of the nation. But he could not personify politics for a long time like Gladstone and Disraeli. Nor was he a personal leader like Lloyd George in England during the latter phase of the War, Lenin in Russia in 1917, Mussolini in Italy, Kemal in Turkey, Hitler in Germany and Roosevelt II in America. "France has never had a personal leader in the same sense, for both Clemenceau and Poincaré, who in turn came fairly near to leadership, failed quite to overcome the essentially group character of government in the French Republic."† France does not love personal ascendancy of the individual. Her politicians are emphatically equalitarian in temperament. They carry individualism to the new power. "They pulled down both Clemenceau and Poincaré as soon as the immediate tasks for which they had been raised up had been fulfilled."†

*Governments of Europe, p. 397.

†G. D. H. and M. I. Cole—A Guide to Modern Politics, p. 351.

Poincaré's regime as Prime Minister is associated with memorable events. His first term as Prime Minister was characterised by the stronger safeguarding of French interests abroad. Apprehensive of the Triple Alliance, he negotiated for the Franco-Russian Alliance. His second term is reminiscent of the historic occupation of the Ruhr "The Ruhr occupation is one of the blackest blots on the post-war history of civilised nations."* France maintained her Black Troops in the Ruhr with constant additions for more than eighteen savage months. "It was War on a totally unarmed people."† Poincaré could not help being implacable to the old enemy of France. France was confronted with the problem of reconstruction. She must repair the ravages of war. Thousands of square miles of her rich and prosperous country had been laid waste. Smiling villages and humming towns, flowering meads and waving forests, blooming orchards and charming villas—had been reduced to shapeless ruins and hopeless debris. As Knapp-Fisher points out, "There was a good deal of sense in the idea of Reparations."‡ France had been invaded by Germany twice in fifty years. In 1871 Germany had imposed a huge indemnity on France, and she had to pay every penny of it in two years. By 1921 nothing had been paid by Germany into the reparation account, whereas twenty million francs had been spent by France on the work of reconstruction in anticipation of German payment. Briand failed to apply the screw to Germany and was forced to resign. Poincaré came into power and did the needful

Poincaré's third term as Premier reminds us of the famous stabilisation of the franc. If less stirring than the Ruhr adventure, it was more miraculous. The franc was declared to be worth one-fifth of its former value. The declaration was accompanied by a guarantee that francs would be exchanged for their new value in gold. The restoration of the gold standard involved an immense sacrifice: four-fifths of the savings of Frenchmen were lost in the process. But national credit was established on a sound basis. It was perhaps the most remarkable achievement for which Poincaré will be remembered. "What he did and how he did it is a striking chapter in the history of modern finance."‡ The work of reconstruction was finished. The new areas were better equipped than the old. National industries made a bid for recovery. Nor was this all. Financial stability contributed a good deal to the political stability of

*Hampden Jackson—Europe Since the War, p. 55.

†Joseph King—The German Revolution, p. 18.

‡The Modern World, p. 284.

‡The Statesman, October 17, 1934.

the time. A few lines from G. D. H. and M. I. Cole will not be out of place here. They write:—"Finance wrecked the Radicals in 1924-25 and again in 1926; and it was left to Poincaré to carry through, by the strength of his personality and with the aid of a Ministry supported chiefly by the Right and Centre, the long delayed stabilisation of the franc. While this was doing, and while Poincaré was there with a strong personality to take charge of affairs, the French political situation appeared for a time unwontedly stable; but after Poincaré's withdrawal the instability returned."*

Poincaré has been assailed in certain quarters as 'a great opponent of Germany.' Such, in effect, was the Berlin comment after his death. It is difficult to answer the charge. Poincaré was not satisfied with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Nor did the restoration of Lorraine to France give him peace. Time and again Europe was thick with rumours of his resignation. He opened the Peace Conference of Paris, but resigned from the chairmanship of the Reparations Conference because of its undue leniency towards Germany. France, he felt, could not afford to be lax or lenient, and he preached his conviction with religious fervour here and there and everywhere. His 'hate sermons' on the rights of France, his passionate emphasis on the indignities of France under the Treaty of Versailles, his vigorous insistence, even after the Ruhr struggle, on the guarantee of further security as the indispensable condition of any proposal for disarmament—all these deeply coloured European politics. But, as has already been said in connection with the Ruhr question, Poincaré could not do otherwise in the circumstances. What he did he did in the best interests of France. And there was the psychological factor—he was a Lorrainer, with the bitter memory of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

As young students of politics, we were equally attracted by Raymond Poincaré and Woodrow Wilson. Both were prominent personalities. Both were scholars and men of affairs. One was the author of 'How France is Governed,' the other was the author of 'Congressional Government in the United States.' One was President of the French Republic, the other was President of the American Republic. In the fulness of youthful admiration we could not discern the difference between the two. With the judgment of maturer years we now can see how poles asunder they were in achievements and ideals. Wilson was a cosmopolitan and an idealist. He gave a lead to the world, but could not lead his country.

*The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe To-day, p. 605.

Nurtured in the traditions of federalism and obsessed with the sense of a universal synthesis, he sponsored the idea of a world-state. But America stood aloof from European entanglements, stuck to the Monroe doctrine, and did not join the League of Nations. Her old 'isolationism' found typical expression in the 'new deal' of Franklin Roosevelt. Poincaré was a nationalist and a realist. He represented the flaming spirit of France, but could not visualise the dim outlines of an international society. He saw that Germany must be crushed if 'the guardian of culture in Europe' was to be saved. And he exacted the full pound of flesh when Germany's debt to France was in the balance. But Germany could not be effaced from the map of Europe. Nor could France live alone. The international texture of modern civilization was lost sight of. Wilson was transfigured in the eyes of men as the saviour of democracy and of the world. "He ceased to be a common statesman; he became a Messiah."* But the flame of nationalism burned more brightly, more disastrously—and showed that mankind were not yet ready for a higher civilization. All France leapt to accept and glorify Poincaré as the saviour of the franc and of France. She seized upon him as her symbol. But Hitlerism came—determined to wash Germany clean of the 'war guilt' and unsettle the settled fact of Versailles. Susceptible to the intimations of the future, Wilson ignored the ugly realities around him. Engrossed with the claims of the present, Poincaré failed to make allowance for the aspirations of humanity. And yet both were great, because the quality of their striving was great.



*H. G. Wells—The Shape of Things to Come, p. 96.

The Evolution of Responsible Government in the British Dominions

RADHIKA MOHAN SANYAL—*Fifth Year, History.*

THE dominions, to-day, have almost an unlimited control over their internal affairs. They are now autonomous communities within the British Empire, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external policy. They now stand beside the United Kingdom as equal partners in the dignities and responsibilities of the British Commonwealth of nations.

But it is after a long period of time that the dominions have achieved this national status. In the eighteenth century the Imperial control was firmly maintained and the colonial government was of a close reactionary character. The growth of the responsible government in the dominions from this subservient position is the main thing upon which we shall concentrate our attention.

Canada was the first country which evolved this system of administration, but here the evolution was characterised first by the introduction of representative system and then the responsible government. The idea of granting representative institutions was first mentioned in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 but the French Canadians, unaccustomed to such institutions, bitterly opposed it. The Quebec Act, passed some years afterwards, revoked the promise of the elective assembly and placed powers in the hand of a nominee council. But the constitutional development in Canada received an impetus from a quite unexpected quarter. After the termination of the American War of Independence a large number of loyalists (known as the United Empire Loyalists) left their old home and migrated to Canada—the influx of these new settlers brought the question of Canada once more into consideration. The Quebec Act had proved a satisfactory system of government but it was paternal in character and was hostile to the tradition of self-government in which the United Empire Loyalists had been reared. The Imperial government tried to solve this difficulty by granting representative institutions and with this object in view it passed the

Canada Act of 1791. This Act divided Canada into two halves, and each half was given a nominated council and an elective assembly. An executive council was introduced but it was not made in any way responsible to the assembly in either provinces.

The Canada Act granted representative but not responsible government—the inherent weakness of such a system lay in the fact that an irresponsible executive was essentially incompatible with a representative assembly. The assembly, being unable to influence the policy of the government, used its legislative and taxing powers to embarrass the executive. The conflict between the two became more and more acute and the exasperated Canadians broke out into open rebellion in 1837. The rising was soon suppressed, but the Home government sent Lord Durham to examine the affairs of the country and he submitted a report which is regarded as classical in the English colonial history. It appeared to Lord Durham that unity was the absolute prerequisite of that consciousness of security which was the fundamental condition of progress and he recommended that all the different provinces in Canada should be merged into a single union. Lord Durham further stated that the frequent political deadlocks could be prevented only by the introduction of a system that would secure harmony between the executive and legislature and this could only be done by placing the former under the control of the latter.¹

The Imperial government did not immediately follow the suggestions of Durham for it declared that local responsible government and the sovereignty of Great Britain were quite contradictory terms. But when Lord Gray became Colonial Secretary he tried to put them into practice and with this object in view Gray selected as the Governor-General of Canada Lord Elgin, the son-in-law of Durham and a convinced believer in his doctrines.

It was under Elgin that not by enactment but in the British way by mere custom the principles of responsible government became fully established. Elgin firmly stuck to the idea that the ministry must be responsible to the legislature. "They might make mistakes," wrote Elgin to Gray, "but it was only by letting men make mistakes and accept the consequences that they will be able to learn responsibility."² Elgin's action was a piece of courageous statesmanship that crowned the work of Durham and made self-government in Canada a reality.

¹—Lord Durham's Report—Pp. 147—154 ; 160—163.

¹—Keith—Speeches and Documents on the Colonial Policy.

²—Elgin to Gray—Keith—Speeches and Documents on the Colonial Policy, Pp. 189—190.

Meanwhile, a federation was established for the whole of Canada and in it the principles of responsible government were continued. The cabinet, which forms the executive, is chosen—as in England—by the prime minister and remains in office as long as it enjoys the confidence of the Canadian House of Commons. The constitution is modelled after England. The establishment of the Federal responsible government marked the culmination of the political development of Canada.

The example of Canada was followed by Australia and her constitutional history is interesting because from a mere penal settlement she rose to the status of a self-governing colony. The original government was of a despotic nature—the governor exercised almost unlimited authority. Later on the governors, on their own commission, were directed to summon certain officials to an advisory council and consider their advice. This tentative procedure led to the formation of the executive council. Very soon, the necessity arose of levying taxes in order to meet the expenses of civil establishments in Australia and the Home Government sought to realise this end by founding local legislatures. Accordingly, an Act was passed in 1825 whereby a nominated legislative council was established in New South Wales. The formation of an executive council and the creation of a legislature, indeed, marked the constitutional progress in the colony, but the most important step—the introduction of representative system—was not yet taken. It was in the year 1842 that a partially representative body was established in New South Wales, when a new legislative council consisting of 24 elected members was created.

About the middle of the eighteenth century the British ministers came to the conclusion that the time had arrived in the history of Australia for the granting of responsible government and the Australian colonies and the Constitution Act was accordingly passed. It divided the legislative council into two chambers, empowered the new legislature to make regulations for the peace and the good government of the colony but at the same time imposed certain safeguards. The colonists became highly indignant at the retention of these safeguards; the Home government asked the colony of New South Wales to draft a constitution similar to that of Canada on the bicameral lines. The new constitution, subject to some amendments, was finally passed by the Imperial Parliament and received the Royal Assent under the name of New South Wales Constitution Act. It conceded a full measure of representative and responsible government to the colony.

The last and the final stage in the constitutional development of

Australia was the union of all the different provinces into a federation. The Federal government is based upon the principles of ministerial responsibility—in its main features it is not different from Canada. The Federal constitution does not follow the Canadian precedent in relation to the separate states. In some other important matters like the amendment of the constitution, Australia depends less closely on the mother country than the British North America.

South Africa, after Australia, was the important country that got the responsible government, but here as in the case of Australia, that system of administration was first introduced in the provinces. But unlike that of Australia the progress towards self-government was very slow—it was Cape Colony, out of the four states composing the union, which first obtained it.

The province, since its conquest, was ruled by a governor who was vested with supreme authority and was only directly responsible to the crown. By the middle of the eighteenth century representative system was introduced into Cape Colony; an Act passed in 1833 set up a bicameral legislature, its novel feature being that both the upper and the lower houses were elective. This measure of self-government excited the desire of the colonists to possess a thorough control over their own administration—the Imperial government in accordance with this demand introduced responsible government in Cape Colony and soon following her example, it was conceded to Natal in 1892.

The constitutional development in two other states—Transvaal and Orange River Colony—was of a chequered character. They were originally Dutch Republics but after the Boer War were annexed to British territories; the terms of the peace included the granting of representative institutions leading up to full colonial self-government as early as possible. Accordingly, when the government of Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman came to power, they decided to introduce responsible government without a previous period of representative system. Letters Patent were issued to this effect for Transvaal in 1906 and for Orange River Colony in 1907.

But a closer co-ordination of the four self-governing units was recognised necessary in the interests of South African consolidation as well as for the economic development. After a referendum to the electorate of each colony, the project of a full political union was submitted to the Imperial government and received the warm assent of all the parties. The new constitution¹ came into operation in

¹—The Constituent Act of 1910 provided that Cape Colony would be known as Cape of Good Hope, while Orange River Colony was to be called Orange Free State.

May 1910 and in it most of the principles of responsible government were retained. The executive corresponds to the cabinet and is subordinate to the legislature. The colonial autonomy has been carried much further in the union than in Canada or Australia.

New Zealand started its existence as a dependency of New South Wales but by virtue of an Imperial Act she was constituted into an independent colony with a nominated council for legislative purposes. A representative government with a nominee council and an elective assembly was conceded in 1852 and the new legislature promptly proceeded to ask the governor to administer on the plan of responsible government. The executive council of the governor advised him that he could not do so without the special sanction of the Imperial Government and the governor informed the Colonial Secretary of this incident. Lord Gray gave the reply that Home Government "have no objection whatsoever to offer to the establishment of the system known as Responsible government in New Zealand."¹ In this peculiar and somewhat curious way the colony got a form of government which was won by Canada after a prolonged struggle. It was introduced into Newfoundland in 1847.

Ireland was the last dominion to gain responsible government. The Act of union which deprived Ireland of her legislative independence was intended for her benefit, but it resulted only in governmental negligence and over-taxations. The idea of repealing this union and of granting Home Rule to Ireland, first struck—beside the Irish agitators—Gladstone, but he could not carry it out into practice.² From time to time Irish Home Rule bills were introduced into the Parliament but had to be abandoned due to the severe opposition. Finally Mr. Lloyd George was able to pass an Act in 1920 which purported to create both in Northern and Southern Ireland a responsible administration with fairly generous powers. The Northern government and Parliament were duly created and they commenced an energetic and prosperous existence under the prudent premiership of Sir James Craig.

In Southern Ireland, the opposition to the Act was intense ; no political progress could be made there as the Irish agitators, headed

¹—Keith—Speeches and Documents on the British Colonial Policy, p. 238.

²—The first attempt (1886) of Mr. Gladstone was frustrated due to the opposition of his own party. A large number of liberals deserted the side of Gladstone and formed another group. The second attempt (1893) of Mr. Gladstone failed due to the opposition of the House of Lords.

by Mr. De Valera, set up a parallel republic government. England resorted to coercion but soon found out the futility of such a policy and concluded a treaty in 1921. This treaty recognized that "Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the community of nations known as the British Empire as the dominion of Canada She shall be styled and known henceforth as the Irish Free State."¹ This Act also further provided that Southern Ireland shall have a Parliament² to make laws for the peace, order and the good government of the country.

The Act of 1922 which followed the Anglo-Irish treaty gave the Irish Free State a constitution with enormous powers and the responsible government which was introduced in 1921 was further developed. The Articles 51 and 52 of the Act of 1922 made provision for a Cabinet and for a prime minister but instead of using those terms they call them the executive council and the president of the executive council. The responsibility of this council to the Irish Free State has been fully enforced; by Article 53 it has been provided that the ministry must go out of office if it ceases to retain the confidence of the majority in the parliament.

So the Act of 1922 has ended the hostilities that existed between the two countries for seven hundred years, but it was a sort of stopgap arrangement. The majority of the Free State people accepted it, because it seemed to them the only practicable alternative to misrule, disorder and confusion. It appeared to them as expedient and not an ideal—it appealed to their heads, not to their hearts. Under such conditions, what the future may bring forth to the Irish Free State no one can say.

Thus every part of the British dominion came to possess full responsible government. Sometimes the dominions have received setbacks from the Imperial Government, and sometimes they have received stimulus but their progress towards responsible government has been steady and continuous. For such a growth history offers no parallel—it is unique in itself. And to-day the British empire depends essentially, if not formally, on positive ideals—free institution is its life-blood—free co-operation is its main instrument. Equality of status, so far as Great Britain and the dominions are concerned, is the cardinal principle that now governs the inter-Imperial relations.

¹—Keith—Speeches and Documents on the British Dominions, pp. 77—79.

²—The Irish Parliament is called Dail Eireann.

One Aspect of Pluralism

BISHNU CHANDRA GHOSH—*Fourth Year, Arts.*

THE problem of the nature of the state engaged the attention of political philosophers in almost every age ; but a systematic study of the subject has been made only in recent years. It is, no doubt, true that Plato and Aristotle, the two master-minds that the ancient world had ever produced, were the first writers to dwell on the problem of the state ; but they lived and taught at a time when conditions—social, economic and political—were fundamentally different from those that are present to-day. They saw around them small city-states containing both citizens and slaves and hence, they were, to a certain extent, influenced by their environment. Men were more or less self-sufficient. The problem of internationalism had not to be tackled. The recent tendency of the multiplicity of associations within a state, was quite absent. So the theories they expounded are applicable in modern times only in a very limited degree.

During the period of Reformation, the state is invested with the character of sovereignty—supremacy of will and power. In every state, there is a will which is pre-eminent over all other wills, a will which neither receives orders from any other will nor can finally alienate its authority. Its power is supreme, exclusive and unlimited. Its control is final over all persons and groups of persons. It is this power which is supposed to distinguish the state from all other human organisations and associations. The sovereign jurisdiction of the state extends fully over all persons and things within its territorial limits. “ An imperium in imperio ” cannot be tolerated in a modern state. A state may, for convenience, divide the powers of government and confer some of them on a central organ and others on local organs, but the ultimate control in all cases lies wholly with the state.

This is to view the state as a unity. This conception has been elaborated by the monists like Austin and others. Laski has put the whole matter thus:—“ The state is a unity. It is all-absorptive. All groups within itself are but the ministrants of its life. Their reality is the outcome of the sovereign character of the state. They are one with it and of it—one and indivisible. All manyness has its origin in oneness and to oneness it returns.”

The character of the state, thus envisaged, is the result of the history through which it has passed and it would be unintelligible save in the light of that history. While the ancient and medieval writers had some notion of the modern idea of the state, it was more or less vague and confused. Jenks in his "The State and the Nation" remarks that the heads of Cambridge Colleges were designated as 'sovereigns' in a fifteenth century Law Report. In fact, the theory prevalent at that time was not so much of state-sovereignty as it was of monarchical sovereignty. The character of the modern state as a sovereign body was the result of the need at the time of the Reformation, of finding an organisation to which all claims to authority could be referred for ultimate decision. Religion was in a state of anarchy. Economic organisation was too local in character to be capable of making general rules. It was the state which was the only organisation capable of laying down "legal imperatives," which men would obey. "It was able to order life, because without its commands, there would have been no order. Its triumph was inherent in its ability to enforce its will upon all men against competing groups who strove not less ardently for their allegiance."

The world has, however, changed considerably since the days of the Reformation. Various factors—social, economic and political—are making the world one vast unit. The development of science and communications has revolutionised men's thoughts and dealings. Men do not think and act just in the same way as they did two hundred years ago. A claim against the state which was then ineffective, has become in process of time irresistible. In short, the political philosophy of the sixteenth or the seventeenth century cannot satisfy the modern generation. "A new philosophy is needed for a new world." Hence has arisen the much debated theory of 'modern individualism' as Joad puts it or 'pluralism' as it is commonly known. Laski, Duguit, Follet and Barker are the prominent advocates of this theory.

According to these writers, the state is, no doubt, an association of human beings. It is not, however, the only such association. There are a large number of other associations such as churches, labour unions, professional associations, scientific bodies and the like. "The state is no longer a mere sand-heap of individuals, all equal and unrelated, except to the state." Some of these associations embrace within their membership a large number of the adult population of the state. They are occupied with interests in the advancement of which the state is itself concerned. "They are, in a sense, co-operating partners with the state in the pursuit of a common task," and it aids them by means of subventions from the public treasury.

“ We do not,” says Laski, “ proceed from the state on the ground that the state is more fundamentally unified than its parts, but we, on the contrary, admit that the parts are as real and self-sufficient as the whole.” Wherever men associate together for performing a task that is part of the common welfare, the group, so formed, has rights as real as those of the state. The church, for example, must live its life, unhindered by the state, because “invasion of its sphere” means the destruction of the quality it brings into the life of its members. The state occupies only the position of a co-ordinating factor in the community. There is no inherent difference between its claim and that of a rule, drawn from experience, by the individual himself or by an association of individuals. Where a state is in conflict, therefore, with a church or a trade union, it has no a priori claim to obedience. The state is only entitled to victory as it proves to its citizens that its laws must result for them in lives of fuller substance. “ Its sovereignty is a function of the quality of the life that it makes of its members.” Men accept the dictates of the state, because their own will finds partial expression there. The authority has no other safeguard than the wills of its members. “ The state is simply a will-organisation.”

This theory thus leaves room for anarchy. The state is supposed to compete for the allegiance of citizens with all other associations in society ; and where there is a conflict between them, the state is not given any assurance of victory. A refusal to obey the state is not, according to the pluralists, always unjustified, because a permanent wisdom cannot be ascribed to the state in all its operations. The government of the state is a trust, the fulfilment of which must be judged by those who are expected to be benefited from its operations. It should, therefore, know the minds and hearts of the members of the state. It should admit that there are aspects of life in which an effort on its part to assert its supremacy will mean social loss. It should not make any law without consulting those who will be affected by its operations. It should not, for example, introduce a great scheme like the Health Insurance System without previous consultation with medical associations and approved societies. In short, the state should be a decentralised state, decentralised both geographically and functionally. Local questions must imply local control. The problems of Chicago must be settled there and not in New York. Similarly, the problems of Cotton Textile Industry must be settled by Cotton Textile interests. There should, of course, be central inspection. There should also be a limitation on the authority of the state to intervene in the internal life of other associations. It should intervene

only in cases where an association violates a right that is essential to citizenship.

It is admitted by all serious writers of the present generation that groups and associations have been playing an important role in the local and national life of every civilised community. As Laski says, man is undoubtedly a creature of competing loyalties and hence it is not expedient that the state should absorb the whole loyalty of any individual. But this does not, and should not, mean that the groups are on the same level with the state, that there is no essential difference between them and the state and that the groups are superior to it. If the pluralistic theory were put into practice, it would lead to conflicts of jurisdiction. The loyalties of one group may come in conflict with the loyalties of others. There may also be conflicts of jurisdiction between one group and the state. In the case of the inevitable conflicts of jurisdiction between the groups, the pluralists suggest that the state would play the role of an umpire for deciding conflicts between the other associations. If the power of adjusting and adjudicating such clashes should be entrusted to the state, we may reasonably suggest that the state is supreme over all other associations. In the case of conflicts of jurisdiction between one group and the state, the pluralists' suggestion is still far from satisfactory. They hold that in such cases, the individual should follow the dictates of his own conscience and should allow himself to be guided by a moral programme. If, for instance, the state wants that every citizen should go to war and the church instructs him not to do so, as non-violence should be his creed, the citizen is supposed to follow that line of action which appeals to him most. If the citizen attempts to disobey the state, his very life may be at stake. Moreover, this theory presupposes that the individual is wise enough to decide for himself as to what line of action would serve his interest best. But even in the civilised countries of the West like England and U. S. A., it is doubtful whether the average man—"the man in the street"—possesses the capacity required for the purpose. It is an admitted fact that the average man rarely can chalk out a new path for him. His nature is imitative. If 'pluralism' were at all to be applied in practice, it would require a society composed of rational men like Laski, Duguit, Follet and others. This society would then be an ideal one, hardly realisable in practice.

The pluralists have, however, made clearer than has been done before the superiority of society to law, and this is a valuable contribution to the history of political thought. They have effectively shown not only the intellectual and moral dangers that result from

attributing moral sovereignty to the state, but also the positive values that would come to society if due respect is given to the independence and initiative of economic, professional and other associations.

We have absolutistic notions that what the state commands is necessarily right, that one who denounces an oppressive act of Government is anti-socially-minded. But, as Coker has pointed out, one can effectively resist the perversions of the doctrine of state sovereignty without abandoning the doctrine. In every society, it is the state which should be assigned the important task in constructing and applying laws 'out of social evaluations.' A wide autonomy should, however, be given to the associations and each should be allowed to "legislate for itself within the ambit of the general level at which society broadly aims."

Monarchical Movements in Post-War Germany

JYOTIRMOY BANERJEE—*Fifth Year, History.*

“IF the United States,” said President Wilson on the eve of the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles “and the Entente Allies deal with the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany at the time, the demand will be surrender. Peace negotiations are impossible with them.” The Kaiser Wilhelm II was informed that his presence jeopardised the armistice negotiations, and that if he went to Berlin, as was his intention, civil war would add to the misfortune of his already distracted country. Against his will and in spite of his protests the patriotic and well-intentioned king made the supreme sacrifice, not as a fugitive, but to relieve the country of the embarrassment which it was alleged his presence was causing. Thus there was an end to the monarchical government in Germany under the Hohenzollerns. Bismarck’s life-work was undone.

New constitutions were drafted at the dictation of the Great Powers assembled at Paris. The inauguration of a Parliamentary Republic in Germany appeared to be the most logical sequence of the happenings of the time. The constitution-makers thought that militarism and monarchist ideals would die a natural death after such a humiliation. But the history of the succeeding years in Germany enables us to form a quite different opinion. The efforts of President Wilson and his colleagues have proved a failure. Germany has been gradually tending towards monarchy and militarism from the very beginning of the republic. A vivid description of the German militarism was given the other day by Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons when he spoke on the question of the National Defence. He said that in Germany every factory was working under war-condition.

Leaving aside the question of militarism, we shall in the following pages give a very brief history of this tendency towards monarchy in post-war Germany. Smaller royalist outbreaks had taken place in the German Republic, indeed in its infancy, as early as 1920. In that year the extreme conservatives, with the cherished hope of restoring monarchy, seized Berlin. Besides, millions of voters turned

against the moderate parties, viz., the Social Democrats, the Democrats and the Catholics (extreme republican). The first Reichstag election of 1920 reduced these three republican parties to a remarkable minority and strengthened the anti-republican Nationalists and the extreme Radicals. The outlook of the Republic was indeed very dark at that time. The year 1923 is one of the darkest periods of the German Republic. In that year the Republic having failed to pay war indemnities to France, the latter under the instructions of Poincaré occupied the Ruhr Valley. This is one of the scandalous incidents of history, as unjustified as the Roman occupation of Sardinia, on the eve of the Second Punic War. In spite of that the Republic calmly swallowed up all humiliations. This naturally leads one to the supposition that the State must have been very busy at that time with the more important and serious task of settling up internal affairs. For the Republic was very young and the anti-republican parties would always avail themselves of any opportunity to rise into open revolts. And actually, a monarchist revolt did take place in Bavaria, in that year. This revolt had to be brought down, only under the able guidance of Dr. Gústav Stressmann, the then Chancellor and looked upon as an avowed monarchist.

In the presidential election of 1925 the moderates fell short of a majority, while the candidate of the Nationalist or Monarchist Party, the late Field-Marshal Von Hindenburg was chosen President of the Republic for the next seven years. This was a great triumph of the anti-republican party. The popularity of Hindenburg made the Republic popular for the time being. In spite of that in the Reichstag election of 1928 the pro-monarchist Nationalists polled no less than five million votes while the Communist only three and one-third millions out of the total of more than thirty millions. This figure is a clear exposition of the strength of the anti-republicans.

On the 11th of August, 1929, thousands of delegates from all parts of Germany with banners flying and bands playing paraded the streets of Berlin in celebration of the ten years of the Republic. But that is a solitary incident. It marks the beginning of the decay of Parliamentary government created on the morrow of the War. The actual blow came with the resignation of Hermani Muller's Socialists Cabinet (March 30, 1930) and the climax has been reached with the Chancellor Hitler's assumption of the Presidentship of the German Reich, along with Chancellorship.

During the ministry of Von Papen the German Press freely discussed the question of the possibility of the returning of the Hohenzollerns. As a protest to this the Chancellor, of course, formally

declared that the foreign press was using the question of the restoration to influence public opinion against the loosening fetters of the Treaty of Versailles. Von Papen's colleague Baron Wilhelm Von Gayl, Minister of the Interior, loudly declared "the Government entertains no idea of the restoration of the monarchy *at present*." In spite of all such governmental protestations, an election manifesto issued by the National Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party on the 25th October, 1932, comments on a speech of the Chancellor (dated 24th October, 1932) saying that "the Chancellor's statement is a declaration of war against the Democratic Republic. Von Papen is fighting for the restoration of the monarchy and for the suppression of equal electoral suffrage."

These remarks were based on good evidence. The very structure of the Cabinet was monarchist. Almost all the members of the Cabinet, including President Hindenburg as well as Baron Von Gayl, Herr Von Nerurath and General Von Schleicher who had acted behind the monarchist Kapp Putsch of 1920, were all enthusiastic supporters of the royalist cause. The proposals of the Government programme as shown by Mr. Ludwig Lore* prove that those proposals conform to the monarchist principle of one man rule (in every detail) with a cipher Parliament to mask the workings of an arbitrary despotism. Besides, anti-republican propaganda gained ground extraordinarily in Bavaria. That is evident from Dr. Maire's speech. According to the Frankfurter Zeitung, the said Dr. Maire, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Wurttemberg addressing a meeting in Stuttgart, on October 17th, 1932, said that the Reich Government was openly fraternizing with the Bavarian ex-Crown Prince. "Berlin," he said, "already sees Germany divided into two spheres of influence—the Hohenzollerns in the North and the Wittelsbach in the South. We Wurttembergers wish to be neither Prussians nor Bavarians, but altogether without a monarchy, better Germans." The German Nationalist People's Party and the German People's Party under Dr. Hugenberg and Stressmann were also respectively upholders of the monarchist conception of government.

The Nazi Government in Germany under Herr Hitler is *anything* but republican. Everything in the State is Hitlerised, that is to say, every wish of Hitler, however absurd it may appear, is translated into action. Like an autocratic monarch Hitler is deciding the destinies of millions of people. His treatment with the Jews remind us of

*An article by Ludwig Lore in 'Current History' December, 1932, is very interesting.

the brutal treatment of the Roman emperors meted towards the Christians at the beginning of the Christian era. He had expelled Prof. Einstein from Germany because he was a Jew, according to his sweet will. The people never joined in declaring him the most dangerous person in the State as in the case of ostracism in ancient Hellas. Ostracism is possible in a republic but expulsion by one particular gentleman is inconceivable.

Hitler decreed the Prussianisation of the whole Reich. The assassination of Chancellor Dolfuss has enabled him to send a Frenchman to Vienna. Dr. Schusnigg, the present Austrian Chancellor, is a monarchist. With the death of President Hindenberg, Hitler became the President-Chancellor of Germany. So he has definitely disregarded the constitution of 1919.

In all his speeches Adolph Hitler has so long been telling that his main task was the unification and centralisation of German lands, as well as healing up the wounds of the Treaty of Versailles. Now, we are entitled to ask whether this unification of German lands under Hitlerite Fascism is an end to itself or a means to an end. The answer according to Wickham Steed (formerly editor of "London Times") is given by Hitler's "Mainkempf," the Holy Bible of present Germany. What Hitler has so long been doing is but a step towards the fulfilment of his mystico-political dream—"The Third Empire" of merely two million 'Nordies.'

'Temps,' the mouthpiece of the semi-official circle in Paris, commented on the accession of Hitler to Chancellorship by saying that the event was of greater importance than any event since the fall of the Hohenzollerns. It is quite evident why such interest was taken in it. This was perhaps because—"With Hitler's appointment the way is prepaned for the return of the Ex-Kaiser" ("Daily Herald"). The Press freely discussed this Nazi coup d'état perhaps because some member of the Royal family including the ex-crown Prince Augustus-Wilhelm belonged to the Nazi camp. Now, this avowal of the "Daily Herald" as well as such other remarks by others were contradicted by the Ex-Kaiser himself sometimes ago, after Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. He contended that he had no intention of returning to the throne of Germany. But does the question at issue end there? Suppose the Ex-Kaiser is not coming back to Germany. But is restoration of monarchy impossible in Germany without Wilhelm II? We think the answer is in the negative. Hitler is already a de facto autocratic monarch. He can throw away the outward mask and become the virtual emperor of Germany like Napoleon III. He can get his

methods approved by a plebiscite ; for after all a plebiscite has no meaning in a militarist state. In 1933, an anonymous writer in the "Nineteenth Century" commented on the existing German constitution—"The new system' virtually leaves the President with nothing but his command of the army ; Bismark could be dismissed at any moment by the Emperor ; but it is scarcely thinkable that Hindenberg or his successor could dismiss Hitler during the next Four Years' Plan." Hindenberg is no more. Hitler is now the Chancellor-President of Germany. So the question of dismissal now does not arise at all.

In conclusion we shall give the views of Mr. Ludwig Lore on the temper of the German people. According to him the German people "are republican neither by tradition nor by conviction. The Republic is yet in its infancy. It never had a chance to take root in the creation. Its schools have fostered the memory of a glorious past and deplored the troublesome present. . . . The Republic came before there were republicans in Germany."*

*I am specially indebted to some foreign periodicals like the 'Current History,' 'Nineteenth Century,' 'the Spectator,' 'International Affairs,' as well as to an interesting essay by Wickham Street, formerly editor of the "London Times."

An Essay on "Essay"

PRITITOSH ROY—*Third Year, Arts.*

LO! look at the stalking gait of the scientist with a measuring rod in hand! He wears an awful scowl on his forehead—a scowl burning with the intensest zest for "searching truth." The meek man of letters with his meagre tools flies before the Formidable Presence. He clutches him by the collar, and—

"What do you," demands the Ghost after Truth, "mean by Life? Is it something which varies with the variation of pressure, or increases and decreases with the rise and fall of temperature? What is its co-efficient of expansion?"

"Yes, master, it is indeed so as you say. The volume of Life is squeezed to a point—just as my life is about to ebb away—in the presence of a tremendous pressure. It falls fast to the freezing-point before a high temperature. But, pray, master, what is that rod for?"

"What do you mean, man? This—this rod? Why, this is for measuring life if you have any, and for belabouring you if you have none, for all that moonshine of yours."

* * * *

The spirit of industrialising life and literature on a wide scientific scale is rapidly gaining ground in the minds of men. "Definition, precise definition, no beating about the bush"—is the cry everywhere. But what definition can you give of life? What definition can you find for Literature? Are they things tangible to conform to your rigid rules, to be defined and contracted into your limited lines? Manifestations of the Divine Self, they are vast and varied. The One is magnified into many, the Unity is divided into diversity. Life is eternal, it is all-pervading. Who knows when it has begun and when it will end? Literature is unlimited, it is all-absorbing. Who can say when its seed was first sown and when the tree will grow to its full? Everything in the world, every minute particle vibrates with pulsating life; everything on the earth teems with life-giving literature. Your science is an expression of literature, your machine is an expression of life. Life and Literature engulf all human knowledge and institutions. And in a way, Life is Literature and Literature Life. The two emerged from the One and will merge in the same. They began together and they will end so.

Now to our subject.

What is an essay? An essay is an extremely elastic term—like all the other branches of literature—which can hardly be given any precise definition, though its various characteristics can be definitely stated. No branch of literature can be rigidly excluded from the other. In fact, there is no sharp line of demarcation that divides them into distinct departments. They are all children of the same parents. They have their mutual give-and-take. One merges and mingles into another. Still, let us consider a few of the daring definitions, forwarded by men of no little repute.

“An essay is a loose sally of the mind, an irregular undigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition,” says DR. JOHNSON.

“An essay is a work of prose-art.”—SAINTSBURY.

According to the latter definition,—for we can safely and with due reverence, unto the veteran, ignore the former with its “most monstrous extravagance and elephantine style of expression,”—we may say that, though an *éssay* takes up the form of a prose-composition, yet it partakes of the nature of poetry, since it is a work of art. An essay is not the logical, coherent, systematic and scientific expression of a doctrine. It is a sort of an imaginative treatment. It is the presentation of personal impressions of an artistic nature. Solidity and infallibility of argument are not the things in an essay. It requires only quality and fineness.

Life, in its wider sense, is the subject-matter of all literary composition. The action of life is reflected in the drama, the song of life in the lyric and incidents in actual life are imitated in the narrative. So, every form of literature is a prototype of actual life. Even descriptive compositions have a subtle, though not apparent, and a remote bearing on the joys of life.

Essays are day-dreams, simply ‘thinking aloud. The essayist gives his own intimate and inner impressions and ideas. Subjectivity is the main spring of essay-writing. The charm of personal impression is the one thing needful. Intensity or solemnity of feeling is the province of the lyricist. But the essayist has a wider field to choose his materials from. He can take up any wind of the flute, either of bantering frivolity—with the exclusion of course of vulgarity,—of light-heartedness, or solemnity or the like. But the keynote of the composition is geniality of spirit and liveliness of style. In a word, essay proper is lighter than the lyric.

What, then, is the connection of the essayist with life? He is a lesser kind of poet. He, more than a poet, is the critic of life. He

does not deal with void. It is only in the art of treatment that the two, essay and poetry, differ from each other. The essayist comments on life. An extreme satirist, as Swift with his stiletto-like thrusts, cannot be regarded as a good essayist. His comments must be permeated with liveliness and geniality. The genial, penetrating eye for the common things and the irrepressible instinct for mild romance—which weaves about every fragment of fact or incident a rich vesture of fancy—are the indispensable accomplishments of the best of essayists. The pleasant fantasy must not be allowed to degenerate into nauseous bitterness. The worst impediments of essay-writing are pungent irony glowing with consuming intensity of feeling, bitter words burning the body like molten lead and scourging humour as bitter as gall. Swift's profound contempt for the average man is a bar to his claim to rank among the best of the essayists.

The essayist does not attempt to recount how many fine things he has seen and has to say on a hackneyed subject. Neither does he pose as a sullen speculator upon the various abstruse problems of life. He does not deal in problems, but in poignant memories—memories which have stirred deeply his heart and left a fairy-tale written upon the page of his mind. Heavy philosophy is a burden to the essay. Philosophy may be there, but it should be of that kind which Addison has declared "to have brought, out of closet and libraries, schools and colleges to dwell at clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses." In a word, a mere casual conjecture of philosophical problems, a mere suggestion, and not a solution, thrown out at random can find room in an essay, and nothing more.

The essayist notes all the phases of life to be observed; "he listens to the wits at Wills's; smokes with 'the philosopher of the Grecian,' may be with the politician at the 'St. James's,' and with the merchants at the 'Exchange.'" If the essayist wishes to smite, he can; but he must keep his coolly clever and languidly brilliant gifts and his easy-going nature on the forefront so that the thrusts may be mellowed down. The favourite mood with him is a mood of delicate and playful satire with just a pleasant tinge of acidity in his humour. He must be very slow at the sledge-hammer work and must not be so swift as the tremendous Jonathan.

The essayist sees the game of life. He is a spectator and not a participator. He does not share in the blood and bruise of the player, tossing and toppling in the mire. Being a spectator, he can look at the game from all points of view. Hence, he is a disinterested seer; yet he keeps his eyes ever on the watch. He is a mute recorder of the "jolly" events of life. He should not have an excessive zeal;

if he has, the essayist staggers back to a fanatic reformer. He must have a detached view of life, yet he must not be a broody or moody sort of a man. He should step aside out of the main-stream of life and have a hearty look at it. He should lend his ear to the music and melody of the flowing song of life. He should breathe life into the drabness and dullness of earthly existence, instil love into the life and soul into the love.

Is the essayist a romancer? The answer is a positive no. He is not a romancer, because he will not have the tendency to escape the multi-coloured life with its clouds and sunshine. The Romanicist does not face facts. He wants to transfigure the degenerate world into the world of Prometheus. The Romancer's tendency is of the fugitive's. The Romancers are the scorers of the ground, they despise the earth where cares abound. They are ethereal minstrels, pilgrims of the sky. They fly, they soar above the clouds and the higher they soar, the sweeter they sing.

But the essayist is the humble lover of the homely soil. He has the homeliest of stuff to begin with. In the homeliest of details, in the most insignificant and commonest of familiar objects, the essayist finds unsuspected possibilities. He does not deal with the splendour of life, but with the spell it casts over a thoughtful mind. He discovers a kernel of beauty in the most familiar objects.

The best example of this kind is Lamb—the consummate essayist—Lamb, who scattered luminous and subtle intuitions in talk and private letters, who “turned the mud and dross of London pavements into pure gold with the alchemy of a mind that loved to be at home in crowds.” His essays were fraught with pathetic humour, charged with poetry and kindness, with imagination and with love, with the airiest romance and the profoundest good sense. Lamb revels in recollecting haunting memories—“memories of simple things and simple people, often with pathos of death or oblivion clinging about them; the sights of common London (‘and what else is a great city but a collection of sights’), the chimney-sweepers and the beggars, the Jews and the actors, the choice savours of beasts, of fish and of roast-meats, the street-cries and the clanging bells. These fragments of his experience Lamb invests with an atmosphere of so magic a quality that while every filament stands out clear and true, the whole seems to have suffered a change into some more precious and ethereal substance.”

This embalming of the wounds of common life with never-failing sympathy and the milk of human kindness, this honest endeavour of making the hard lot of man a bit more lovable, a bit more beautiful,

this silent shedding of tears through which the wretched vaguely see the rainbow in the sky—these are the essentials of the best essayist. And let us now, when we have reached the close of our endeavour, end happily with Lamb,—

“ The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street ; life, awake, if you awake at all, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, the pantomime, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade, all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without the power of satiating me. The wonder of these nights compels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears for fulness of joy at so much life.”

OURSELVES

COLLEGE UNION

AUTUMN SOCIAL—

The Annual Autumn Social of the Union was celebrated on Friday, the 5th October, 1934, at 6-30 p.m. in the Calcutta University Institute Hall, when the students of the College staged Rabindranath's "Paritrán" and Parasuram's "Birinchi Baba." The programme opened with an oriental dance by Rashid Ahmed Chaudhury of the First Year Class, which was highly appreciated. The play was an unqualified success. Special mention must be made of Messrs. Robi Maitra, Kartick Mookherjee, Ramen Sen, Moni Mookherjee, Moni Ghose, Robi Majumdar, Romanath Sen Gupta and Sudhendujyoti Majumdar for the exquisite execution of their respective rôles. The sweet songs of Mr. Jyoti Prosad Mukherji in the rôle of Dhananjoy and the orchestra led by Messrs. Bidyut Ghose and Robi Majumdar were highly welcome by the audience.

To augment the Students' Aid Fund of the College, the occasion was utilised as a charity performance. Thanks to the unstinted co-operation of the students and the ready sympathy of their guardians and ex-students, tickets had an unprecedented sale. A sum of about Rs. 1,100/- was realised. Till the scheme of providing full free-studentships matures, for which our popular and sympathetic Principal is trying his best, such charity performances would undoubtedly mitigate the difficulties of our poor fellow students.

We are grateful to our Vice-Presidents Profs. C. C. Bhattacharya and S. Bhaduri for the keen interest they took in the rehearsal of the play. The unqualified success of the play was mainly due to Prof. Bhaduri's constant attendance at and able supervision of the rehearsals. We shall be failing in our duty if we do not express our deep sense of gratitude to our Principal and Mrs. Sen for encouraging the students by their occasional visits during the rehearsal of the play and for their kind suggestions and active interest. Our grateful thanks are also due to Prof. S. C. Majumdar whose letters of encouragement have always inspired us in our task: his absence was very keenly felt on the occasion, a fact which is a clear testimony to his unfailing popularity amongst his pupils.

The Volunteer organisation under the captaincy of Mr. P. Das left little to be desired. Mr. Das was greatly helped by Messrs. Santosh Gupta and Sunil Bose.

The function owed much of its success to two of our Ex-Secretaries, Messrs. Bibhuti Mukherjea and Hiren Bhanja.

PUNYABRATA BHATTACHARYA,

BIKASH C. ROY,

Secretaries, Autumn Social Committee.

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF SIR J. C. BOSE'S CONNECTION WITH THE COLLEGE

The Golden Jubilee of Sir J. C. Bose's Connection with the College was celebrated on Monday, the 21st January, at 6 P.M. in the College Physics Theatre under the Presidency of Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Moulavi Azizul Haque, Minister of Education.

Under the able direction of Mr. Bibhuti Mukherjee, one of our ex-secretaries, the Hall was tastefully decorated in oriental style. On their arrival, Sir J. C. and Lady Bose were received by the Principal and other members of the staff and students. Mrs. Sen, on behalf of the staff and students of the College presented an *arghya* consisting of silk dhuti and chaddar, flowers and fruits on a nice copper plate. The address (which is printed elsewhere in the Magazine) was then read out by the Principal and presented in a silver casket in a book form specially designed by Mr. Bratindranath Tagore. The address was also written and painted with artistic designs under his guidance. The Hon'ble Minister paid a glowing tribute to this mighty seer and the untired worker for lifting the prestige not only of this College in whose laboratories he made his epoch-making experiments but also the whole of India.

Messrs. J. N. Basu and Ramananda Chatterjee, two of his old students in this College and Prof. S. C. Mahalanobis, one of Sir J. C. Bose's colleagues associated themselves with the sentiments expressed by the Hon'ble Minister and made references to reminiscences of their time. Sir J. C. Bose's reply (the full text of which has been printed elsewhere) emphasised the prime importance of discipline and patience in student life.

The occasion once again reminded us of the absence of a spacious and adequate College Hall. A large number of guests and hundreds of students had to go away disappointed.

We are grateful to the Principal and Professors C. C. Bhattacharya and S. C. Majumdar for their encouragement and guidance. We are specially grateful to Mrs. Sen who personally chose and purchased the things for the *arghya*. Our thanks are due to Messrs. Bibhuti Mukherjee, Bratindranath Tagore and Mihir Ranjan Bose (one of the ex-students of the College), for their kind help and active co-operation.

118TH FOUNDERS' DAY

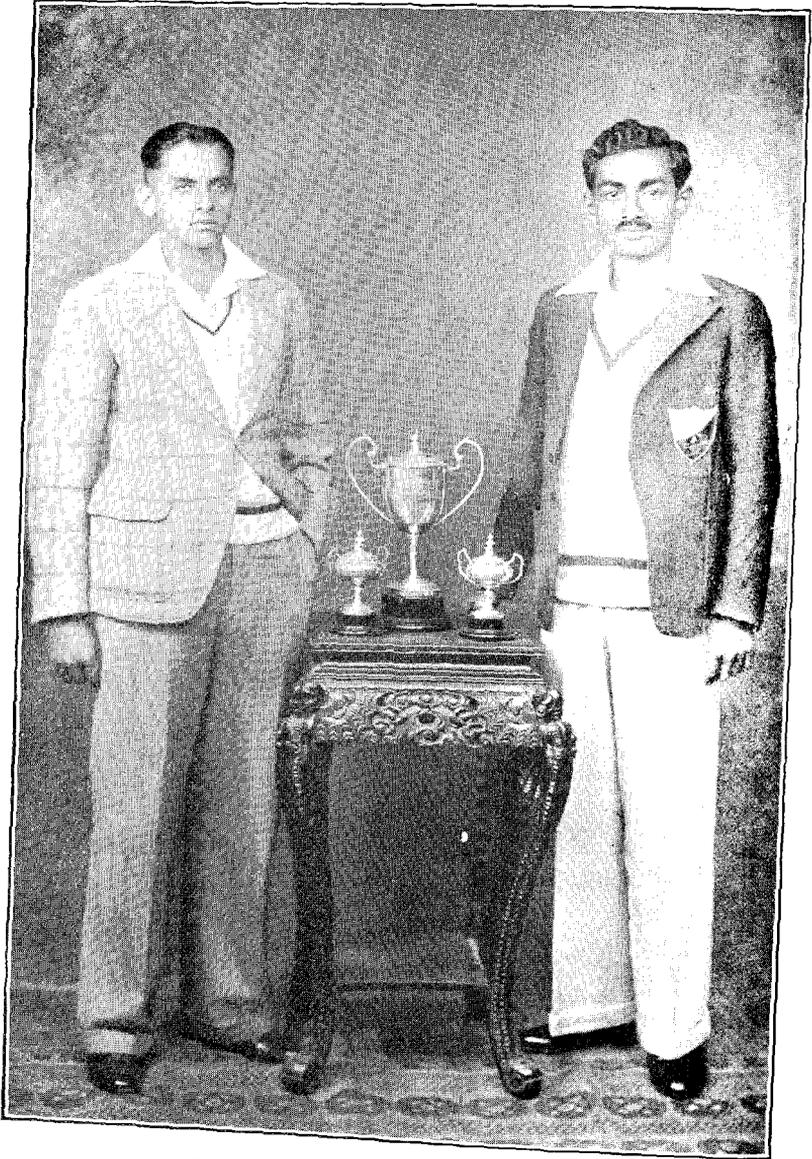
The 118th Founders' Day was celebrated on 21st January, at 4-30 P.M., the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Azizul Haque presiding. In presenting the report the Principal spoke about several wants and needs of the College, *e.g.* (1) a College Assembly Hall, (2) creation of a number of full free studentships, (3) a properly equipped gymnasium. None feel so keenly the absence of these as we do. We hope that the authorities will take expeditious steps in meeting these grievances.

Many distinguished citizens and ex-students were present. About 350 guests were entertained with tea on the College lawn. Special arrangement was made for the orthodox guests. Students were also treated to light refreshments. The function terminated happily at night.

We express our hearty thanks to all those who helped us in the successful management of the function.

Among those present were the following —

The Hon'ble Kunwar Jagadish Prasad, Lady Protima Mitter, Mrs P K Ray, Sir Nilratan and Lady Sircar, Sir Manmatha Nath Mukerjee Mr Justice D N Mitter, Mr Justice M C Ghosh, Mr Justice and Mrs S K Ghose, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sir Upendranath Brahmachari Sir Badridas Goenka, Mr S P Mookerjee, Dr W S Urquhart, Mr & Mrs J W Holme, Mr & Mrs J M Bottomlev, Dr & Mrs W A Jenkins, Principal K Zachariah, Mr A K Chanda, Mr & Mrs S C Mahalanobis, Mr & Mrs R N Sen, Mr & Mrs S N Maitra, Mr & Mrs K C Nag, Mr & Mrs B R Sen, Mr & Mrs S N Roy Mr S N Modak Messrs Kamini Kumar Chanda, Jogesh Chandra Ray, Rumananda Chatterjee, J N Basu S N Mallik, J C Gupta, Satyananda Bose, Amulyadhan Addy, N C Nag, A N Mitter, N Mukherji Khan Bahadur Abdul Momen, Khan Bahadur A F M Abdul Ali, Rai Bahadur Dr Haridhan Dutt, Mr S M Bose, Dr Nares Chandra Sen Gupta, Mr Mukunda Behary Mallik Captam Dabiruddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Md Musa, Khan Bahadur K M Ashadullah, Dr Susil Kumar Mukerjee, Messrs Jyotish Chandra Mitra Jotindra Mohan Ray, Mohini Kanta Ghatak, Bisweswar Bhattacharyya, Rai Bahadur Nikhil Nath Ray, Dr D R Bhandarkar, Dr Ganes Prasad Rai Bahadur Khagendranath Mitter, Dr P C Mitter, Dr & Mrs D M Bose, Mr & Mrs K N Chatterjee, Mr & Mrs Asoke Chatterjee Mr & Mrs K K Mukerjee, Mr & Mrs Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Dr & Mrs B B Sarkar, Mrs Anna Arusholt, Mrs Tatini Das, Mrs P C Mahalanobis Mrs S Datta, Mrs J C Sen Gupta, Mrs S C Sarkar, Mr Bidhu Bhusan Majumdar, Rai Bahadur Gobinlal Bonnerjee, Prof Gopal Chandra Ganguli, Prof Harihar Vidyabhusan, Rai Bahadur Hem Chandra De Profs Nibaran Chandra Ray, Narendranath Chakravarti, Akshay Kumar Sarkar, Nripendra Chandra Banerjee, P Gangooly, Devendra Nath Ray Hem Chandra Sen, Rai Bahadurs Mallinath Ray, Hem Kumar Mallik Mahendranath Gupta, Giris Chandra Sen, Jamini Mohan Ghosh, Messrs J K Biswas, Hari Charan Bose, Anadi Ranjan Bose, Sures C Sen Bijay Kumar Ganguli, Asutosh Dutt, Bimal C Chatterjee, Rai Saheb Harisadhan Mukerjee, Rai Saheb Rebatu Mohan Das, Mr J M Sen, Mr & Mrs B C Dutt, Mr A K M Ehya Sadique, Dr Girindra Sekhar Bose, Mr & Mrs P N Chatterjee, Messrs M N Kanjulal, N N Bhowe, P N Mallik, Dr S K Gupta, Dr Sarat C Basak, Messrs Satinath Ray, Biraj Mohan Majumdar, Rama Prasad Mookerjee, Manmatha Nath Ray, Sachindranath Mukerjee, Narendranath Set, Gopal Chandra Das Amruddin Ahmed, Zanoor Ahmed, Dr Radha Binod Pal, Messrs Sachin Banerjee, P Trivedi, N. N Sarkar, D N Ganguli, Birendranath Maitra Siddheswar Chaudhuri, S. Zaman, S C Ray, S N Banerjee, Prof K D Ghose, B B Roy, Nirmal Chandra Bhattacharyya, Mahitosh Rai Chaudhuri, Sukumar Ranjan Das, Dr Sahayram Bose, Dr J N Mukherjee, Dr S K Mitra, Prof Joges C Mukerjee, Prof Priyada Ranjan Roy, Dr Bidhu Bhusan Ray, Prof Susil Kumar Acharyya, Dr S P Agharkar, Dr H K Mookerjee, Prof Sahid Suhrawardy, Dr M Z Siddique, Dr Beni Madhav Barua, Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Dr Surendra Nath Sen, Dr J P Neogi, Dr Panchanan Mitra, Dr S M Ganguli, Dr Saroj Kumar Das, Dr H C. Raichaudhuri, Dr A. P Das Gupta, Prof



WINNERS OF THE DUKE CUP

C. L. MEHTA

M. DAS

Humayun Kabir, Prof. Sambhunath Banerjee and Mr. Purna Chandra De Udbhatsagar.

PUNYABRATA BHATTACHARYA,
 PRAVAS DAS,
Secretaries, College Union.

COLLEGE SPORTS

TENNIS CLUB

Our tennis season commenced this year late in November. The most striking feature about the Club has been the unusual heavy rush for membership, and it is gratifying to note that there has been a record number of members of the Club this year—a clear indication of the growing popularity of this "Lords' Game" in our College.

This season of the Tennis Club has been marked by a vigorous activity. Up till now we have played four friendly matches against prominent clubs of the city and outside—the Y. M. C. A. Playground, Bhowanipore Tennis Club, Patna Medical College and the Lahore MacLagan College. In the first three matches, we won by comfortable margins and we were rather unlucky to lose the last match, owing to the absence of Mr. Mehta and some other players.

Another feature of note is that some of our members participated in many of the first class Tournaments of the city, and gave quite a good account of themselves.

Lastly about our noteworthy achievement in the Calcutta University Tennis Championship Tournament, to which we sent four teams, and although three of them lost in the earlier rounds, all the players succeeded in giving a fine display. Messrs. C. L. Mehta and M. Das of our College, formed a remarkable combination, and carried away everything before them. They came out victorious without conceding a single set in the course of the whole tournament. In the final match against the St. Xavier's College, winner for the last three years, our players played sparkling tennis to win easily and unextended against a formidable pair.

In conclusion, I like to acknowledge my heart-felt gratitude to the members of the teaching staff—particularly our popular Principal, Mr. B. M. Sen, Prof. H. K. Banerjee and Mr. S. C. Sen for their kind encouragement and patronage. It is in more than formal terms that I thank the Secretary, Mr. Anil Mohan Gupta for his able management of the affairs of the Club.

The report is not complete, as the season is not yet over. We hope to give a more detailed report in the next issue of the Magazine.

MANORANJAN DAS,
Captain, Tennis Club.

THE ECONOMICS SEMINAR

The fourth meeting of the Seminar was held on the 22nd September last, with Dr. J. C. Sinha in the chair. Mr. Kalidas Lahiri of the Fourth Year Economics class read a paper on 'Agricultural Indebtedness in Bengal.' The writer of the essay greatly stressed on the urgent need of both short and long-term loans and examined the present position of the existing agents for financing agricultural credit. He weighed the possibilities of the debt-conciliation scheme and remarked that, under the present abnormal circumstances, this even would fail as a practical measure. Looking towards the recent move of the Bengal Government in establishing land-mortgage banks in the Province, he could not feel sure if it would be of any relief to the petty land-holder, especially when the value of his land as security has fallen almost to nothing. The situation, he continued, was one of great despondence, and it might seem as if it were impossible to help the helpless. He recommended that a simpler Rural Insolvency Act should be considered, and concluded with the remark that 'the worst policy towards debt is to ignore it and do nothing.'

In the debate that followed, Messrs. Srijit Ganguly, Bishnu Ghosh and Ashoke Chowdhury took part. The President, in a worthy speech, summarised the whole discussion and brought to light the various phases of the problem. He also suggested that the value of the land as security should be assessed at the figure of a normal year.

The next meeting came off on the 8th November last, in the Seminar room and was presided over by Dr. Sinha. Mr. Kanailal Ghosh of the Fourth Year Economics class read an able paper on 'The Reserve Bank of India.' Mr. Ghosh considered the urgency of a Central Bank in India and deplored the present system of dyarchy in financial matters, credit and currency in India being entrusted to different hands. The writer gave a neat historical survey of the movement for a Central Bank in India right up to the passing of the Reserve Bank Act early in 1934. He then went on to examine the constitution and functions of the Bank as contained in the provisions of the Act. On the question whether it would be a state-owned institution or a shareholders' Bank, Mr. Ghosh suggested a compromise that it should be of the mixed type, a shareholders' Bank under state management. He criticised the Proportional Reserve system as recommended in the Act, and maintained that to impart proper elasticity to the currency a Fixed Fiduciary system with a high fiduciary limit would be not only desirable but indispensable. He also considered the case for organising the Bill Market in India without which it would be difficult for a Central Bank to carry on its functions.

Messrs. Nisith Mitter and Bishnu Ghosh joined in the discussion that followed.

Dr. Sinha then summed up the discussions in a nice speech. As regards the question whether the proposed Bank should be a State-bank or a Shareholders' Bank, his view was that it was only a 'fools' contest' and 'whatever would be best administered would be best.' He did not support the view that the function of the Central Bank would be to stabilise prices; if it could do any such thing it would be to stabilise the profits. He deplored the present position of Indian Banking where, as

Sir George Schuster had once remarked, 90% of banking is in the hands of indigenous bankers. Unless these indigenous bankers were co-ordinated with the Central Banking institution, the financial millennium of the country would be far removed.

The sixth meeting of the Seminar was held in the Seminar Room on the 15th November. Professor U. N. Ghoshal presided over the occasion. Mr. Srijit Ganguly of the Fourth Year Economics class read a paper on 'Land Mortgage Banking in India.'

The writer greatly emphasised on the regrettable practice of co-operative societies, with their short-term deposits, financing long-term credit-requirements. Special institutions for dealing with long-term credit would be of immense necessity to the agriculturists and a network of land-mortgage banks for this purpose would be indispensable. Of the three types, co-operative, quasi-co-operative and commercial, the co-operative type would be, according to the writer, the most suitable for dealing with agricultural loans. To ensure efficiency all shackles to land-alienation should be removed, presumably in the interest of the raiyat. As regards the period of loans advanced, Mr. Ganguly suggested that these should be long enough, say 40 years, as is the case in other countries. Mr. Ganguly then concluded his essay with a plea for a Central Land-Mortgage Bank in India.

Messrs. Kalidas Lahiri, Nisith Mitra, Asoke Chowdhury and Satijiban Das took part in the discussion that followed.

The meeting then came to a close after a neat little speech from the chair.

This note terminates the present Secretary's period of office. It is with a sense of pleasure that he recalls the unstinted help and suggestion he got from Dr. J. C. Sinha, the President of the Seminar, and from his friends, particularly Messrs. S. K. Bhattacharjee, A. L. Kar, A. K. Banerjee and A. Das Gupta. He also owes a great deal to Prof. Ghoshal who used to take keen interest in the work of the Seminar.

KALIDAS LAHIRI,
Secretary.

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of past students and past and present members of the staff of Presidency College was held in the College under the chairmanship of Principal B. M. Sen, on the 10th January, 1934, and it was unanimously decided to start an Association of past students and past and present members of the College.

A Provisional Committee with Mr. S. N. Mallik, C.I.E. and Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis as Secretaries was appointed to take necessary steps for organising the Association.

A second meeting was held in the College on the 10th April, 1934, under the chairmanship of Mr. Basanta Kumar Bose, M.A., B.L., the seniormost ex-student of the College. Draft Rules prepared by the Provisional Committee were considered, and the Provisional Committee was authorized to enrol members. The Inaugural Meeting of the Association will be held after not less than fifty members have been enrolled.

ALL PAST STUDENTS AND PAST AND
PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE STAFF ARE
CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN.

Life Membership Fee.

Rs. 15/- in one instalment, or Rs. 20/- in four instalments of Rs. 5/- each.

Membership forms and information regarding the Association may be obtained from Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, Presidency College, Calcutta.





Their Majesties' Silver Jubilee

On the happy occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Their Majesties' accession to the throne, we humbly offer our loyal felicitations and our earnest prayer for their long life. These twenty-five years have been extremely eventful ones in the history of the world, and the record of progress and general advancement is long and imposing. The event which stands out prominent more than any other is the Great War which involved nearly the whole of Europe and threatened to bring about the end of the present-day civilisation. Even though the drums of war have been silenced, signs are not wanting that the war to end war has scarcely been successful in bringing about the millennium. This has brought about in its train great changes in ideas and ideals and appraisal of the values of life.

Our own country has seen rapid progress towards democracy since the memorable Durbar of 1911, and the India Bill, now being pushed through the Houses of Parliament, in spite of the criticisms levelled against it, holds promise of many beneficial results. In short, there is every reason to believe that the reign of King George V will go down in history as an eventful and memorable one.

B. M. S.

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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{ No. 3

Notes and News

IT is now the second week of April and within less than a month the whole Empire will be busy celebrating the Silver Jubilee of Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary. Many years have passed since the world has last seen the Jubilee of an English sovereign, as Edward VII ruled only for a decade. It is, however, most gratifying that the loyalty of British subjects in Great Britain, the Dominions, Colonies and the Indian Empire has not diminished at all during these forty years, despite all the waves of republicanism that have swept over the world and all the severe attacks which monarchical institutions have had to sustain. Now as in 1897, the hundreds of millions of people who look up to George V as their King and Emperor will join in a general thanksgiving to the Almighty for granting them so kind and generous a monarch. All differences of countries, races, colours and views will be swept away for once and from every loyal soul in the vast Empire on which the sun never sets will rise forth a sincere prayer for the safety and long life of our gracious Sovereign.

There have been critics who held the view that the King in modern Great Britain is a mere figurehead—a man who has no work to do. We doubt very much how these carpers would maintain their dogma *in toto* when confronted with the resplendent career of His Majesty. When we remember King George's visits to the Fronts during the War and his burning zeal in the cause of Britain's championship of right and justice, we can visualise how his personal influence has moulded the

character of the present generation in Great Britain. And when we call to mind the extreme tact and resourcefulness with which King George brought Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Baldwin together to work in the National Government, thereby effecting a departure from a century-old practice, we can form some idea as to what power he exercises over the leaders of the Government. It is not for nothing that the vast Empire and even nations outside it are participating in the Jubilee celebrations: behind their rejoicing lies that fervent admiration which the King has won through long years of contact with the people—through his apprenticeship in the navy, his tour round the Empire, and the warm sympathy and interest which Their Majesties have always shown in the cause of their innumerable subjects.

Indians have always been a sentimental people, among whom the idea of kingship has been coupled with that of divinity from times immemorial. Whatever be their political views and aspirations, the King is to them a sacred person beyond the pale of their quarrels and contentions. This is amply testified by the enthusiasm with which Indians in every province have joined hands to participate in the coming celebrations. Bengal, as we all might expect of her, has decided to pay her homage of loyalty and respect in a fitting manner. A representative Committee has been formed and subscriptions are being raised out of which a considerable portion will go to the alleviation of the sufferings of the needy and the distressed. This is indeed the noblest and the best cause to which money could be directed.

As a body of British subjects, though only an infinitesimal fraction of the whole, we, members of the Presidency College, are striving to celebrate the auspicious occasion on a suitable scale. A committee has already been formed and ways and means are being devised for its working. We wish our friends, all success!

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Spring is a time when young men have been proverbially known to throw all serious considerations to the winds, give a loose rein to fancy and take to love-making and sighting and dreaming of old, far-off things, happy and unhappy. We do not know how much of this is truth and how much fiction. Sentiments may vary with temperaments and climates and they do mostly in modern times with environments. But that this season with its sprouting of foliage, its blossoming of flowers, its song of birds and its throbbing of newly awakened life

stirs some sleeping chord in our hearts, very few will have the hardihood to deny. It is, therefore, nothing short of a breach of natural law that examinations should come in so thick and so fast at this time of the year. Indeed, in view of the Finals and Annuals coming in unbroken sequence—if not simultaneously—one has sometimes an obstinate questioning lurking in some secret corner of the mind whether our educational authorities take any malicious pleasure in shutting off the outside world from the poor examinees. When the ordeals are over, and students come out with a sigh of relief to the world of freedom and ease and do-what-you-like, spring is almost at an end and summer is about to set in with its scorching heat and its dulling weariness.

But, of course, stalwarts there are in every sphere of life, for otherwise existence would have been a very sordid business. It is really a comfort to know and make known the fact that there are among our friends a few who never blanch, even at the prospect of the severest examinations. This is proved by the very large number of Bengali poems that we have received for publication in this issue. Most of them deal with love and memory and wistful longing and all those things that had better be left to the imagination than described. Adequate themes for spring-time, no doubt, and we thank the writers heartily. But we would have been much more delighted had some of them taken up serious themes and chosen prose as their medium of expression. We know, of course, that the natural language of spring is poetry and that this is not the time for any sustained effort of thought or imagination. No sooner do you take up a line of fancy than it branches off into a hundred directions, forming a veritable maze and leaving you baffled and bewildered.

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Taking stock of the events of the last few months, the first thing that comes to our mind is the loss the College has suffered in the death of two illustrious ex-students, Rai Bahadurs Nagendranath Banerji and Narendranath Sen. The late Rai Bahadur Nagendranath Banerji, whose connection with this College as a student extended from 1896 to 1901, was known throughout the country for his magnificent qualities of head and heart. His legal acumen, his wide munificence and his tireless zeal in the cause of village reconstruction are things that the nation will not soon forget. The late Rai Bahadur Narendranath Sen who passed his B.Sc. and M.A. Examinations from this College in 1904 and 1906 respectively was, as the Vice-Chancellor himself remarked, one of the most efficient officials in the University.

The services he rendered to the University as Assistant Controller and, of late, as the Controller of Examinations will be remembered gratefully by all those in any way connected with the institution.

We beg to convey to the bereaved families our sincerest condolence on behalf of the College.

The University has suffered another great loss in the death of Dr. Ganesh Prasad, the Hardinge Professor of Mathematics. Connected with the University and thereby with the educational world of Bengal for a period of more than twenty years, the great mathematician was admired and respected by all who came into contact with him.

The untimely death of Mr. Gopal Krishna Mukherji, Research Scholar in Chemistry, removes from the College one of its brilliant and energetic graduates. A meeting was held in which a condolence resolution was passed and sent to the bereaved family.

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There have not been many changes in the staff since we went to press last time, except for one or two adjustments in the departments of Mathematics and Chemistry. Prof. Naresh Chandra Ghosh whom we have been missing nearly two years now is about to rejoin the College. Mr. A. Hossain of the Department of Chemistry has been transferred to Hooghly and Mr. Sailendralal Mitra, a person connected with the College for more than a quarter of a century except for an interval of three years, comes back to renew old acquaintances.

Babu Atulkrishna Chatterji, our Accountant, has retired from service and his place has been taken by Babu Kshitish Chandra Chakravarti, M.Sc., G.D.A., from the Ahsanulla School of Engineering, Dacca.

Things that please the staff seldom fail to delight the students at the same time. We are, therefore, rejoiced at the confirmation in the newly created Class I of the Bengal Educational Service of four of our Professors, Mr. P. C. Ghosh, Dr. J. C. Sinha, Dr. J. Ghosh and Dr. Qudrut-i-Khuda. Our sincerest congratulations to them!

It will not be out of place here to say a few words regarding Prof. P. C. Ghosh's belated promotion. It does not behove us as students to discuss the merits of our teachers, but we are sure we speak the truth when we say that Prof. Ghosh commands nothing but the unmixed esteem and admiration of all the batches of students who have passed out of his hands during his connection of well-nigh thirty

years with the College. This may sound as only formal encomium, but students and teachers know what this means now-a-days. His profound erudition which has won him a name as one of the best professors of English in India is beyond our capacity to appreciate. We shall, however, cherish for many a year to come the wonderful energy he displayed in his work, the almost inhuman capacity with which he would disregard all physical discomforts and the acute pains he would take to make even dull subjects informative and interesting. The debt which Presidency College owes to Prof. Ghosh is inestimable. The authorities have done nothing of unusual goodness in promoting him to Class I of the Service. It is only a partial payment of a debt which was long overdue.

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Turning our focuss of attention from the staff to the students we find the most noteworthy events during the term under review have been the Annual Sports and the Steamer Party. The Sports, as we find in the Secretary's report, were more successful than those of the last few years, the improvement being due mainly to a larger number of competitors. We hope this improvement will continue. One thing, however, we cannot avoid noticing and that is the comparatively low standard of the records set up. The Secretary, of course, is quite optimistic, as all secretaries should be. But any impartial observer would agree that from a college like ours—the foremost in matters relating to class-rooms—better standards could be expected in the field. We are sure, however, that our friends will before long make up this deficiency and be able to acquit themselves as creditably in sports contests as in examinations.

The Steamer Party, as the Secretary tells us, has been a grand success, thanks to the co-operation of the staff and students. We take this opportunity of conveying our heart-felt thanks to Mrs. Sen who takes such a keen interest in all social activities of the College. Her presence on the occasion had a perceptibly brightening influence on the students and they remember gratefully the trouble which she kindly took to interest herself in their functions.

A third noticeable event which we have to describe is the recent rowing competition organised by the University on the Dhakuria Lake. Our College defeated Ashutosh and Vidyasagar by good margins and went up to the final to meet St. Xavier's. Unfortunately, however, we were defeated by a length after a keen and exciting competition. The defeat, however, we are confident, will act as an

incentive and our crew will make up their deficiency very soon under the able coach provided for them.

When a student earns distinction for himself in any sphere he adds a fresh lustre to his *alma mater*. It is, therefore, with a sense of delight and pride that we have received the news of the selection of Mr. P. Das as one of the representatives of India's Official Team to New Zealand this summer. Mr. Das had already made a name for himself in the world of Hockey and his brilliant display in the Mohan Bagan this season has considerably enhanced his reputation. The unique honour of being selected for a visit to New Zealand now adds a fresh feather—and undoubtedly the most gorgeous—to his cap. Our best congratulations go to him.

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Riveting our eyes on the academic side of the College, the first thing we find is a general attitude of relaxation following upon the Annual Examinations. The promotion list will be out in a few days and the classes will break up for the Summer Vacation. Our friends no doubt have already begun to visualise the joys and the leisure that are in store for them.

Thinking of the Annual Examinations we are reminded of the innovation introduced this year viz. a general knowledge test which the First and Third Year students have been made to take. We welcome this change wholeheartedly. It will help the students a great deal not only in equipping themselves for the Public Service Examinations but in acquiring as well a broad and enlightened outlook on life in general. The defects of a purely academic education divorced from a knowledge of practical and current affairs have only been too often dwelt upon. We felicitate the authorities on their new scheme which is designed to remove this standing defect.

Apart from the First and Third Year Classes we have another batch appearing at the Bachelorship Examinations which are still in progress. We wish our friends all success.

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Discussing matters educational, it will not be irrelevant here to say a word or two about the activities of the different seminars and societies. The number of such societies in our College is much greater than that in any other; but what these bodies do is best known to themselves. We have invited reports in every issue of the Magazine but the occasions when the Secretaries have responded are few and far between. The reports which at last have been printed have had

mostly to be exacted from the Secretaries after repeated expostulations. We have heard of the existence of such societies as the Presidency College Science Association, the Bengali Literary Society, the Sanskrit and Pali Seminar, etc., but we have never received any report from them. Is this due to the unwillingness of the Secretaries to take up pens or to the want of materials to write upon? If it is the first, we cannot deplore the attitude too severely; if it is the second, i.e. if the associations do not work at all, why are they kept alive in name?

The worst of these so-called associations is the much talked-of Debating Society. We are not sure whether any such society was formally inaugurated, but we remember well the division of the College Union into two sections last autumn. A Secretary and an Assistant Secretary were appointed for meetings and debates and in the report of the College Union in the September issue of the Magazine we were promised most benevolently competitions in music, recitation and debates. We were for once deluded into the belief that old times were returning to the College. Now we find that our fond illusion has gone the way of all its kind. What the worthy Secretary and his assistant have been doing all the year long remains a mystery to everybody but themselves. Will they care to submit a report of their activities or otherwise in the next issue of the Magazine?

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Turning now from the present to the past students, we beg to extend our rather belated congratulations to Dr. Profulla Chandra Basu, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., on his appointment as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agra. Dr. Basu took his B.A. and M.A. degrees from our College—the latter in 1911—, received a Decorate in 1923 and after acting for a time as a Lecturer in Economics and History in the Calcutta University, entered the Hölkar College, Indore, of which he was the Principal at the time of his appointment to the honourable post.

Coming nearer home, we congratulate two of our ex-students—Mr. J. M. Basu, Principal of the Rajshahi College and Mr. J. M. Sen, Inspector of Schools, Presidency Division—on their promotion to Class I, Bengal Educational Service.

The appointment of Mr. B. B. Dutt as the Controller of Examinations in our University has given general satisfaction. Mr. Dutt who was a student in our College for four years, 1913-1917, brings to his new post a wealth of experience which should prove to be of great value to the University.

We congratulate Mr. Dhirendranath Sen, who graduated from this College in 1923 and who is at present the Editor of the daily paper Advance, on his being admitted to the degree of Ph.D. of the Calcutta University.

Passing now beyond the borders of the educational world, we are rejoiced to find Mr. Basanta Kumar Chatterjee, one of the most brilliant of our ex-students, appointed as the Accountant-General of Burma.

Our congratulations go also to Mr. Alamgir Kabir, one of our recent graduates, on his appointment to the Indian Police Service from Bengal in 1934.

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The University appears to have waked up to a new life with the appointment of Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee as the Vice-Chancellor. This is shown by the various improvements which have been undertaken on all sides and also by the general atmosphere of life and vigour which we feel around us. The new Library rooms are now almost complete and when the frescoes on the walls are painted, as we hope they will be during the vacation, they will be open to the students.

One very bright idea which the Vice-Chancellor has translated into practice is that of the rowing competition. Oxford and Cambridge in the West have made the annual boat race a classic event in their history and it is therefore in the fitness of things that Calcutta too should organise her own competitions. The races this year have been quite enjoyable and with better training we may assume the Colleges will take to this sport more seriously.

During the past few months arrangements have been made under the auspices of the University to coach students for the Indian Civil Service Examinations. It is indeed a matter of serious concern to Bengal that her sons are now being beaten in inter-provincial contests by men of other provinces. This is not due to any inferiority in the merit of the Bengali student ; the cause lies in the want of proper training. During the first few years after the inauguration of the I. C. S. Examination in India, Bengalis acquitted themselves quite creditably, because they and students of other provinces appeared under the same conditions. But training centres have been set up since that time in Madras, Delhi, Poona and elsewhere and consequently Bengalis have to appear under a serious handicap. The new arrangements made in Calcutta are therefore gratifying to all.

A word or two of comment in this connection will not be taken amiss. Why should the training be for the I.C.S. alone? It might be made more comprehensive to include other all-Indian Public Service Examinations as well. Again, the authorities should guard against the danger of their training becoming too academic. Could not the University, in addition to its learned Professors, find a few men who have been personally connected with the Examination? Lastly, could they not see their way to reduce the scale of fees a little? The present charges are almost too high to enable ordinary middle class students—not to speak of their poor brethren—to avail themselves of the facilities.

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The educational world of Bengal welcomes with grateful delight Prof. P. C. Ghosh's donation of Rs. 30,000 to the University. A fund will be created after the name of the donor's father Rai Sahib Ishan Chandra Ghosh—a renowned figure in Bengali literature—and the money will be spent for the translation into Bengali of works in Sanskrit, Pali and other oriental languages. This generous donation from a Professor of a Government College is almost unique in the history of the University. We hope it will serve as an impetus to the culture of the oriental languages and help to enrich our vernacular with many valuable translations.

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So long as we were within our familiar sphere of education, we felt quite at ease. But now passing on to the country as a whole, we find it extremely difficult to pass any comment on the issues which concern much wider spheres than our own.

The India Bill is still in the process of discussion, as it will be for many months to come—for obviously it will be a long time before the Commons have finished with it and the Lords have done their careful examination through and through. So long as it is in the crucible nobody can say precisely in what shape it will ultimately emerge, especially in view of the amendments that are cropping up on every side. Sir Samuel Hoare, we believe, must be having a trying time, what with fighting these ever-increasing enemies and what with attempting to smooth over the difficulties that have led the Princes to reject the proposed Federation.

But it is not the fate of India alone that is in the melting pot. In fact, Europe, too, appears to stand on the threshold of a great change. The political horizon is getting darker day by day and the recent

thunder that Germany has hurled by disclosing her air force is causing her neighbours extreme uneasiness. The League of Nations is there, but its influence is only partial. Not all nations are its members, nor those that are, always obey its injunctions. If its power had a solid sanction behind it, Japan would never have flouted its authority, nor would Abyssinia's appeals go in vain, nor would the bitter struggle between Bolivia and Paraguay have continued so long. Thus, as the League has not the adequate influence, the nations must try to settle it up among themselves. But what settlement can there be when nearly every government extends one hand as a sign of good-will while the other gropes for the dagger under the cloak? Representatives of Great Britain have visited most of the great powers. They have talked things over with Hilter, they have been closeted with Stalin, and they have shaken hands with Pilsudski. But what good comes out of it all? Only the familiar ministerial hallelujahs that we find sung on such occasions. There is no fundamental conflict of interest between one state and another and gradually a settlement will be reached which will further the cause of peace and territorial integrity and commercial co-operation—that is what they say. But is that true?

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Our long chronicle is over and we have now to bid our readers farewell. The task of unharnessing is one which evokes mixed feelings. We are glad that the work will be taken up next year by worthier men. But all the same, it is a weakness of the human heart that one sometimes falls in love with the work one has to perform. It may sound curious, but it is true.

We are sorry that at this last stage we cannot help making a melancholy remark. When we came to office last autumn, we entertained many a rosy hope—of raising the standard of the Magazine, of introducing changes for the better and so on. Mr. James' words written twenty years ago were a source of inspiration to us: "When a Presidency College Magazine does exist, it is the duty of every member of the College to do his best for it." But contact with realities have taught us the bitter lesson that values and ideals have changed much since Mr. James' days. We do not know whether this change is for the better or for the worse ; but this we are sorry to point out that from the staff at least we expected much better treatment.

But though apathy has been mostly the lot of the Editor and the Secretary, their work has been considerably lightened by the lively interest and the warm co-operation of a few sympathisers. To Prof. J. G. Chatteraj we owe the little success that has been ours. The way he has welcomed our intrusions on his personal works and comfort and the manner in which he has superintended every little detail about the Magazine have burdened us with a debt of gratitude of which formal thanks will be but poor acknowledgment. From Profs. S. C. Majumdar and T. N. Sen also we have received suggestions at various stages of our work and their encouragement has always been a source of stimulus. Our thanks go also to Mr. Nikhilmath Chakravarty who has very kindly given his time and attention to our Magazine of which last year he was the Editor. With this we beg to close, after a last word of general thankfulness to all our contributors, readers and well-wishers.

Their Majesties' Silver Jubilee

THE Silver Jubilee of Their Majesties' reign is going to be celebrated in all parts of the British Empire, and when we, as students, offer our grateful and loyal homage to Their Majesties on this happy occasion and pray to the Almighty for their long life, the idea of recounting and recollecting the epoch-making changes that have occurred during this fairly long period of twenty-five years naturally arises in our mind. Is it not during this reign of King George that England has witnessed the triumph of democracy? The Representation of the Peoples Act of 1918 and the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 gave the people of England the fullest scope to rule themselves and the curtailment of the powers of the House of Lords by the Parliament Act of 1911 goes to show that the people of England are the real masters of the nation. Was it not this period of blissful reign that witnessed the emancipation of women in England? Women have acquired equal rights of voting with men and all their legal disabilities have been removed. It was in the reign of this great Monarch that England which so long observed the doctrine of Laissez-Faire has given way to socialism. The coming into power of the Labour Ministry under the leadership of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald in 1924 bears eloquent testimony to this fact. It was in this period that Britain has shown her great anxiety and has made her best efforts for world-peace. England took a leading part in the establishment of the League of Nations. It was Mr. Lloyd George, a great son of England who, along with Dr. Woodrow Wilson and M. Clemenceau, was mainly responsible for the establishment of the League.

From the stand-point of the Empire it was a period of rapid progress in constitutional developments. A new conception of the British Empire has developed in the minds of Their Majesties' subjects in the different parts of the Empire. Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Ireland and India are no longer isolated parts of the British Empire but they together constitute to-day a British Commonwealth of Nations. The Imperial Conference of 1926 and the findings of the Balfour Committee give ample proof to this fact. The self-governing Dominions have acquired a new status by the Statute of Westminster of 1931 and the emergence of the Irish

Free State shows what great strides the Dominions have made in constitutional reforms during Their Majesties' reign.

From the Indian stand-point this period of Their Majesties' reign is a period of record progress in the internal and external status of India. Responsible Government has been declared by His Majesty's Government as the goal of India. A large amount of responsibility was introduced in the Indian Government by the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and further progress is going to be made in the coming constitution, as has been outlined by the White Paper on Indian Constitutional Reforms and the Report of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee. In the internal administration of India, some of the highest offices of State have been thrown open to Indians and Indians have been appointed as Provincial Governors, Privy Council Judges, and Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Rapid progress has been made in Local Self-Government in the Indian Provinces as is illustrated mainly by the working of the great Indian Municipal Corporations. The extension of Universities in India shows what great strides education has made in this period. Military education has been encouraged by the establishment of the Prince of Wales Military College, Dehra Dun and the formation of the Royal Indian Marine has given the Indian an opportunity of entering into naval service. Competitive examinations for the Public Services like the I.C.S. are now being held in India and Indian students have been offered greater opportunities of entering into these Services. During Their Majesties' reign Indians have won laurels in the realm of literature and science and two of our great men have won the Nobel Prize. Is this not a sign of real progress?

The external status of India, has also increased during Their Majesties' reign. The appointment of the High Commissioner in London and the Agent-General in South Africa makes the position of India somewhat equal to that of the self-governing Dominions. The Representation of India in the Imperial War Cabinet and the Peace Conference gave her great honour in the eyes of the world. India was a signatory of the Peace Treaty. India is an original member of the League of Nations. Great savants of India like Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose and Sir S. Radhakrishnan have been offered membership of the Committee of International Intellectual Co-operation and at one time a member of the Indian Delegation, Sir Atul Chandra Chatterjee, was chosen as President of the International Labour Conference. All these facts, along with the recent Indo-British Trade Agreement and the Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement which have

a great political significance, go to show that India has acquired, during Their Majesties' reign, many attributes of external sovereignty.

All that has been stated above will prove that it was only in the reign of a few monarchs in the history of the world that their subjects made so much progress in the spheres of social and political activities. So when the millions of subjects of Their Majesties throughout the Empire are celebrating the Silver Jubilee on the completion of the 25th year of Their Majesties' peaceful reign, we, students of Presidency College, Calcutta, should not lag behind. We offer to Their Majesties from this distance our affectionate and loyal greetings and pray to God for the long life of Their Majesties the King-Emperor and the Queen-Empress.

SUDHIR KUMAR GHOSH.

Reforms in the Matriculation Standard

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THE changes which the Senate of the Calcutta University adopted on Saturday, the 23rd February last in the Regulations for the Matriculation Examination will be of considerable significance for the future of education in this province. It is expected that the formal sanction of the Government will be given to the proposals very soon and they will be in operation with effect from the examination of 1939. There is no doubt that the standard of the secondary education in Bengal has deteriorated very considerably and does not assure to the products of our schools that amount of knowledge, culture and intellectual and physical discipline which young men with finished secondary education should be expected to possess. It is our confident hope that the alterations in the Regulations which the Senate has accepted will succeed in making good the defects of the existing arrangement and make possible the imparting of an organic education to the future citizens of this great province.

The most important change which is being introduced in the system is in the medium of instruction. Since the time that the great and the historic minute on education, was penned by Lord Macaulay as the Chairman of the Committee of Public Instruction in 1835, all instruction has been conveyed to us, both in the lower and in the higher spheres, only through the medium of the English language. The University at the time of its birth, seventy-seven years ago, found this arrangement exclusively holding the field and took it over without contemplating any change and harbouring any suspicion as to its unnatural and artificial character. It is not for me to decry the value of education which generations of Bengalees have received under the arrangement which is now being replaced by what has appeared to us to be more in keeping with our nature and genius. The old system saw the rise to great intellectual eminence of men like Sir Gurudas Banerjee, Sir Rashbehari Ghose, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, Swami Vivekanand and Sir B. N. Seal. But if the few could get over the language difficulty and profit by the instruction imparted through a foreign medium, that

is certainly no argument that the many who are knocking at the door of the University will equally find themselves at home with this arrangement. Many, in fact, have found it impossible even to secure an acquaintance with the outline of different subjects and thereby widen the bounds of their knowledge and the limits of their interest, simply because they have been repelled by the barrier of foreign language. If the benefit of a true and sound secondary education is not to be limited to the few and if it is really to be brought within the reach of average young men and young women in these provinces, the change in the medium of instruction is indispensable. The necessity of an alteration in the University Regulations was brought home to the Sadler Commission towards the close of the second decade of this century. When the late Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee became the Vice-Chancellor in 1921 for the fifth time, he appreciated the importance of making the vernacular languages the medium of instruction in the schools. *If he lived longer and his leadership was available to the University for some time more, the changes now awaiting Government sanction would have been embodied in the Regulations some years ago.*

Now that our boys and girls are going to receive their instruction in their own mother tongue, we can expect them to acquire at school more accurate and wide information on subjects like history, geography, science, etc., and to develop far more than formerly their powers of criticism and judgment. But while we adopt this change in the medium of instruction, we cannot underestimate the importance of the position which English Language occupies in our curriculum. It is the window through which alone we can peep in to the civilisation of the Western world. English is not only the language of liberty and progress and constitutes by itself a heartening and inspiring factor in the education of man, but it is also the one medium through which alone we can maintain our communication with the outside world. By the change which the Senate has adopted, we are not cutting ourselves off from all correspondence with the springs of knowledge in the Western world. In order that we may not be out of touch with the progressive thoughts and ideals, we have to attach due importance to the study of the English language. Accordingly the Senate has decided to strengthen the teaching of the subject both by insisting on certain qualifications on the part of the teachers and also by adding to the marks which it will carry in the Matriculation Examination. Altogether it will consist of two papers and a half and carry two hundred and fifty marks. The students will be required to master some books which will be selected for them and they will be expected to go through some

other books as well which will be recommended for the purpose. In setting papers, the University will see to it that the recommended books are really read and digested by the students and are not merely purchased and relegated to the shelf.

Along with the strengthening of their knowledge of English literature and their command over the English language, the young scholars at school will be obliged henceforward to read both history and geography. These two subjects formed at one time an important part of the curriculum of the Entrance Examination. But since 1910 they were made optional subjects. It was expected by the University at the time that in the lower forms at least all the students would acquire a comprehensive idea of the geography of the world and the history of their own country. But the hope has been falsified by the experience of the last one quarter of a century. Our young men come out of the University with a singular and striking ignorance of the geography of the world and the history of even their own country. Without proper knowledge of these two subjects, their outlook cannot be widened, their perspective strengthened, and their superstitions repelled. The history of both India and England will be now compulsory for all the students in the secondary schools and geography also they will be obliged to read in some detail. As Vernacular will be henceforward the medium of instruction and examination, I am not too optimistic when I expect that our young boys and girls will look upon it as a pleasure and certainly not as a burden to read history and geography and acquire as much knowledge over both principles and details as few can dream of to-day.

I am looking forward to another important result of the reforms which are being initiated in the curriculum of secondary education in Bengal. Up till now education in the schools has been regarded only as the stepping stone to the university career. It has not been supposed to have a utility of its own. It has not been an independent system by itself. Our Matriculates who have not sought admission into the colleges have consequently found themselves at sea. It has been very difficult for them so far to take to a profession at once. But the changes that are now being introduced will so strengthen the secondary course, will so discipline the intellect and systematise the thoughts of the young students, and will so initiate them into the mysteries, as much of the liberal arts as of certain branches of professional work, as to make it possible for the young men at once to launch upon some line of productive activity. If the figures of the last few years are consulted, they will tell us that near about two-thirds of the young men who pass the Matriculation Examination remain

without any higher education in the college. If they are to turn their secondary education to good account, it is essential that this education should be as much thorough and all round as it can be within its obvious limits.

Lastly, I should touch upon the changes so far as they will affect the future of the girls' education in Bengal. The girl candidates are every year on the increase. I can very well visualise the time when their number will not be far behind that of the boys for the Matriculation Examination. Most of these young girls will not be expected to go beyond the secondary course. The few who will prefer University education and a scholastic career will have the full freedom to enter the University and go in for higher studies just like their brothers. But the vast majority of the girl students will in all possibility be required, after their secondary education is completed, to become wives and take charge of families. Their education should be such as to enable them to introduce an element of culture in the house, to perform the duties of the family systematically and elegantly, and to take charge of the education of the children up to a certain point at least. In one word, they are expected to be a good helping hand to their husbands in the careful management of the household. This being the case, the University naturally decided to introduce some difference in the curriculum for the girl-students. Some of the subjects they will have to read in the same way as the boys and they are the major subjects like English, Bengali, History and Geography. Those girls who have an aptitude for Mathematics may pursue the study of the subject but girl-students who are averse to Mathematics may forego the study of Geometry and Algebra altogether. But Arithmetic will be compulsory for them and together with it they will be required to get an acquaintance with the first principles of Hygiene and Domestic Sciences. As regards the optional subjects also, they have been so chosen for the girls as to be helpful to them in the management of households.

To me, the changes in the secondary education which will operate from 1939 are a landmark in the history of education in these provinces. Of course, I am the last person to declare that they are the last word in the educational code for these provinces. Like the laws of the Medes and the Persians, no educational system can be immutable and unchangeable. Just as the circumstances of the people change and the environments alter, so the educational ideals and organisation must also be amended and modified. But I am sure that during the next few years the changes which the Senate has just accepted will be fruitful in their results.

Modern Iran

PROF. TAHER REZWI, M.A.

IT may be of interest to some of our countrymen to know something about the present-day Iran and of my own experiences of the land of Hafiz and Saadi, when I visited it recently in connection with the 1000th anniversary of the birth of the Iranian national Poet Firdausi. To tell the truth, I was not only delighted to receive invitation from the Government of Iran to attend the function, rather it also gave me genuine hopes of fulfilling my long-felt desire of visiting personally one of the most ancient and famous seats of learning, culture and civilization in the East, and seeing things in their true colours with my own eyes. I had read about Iran in books and papers and heard of the land and its people from others who had visited the country long before me; but the pleasure of going there personally was something else and which this rare chance afforded me only now. Iran of to-day proved to be a different country than that which I read or heard about.

My personal experiences of the land of the *Lion and the Sun* begin from the time of my entering the Iranian borders via Quetta and then they end with my leaving the Iranian soil near about Khanaqin on the borders of Iraq. Iran to-day is flourishing everywhere, peace and prosperity reigning supreme, as the country of Cyrus and Darius has found in its present ruler the worthiest successor of Jamshid and Anushirwan. The Iranians are no longer sleeping; they are already awakened, and realising their real state of affairs have set to work heart and soul with the result that to-day, they are counted amongst the most advanced nations of the world. The land of opium-eaters has turned into the home of strong, energetic and active persons. The spirit that has been inspired into them by His Imperial Majesty Reza Shah Pahlevi is such that every Irani without exception feels the real wants of his country to-day. The people want to stand on their own legs and thus improvement and advancement are seen in every direction. We had heard of Iran to be a den of robbers and highwaymen, where visitors and travellers were scarcely left untouched. But now the case is just the reverse; and the first thing that attracted my notice was the sign of perpetual peace throughout the country. The blessing of the Pahlevi regime has not only put a final stop to all such things, rather it has turned all the robbers and thieves into industrious and hard-

working husbandmen. The travellers into Iran now not only find themselves safe and sound, but they also get hospitable quarters everywhere in the course of their journey from one end to the other. I myself had the pleasure of visiting certain villages which my guides pointed out to have been the homes of cut-throats and highwaymen, but which, thanks to the beneficent rule of Reza Shah, are now counted amongst the most peaceful places of the country. It may be observed here that Iran is still without railways. She is going to have them very soon as the Shah is very keen about the construction of railways and the work has already begun. The delay in having the rail-routes till now was due to the fact that the Iranians did not like foreign capitals to be invested in this connection. They are spending their own money on this enterprise, and though it will take time to have them completed throughout the country, yet the transport business does not suffer meanwhile on this account. There are good roads everywhere and the automobiles are in such an abundance that the journey is quite cheap. For the safety of the travellers, the machines are carefully examined at different places by the police, so that long and tedious run through mountainous quarters may not prove fatal for the passengers.

The next thing that attracts the attention of an outside visitor is the foundation of factories for the manufacture of different things for which the Iranians had to depend till lately on foreign help. The country grows cotton abundantly and thus apart from its carpet industry for which Iran is already famous throughout the world, there are now spinning factories to be found everywhere. We had the opportunity of visiting one of the famous spinning factories at Simnan, which was equipped with all up-to-date machinery and where young boys were working, like "genii"—as one of us remarked, and handling the machines most wonderfully. Along with spinning factories there are match and cigarette factories, cement factories, shoe factories, etc., which show that the people are determined to see everything *Iranian*. There are also more than half a dozen sugar factories which provide the people with home-made sugar, of course not so abundantly and cheap as that of other countries. It is to be noted that the personality of the Shah plays a very prominent part in making the people industrious and self-supporting. For the encouragement of his subjects to make whatever there is their own, it is in the regular programme of His Majesty to visit different factories and ware-houses, performing inauguration ceremony of this or that manufacturing place and granting personal patronage and state support to each and all enterprises.

With regard to the education of the people in Iran, we can safely say that almost two-third of the Irani male population to-day can read

and write well, and it is hoped that in the near future there will not be found a single illiterate person in Iran, as the present Ministry of Public Instruction is whole-heartedly attentive towards the problem of mass education. Free primary and secondary schools, for boys and girls alike, are to be found everywhere, either endowed by the public or supported by the State, while the scheme of establishing a big University at Teheran, on Western lines, is soon going to materialise, and the foundation stone of which has already been laid by His Majesty the Shah.

The Iranis are celebrated for their literary taste from very ancient times. All of us know that our Islamic literatures are rich today only through the activities of the Iranians and that Iran after the Arab conquest provided Islam with its hosts of historians, traditionists, commentators, and writers in every branch of literature. The same spirit still prevails in the country, and it is a common thing with the Irani, whether he be a political head, a civil or a military man, a chief of the police, or a trading person, that his official work or business never keeps him away from his study of literature, and almost every such man has got some literary work to his credit. Here in India, we receive education with a view to get any sort of employment, and we continue our studies so long as we have not finished our University career. We leave aside books as soon as we get a suitable job. Rarely do we find a man holding any high post to have done any sort of literary work. The gloomy professor of a College here might have the patience to shut himself within his doors, denying all pleasures of life, and then produce something which may not even give him any monetary help. Lack of patronage discourages even the educationists here to tax their brains in this respect and thus very little can we expect from others, I mean the non-educationists, to spare their leisure for this thankless task. But such is not the case with Iran. There the people devote themselves to the study of serious literature as a general hobby. Public and private libraries are in abundance there, and the modern facilities of printing have enabled the Iranis to publish thousands of useful books, of general interest, in course of the last few years, which fact is a practical proof of the Iranian activity in the field of literature. We had the opportunity of hearing the oratory of a common Irani soldier, in course of the Firdausi Congress, on the art of battle as described in the Shah-Nameh; while to say the least in this connection, it is a known fact that the present Prime Minister of Iran is a man of vast learning and a writer of great reputation.

Another thing worthy of remark is the development of Iranian Fine Arts, which we outsiders thought to have been dead by this time. But when we visited the famous School of Fine Arts at Teheran, where the students were busy in finishing their finest paintings, carving their most beautiful wooden works and completing their nicest potteries, we were simply taken aback. The pupils of the celebrated Behzad are still in a flourishing state in Iran.

Regarding Sports, it will suffice to say that the Iranis have never neglected their own outdoor games, rather along with these, all the modern kinds of physical exercises are being practised to-day in the schools and madrasahs of Iran. Side by side with the polo-playing, wrestling, hunting and swimming, one can witness also the football games, tennis and hockey matches, played quite in modern fashion.

And now something may be said in regard to the journalism of the present-day Iran, which plays a very important part in the life of the people. It is carried on in the most up-to-date fashion, and the Press in Iran possesses the required freedom. The Iranis have got their own news-agency, the "Azhangs-Pars", which gets news from foreign countries as well as from local places, and distributes them in different quarters. More than half a dozen daily newspapers are published in Teheran, the Capital, while almost all the chief cities of Iran have their own local organs. Besides the dailies, there are a number of weekly, monthly and quarterly journals, both of general and special interests to the public.

Iran to-day is quite a changed country. Its many friends and well-wishers, some ten years back, lamented its miserable state of affairs, while a number of us were of opinion that Iran would never rise again. But Providence sent among the Iranis, one of their own, to regenerate the country out of oblivion. Just as it happened with the Turks so also it happened with the Iranians. Old ideas have changed into new ones and there are marked improvements in every place and in all directions. Wide and clean roads, lofty buildings, beautiful gardens, etc. along with electric lights and telephone connections in every city and town, bear witness to-day to the fact as to how far Iran has advanced within a short period of only ten years. The active personality of the Shah works like a stimulant to the people who, too, are actively busy in improving themselves and their country.

It will be a cause of satisfaction for the Musalmans of India to know that there has been formed between the Turks and the Iranis such a close relationship of Muslim brotherhood as was unknown

in history of the bygone days. Sectarian differences that existed between these two Muslim States in the past have totally vanished and a real spirit of mutual co-operation has taken place instead. This sort of enlightenment too is the outcome of modern ideas based on sensibility and foresight that have crept into Turkey and Iran.

Another sign of advancement among the Iranians is the fact of their remembering Iran's illustrious fathers who made the name of their country famous throughout the world. Roads and city gardens are being named after Saadi, Hafiz, Ibne-Yamin, and others, while their graves are being rebuilt in befitting manners. The tomb of the celebrated Omar Khayyam, in a very beautiful garden at Nishapur, having a few of his quatrains engraved upon its marble slabs, is simply a bewitching sight. Our poet could not have dreamt of a better place than this for his final rest.

And now to the Millenary Celebrations of the builder of the Iranian nation and the Bard of Ancient Iran. I shall not tax the patience of my readers by explaining the various events during the course of our visit to Iran to attend the ceremony, or narrate the hospitality of the Iranis in receiving their guests from the East and West alike, in the most charming manner; rather I will only point out the importance and one of the real significances of celebrating the birthday of Poet Firdausi after a period as long as a thousand years, and that too, on such a grand scale that everybody, whether European or American, Egyptian or Iraqi, Indian or Japanese, went away pleased with Iran and the Iranis. The foresight of His Majesty Reza Shah Pahlevi has not only given a new life to the Firdausi literature, rather it also enabled his country at this opportune moment to exhibit most successfully what it has achieved during the last ten years. In fact, all the foreign delegates to the Firdausi celebrations were taken by surprise on seeing quite a changed Iran. No more religious bigotry is there, *Mullaism* has narrowed its circle, and every Irani, whether Muslim or Zoroastrian, Christian or Jew, breathes in peaceful air. Of course, religion has not lost ground in Iran, but it has certainly given freedom to all. Irani women go out freely in their customary *chadar*, and the curse of *harem* is gone for ever. All religious and public endowments are now strictly under the control of the State and their incomes, after meeting religious obligations, are being spent in building schools, hospitals, poor-houses, etc. Only recently a very grand hospital has been built at Meshed, fully equipped with all sorts of modern facilities, and having a thousand beds for indoor patients. Its expenses are being met partly by the State and partly out of the income from endowments connected with the Shrine of Imam Reza.

Before concluding the paper, something may be said regarding the simple and benevolent nature of the Shah of Iran. We had the honour of meeting His Majesty personally and the manner in which he talked to us individually was simply charming. We also had the fortune of visiting the royal palace at Shamiran, a few miles outside Teheran, built in a simple style within a beautiful garden. The study-room of the Shah-in-Shah attracted our immediate notice on account of its simplest possible decorations. A few pictures of battle-fields along with a large wall-map of the Iranian Empire, a chair and a table with inkstand and note-papers on, a shelf of books containing important volumes notably among which were the *Shah-Nameh*, the *Pahlevi-Nameh*, Army Regulation books, Parliamentary proceedings, etc., were the only things to be found there. His Majesty leads a purely simple life, wearing always the simple military uniform, working constantly from morning till evening, and taking the least possible rest. We were told by the personal attendants of the Shah, at the Quasar-i-Pahlevi, that in spite of the fact that there are beautiful flower-beds all around the court-yard of the Palace, His Majesty seldom gets time, on account of his busy hours, to walk about the gardens to refresh himself ; while it happens frequently that for nights together he does not even have a wink of sleep owing to pressure of work. The attendants have the strict commands to inform His Majesty whenever any message arrives at the Palace, even if he be in the bed-chambers ; and every message is properly looked into by His Majesty in person.

The Shah is the best model of a benevolent despot. In spite of the fact that he is the absolute Monarch of the Iranian Empire, his people have got a voice in the affairs of the Government, and in this respect they are encouraged further, and further by their Sovereign himself. I was thinking that after the dethronement of the Qajar dynasty, the princes and the princesses of the old blood-royal must have been treated in the same way as it happens generally in the history of all nations on such occasions. I was really expecting to find them in quite an unfavourable plight. But I am glad to say that I was greatly disappointed in this connection, and the circumstances in which the members of the past ruling dynasty live to-day proved beyond my anticipations. They have never been driven out of their homes nor deprived of any facility or privilege, rather they live in peace and happiness like all other citizens of Iran. Most of them even hold very high and responsible posts under the Government. Thus, to be short, the Pahlevi regime is simply a blessing to all Iranians without the least exception.

Report of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee

PROF. NIRMAL KANTI MAJUMDAR, M.A., F.R. Econ. S.

WE stand to-day on the threshold of a new constitution. The headlines of newspapers flash every morning the progress of the India Bill. It will soon become an Act of Parliament.

It is difficult at this stage to anticipate the finished product. But we may have some idea of it from the raw materials at our disposal. The raw materials are provided by the Report of the J. S. C. The Report of the J. S. C. is a state paper of the highest importance. It sums up the long and tangled essay on constitutional settlement which began with the Simon Commission years ago.

It is not possible within the brief compass of this paper to do full justice to the Report of the J. S. C. It is a big volume of more than 400 pages. I will confine myself, therefore, to its main principles and proposals. An analysis of these will give us a fore-taste of the New Constitution we are going to have.

From this preface I will not directly pass on to an elucidation of the principles and proposals of the J. S. C. Before that I think it is necessary to make a broad survey of the present constitution. That will make for a clear understanding and a just appreciation of our subject.

PRESENT CONSTITUTION.

The Government of India is the Supreme authority in India, subject to the Secretary of State, and supervises, within well-defined limits, the administration of all the Indian Provinces and Native States. The adjustment of income and expenditure has been so arranged as to allow the Central Government the exclusive use of certain sources of revenue, and the Provincial Governments the exclusive use of certain others.

The Government of India consists of the Viceroy and his Executive Council who must always act together. In rare cases only the Viceroy may act on his sole responsibility. As Viceroy, he is the representative of the Crown; as Governor-General, he is the head of the Government of India.

The business of the Government of India is conducted by a number of Departments. The Viceroy himself is in charge of the Political Department which deals with the Native States through specially appointed Residents or Agents. The portfolios for other Departments are held by Members of the Executive Council.

The Members of the Executive Council are appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Secretary of State for India. They constitute an irresponsible Executive. They are not amenable to the wishes of the Indian Legislature. Any expression of disapproval of the policy of the Members of the Executive Council by the Indian Legislature may be completely ignored by them, for they are not appointed from among the members of the Indian Legislature nor can they be removed by it.

The Indian Legislature is composed of two chambers: the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly. The Council of State has a total membership of 60, of whom not more than 20 may be officials, nominated by the Governor-General. It is meant to be a revising chamber and possesses a senatorial character. The qualifications of candidates for election are so framed as to secure men of the status and position worthy of the dignity of a revising chamber.

The Legislative Assembly has a total membership of 144. It is more truly a representative body in that as many as 104 of its members are elected by direct franchise. Subject to the authority of Parliament, which still remains the supreme legislative authority for India, the legislative power of the Assembly is unlimited. It can discuss the budget, but a vote upon it is not in all cases binding upon the Government, if the Governor-General in Council should be prepared to certify that the money or the grant is essential.

Each major province now has its own Governor. In the case of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, he is appointed direct from England. In the case of others, he is appointed on the nomination of the Governor-General. Each has an Executive Council of not more than 4 members, half of whom are Indians. With the assistance of the Executive Council the Governor manages what are called the 'Reserved Departments,' such as Finance, Law and Order, etc. This is one-half of the Government. The other half consists of the Governor and the Ministers, who administer what are called the 'Transferred Departments,' such as Local Self-Government, Public Health, etc.

The members of the Executive Council are appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Secretary of State, while the Ministers are

appointed by the Governor from amongst the elected members of the Legislative Council. The ordinary business of Government is distributed between the members of the Executive Council and the Ministers, the Governor having the power, in certain events, to overrule them. Usually, however, the view of the majority prevails. As a rule, the executive body composed of Members of Council and Ministers are to deliberate as a whole, but there may be occasions when the Governor would prefer to discuss a particular question with that part of the Government which is directly responsible for it.

Thus the Provincial Government is a sort of Dyarchy or double government. The Executive is partitioned into two parts. One part consists of the Governor and the Members of the Executive Council, the other part consists of the Governor and the Ministers. For the administration of the 'reserved subjects' the Governor and the Members of his Executive Council are responsible to the British Parliament through the Government of India and through the Secretary of State. For the administration of the 'transferred subjects' the Governor and the Ministers are responsible immediately to the Legislative Council and mediately to the electorate of the province. Obviously the Governor must act as the connecting link between the two parts and maintain the essential unity of administration. For administration is a seamless garment: to divide it is to destroy it.

At the time of his appointment the Governor receives from His Majesty the King-Emperor certain imperative instructions for his guidance. He must maintain a high standard of efficiency in the administration. He must encourage religious toleration, co-operation and goodwill among classes and creeds. He must have proper regard for the financial solvency of his government and promote measures for the moral, social and industrial welfare of the people. He must encourage them in every way to fit themselves to take their due share in the public life and the government of the country. He must hold joint deliberations of his Councillors and Ministers. He must have respect for the opinion of the Council as expressed through the Ministers. He must take every legitimate measure for the maintenance of the safety and tranquility of the province and to protect the interest of the minority therein. The strongest power in the hands of the Governor is his power to certify measures even if they should not be approved by the Legislative Council. But here also there is a restriction upon the exercise of the power. It is applicable to measures relating to the 'reserved subjects.' It is not applicable to the 'transferred subjects' in charge of Ministers. It is sparingly used.

The Provincial Legislature is unicameral. It varies from province to province as regards size and composition. But a substantial majority of members are elected by direct election on a broad franchise. In Bengal we have 113 elected members against 26 nominated by the Governor. These members are representatives of, and responsible to, a much larger proportion of their fellow countrymen, most of whom are small ryots and other citizens with but little property qualification, than their predecessors.

I have dwelt at length upon the provincial administration because it is in the provincial sphere that an instalment of responsible government has been introduced as an experimental measure.

A SUMMING-UP.

The salient features of the present system of Indian administration may now be conveniently summarised. In the first place, there is no recognition of the fundamental unity of India. Geographically and historically considered, India is one. Although the British Provinces and the Native States form an intricate chequer-work, although political, economic, even international factors impinge upon them with equal force, no attempt has been made to bring them under a common system. British India has passed from autocracy to democracy and the goal of her constitutional development is the realisation of full responsible government. Indian India, on the other hand, is essentially autocratic with a sprinkling of democratic institutions here and there. This is an anomaly, for the conversion or the combination of the States into an 'Indian Ulster' is an impossibility.

So far as British India is concerned, we come across at the Centre the spectacle of a representative Legislature pitted against an irresponsible Executive. In the Provinces, however, the Executive is tinged with a sense of responsibility. At least one-half of the Executive is responsible to the Legislature. Some of the provincial subjects, the so-called 'transferred subjects,' are administered by Ministers who are elected members of the Legislature and are responsible to it.

Lastly, a mere fraction of the population, only three per cent. enjoy the suffrage.

THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

Now we have got the necessary back-ground for an examination of the principles and proposals of the Joint Select Committee.

The Committee note that the subtle ferments of education, the impact of the War and the growth of a sense of nationality have combined to create a public opinion in India which should not be ignored. But a recognition of Indian aspirations is an insufficient guide to their solution. Responsible government to which these aspirations are mainly directed to-day, is not an automatic device which can be manufactured to specification. It is a grave error to assume that an Act of Parliament can establish British institutions in India merely by reproducing provisions found in the constitutional law of the United Kingdom. But the Committee hold that Parliamentary Government in India may well develop on lines different from those at Westminster.

The Committee think that the future Government of India will be successful in proportion as it represents not a new creation but the natural evolution of past tendencies. From that point of view the Committee suggest that the new constitutional system should be founded on the principle of Provincial Autonomy. This change will not be a break with the past. The Act of 1919 introduced a measure of responsible government in the provinces, and the governments thus established have been in operation more than a decade. The Committee recognise that a sense of responsibility can be acquired only by making men responsible politically for the effects of their actions, and their sense of responsibility must be weakened if the Government functions in watertight compartments partitioned off by the constitution. The Committee therefore propose that **in all Provinces dyarchy should be abolished and Ministers made generally responsible over the whole provincial field.**

While agreeing that Provincial Ministers must be made responsible for the enforcement of law and order and the maintenance of an upright administration, the Committee remember the nature of that responsibility. It is a responsibility which no Executive can share with any Legislature, however answerable it may be to that Legislature for the manner of its discharge. In the special circumstances of India it is appropriate that this principle of **executive independence** should be reinforced in the constitution by the conferment of special powers and responsibilities on the Governor as the head of the Provincial Executive.

The Committee emphasise that Provincial Autonomy requires a **re-adjustment** at the Centre. To create autonomous units without any corresponding adaptation of the existing Central Legislature would, in the Committee's opinion, give full play to the powerful centrifugal forces without any attempt to counteract them and ensure the continued

unity of India. The Committee express the view that the unity of India would be seriously endangered without a **constitutional relationship between the States and British India**. The question for decision, it is stated, is whether the measure of unity which can be achieved by an All-India Federation, imperfect though it may be, is likely to confer added strength, stability and prosperity on India as a whole. In the Committee's opinion there is only one answer—an affirmative. The Committee state that the attraction of Federation to the States clearly depends on the fulfilment of one condition, that, in acceding to the Federation, they should be assured of a real voice in the determination of its policy.

Having accepted the broad principles of Provincial Autonomy and an All-India Federation, the Committee, while recognising that Provincial Autonomy must precede change at the Centre, state that the same Act should lay down a constitution both for the centre and for the provinces. Federation is not left as a mere contingency of the future. The Committee advise that the interval between Provincial Autonomy and the inauguration of the Federation should not be longer than is necessitated by administrative considerations.

I shall now proceed to describe the structural changes which follow from the above principles and proposals.

The Province of Burma is to be separated from India. Two new provinces are to be created—Sind and Orissa.

The abolition of dyarchy involves the transfer to Ministers of all departments of a Provincial Government, including those of law and order. Non-official Ministers selected from the Legislature should advise the Governor in all matters other than the administration of the excluded areas, and matters left to the Governor's discretion, e.g., the power to withhold assent to legislation. For the discharge of his special responsibilities the Governor will have power to secure finance and legislation.

As regards the Provincial Legislature, second Chambers are to be established in Bengal, United Provinces, Bihar, Bombay and Madras. Provincial Upper Houses should not be liable to dissolution, but one-third of the members should retire at fixed intervals.

The provincial electorate is to be increased from 7 million including 315,000 women to 29 million men and 6 million women, i.e., from 3 to 14 per cent of the population.

Communal representation being considered inevitable at the present time, the composition of Provincial Assemblies should follow

the arrangement embodied in the Communal Award as modified by the Poona Pact.

The composition of the Bengal Legislative Assembly (Lower House) will be as follows:—

Total number of seats	...	...	...	250
General seats (including 2 women)	...	...	...	80
No. of General seats reserved for depressed classes	...	...	...	30
Mahomedan seats (including 2 women)	...	...	...	119
Indian Christian seats	...	...	...	2
Anglo-Indian seats (including 1 woman)	...	...	...	4
European seats	...	...	...	11
Commerce and Industry, Mining and Planting	...	...	...	19
Landholders seats	...	...	...	5
University seats	...	...	...	2
Labour seats	...	...	...	8

The composition of the Bengal Legislative Council (Upper House) will be as follows:—

10 nominated by the Governor-General in his discretion
(must be non-officials).

27 elected by the members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

17 directly elected from Mahomedan constituencies.

1 " " " European "

10 " " " General "

For which all qualified voters other than Mahomedans and Europeans will be entitled to vote.

The accession of a State to Federation must not take place otherwise than by the voluntary act of its Ruler. The accession of a sufficient number of States should be a condition precedent to Federation. The Federation should not come into existence until the Rulers of States representing not less than half the total population of the States and entitled to not less than half the seats allotted to the States in the Federal Upper Chamber have signified their desire to accede.

Representatives of the States in the Federal Legislature are to be appointed by the Rulers of the States concerned.

The list of subjects accepted by the Princes as Federal may not be identical in every case, but deviations from the standard list should be regarded as exceptional and not admitted as matter of course.

The rights of paramountcy over the Indian States at present exercised on behalf of the Crown by the Governor-General in Council,

cannot be exercised by any Federal Authority. Outside the Federal sphere the States' relations will be exclusively with the Crown, the right to tender advice to the Crown within this sphere lying with His Majesty's Government.

As regards the Federal Executive, the Governor-General with the assistance of not more than 3 Counsellors should administer the Departments of Defence, External Affairs, Ecclesiastical Affairs and British Baluchistan. In all other Departments, he should be guided by the advice of Ministers chosen from the Federal Legislature, subject to his powers under 'special responsibilities.' These powers would follow generally those of the Provincial Governors except that the Governor-General would have a special responsibility for the financial stability and credit of the Federation. To assist him in the discharge of this special responsibility, there would be a Financial Adviser whose services would also be available to the Federal Ministry. The Counsellors will not be Members of the Council of Ministry, but joint deliberation between Counsellors and Ministers should be encouraged.

The Federal Legislature will consist of two Chambers, to be styled the Council of State and the House of Assembly. The Council of State will consist, apart from the Governor-General's Counsellors, of not more than 260 members, of whom 150 will be elected from British India, not more than 100 will be appointed by the Rulers of States, and not more than 10 (who shall not be officials) will be nominated by the Governor-General in his discretion. The Assembly will consist, apart from the Governor-General's Counsellors, of not more than 375 members, of whom 250 will be elected to represent constituencies in British India, and not more than 125 will be appointed by the Rulers of States.

Election to the Federal Lower House will be indirect election by the Provincial Lower Houses, the various committees voting separately for their own representatives. Election to the Council of State will also be indirect election. In the case of bicameral Legislatures, the electing body should be the Provincial Upper House and in unicameral Provinces an electoral college should be formed of persons elected by an electorate corresponding to an electorate for Upper Houses in bicameral Provinces.

A SUMMING-UP.

The principal characteristics of the New Constitution, as far as we can visualise, may be thus summed up. The fundamental unity of India is recognised. We are going to have a Federation in which the

two Indias, British and Princely, will play their part and work out their common destiny. Federation has solved once for all the vexed problem of constitutional structure. The Indian Federation, be it noted, will be a peculiar type of Federation. A Federation is formed, either by a voluntary union of independent states, or by a voluntary conversion of a unitary state into autonomous provinces. The Indian Federation involves both the processes. The union of British India with Princely India is the result of the former process. The elevation of British Provinces to the status of autonomous units is the result of the latter process.

The Central Government will no longer be an utterly irresponsible one. Some measure of responsibility, however qualified, has been introduced into the Federal Executive. At least some Departments of the Federal Government will be administered by Ministers chosen from the Federal Legislature.

In the Provinces Dyarchy has been killed, buried and damned. We shall no more hear of the so-called 'Reserved subjects.' We shall no more hear of the odious central control in legislation, administration and finance. This is the negative aspect of Provincial Autonomy. Positively, Provincial Autonomy implies full responsible government in the Provinces. We shall no more hear of Executive Councillors. The Ministers will constitute a real Cabinet—sometimes leading the Legislature, sometimes being led by the Legislature.

There is a large extension of franchise—from 3 per cent. to 14 per cent. The extension is more marked in the case of women—their voting strength increasing from 315,000 to 6 million.

CONCLUSION.

How the New Constitution will work it is difficult to say. Prophecy is dangerous in politics. A constitution is at best a pattern, a formula. Its success depends far more upon the manner and spirit in which it is worked than upon its formal provisions. An ideal constitution on paper, a model of legal skill and political wisdom, a perfection of draughtsmanship and statesmanship, may not work smoothly in practice, may even completely break down. On the other hand, a dry skeleton may prove to be a warm breathing image. It is impossible to foresee the exact weaknesses which a constitution will eventually reveal. Through a fault here and an error there it comes to adapt itself to the circumstances of a country and the psychology of its people. It is a matter of time and experience. When the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution was launched into operation, its unmistakable

shortcomings were not in sight. It was only when the Muddiman Committee was set up in 1924 to enquire into its working that the yawning gaps were brought to the fore. All that we can do at present, therefore, is to follow the advice of the Count of Monte Cristo. We should wait and hope—wait for a willing acceptance, and hope for a step forward.



A Song from the "Geetanjali"

(No. 149.)

KALIDAS GHOSH, M.A., B.L.—*Ex-student.*

What has ever remained all my life
 Only a faint, vague suggestion,
What, in the light of the morn,
 Has ne'er blossomed into expression,

Shall I, O Lord! present now unto Thee
 In the last gift of my strife,
 The last song of my life.

Speech hath not fathomed it
 Nor chained it unto its fold
Song hath ne'er intonated it
 Nor nursed it unto its hold.

In what silence, how stealthily
 It remained,
 O my friend!

In a garment new, charmingly
 Hidden alone from world's vision,
What alas! in the light of the morn
 Has ne'er blossomed into expression.

With it by me, have I travelled
 From one country to another
And the rises and falls of life have circled,
 Around it, always a centre.

In all thoughts and through all works
 'Midst everything, all mine own,
When awake and in my dreams
 Clinging unto me, always,
 Still wrapped up, all alone,
Ne'er did it come to light
 With the light of the morn.

O how often,
What multitude of men -
For it they yearned ;
At last in vain
Out of the door have they gone
O! in vain.

None else would it appreciate,
With Thee shall it be intimate
Was the hope.
It fostered, and lived in its ethereal region,
Alas! it did ne'er come to light,
Nor blossomed into expression.

The Islamic Kingship in India*

(PRE-MUGHAL PERIOD)

ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE, M.A.—(*Ex-student*).

THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY.

THE Islamic conception of the State was indissolubly mixed up with religious belief, and to the faithful there was, and could be, no distinction between the State and the Church. The head of the State was the successor of the Prophet, and exercised power as the representative of God. The theory that the entire Islamic world was under the direct authority of the Khalifah persisted up to the last, in spite of the fact that the declining power of the Abbasids and the rise of the so-called 'Minor Dynasties' constituted unmistakable evidence of the steadily growing spirit of disruption. The crumbling political structure of Islam was covering the East and the West with magnificent ruins, and the day was not far off when imposing monuments would be created by new converts out of these materials.

The Islamic kingship in India—an autonomous and distinct part of the vast world over which the spirit of the Prophet ruled—had two aspects. So far as the Muhammadans were concerned, the Sultan was for all practical purposes regarded as occupying the same position as the Khalifah himself,¹ although the spiritual supremacy of the direct successor of the Prophet was universally recognised. But the Hindus, the vast majority of the population of the country, regarded the Islamic kingship merely as the product of military conquest. For the Muhammadans the Sultan was "the shadow of God upon earth to whose refuge we are to fly when oppressed by injury from the unforeseen occurrences of life,"² the God-given leader of the faithful in their *jihād* against the 'unclean' infidels. For the Hindus, on the other hand, he was an alien conqueror, a *yavana* bent upon destroying their religion and their society, an intruder who had to be tolerated

*A brief summary of a chapter in the writer's forthcoming work, *The Islamic State in India*.

1. Some of the Turkish Sultans and Mughal Emperors claimed to be regarded as 'the Khalifah of his age.' For instances, see *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1919-20 and 1927-28, *J. A. S. B.*, 1873, and *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II. For theory, see J. N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, pp. 310-12.

2. *Akhlaq-i-Jalali*, translated by Thompson, pp. 377-8.

because he was too strong to be expelled. When Abul Fazl says that "Obedience to kings is a kind of divine worship," he is correctly expressing the point of view of his co-religionists. But when lavish praise is bestowed by a Hindu upon Balban³ who made it a rule never to place any Hindu in a position of trust and responsibility,⁴ when Akbar is hailed as an incarnation of God Himself, we can clearly trace the influence of men who did not act without ulterior motives in composing laudatory verses.

Islamic law recognises the theory that the Khalifah owed his throne to the suffrage of the faithful;⁵ but as a matter of fact military force proved to be a more potent source of sovereignty than the doctrines of the *ulama*.⁶ Theoretical speculations had very little influence on the rough Turkish soldiers who made themselves masters of India. They conquered the country by force, they maintained their authority by force, and they lost their position when they failed to command adequate force. All their followers—soldiers, poets and *ulama* alike—understood the situation thoroughly well, and never cared or dared to investigate into the legal claims of their *de facto* master. When Ala-ud-din Khilji successfully murdered his uncle and occupied a throne to which he had not a shadow of claim either by divine or by human law, not only 'the unthinking rabble,'⁷ but the best minds of the day—the great poet, Amir Khusrav, for instance⁸—bowed down before the realities of the situation. And while we shed our tears for the old Sultan who was so basely struck by one whom he loved so much, it is necessary to remember that he himself had assassinated his master in order to get the throne.

Indeed, it is altogether impossible to discover any intelligible principle, either legal or reasonable, which may be regarded as the source of the power which the Sultans of Delhi enjoyed for three centuries. They did not owe their position to the Khalifah, the nominal ruler of the Islamic world, although, as we shall see, some of them did invoke his authority in their support. Nor did they owe their sovereignty to the will of the people. At the first instance, their sole right to rule this country was that of military conquest. But they failed to evolve any workable law of succession, or any tolerable method to secure dynastic continuity. Sons did not succeed their

3. Palam inscription, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1913-14.

4. Firishhta. Briggs, Vol. I, p. 250.

5. Khuda Bukhsh, *Orient Under the Caliphs*.

6. Many instances will be found in Muir, *The Caliphate*.

7. Firishhta. Briggs, Vol. I, p. 324.

8. *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, British Museum Ms., Additional 16838, fol. 5b and 6.

fathers as a matter of course. Balban was succeeded by his grandson, Kaiqubad, when the father of the latter was alive. The nomination of the dying ruler was unceremoniously set aside by the over-mighty nobles, as we see in the cases of the nomination of Raziyyat by Iltutmish⁹ and of Kai Khusrav by Balvan.¹⁰ Nor did the nobles have the decisive voice in selecting the ruler. With the sole exception of the case of Ghi-yas-ud-din Tughluq,¹¹ no other Sultan owed his throne to the votes of the nobility.¹² The only *principle*—if it is a *principle* at all—to which candidates appealed was that of force ; and nothing but might was right.

RELATIONS WITH THE KHILAFAT

By the thirteenth century the theory that the entire Islamic world was united under the religious and political authority of the Khalifah had been transformed into an unreal but convenient legal fiction ; and a huge majority of the faithful had transferred their allegiance to, and begun to read the *Khutbah*¹³ in the name of, Muhammadan princes who occupied an independent position. There were historical and geographical reasons which led to this disintegration of the Islamic world, but into those details it is unnecessary for our present purpose to enter. The fall of the Ommeyyades in 750 A. C. was the precursor of the fate which was to fall upon the *Khilafah*. As Muir remarks, " While the Umeiyad Caliphate, from first to last, was co-ordinate with the limits of Islam, this is no longer true of the Abbasid. . . Islam was. . . broken up into many fragments, not necessarily in any way dependent on the Caliphate, each with its own separate history."¹⁴ Spain became independent.¹⁵ Powerful autonomous kingdoms arose in Africa.¹⁶ The growth of a number of independent 'Minor

9. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, translated by Raverty, Vol. II, pp. 638-9.

10. *Tarikh-i-Firuz-Shahi*, Elliot, Vol. III, p. 124.

11. *Tarikh-i-Firuz-Shahi*, Elliot, Vol. III, pp. 228-9.

12. In the case of Sikandar Lodi, who was preferred by the nobles to his elder brother, there was a combination of hereditary claim, although imperfect, with baronial support. Dorn, *History of the Afghans*, Part I, pp. 55-56.

13. " According to the best authorities, the name of the reigning Khalifah ought to be recited in the *Khutbah*; and the fact that it is not so recited in independent Muhammadan kingdoms, but the name of the Sultan or Amir is substituted for the Khalifah, has its significance." Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 277. *Khutbah* means the sermon delivered on Fridays at the time of *zuhr* (or meridian prayer). *Op. cit.*, p. 274.

14. *The Caliphate*, p. 432.

15. Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 474-5.

16. *Op. cit.*, pp. 235, 240, 581, 589-593.

Dynasties' in Iraq, Persia and Turkestan in the tenth century destroyed the power of Baghdad in the East. Finally, Hulagu, a grandson of Jengiz Khan, took Baghdad, and put the Khalifah to death in 1258 A.C.¹⁷ "The Caliphate, long in hopeless decrepitude, had now disappeared, and there remained no possibility of its revival. But a shadow survived in Egypt,—a race of mock-Caliphs, having the name without the substance; a mere spectre as it were."¹⁸ The uncle of the last Khalifah of Baghdad went to Egypt, and was recognised by the Memluk Sultans as a spiritual potentate. The succession of such Egyptian Khalifahs was maintained unbroken in the same line, until the last of them resigned his rights into the hands of Suleiman II, the Ottoman Sultan of Constantinople, towards the close of the first quarter of the sixteenth century.¹⁹

Tradition, especially if it is intertwined with religion, dies hard. The Khalifahs lost political power, but they did not forfeit their spiritual prestige. No true believer could ever forget that it was to the successor of the Prophet that his allegiance was due. "He was the fountain-head of all political authority; kings and tribal chiefs were in theory subordinate to him, and his sanction alone could provide a legal basis for their power. The maddest of political adventurers would think many times before he directly defied the Caliph's authority."²⁰ This is why the Memluk Sultans of Egypt had considered it necessary to consecrate their authority with the sanction of the titular chief of the Islamic world,²¹ and this is why the ruler of the all-conquering Ottoman Turks resorted to a legal fiction of doubtful validity in order to assume the position of the Khalifah.²²

When Mahmud of Ghazni put an end to the Samanid dynasty and asserted his independence,²³ his position was recognised by the then Abbasid Khalifah of Baghdad. We are informed by Utbi, who was Mahmud's Secretary, that the Khalifah "sent a *khila't*, such as never before had been heard of . . . and entitled Mahmud

17. Muir, *The Caliphate*, pp. 591-2.

18. *Op. cit.*, p. 593.

19. *Op. cit.*, p. 596. Cf., Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 264, and Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 142-158.

20. Habib, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin*, pp. 3-4.

21. See the diploma of investiture granted by Khalifah Mustansir to Baybars, the fourth Memluk Sultan. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 92-94.

22. For a discussion of the claim of the Ottoman Sultans to that position, see Muir, p. 596, Arnold, pp. 129-158, 163-183, and Hughes, pp. 264-6.

23. Firishta. Briggs, Vol. I, pp. 34-36.

Yaminud daulah Aminu-l-millat, the friend of the Amir-l-muminin."²⁴ The author of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* tells us that Mahmud " was the first among the sovereigns of Islam, who was styled Sultan by the court of the Khalifahs of Baghdad."²⁵ Whether Mahmud himself desired to consecrate and strengthen his own authority by securing the diploma of the successor of the Prophet,²⁶ or whether the declining Abbasid dynasty considered it prudent to take advantage of the situation in order to remind the world that the prestige of the Khalifah was not a legend of the past, is not clear. The entire proceedings are, however, interesting from a legal and historical point of view, although the solemnity attached to them did not in any sense correspond to realities.

The precedent set by the mighty conqueror was followed by many Sultans of Delhi. In 1229 A. C. the Khalifah sent Iltutmish a robe of honour and recognised his position as Sultan of India.²⁷ In his inscriptions he calls himself ' Helper of the Prince of the Faithful.'²⁸ On his later coins the name of the Khalifah occurs frequently.²⁹ The name of the last Khalifah of Baghdad is mentioned on the coins of Ala-ud-din Masud, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Balban, Kaiqubad, and Jalal-ud-din Khalji.³⁰ One inscription refers to Nasir-ud-din as ' supporter of the Prince of the Faithful.' The same title is bestowed on Balban in more than one epigraph. On his coins Ala-ud-din Khalji described himself as ' the right hand of the Khilafat, the helper of the Prince of the Faithful.'³¹ The same titles are given to him in contemporary inscriptions.³² Muhammad Tughluq who, in Sir Wolseley Haig's words, " scandalised the orthodox by deliberately preferring human reason to divine revelation as a guide in mundane matters, and by openly avowing his preference "³³ appealed to the Khalifah to bestow his sanction on his regal rights. Barani, the

24. Elliot, Vol. II, p. 24.

25. Raverty's translation, Vol. I, pp. 75-76.

26. Sir Wolseley Haig says that Mahmud "sought formal recognition of his sovereignty from the Caliph." *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 12.

27. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Raverty's translation, Vol. II, p. 616.

28. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1911-12.

29. *Op. cit.*

30. This Khalifah, as we have said already, was killed by the Mongol Chief Hulagu in 1258 A. C. But the Sultans of Delhi continued to appeal to his name till the close of the thirteenth century.

31. Wright, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Vol. II, pp. 36, 38.

32. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1917-18.

33. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 137.

contemporary historian, and an intimate protégé of the King, has left for us an interesting account of the whole episode.³⁴ It occurred to the Sultan's mind that "no king or prince could exercise regal power without confirmation by the Khalifah of the race of Abbas, and that every king who had, or should hereafter reign, without such confirmation, had been or would be overpowered." A messenger of the Khalifah came, a letter acknowledging the Sultan's subordination to the Khalifah was sent to Egypt, and a diploma was procured "He had his own name and style removed from his coins," said Barani, "and that of the Khalifah substituted; and his flatteries of the Khalifah were so fulsome that they cannot be reduced to writing."³⁵ The relations of Firuz Shah Tughluq with the Khalifah may be best expressed in his own words: "The greatest and best of honours that I obtained through God's mercy was, that by my obedience and piety, and friendliness and submission to the Khalifah, the representative of the holy Prophet, my authority was confirmed; for it is by his sanction that the power of kings is assured, and no king is secure until he has submitted himself to the Khalifah, and has received a confirmation from the sacred throne."³⁶ While Firuz was writing these words, the Khalifah was "a mere phantom, vanishing into the shadowy pageantry of attendants on the Memluk kings of Egypt."³⁷

What, then, is the explanation of the historic role thus played by the Khalifahs for so many centuries? Why did Muhammadan rulers of far-off countries look to them as the one and indivisible source of sovereignty, even when they had become mere sacerdotal advisers to the local rulers of Egypt? The explanation offered by Sir Thomas Arnold is this: "What was an unfortunate Muslim monarch to do, who felt that his title was insecure? He knew that it was only his sword that had set him on the throne, that his own dynasty might at any time be displaced, as he had himself displaced the dynasty that had preceded him, while his legal advisers and religious guides told him that the only legitimate source of authority was the Khalifah, the Imam, and he realized that all his devout Muslim subjects shared their opinion."³⁸ So he went on invoking the

34. *Tarikh-i-Firuz-Shahi*, Elliot, Vol. III, pp. 249-250.

35. For an account of Muhammad Tughluq's treatment of a descendant of the Khalifah, see Sir Wolsley Haig's article in *J. R. A. S.*, July, 1922, pp. 351-2.

36. *Fatuh-at-i-Firuz-Shahi*, Elliot, Vol. III, p. 387.

37. Muir, *The Caliphate*, pp. 432-3.

38. *The Caliphate*, pp. 87-88.

name of the shadowy head of the Islamic world in support of his own *de facto* authority, and "this was sufficient for the satisfaction of tender consciences."

In spite of the ceremonial allegiance which the Sultans of Delhi from time to time paid to the Khalifahs, they were independent rulers to all intents and purposes. From the time when the death of Muizz-ud-din Muhammad *ibn* Sam left Qutb-ud-din free to issue coins in his own name, the Sultanate of Delhi had never in theory or in practice sunk to the position of vassalage under any internal or external authority.³⁹ The state over which they presided was essentially a compromise between two antagonistic ideals of life—Hindu and Islamic—a compromise which was rather a natural outcome of political necessities than a compact between the conquerors and the conquered. It was neither a mere importation, an alien product superimposed on indigenous institutions, with which it was in perpetual conflict, and which it finally destroyed. Nor was it a crude and cumbrous adaptation of Hindu principles and practices, a new edition of the Kautilyan state.⁴⁰ It is necessary for us to grasp the significance of the persistence of Indian indigenous ideas and institutions during Muslim rule. But it would be illogical and unhistorical to assume that the Muhammadan conquerors left on the other side of the stupendous mountain wall of the Hindu-kush everything that they could call their own, and that when they were called upon to rule over this country, they accepted in toto the prevailing spirit as well as the existing machinery of the land. If Muhammadan rulers were compelled for reasons of political expediency to take up a favourable and tolerant attitude towards Indian indigenous ideas and institutions, personal conviction, tradition and the necessity of conciliating their co-religionists combined to urge upon them the desirability of accepting the principles of Islamic Law as the basis of the state which they created by military force.

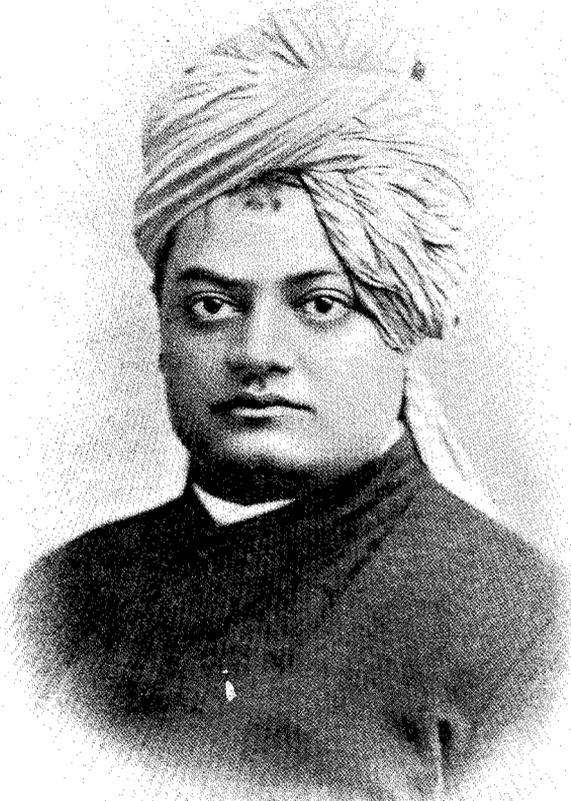
39. Khizr Khan is said to have acted as a vassal of Timur. Briggs, Vol. I, p. 508.

40. Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar tells us that the "Turkish conquerors brought with themselves to their new home the type of administration which had long been known to extra-Indian Muslim countries as the model." *Mughal Administration*, p. 6. On the other hand, Dr. Surendra Nath Sen remarks that "Muhammadan conquerors were not hostile to the indigenous institutions," and that "the new rulers did not interfere much with the administrative institutions of Hindusthan," although "it will be a mistake to suppose that the Muhammadans simply transmitted the old Hindu system, and did not add to it anything of their own." *Administrative System of the Marathas*, pp. 485, 604.

Vivekananda and the Masses of India

Few Presidency College men are aware that Swami Vivekananda, whose 73rd birthday has recently been celebrated in Bengal and abroad, was some 55 years ago a student in the First Arts Class of the Presidency College which he entered after he had passed the Entrance Examination. Scarcely a year after he was, however, forced by reasons of health to take his transfer to the General Assembly's Institution (the present Scottish Church College), which was situated nearer home. His name finds no mention in the Presidency College Register, probably because he passed no examination from the Presidency College. Nonetheless Presidency College men may justly take a heightened interest and augmented pride in claiming him among the illustrious ex-alumni of their Institution.

ONE has almost a feeling of despair in trying to bring out clearly the ideas of Vivekananda in all their implications with regard to the problem of the Indian masses within the limit of a short article. The first obvious difficulty is, of course, the vastness and the many-sided character of the problem. Others are of a tougher kind, and have not unoften led unwary expositors into partial conclusions. For example, his works are strewn over with inconsistent remarks which sometimes directly contradict one another and which are sure to leave the reader not a little bewildered. To obviate the difficulty one is apt to cut the knot accepting those in consonance with his own wishes and rejecting the rest. It will not be possible here to rationally and consistently interpret all his ideas. But it is necessary to point out that certain facts are always to be remembered for the proper understanding of Vivekananda. Firstly, an intimate knowledge of his life would give the reader a proper orientation to his message. Secondly, one should never forget that he was not only shaping his ideas into the forms appropriate for his varying audiences (most of his works consist of lectures delivered in India and abroad), but also using the current coins of expression to make them intelligible to them. Thirdly, the Swami always drove his point home in a manner which seemed to belittle everything else in comparison. A frequent complaint of his admirers to the Swami was that they were at a loss to decide what to take from his words, for whenever he happened to dilate on a topic he magnified it out of all proportions for the time being. Moreover, in his utterances he was not much given to fasti-



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

dious criticality, but loved to impress the audience with magnificent and broad generalisations to which he seems to have had a special leaning. His criticisms, answers to questions and writings are, however, remarkable examples of his exactitude, wit and discernment. Last, but in some respects the most important of all, because it is the most likely to escape general notice, is the fact that the Swami grew in his views. It is a mistake to suppose that he stuck to all the ideas, which he held at any particular moment, to the end of his life. He changed some of them in the light of maturer experience and knowledge. For, example, in his lectures he repeatedly enjoined his listeners to take to the path of least resistance in their work. Many of us are likely to pin him down to the statement. But listen to what he said to Sister Nivèdita (Margaret E. Noble) on 12th March, 1899: "I say, Margot, I have been thinking for days about that line of least resistance, and it is a base fallacy. It is a comparative thing. As for me, I am never going to think of it again. The history of the world is the history of a few earnest men, and when one man is earnest the world must come to his feet. I am not going to water down my ideals, I am going to dictate terms."

This rather long introduction has been inserted of set purpose, as a plea for taking a sober, critical and comprehensive view of Vivekananda's message, instead of jumping at conclusions from a hasty perusal of his speeches and writings.

A careful reading of the works of Vivekananda leaves the abiding impression that he conceived his special mission—it is not too much to say, the only mission of his life—to be the regeneration of India. And the regeneration of India to him meant primarily and wholly the regeneration of her masses. He was alive to the various problems, social, economic and political, that demanded solution and engaged the attention of the intelligentsia of the time. He saw the injustice of the various customs and rules that lay heavily upon the society and impeded all growth and expansion. He gave anxious thoughts over them, suggested lines of improvement and sympathised with attempts at their betterment. But he felt that most of these touched only a handful of men of the upper classes alone, while the real India, the India of the masses, lay inarticulate. Theirs was the real problem of India which insistently demanded solution. The Swami sometimes expressed the view by remarking that he did not believe in bits of reform but that he believed only in root and branch reform. The root of all evils, he used to emphasise, was the evil of neglecting and repressing the lower classes.

About six years of wandering throughout India, mostly on foot,

during the Parivrajaka days, revealed to him in all their nakedness the dismal poverty, ignorance and debasement of the Indian masses. If the picture filled him with pity and remorse, it also enkindled in him a resolute determination to find out a remedy. "My brother," he writes to one from Chicago, "in view of all this (the depressed condition of the Indian masses), especially of the poverty and ignorance, I got no sleep. At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan." The rest of his life was spent in trying to work out this plan. The reason for his going to the West, he tells us in another letter, was also dictated by this motive. After recounting the miserable plight of the poor and lowly in India, its causes and its remedy he goes on to say: "I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half this world to this strange land seeking for help." It would appear that the same motive also induced him to visit the West for the second time.

How the masses in India came to this plight? Well! it was the same story everywhere. From the beginning of history they have been pressed down, and all the avenues of progress have been barred to them by selfishness of the privileged classes. Though the masses in the West have not as yet attained to the fullest self-expression in every land, they have been emancipated from their worst disabilities almost everywhere towards the close of the last century. But the Indian masses had scarcely made any tangible progress for centuries. It would be a mistake, however, to regard the problem of the masses everywhere as identical. It is no place here to go into detailed analysis of their conditions in the different lands. But several broad differences may be pointed out. In India the social divisions have been more numerous and rigid, and in some respects, more tyrannical, while in the West some flexibility has always been observed in regard to at least a large portion of the population. Another disparity lies in the fact that whereas in the West social distinction and economic interests have been the more potent causes in creating class divisions, in India religious sanction has been the most powerful factor in fostering and perpetuating the pretensions of the privileged classes in a sharper form. Further, the masses have a more complicated origin in India than is the case elsewhere. Vivekananda calls India "a veritable ethnological museum." Here the various classes and caste distinctions are to be partially accounted for by the attempt at synthesizing in a hierarchical organisation, the conflicting races and

peoples at different stages of culture. Looked at from this standpoint the ancient Indians accomplished a magnificent task. It may help the reader to make a right appraisal of the achievement to recall how the Egyptians treated the Jews, the Greeks, the Barbarians, the Spartans, in particular, the Helots, in times of antiquity, and the Whites, the Africans, the Red Indians and the Maoris in more recent times. The masses were recognised in India but no laws of social dynamics appeared to effect a steady elevation of their social position in the course of centuries. True, a perusal of the Smritis reveals a gradual softening of the rules against the lower classes, but the selfish bigotry of the privileged thwarted all real attempts at the amelioration of their conditions.

The neglect and persecution of the masses have involved both the persecutors and the persecuted in common ruin. It is for this reason that India has been for centuries trodden under the heels of whatever race or people which chose to come to India. If India is to rise again, she must rise by raising her masses. The future development of India must be along national lines, bringing into being a homogeneous, united people out of a welter of races and cultures and classes, not imitating the shibboleths of the run-amuck nationalism of the West, but maintaining its distinctiveness of spiritual culture, which was to form a sure basis for a real internationalism.

Vivekananda believed India had a future, infinitely more magnificent than all the splendid ages of her past. The masses awakened and organised will wield the reins of power in the self-conscious Indian nation that would come into being. They have been toiling for ages without noise and without notice and producing the fabulous wealth of India which had sustained the great empires and kingdoms of antiquity and is at present upholding the greatest of all in history. So long they have been repressed by men who have lived by sucking their blood. But no longer are they going to be put down. They are rising. The mighty deluge will wash away the upper classes. The latter are doomed. And he makes the significant remark that they would be extinct in vain search for employment. He calls them the shades and mummies of the past. To him they "represented the past tense with all its varieties of form jumbled into one." They are "the void unsubstantial non-entities of the future . . . the fleshless and bloodless skeletons of the dead body of past India." They no doubt carried with them the priceless heritage of India but the sooner they hand it over to the masses the better. He then invokes the New India to arise in their place. "Let her arise," says he "—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisher-

men, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains."

Vivekananda held the masses of India not only in great affection but also in high estimation. They had wonderful vitality and their energy knew no bounds. "Living on a handful of oatmeal they can convulse the world," he writes: "give them only half a piece of bread and the whole world will not be big enough to contain their energy." More than that he considered them gods in comparison with the masses of other countries. Nowhere could be found such moral excellence as in them. "They have got the wonderful strength that comes of a pure and moral life, which is not to be found anywhere else in the world."

Vivekananda viewed the rise of the Indian masses not as a solitary and isolated phenomenon but as an element in the general upheaval of the proletariat throughout the world, which, though not necessarily simultaneous, was inevitable everywhere. He read the history of the world broadly as the successive rise to power of the priestly, military, commercial and proletariat classes at different times in different countries. "Yet, a time will come," he writes in an article contributed to the *Udbodhan*, "when there will be the rising of the Sudra classes, *with their Sudrahood*; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their in-born Sudra nature and habits,—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudras—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to slowly break upon the Western world. . . . Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism and like other sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow."

We have, however, disabused our minds of the current ideology of the mass-movement when talking of Vivekananda's ideas of a social upheaval in India. The rise of the Indian masses will have its distinctive character conditioned by their peculiar constitution. He did not contemplate a bitter class struggle raging throughout the Indian sub-continent but believed that the intelligentsia themselves would dig their own grave by surrendering their privileges and helping the ascent of the masses along the path of manhood. Nor did he put any faith either in a purely materialistic rising in India or in economic motivation of history alone. He considered religion as one of the

mightiest forces in shaping the destinies of humanity. The seed of religion is embedded in every heart. It may be hidden or obstructed for a moment, but it is sure to sprout up sooner or later. Consciously or unconsciously the same urge is driving mankind everywhere towards the same goal. In India religion, which wielded the greatest influence on the life of her people, was to govern the future development of her people.

The usual ascription of the fallen state of India to religion was emphatically repudiated by Vivekananda. Religion was not at fault ; rather it was the neglect of religion. "Hear me, my friend!" he writes in a letter, "I have discovered the secret through the grace of the Lord. Religion is not at fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied. But it was the want of sympathy—the want of heart. The Lord once more came to you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but you heard Him not. Your priests invented the horrible story that the Lord was here for deluding demons with false doctrines! True indeed, but we are the demons, not those that believed." It is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism who have invented all sorts of engines of tyranny. in the shape of doctrines of Paramarthika and Vyavaharika. The same has been the case with Industrialism which was not at fault for the poverty of the labouring classes, but the selfish greed of the employers backed up by a plausible philosophy of utilitarianism and individualism.

Not only was not religion at fault but a general dissemination of the noble truths of religion will be the prelude to the great awakening of the masses. Being inherently of a religious bent of mind, the Indian masses will readily take to a philosophy of activism if it is preached through religion. Religion has, in this sense, apart from its intrinsic worth, a pragmatic value. By the noble truths of religion he meant the invigorating Vedantic principles. Broadly they may be said to comprise the divinity of man and the unity of creation. They should be preached to one and all with their corollaries of equality, strength and self-determination. The life-giving principles of religion have so long been withheld from the commonalty with deplorable consequences. The great idea of the real and basic solidarity of man, and for the matter of that, the entire creation, is the one life-giving idea which the world wants from India to-day and "which the mute masses of India for their uplifting, for none can regenerate this land of ours without the practical application and effective operation of this ideal of the oneness of things." It might be said that the Indians do not want religion, they have had enough of it. But it is not true.

Ugly things have generally masqueraded under the form of religion. The truth has remained hidden from the generality like the proverbial needle under a hay-stack. Though the perennial flow of clear water was always close by, the common people have all along been fed with ditch-water. The unlocking of the great spiritual treasures to the masses would evoke their latent potentialities and liberate the immense energy dormant in them. Negative and depressing thoughts have up till now repressed them in the name of religion. The swaddling clothes are to be got rid of not by doing away with religion but by calling forth the innate greatness and dignity of the human nature which religion really preaches.

It would, however, be a bitter mockery to preach religion to the starving masses. What they immediately need is bread. Not only can no army march on an empty stomach, but a secure economic basis is the indispensable precondition of all sure progress of a people. Along with religion they are to be given secular education and taught to earn their bread by improving, organising and devising novel ways of utilising their productive power. Side by side with elements of an up-to-date education they are to receive training in improved methods of cultivation and industry. Attempts are to be made to promote the industrialisation of the country. In addition to this, associations of the nature of the present marketing boards should be started to find out suitable markets for the sale of their produce at a reasonable price. But the problem of imparting education in letters, arts and crafts was beset with peculiar difficulties in India. To surmount them recourse was to be had to special methods. The Government is in the hands of persons who are always responsive to the needs of the people. The initiative is to be taken by the people themselves. It is not also enough only to open free schools for the poor. Often the peasant considers it more profitable to take his son to work with him in the field than to send him to school. "If the mountain does not come to Mahomet," he used to say "Mahomet must go to the mountain." It is often necessary to bring education to the very doors of the poor, even as religious teachers in the past brought religion to the doors of all. A good deal of the education has at first to be given orally by moving bands of missionaries from a central place. Only in this way a quick result be achieved.

The task of bringing religion and education to the poor is to be performed by the upper classes themselves. They have so long lived by denying all education and privileges to the lowly. Now, like the snake in the old Bengali proverb they have got to take out the poison themselves. He did not envisage a bloody and violent class-strife in

India as a step to the abolition of all privileges but contemplated that persons belonging to the upper classes themselves would help to bring about a peaceful social revolution. The privileged classes will have accomplished their task when they have abdicated their entrenched positions and spread education among the masses. The rest will take care of itself. A great believer in self-determination, Vivekananda always insisted upon the fact that problems peculiar to a particular people, society, class or sex were best solved by the persons concerned. Others can only help them to a limited extent. It was our business, he said, to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation would take place itself.

Vivekananda cautioned the would-be reformers and well-wishers of India specially against two pitfalls which had frustrated in the past any enduring amelioration of the condition of the masses. Firstly, he exhorted all to direct their entire energy to construction and not to abuse it in vilification and destruction, specially in a base, slavish imitation of alien methods and ways of life. Growth is to be organic and from within. Secondly, along with religion and privileges the poor and the lowly are to be given adequate culture. In the past whenever there was a great religious awakening the masses felt the stir of a new life and great upheavals followed in the wake of their awakening to self-consciousness. But the faint hope of their elevation soon disappeared. Lacking the culture necessary both to grasp and retain the sublime teachings and to command the consideration and prestige which go with them they sank as rapidly as they seemed to rise. The conditions have now changed. The ancient, traditional culture has lost much of its prestige ; a new culture commanding greater distinction has been thrown open to all the classes. In spite of it the old culture of India is to be preserved and imparted to all for in the long run it is sure to wield its legitimate influence and power.

The writer has necessarily been brief in compressing the matter at his disposal within a short compass. Some of the limitations that have crept into the summary account might possibly have been avoided by an elaborate treatment. No attempt has been made to be comprehensive, but only a presentation of the broad lines of thinking of Vivekananda has been aimed at.

The hopes of Vivekananda have not come to fruition. But the observant reader will notice that a beginning has been made in translating some of them into realities. It is a pity, however, that those upon whom Vivekananda specially pinned his faith and who are the best equipped to do it, have scarcely made a move in the matter. We can no better bring the meagre account to a close than by

quoting his own words instinct with the prophetic vision of the Great Indian Awakening: "The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awakening and a voice is coming to us,—away back where history and even tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the past, coming down from there, reflected as it were, from peak to peak of the Infinite Himalayas of knowledge, and of love and of work, India, this motherland of ours,—a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more ; never is she going to sleep any more ; no outward powers can hold her back any more ; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet."

This was said about thirty-eight years ago when only faint flickers flittered through the unending gloom that enveloped Indian hopes and aspirations. To-day the red streaks of dawn are visible in the eastern sky.

S.

Mr. Lamp-Post Speaks

PURNENDU KUMAR DAS—*Ex-student.*

KIND Readers, allow me to make bit of a preface. You needn't be frightened, however, for I am not going to bore you with a Shaw-like preface of hundred pages to something of fifty.

Allow me only to take you to a long, lone street on a grey, drizzly evening like one I was reeling back home, jaded, tired and dizzy from the dull, dull work at office when I met the same old lamp-post at the same old nook and—would you believe it—he spoke to me, he did.

Allow me only to do this little bit by way of preface and I have done—with due apologies to my kind readers.]

Ah, there you are. I have been waiting for you for ever so long. Your weary step as you return home of late afternoons is so familiar to me. It is a part of my daily life. In the midst of this quiet street, in the midst of my loneliness and monotony, I do look forward to it as daylight fades. In your weariness I find sympathy. Perhaps you will indifferently pass me by as on other days. But could you not wait awhile for once? Could you not feel for "one too like thee?"

Day after day, month after month, year after year, I stand here motionless. Amid sun and shower. Amid storm and shiver. Under an open sky.

Sometimes a bird sits on my shoulder. I feel in its wings the sensation of flight, the joy of movement. Under me move men and women, away in the main-street rumbles the wild traffic. But I am motionless.

And all day long—blind. Blind to the various sights of this great, whirling city. Blind to the pageant of life weaving out wondrously. Of course, we don't have much of it here in this lonely street. Not that thrilling bustle, that exciting din, that queer stream of men and vehicles of all sorts. No, in this lonely street day dawns with a faint hum wafted from afar, from the mighty main-street waking in the distance. Then, as the day rolls, a few people stir out, voices are heard from the houses about, occasionally some hawkers pass by, crows and dogs hold rather noisy councils over the refuses, the maid-servant of your house tests the pitch of her voice, children quarrel

over their marbles and such other trifling things happen till the deepening buzz of the active city faints off to the midday hush. Of course, these are not enviable sights. But in my solitude, and utter darkness I miss even these tit-bits. And I do miss the events in the houses I can overlook. All day long, in the dark loneliness, I feel the throb of life all around me, hear the echo of the giant city roaring in the distance. All day long I am blind, blind.

But the evening, ah the gracious evening! It brings me all the little joy I have in my humdrum life. Even from the farthest end of the road I recognise the familiar tread of my one dear friend, the You may laugh at it, but I listen to it even as the lover listens to his darling's footsteps, tremulously. A slight touch and this marvellous creation of Gods is unveiled before me, mysterious in the evening shades. For a while I forget the pains of solitude. For a while I bubble with joy. But the joy is mine alone. And the desire for a sharer grows in me. Grows in me the sense of desolation. And then I hear your weary steps dragging slowly homewards. I long to speak to you. But you coldly pass by. What is it that melts you to-day? Perhaps this drizzly evening, this moaning wind, this weirdly transformed street perhaps.

You must be thinking me a sentimental fool, one that sobs out one's sad story to everybody. O no, sir. If I complain, it is only of my loneliness. I am not ungrateful to the enjoyments I have. Do you ever suspect that an invisible C. I. D. keeps watch over all the nightly doings of your house, and for the matter of that, of all the four houses around me? Why, can you ever imagine how much I know of you, yes you, sir! As of nights you sit by the window gazing vacantly ahead, that haunted look of yours—how much it tells me! It tells me of your reverie on "dream-children," your thwarted ambitions, your youthful hopes crushed in the relentless wheel of life, stern life. (By the way what are you—a clerk or a schoolmaster? One of these you must be from your dulled expression).

Well, I'll leave alone your house for courtesy's sake. As for the others take this big one in front of yours. In that lighted room on the first floor lives a young man, rather uppish and over-smart (I suppose he belongs to the Presidency College—but this in private). With evening his friends drop in, all up-to-date young men, easily marked out by their dress and airs. I have great esteem for these "hopes" of our land. They seem so cultured! I often find them ardently engaged in hot debates on serious problems of the day—whether Greta Garbo or Mae West is better paid, if the Mohanbagan left winger

is any good, how a certain Scottish Church girl was put to trouble by one of these "chivalric" young men, her class-mate. Isn't it all very clever?

Opposite this noisy room there's a dark, damp room of the old shabby house of the Roys. A dark, slim girl used to live in it—why slim, quite skinny to be plain. She had phthisis. But how her pale eyes would brighten up as she stole a view of our fair young man of the opposite room. How eagerly she would listen to the talks in that room, hidden behind the shutters (she didn't know that I was aware). One such drizzly evening, when the boy was alone in his room, she began to sing softly—I know it was meant for him. Years ago the girl was a really good singer. But that day her voice was faint, cracked and out of tune. Yet she was singing with all her heart, when suddenly a shrill laughter from the room opposite choked her. That night she couldn't sleep: tears trickled down her cheeks. I haven't seen her at the window ever since.

I like the yellow house beside yours—and then I don't like it. Like it because it is lit up by a lovely baby who toddles about, doing all sorts of funny things in her sweet, innocent way. Don't like it because the baby's elder brother took it to his head to make a target of my eyes (though he fortunately missed). That boy is a positive public danger. I wonder why your police don't put him into prison. His elder sister is much better. A tall slim girl with a pretty face (cent. per cent. prettier after toilet), she seems a she Narcissus with her habit of looking at the mirror every ten minutes. She is in someways a counterpart of our aforesaid youngmen. She doesn't, of course, discuss the knotty politics of Football; but she is pretty smart, clever in her repartees, agile in her movements and talks about cinema, about Lawrence and Huxly (when does she find time to read I don't know), about romantic episodes, and mostly, instead of Football, about the knotty problems of dress and ornaments (quite like her grandmother, eh!). Well, none grudges her these. But when she attempts singing (or artistically weeping?), alas, she isn't very different from her terrible brother.

I won't forget a scene in this very house. The daughter-in-law of the house was on death-bed. Anguish was on every face and the agony of suspense. Unseen to all, the daughter of the patient, a girl of seven, entered the prayer-room and with tears in her eyes, with all her heart, prayed and prayed, "God Almighty save my mother, save save mother." She prayed, this seven years' child and meanwhile the mother died.

Thus through the nights I watch the colourful play of life in the houses about me—life with its smiles and tears.

But the hours are short. As night deepens, the lights go out one by one and I am left once more to my desolation with only the starry sky glowing above.

Meanwhile on the main street—omnibuses are whizzing romantically through the wet gloom and

“ Lighted faces row on row
From darkness unto darkness go.”

Nature of Asokan Kingship :

A Reply

IN his paper on Asoka, published in the last issue of this Magazine, Mr. Sudhir Ranjan Ghosh has attempted to show that Asokan Kingship was "a peculiar type of limited monarchy in which the King was bound by a number of self-created shackles." The 'shackles' that the writer mentions may be summarised as the following : (i) Asoka's readiness to receive petitions and prayers of his subjects; (ii) his "lofty spirit of toleration that saw good in everything"; (iii) his "constant vigilance upon and his occasional visits to the local governors and city magistrates"; (iv) his grant of "partial autonomy to smaller states and weaker peoples"; (v) "the prominence he gave to moral and spiritual life over secular." The purpose of this paper is to weigh carefully the arguments that Mr. Ghosh put forth in support of his theory, and discuss in that connexion the actual nature of royal power exercised by the great Maurya.

In any study of political developments, a warning should always be borne in mind, a warning which is persistently emphasised by every serious scholar, that it is dangerous, though tempting, to describe the institutions and movements of the past in terms of theories and catchwords current in our own days. Circumstances change as rapidly as ideas, and if one generation has a peculiar way of looking at things, it is idle to expect that its predecessors had, or its successors will, always maintain the same point of view. Moreover, such current catchwords and expressions by themselves do not always possess very accurate connotations so as to leave out the possibility of any confusion about their meaning and use. For example, here in this case, there appears to be a good deal of misconception about the import of the term, 'limited monarchy.' Mr. Ghosh would suggest that any check, however mild and dubious, on the authority of a ruler would constitute a limited monarchy. But as a rule, the epithet is applied to cases where the limits imposed become more prominent than the actual exercise of sovereign authority ; in other words, when a king reigns but does not govern he is regarded as enjoying it. It is, therefore, not at all safe to indulge in such expressions, which are not only

ill-defined but positively misleading when applied to the institutions of the past.

Accepting this preliminary caution about the use of the term, limited monarchy, let us proceed to consider how far the powers enjoyed by Asoka had at all been anything other than absolute. Mr. Ghosh simply rejects all ideas about despotism with regard to Asoka. But there are facts which refuse to be ignored so easily. Asoka, we know, inherited the fine standing army which his grandfather, Chandragupta, had organised, and the horrors and bloodshed on the battlefields of Kalinga all the more prove that the army was not lacking strength and vigour when occasions demanded. Over such an army, Asoka certainly exercised an undisputed control. This fact is significant, for, a monarchy with a powerful army at its back cannot be anything but absolute, for the one has always provided the buttress with which the other could lift itself up. Tudors even without a standing army have gone down in history as despots, and Asoka with one cannot claim to be otherwise. Moreover, Asoka had other advantages of a despot. The Maurya central government was efficiently organised and maintained its firm hold upon its outlying provinces by means of a regular network of roads and an efficient system of espionage. Asoka's despotism was, therefore, certainly effective, perhaps even more than that of the early Norman Kings of England who had themselves to build up a strong central government in order to make their will felt throughout their dominions. Again, the king was the fountain of justice and actually heard cases. In law-making too, his authority was perhaps not negligible. It is true that there was a Council of ministers, the Mantriparishad. But most probably, like the Anglo-Saxon Witan, it was its custom to be merely associated with the king in every public act. Even with regard to this much, there are great doubts, because, unlike the Anglo-Saxon Kings, the Maurya monarch nowhere expressly mentions in his edicts that they were issued with the counsel, not to speak of the consent, of his ministers. The members of the Mantriparishad were also appointed by the king and held their offices at his pleasure. Under such circumstances, these Mantriparishads were as little capable of independent action and initiation as the subservient cabinet of a modern dictator. Thus the prerogatives enjoyed by Asoka were indeed wide and various, and there cannot be any serious objection in calling him an absolute monarch. As Sidgwick puts it: "By the word absolute, it is not, of course, meant that the power of the ruler over the ruled is practically unlimited, that he can deal with his subjects as if they were a troop of cattle What is meant by calling him

“absolute” is that there is no established constitutional authority—no human authority that his subjects habitually obey as much as they obey him—which can resist him or call him to account.”

Let us now examine the checks which, Mr. Ghosh believes, were effective in curbing the authority of Asoka. First, with regard to his readiness to receive petitions and prayers of his subjects, it may be pointed out that that was not at all an innovation made by Asoka, but was already in vogue, in the days of his celebrated grandfather. Megasthenes referring to Chandragupta's administration says: “The king leaves his palace not only in time of war, but also for the purpose of judging causes. He then remains in court for the whole day, without allowing the business to be interrupted, even though the hour arrives when he must needs attend to his person,—that is, when he is to be rubbed with cylinders of wood. He continues hearing the cases while the friction, which is performed by four attendants, is still proceeding.” What Asoka claimed to have done was not very different from that: “Now I have made the following arrangement, that the informers may report to me the concerns of the people at any time, while I dine, in my harem, in my private rooms, in the latrine, in my carriages, and in my pleasure garden, and everywhere I despatch the business of the people.” (R. E. VI). Since none would suggest that because of this practice of listening to cases, the authority of Chandragupta Maurya suffered in the least, one cannot regard it as having acted like a check in the days of Asoka. Secondly, Asoka's lofty spirit of toleration that saw good in everything, (which, according to Mr. Ghosh, restrained his personal likes and dislikes) could not have much influence on the character of his authority, because in that case, Akbar, who was equally tolerant, would have to be regarded as a constitutional monarch. Thirdly, his maintenance of an efficient and upright bureaucracy is not incompatible with his wielding of uncontrolled royal authority. As a matter of fact, only a strong despot like a Charlemagne or a Henry II could ensure the smooth working of the administrative machinery in the days when the general body of the people did not participate in the work of government. Fourthly, his grant of partial autonomy to smaller states and weaker peoples cannot be taken to imply any surrender of royal power, because such grants were most probably voluntary in character, and moreover, as Mr. Ghosh himself admits, in respect of the administration of justice they came directly under the ægis of Maurya law. Nevertheless, in this particular case, there is some justification in finding a check on royal authority as we shall see presently. Finally, Mr. Ghosh believes that “the prominence he gave to moral and spiritual life over secular

completely changed Asoka's conception of kingly office and reminded him of his perpetual obligation to his people. He totally forgot to accumulate power in his own hands and devoted himself to ensure the good of his subjects." But such a remark does not bear out the facts. The monarch who issued edicts, established hospitals, planted trees, dug wells, sent our Dharma-mahamatras cannot be said to have abdicated his authority. On the other hand, it was the very exercise of the powers accumulated in his own hands that enabled him to effect such splendid achievements for the moral as well as material welfare of his subjects. In the days when the only alternative to strong monarchy was anarchy, the interests of peace and stability in society demanded the presence of an absolute autocrat.

Mr. Ghosh has tried to make out that Asoka himself disproved all ideas about absolutism since he declared in one of his records: "What little effort I make—what is it for?—in order that I may be free from debts to the creatures, that I may render some happy here, and that they gain heaven in the next world." According to Mr. Ghosh, we have here "a sort of direct obligation of the king to the people,—a contract, so to speak, which the king must fulfil." Contract is another of those illusive terms whose use in any description of ancient Indian polity is not at all happy. Throughout the whole range of extant historical records of ancient India, epigraphic or literary, there can hardly be found a single instance of the adumbration of a real contractual theory of the origin of monarchy, if we leave out the story in the Aganna-Suttanta of the Buddhist Digha-Nikaya. The compendium of Kautilya and the Rajadharma section of the Mahabharata indeed contain passages which smack of contract. But in each of the instances, the transaction was not strictly between two parties of mortals, but a divinity would step in to invest the selected ruler with an element of the supernatural. Thus in Kautilya, Manu who was a party to the contract was not an ordinary mortal, but a Vaivasyata, or one descended from the Sun God. According to the Mahabharata also, the people begged Brahma for a protector, then Manu was approached, and he consented to rule the earth on certain conditions. The Digha-Nikaya story, however, suggests a society from a state of nature in which, as time went on, righteousness was replaced by moral deterioration and then men selected the most handsome, gracious and powerful individual among them to wield supreme authority and maintain order in society and in return they promised him a portion of their food. The idea of contract, as understood in the West, and as expounded by its prophet, Locke, is accepted to provide "a convenient image for describing the continued action of mankind" and implied that the

compact at any time could be altered or revoked. The contract in Asokan doctrine, if it at all be called a contract, does not make any such provision, and never makes the ruler, not even theoretically, accountable to the people. Asoka's idea of *anrinya*, or redemption of the debt that he owed to his subjects by means of service, was the result not of any clear-cut theory of a contractual origin of kingship, but of the personal faith of the Piyadasi in the lofty philosophy of *Ich Dien*—'I serve'—which led him to work ceaselessly for the betterment of the state.

Are we then to conclude that Asoka could exercise his powers like an unbridled tyrant? Did the tradition that the will of the prince is law develop in the Maurya State, and could Asoka identify himself as completely with the State as the Grand Monarch of France did? Such things were out of the question in Asokan polity. Let us now turn our attention to the really effective limitations on the absolutism of Asoka ; but they were to be found not in those mentioned by Mr. Ghose, but elsewhere. In the first place, the executive authority of the king was restricted by the grant of local autonomy. Local bodies all over the empire appeared to have been little affected by the reforming zeal of Piyadasi; in his records, he issued orders and instructions to central and provincial authorities only, and adopted an attitude of *laissez faire* to those below them. This suggests that each of the smaller local units itself managed its own affairs in its own way, without any direction or control from the centre. From Megasthenes' description of Pataliputra, we get an idea of the administrative arrangements in urban centres; perhaps, the rural areas also had their own organs which developed along parallel lines. Similarly, in the autonomous states within the empire, though the ultimate sovereignty lay certainly with the Emperor, the executive business was carried on by the people on the spot. The central government at Pataliputra had very little direct control over them, though, as we have seen, in the administration of justice the king did exercise some control by sending out his judicial officers to these distant regions. Moreover, the Emperor granted independence to the Rajukas in the award of honours and penalties. But all these restrictions on the supreme executive authority of the Crown should not be looked upon as instances of abdication of royal power ; rather, they implied the delegation of his authority to different bodies to ensure the smooth and efficient working of the administration machinery. An analogy will make the point clear. When the Curia Regis or the king's council in England rapidly grew up, there arose, as a result of differentiation of functions, branches out of the parent tree, like the Exchequer, the Chancery, and others. But none of these separate

bodies could even claim to supersede the authority and jurisdiction of the Curia which thereby suffered neither in prestige nor in powers. In the same way, here the central authority, that is, in a word, the Crown, by conceding independence to local bodies and Rajukas never for a moment gave out the idea that its authority disappeared in any of those fields. It was only a case of allocation of functions with their consequent rights, in the interests of the good government and the empire. Moreover, the central government counteracted all disintegrating tendencies of the component parts of the empire, by means of the two institutions of Anusanyana or circuit of officials, and itinerant Dharmamahamatras. Secondly, in the field of legislation, the king had to admit certain restrictions. Even in his edicts, Asoka confessed that the sacred laws that he had propagated among his subjects, were Poranapakiti or old customs, which as Dr. H. C. Raichaudhuri rightly interpretes, implies that they were not his own innovations, but customs and usages of the past—a sort of Common Law in so far as they were customary and became, as a result of Asoka's propagation, common to the whole kingdom. The anxiety which Asoka expressed in his edicts for reverence and welfare of the Brahmanas also proves that he had recognised the position of distinction that the Brahman held in the eye of law in those days. Again, although he interferred in the affairs of the Buddhist Sangha, and had made donations to the followers of other faiths, Asoka never claimed to meddle into the religious affairs of his subjects in general. It is not possible to think of Asoka issuing Claraedon Codes for Brahmanism and Jainism, which were allowed to pursue their independent existence.

All these facts taken together would clearly show that the absolutism which Asoka enjoyed was not of the same kind as that of an Alauddin Khilji. But the monarch was no doubt a despot, though, of course, there were certain redeeming features in his despotism. To call it a limited monarchy is a mistake. It would rather come very near to what is known as benevolent despotism. According to Mr. Ghosh, "it was even more enlightened than the benevolent despotism of the West." Such an opinion is also open to objection. For, it is indeed difficult to decide as to which represented the more enlightened type, because enlightenment has been interpreted in different ages according to different ethical standards. On the other hand, from the standpoint of practical politics, a Frederick or a Catharine with their constructive genius would not have been as incongruous at Pataliputra in the fourth century B. C. as an Asoka with his idealistic pacifism at Potsdam or St. Petersburg in the eighteenth century. However, we need not enter here into a fruitless discussion on the relative greatness of these monarchs.

What is noteworthy is the fact that all of them were cast in the same mould, and enjoyed the same amount of absolute authority in their respective realms, though circumstances and temperaments prevented each of them from exercising those powers in the same manner and to the same extent. Asoka's kingship was as despotic as those of the other two, though the charm of his hallowed name keeps him apart, in popular imagination, from that despised and discredited species of mortals, the royal autocrats. But a sober student of history should be critical in his judgment, and never fall an easy victim to chauvinistic proclivities.

N. C.

“The College is too much with us”

(A PARODY ON WORDSWORTH)

RAMESH KUMAR GHOSHAL—*Third Year, Arts.*

The College is too much with us ; day after day,
 Reading and listening, we lay waste our powers :
 Little we see in study that is ours ;
We have given our time away, a sordid boon !

The classes that are enough to send us into a swoon,
 The students that will be howling at all hours
 And all of them, undoubtedly, cowards,
For this, for everything we are out of tune ;

It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
 A man that for money's sake has to mourn :
So might I, drinking tasteful Tosh's tea,

 Have works that would make me less forlorn ;
Have looks on buses plying along the street ;
 Or hear big lorries blow their miserable horn.



Sir Abdur Rahim
President, Indian Legislative Assembly
(One of our distinguished ex-students)

The Telephone

SAILENDRA NATH SUR—*Third Year, Science.*

OF the many inventions or discoveries brought out during the Nineteenth Century (of which thirteen are of very great importance) the Telephone is one of the most useful and interesting. The word 'Telephone' means an "apparatus for transmitting sound, especially speech, to a distance by wire or cord, especially by means of electricity." The history of the electric telephone dates from 1854, when Charles Bourseul, a Frenchman, published a paper containing the following statement:—"Suppose that a man speaks near a movable disc sufficiently pliable to lose none of the vibrations of the voice: that this disc alternately makes and breaks currents from a battery, you may have, at a distance, another disc, which will simultaneously execute the same vibrations..... It is certain that, in the more or less distant future, speech will be transmitted by electricity. I have made experiments in this direction: they are delicate, and demand time and patience but the approximations obtained promise a favourable result."

This undoubtedly contained the germ of electric telephony, but it was Johann Philipp Reis, Science master in a school at Friedrichsdorf, Germany, who invented the telephone in 1861. The first really successful telephone was the invention of Alexander Graham Bell, who was professor of Vocal Physiology in the University of Boston. To this Graham Bell the invention of electric telephone is mostly attributed.

For the transmission of speech or sound we require the use of (1) a transmitter or microphone, (2) a receiver and (3) a circuit containing a battery. One principle requires the use of only two receivers and a circuit and no battery.

As stated before, Reis was the first person to transmit sound electrically. His telephone is, therefore, important from a historical point of view. His apparatus transmitted musical sounds with considerable accuracy but people do not agree as to whether his apparatus could transmit speech. Professor Silvanus Thompson asserts that Reis's telephone could and did transmit speech, but others hold just the opposite view. Probably his apparatus could transmit speech but so very imperfectly as to be of no practical use. Reis was quite aware of this defect in his telephone and he admitted that in a

lecture in which he said:—"Hitherto it has not been possible to reproduce human speech with sufficient distinction. The consonants are for the most part reproduced pretty distinctly but not the vowels as yet in an equal degree."

The working of Reis's telephone depended upon the fact that when an iron rod is magnetised a ticking sound is produced. If the current be interrupted very frequently and regularly and the rod be attached in its two ends to a sounding-board or box a musical note will be produced of a pitch depending upon the frequency of the breaks of the current. Reis's receiver was an arrangement of this kind. The Reis transmitter consisted of a membrane with a contact arranged at its centre by means of which the current was intended to be made or broken by every movement of this diaphragm.

However, Reis's telephone has come to no use. It is Prof. Bell's telephone, and particularly his receiver, which is being still used with great advantage. Prof. Bell's telephone rests, for its working, on the fact that "every different sound needs a different motion of the air particles for its conveyance, and if the characteristic motion of any sound can be impressed upon the air particles at any place, that sound will be reproduced." Bell's first telephone consisted of an adjustable electro-magnet in front of which a gold-beater's skin was stretched over a hollow cylinder. A small piece of clock-spring was cemented to the centre of the membrane. Two of these instruments were taken and joined with each other, a battery being inserted in the circuit. The action was as follows:—On speaking the air particles moved and so the membrane also moved. The movements of the magnetic substance in front of the magnet produced alterations in the magnetic field in which were the coils. The effect was to cause electrical pulsations to pass through the coils, the wires and the coils of the receiving instrument were of such a nature that they affected the attraction between the electro-magnet and the steel-spring and produced vibrations in the diaphragm which set the air in front of it in motion in such a manner as to reproduce the original sound.

Many improvements were made by Prof. Bell gradually and later on he discovered the "Double-pole" telephone in which a horse-shoe magnet was used and two small coils of wire were fixed on soft-iron pieces attached to the poles. It has been found that no battery was necessary in the circuit. Thin sheet-iron was also introduced instead of the gold-beater's skin.

This instrument, however, lacked portability. So the third and final type of instrument was designed which was essentially a bar

magnet with a bobbin of wire on one end. The ends of the wire of the bobbin were connected to the two terminals and the diaphragm, made of ferrotype iron, was placed before the end of the magnet (projected through the bobbin). This is the instrument we nowadays use as our telephone receiver.

In the meantime the world-famous scientist Edison was performing experiments for the improvement of the telephone. Du Moncel had discovered "that the increase of pressure between two conductors in contact produces a diminution in their electrical resistance." Carbon affords the best illustration of this fact and so Edison chose this substance for making his "Button transmitter." In its simplest form it consists of a mica diaphragm pressed against a button which again presses against a chamber, the sides of which are made of insulating material. This chamber contains lamp-black. On speaking on the *diaphragm it vibrates and presses or releases the pressure on the button*, which again repeats the process on the chamber.

The original type of Edison's transmitter is, however, not in use. A variation of this transmitter, invented by A. C. White, is the instrument we mostly use nowadays. The construction of this type of Microphone is as follows:—A small brass cell provided with a screwed cover is rigidly fixed to the mouthpiece. The sides of the cell are lined with paper. A mica disc, fitted with a thin carbon electrode in the centre, is clamped to the screwed cover. The electrode is faced by another one of carbon fixed to the back of the cell. Both the electrodes are electroplated and soldered to their supports. The space left in the cell is filled with carbon granules.

Later experiments in telephony by Prof. Hughes have proved that "any loose contact between conductors would act as a telephonic transmitter, owing to the variations of resistance caused between them by the impact of the sound waves." Prof. Hughes arranged two nails parallel to each other in one direction and placed another nail over them and connected a circuit containing a Bell receiver and a battery with the parallel nails. The best effect was obtained when a carbon rod, chiselled in both the ends was made to stand in scooped-out grooves in two carbon blocks which were connected with a circuit. We see, therefore, that the principle of the telephone, viz.:—developing pulsatory currents or varying a current already existing is the same in all cases.

So far as to the telephones. Now let us describe how in a city subscribers talk with one another by means of telephones. In cities there are exchanges which connect a subscriber with another. These

exchanges may be "manual" i.e., worked by operators or "automatic" for working which no operators are required. The former can be divided into two classes, viz.:—"magneto" and "central battery" (C. B.). In the magneto system each subscriber has a magneto generator attached to his instrument. Whenever any subscriber wishes to speak to another, he turns the handle of the generator (producing alternating current) and the operator gets a signal from the indicator in the exchange. He then takes up one of the several connecting cords with plugs and inserts the plug into the "jack" of the calling subscriber and asks the number of the subscriber whom he wants to speak to. Having ascertained the number the operator inserts the other plug of the cord into the "jack" of the called subscriber. He then rings the bell of the latter by means of a magneto generator in the exchange.

In the C. B. system all that the subscriber has to do is to remove the receiver from the hook. On removing the receiver the hook rises a little, making a circuit complete and the operator gets the signal by means of a small electric bulb corresponding to the subscriber's instrument. He then repeats the process as described in the latter portion of the previous paragraph.

Automatic exchanges are worked on the C. B. principle but the connections are made by means of switches controlled by the subscribers. Each subscriber's telephone has a dial by manipulating which one to ten impulses can be sent. The switches in the exchanges are controlled by these impulses and connections are made according to the combination of impulses sent. No operator is required at the exchange.

Compared with the Wireless Telegraphy and Telephony or with Television the importance and necessity of the Telephone may appear rather little. But the Telephone has its own importance and so it has become almost indispensable in our daily life. Now we cannot but wonder how our grandfathers managed without it.

Unemployment in the Empire of Chemistry

NRIPENDRA LAL LAHIRY—*Fourth Year, Science.*

THE question of unemployment is a universal one in these days. Even among the elements which constitute this world, the majority are either sitting idle or have only part-time jobs.

There are ninety-two known elements—the workmen upon whom the chemist must depend for everything he does. Only eleven have found jobs. The other eighty-one are still sitting idle and waiting for jobs.

The business of finding new jobs for chemical elements is extremely profitable, not only to the world but to the employment agents. Many fortunes have thus been made by chemists in the last fifty years and many more are being made now.

One element has sat idle since its discovery nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. This is Titanium. It is a tough hard metal and greyish in colour. It can be used to make tools and implements.

Silicon is actually the second most plentiful element in the accessible part of the earth, surpassed only by Oxygen. Yet it has practically no job.

Fluorine is so violent and temperamental that few care to have it around. It bites everything that comes near it. Consequently Fluorine gets very few jobs, and the vast deposits of its ore are lying unused.

Only recently chemists have succeeded in isolating Thorium, Uranium, Vanadium and Zirconium in large quantities. The first two are slightly radio-active, sharing in some degree the properties of radium.

Among metals, Magnesium and Beryllium are only partially employed. They are capable of making very light alloys.

Potassium, Sodium, Rubidium and Cæsium are relatively unused. All of them become so angry when anyone gives them a drink of water that they burst into flame.

Tin is overworked instead of underworked. A helper for Tin is urgently needed.

Lead is the only known material that can properly protect underground electric cables. It is largely used every year for this purpose. A substitute, in case of exhaustion of lead-sources, should be sought for.

Osmium is the heaviest substance known, nearly twice as heavy as lead. It would be useful for weights, but enough of it has never been found.

Neon, a gaseous element, unemployed for twenty years, has found employment in making the Neon tubes used by experimenters in television and the new lamps which now decorate so many city streets with words written in reddish fire.

Chromium, a century-old metal, has at last found an extremely useful job in plating metal tools and machine parts to make their surfaces almost as hard as diamonds and in the production of stainless cutlery.

Argon, an unemployed gaseous element, is now largely being used for filling metal filament electric lamps.

Helium, another gaseous element, is now extensively used for filling the gas containers of air-ships in place of hydrogen.

Perhaps the most spectacular of all, Chlorine gas, used as a war weapon, is now at work, bleaching most of the papers and much of the white cloths that are made in the world. No less beneficial is the use of chlorine in disinfecting places infected with germs of diseases.

There are still many vacancies waiting to be filled.*

*I am indebted to Mr. E. E. Free, the writer of the paper "New Jobs for the Old Metals," for my article.

Asoka's Religion (Dhamma)

His early faith, His Conversion and Nature of His Dhamma (Buddhism)

SUDHIR RANJAN GHOSH, M.A., B.L.—*Ex-student.*

EVERYBODY who has some knowledge of Indian history knows Asoka as the greatest Buddhist Emperor of India—as an ardent follower of the religion of Gautama. But it is not safe to assert that he was a Buddhist from the very dawn of his life. There are some scholars¹ who go so far as to say that Asoka was never a Buddhist. This is far from truth. Though he was not a Buddhist, as we shall see, in the early part of his life, he had certainly embraced Buddhism by the tenth year of his coronation (C. 269 B. C.). Those who hold that Asoka was not a Buddhist at first, do not entertain any doubt that he became a Buddhist afterwards. Thus Edward Thomas thinks that Asoka was a Jaina at first, but became a Buddhist afterwards.² According to Kalhan, Asoka himself was a Saiva at first and then he became a Buddhist.³ Moreover, there is no evidence which shows that Asoka accepted any religion other than that of Gautama. On the other hand, the Buddhist traditions and the inscriptions⁴ of Asoka decisively prove that his religion was Buddhism. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that during the first few years of his life he was either a Brahmanical Hindu, especially devoted to Siva or a Jaina, but in the middle of his life he gave up his old faith and turned a Buddhist.

Asoka's early religion:—

In the early life of Asoka—the life he led up to the end of the Kalinga war (261 B. C.), we find him a typical Magadhan monarch-like Bimbisara or Chandragupta taking delight in animal sacrifices and wars

1. H. H. Wilson, *Father Heras*; V. R. R. Dikshitar (*The Mauryan Polity*, p. 288). Mr. Dikshitar says, 'Asoka's personal faith was Brahmanical Hinduism to the very end of his days.' (*Mauryan Polity*, p. 288).

2. J. R. A. S. (NS.) Vol. IX, pp. 155, 187.

3. Kalhan, *Rajatarangini*, I, 102.

4. Bhabru Edict, Minor Pillar Inscriptions (Rummindei, Nigliva, Sarnath Pillar, etc.), Ceylonese tradition that he held 3rd Buddhist Council at Pataliputra, P. E. V., Rock Edict VIII, etc. (See R. K. Mukherjee—'Asoka,' Chap. IV, p. 55). ...

of conquests. Like other kings of ancient India, Asoka was in the habit of holding *samajas*—or gatherings of people—in which men were treated to dainty dishes, to wrestling and dancing and other enjoyments.¹ He also used to distribute meat among his subjects and hundreds of animals were daily slain for the purpose. He went on tours of pleasures in which hunting played the most prominent part. Before he embraced Buddhism, he had been fond of animal flesh and had no scruple about slaughter of animals.² These practices indicate that Asoka could not have been a follower of Mahavir's religion (as Edward Thomas suggests) in the early part of his life, for the sanctity of animal life was held in great esteem by the Jainas. In all probability, Asoka was a Saiva—the **worshipper of a God** 'whose consort delights in bloody sacrifices.' Thus the traditions (e.g. Kalhan's history of Kashmir) that describe Asoka as a follower of Brahmanical faith in his early years seem to contain a large element of truth. It is almost certain, therefore, that Asoka himself had been a Brahmanical Hindu before he became a convert to Buddhism.

Asoka's conversion—its time and cause:—

Now it will be necessary to discuss how and when Asoka gave up his early religion and embraced the simple faith of the Sakya sage. At the present state of knowledge it is no longer possible to call in question the Buddhist faith of the third Maurya Emperor. But it is difficult to determine the year which saw the parting of ways—the year in which Asoka embraced the new faith. Opinions differ on this point.

The Ceylonese chronicle mentions that in the fourth year of his accession to the throne, i.e., in the year of his solemn coronation (C. 269 B.C.) 'was King Asoka constrained to abandon the Brahmanical faith of his father, to accept as a lay disciple the sacred law of Buddha.'³ This account places his conversion to Buddhism some eight years before the Kalinga war (C. 261 B.C.). But Asoka's inscriptions do not say that his coronation and change of faith took place in the same year. The earliest inscription that definitely speaks of Asoka's leanings towards Buddhism is Rock Edict VIII which says 'Now King Piyadasin, Beloved of God, repaired to sambodhi (Bodhi Tree)—(a 'place where Buddha obtained enlightenment') when he had been consecrated ten years' (e.g. 259 B.C.). This shows that Asoka

1. Rock Edict I.

2. *Ibd.* cf. "Formerly in the kitchen of king Piyadasin, Beloved of Gods, many hundreds of thousands of animals were every day slaughtered for curry."

3. V. Smith—'Asoka' (2nd ed.), p. 208.

was a Buddhist in the tenth year of his reign—and that he was visiting Buddhist holy places. Another inscription¹ says—'It was more than two years and a half that I was a lay-worshipper, but did not exert myself strenuously. It is one year, indeed, more than a year that I have lived with the Samgha and have exerted myself.' This inscription shows that Asoka had become a lay-worshipper of Buddha two years before he began to exert himself for his new faith. Thus if his visit to Samadhi (in the 10th year of his reign) be the earliest exertion on his part in the interest of Buddhism, he must have become a Buddhist two years earlier, i.e., in the 8th year of his reign (C. 261 B.C.). Again, another edict² of his, issued in the 12th year of his reign, says—'But now in consequence of the practice of Dhamma by the King Piyadasi, Beloved of Gods, the sound of drum has become the sound of Dhamma have now increased slaughter of animate beings, abstention from injury to creatures! This Edict clearly points out that Asoka had become a Buddhist before the 12th year of his reign (257 B.C.), because here he reviews the result of his exertions for the cause of his new faith. Now if we read this edict with the Minor Rock Inscription (No. 1) quoted above, which give four years' progress of Asoka's religion (more than two years of non-exertion, and more than a year of exertion) and deduct these four years from the 12th year (in which the R. E. IV was issued)—we get the 8th year of his reign, i.e., year of the Kalinga war (261 B.C.) as the earliest date which may be fixed for Asoka's conversion to Buddhism. Dr. Bhandarkar³ has definitely placed Asoka's conversion in the 8th regnal year (261 B.C.)—the year of the Kalinga war. Anyway the testimony of Ceylonese chronicle cannot be accepted as true.

But one scholar⁴ suggested that Asoka embraced Buddhism in the thirtieth year from his Coronation (293 B.C.). It is impossible to support this view. There are a number of dated inscriptions issued by Asoka himself which prove beyond doubt that he had become a Buddhist long before he completed the 30th year of his reign. As early as 20th year of his reign, Asoka himself visited the birthplace of Buddha, and did worship.⁵ In the fourteenth year of his reign, he enlarged for the second time the stupa of Buddha Konakamana. In the 12th year from his Coronation he reviewed the achievements

1. M. R. Inscription (Brahmagiri Text).

2. Rock Edict IV.

3. Dr. Bhandarkar's 'Asoka' (1925), pp. 73-76, Chap. III.

4. Late Dr. J. F. Fleet.

5. Rummidei Inscription.

that his Dhamma had attained. As early as the 10th year he had repaired to sambodhi, the place where Buddha attained True Knowledge.

All these inscriptions taken together prove decisively that Asoka had embraced Buddhism in the year of the Kalinga war, (eighth year from his Coronation, i.e., 261 B.C.). So we may conclude that up to 261 B. C. Asoka had been a Brahmanical Hindu, and had nothing to do with the teachings of Sakyamuni. But the year 261 B. C. saw two mighty events—Asoka's conversion to Buddhism, and the Kalinga war.¹

CAUSES OF HIS CONVERSION.

Now let us discuss the causes of Asoka's conversion to Buddhism. It is extremely difficult to state the causes of Asoka's conversion to the faith of Gautama. As we have seen above, the year of his conversion coincides with that of the Kalinga war. Some scholars are inclined to believe that the Kalinga war was the cause of Asoka's change of religion. The indescribable horrors and untold miseries that the war brought upon the people of Kalinga must have caused a revolution in his mind and given the first signal for the entire change of his outlook on life. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar², on the other hand, would have us believe that at the time of the Kalinga war 'he was already a Buddhist and was therefore ashamed of the war and felt a deep longing for Dhamma.' The Rock Edict XIII is the only epigraph which describes the horrors of the Kalinga war, and side by side with it refers to the penitent attitude of the Emperor. But this Edict means that Asoka felt remorse not at the time when Kalinga was annexed, but at the time when this edict was promulgated. So the Kalinga war could not be the cause of Asoka's embracing the Buddhist faith. If the Kalinga war is at all taken to be the cause of his conversion, one has got to admit that "he was zealously carrying on the protection and teaching of Dhamma, as we are told in the Rock Edict XIII, immediately after this province was conquered and he became a Buddhist."³ According to Dr. R. K. Mukherjee, Asoka became a convert to Buddhism some three years before the outbreak of the Kalinga war (i.e., 264 B.C.).

1. But Dr. R. K. Mukherjee (Asoka, Chap. IV) suggests that Asoka's conversion to Buddhism preceded the Kalinga war—and that he had shown his definite leanings towards Buddhism some three years earlier than this momentous event of his career, i.e., he became a convert to Buddhism in 264 B.C.

2. Bhandarkar—Asoka (1925), pp. 74-75. The only Edict that leads scholars to assume that the Kalinga war is the cause of Asoka's conversion to Buddhism is R. E. XIII.

3. *Ibd.*, pp. 77-78.

After carefully examining the different views on the point we may conclude that the Kalinga war was not the immediate cause of Asoka's conversion to Buddhism. It took place, on the other hand, at a time when Asoka had just started his life as a lay-worshipper of Gautama. But there is no denying the fact that the actual horrors of the campaign at Kalinga left a deep impression on Asoka's mind and he became determined to hold fast to the faith of Buddha—specially to its cardinal doctrines of Ahimsa and Maitri. Scarcely two years and a half had passed when Asoka 'woke to the possibilities of his position, joined the order of monks and entered upon a course of activity'. His visit to Sambodhi, the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, in the tenth year of his reign marks the beginning of his zealous protection and teaching of Dhamma.' Thus, though the Kalinga war cannot be regarded as the immediate cause of Asoka's change of faith, it must be recognised as a factor that intensified Asoka's feelings towards, and reverence for, the Holy Samgha, and persuaded him to attach himself more intimately to it. The years that followed the Kalinga war saw the closer association of the Emperor with the Samgha, and his strenuous exertions for the cause of Buddhism. In the tenth year of his reign he repaired to Sambodhi,—and in the 20th year he became a full-fledged Buddhist visiting the birthplace of Buddha at Lumbini Garden and doing worship there.

NATURE OF ASOKA'S BUDDHISM.

One who carefully goes through the edicts of Asoka naturally gets curious as to the nature of his new faith. A Buddhist he certainly became. But the elements constituting his Dhamma are so simple and non-sectarian that one is at first sight led to doubt if it was Buddhism at all. Dr. Bhandarkar is, however, inclined to believe that Asoka's (personal) Dhamma was 'a code of morals, not, however, such as was merely common to all religions . . . but rather such as have been recommended by Buddhism to the people in general.'² Thus the code of practical ethics which Piyadasi himself practised was primarily based upon the fundamental principles of Buddhism. In short, the ethics of the Edicts are Buddhistic, rather than Brahmanical³ and at the time these edicts were inscribed on rocks and pillars he had definitely attached himself to Buddhism.

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1. C. H. I., Vol. I, p. 504.
 2. Bhandarkar—Asoka, p. 85.
 3. Smith—Asoka (2nd ed.), p. 30.

ORIGINAL BUDDHISM IN ITS BROADER SENSE.

It is very difficult to determine how far Asoka's Buddhism resembled the original faith as preached by Lord Gautama. Asoka proclaimed in no uncertain terms his respect and delight in "Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha,"¹ and thus he obeyed the well-known Buddhist formula. Utterances of Buddha were regarded by him as Gospel truth: "Whatever, reverend sir," says he, "has been said by Buddha all that has been well said."² He expressed a great solicitude for the maintenance of unity of the Buddhist Samgha and strove hard to see that 'the Samgha may not be divided by anyone.'³ All this shows that he accepted the original Buddhism in its broader aspect.

BUDDHISM MEANS FOR THE HOUSEHOLDERS.

But his Buddhism did not resemble the original Buddhism in every point. He left aside the ritualistic and metaphysical elements, the mere disciplinary rules of the Samgha. He took only the essence of Buddhism that elevates the mind and ennobles the soul. He did not care much for the higher philosophical conceptions of Buddhism, namely, the four grand truths, the eightfold path, the chain of causation, the supernatural quality of Buddha, the word and the idea of Nirvana;⁴ and no distinct Law of Karma is mentioned in his religion. He only made a very modest approach to these higher ideas in saying that the gift of Dhamma is above all other gifts,⁵ and that meditation is to be preferred to liberality. But the fundamentals of Buddhism attracted his mind. Its ethical side that 'conduces to real inner growth' fascinated him, and Asoka gave marked prominence to two specially Buddhist virtues—respect for sanctity of animal life (Ahimsa) and reverence to parents, superiors and elders. The texts that he cites in his Bhabru Edict clearly point to the fundamental ethical principles of Gautama's religion. But Asoka's Buddhism was not that part of Buddhism which had been specially reserved for the monks. It resembled only the other part of it, the Dhamma, laid down for the ordinary householders who had not embraced monastic life. Asoka never became a Bhikshu or Monk himself, but he ended his career as a Bhikshu-gatika, i.e., a householder practising those articles of faith specially laid down by Gautama for the ordinary men of the world. This part of Buddhism consisted of a body of simple ethical

1. Bhabru Inscription.

2. *Ibd.*

3. Sarnath Pillar Inscription.

4. C. H. I., Vol. I, p. 505.

5. R. E. IX.

principles and practices, such as hearkening to parents, seemly behaviour to servants, freedom from sin, etc., Himself a householder (and not a monk), Asoka readily accepted this part of Buddhism as his personal religion as well as the religion he sought to popularise among his men, though his reverence for the Samgha and his solicitude for its unity were also equally prominent in him. Asoka's religion was, therefore, the Buddhism meant for the householders only and not for the monks, that part of the faith of Gautama which it is easier to practise and propagate. He was thus a householder Buddhist for whom the intricate philosophy of the monks and their ritualistic rules had no charm.

NOT MILITANT—BUT HIGHLY TOLERANT.

Asoka's faith in Buddha was not of a militant type. It was not exclusively sectarian but was highly tolerant of and respectful to all other religions. An analysis of his different edicts proves the truth of this statement. "The King does reverence to men of all sects"¹ and he instructs seemly behaviour to Brahmanas and Sramanas² and even goes so far as to encourage the faith of Ajivikas by Barabar cave dedications to them in the 12th year of his reign. Rajatarangini³ mentions the names of several Brahmanical temples built or restored by Asoka. He was not hostile to any faith or to its fundamental ideas. By denouncing the killing of men in war, samajas and the slaughter of animal life in sacrifices, he gave a new tone to Buddhism. He made it more refined and more simple. By stripping it of its elaborate formalities and external rules he made it more popular. Thus Buddhism under Asoka became a living and universal faith—a faith that sees good in all creeds. It crystallised into his all-embracing Law of Piety that aimed at the material and spiritual progress of the animate beings in this world and the next. His precepts were, "purely practical and intended to lead men into the right way of living, not into correct philosophical positions."⁴ Asoka's faith then included only those duties which Buddhism prescribed for a householder; it represented not the whole of Buddhism but only the practical side of it.

ASOKA AND THE BUDDHIST CHURCH.

Asoka himself proclaimed in the famous Bhabru Edict his abiding faith in the Buddha, Dhamma the Sacred Law and the Samgha. It is therefore not unreasonable to think that he would strain every nerve

1. R. E. XII.

2. R. E. IV.

3. Rajatarangini, Stein, Book I, VV, pp. 101-107.

4. Smith—Asoka, p. 64.

to maintain the purity and solidarity of the Buddhist Church. He set forth passages from the Buddhist Scriptures embodying certain fundamental principles conducive to a higher and nobler life. He expected that monks and nuns should listen to them. He was anxious to maintain the unity of the Buddhist Church and to discourage any possible schism therein by holding before the monks and nuns the fear of punishment that would visit any person who breaks away from the Samgha. Thus said Piyadasi: "The Samgha may not be divided by any one. But whosoever breaks the Samgha, be it monk or nun, shall be clad in white raiment and compelled to live in what is not a residence" (of the clergy).¹

These edicts² directed against any possible disruption in the Buddhist Church naturally give rise to the enquiry about the condition of the Buddhist Church at the time. The tone of the edicts indicates that possibly the Buddhist Church was threatened with disruption during Asoka's reign and that the King took every possible step to prevent such schism in the 'Holy Church.'

The Buddhist tradition, as preserved in the Ceylonese legends clearly tells us that at the time of Asoka the Buddhist Church was split up into two main divisions—Theravada and Maha Samghika, each of which was divided into further sub-sections. If we are to believe the Buddhist tradition, we should also admit that the edicts of Asoka were issued to prevent further division in the Church to which Asoka belonged. The Samgha, in that case, would not mean the Buddhist Samgha as a whole, but a particular section of it to which the Emperor himself belonged.

But Dr. Bhandarkar is rather unwilling to believe the above tradition. He puts forth cogent arguments to prove that what Asoka meant by 'Samgha' was the entire undivided Buddhist Church and not a particular division of it.³ He is right when he says, "In Asoka's time the Buddhist Church was not divided and whenever he uses the word 'Samgha,' he means the whole undivided church . . . (but) some attempts at schism must have already been made in his time; as otherwise there is no meaning in taking comprehensive measures to suppress all heresy."⁴

1. Sarnath Pillar Inscriptions.

2. Tradition affirms that a Buddhist Council was held at Pataliputra during Asoka's reign for the purpose of suppressing heresy. The Sarnath Edict and its variants may be regarded as embodying the resolution of this Council. (V. Smith—Asoka, 3rd edition, p. 55).

3. Bhandarkar—Asoka (1925), pp. 93-96.

4. *Ibd.*—Asoka (1925), 95-96, 97.

Thus we may conclude that the Buddhist Church was not divided: it was only threatened with disruption to prevent which Asoka took every precaution. It seems probable that the attempt to break up the unity of the Buddhist Church was not confined to a particular place, but it was manifest in some of the important centres of Buddhist monastic establishments—the places where the copies of Sarnath-Kousambi-Sanchi Edict were distributed. The attitude that Asoka took up to prevent attempts at schism was rather stern and careful. Nevertheless, his relations with the Buddhist Church were friendly and cordial¹ beyond all doubt. His advice to the members of the church in the Bhabru edict regarding the study of certain passages from the Buddhist scriptures betrays no note of arrogance. But as regards the suppression of heresy within the Buddhist Church he was very cautious and severe. This displays nothing but his ardent regard for the unity of the Samgha though he paid no special attention to it. Every other religious organisation was equally an object of reverence to him. The two edicts, Bhabru and Sarnath, thus explain the nature of Asoka's relation to the Holy Samgha. Was it subordinate to the Emperor's authority or was Asoka bound to obey the church decision? The above two inscriptions have been interpreted by scholars to mean that Asoka was the head of the State as well as the head of the church.² The Sarnath Edict has been described by Asoka himself as his Sasana or order, directing the Mahamatras to carry his command to every Samgha of monks or nuns within his empire. Thus, Asoka was no less an ecclesiastical than a civil ruler.³ But it should be borne in mind that he was not that type of king who would usurp the legitimate position of the clergy. He was rather a 'watchful guardian of the unity and discipline of the church which he loved.'⁴ His intimate connection with the Samgha since the year of the Kalinga war had made him extremely anxious for the unity and harmony within the church; and he felt it to be a sort of moral obligation on his part to punish every attempt at schism within its fold. Yet he would hardly like the constant interference in the affairs of the churchmen, and he never allowed his own reason to encroach upon the freedom of individual belief and judgment.

Such was the nature of Asoka's Buddhism. It was a non-sectarian, tolerant, and a highly impartial religion. It was a code of practical

1. C. H. I., Vol. I, p. 506.

2. Smith—Asoka, 2nd edition, p. 106. (Asoka) was at the same time able to control the intricate affairs of Church and State.

3. Bhandarkar—Asoka (1st edition), p. 99.

4. Smith—Asoka (2nd edition), p. 67.

ethics—of the simple Buddhist doctrines laid down for the householders. Though a Buddhist Asoka was not partial to his own faith. The punishment he lays down for those who would attempt to break the Samgha sufficiently indicates that he was not a person to treat the followers of his own faith leniently.

ASOKA AND THE BUDDHIST COUNCIL.

Tradition¹ affirms that Asoka convened a Buddhist Council at Asokaram in Pataliputra in the 19th year (C. 250 B.C.) of his Coronation to suppress heresy. This Council is usually known as the third Buddhist Council. The first Council had been held at Rajagriha soon after the death of Buddha and the second at Vaisali a century after the first. The Council that was held under Asoka's patronage was "occasioned by sectarian differences among the Buddhist Confession of which as many as eighteen divisions are named."² It is stated that the Council lasted for nine months and gave decisions in favour of the Sthaviras, a section of the Buddhists. V. Smith thinks that the resolutions of the Council were published in the Sarnath Edict which deals with the penalty of schism within the Buddhist Church. There is some truth in the position taken by the above scholar, for, Asoka's order in this edict—"Whoever, monk or nun, shall break the unity of the Church shall be compelled to wear white garments and to dwell in a place not reserved for the clergy" well accords with the statement of Buddha Ghosha that 'after the Council of Pataliputra Asoka actually expelled the schismatics giving them white garments.'³ Still it is very curious that the above edict does not give even the slightest hint about this Buddhist Council at Pataliputra.

A contrary view is expressed by Dr. Bhandarkar. He does not agree with the Ceylonese tradition that Asoka convened the third Buddhist Council in order to heal the divisions in the Buddhist Church. He says that at the time of Asoka 'the Buddhist Church was not divided and that wherever he uses the word 'Samgha,' he means the whole undivided church.'⁴ It was only threatened with disruption. At the time of the second Buddhist Council which met at Vaisali under Kalasoka, a century after Buddha, "the Buddhist Church was still undivided, though it was threatened with a schism on account of the ten points about discipline raised by the Vrijan monks. The

1. Mahavamsa—Pali Hist. of Buddhism in India and Ceylon.

2. C. H. I., Vol. I, p. 498.

3. Asoka—Smith (2nd edition), p. 196.

4. Bhandarkar—Asoka, pp. 95-96.

latter were defeated and the split of the Samgha for the time averted."¹ So according to him, Asoka convoked the second Buddhist Council (and not the third) and Kalasoka of the tradition is the real historical Asoka. Asoka's inscriptions do not set forth the conditions under which the third Buddhist Council of the tradition met, viz., the sectarian differences among the Buddhist confession. If the third Buddhist Council had met at all in Asoka's time, it was rather a party meeting than a general Council.

Our conclusion is that during the reign of Asoka the Buddhist Church, though undivided, was threatened with a possible disruption. So the emperor Asoka convened a great Buddhist Council, most probably the second Council of the tradition, to discuss the measures to be taken to prevent the schism that was threatening the holy Samgha. It is also reasonable to infer that the opinions which Asoka expressed and the duties which he imposed upon the clergy, were published in a series of edicts known as the Bhabru-Sarnath-Kosambi-Sanchi group so that the wish or the order of Piyadasi might be known to all.

MAIN STAGES OF HIS RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT—CONCLUSION.

So far we have surveyed the personal religion of Asoka. That he became a Buddhist in the 8th year of his Coronation (C. 261 B.C.) admits of no question.² From this time to the twenty-seventh year of his reign of which we have epigraphic records, Asoka remained Buddhist in faith. For more than two years after his conversion he had been a lay worshipper or *upasaka*. During this period he supplied the Bhikshus with their four necessities of life, viz., food, clothing, shelter and medicine³ and did not exert himself strenuously for Buddhism. Meanwhile the Kalinga war had left a deep impression upon his mind and he was determined to come into closer association with the Samgha. The tenth year of his Coronation (C. 259 B.C.)

1. Bhandarkar—Asoka (1925), p. 96.

2. Dr. R. K. Mukherjee in his 'Asoka,' Chap. IV, p. 55, brilliantly sums up the pieces of evidence which decisively prove that Asoka did become and remain up to the end of his reign a sincere follower of Gautama, we may quote some of the instances given by him:—

(a) Asoka's pilgrimage to holy places,

(b) His observance of *upasira*—Buddhist holidays (P. E. V.),

(c) Association with Asokan pillars with 4 animals—Elephant, Bull, Horse and Lion,

(d) His various measures for protecting animal life,

(e) Convocation of a Buddhist Council at Pataliputra, etc.

3. Mahavamsa—(Geiger's Tr., pp. 42-43).

saw a great land mark in the story of his religious development. It synchronised with his becoming a Bhiksu-gatika (i.e., reaching that stage of Buddhism which enables a 'person to gratify the religious bent of his mind without at the same time his having to renounce the world') and a zealous protector of the religion of Gautama. He signalised this new phase of his religious life by paying a visit to the Bodhi Tree, by giving up tours of pleasure and starting religious tours instead. Thus originated his 'touring for Dhamma,'¹ in which visits and gifts to Brahmana and Sramana ascetics played a prominent part. Thus from the very beginning of his new religious experience (conversion to Buddhism) he developed a spirit of toleration. In the twelfth year he dedicated Barabar Hill Caves to the Ajvikas—a Brahmanical order and had accepted Ahimsa or non-injury to animate beings as the definite creed of his religion.² He realised the merit of alms-giving in the 14th year of his reign³ and enlarged for the second time the stupa of Buddha Konakamana.⁴ Five years later (19th year) he dedicated another cave (Khalatika Hill)—probably to the Ajvikas. The twentieth year of his Coronation saw Asoka a full-fledged Buddhist, a full-grown Bhikshu-gatika when he visited the Lummini garden, the birthplace of Buddha, and did worship there.⁵ In the same year he visited the stupa of Buddha Konakamana, worshipped Him and raised a pillar.⁶ In the 26th year Asoka put restrictions upon the slaughter of living beings and in the next year he prevented it altogether. Meanwhile he had stood forth as the defender of his faith and had issued edicts to prevent schism in the Buddhist Church.

Thus we see that up to 261 B. C. Asoka had been a Brahmanical Hindu, probably a worshipper of Siva. In the eighth year of his reign he became a Buddhist and in the tenth a devout Bhikshu-gatika. Till the end of his reign he scrupulously observed the cardinal doctrines of Buddhism, Ahimsa and Maitri, and the simple ethical principles and practices which Buddhism lays down for a house-holder. Throughout his life, he maintained high regard for Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha. Though a Buddhist, he was tolerant of all religions and took equal interest in the development of Buddhism, Brahmanical Hinduism and Jainism. His attitude towards every sect was friendly and cordial.

1. R. E. VIII.

2. See R. E. III, IV, Barabar Hill Cave Inscription.

3. R. E. V.

4. Nigliva inscription.

5. Rummidei inscription.

6. Nigliva inscription.

This was the religion which Asoka himself professed and practised. In the next chapter we shall have occasion to discuss the religion that he gave to his people, viz., the religion or Dhamma of the Edicts, which he preached and propagated among the peoples of his dominions and in those of neighbouring independent states.

OURSELVES

COLLEGE UNION NOTES

The time has come when we must say a few parting words. We meet, we part but sometimes we remember. Would we not remember these days which have brought to us a stir of pleasure? We carry with us the memory of ready sympathy and kind assistance which we had the proud privilege of receiving from the staff as well as students on various occasions—in a social gathering, at the stage or in a meeting room.

We tried our best to create an *esprit de corps* among the students, a cultural community among the teacher and the taught. None is more alive to failure and shortcomings than we are—still the success, if any, we have attained, is due more to our friends and teachers than to our efficiency and organisation. At this parting moment we cannot but repeat the words of thanks to them from the very depth of our heart.

The annual river trip under the auspices of the Union came off on Friday, the 9th March last. At 11-30 a.m. the steamer 'Howrah' started with a party of about 300, including members of the staff, from Chand Pal Ghat.

Everyone of us enjoyed the trip very much.

The haunting notes of 'kirtan' sung by Mrs. Renuka Das-Gupta and charming display of violin by Sj. Amulya Mukherjee lured our minds far away over the distant sunlit waves. But then the comic sketches and performance of black art by 'Baron' made us laugh. The oriental dance by Rashid Ahmed Chaudhury was highly appreciated. The sweet songs by other students and guests were highly welcome.

Light refreshment was served on board. Travelling up to Pulta we came back at about 5-30 in the afternoon.

On that occasion we had amidst us Sja. Aparna Devi, Mrs. Renuka Das-Gupta, Mrs. B. M. Sen, Mrs. S. Dutta, Mrs. N. M. Bose, Mrs. S. C. Majumdar, Mrs. J. C. Sinha, Mrs. M. M. Chatterjee, Mrs. S. C. Sarkar and Mrs. J. C. Sen-Gupta and their company made the trip all the livelier.

The Secretaries take the opportunity of thanking all who have worked whole-heartedly to make the function a success.

PUNYABRATA BHATTACHARYYA,
PROVASH DAS,

Secretaries.

HISTORICAL SEMINAR

The first general meeting of the current session came off on Saturday, the 16th December, 1934, with Professor S. C. Sarkar in the chair. Mr. Prosad Kumar Bose of the Fifth Year Class read a paper on "Chartism: Its Glories." It was a nice paper. The writer supported the movement

and took it as the first expression of socialism. A discussion followed in which Messrs. Nikhilnath Chakravarty and Krishna Govinda Bose took part. Mr. Chakravarty criticised the movement and Mr. Bose dwelt on the causes of failure. The President, then, gave a neat little speech. He emphasised particularly the connection of the chartist movement with Owenism and also because of its being the first working class movement. The meeting then came to a close.

The second general meeting took place on Saturday, the 23rd February last. Professor S. C. Sarkar presided. Mr. Akhtaruz Zaman of the Third Year Class read a paper entitled "An Apologia for Louis XIV." The writer tried to prove that almost all the acts of Louis XIV were in consonance with the desire of the majority of Frenchmen. He also contended that the civilisation of France, which dominated Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly sprang up at Louis' bidding and this can attest to the greatness of Louis XIV. An animated discussion took place in which almost everyone took part. All the speakers attacked Louis' policies from different standpoints. The President, after congratulating the essayist, reviewed Louis XIV's policies from different aspects. He admitted Louis' policies to be perfectly natural but denied him any greatness judging from different standpoints.

AKHTARUZ ZAMAN,
Secretary.

PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

At this fag-end of the session when all, from the Librarian down to the bearers are busy about "stock-taking" we, too, are thinking of looking back to the activities of our Seminar. We do not know whether after so many sunny pages of our Magazine a review of this rather questionable quarter of philosophers is going to look quite promising to the reader. Still, for a moment, let us look into the dark chamber of some dreaming visionaries.

In reviewing the activities of our Seminar this session, we should, first of all, express our gratefulness to Dr. Brahma for the keen interest he has taken all along for a really successful working of this Institution. Then we should thank the essayists and our ardent Secretary Mr. Anil Mohan Gupta, whose enthusiasm made it a real success.

Let us enter into a short review of the meetings. We had seven sittings during this session—all of them under the presidency of Dr. Brahma.

The Seminar opened this year with a discussion on the "Relation of Philosophy to Religion." Mr. Anil Gupta read a paper. He stated that the subject-matters of religion and Philosophy are the same, but there is a difference as regards the approach. Reason is the organ of Philosophy, intuition being the path to religion. Then he pointed out that intuition is "reason synthesised." So true knowledge, Philosophy, must culminate in religion.

In the second meeting, Mr. Taraprasad Das read a paper on the Substance of Spinoza. He touched all important points and remarked

that Spinoza introduces two contradictory ideas in his doctrine of Substance. The indeterminate unity, God, cannot be the cause of the diversified Universe. The President pointed out that there is no real contradiction at all. If we enter deep the apparent contradictions seem to reveal the truth. "God is neither the whole nor the part, but He is both part and the whole." The system of the Vedant, he observed, clears up the whole position.

In our third meeting, Mr. Ajit Mitra read a paper on the "Best View of Life." His treatment was mainly concerning the controversy between materialism and idealism. According to him, idealism alone can solve the riddle of this Universe. Only idealism offers an adequate explanation of this Universe—life, mind, and spirit.

In the fourth meeting, Mr. Kabir read an essay on "Mechanism and Teleology." The essayist favoured the teleological view and following, in main Martineau's arguments, established the validity of the teleological standpoint. The President observed that there is no antagonism between mechanism and teleology. Thus he attempted at a synthesis of both the theories. A good theory of teleology does not exclude mechanism. Mechanism is explained in the light of teleology. The mechanistic interpretation of life and mind, consciousness and spirit is a step in the process of translation. Events are worked out mechanically. But if you ask the why, teleology alone can answer the question.

The subject of discussion of the fifth meeting was "Whether the Absolute of Philosophy is the God of Religion." Mr. Sukumar Mitra pointed out that it is popularly held that the Absolute of Philosophy is impersonal as contrasted with the personal God of religion. But this is not tenable. The highest synthesis is not in ballet of bloodless categories. Such is the conclusion in Spinoza—that is what Hegel asserts.

Our sixth meeting was graced by the presence of Principal Sen. We had a debate on that occasion, the subject being "Mind vs. Matter—which is ultimately real." Mr. Haripada Das spoke on matter and Mr. Sudhendu-jiyoti Majumdar supported idealism. In this discussion all the essential arguments of the long-drawn controversy were presented before the house.

In our last meeting, Mr. Nirmal Chandra Majumdar read an essay on Spinoza's Metaphysics—"The Relation of Substance and Modes." The essayist observed that in Spinoza there is no real contradiction. To a lower understanding, imagination, modes are real no doubt, but intuition perceives the unity that underlies all through. It catches a transient glimpse of the living principle, underlying the fleeting reality. God is the Universe itself: He is the Cosmos and the Cosmos is God.

Concerning our lending section our business was quite brisk. Even during so short a period since Mr. Nirmal Majumdar assumed the charges, 195 books have been issued, and certainly the number is encouraging.

Let us now close our review. We would invite the students to take a real interest in the debates, and concerning the essayists, they have creditably performed their tasks during this session, and, we hope, so they would do in the next term.

SUDHENDUJIYOTI MAZUMDAR,
NIRMAL CHANDRA MAJUMDAR,
Joint Secretaries.

CHEMICAL SOCIETY

As of late, there has been no activity shown on the part of the Chemical Society we feel it necessary to put forth some explanations. Every society has a period of quiescence; and the first few months of the session 1934-35 had been the quiescent period of our Society. Our President Dr. P. Neogi was ill and had to keep himself away from the College for a number of months; mainly due to the lack of Dr. Neogi's ever-watchful care, and also due to the lack of an 'esprit de corps' among the members of the Executive Committee of the Society, the Society had to pass through a rather inactive time.

When Dr. Neogi was back to the College a meeting of the students of Chemistry was called and Mr. Tripura C. Sarkar of the 5th Year Chemistry Class and Mr. Barid Baran Mitra of the 3rd Year Chemistry Honours Class were elected the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary provisionally. At a subsequent meeting of the members of the Society, the following office-bearers were elected :

- Dr. P. Neogi—*President.*
- Dr. M. Q. Khuda
- Dr. A. C. Sircar
- Prof. A. Maitra
- Prof. H. D. Mukherji—*Representative of the Staff.*
- Prof. N. G. Chakravarty—*Honorary Treasurer.*
- Mr. Tripura C. Sarkar
- Mr. Nirmal Chandra Brahmachari
- Mr. Hirendra Nath Gupta—*Representative of the Sixth Year Class.*
- Mr. Birendra Nath Chaudhuri—
Representative of the Fifth Year Class.
- Mr. Barid Baran Mitter—*Representative of the Third Year Class.*

During the year 1935, a number of meetings were arranged. In the first meeting, we had to mourn the loss of Mr. Gopal Krishna Mukherji, M.Sc., a brilliant ex-student, and Government Research Scholar in Chemistry, and an illustrated lecture "Domestic Smoke Nuisance, and Its Prevention" to be delivered by Dr. Neogi, had to be postponed. In a subsequent meeting of the students of the College, past and present, presided over by Principal B. M. Sen, resolutions were passed to place on record the deep sense of sorrow at the sad death of Mr. Mukherji, and to perpetuate his memory. It is contemplated that a scholarship of Rs. 3/- or Rs. 4/- per month will be given to the younger brother of late Mr. Mukherji for two years out of the funds of the Society.

The Annual Social Gathering of the Society comes off on the 8th April, 1935. Sir U. N. Brahmachari, Kt., will be our chief guest and he is expected to give us an address. Further meetings will be held where eminent workers in Chemistry and also the students will read papers. Excursions are in contemplation, including one to Tatanagar and Ghatsila, which may take place on the 12th April, 1935.

NIRMAL CHANDRA BRAHMACHARI,
TRIPURA C. SARKAR,
Jt. Secretaries

GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Institute was held on the 25th August, 1934, with Mr. W. D. West, M.A. (Cantab.), in the chair. The following office-bearers for the session-1934-35 were duly elected.

President—Prof. B. N. Maitra, M.Sc., B.L.

Vice-Presidents—Prof. Dr. M. Chatterjee, Ph.D. (Lond.),
Prof. Susovan Sircar, M.A. (Oxon.).

Treasurer—Mr. D. N. Roy, B.Sc.

Secretary—Mr. S. K. Chowdhury.

Asst. Secy.—Mr. C. Banerjee.

Class Representatives—

VI Year.	Mr. P. K. Chatterjee, B.Sc., Mr. S. Mukherjee, B.Sc.
V „	Mr. H. Ganguly, B.Sc., Mr. B. Chakravarty, B.Sc.
IV „	Mr. S. K. Chowdhury, Mr. A. Roy.
III „	Mr. C. Banerjee, Mr. J. Sen-Gupta.
II „	Mr. S. Bose, Mr. A. Sen.
I „	Mr. B. Dewarah, Mr. S. Mondal.

The first ordinary general meeting was held on Monday, the 17th September, 1934, at 4-30 p.m. Prof. B. N. Maitra presided.

Dr. T. P. Das Gupta delivered a lecture on "The Life through the ages." The lecture was very interesting and most of the members were present. Light refreshments were served to all present.

The second ordinary general meeting was held on the 18th December, 1934, with Prof. B. N. Mantra in the chair.

Several interesting papers were read. One by Mr. P. K. Chatterjee, B.Sc., on "Refractories" and the other by Mr. K. L. Das, B.Sc., on "A short Tour to South India."

Besides these meetings, four executive committee meetings were held.

SOCIAL GATHERING

The 29th Anniversary was held on Saturday, the 22nd December, 1934, at the Geology Lecture Theatre, Presidency College, with Prof. B. Maitra in the chair. A group photograph of members with the President and patrons was taken on the occasion. There was a very large gathering. A variety entertainment was arranged on the occasion. Mr. W. D. West, M.A. (Cantab.), addressed the gathering. A film, depicting the effects of the last Earthquake, was shown by Mr. West. Mr. A. M. N. Ghose also delivered a lecture on the Bihar Earthquake with special reference to Muzaffarpur which was profusely illustrated with lantern slides.

The Institute was 'At home' to the President and delegates of the Geology section of the last Indian Science Congress held in Calcutta.

S. K. CHOWDHURY,
Honorary Secretary.

ANNUAL SPORTS MEETING

The Presidency College successfully celebrated its Annual Sports Meeting on Tuesday, the 12th February, 1935, at the College premises. The number of competitions was greater than that in recent years, and it is gratifying to note that the majority of the competitors were from the First Year Class. The competition was keen and in most of the events the standard was quite satisfactory.

Benoy Das of the 2nd Year Class won the Best Man's Prize which he thoroughly deserved. His spirited 220 yards run was the feature of the day. The tug-of-war between the staff and the students was won by the staff amidst great excitement. "Go as you like" was very enjoyable. A good number of the competitors took part and all of them, were so perfect in their make-up that there was considerable difficulty in choosing the winner.

Principal B. M. Sen presided and Mrs. J. M. Bottomly kindly distributed the prizes. There was a large gathering of the staff and students. Ladies and distinguished gentlemen of the city graced the occasion by their presence.

We take this opportunity of expressing our heart-felt thanks to all those who helped us as Volunteers. We are very much indebted to Profs. D. G. Chatteraj and S. Bhaduri for their excellent arrangement of the refreshment. We shall be failing in our duty if we do not express our deep sense of gratitude to our Principal and to our Physical Instructor, Mr. S. C. Sen, without whose constant guidance we could not have staged our sports meeting so successfully.

RESULTS :—

1. *100 Yards Run*:—I. B. Das; II. A. Mirza; III. A. Mkherji.
Time—10 $\frac{4}{5}$ seconds.
2. *Throwing the Cricket Ball*:—I. N. Deb. Roy; II. D. Mittra;
III. Q. Hassan. *Distance*—8 yds.
3. *220 Yards Run*:—I. B. Das; II. A. Mirza; III. S. M. Hussain.
Time—23 $\frac{4}{5}$ seconds.
4. *Long Jump*:—I. S. Gupta; II. R. Deb; III. S. Chowdhury.
Distance—18 ft. 5 in.
5. *Sack Race* :—I. A. Mirza; II. A. De-Purkayastha; III. K. Dhar.
6. *High Jump*:—I. M. Mukherjee; II. D. Chatterjee; III. A. De-Purkayastha. *Height*—5 ft. 1 in.
7. *Pulling the Shot*:—I. D. Chatterjee; II. S. Mukherjee; III. N. Deb-Roy. *Distance*—27 ft. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
8. *440 Yards Run*:—I. S. M. Hussain; II. B. Das; III. A. De-Purkayastha. *Time*—1 min.
9. *Javeline Throw*:—I. S. Mittra; II. N. Deb; III. R. Rutt.
Distance—111 ft. 8 in.
10. *Pole Vault* :—I. S. Auddya; II. A. De-Purkayastha. *Height*—7 ft. 8 in.

11. *880 Yards Run* :—I. S. M. Hussain; II. A. De-Purkayastha; III. A. Mukherjee. *Time*—2 min. 32 secs.
12. *Ex-Students 220 Yards Run*:—I. Mr. M. Huq; II. Mr. A. Khain.
13. *One Mile Cycle Race*:—I. B. Khaitan; II. R. Chatterjee; III. B. Mukherjee. *Time*—2 min. 32 secs.
14. *Relay Race*:—Won by the 2nd Year Class.
15. *Tug-of-War*:—Won by the 3rd Year ' B '.
16. *Go as You Like* :—D. Das.

COLLEGE BLUES for 1934 were awarded to:—

Football :—(1) Mr. A. Chowdhury; (2) Mr. Rashid Ahmed; (3) Mr. Abbas Mirza.

Hockey :—(1) Mr. Santosh Gupta; (2) Mr. Jyoti Sen.

Cricket :—(1) Mr. E. Glancey; (2) Mr. A. Mitra.

Athletics :—(1) Mr. William Jack; (2) Mr. Chinmoy Ghose.

SANTOSH GUPTA,

Honorary Secretary.

TENNIS CLUB

We gave a brief account of the activities of our Club in the last issue of the Magazine. In the course of the following few days, we entertained the Nagpur Morris College in a friendly Tennis Match. We also arranged a short tour to Ranchi.

We are highly grateful to Rai Bahadur P. Banerji of Ranchi for his kind hospitality to our players. It was only due to his kindness that we suffered no inconvenience which would otherwise have been inevitable.

C. L. Mehta played an exhibition match with Madan Mohan. The latter won by 2—6, 6—2, 6—4, 6—3. It was a game of a very high standard, and the youthful Mehta took away the first set from the Indian Davis Cup player by fast deep drives to the corners before Madan Mohan could actually settle down.

Another exhibition doubles match was played between C. L. Mehta & M. Das on one side and Madan Mohan & Santosh Roy on the other. The latter won by 6—3, 6—3. The premier player of India much appreciated the style and game, played by his opponents.

In our match against " All-Ranchi," we won by five matches to four.

In the match against the Morris College Team played at home, our College lost by two matches to one. It was rather unlucky that we lost the doubles match.

Coming now to the shorter circle of our College, the individual championship was won by S. Mullick who beat M. Das in the Final by

straight sets. Mullick played a superior game and gave no chance to Das who was made completely off-colour. The Doubles Championship was won by M. Das and S. Mullick who beat A. Gupta and A. Das Gupta by three straight sets.

This year, there has been a marked improvement in our standard of tennis. Besides Mehta, some of our players, S. Mullick, S. Roy, A. Gupta, G. Banerjee and M. Das participated in many of the first class tournaments of the city and gave quite a good account of themselves, and some of them won the encomium of the competent critics of the game. S. Mullick was the Doubles Holder of the South Calcutta Club Junior Championship. M. Das won the Singles Championship at Khulna and also the Doubles in partnership with J. Banerji. Among the beginners, Arun Ghosh, Barid Mitter, Moni Mukherjee and Saurin Mitter have picked up the game very well and if they take to it seriously, they are sure to improve.

The Annual Social Gathering and on this occasion a friendly match between the past and the present members of the College, brought the activities of our Club to a close. It was a successful and enjoyable function, presided over by the Hon'ble Raja Sir Manmatha Nath Roy Chowdhury, Kt., of Santosh. Both the teams were equally balanced and the present students won by a margin of 10 games only. The older members of the past team showed that they could still bravely fight the youth and vigour of the juniors. We were pleased to mark how keenly interested are our old boys in the affairs of their *alma mater*. Rai Bahadur P. Banerji came down from Ranchi in spite of his manifold duties there, only to participate in our functions. Another interesting match was played between the present Principal (Mr. B. M. Sen) and the present Captain (M. Das) on one side, and the past Principal (Mr. W. C. Wordsworth) and the past team's Captain (Mr. Sudhir Roy) on the other, resulting in a win for the present team.

The meeting dispersed with a very neat speech by the President, who remarked that there was no lack of talent in our young players, but the tennis in them should be brought out under able coaches like Sohanlal and others.

We heartily thank Mrs. B. M. Sen, who gave away the prizes and all the members of the past team and, last but not the least, our guests for taking great trouble to make our function a success.

The College tennis "Blue" for this year was awarded to C. L. Mehta.

In conclusion, we like to acknowledge our heart-felt gratitude to our Principal, Prof. H. K. Banerji, Mr. S. C. Sen and the Members of the Club for their kind help and patronage at every step. It is in more than formal terms that I thank the Secretary, Mr. A. Gupta for his able management of the affairs of the Club.

MANORANJAN DAS,
Captain, Tennis Club.

CRICKET CLUB

It has come to be my pleasant task of reviewing the cricket season just concluded, which was undoubtedly an eventful one. We were really fortunate to have a fairly large number of promising players on our rolls after a few years of lapse in this respect. In fact, we could always muster fairly strong even when our stalwarts were unavoidably absent.

Statistically, we played 18 matches of which we won 6, lost 3 and 9 were drawn. This is, as compared with our showing in recent years, a very good season and should give us every encouragement. Our notable victories were against Mohun Bagan at home, against Jadabpur on their ground and also against Hooghly College playing at home. We suffered our 3 defeats against Mohun Bagan on their ground as also against Hooghly College and Sporting Union.

Individually Messers. Jagadish Lahiri, Arabindo Mitra, Dasharathi Mitter and E. Glancey had brilliant performances to their credit. The above gentlemen bore the brunt of our batting while Mr. Lahiri and Mr. D. Mitter were the spear-head of our attack. Mr. E. Glancey was selected to accompany the University team visiting the Punjab, but unfortunately he was not included in the team which played the all-important match against Punjab University for reasons not quite obvious.

Our Inter-Club Match between the Principal's XI and Prof. S. C. Sarkar's XI went off very well. Prof. Sarkar's XI just managed to win after an exciting finish. The refreshments helped to conclude a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

In conclusion, it must be added that efforts must be made to improve the standard of our fixtures and renew the traditional match against Calcutta C. C. This, I am sure, will lend more fillip to our cricket and we can look forward to a still better season than what we have just had.

ASHIT MUKHERJI,
Secretary, P. C. C. C.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Editor begs to acknowledge thankfully the receipt of the following magazines:—

- Young Asia (Rome)*, 3 copies.
- The Elphinstonian (Bombay), 2 copies.
- The Presidency College Magazine (Madras), 3 copies.
- The Zamorin's College Magazine (Calicut).
- The Magazine, St. Thomas' College (Trichur).
- The Robertson College Magazine (Jubbulpore).
- The Union, D. A. V. College (Lahore), 4 copies.
- The Murray College Magazine (Sialkot), 3 copies.
- The Durbar, Khalsa College (Amritsar), 3 copies.
- The Dyal Singh College Magazine (Lahore).
- The Anand Parbat, Ramjas College (Delhi), 2 copies.
- St. Stephen's College Magazine (Delhi).
- The Maharana's College Magazine (Udaipur).
- The Benares Hindu University Magazine, 4 copies.
- The Patna College Magazine.
- The Greer Bhumihar Brahman College Magazine (Muzaffarpur),
2 copies.
- The Cottonian (Gauhati).
- The Hooghly College Magazine.
- The Krhishnagar College Magazine, 2 copies.
- The Rajshahi College Magazine, 2 copies.
- The Chittagong College Magazine.
- The Anandamohan College Magazine (Mymensingh).
- The Carmichael College Magazine (Rangpur), 2 copies.
- The Victoria College Magazine (Cooch Behar).
- The Krishnachandra College Magazine (Hetampur).
- The Brajamohan College Magazine (Barisal).
- The Krishnath College Magazine (Berhampur), 3 copies.
- The Vidyapith (Deoghar).
- The Scottish Church College Magazine, 3 copies.
- The St. Xavier's College Magazine, 2 copies.
- The Bethune College Magazine.
- The St. Paul's College Magazine.
- The Vidyasagar College Magazine.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

- The Bangabasi College Magazine, 2 copies.
The Ashutosh College Magazine, 2 copies.
The Ripon College Magazine, 4 copies.
The Narasingha Dutt College Magazine.
Journal of the College of Engineering and Technology (Jadavpur)
The Government Commercial Institute Magazine, 2 issues.
The Kishori Raman High School Magazine (Muttra), 2 copies.
Our Chronicle, Ballygunj Government High School.
The Hare School Magazine, 2 copies.
The Hindu School Magazine.
The Bankura Zilla School Magazine.
The Financial Times.
-

A Letter

We are very glad to publish the following letter addressed to the Secretary, Presidency College Magazine, by our ex-Principal Mr. R. B. Ramsbotham regarding the College Magazine.—EDITOR, P. C. M.

MUSLIM UNIVERSITY,
Aligarh.

MY DEAR SUDHIR,

I was much touched by your courteous and most kind letter and by receiving a copy of the Presidency College Magazine, which is, in my opinion, incomparably the best College Magazine published in India : it keeps up a very high standard, and challenges comparison with any Magazine of that type in the world. You seem happy and flourishing under Principal Sen and it is good to read how much happier educational matters are now in Bengal.

I value most deeply the friendship of my kind Bengali students whose courtesy and patience I shall always most gratefully remember : it was always a pleasure to work with and for them.

* * * * *

Yours very sincerely,
R. B. RAMSBOTHAM.

Editors and General Secretaries

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MUST BE ON THE SHELVES OF EVERY OLD BOY.

It will be a reminder of the days of
College life

It will revivify old memories of Association.

The REGISTER CONTAINS :

- (a) A history of the Presidency College and of (its predecessor) the Hindu College, and a list of the staff of these Colleges;
- (b) A register of ex-students who graduated between 1858 and 1925, with details of their career where available;
- (c) A supplementary list of distinguished ex-students of the Hindu College.

Price Rs. 2-8.

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CALCUTTA.

NOTICE

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For Students of Presidency College	„	1	8	0
Single Copy	„	0	10	0
Foreign Subscription			4	shillings.

There will ordinarily be three issues a year, in September, January and April.

Students, old Presidency College men and members of the Staff of the College are invited to contribute to the Magazine. Short and interesting articles written on subjects of general interest and letters dealing in a fair spirit with College and University matters will be welcome. The Editor cannot return rejected articles *unless accompanied by stamped and addressed envelope.*

All contributions for publication must be written on one side of the paper and must be accompanied by the full name and address of the writer, *not necessarily for publication but as a guarantee of good faith*

Contributions should be addressed to the Editor and all business communications should be addressed to the General Secretary, *Presidency College Magazine*, and forwarded to the College Office

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Baksi, Presidency College.



আগমনী

শ্রীচন্দ্রশেখর আঢ্য, এম, এ,
(ভূতপূৰ্ণ ছাত্র)

ভুবন ভরিয়া গেল, বনানী ভরিয়া গেল গানে,
কে এলোরে, কে এলোরে, কে অতিথি, কাঙাল-কুটারে ;
শরতের শুক্লারাতে, যৌবনের পূর্ণিমার স্নানে
সিক্ত-কেশে মুক্তাছ্যতি কে স্নন্দরী কী কোতুক ভরে !
পাদম্পর্শে ফুটিলরে গৃহাঙ্গনে শত শতদল,
সায়রে নাচিল নীর, নীল ঢেউ করে টলমল,
তটতল্লু রোমাঞ্চিত, তুণে তুণে লাগে শিহরণ,
পাপিয়ার রুদ্ধকণ্ঠে উচ্ছ্বসিত সঙ্গীত প্লাবন ।

আকাশ ভরিয়া গেল, নীলিমা ভরিয়া গেল শ্রোতে,
আলোকের নির্বরের ইন্দ্রধনু অযুত বরণে ;
ছঙ্কধারা ঝরিলরে সৌন্দর্যের উৎস মুখ হতে,
কবি-প্রাণ স্নিগ্ধ হল, নীল মেঘ প্রশান্ত গগনে ।

আকাশের বুক বেয়ে লঘুপক্ষ মেঘের ভেলায়
এস গো, শারদ লক্ষ্মী, এস এস, অনিন্দ্য লীলায় ।

রূপক ও সাক্ষেতিক রচনায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ

অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত সুবোধচন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত, এম্-এ,

পি-আর-এস, পি-এইচ-ডি

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্যে রূপকের একটি বিশেষ স্থান আছে। ৬মোহিতচন্দ্র সেন তাঁহার সম্পাদিত কাব্যগ্রন্থে ‘রূপক’ আখ্যা দিয়া কয়েকটি কবিতা একত্বে করিয়াছিলেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের অধিকাংশ নাটক সাক্ষেতিক; তাঁহার গল্পকাব্য ‘চতুরঙ্গ’ রূপকের লক্ষণযুক্ত। তিনি নিজে কিন্তু রূপককে স্বীকার করিতে কুণ্ঠা বোধ করিয়াছেন। তিনি ডক্টর টম্পসনকে বলিয়াছেন যে, তাঁহার নাটকগুলি “allegorical” নহে; তাঁহার কাছে ইহার খুব “concrete”। ‘রক্তকরবী’র প্রস্তাবনায় তিনি বলিয়াছেন, “এইট মনে রাখুন, রক্তকরবীর সমস্ত পালাটি ‘নন্দিনী’ বলে একটি মানবীর ছবি। চারিদিকের পীড়নের ভিতর দিয়েই তাঁর আত্মপ্রকাশ। …… সেই ছবির দিকেই যদি সম্পূর্ণ ক’রে তাকিয়ে দেখেন তাহলে হয়তো কিছু রস পেতে পারেন। নয়তো রক্তকরবীর পাপ্‌ড়ির আড়ালে অর্থ খুঁজতে গিয়ে যদি অনর্থ ঘটে তাহলে সে দায় কবির নয়।”

কবির এই উক্তি সম্পূর্ণরূপে গ্রাহ্য নহে। ‘রাজা’ ও ‘রাজা ও রাণী’কে যদি একই সংজ্ঞায় ফেলা যায়, তাহা হইলে কবির শিল্পের প্রতি অবিচার করা হয়। কবি ‘রক্তকরবী’র পাপ্‌ড়ির অর্থ খুঁজিতে নিষেধ করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু নিজে রামায়ণের রূপক ব্যাখ্যা দিয়াছেন। এই ব্যাখ্যাকে কৌতুকের আবরণে ঢাকিয়াছেন সত্য, কিন্তু তাহা সম্পূর্ণরূপে চাপা পড়ে নাই। রূপক-শিল্পের তাৎপর্য সম্পর্কে অনেকের মনেই অস্পষ্ট ধারণা আছে, এবং সেই কারণেই এই জাতীয় রচনার আলোচনায় নানা গোলযোগ উপস্থিত হয়। রূপক বলিতে আমরা কখনও বুঝি নীতিগর্ভ আখ্যান (allegory), আবার কখনও বুঝি সাক্ষেতিক রচনা (symbolic art)। প্রথম শ্রেণীর রচনায় একটি অমূর্ত্ত ভাবকে রূপ দেওয়া হয়। তাই এই শ্রেণীর রচনায় দুইটি অর্থ থাকে; একটি উপাখ্যানের আর একটি উপাখ্যান-অতীত ভাবের। নীতিকথা নীরস; তাহাকে সরস করিবার জন্ত কোন কোন গ্রন্থকার ইহাকে আখ্যানের আবরণ দেন। কিন্তু অপর শ্রেণীর—অর্থাৎ সাক্ষেতিক—রচনায় কোন মূর্ত্তিহীন চিন্তাকে রূপ পরিগ্রহ করান হয় না, এবং তাহার মধ্যে দুইটি সমান্তর তাৎপর্য থাকে না। এই শ্রেণীর রচনায় কবি মূর্ত্তি দিতে চেষ্টা করেন সেই সত্যকে যাহা স্পর্শগন্ধরসস্বাদ জগৎ হইতে দূরস্থিত, যাহা অপার্থিব, অশরীরী, অনন্ত। যাহার ভাষা নাই কবি তাহাকে কথা দিতে চেষ্টা করেন, যাহা দৃষ্টির অতীত কবি তাহাকে মূর্ত্তি দেন। প্রথম শ্রেণীর রচনা

শ্রেষ্ঠ নিদর্শন Faery Queen ও Pilgrim's Progress ও দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণীর রচনার মধ্যে পড়িবে ব্লেকের কবিতা, ইয়েটসের নাটক, Peter Pan, Mary Rose। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই শ্রেণীর একাধিক নাটক রচনা করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু তাঁহার উপরি-উল্লিখিত আলোচনায় দুই শ্রেণীর পার্থক্য স্পষ্ট হইয়া উঠে নাই। মেটারলিঙ্কের 'নীল পাখী' নাটকে ইন্ডিয়গ্রাহ রূপের অন্তরালে যে জগৎ আছে তাহাকে প্রকাশ করিবার চেষ্টা হইয়াছে; তাই ইহা সাস্কেতিক। কিন্তু শিশু দুইটি যখন পৃথিবীর আভ্যন্তরীণ সত্যের সন্ধান বাহির হইল, তখন তাহাদের সঙ্গে রহিল একটি আলো। এই আলো জ্ঞানের প্রতীক। এইখানে কিন্তু সাস্কেতিক রচনার মধ্যে আসিয়া পড়িল allegory বা রূপক। বিখ্যাত আইরিশ কবি এই দুই শ্রেণীর পার্থক্য নির্দেশ করিয়াছেন এই ভাবে,—The one thing gave dumb things voices and bodiless things bodies, while the other read a meaning—which had never lacked its body or its voice into something heard or seen—and loved less for the meaning than for its own sake.

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রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাটক সাস্কেতিক। তাহার মধ্যে রূপকের স্পর্শ আছে। কিন্তু অরূপ, অসীমের সন্ধানই তাহার প্রধান লক্ষ্য।

সাস্কেতিক নাটকের একটি মূল নীতি আছে। ইহার উদ্দেশ্য হইতেছে গুহাহিতকে রূপ দেওয়া। কাজেই এই নাটকে বাহ্য ঘটনার বাহুল্য থাকে না। সরব কর্ম ও বাক্য হইতে নীরব সঙ্কেতই ইহার প্রধান বাহন। এই সম্পর্কে মেটারলিঙ্কের একটি কথা খুব প্রচার লাভ করিয়াছে। তিনি বলিয়াছেন যে, তিনি বিশ্বাস করেন যে একজন বুদ্ধ তাহার আরাম কেদারায় চুপ করিয়া বসিয়া থাকিয়া নিজের অজ্ঞাতসারে বহু চরম সত্যের সন্ধান পাইতে পারে, এবং যে সেনাপতি বুদ্ধ জয় করে ও যে স্বামী তাহার আহত সন্মানের প্রতিহিংসা গ্রহণ করে তাহাদের জীবনে এই সকল চরম সত্য উপলব্ধির সম্ভাবনা বিরল। তাই সাস্কেতিক রচনায় শব্দের মূল্য কম এবং অনেক সময় দেখা যায় যে, যে সকল শব্দ আপাতঃদৃষ্টিতে সর্ব্বাপেক্ষা অপ্রয়োজনীয় মনে হয়, তাহাই সর্ব্বাপেক্ষা তাৎপর্যবান। তাই এই জাতীয় নাটকে গতিশীল ঘটনা হইতে বেশী জোর দেওয়া হয় পরিস্থিতির উপরে; অন্ধকারাচ্ছন্ন গুহা, সমুদ্রতীর, জলাকীর্ণ দ্বীপ, আধখোলা দরজা—এই সব সঙ্কেতের সাহায্যে কবি নিগূঢ়, অব্যক্ত ভাষায় অপ্রকাশ্য রহস্যের সন্ধান দেন। চরিত্রচিত্রণেও এই জাতীয় কাব্যের বৈশিষ্ট্য আছে। এইখানে কবি

পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ বিশ্লেষণ ও বিচিত্র প্রবৃত্তির সমাবেশকে পরিহার করেন; কবির লক্ষ্য যায় বাহিরের বৈচিত্র্যের অন্তরালে চরিত্রের রহস্যময় সত্যের উপরে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাক্ষেতিক রচনা আলোচনা করিতে হইলে এই বৈশিষ্ট্যের প্রতি দৃষ্টি রাখিতে হইবে। এই বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিল্পের উৎকর্ষের সবচেয়ে বেশী পরিচয় পাই সেই সকল রচনায় যেখানে সাক্ষেতিকতা সাধারণ সুখচ্ছুরের কাহিনীর সঙ্গে মিশিয়া গিয়াছে। এই সংমিশ্রণের প্রকৃষ্টতম উদাহরণ দেখিতে পাই 'চতুরঙ্গ' গল্পকাব্যে। অভিব্যক্তির দিক্ দিয়া ইহা একটি অপরূপ সৃষ্টি। এই গ্রন্থে শচীশের কাহিনীতে কবি দেখাইয়াছেন মানবাত্মার অরূপ রসের সন্ধান; শচীশ জ্যাঠামহাশয়ের সঙ্গে প্রচুরতম লোকের প্রভূততম উপকার সাধন করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছে, আবার লীলানন্দ স্বামীর সঙ্গে নামকীর্তন করিয়াছে, তারপর তাহাকে ছাড়িয়া বালুচরে যাইয়া কি সাধনা করিয়াছে। তারপর তাহাও ছাড়িয়া যে কাজ আরম্ভ করিল তাহার মধ্যে কি বাদ পড়িল, কি রহিল তাহার হিসাব রহিল না। শচীশের জীবনের কোন এক অংশের বিস্তৃত আলোচনা বা পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ বিশ্লেষণ নাই, কারণ শচীশ কোনও একটি বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তিমাত্র নহে, সে মানবের রসানুসন্ধিৎসার প্রতীক। কবি শুধু সঙ্কল্পের দ্বারা এই রসানুসন্ধিৎসার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন; ননীবালা, দামিনী, লীলানন্দ স্বামী, শ্রীবিলাস—ইহারা রক্তমাংসে গড়া মানুষ; কিন্তু শচীশের পক্ষে ইহারা শুধু আইডিয়া। এই সাক্ষেতিক কাহিনীর সঙ্গে জড়িত হইয়াছে দামিনীর ইতিহাস। দামিনী কোন আইডিয়ার ধার ধারে না, সে রসকে যুগা করে। শচীশকে সে যে পূজা করে, ভালবাসে, তাহার মধ্যে কোন আইডিয়া নাই,—আইডিয়াকে ছাড়িয়া মানুষ শচীশকে সে চায়; শচীশের দেহের প্রতি তাহার যত্নের ক্রটি নাই, কারণ দেহটা যে একেবারে মেয়েদের নিজের কীর্তি। শচীশ তাহাকে বাঁচাইল, সে হইল তাহার গুরু, কিন্তু গুরুকে ভক্তি দিয়া সে তৃপ্ত হইতে পারিল না, কারণ ভক্তি তো একটা আইডিয়া মাত্র। তাই সে শ্রীবিলাসকে বিবাহ করিল; শ্রীবিলাস শচীশ ও দামিনীর মধ্যে হাইফেন।

এমনি করিয়া সাক্ষেতিক কাহিনীর সঙ্গে সাধারণ জীবনের কাহিনী মিশিয়া গিয়াছে, রূপ ও অরূপ পরস্পরের সান্নিধ্যে আসিয়াছে। এই ধরণের আর্ট অল্প কোথাও আছে কিনা জানি না। 'চতুরঙ্গ' গল্পকাব্যে এই সংমিশ্রণের শ্রেষ্ঠ নিদর্শন হইয়াছে, গুহার মধ্যে দামিনী ও শচীশের সাক্ষাতের বর্ণনায়। রাত্রি গভীর, স্থান সমুদ্র-তীরস্থিত পর্বতের গুহা। দামিনী তাহার সমস্ত তেজ, অতৃপ্ত জীবনের সমস্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষা লইয়া, সমস্ত লজ্জা ও সঙ্কোচ জলাঞ্জলি দিয়া শচীশের পদপ্রান্তে উপস্থিত। তাহার সমগ্র শক্তি, সমস্ত আশা ও বেদনা একটি প্রচেষ্টার মধ্যে কেন্দ্রীভূত হইয়াছে, সে

মানবী নহে, সে জন্তুও নহে, সে শুধু একটি বিরাট ক্ষুধার পুঞ্জ ; ইহা ছাড়া আর কিছুই তাহার কাছে সত্য নহে । শচীশ ছিল ফ্লাদিনী, সন্ধিনী প্রভৃতি অশরীরী শক্তির রাজ্যে ; তাই গভীর রাত্রিতে, গুহার অন্ধকারে যে বস্তু তাহার পায়ে পড়িল, তাহাকে সে সম্পূর্ণ চিনিতে পারিল না, কিন্তু সে বুঝিল যে ইহা সত্য এবং ইহা আইডিয়া মাত্র নহে, ইহা শরীরী, ইহা সৃষ্টির আদিম জন্তু, অনন্তকাল গুহার মধ্যে বন্দী । কবির এই চিত্রে রূপ ও অরূপের সংঘর্ষ অপরূপ অভিব্যক্তি পাইয়াছে ; ইহা নিছক রূপক নহে, আবার শুধু কাহিনীমাত্রও নহে ।

এই দিক্ দিয়া দেখিতে গেলে কবির আর একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ সৃষ্টি তাঁহার নূতন নাটক 'চণ্ডালিকা' । বর্তমান কালের হরিজন আন্দোলন কবিকে এই নাটক রচনায় প্রবৃত্ত করাইয়া থাকিবে, যদিও ইহার মধ্যে অস্পৃশ্যতাবর্জনঘটিত সামাজিক প্রশ্নের সমাধানের কোন চেষ্টাই নাই । ইহার বিষয় হইতেছে রমণীর প্রণয়াকাঙ্ক্ষা । একটি বৌদ্ধ ভিক্ষুর প্রতি একটি চণ্ডালিনী রমণী আকৃষ্ট হইয়া কিরূপে তাহার সমস্ত মনপ্রাণ দিয়া তাহার সন্ন্যাসী প্রণয়ীকে আকর্ষণ করিতে পারিয়াছে তাহার চিত্রই এই নাটিকায় ঠাঁকা হইয়াছে । বালিকার দুর্দমনীয় আকাঙ্ক্ষা, তাহার প্রতি সন্ন্যাসীর দুর্বীর আকর্ষণ এবং এই আকাঙ্ক্ষা ও আকর্ষণের বিশ্ববিধ্বংসী শক্তি—ইহার অপূর্ব চিত্র কবি ঠাঁকিয়াছেন । এই আখ্যায়িকার সঙ্গে আনাতোল্ ফ্রাসের Thais-র মৌলিক সাদৃশ্য আছে । Thais-কে দেখিয়াও সন্ন্যাসীর আজন্ম সাধনার ব্রহ্মচর্যের ভিত্তি নড়িয়া উঠিয়াছিল । সুন্দরী রমণীর সম্মোহনে সংঘের শক্তি কেমন করিয়া হ্রাস পায় উপস্থানে তাহারই চিত্র দেওয়া হইয়াছে ; এই ক্ষয় আসে ধীরে ধীরে কিন্তু ইহা অনতিক্রম্য । রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাটকেও এই চিত্রই আমরা পাই । চণ্ডালিনীর হৃদয়াবেগ এত প্রবল যে তাহার কাছে তাহার স্বপ্নের জীবনই সত্য, বাস্তবজীবন মায়ামাত্র ।

এই অপূর্ব নাটিকার গল্প গৃহীত হইয়াছে রাজেন্দ্রলাল মিত্র কর্তৃক সম্পাদিত নেপালী বৌদ্ধসাহিত্যে শাঙ্গলুকর্ণাবদানের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ হইতে । এই সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণের মধ্যে আছে তিনটি উল্লেখযোগ্য স্তর । প্রভু বুদ্ধের প্রিয় শিষ্য আনন্দ তৃষ্ণা নিবারণের জন্য চণ্ডালকন্যা প্রকৃতির নিকট হইতে জল চাহিলেন, এবং তাহা পান করিয়া চলিয়া গেলেন । তাঁহার রূপে মুগ্ধ হইয়া প্রকৃতি তাঁহাকে বশ করিতে চাহিল তাহার মার যাত্ৰবিভার সাহায্যে । যাত্ৰমন্ত্রের ফলে সন্ন্যাসীকে আনিয়া উপস্থিত করান হইল । ভগবান্ বুদ্ধ তাঁহার অলৌকিক শক্তিতে বৌদ্ধমন্ত্র আবৃত্তি করিলেন ; সেই মন্ত্রের জোরে চণ্ডালীর বশীকরণবিদ্যা দুর্বল হইয়া গেল, আনন্দ মঠে ফিরিয়া আসিলেন । রবীন্দ্রনাথের

নাটকে আনন্দ'র পরাজয় চিত্রিত হইয়াছে, তাঁহার পুনরুদ্ধারের কথা নাই। কেমন করিয়া ষাটমস্তের সাহায্যে আনন্দ বশীভূত হইলেন, তাহাই নাটকের বিষয়।

আনন্দ'র পরাজয় নাটকের উপজীব্য হইলেও, আনন্দ নিজে উপস্থিত হইয়াছেন নাটকের অবসানে। আনন্দ'র মনোভাব কবি প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন সঙ্কেতের সাহায্যে। মানবের কতকগুলি অতি প্রবল প্রবৃত্তি আছে। মালুঘের ইন্দ্রিয়াশ্রয়ী হইলেও, ইহাদের গতিবেগ এত বেশী যে, মনে হয় যে ইহাদের প্রেরণা আসিয়াছে বাহিরের কোন শক্তি হইতে। গ্রীক সাহিত্যে নিয়তির যে চিত্র পাই, তাহার মধ্যে এই ভাবটিই স্পষ্ট হইয়াছে। শরীরী প্রবৃত্তিকে অশরীরী দৈবের বাহন বলিয়া মনে হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই ভাবটিকে প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন একটি অভিনব উপায়ে। মূল গল্পে ষাটমস্তের উল্লেখ আছে। যে প্রবৃত্তির তাড়না জিতেন্দ্রিয় সন্ন্যাসী আনন্দকে পরাহত করিয়াছে, তাহা কেবল প্রবৃত্তিমাত্র নহে; তাহার মধ্যে অশরীরী অতিপ্রাকৃত শক্তি আছে। মূল গল্পের ইঙ্গিত গ্রহণ করিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেখাইয়াছেন যে ইহা ষাটমস্তের ফল। মূল গল্পে যাহা ছিল অবিশ্বাস ও উদ্ভট, তাহাই এখানে মানবমনের নিগূঢ় রহস্যের পরমাশ্চর্য্যময় সঙ্কেতে পরিণত হইয়াছে। আনন্দ নিজে উপস্থিত নাই, কিন্তু আয়নার মধ্যে দেখিতে পাই দুর্গবীর আকর্ষণের ফলে তিনি আসিতেছেন দূর হইতে, বহু বাধা বিঘ্ন অতিক্রম করিয়া। বাহিরের দুরত্ব ও বাধা অন্তরের কঠিন দ্বন্দ্বের ত্রোতক। যখন তিনি পরাজিত হইয়া আসিলেন, তখন তাঁহার মহিমা মেঘাচ্ছন্ন। যে বালিকা তাঁহাকে সাগ্রহে আছান করিয়াছিল, সেই বলিয়া উঠিয়াছে, “ওগো কোথায় আমার সেই দীপ্ত উজ্জল সেই শুভ্র নির্মল সেই স্নেহের স্বর্গের আলো! কী ম্লান, কী ক্লান্ত, আত্মপরাভয়ের কি প্রকাণ্ড বোঝা নিয়ে এল আমার দ্বারে! মাথা হেঁট করে এল!”

আনন্দ'র পরাজয় নাটকের প্রধান বিষয়, কিন্তু নাটকে আনন্দ'র আবির্ভাব হইল শেষ মুহূর্ত্তে। এই বৈশিষ্ট্যের কথা পূর্বেই উল্লিখিত হইয়াছে। আনন্দ'র কাহিনী কবি প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন সঙ্কেতের সাহায্যে। কিন্তু প্রকৃতির মনের ভাব প্রকাশ করিতে কবি কোন সঙ্কেতের সাহায্য গ্রহণ করেন নাই; সরলভাবে রমণীর মনের উচ্চতম আকাঙ্ক্ষা ও তীব্রতম বেদনাকে অভিব্যক্তি দিয়াছেন। এমনি করিয়া সাস্থ্যিক ও অসাস্থ্যিক আর্টের সমন্বয় হইয়াছে—এই নাটকে ইহারা সংযুক্ত হইয়াছে একটি অলৌকিক আয়নার মারফতে। এই আয়নায় আনন্দ'র মনের অবস্থা প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছে; সাস্থ্যিক নাটকে ইহা একটি প্রধান সঙ্কেত। আবার এই আয়নার চিত্র দেখিয়া প্রকৃতির মনে নানা ভাবের সঞ্চারণ হইয়াছে; তাহার বিস্ময় মনের প্রকাশ হইয়াছে সহজ, সাধারণ ভাবে। যৌনপ্রবৃত্তির সঙ্গে সন্ন্যাসের সংঘর্ষ যে কত পীড়াদায়ক তাহাও অতি অপরূপ উপায়ে সূচিত হইয়াছে। সন্ন্যাসী আসিয়াছেন শান্ত, ক্লান্ত,

গ্নান মূর্তিতে, তাহা দেখিয়া প্রকৃতি পর্যন্ত শিহরিয়া উঠিয়াছে ; আর যাহার যাদুমন্ত্রে এই কার্য সাধিত হইয়াছে, সেও ইহার ভীষণ পীড়ন অল্পভব করিয়াছে তাহার সর্বশরীরে এবং তাহার মৃত্যুতে ট্রাজেডি চরমে পহুঁছিয়াছে ।

কোনও কোনও নাটকে রূপক (allegory) ও সাক্ষেতিকতা (symbolism)’র সমন্বয় করা হইয়াছে । এই সংমিশ্রণের প্রকৃষ্টতম পরিচয় রহিয়াছে ‘অচলায়তন’ ও ‘রক্তকরবী’তে । নাটক দুইখানিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রাচীন ভারতবর্ষের সঙ্কীর্ণতা ও বর্তমান ইউরোপীয় সভ্যতার সঙ্কীর্ণতার চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন রূপকের সাহায্যে । আবার এই নাটকেই অপার্থিব, চিরস্বন্দরেরও আবির্ভাব হইয়াছে নানা সঙ্কেতের মধ্য দিয়া ।

‘অচলায়তন’ নাট্যে কবি প্রাচীন সভ্যতার সঙ্কীর্ণতার যে চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন তাহা অতিশয় স্নন্দর হইয়াছে । এই নাট্যের নামকরণ ইহার একটি প্রধান বৈশিষ্ট্য । বৎসরের পর বৎসর ধরিয়া রুদ্ধ গৃহে আচারবিলাসী সত্যের ও ধর্মের অর্হনা করিতে যাইয়া স্তূপীকৃত মিথ্যার আবর্জনা সঞ্চয় করিতেছে এবং গৃহের চতুর্দিকে সীমাহীন প্রাচীর তুলিয়াছে, এই পরিকল্পনা অতি অপরূপ । ডক্টর শ্রীযুক্ত শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় এই চিত্র সম্পর্কে জুই একটি আপত্তি তুলিয়াছেন । তিনি মনে করেন, “ব্যঙ্গ-বিজ্রপের প্রাধান্য নাটকখানির উৎকর্ষের হানি করিয়াছে । অনেক অংশ caricature বা অতিরঞ্জিত চিত্র বলিয়াই ঠেকে ।” সাহিত্যে অতিরঞ্জনের খানিকটা অবকাশ আছে, এবং এই নাটকে সীমা অতিক্রম করা হইয়াছে বলিয়া মনে হয় না । আমাদের দেশে বিচারহীন আচারনিষ্ঠা যে কতদূর গিয়াছিল তাহার পরিচয় আমরা এখনও পাইয়া থাকি এবং ‘অচলায়তন’ নাট্যে এই সঙ্কীর্ণতার চিত্র অতিশয় সজীব হইয়াছে বলিয়া মনে হয় । ইহার অনেক অংশ caricature বলিয়া মনে হইতে পারে ; আবার ইহাও স্মরণ রাখিতে হইবে যে caricature এই চিত্রের অপরিহার্য অঙ্গ । কিন্তু শেষের দিকে অচলায়তনের ধ্বংসের যে বর্ণনা দেওয়া হইয়াছে তাহা অনবত্ত নহে । শোণপাংশুগণ কিসের প্রতীক তাহা বোঝা কঠিন । তাহাদের সঙ্গে অচলায়তনবাসিগণ যে ব্যবহার করিয়াছেন, তাহাতে মনে হয় কবির মতে তাহারা অন্ত্যজ অনার্য ; কিন্তু যাহারা যুদ্ধ করিয়া অচলায়তনকে ভাঙ্গিয়াছে তাহারা শ্লেচ্ছ হইলেও অনার্য অন্ত্যজ নহে ; তাহারা চাষী নহে, বণিক্ । তবে কবি কি কোন ভবিষ্যৎ যুদ্ধের কথা বলিতেছেন ? অচলায়তন কি এখনও ভাঙ্গিয়া যায় নাই ? এই দিক্ দিয়া দেখিতে গেলে কবির চিত্রে যথেষ্ট অস্পষ্টতা রহিয়া গিয়াছে ।

কবির দাদাঠাকুরই বা কে ? তিনি কি ভগবান্ ? এইখানে আমরা রূপককে ছাড়িয়া সাক্ষেতিক রচনার সীমানায় পহুঁছিয়াছি । কারণ তিনি একেবারে ভগবান্ না হইলেও ঈশ্বরের মহিমা যে তাঁহার মারফতেই প্রকাশিত হইতেছে সেই সম্বন্ধে

সন্দেহ নাই। কিন্তু যে রহস্যময়তা ঈশ্বরের প্রধান লক্ষণ তাহা তাঁহার মধ্যে নাই, তাঁহার কার্যকলাপে কোন অপার্থিব মহিমা লীলায়িত হইয়াছে এমন কোন আভাস পাওয়া যায় না। শোণপাংশুদের সাহায্যে যুদ্ধ করিয়া যে ভাবে তিনি অচলায়তনের প্রাচীর ধূলিসাৎ করিলেন, তাহার মধ্যে বীরত্ব থাকিতে পারে, কিন্তু বর্বরতাও আছে। তাঁহার খেলাধূলা সম্পর্কে ডক্টর বন্যোপাধ্যায় বলিয়াছেন, “দাদাঠাকুরের সরল খেলাধূলায় মধ্যে অগ্নিগর্ভ মেঘের ছায় কোন গোপন মহিমার বিদ্যুৎবিকাশ দেখা যায় না।” শুধু তাহাই নহে। এই খেলাধূলা সরল হইলেও সহজ নহে, দাদাঠাকুর ও অকালপঙ্ক পঞ্চক যেন জোর করিয়া শোণপাংশুদের সঙ্গে আসিয়া মিশিতে আরম্ভ করিয়াছেন। সাস্কৈতিক নাটকের প্রধান লক্ষণ এই যে তাহা অতিভাষণকে পরিহার করে, এবং আভাসে ইঙ্গিতে ছুজের রহস্যের সন্ধান দেয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচনার প্রধান দোষ এই যে, তাহাতে সাধারণতঃ বাকসংযম থাকে না। অনাবশ্যক গান, কথোপকথন ও যুদ্ধবিগ্রহ আনিয়া তিনি অব্যক্তকে অতি মুখর করিয়া ফেলিয়াছেন। আচার্য্য অদীনপুংয়ের মনে মাঝে মাঝে যে দ্বিধার উদয় হয়, সুভদ্রর হৃদয়ে বহির্জগৎ সম্পর্কে যে ভয়কটকিত, অদম্য জিজ্ঞাসা জাগিয়া উঠে, তাহার মধ্যে শ্রেষ্ঠ কাব্যের লক্ষণ রহিয়াছে। কিন্তু দাদাঠাকুরের বাচালতা ও পঞ্চকের মুক্বিয়ানা অসহ্য। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নূতন নাটক “তাসের দেশ” ‘অচলায়তন’ নাট্যের ছোট সংস্করণ। এইখানে ব্যঙ্গ-বিদ্রূপ খুব বেশী তীব্র হয় নাই। বাধ্যতামূলক কৃষ্টির নির্জীব শান্তির মধ্যে কেমন করিয়া চঞ্চলের হাওয়া লাগিল কবি তাহাই দেখাইয়াছেন। ইহা উপভোগ্য, কিন্তু রসনিবিড় নহে; কবি সেই চেষ্টাও করেন নাই।

‘রক্তকরবী’তে রবীন্দ্রনাথ রূপক ও সাস্কৈতিক নাট্যের সমাবেশ করিয়াছেন। ‘রক্তকরবী’তে যে রূপক আছে তাহা প্রাচীন ভারতবর্ষের ক্রৈব্যের নয়, বর্তমান ইউরোপীয় যন্ত্রসভ্যতার বিশ্বগ্রাসী শক্তির। এই যন্ত্রসভ্যতার প্রতীক হইতেছে রাজা। সে থাকে জাল দেওয়া ঘরের অন্তরালে। সে অদৃশ্য; কিন্তু তাহার শক্তি অপারিসীম, নিষ্করণ ক্ষুধাও অপারিসীম। অথচ এই শক্তি ও ভীষণ সাফল্যের সঙ্গে রাজার মনে রহিয়াছে অনন্ত ব্যর্থতার বিরাত অতৃপ্তি। নাটকের শেষে ছাড়া রাজা আর সব সময়ই থাকে নেপথ্যে; কিন্তু তাহার শক্তির অবধি নাই, কত লোক সোনার কাজে আসিয়াছিল, কেহই নিস্তার পায় নাই। ইহাই যন্ত্রসভ্যতার উপযুক্ত প্রতীক। এই সভ্যতার নিষ্পেষণ হইতে কেহই আত্মরক্ষা করিতে পারিতেছে না, অথচ ঠিক কোথায় যে ইহার শক্তি, কোথায় যে ইহার ভীষণ আকর্ষণ তাহাও বুঝিতে পারা যায় না। এই সভ্যতা শুধু বিরাত নহে, ইহা ভয়ঙ্কর, কারণ ইহা রহস্যময়। ইহার শক্তির কেন্দ্র রহিয়াছে অত্যন্ত জটিল জালের আবরণের আড়ালে; আমরা শুধু বাহিরের ঘটনা দেখিতেছি। ‘রক্তকরবী’র রাজা বিরাত সৃষ্টি।

রাজার শক্তির অভিব্যক্তি কবি দেখাইয়াছেন কয়েকটি খণ্ডদৃশ্যের মধ্য দিয়া। ফাণ্ডাল, বিগু, চন্দ্রা, সর্দার, গোসাঁই, কিশোর, গোকুল—ইহাদের সকলের জীবনের মধ্যেই যন্ত্রসভ্যতার প্রভাব রহিয়াছে; সবাই নিষ্পেষিত হইতেছে; কেহ কেহ নিষ্পেষণ-যন্ত্রের অঙ্গীভূত হইয়াছে, আবার কাহারও ভাগ্যে জুটিয়াছে অবিমিশ্র নির্ঘাতন। এই সকল খণ্ডচিত্রের কোন বৈশিষ্ট্য নাই, এবং নাটকের মধ্যে রাজাকে না আনিলে, এই সমস্ত খণ্ডদৃশ্যের মধ্য দিয়া যন্ত্রসভ্যতার সমগ্র মূর্তিটি পরিস্ফুট হইত না।

‘রক্তকরবী’র নন্দিনী পাতালে প্রবেশ করিয়াছে, কিন্তু সে পাতালের সামগ্রী নয়; “মাটির উপরিতলে যেখানে রূপের নৃত্য, যেখানে প্রেমের লীলা, নন্দিনী সেই সহজ স্নেহের, সেই সহজ সৌন্দর্যের।” এই কথা সত্য যে নন্দিনী পাতালের উপরিতলার, কিন্তু তাহার মধ্যে প্রাণধারার যে স্ফূর্তি দেখি তাহা সহজ নহে; তাহা যেন প্রতিবেশের বিরুদ্ধে বিদ্রোহ করিবার অস্ত্র মাত্র। এই বিষয়ে Peter Pan নাটকের নায়কের সঙ্গে নন্দিনীর তুলনা হইতে পারে। যে চাঞ্চল্য, সাহস ও স্ফূর্তি পিটার প্যানের চরিত্রকে অমর করিয়াছে তাহা তাহার সহজাত, বাহিরের আবেষ্টনের সঙ্গে তাহার সম্পর্ক গৌণ। কিন্তু রাজা না থাকিলে নন্দিনী কি হইত তাহা আমরা অনুমান করিতে পারি না। ‘রক্তকরবী’ নাটকের আর একটি দোষ রহিয়াছে নন্দিনী-রঞ্জন উপাখ্যানে। রঞ্জনের চরিত্র স্পষ্ট হইয়া উঠে নাই; তাহার মারফতে কবি যে কোন নিগূঢ় রহস্যের সঙ্কেত করিতে চাহেন তাহাও আমরা বুঝিতে পারি না। তাহাকে জীবিত অবস্থায় আমরা দেখিতে পাই না, তাহার মৃত দেহকে লইয়া নন্দিনী শোক করিয়াছে; কিন্তু আশ্চর্যের বিষয় এই যে, তাহার মৃত্যু নন্দিনীকে খুব বেশী প্রভাবান্বিত করিতে পারে নাই; রঞ্জনের মৃত্যুতে সব চেয়ে বেশী টলিয়াছে তাহার বিজেতা রাজা নিজে! রঞ্জন উপাখ্যান সম্পর্কে উক্তর শ্রীযুক্ত শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের মত উদ্ধারযোগ্য, “একদিকে তাহার এই অত্যন্ত অশরীরী, অতীন্দ্রিয় স্পর্শ, অপরদিকে তাহার মৃতদেহ— এই দুইএর মধ্যে একটা বিষম অসঙ্গতি রহিয়া গিয়াছে, যাহা আমরা কল্পনা সাহায্যে পূরণ করিতে পারি না। এই কল্পনা-গত অনৈক্য আমাদের বিচার বুদ্ধিকে নিরস্তুর পাড়িত করে।”

‘মুক্তধারা’র সঙ্গে ‘রক্তকরবী’র সংযোগ আছে; উভয়েরই মুখ্য বিষয় যন্ত্রসভ্যতার নিপীড়ন এবং উভয় নাটকেই রূপকের সাহায্য গ্রহণ করা হইয়াছে। ‘রক্তকরবী’তে যন্ত্রসভ্যতার প্রতীক হইতেছে রাজা; ‘মুক্তধারা’য় কবি যন্ত্রসভ্যতার চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন যন্ত্রের সাহায্যে। যন্ত্ররাজ বিভূতি এক ভীষণ লোহব্রহ্ম আবিষ্কার করিয়াছে এবং কবি অতি অপক্লপ উপায়ে দেখাইয়াছেন যে, যন্ত্রসভ্যতা যে অকল্যাণ আনে তাহা কত বিস্তীর্ণ। প্রথমতঃ, ইহার কোন সার্থকতা নাই, মানুষ্যের দণ্ডেই ইহা পরিপুষ্ট হইতেছে;

যন্ত্ররাজ বিভূতি নিজের কৌশল ও ক্ষমতা দেখাইবার জন্ম ইহা সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে এবং দম্ভের সঙ্গে বিবেকের সম্বন্ধ চিরন্তন। তাই বিভূতির লৌহযন্ত্র শুধু উত্তরকূটের আক্ষালনের সামগ্রী নহে, ইহা শিবতরাইয়ের লোকদের উপর অত্যাচার করিবারও উপায়। “শতাব্দীর সূর্যাস্ত” প্রভৃতি কবিতায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেখাইয়াছেন যে, জাতি-প্রেম, জাতি-বিদ্বেষ ও স্বার্থান্বেষী বনিকমভ্যতার মধ্যে নিকট সম্পর্ক আছে। আবার বণিক-সভ্যতার ও বর্তমান জগতের সংঘাতের মূলে রহিয়াছে যান্ত্রিকতা। আর একটি বিষয় লক্ষ্য করা যাইতে পারে। বিভূতির যন্ত্র শিবতরাইয়ের লোকের অসুবিধা করিয়াছে তাহাদের ঝরণার জল বন্ধ করিয়া। যন্ত্রের বৈশিষ্ট্যই এই যে, তাহা প্রকৃতিপ্রদত্ত কল্যাণের পথ রুদ্ধ করে; যে আলো, বাতাস ও জল মানুষ জন্মিয়াই পায়, যাহা তাহার প্রধান সম্পদ—তাহারই সঙ্গে যন্ত্রের রহিয়াছে চিরবিরুদ্ধতা।

এমনি করিয়া এই নাটকের রূপকের বিস্তৃত বিশ্লেষণ দেওয়া যাইতে পারে। কিন্তু এই নাটকের গৌরব ইহার সাস্কৈতিকতায়। যন্ত্র প্রকৃতিকে পঙ্খ করিতে চায়; কিন্তু কুমার অভিজিৎ প্রকৃতির সন্তান, এক অনির্দেশ্য অথচ অনতিক্রমণীয় নাড়ীর টান তাহাকে বিভূতির রাজ্য হইতে লইয়া যায় প্রকৃতির উন্মুক্ত, প্রশস্ত ক্ষেত্রে। মুক্তধারায় তাহার জন্ম, কাজেই রাজপ্রাসাদের ঐশ্বর্যের মধ্যেও সে থাকে প্রবাসীর মত। প্রকৃতির অন্তরতর প্রাণের সঙ্গে তাহার সংযোগ; তাই নানা জনহিতকর কর্মের সঙ্গে সংশ্লিষ্ট থাকিলেও, তাহার আত্মা স্নদূরের পিয়াসী। তাহার আচরণ দেখিয়া মনে হয় শিবতরাইয়ের কল্যাণকামনা তাহার জীবনের গোণ কাজ। সে মুক্তধারার সন্তান এবং মুক্তধারার জল খাইয়া শিবতরাইয়ের লোকেরা বাঁচিয়া থাকে; এই মুক্তধারাই যেন তাহাকে শিবতরাইয়ের সঙ্গে সম্পৃক্ত করিয়া দিয়াছে। ‘রক্তকরবী’র নন্দিনীর সঙ্গে কুমার অভিজিতের তুলনা করা যাইতে পারে। নন্দিনীর সঙ্গে যন্ত্ররাজ্যের অতীত প্রেমের ও সৌন্দর্যের জগতের কোন সহজ সম্পর্ক নাই; সে প্রধানতঃ বিদ্রোহিনী। রাজার বিরুদ্ধে সে যে আন্দোলন সুরু করিয়াছে তাহাই যেন তাহাকে মাটির উপরিতলার দিকে ঠেলিতেছে। অভিজিৎ শিবতরাইয়ের বন্ধু এবং বাঁধ উন্মুক্ত করিতে যাইয়া সে যে প্রাণ বিসর্জন দিল তাহাতে শিবতরাইয়ের উপকার সাধিত হইল। কিন্তু অভিজিৎ যে মুক্তধারাকে মুক্ত করিয়াছিল সে গভীরতর প্রয়োজনের আস্থানে। সে সঞ্জয়কে বলিয়াছে, “মানুষের ভিতরকার রহস্য বিধাতা বাইরের কোথাও না কোথাও লিখেছেন; আমার অন্তরের কথা আছে ঐ মুক্তধারার মধ্যে। তারই পায়ে ওরা যখন লোহার বেড়ি পরিয়ে দিলে তখন হঠাৎ যেন চমক ভেঙে বুঝতে পারলুম উত্তরকূটের সিংহাসনই আমার জীবনশ্রোতের বাঁধ। পথে বেরিয়েছি তারই পথ খুলে দেবার জন্তে।” লৌহযন্ত্র যে কিরূপ অস্বাভাবিক তাহা কবি অভিজিতের জন্মের অনির্দেশ্যতার

প্রতি ইঙ্গিত করিয়া বুঝাইয়া দিয়াছেন। ইহা যে মাহুঘের কল্যাণের পরিপন্থী তাহার প্রকৃষ্টতম অভিব্যক্তি হইয়াছে পুত্রহীনা অম্বার ক্রন্দনে। রাজার রাষ্ট্রনীতি, বিভূতির দস্ত, উত্তরকূটের আশ্ফালন, শিবতরাইয়ের অসন্তোষ, অভিজিতের স্নুদরের জন্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষা— ইহাদিগকে বিমথিত করিয়া অম্বার ক্রন্দন ধ্বনিত হইয়াছে।

‘মুক্তধারা’ রবীন্দ্রনাথের রূপক নাটকের মধ্যে একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ আসন দাবী করিতে পারে। ইহাকে নষ্ট করিয়াছে ধনঞ্জয় বৈরাগী ও তাহার দল। নাটকে ইহাদের কোন স্ননির্দিষ্ট স্থান নাই, ইহাদের দ্বারা কিছুই সংসাধিত হয় না। অথচ এই অনাহুতের দল নাটকের অনেকখানি জায়গা জুড়িয়াছে। ইহাদের কথোপকথন, গান, মন্তব্যবৃতি অপ্রাসঙ্গিক না হইলেও মূল আখ্যায়িকার সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে সংযুক্ত নহে। ধনঞ্জয় বৈরাগী ও তাহার ক্রিয়াকলাপে মহাত্মা গান্ধীর ও তাঁহার অসহযোগ আন্দোলনের প্রতিক্রিয়া আছে বলিয়া কেহ কেহ মনে করেন, যদিও এইরূপ সমালোচনা রবীন্দ্রনাথের অননুমোদিত। কিন্তু ধনঞ্জয় বৈরাগীর একমাত্র অস্ত্র গান ও মন্তব্য এবং তাহাকে গান্ধীর caricature বলিয়াই মনে করা যাইতে পারে। তাহার শঙ্করস্তোত্রের মধ্যে হয়ত কোন সঙ্কেত আছে; বিশ্বনিয়ন্ত্রার শক্তি রহস্যাবৃত; শঙ্করস্তোত্রে বোধ হয় দুজ্জৈয় ঐশী শক্তির ইঙ্গিত রহিয়াছে। কিন্তু কবির অভিপ্রায় যাহাই থাক্ না কেন, কাব্য হিসাবে এই স্তবের কোন মূল্য নাই। এই স্তবকে অর্থহীন যাত্নমন্ত বলিয়াই মনে হয়; ইহার মধ্যে কোন অতীন্দ্রিয় রহস্যের সন্ধান পাওয়া যায় না।

প্রকৃতির লীলা লইয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ কয়েকখানি নাটক ও নাটিকা লিখিয়াছেন; তন্মধ্যে ‘শারদোৎসব’ (ঋণশোধ) ও ‘ফাল্গুনী’ সমধিক প্রসিদ্ধ। ‘শারদোৎসব’ নাটকে কোন রূপক নাই; শরতের উজ্জ্বল প্রভাতে প্রকৃতি মানবমনের উপর যে স্নগভীর প্রভাব বিস্তার করে, এই কাব্যে তাহারই বর্ণনা দেওয়া হইয়াছে। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বালক উপনদের প্রভুতক্তি ও লঙ্কেশ্বরের কাছে প্রভুর ঋণশোধের কাহিনীও লিপিবদ্ধ হইয়াছে। ‘শারদোৎসব’ নাটকের আর্ট খুবই অপকৃষ্ট। প্রকৃতি যে নিগূঢ় অনির্দেশ্য উপায়ে মানবমনের উপর তাহার প্রভাব বিস্তার করে, তাহার কোন চিত্রই নাই। নাটক যখন আরম্ভ হইয়াছে, তখন দেখিতে পাই যে এই প্রভাবে প্রভাবান্বিত হইয়া প্রধান পাত্রগণ বাহির হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। এখন শুধু উৎসবই বাকী। নাটকের পক্ষে মুখ্য কাজ হইতেছে মানবমনের নিগূঢ় রহস্যের সন্ধান; বাহিরের উৎসব গোপন; অথচ এই নাটকে বাহিরের উৎসব, ফুল চয়ন ও গান প্রভৃতিই মুখ্য বিষয়বস্তু হইয়াছে। সম্যাসী (বিজয়াদিত্য), ঠাকুরদাদা, বালকদল, রাজা সোমপাল—ইহারা বারংবার যদি শারদোৎসবের কথা স্পষ্ট করিয়া না বলিতেন, তাহা হইলে তাহাদের আচার ব্যবহারে শরতের বিশিষ্ট প্রভাব পরিলক্ষিত হইত কিনা সন্দেহ। সম্যাসিবেশধারী

সত্রাট বিজয়াদিত্যকে হারুণ-অল্-রশিদের ছোট ভাই বলিয়া মনে হয়। তিনি বুদ্ধিমান, রসিক, হৃদয়বান্ ও ক্ষমাশীল ; কিন্তু প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে তাঁহার যে সংযোগের কথা কবি বলিয়াছেন, তাহা তাঁহার মনের গভীরতম স্তরে বিद्यমান কিনা সেই সম্বন্ধে সন্দেহের অবকাশ আছে। বরং ইহাই মনে হয় যে, সম্মাসীর বেশের মত ইহাও তাঁহার একটা বিশেষ ভঙ্গীমাত্র ; মজা দেখিবার জন্ত যে কোন সময়ই তিনি বাহির হইতে পারেন, শরতের ঐশ্বর্য উপলক্ষ্যমাত্র। বাস্তবিকপক্ষে, তাঁহার কাহিনীতে উপভোগ্য ইহাছে শুধু সেই জায়গা যেখানে রাজা সোমপালের সঙ্গে তিনি সকৌতুকে তাঁহার নিজের আলোচনায় যোগ দিয়াছেন।

এই নাটকের আর একটি প্রধান দোষ এই যে, প্রায় প্রত্যেকটি চরিত্রই অতিশয় সচেতন। মানবজীবনের যে তত্ত্ব গুহাহিত ও রহস্যময়, সাহিত্যে তাহারই অভিব্যক্তি হয়। মানুষের সচেতন বুদ্ধি তাহার চরিত্রের একটি অপরিহার্য অঙ্গ, কিন্তু ইহার সঙ্গে অবিচ্ছিন্নভাবে জড়িত হইয়া আছে তাহার অস্পষ্ট ধারণা, তাহার অর্দেচেতন অন্তর্ভুক্তি। সাহিত্যে—বিশেষ করিয়া নাট্যসাহিত্যে—সচেতন বুদ্ধি ও অবচেতন প্রবৃত্তির ক্রিয়া-প্রতিক্রিয়ার চিত্র অঙ্কিত হয়। ‘শারদোৎসব’ নাট্যে প্রত্যেক চরিত্রই অতিশয় সজাগ। বিজয়াদিত্য ও ঠাকুর্দা বেশ জানেন যে তাঁহারা অল্প লোক হইতে স্বতন্ত্র ; অল্প লোকের আদর্শ যে তাঁহারা পরিহার করিয়াছেন, তাহার মূলে কোন স্বাভাবিক ওঁদাসিত্য নাই। জীবনযাত্রার চিরাচরিত রীতি পরিবর্জন করার মধ্যে খানিকটা বাহাতুরি আছে, সেই বাহাতুরির আশাই ইহাদিগকে প্রলুব্ধ করিয়াছে। উপনন্দ’র সম্পর্কেও এই কথা খাটে ; তাহার চরিত্রে মহত্ত্ব আছে, কিন্তু শিশুর সহজ সারল্য ও চঞ্চলতা নাই। তারপর সম্মাসী, ঠাকুর্দা ও উপনন্দ—ইহারা মিলিয়া এমন একটি মিউচুয়াল অ্যাড্‌মিরেশন্ সোসাইটি খুলিয়াছে যে, পাঠকের বিরক্তি না আসিয়া যায় না। নাটকের মধ্যে সর্বাপেক্ষা চিত্তাকর্ষক হইয়াছে লক্ষ্মণ ও রাজা সোমপাল। তাহাদের মনের গতি সহজ ও সরল ; যখন যে ভাব মনে উদ্ভিত হয় তাহাই প্রকাশ করিয়া ফেলে। তাহারা অপেক্ষাকৃত মূর্খ ; সম্মাসী ও ঠাকুর্দা তাহাদিগকে লইয়া কৌতুক করেন। তবুও তাহাদের মধ্যে প্রাণের স্পন্দন আছে ; কিন্তু তথাকথিত শ্রেষ্ঠ চরিত্রগুলি জীবন্ত হয় নাই।

‘ফাস্তুনী’, ‘শারদোৎসব’ অপেক্ষা সর্বতোভাবে শ্রেষ্ঠ। এই নাটকের বিষয় হইতেছে এই যে, “ঋতুর নাট্যে বৎসরে বৎসরে শীতবুড়োটার ছদ্মবেশ খসিয়ে তার বসন্তরূপ প্রকাশ করা হয়, দেখি পুরাতনটাই নতুন।” ত্রীযুক্ত জিতেন্দ্রলাল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় বলিয়াছেন, “The conception is thin and the execution just tolerable।” ডক্টর টম্পসন্ও এই মতে সায় দিয়াছেন। কিন্তু নাটকের পরিকল্পনাকে লঘু মনে করিবার কোন কারণ নাই। প্রকৃতির অন্তর্লীন রহস্যের মহিমা ইহার

উপজীব্য ; কাজেই ইহার বিষয়বস্তুর মধ্যে গৌরবের অভাব নাই। কবি পরিকল্পনা করিয়াছেন যে শীতবুড়ো গুহার মধ্যে লুক্কায়িত থাকিবে, একদল ছঃসাহসী লোক সেই বুড়োকে বাহির করিলেই দেখা যাইবে শীতের দৈন্ত একটা ছদ্মবেশমাত্র ; এই ছদ্মবেশের অভ্যন্তরে রহিয়াছে বসন্তের অপরাজেয় নবীনতা। এই নাটকে সবগুলি চরিত্রই সুস্পষ্ট হইয়াছে, তাহাদের প্রত্যেকেরই সতেজ ব্যক্তিত্ব আছে। অন্ধ বাউলের সৃষ্টি রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাস্কৃতিক নাটকের একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ অবদান। ময়নী সাহিত্যের একটি প্রধান লক্ষণ এই যে, তাহার মধ্যে ইন্দ্রিয়গ্রাহ্য রূপকে অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া অতীন্দ্রিয় রহস্যের সন্ধান করা হয়। বাউল চোখে দেখে না ; কিন্তু যৌবনের দলকে ঠিক পথ সেই দেখাইয়া লইয়া যায়। বাউল শুধু যে অন্ধ তাই নয়, সে খুব কম কথা বলে ; কিন্তু তাহার প্রত্যেকটি কথা ছুজ্জ্বল রহস্যের সঙ্কেত দেয়। বাহিরের জগতে সে শুধু একটি বাউল ; তাহার মূল্য ও মর্যাদা খুবই কম। কিন্তু অন্তরে সে ঐশ্বর্যবান্ এবং বিশ্বের অন্তরের সংবাদ সে রাখে। বাউলের যে বর্ণনা তাহার সঙ্গীরা দিয়াছে, তাহা হইতেই তাহার চরিত্রের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় :—

“ঐ বাউলটা চুপ করে’ বসে’ থাকে, কথা কয় না, ভালো লাগে না।
ও কেমন যেন একটা অলক্ষণ
যেন কালবৈশাখীর প্রথম মেঘ।
দাও ভাই দাও, গুকে বিদায় করে’ দাও।
না, না, ও বসে আছে তবু একটা ভরসা আছে।
দেখ্চ না ওর মুখে কিছু ভয় নেই।
মনে হচ্চে ওর কপালে যেন কি সব খবর আসচে।
ওর সমস্ত গা যেন অনেক দূরের কাকে দেখতে পাচে।
ওর আঙুলের আগায় চোখ ছড়িয়ে আছে।
ওকে দেখলেই বুঝতে পারি কে আসচে অন্ধকারের ভিতর
দিয়ে পথ করে’।
ঐ দেখ জোড়হাত করে’ উঠে দাঁড়িয়েছে।
পূবের দিকে মুখ করে’ কাকে প্রণাম করচে।
ওখানে ত কিছুই নেই—একটু আলোর রেখাও না।
একবার জিজ্ঞাসাই করনা, ও কি দেখ্চে—কা’কে দেখ্চে।
না, না, এখন ওরে কিছু বোলো না।
আমার কি মনে হচ্চে জান ? যেন ওর মধ্যে সকাল হয়েছে।
যেন ওর ভুরুর মাঝখানে অরণের আলো খেঁয়া নৌকোটর
মত এসে ঠেকেচে।
ওর মনটা ভোর বেলাকার আকাশের মত চুপ।
এখনি যেন পাখীর গানের বাড উঠবে—তা’র আগে সমস্ত
থম্‌থমে।”

বাউলের এই বর্ণনা তাহার সহযাত্রীরা দিয়াছিল যখন তাহার নির্দেশ অনুসারে চন্দ্রহাস গুহার মধ্যে চলিয়া গিয়াছে এবং সে নিজে চিরনবীনের আগমনের জন্ত উৎকণ্ঠিত

প্রতীক্ষায় দাঁড়াইয়া রহিয়াছে। এই আগমনের মধ্যেই কবি প্রকৃতির গভীরতম রহস্যের প্রতীক দেখিয়াছেন, তাই বাউলের প্রতীক্ষা এত স্তব্ধ অথচ এত সঙ্কেতময়। এই নাটকের পরিকল্পনা ও বর্ণনায় যুদ্ধ বিগ্রহ নাই বা প্রণয়ের আদান প্রদান খাটত কোন লোমহর্ষণ কাহিনীও নাই, কিন্তু ইহার আর্ট অতি উচ্চ শ্রেণীর।

ঋতুর গতি ও কালের যাত্রা লইয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ কয়েকখানা নাটিকা লিখিয়াছেন। ‘শেষ বর্ষণ’, ‘বসন্ত’ এই দুইখানি নাটিকা ‘ঋতু উৎসবে’র অঙ্গ। ‘রথের রশি’-তে কবি বর্তমান কালের একটি সমস্তার চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন এবং ‘কবির দীক্ষা’র তিনি দেখাইতে চাহিয়াছেন যে প্রকৃত ঐশ্বৰ্য্যের সঙ্গে ভিক্ষার সম্পর্ক নিকট। এই সব নাটক খুবই অকিঞ্চিৎকর। ‘শেষ বর্ষণ’ ও ‘বসন্ত’ গানের সমষ্টিমাত্র। ‘রথের রশি’ নীতিমূলক রূপক; ‘কবির দীক্ষা’র পরিকল্পনায় মারুর্ঘ্য আছে কিন্তু নাটকের মধ্য দিয়া কবির বক্তব্য সুপরিষ্কৃত হইয়া উঠে নাই।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাক্ষেতিক নাটকের মধ্যে ‘ডাকঘর’ ও ‘রাজা’ সর্বাপেক্ষা শ্রেষ্ঠ। ‘ডাকঘর’ নাটকে কবি মানবমনের স্রুদূরের জন্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষার ও তাহার মুক্তির চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন। এই সম্পর্কে কবি ইয়েটসের উক্তি প্রণিধানযোগ্যঃ When this little play was performed in London....., some friends of mine discovered much detailed allegory, the Headman being one principle of social life, the Curdseller or the Gaffer another; but the meaning is less intellectual, more emotional and simple. The deliverance sought and won by the dying child is the same deliverance which rose before his imagination, Mr. Tagore has said, when once in the early dawn he heard amid the noise of a crowd returning from some festival, this line out of an old village song, “Ferryman, take me to the other shore of the river.” It may come at any moment, though the child discovers it in death, for it always comes at the moment when the “I” seeking no longer for gains that cannot be “assimilated with its spirit,” is able to say, “All my work is thine.”

কবি ইয়েটস্ অমলের রোগ ও তাহার প্রতিকারের প্রতি লক্ষ্য রাখিয়া মানবমনের মুক্তিকেই নাটকের বিষয়বস্তু বলিয়া নির্দেশ করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু নাটকের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে বড় জিনিস হইতেছে বাহিরের জগতের জন্ত অমলের অদম্য আকাঙ্ক্ষা; অবশ্য এই আকাঙ্ক্ষার পরিণতিই মুক্তিতে। তবুও এই কথা বিস্মৃত হইলে চলবে না যে স্রুদূরের আকাঙ্ক্ষাই অমলের চরিত্রের প্রধান লক্ষণ ও নাটকের মুখ্য বিষয়। মনের যে অবস্থায় কবি “স্রুদূর” কবিতা লিখিয়াছিলেন, ‘ডাকঘর’ নাটকেও তাহারই অভিব্যক্তি হইয়াছে। স্রুদূরের আকাঙ্ক্ষা প্রকাশ করিবার জন্ত কবি যে একটি শিশুকে নির্বাচন করিয়াছেন তাহারও একটি বিশেষ তাৎপর্ধ্য আছে। বয়স্ক ব্যক্তি সংসারের নানা ব্যাপারে জড়িত

হইয়া সঙ্কীর্ণমনা ও সঙ্কচিতদৃষ্টি হইয়া পড়ে ; কিন্তু শিশুর জগৎ টাকা-আনা-পাই'র জগৎ হইতে বিচ্ছিন্ন। কাজেই যে সঙ্কীর্ণতা আমাদের অল্পভূতিকে সীমাবদ্ধ করিয়া দিয়াছে তাহা তাহার দৃষ্টিকে ম্লান করিতে পারে নাই। তাই স্মদুরকে সে চায়, স্বীয় ক্ষুদ্র প্রতীবশকে ছাড়িয়া বাহিরের রহস্য জানিবার জন্ত তাহার অপরিসীম কোতুহল। এই বিষয়ে ব্যারি'র পিটার প্যানে'র সঙ্গে অমলের তুলনা করিলে শিশুচরিত্র অঙ্কনে রবীন্দ্রনাথের বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্যক উপলব্ধি করা যাইবে। পিটার প্যানে ব্যারি শিশুর অপরায়ে সাহস ও অদম্য চঞ্চলতার চিত্র আঁকিয়াছেন ; কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেখিয়াছেন শিশুর অপরিসীম কোতুহল ও স্মদুরের জন্ত হ্রনিবার আকাঙ্ক্ষা।

‘ডাকঘর’ নাটকের আর একটি জিনিষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। যদিও অপরিচিতের সঙ্গে পরিচয় লাভের আকাঙ্ক্ষা এই নাটকের উপজীব্য, তবুও কবি অমলের চতুর্দিকে যে প্রতীবশ রচনা করিয়াছেন তাহা একান্ত সাধারণ। গ্রামের দৈনন্দিন জীবনের কয়েকটি চিত্রের সাহায্যে কবি রহস্যময় অপরিচিত জগতের সঙ্কেত দিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছেন। কাজেই এই কাহিনীর একটি বিশিষ্ট সৌন্দর্য আছে, এখানে ঘরের কথা বড় হইয়া দেখা দিয়াছে। গ্রামের দইওয়াল, ঠাকুর্দা, কবিরাজ, মোড়ল—ইহার নাটকের প্রধান চরিত্র ; ডাকঘর হইতে চিঠি পাওয়া নাটকের প্রধান বিষয়। তাই এই নাটকের মধ্যে একটি প্রশান্ত সৌন্দর্য আছে যাহা অভিজিৎ বা স্মদুরের অন্ত কোন ‘পিয়াসী’র কাহিনীতে পাওয়া যায় না। ইয়েটস্ বলিয়াছেন : On the stage the little play...conveys to the right audience an emotion of gentleness and peace. নাটকের মধ্যে যে জিনিসটি আমাদের চিত্ত সর্বাপেক্ষা বেশী আকর্ষণ করে তাহা কোন বিশেষ তত্ত্ব নহে, কোন বিশেষ সঙ্কেত নহে, তাহা স্নেহে মাধুর্যে পরিপূর্ণ স্মখার শেষ কথাটি :—বোলো যে, স্মখা তোমাকে ভালেনি।

‘রাজা’নাট্যে ঘটনার সমাবেশ খুব নিবিড় ও জটিল। এই নাটকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভগবানের স্বরূপকে প্রকাশ করিতে চাহিয়াছেন। ভগবান নিরাকার, অথচ আর্টের ধর্ম হইতেছে রূপ দেওয়া। কবি নিরাকার ব্রহ্মের স্বরূপের অভিব্যক্তি দিয়াছেন অতি অপরূপ সঙ্কেতের সাহায্যে। বিশ্বকে তুলনা করিয়াছেন এক রাজ্যের সঙ্গে যেখানকার দৈনন্দিন জীবনযাত্রা অতি সুস্বাভাৱ ও সুন্দরভাবে চলিতেছে, কিন্তু যে রাজা এই শাসনকার্য চালাইতেছেন তিনি অদৃশ্য ; বাহিরে তাঁহাকে খুঁজিলে পাওয়া যাইবে না। রাজাকে অরাজক মনে করিয়া অন্ত দেশ হইতে বহু রাজা আসিয়া এই রাজ্য অধিকার করিতে চেষ্টা করিল ; এক নকল রাজা দাঁড়াইল। কিন্তু তাহারা সবাই পরাভূত হইল আসল রাজার কাছে ; অথচ সেই আসল রাজা চক্ষুর দ্বারা দৃশ্য নহেন। এই নাটকের ঘটনাবহুল্যের মধ্যে কোন কোন সমালোচক বিস্তৃত ও জটিল রূপক দেখিতে

পাইয়াছেন আবার কেহ কেহ বলিয়াছেন যে, এই বাহুল্য নাটকের প্রধান দোষ। বস্তুতঃ, দুই একটি অংশ ছাড়া সবগুলি চিত্রই নাটকের পক্ষে অপরিহার্য; অথচ তাহাদের বিস্তৃত রূপক-ব্যাখ্যারও কোন প্রয়োজন নাই। নাটকের ঘটনাবাহুল্য জগতের বৈচিত্র্যের পরিচায়ক; বিশ্বে নানান্ দিকে নানান্ ব্যাপার ঘটিতেছে, কিন্তু কবি দেখাইতে চাহেন এই বৈচিত্র্যের মধ্যে ঐক্য আছে এবং বাহুল্যের মধ্যে শৃঙ্খলা আছে। এই ঐক্য ও শৃঙ্খলার মূলে রহিয়াছেন রাজা।

কিন্তু পার্থিব রাজার সঙ্গে তাঁহার পার্থক্য অনেক। প্রথমতঃ, তাঁহাকে বাহিরে দেখা যায় না; বহির্জগৎকে তিনি চালাইতেছেন, কিন্তু তিনি নিজে মুক্ত, নির্লিপ্ত। আর তিনি কোন ব্যক্তিবিশেষের সামগ্রী নহেন, তিনি বিশ্বনিয়ন্তা। তাঁহাকে লাভ করিতে হইলে অম্লসন্ধান করিতে হইবে অন্তরের মধ্যে; সেখানে প্রত্যক্ষ হইলেই বাহিরের জগতেও তাঁহাকে পাওয়া যাইবে। রাণী স্নদর্শনার ব্যাকুল আকাঙ্ক্ষা, তাহার বিফলতা ও পরিশেষে সেই আকাঙ্ক্ষার সফল পরিণতি—ইহার মধ্য দিয়া কবি ভগবানের এই বৈশিষ্ট্য অঙ্কিত করিয়াছেন। অনেক ভ্রান্তির মধ্য দিয়া রাণী “তাহার সেই প্রভুর সঙ্গে লাভ করিল, যে-প্রভু কোন বিশেষ রূপে, বিশেষ স্থানে, বিশেষ দ্রব্যে নাই, যে-প্রভু সকল দেশে, সকল কালে; আপন অন্তরের আনন্দ-রসে যাহাকে উপলব্ধি করা যায়।”

এই প্রভুকে প্রথম হইতেই চিনিয়াছিল রাণীর সঙ্গিনী সুরঙ্গমা। উক্তর টম্পসনের নিকট সুরঙ্গমা বিরক্তিকর মনে হইয়াছে এবং তিনি ইহার অতিরিক্ত বক্তৃতার বিরুদ্ধে আপত্তি করিয়াছেন। তিনি এই চরিত্রের তাৎপর্ঘ্য ঠিক উপলব্ধি করিতে পারেন নাই। রাণীর মধ্যে যে সব গুণের অভাব তাহা সুরঙ্গমার আছে, এবং স্নদর্শনার ব্যাকুলতা ও সন্দিগ্ধতার পাশে তাহার প্রশান্ত বিশ্বাস অতি মধুর বলিয়া প্রতিভাত হয়। এই দুই চরিত্রের বৈপরীত্য ভগবানের স্বরূপ উপলব্ধি করিতে সাহায্য করে। অজিতকুমার চক্রবর্তী বলিয়াছেন, “সে স্নদর্শনার সঙ্গে থাকিয়া সেই সরল ভক্তির সুরটি হিমবিপ্লুর মত তাহার ক্ষুদ্র অভিমানের শিখার উপর ধরিতে লাগিল।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের রূপকনাট্যে—বিশেষতঃ ‘রাজা’নাট্যে ঠাকুরদাদার একটি বিশিষ্ট স্থান আছে। রূপকনাট্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ অতীন্দ্রিয় রহস্যের সন্ধান দিতে চাহিয়াছেন; সেই রহস্য আমরা বুঝিতে পারি না, কারণ আমরা ইন্দ্রিয়গ্রাহ্য জগতের ক্ষুদ্রতায় আচ্ছন্ন হইয়াছি। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ এমন একজন মহামানব সৃষ্টি করিতে চাহিয়াছেন যিনি পৃথিবীতে থাকিয়াও অপার্থিব জগতের সৌন্দর্য ও ভগবানের মাহাত্ম্যের সঙ্গে পরিচিত। “একজন স্বচ্ছদৃষ্টি, সরলহৃদয়, আনন্দময় পুরুষ যিনি হৃদয়ের মধ্যে ভগবানের প্রত্যক্ষ অল্পভূতি লাভ করিয়াছেন, যাহার জীবনের সমস্ত অভিজ্ঞতা তাঁহার আনন্দ-

উৎসের মুখে পাথর না চাপাইয়া তাহার স্রোতোবেগ আরও বর্ধিত করিয়া দিয়াছে, যিনি বালকদের সমপ্রাণ বন্ধু, নায়ক ও ক্রীড়াসহচর—এই আদর্শেই কবি ঠাকুরদাদার সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন।” এই ঠাকুরদাদা—অথবা দা’-ঠাকুর বা ধনঞ্জয় বৈরাগী—নাটকে কোরাসের কাজ করেন। নাটকে তাঁহার কাজ কম; তিনি দ্রষ্টা এবং নানা ঘটনার তাৎপর্য অথবা ভগবানের লীলা তিনি বুঝাইয়া দেন, কখনও কথা বলিয়া আবার কখনও গানের সাহায্যে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভগবানের স্বরূপ বর্ণনা করিতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছেন ইহার মারফতে, যিনি পার্থিব হইয়াও অপার্থিব লোকে সঞ্চরণ করেন।

নাটকের মধ্যে ঠাকুরদাদার চরিত্র প্রায় সব সময়েই অনুল্পযোগী হইয়াছে এবং অনেক সময় ইহার বাক্বাহুল্য আমাদিগের চিত্তকে পীড়া দেয়। প্রথমতঃ, ঠাকুরদাদা সবজ্ঞাত্তা লোক; দুজ্জেন্ন রহস্য সম্পর্কে শ্রদ্ধা ও তাহার বর্ণনায় যে সংযম থাকা স্বাভাবিক তাহা ঠাকুরদাদার মধ্যে নাই। সাঙ্কেতিক নাটকের সমস্ত সঙ্কেতকে তিনি নষ্ট করেন তাঁহার অতিভাষণের দ্বারা এবং অর্দ্ধক্ষুট সঙ্কেত যে বিরাট বিস্তৃতি বা সীমাহীনতার আভাস দেয় ঠাকুরদাদার বক্তৃতা ও গান তাহাকে খণ্ডিত করিয়া দেয়; মনে হয়, এই ব্যক্তির জ্ঞানের পরিধির মধ্যেই সমস্ত রহস্য ও তত্ত্ব সীমাবদ্ধ হইয়াছে। তারপর, রবীন্দ্রনাথ সঙ্গীতরচনায় সিদ্ধহস্ত, তিনি তাঁহার রূপক নাটকে বহু গানের সমাবেশ করিয়াছেন; ঠাকুরদাদা যখন তখন গান করিয়াছেন। ইহাতে নাটকের স্বচ্ছন্দ গতি ব্যাহত হইয়াছে। ‘নটীর পূজা’ ছাড়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের এমন কোন নাটকের নাম করা যায় না যেখানে গানের সাহায্যে নাটকের মূল বক্তব্য বর্ণিত হইয়াছে অথবা যেখানে গান নাটকের অর্থগ্রহণে সহায়তা করে। অধিকাংশ রূপক নাটকে যে সকল গান আছে তাহা মধুর; কিন্তু সঙ্গীতহিসাবে তাহাদের মূল্য যাহাই থাক্ না কেন তাহারা নাটকের গতিবেগ মন্দীভূত করিয়াছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান ও ঠাকুরদাদা তাঁহার রূপক নাটকে অবাস্তর, অনুল্পযোগী। ইহাদের জন্ত এই শ্রেণীর নাটকে সেই সংস্কৃতি ও সংযমের অভাব দেখা যায় যাহা শ্রেষ্ঠ রচনার প্রধান উপাদান।

বাংলা সাহিত্যে মসীযুদ্ধ

শ্রীধী————রায়

(চতুর্থ বার্ষিক শ্রেণী, কলা বিভাগ)

ইতিহাসের পৃষ্ঠায় থাকে রাজা-রাজড়াদের অসিযুদ্ধের বিবরণ ; তুচ্ছ সাহিত্যিকদের মসীযুদ্ধে সাধারণতঃ কোন পক্ষই হার স্বীকার করে না এবং করিতে বাধ্য না থাকায় উহার দর ইতিহাসে বড় নাই। ইতিহাসের না থাকুক, সাহিত্যের উহা লইয়া কাজ আছে। আর সত্য কথা বলিতে কি, যেক্রম বীরভাবপ্রবণ নরপুঙ্খবই হউন না কেন, আরামকেদারায় বসিয়া সংবাদপত্রের পৃষ্ঠায় হিঙেনবার্গের ট্যানেনবুর্গখুঙ্কবিজয়ের বিবরণ অপেক্ষা দুইখানা অহিনকুল মাসিকপত্রের পরস্পর কলমখোঁচাখুঁচিই অধিক উপভোগ করিবেন। নেহাৎ অরসিকদের কথা ছাড়িয়া দিলাম। তাহাদের বুঝাইবার ভার চতুরানন আমার শিরে লিখিয়া দেন নাই।

অসম অবস্থা হইতে ঈর্ষ্যা ও ঈর্ষ্যা হইতেই বিবাদের সৃষ্টি। শুদ্ধ সাহিত্যিক বিতর্কবাদের অন্তরালেও একটু ঘেষ না থাকিয়াই পারে না। “আমি অমুক হইতে কম কিসে?”—এই আত্মমর্ধ্যাদার দর যখন মান্নস আপনি কথিতে বসে তখনই বাধে বিবাদ। মান্নসের নিত্যনৈমিত্তিক সাংসারিক জীবন ছাড়াইয়া এই বিবাদ বহুকাল খাবত বাণীর মন্দিরেও প্রবেশলাভ করিয়াছে। দর্শন, বিজ্ঞান, ধর্মতত্ত্ব ও রাষ্ট্রনীতির উপদেষ্টা ও প্রচারকগণের বিবাদের বর্ণনাস্থল এ নহে। এখানে শুধু বাংলা সাহিত্যে মসীযুদ্ধ কেমন অবিচ্ছেদপরস্পরায় বহুকাল চলিয়া আসিতেছে তাহাই দেখাইতে চেষ্টা করিব।

চণ্ডীদাস বিত্বাপতিতে বিবাদ ছিল না, তাহার প্রমাণ আছে বটে, তাহার অপর্ধ্যাপ্ত কারণও বিত্তমান আছে। “হুঁহু লাগি দৌহার” দরশনে অনুরাগ যখন জন্মিল, তখন উভয়েই উভয়ের উদ্দেশে যাত্রা করিয়া পথিমধ্যেই পরস্পরের সাক্ষাৎকার লাভ করেন এবং সাক্ষাৎকারের পরে পরস্পরের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা ও অনুরাগ আরও বাড়িয়া গেল। ইহার দুই মুখ্য কারণ বর্তমান। প্রথমতঃ, দুইজনে ভিন্নপ্রদেশবাসী বলিয়া সংঘাত-সম্ভাবনা কম ছিল। রাজা শিবসিংহ ও লছিমাদেবীর অনুগ্রহপুষ্ট বিদ্বান কবি বিত্তাপতি বেশ স্নেহেই ছিলেন। আর বাসুলীপূজক দরিদ্র কবি চণ্ডীদাসও সামান্ত পৌরহিত্যেই তুষ্ট ছিলেন। যশ তখনও বাণীর সেবকদের জন্ত বরাদ্দ হয় নাই—অনুগ্রহই যথেষ্ট। উহা বীরপুরুষদের জন্তই earmarked ছিল। দ্বিতীয়তঃ, সংবাদ-পত্ররূপ জয়ঢাক তখনও সৃষ্ট হইয়া ঢকানিনাদে রামকে মাথায় তুলিয়া শ্রামকে সলিলে নিক্ষেপ করিবার চেষ্টায় ফিরিত না। আমার ঐব বিশ্বাস আছে যে, সে সময় সংবাদপত্ররূপ

বাহন থাকিলে এবং সাহিত্যিকমর্যাদার একটা শ্রেণীবিভাগ থাকিলে উভয়ে নিশ্চিত বিবাদ বাধিত। এমন কি, উভয়েই বৈষ্ণবকবি বলিয়াও কোনই বাধা উপস্থিত হইত না।

রামমোহন ও বেদান্তবাগীশের তর্কে সাহিত্যিকের বড় প্রয়োজন নাই, সেকালের পণ্ডিতদের বিদায়নির্দেশী তর্কের কথাও এস্থানে উত্থাপনীয় নহে।

প্রকৃত দ্বন্দ্ব আরম্ভ হয় ‘সোমপ্রকাশ’ ও ‘বঙ্গদর্শনে’। বিত্বাসাগরী মতবাদ ও অশান্ত সাময়িক বিষয় অবিষয় লইয়া উভয়ে দ্বন্দ্ব বাধিত। ‘সোমপ্রকাশে’র ভাষা বিত্বাভূষণগৃহিণীরই স্থায়—সর্বক্ষেত্র ব্যাকরণের ফাঁক ছিল না, কিন্তু মনস্তত্ত্বের ফাঁকি ছিল। আর ‘বঙ্গদর্শনে’র ভাষা ডেপুটীগৃহিণীর স্থায়ই ঠিক উণ্টা, ঘোমটাছাড়া, ব্যাকরণের বাঁধনে শিথিল না হইলেও আঁটসাঁট নহে। কিন্তু তাহাতে ফাঁকি ছিল না। স্মরণ্য সে যাত্রায় ডেপুটীগৃহিণীরই জয় হইল। ভবিষ্যতের চাবিকাঠি তাহারই হস্তে আসিল।

ডেপুটীর রাজস্ব তখন দোর্দণ্ডপ্রতাপ। চাট্টুবাক্যে ভুলিবার পাত্র বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র ছিলেন না। প্রকৃত প্রতিভাবান না হইলে তখনকার কোন লেখকের কলম ধরিয়া থাকার হুকুম হইত। ‘বঙ্গদর্শনে’র অদর্শনে যে বহুলোক নিশ্বাস ফেলিয়া বাঁচিয়াছিল, তাহার প্রমাণ ১২৮২ সনের ‘বঙ্গদর্শনে’র শ্মশানপর্কের ভূমিকায় বঙ্কিমবাবু স্বয়ং দিয়া গিয়াছেন। স্ত্রীলোক লেখকদেরও মাত্র স্ত্রীলোক বলিয়াই কোনও excuse মিলিত না। এইরূপ উদগ্রদণ্ড সম্রাটের সহিত ঝগড়া করিবার সাহস বা ক্ষমতা বড় কাহারও হয় নাই। তবে দুই এক স্থান হইতে এমন ছাঁ, হাঁ কেহ না করিয়াছেন, এমনও নহে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন আদিব্রাহ্মসমাজের সম্পাদকপদে বহাল আছেন। বয়সে কাঁচা হইলেও স্নলেখক বলিয়া বঙ্কিমবাবুর সনদ তিনি সে বয়সেই পাইয়াছিলেন। অক্ষয়বাবুর ‘নবজীবন’ ও বঙ্কিমবাবুর ‘প্রচারে’ তখন বঙ্কিমবাবু চাকুরী হইতে অবসর লইয়া ধর্মচর্চা করিতেছেন। ঐ সময়ে ‘প্রচারে’ তিনি ‘হিন্দুধর্ম’ নামে এক প্রবন্ধ লেখেন। রবিবাবু তাহার প্রতিবাদে এক তীর বজ্জ্বতা করিয়া ‘ভারতী’তে মুদ্রিত করেন। সাহিত্যগুরু প্রাণ্য বহু নিন্দাবাদই বঙ্কিমবাবু নীরবে সহ করিয়াছিলেন—কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথকে তিনি ছাড়েন নাই। রবিবাবুর পিছনে তিনি ব্রাহ্মসমাজরূপ একটা বিরাট ছায়া দর্শন করিয়া “আদিব্রাহ্মসমাজ” নাম দিয়া ‘প্রচারে’ রবিবাবুকে মুখের মতন জবাব দিলেন। রবিবাবু নিজের ভুল বুঝা হেতু ক্রটীর জন্ত বঙ্কিমবাবুর নিকট ক্ষমা চাহিয়া ‘কৈফিয়ৎ’ দেন ও তাঁহাকেও যাহাতে বঙ্কিমবাবু ক্ষুল না বুঝেন সেইজন্ত অল্পরোধ করেন।

বঙ্কিমবাবু ও কৈলাস সিংহেও বিরোধ বাধিয়াছিল, কিন্তু কৈলাসবাবু প্রতিক্ষেপ মান রাখিয়া কথা কহিতে পারিতেন না বলিয়া তাহা জমে নাই।

মাইকেল ও হেমচন্দ্রে বিরোধ ছিল না। তাহার কারণ, উভয়ে পার্থক্য বড় বেশী—প্রতিভা ও বয়স দুইএই। রঙ্গলালের কবিত্বশক্তিতে মাইকেলের বড় আস্থা ছিল না, তাহা রাজনারায়ণ বসুর নিকট লিখিত এক পত্রে প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে।

হেমচন্দ্র ও নবীন সেনে কেন বিবাদ বাধে নাই, তাহার কারণ যথেষ্ট বিচক্ষণ। বঙ্কিমবাবুর সাম্রাজ্যে তখন এমন প্রতাপ যে, সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে এক কাঠা ভূমির জন্তও তাঁহাব দ্বারস্থ হইতে হইত। তিনিই যখন মাইকেলের মৃত্যুর পর তদীয় সিংহাসনে হেমবাবুকে বসাইয়া দিলেন, তখন আর বিবাদ করিবার অবকাশ রহিল না। “পর্কতের চূড়া”কে বঙ্কিমবাবু যে কি নজরেই দেখিয়াছিলেন—তাহার কাছে মহাত্মারতের নূতন interpretation পর্য্যন্ত তলাইয়া গেল। ইহা লইয়া অক্ষয় সরকার কটাক্ষ করিতে ছাড়েন নাই, এবং আজও হীরেন্দ্র দত্ত মহাশয় প্রয়োজন হইলেই বলিবেন যে, হেমবাবু বড় কবি না নবীনবাবু বড় কবি, সে প্রশ্নই উঠে না, (অর্থাৎ নবীনবাবু এতই বড়!)। হেমবাবুর কনিষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা ঈশানবাবু (‘যোগেশ’ কাব্যকার) নাকি হেমবাবুকে বলিতেন, “দাদা, তোমার চেয়ে নবীনবাবু কিন্তু ঢের ভাল লেখেন।” হেমবাবু, শুনিয়াছি, তাহাতে না হাসিয়া রাগই করিতেন। যাহা হউক কতকটা বঙ্কিমবাবুর ব্যক্তিত্বপ্রভায় ও কতকটা নবীনবাবুর স্বভাবস্বলভ নব্রতা হেতু হেমবাবুর সঙ্গে তাঁহার বিবাদ বাধিয়া উঠিতে পারে নাই।

“আজি শতীমাতা কেন চমকিলে”র কবির বহুদিন পর্য্যন্ত ধারণা ছিল যে, তিনি নবীনবাবুর চেয়ে ভাল কবিতা লেখেন। উভয়ে সহপাঠী—এবং ছাত্রাবস্থায় শাস্ত্রীমহাশয় নাকি সর্ববিষয়েই নবীনবাবুর চেয়ে অগ্রণী ছিলেন—এমন কি, কবিতা লেখায়ও। পবে নবীনবাবু বড় হইয়া যখন শাস্ত্রীমহাশয়ের নাগালের বাহিরে চলিয়া গেলেন, তখন তিনি ক্ষোভে কাব্যচর্চাই ছাড়িয়া দিলেন। “আমার জীবনে” শাস্ত্রীমহাশয়ের সে আক্ষেপ, নবীনবাবু প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন।

নবীনবাবুর বিত্বমানেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ মাথা ঝাড়া দিয়া উঠিয়াছিলেন। নূতন মহাত্মারতের মহাকবির রবীন্দ্রনাথ হইতে ভয়ের কারণ না থাকিলেও “অবকাশরঞ্জিনী”র কবির সে ভয় হয় ত’ ছিল। কিন্তু রবিবাবুই নবীনবাবুর সম্মান বজায় রাখিয়া বরাবরই নবীনচন্দ্রের অব্যবহিত নিম্নেই নাকি নামস্বাক্ষর করিতেন।

ইহার পরে আসিল রবীন্দ্রনাথের যুগ। বাল্যকাল হইতেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ বড় কৌতুকপ্রিয় ছিলেন। কলম হাতে লইয়াই যত্র তত্র খোঁচা মারিতে লাগিলেন। সেই মোহে প্রণোদিত হইয়া কিশোর রবীন্দ্রনাথ মাইকেলের আয় সর্বজনমাত্ত মহাকবিকেই এক খোঁচা মারিয়াছিলেন। পরে অবশ্য তাহা তিনি প্রত্যাহার করিয়া লন, কিন্তু সেই স্বভাব বহুদিন পর্য্যন্ত যায় নাই।

চন্দ্রনাথ বসুর সহিত রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিতর্কবাদ বঙ্গসাহিত্যের এক চিরস্মরণীয় ব্যাপার। সুদীর্ঘ সাত বৎসর ধরিয়া ইঁহার সাহিত্য ও সাধনার অন্তরালে থাকিয়া পরস্পরকে শরসন্ধান করিয়াছেন। কথার পারিপাট্যে, যুক্তিতর্কের জালবিস্তারে কেহই কম যাইতেন না। শেষে এমন অবস্থা হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছিল যে, একজন ‘ছ’ বলিলে আর একজনের ‘না’ বলা চাইই। নহিলে মহাভারত অশুদ্ধ হইত! এই বিবাদ অবসানের জন্ত কয়েকবার নাকি সাহিত্যিকমহল হইতে চেষ্টাও চলিয়াছিল, কিন্তু তাহা ব্যর্থ হয়। রবিবাবুর “হিং টিং ছুট্” কবিতাটা সেই গোলমালের সময় প্রকাশিত হয়। কুলোকে অমনি বলিতে লাগিল যে গোড় হইতে আগত পণ্ডিতটী চন্দ্রনাথবাবু ছাড়া আর কেহ নন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কানে এই কথা গেলে তিনি অবশ্য প্রতিবাদ করিয়াছিলেন কিন্তু তখনকার লোকে তাহা শোনে নাই। অবশেষে ১৩০০ সালের সাহিত্যে (বৈশাখে) “রবীন্দ্রনাথের পত্রে”র পরে বিবাদের অবসান হয়।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বড় অল্পবয়সে প্রতিভায় দকলকে অতিক্রম করিয়া যান। কলম একটা পাইলেই তিনি কবিতা লিখিতে পারেন—বড় একটা আয়াসের প্রয়োজন হয় না। অথচ ইঁহারও জন্ম কত কবিকে কাব্যসরস্বতীর সঙ্গে কসরৎ করিতে হয়! কিন্তু ভাষার উপর এত ধস্তাধস্তি সহিবে কেন? তাই এই শ্রেণীর লোকদের রবিবাবু চক্ষুশূল হইলেন। এমন কি কাব্যবিশারদের মতন একজন একনিষ্ঠ দেশহিতৈষীও রবিবাবুকে ব্যঙ্গ করিয়া লিখিয়াছিলেন :—

“তোয় বক্বকানি, ফস্ফসানি, তাও কবিষের ঙ্গণ মাথা।

তাও ছাপিয়ে গ্রন্থ হ’লো, নগদ মূল্য এক টাকা॥”

বা এমনই একটা কিছু।

রবিবাবু একবার কোথায় লিখিলেন—“পুলক নাচিছে গাছে গাছে,” অমনি একদল “পুলক”কে কপিকুলতিলক কেহ হইবে ভাবিয়া সে বট, অশ্বথ প্রভৃতি কোন কোন গাছে নাচিয়া বেড়ায় তাহা লইয়া গবেষণা করিতে বসিয়া গেল। বস্তুতঃ তখন রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিরুদ্ধে এক অতি প্রবল প্রতিপক্ষ এমন জোট পাকাইয়াছিল যে, রবিবাবুকে আক্রমণ না করিয়া তাহাদের জলগ্রহণ পর্য্যন্ত করা চলিত না। রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজে কখনও এই সকল বিজ্ঞপের উত্তর দেন নাই।

ডি, এল, রায় ও রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিবাদ বাংলা সাহিত্যে একটা ছুঃখকর ঘটনা। অথচ উভয়েই উভয়ের গুণগ্রাহী ছিলেন—পরস্পরকে শ্রদ্ধার চক্ষেও নাকি দেখিতেন। ডি, এল, রায়ের মৃত্যুর পর দেবকুমার বাবুর নিকট একখানি পত্রে রবিবাবু সেকথা প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন। রবিবাবুর ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’ লইয়া দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল যে তীব্র আক্রমণ করিয়াছিলেন তাহার কোনও হেতু ছিল না। প্রিয়নাথ সেন তাহার যোগ্য উত্তর

দিয়াছিলেন। “আনন্দবিদায়”-এর মধ্যে লোকে রবিবাবুর ছায়া দেখিত। এমন কি ইহার অভিনয়কালে রঙ্গালয়ে ধস্তাধস্তি হয় হয় করিয়া হইয়া উঠে নাই। ইহা অসম্ভব কি যে দ্বিজেন্দ্রলালের মনে একটু rivalry বিদ্যমান ছিল। প্রতিভা দুইজনের দুইদিকে ব্যক্ত হইয়াছিল, তথাপি উভয়ে উভয়ের নাম পর্য্যন্ত শুনিতে পারিতেন না। দ্বিজেন্দ্রলালের মতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যে ও গানে দুর্নীতি প্রশ্রয় পাইয়াছে। তিনি ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা’কে immoral বলিয়াছিলেন। “মাইকেলের পর এত মধুর অমিত্রাক্ষর আর বোধ হয় কেহই লিখিতে পারেন নাই। তথাপি এ পুস্তকখানি (চিত্রাঙ্গদা) দণ্ড করা উচিত।” তাহাকে কেহ তাঁহার রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আক্রমণ করিবার কারণ জিজ্ঞাসা করিলে বলিতেন, “তাহা না করিয়া কি হরি ঘোষকে করিব? সে বোচারা রবিবাবু minus প্রতিভা। রবিবাবুর গুণ আয়ত্ত করা তাঁহার সাধ্যাতীত, কিন্তু দোষগুলি ছবছ নকল করিয়াছেন। এমন কি অনেক সময় সে outheroed Herod।” ব্যাপার এতদূর গড়াইয়াছিল যে, দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল একখানি স্বতন্ত্র পত্রিকা প্রকাশ করিতে যত্নবান হইলেন। কিন্তু ‘ভারতবর্ষ’ বাহির হইবার পূর্বেই তিনি মারা যান। তথাপি বিবাদের রেশ বর্তমান ছিল বলিয়া বহুদিন ভারতবর্ষে রবিবাবুর লেখা বাহির হয় নাই—বাহির হওয়াটা যেন অশোভনও দেখাইত।

আমার বোধ হয় তখনও বঙ্কিমবাবুর স্মৃতি সকলের মনেই জাগরুক ছিল বলিয়া এবং তখনও রবীন্দ্রনাথ বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের স্থানের উপযুক্ত পরিপূরক বলিয়া আপনাকে প্রতিপন্ন করিয়া উঠিতে পারেন নাই বা চাহেন নাই বলিয়া এবং তাঁহার অমজলিনী ও নিঃসঙ্গস্থিতিপ্রিয়তার স্বভাব হেতুও তাঁহাকে অনেকে বরদাস্ত করিতে পারেন নাই। অথচ রবীন্দ্রনাথ “ইংরাজ ও ভারতবাসী”তে সাহিত্যগুরুর সংজ্ঞা নির্দেশ করিতে গিয়া বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রেও তাহা আরোপ করেন নাই, আপনিও সাহিত্যগুরুর স্থান অধিকার করিতে পারেন নাই। স্মতরাং সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে যে তখন মৎস্রত্নায়ের সৃষ্টি হইবে তাহাতে বিচিত্র কি?

প্রভাত মুখোপাধ্যায় ও শরৎচন্দ্রে প্রকাশিতঃ বিবাদ না বাধিলেও লোকে ইহা লইয়া কানাঘুসা করিত। প্রভাতবাবুর একচেটিয়া গল্প লেখার রাজত্বের মধ্যে শরৎবাবুর আবির্ভাব অহিরাবণের ভূমিষ্ট হইয়াই যুদ্ধোত্তমের স্থায়। স্মতরাং বিবাদের মহাসুযোগই উপস্থিত হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু এককাঠি বাজিল না। মাত্র ‘মানসী মন্মথানী’র পৃষ্ঠায় কিছু কলঙ্ক রহিয়া গেল।

অর্ধসাহিত্যিকদের মধ্যে মতি ঘোষ ও সুরেন বাঁজুয়ের বিবাদ মারফতে অমৃত বাজার ও বেঙ্গলী উল্লেখযোগ্য। পাঁচজনের চেষ্টায় উভয়ে বহুবার রাখীবন্ধন করিয়াও ‘বন্ধন’ ‘রাখী’ করিতে পারেন নাই। সমাজপতি ও পাঁচকড়ির বিবাদও বেশ জমিত। পাঁচকড়ির আবার আর এক কৃতিত্ব ছিল। তিনি একক তিনটী পত্রিকার সহিত যুক্ত

ছিলেন। ঐ তিনটী পত্রিকার পরস্পর সম্বন্ধ তত মধুর ছিল না বলিয়া পাঁচকড়ি, এবেলা ওবেলা ইংরাজী, বাংলা ও হিন্দীর মারফতে নিজেকে নিজেই বিদ্রূপ করিতেন ও পাণ্টা জবাব দিতেন।

এখন আর তেমন প্রতিভা সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে নাই, তাই বিবাদও তেমন জমে না। মাঝে মাঝে বীরবল, দিলীপ রায়, নলিনী গুপ্ত প্রভৃতি খোলা চিঠি ঝাড়ে ন বটে, কিন্তু তাহা একে ত' শুদ্ধ intellectual ব্যাপার, দ্বিতীয়তঃ, তাঁহারা সকলেই কতকটা এক গোষ্ঠী-ভুক্ত (চিন্তাধারায়) বলিয়া সাধারণ্যে উহার তত সমাদর হয় না। কেন্দ্র বিভিন্ন না হইলে বিবাদ জমে না। আমার ত' মনে হয় শরৎচন্দ্র, রবিবাবু ও বীরবল পরস্পরের প্রতি এত অনুরাগ প্রদর্শন না করিয়া মাঝে মাঝে একটা কিছু লইয়া একটু আধটু কলহের সৃষ্টি করিলে সাহিত্যের বাজার হইতে এই মন্দা ভাবটা কাটিয়া যাইত। পাঠকবর্গও আজকালকার specialised বিষয়ের গুরুত্বের মনমরা হইয়া পড়িত না।

প্রবীণা প্রিয়া

শ্রীচন্দ্রশেখর আঢ়া, এম, এ,

(ভূতপূর্ব ছাত্র)

“আজিও সময় আছে, ওগো বন্ধু, হও সাবধান”
—কহিল দরদী মোর প্রিয়সখা হৃৎখে ত্রিয়মান—
“তোমার প্রিয়ার কুঞ্জে বসন্ত যে মাগিছে বিদায়,
শীতের তুষারস্পর্শ মৃত্যু-হিম লতায় লতায় ;
বার্দ্ধক্য ছুঁয়েছে তার কেশরাশি রেশম-উজ্জ্বল,
নয়নে নাহিক শোভা সেই লীলা তরঙ্গ-চঞ্চল।”

হাসিয়া কহিলু তারে, “ওগো বন্ধু রুখা তব ভয়,
আমার প্রবীণা প্রিয়া আজো আছে বিশ্ব করি জয়।
তোমার আবদ্ধ দৃষ্টি, তাই তুমি না পোলে সন্ধান,
প্রিয়ার নূতন রূপ আজিকার স্নিগ্ধ শোভমান।
চটুল যৌবন অশ্বে অঙ্গে তার পড়েছে সুঘমা,
ঘননীল মায়াখানি সাগরের শান্তি মনোরমা।
গম্ভীর মধুর শোভা হেরি তার সম্ভমে শ্রদ্ধায়,
প্রসন্ন দেবীর মূর্ত্তি মহিয়সী পবিত্র বিভায়।”

অলোক-পন্থী রবীন্দ্রনাথ

জ্যোতির্শ্রম্য বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

[পঞ্চম বার্ষিক শ্রেণী, ইতিহাস]

মিষ্টিসিজমের পরিবর্তে বাংলায় অলৌকিকতা বা অলোক-পন্থা শব্দ ব্যবহার করার রীতি প্রচলিত আছে। অম্পষ্টবাদ বা দুজ্জের্যবাদ শব্দের প্রচলনও স্থল বিশেষে দেখা যায়। বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে আমরা মিষ্টিসিজমের পরিবর্তে অনেক স্থলে এই শব্দগুলি ব্যবহার করিব। মিষ্টিক কবিদের কেহ কেহ মরমী কবি বলিয়া থাকেন। অধ্যাত্ম বিষয়ে অলোক-পন্থী কবিদের মরমী বলা তেমন অসঙ্গত নহে। কিন্তু অলোক-রস অলৌকিকতার শ্রেষ্ঠ আধার ঈশ্বরকে নিয়া যেমন, লোকাতীত যে কোন ব্যাপার নিয়া তেমনি ফুটিয়া উঠিতে পারে। অর্থাৎ অলৌকিকতা আধ্যাত্মিক হইতে পারে বা ভৌতিকও হইতে পারে। ব্লেক, রবীন্দ্রনাথ বা ইয়েটসের কবিতা যেমন অলৌকিক, কবি কোলরিজের Kubla-Khan, ক্রিষ্টাবেল বা পুরানো-নাবিকের গান তেমনি অলৌকিক। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও কোলরিজের অলৌকিকতার আধার এক নহে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কারবার অধ্যাত্ম বিষয় নিয়া, ভগবানকে নিয়া—যদিও কবির ভগবান কোন স্ননির্দিষ্ট সত্তা নন, তিনি অনন্ত, বিচিত্র, চির-চঞ্চল। মরমী বলা তাঁহাকে সাজে। কিন্তু কোলরিজ সেই হিম্মাবে মরমী নহে। ভগবান তাঁহার কবিতার অঙ্গে ছাপাইয়া উঠে নাই। Supernatural-কে naturalise করার দিগেই তাহার সমস্ত চিত্তবৃত্তি উন্মুথ হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ একজন উচ্চশ্রেণীর মিষ্টিক কবি। কিন্তু তাঁহার অলোক-পন্থা তাহাকে অনেকের বিরাগ-ভাজন করিয়া তুলিয়াছে। তাহার ঐ mystic কবিতাগুলির চারিদিকেই নাকি একটা কুহেলী আছে, যাহা ভেদ করিয়া সকলের দৃষ্টি কবিতার আসল কথায় পৌঁছায় না। স্মরণ্য ওগুলি প্রলাপোক্তি ব্যতীত আর কিছুই নহে। একটা অক্ষুট ছায়া যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অনেক কবিতাকে আড়াল করিয়া আছে, তাহা অস্বীকার করিবার উপায় নাই। কিন্তু সেই জগত্ই যদি আমরা summary trial-এর জ্ঞায় তাঁহাকে সরাসরি অভিব্যক্ত করিয়া বসি সে-টা খুবই অজ্ঞায় হইবে। রবীন্দ্রকাব্য হইতে mystic element-কে বাদ দিলে কবির পরিচয় সম্পূর্ণ অসমাপ্ত রহিয়া যাইবে। তাহাকে সম্যক বুঝিতে হইলে আমাদের অন্তরে অনুভব করা চাই raptures

of mystic thoughts and emotions. রবীন্দ্রকাব্য সেই জিনিস যাহাকে মেটারলিক্‌সের ভাষায় বুঝিতে হইবে—

“ Intuitions, grasps of guess
Which pull the more into the less
Making the finite comprehend Infinity.”

এর ভিতর দিয়া ।

পূর্বেই বলিয়াছি অলৌকিকতাকে অনেকে মানিতে চাহেন না । তাহারা ইহাকে নিতান্ত ভুয়া বলিয়া উড়াইয়া দিতে চাহেন । এই বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের উক্তিই প্রকৃষ্ট উত্তর । কবির ভাষায় “যেমন নীহারিকাকে সৃষ্টি-ছাড়া বলা চলে না, কারণ তাহা সৃষ্টির একটা সবিশেষ অবস্থার সত্য; তেমনি কাব্যের অক্ষুটতাকে ফাঁকি দিয়া উড়াইয়া দিলে কাব্য-সাহিত্যের একটা সত্যেরই অপলাপ করা হয়।” “Poetry without mysticism is prose” ।

কেহ কেহ আবার mysticism-কে mental degeneration মানসিক দুর্বলতা দোষে অভিহিত করেন । তাহাদের মতে অলোক-পন্থা একটা মস্ত বড় মানসিক বিকারের লক্ষণ । একটা কথা এখানে বলিয়া রাখা ভাল । কেবল রবীন্দ্রনাথ নহেন, কবি মাত্রেই দুইটা কারণে অস্পষ্ট হওয়া সম্ভব । প্রথমতঃ, কবি যাহা বলিয়া যান তাহা হয়ত ভাবমূলক না হইয়া নিরবচ্ছিন্ন অভাবাত্মক, তাহা তাহার অন্তর হইতে অজানিত ভাবে বাহির হয় । তখন তাঁহার ভাব অস্পষ্ট থাকিবে, ইহা স্বাভাবিক । এখানে কবির অক্ষমতাই ধর্তব্য । দ্বিতীয়তঃ, কবির অন্তর্দৃষ্টি সাধারণের দৃষ্টির এত উচ্চে যে, সাধারণে তাহার নাগাল পায় না । তখন তাহাদের ভাব ও কথা আমাদের নিকট অস্পষ্ট রহিয়া যায় । এখানে পাঠকের অক্ষমতাই প্রকট হয় । রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁহার ‘পঞ্চভূত’ নামক প্রবন্ধে কাব্যের তাৎপর্য সম্বন্ধে বলিতে বাইয়া আমাদের এই অক্ষম অবস্থার প্রতি ইঙ্গিত করিয়াছেন দীপ্তির একটা প্রশ্নের উত্তরে । দীপ্তিকে তিনি সোজা কথায় বলিয়া দিলেন যে, সমালোচকের বিচার-বোধ-শক্তি যে সব সময় ঠিক হইবে তাহা কোন শাস্ত্রে লিখিত হয় নাই । প্রকৃত-পক্ষে অনুভূতির অভাবই রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রভৃতি কবিদের অলোক-রস গ্রহণে আমাদের অসমর্থ করে । রসের আধার অনুভূতি । যিনি রস সৃষ্টি করেন বা যিনি কেবল বাহির হইতে রস উপভোগ করেন, শ্রষ্টা বা ভোক্তা যাহার কথাই বলুন না কেন, অনুভূতিই রসোপভোগের মূল । এই জন্তই শাস্ত্রে কথিত আছে “রসোটৈব সঃ” অর্থাৎ রস হইল সেই জিনিস যাহা আমরা আনন্দময় অনুভূতি দিয়া উপভোগ করি ।

আবার এই অনুভূতিও সকলের এক নহে। অনুভূতির গভীরতার অভাব অনেক সময় রসজ্ঞদের ভিতরও পার্থক্য সৃষ্টি করে। আমরা রসের আনন্দ উপভোগ করিতে যাই নীতিবিদের নীতি নিয়া। কিন্তু প্রকৃত রসিক রস-পণ্ডিতের শাস্ত্র মানিয়া চলেন না। আগে ভাষার সৃষ্টি হইয়াছিল, তাহার পর ব্যাকরণের সূত্রে ভাষাকে পীঠিবার চেষ্টা করা হয়। তেমনি রসের জন্মের পর রস-শাস্ত্রের নিয়ম-কানূনের সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে। যিনি প্রকৃত রসজ্ঞ তাহার অনুভূতি রস-শাস্ত্রের রসানুভূতি নহে। জীবনের এই চরম অনুভূতি সকলের হয় না। তাহাদের শাস্ত্রে পাওয়ার কথা নহে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই চরম অনুভূতি হইয়াছিল। রসের দিক্ দিয়া তিনি অনেক রস-পণ্ডিতকে অতিক্রম করিয়া গিয়াছেন। কারণ সকলেই ত' তাঁহার ছায় সকল প্রকার বিচিত্রতার ভিতর দিয়া জীবনকে উপলব্ধি করিতে পারে নাই। অতএব দেখা যাইতেছে অনুভূতির অভাব অথবা অনুভূতির তারতম্য রসোপভোগে মস্ত বড় বাধা। 'কাব্যপরিমিতি'র লেখক ঠিকই বলিয়াছেন যে, "Mystic কবিতার চক্র" সম্পূর্ণ করিতে হইলে, mystic পাঠক চিন্তের প্রয়োজন; অর্থাৎ যেই পাঠক-চিন্তে সেই চেউয়ের ভাবস্বৃতি একেবারে ঘুমাইয়া পড়ে নাই, এবং অনুরূপ চেউয়ের দোলা যে পাঠক-চিন্তকে আজিও মধ্যে মধ্যে নাড়া দেয়, সেই পাঠক-চিন্ত সহধর্মী mystic কাব্যের রসগ্রহণ করিতে সক্ষম হয়।"

আমাদের প্রিয় ভারতভূমে এবং অন্তান্ত দেশেও উচ্চ শ্রেণীর mysticism-এর ভিতর দিয়াই চিরকাল পরম সত্যের সন্ধান করা হইয়াছে। চারুকলা, বিজ্ঞান এবং অন্তান্ত বাস্তব উন্নতির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে একমাত্র ভারতবর্ষেই জাতির গভীরতম আধ্যাত্মিকতা উচ্চশ্রেণীর mysticism-কে রক্ষা করিতে পারিয়াছে। প্রত্যেক সৃষ্ট সত্তার ভিতরে আধ্যাত্মিক ঐক্য এবং বিশ্বব্রহ্মাণ্ডের দৃশ্যমান ও অদৃশ্যমান বস্তুনিচয়ের আত্মার গভীর যোগ-সূত্র স্থাপন, ভারতের নিত্য আপনার জিনিস। অলোক-পন্থার ভিতর দিয়াই এই আধ্যাত্মিকতা রূপ পাইয়াছে। Senses অনুভূতি-চয়ের বাঁধা নিষেধের ডোর হইতে উদ্ধে উঠিবার জন্ত অন্তরের চিরন্তন আকাঙ্ক্ষা হইতে ধর্মের সৃষ্টি। এবং যাহা বাক্য এবং চিন্তা-শক্তির অতীত তাহাদের কথা ও ভাবের প্রকাশ করিতে হইলে, অলোক-পন্থা আপনি আসিয়া পড়ে। বাস্তব ও মানসিক জগতে কল্পনা শক্তির যেই স্থান, আধ্যাত্মিক জগতেও mysticism ও spiritual vision-এর সেই স্থান।

অলৌকিকতা একটা রস, সেটা শুষ্ক ও বস্তুতাত্ত্বিক দার্শনিক তত্ত্বের ভিতরে ত' থাকিতেই পারে না, অধ্যাত্ম বিষয়ে প্রত্যক্ষ অনুভূতির মধ্যেই যে থাকিবে তাহাও নহে। স্বপ্ন, অপ্রত্যক্ষ অনুভূতি নিয়া অলোক-পন্থীদের কারবার। জলে, স্থলে, ফুলে, ফলে এক গোপন অচেনার পাদক্ষেপের ইতিহাস প্রচার করাই তাহাদের উদ্দেশ্য। স্থির, অচল, মাটা খড়ের মূর্তির মধ্যে বন্ধ এবং অবিচ্ছিন্ন করিয়া রসানুভূতিকে পাওয়ার সাধনা

তাহাদের নহে। নিখিল বিশ্ব-প্রকৃতির নিয়ত চঞ্চল গতির মধ্যে সেই অচঞ্চল পরম রহস্যময়কে অনুভব করিবার দিকেই তাহাদের সমস্ত চিন্তবৃত্তি উন্মুখ হইয়া উঠে। তাহার পুলক তাই গাছে গাছে নাচে, খুসি আকাশে ফুটিয়া উঠে আর ক্রন্দন বাতাসে গুমরিয়া উঠিয়া অজানার অভিযানে ছুটিয়া যায়।

তাই আমরা দেখিতে পাই, রবীন্দ্রনাথ নব-বর্ষার ঘন-নীল আকাশে, ভাস্করের বারিধারায়, শরতের শেফালিকা-সুগন্ধ গগনে, বসন্তের বকুল-বিখারিত পথে এক অতীন্দ্রিয় জগতের সন্ধান পাইয়া আনন্দে দিশেহারা হন। ‘বড়ের রাতে’ কবির ‘পরাণ-সখা বন্ধু’ তাহার অভিসার যাত্রা স্মরু করে। কবির দেবতা তাঁহার পাশে আসিয়া বসিয়াছিল, তবু কবি তাহাকে দেখিতে পান নাই। তাঁহার দেবতা তাঁহাকে দেখা দিয়াও দেখা দেন না। তাই তিনি বলেন—

“আমি দেখি নাই তা’র মুখ, আমি
শুনি নাই তা’র বাণী
কেবল শুনি ক্ষণে ক্ষণে তাহার
পায়ের ধ্বনি খানি।”

অথবা—

“বিশ্ব যখন নিদ্রা-মগন
গগন অন্ধকার
কে দেয় আমার বীণার তারে
এমন স্বাক্ষর”
নয়নে ঘুম নিল কেড়ে
উঠে বসি শয়ন ছেড়ে
মেলে আঁধি চেয়ে থাকি
পাইনে দেখা তা’র ॥”

কিংবা—

“আড়াল থেকে ক্ষণে ক্ষণে
আভাসে দাও দেখা—
কালো মেঘের ফাঁকে ফাঁকে
রবির মুদ্র রেখা।”

অতএব দেখা যাইতেছে, না-পাওয়ার ভিতরেই অলোক-পন্থীর আনন্দ। অতৃপ্তিতেই তাঁহার তৃপ্তি। তৃপ্তির অর্থ নিঃশেষ হইয়া যাওয়া। যাহা স্থূল, এ পারের, তাহারই নিঃশেষ হইয়া যাওয়া, ফুরাইয়া যাওয়া সম্ভব। মাহুঘের যে দিকটা খোলা সান্তকে, এপারকে চায়—মিষ্টিকের সে-দিকে শোটেই গ্রাছ নাই। তাহার মনের টান অনন্তের দিকে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ একজন আদর্শবাদী; কিন্তু তাহা বলিয়া যাহাকে পাওয়া যায় না, ধরা যায় না, দেখা যায় না, কেবল তাহা নিয়াই তাঁহার কার্যবার নহে। কারণ তাঁহার

ideals গুলি উঁচুদরের হইলেও কেবলমাত্র কবি-কল্পনা গ্রন্থভই নহে। স্বপ্ন, অপ্রত্যক্ষ অমুভূতি নিয়া মিষ্টিক কবি চলা ফেরা করেন বটে, কিন্তু তিনি সত্যকে সাক্ষাৎ দেখেন না বা উপলব্ধি করেন না, তাহা নহে। কিন্তু তিনি যে তাঁহার সত্যের উপলব্ধিকে একটু হেঁয়ালীর ছন্দে প্রকাশ করেন, একটা পাতলা অবগুণ্ঠনের ভিতর দিয়া দেখান তাহা তিনি প্রয়োজনবশতঃই করেন। কারণ যাহা অনন্ত, অব্যক্ত তাহাকে অনন্তের, অব্যক্তের মতন করিয়া না দেখাইলে কবির এই চরম অমুভূতির কোনই সার্থকতা নাই।

মিষ্টিক কবি প্রকৃতিকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া ভালবাসেন। প্রকৃতির মনোরম শোভায় ভগবানের প্রেমের পরশ বুলানো রহিয়াছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাই বলিয়াছেন—

“এই যে তোমার প্রেম ওগো

হৃদয় হরণ।

এই যে পাতায় আলো নাচে

সোনার বরণ।

এই যে মধুর অলস, ভঁরে

মেঘ ভেসে যায় আকাশ পরে

এই যে বাতাস দেহে করে

অমৃত ক্ষরণ।

এই ত তোমার প্রেম ওগো

হৃদয় হরণ।

প্রভাত আলোর ধারায় আমার

নয়ন ভেসেছে।

এই তোমারি প্রেমের বাণী

প্রাণে এসেছে।

তোমারি মুখ ঐ ফুয়েছে

মুখে আমার চোখ ধুয়েছে

হৃদয় আমার আজ ছুয়েছে

তোমার চরণ”

‘গীতাঞ্জলি’তে রবীন্দ্রনাথের মিষ্টিক প্রতিভার চরমোৎকর্ষ সাধিত হইয়াছে। ‘গীতাঞ্জলি’র কবিতাগুলিতে যে অপূর্ব সুন্দর অতীন্দ্রিয় লোকের আভাস পাওয়া যায়, অলৌকিকতার অপকল্প নিদর্শন অশ্রু কোন কাব্য-গ্রন্থে তেমন পাওয়া যায় না। পাঠে মন-আকাশ ধীরে ধীরে সেই অদৃশ্য জগতের সৌন্দর্য্যপাতে নানা কোমল রঙে রঙীন হইয়া উঠে; অব্যক্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষায় প্রাণ অনন্ত অভিমুখী হইয়া দাঁড়ায়। অথচ সবই কেমন সহজ, সরল ও সুন্দর ভাবে প্রকাশিত। যেমন—

“আমারে যদি জাগালে আজি নাথ

ফিরো না তবে ফিরো না করো

করণ আঁখি-পাত।

নিবিড় মন-শাখার পরে

আঁধা মেঘে বৃষ্টি ঝরে

বাদল-ভরা আলস-ভরে
 বুমায়ে আছে রাত
 ফিরো না, তুমি ফিরো না করো
 করণ আঁধি পাত।”

পাঠে আমাদের নিদ্রাহারা প্রাণ বিরাম-হীন বিজুলি-স্বাভে বর্ষার জলধারার সহিত গান গাহিতে চাহে।

‘গীতাঞ্জলি’র অধিকাংশ কবিতার ভিতরে আমরা দেখিতে পাই একটা
 “heavenly fragrance of the sweetest flowers of passionate
 mystic thought and emotions.” দৃষ্টান্তস্বরূপ—

“তুমি কেমন ক’রে গান করো যে গুণী
 অবাক্ হ’য়ে শুনি কেবল শুনি”

অথবা

“হে মোর দেবতা ভরিয়া এ দেহ প্রাণ
 কী অমৃত তুমি চাহ করিবারে পান”

কবিতা-ছইটীর উল্লেখ করা যাইতে পারে।

কিন্তু তাহা বলিয়া কবির অলোক-পন্থা সংসার হইতে অতি দূরে গোপন পথে তাহার অভিসার স্করু করে নাই। মিষ্টিকের নিকট অতি ক্ষুদ্র বস্তুরও যথেষ্ট সার্থকতা আছে। তাহার নিকট একটা গাছের পাতায়ও কত সৌন্দর্য্য, যুগ-যুগান্তরের রহস্য নিহিত আছে। তিনি চাহেন “not the apparent renunciation seen in the form of asceticism but the real renunciation of an unselfish and dedicated life।” সেই জন্ত তিনি বলিয়াছেন, “বৈরাগ্য সাধনে মুক্তি সে আমার নয়।” এই কবিতাটিতে ভারতীয় অধ্যাত্মবাদ এক অভিনব ভোগবাদের সমর্থন করিতে বাধ্য হইয়াছে।

উপনিষদ্ বলিয়াছেন, “কোহোবাচ্চাৎ কঃ প্রাণ্যাৎ যদেষ আকাশ আনন্দো ন শ্চাৎ” —অর্থাৎ চারিদিক আনন্দে আচ্ছন্ন না থাকিলে প্রাণধারণ বিড়ম্বনা হইত। মিষ্টিক কবিও ঐ একই কথা বলেন—“এই নিখিল আকাশ ধরা, এ-যে তোমায় দিয়ে ভরা।” সৌন্দর্য্যই চরম সত্য, সে কথা ভারতীয় দর্শনের মূল কথা, উপনিষদেরও মুখ্য বর্ণনীয় বিষয়। মিষ্টিক কবি বিশ্ব-ব্রহ্মাণ্ড হইতে এই শাস্ত্রত সৌন্দর্য্যটিকে বাহির করিবার চেষ্টা করেন। মেস্‌ফীল্ড ঠিক সেই কথাই বলিয়াছেন—

“ In quest of that one beauty
 God put me here to find.”

এই শাস্ত্রত বস্তুটিকে ভাষায় প্রকাশ করিবার উপায় নাই। তাই ভারতীয় দর্শন ইহাকে “অনির্বচনীয়” এই আখ্যা দিয়াছে। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন বলেন—

“নিশীথে সে কি ক’য়ে গেল কানে,
কী জানি, কী জানি !
সে কি ঘুমে, সে কি জাগরণে—
কী জানি, কী জানি !

তখন আমরা ঐ “অনির্বচনীয়ের” আভাসই দেখিতে পাই। এই ‘অনির্বচনীয়’ অন্ত্র আরও মধুর হইয়াছে—

“যার লাগি ফিরি একা একা,
আঁখি পিপাসিত নাহি দেখা
তারই বাঁশী, ওগো তারই বাঁশী,
তারই বাঁশী বাজে হিয়া ভরি।
—মরি মরি !”

অলোক-পন্থী কবির শাস্ত্রত স্তম্ভরকে সন্ধান করিবার প্রয়াস ‘গীতালি’তে বড় স্তম্ভর প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে, “নানা রঙের ছায়ায় বোনা এই আলোকের অন্তরালে, আনন্দরূপ লুকিয়ে আছে দেখব নাকি যাবার কালে!” এই যে লুকায়িত অথও আনন্দরূপ, ইহা সকলের নিকট প্রকাশিত হয় না। শুধু কবি তাঁহার অন্তরের স্তম্ভ দৃষ্টি দিয়া তাহা ধরিয়াছেন, “সবায় নিয়ে সবার মাঝে লুকিয়ে আছ তুমি, সেই ত আমার তুমি।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের মিষ্টিসিদ্ধম্ সঙ্ঘর্ষে কোন আলোচনা করিতে গেলে, তাঁহার symbolical drama বা রূপক-নাটক সঙ্ঘর্ষে ছ’-এক কথা বলা প্রয়োজন। এই প্রয়োজন আরও বিশেষ করিয়া অনুভূত এই জন্ম যে, সাধারণ পাঠক এই রূপক-নাটকগুলির মধ্যে কী ইঙ্গিত করা হইয়াছে, তাহা না বুঝিয়া, অবজ্ঞার সহিত ‘মিষ্টিক’ ‘মিষ্টিক’ বলিয়া তারস্বরে চীৎকার করিতে থাকে। অলোক-পন্থী কবি সঙ্ঘর্ষে শব্দের নলিনীকান্ত গুপ্ত মহাশয় বলিয়াছেন—“তিনি (মিষ্টিক কবি) অন্তরাত্মা দিয়ে, অন্তরাত্মার বস্তুকে অনুভব করেন, অশরীরীকে ইঙ্গিতের সাহায্যে লক্ষ্য করেন মাত্র। জগৎ, সৃষ্টি, প্রকাশ, রূপ যাহা মিষ্টিকের কাছে তাহার নিজস্ব মূল্য তেমন নাই। এ সব হইতেছে একটা গভীরতর বিরাট সত্তার পরিচ্ছদ, আবরণ; এ সকলকে শুধু সঙ্ঘর্ষে, রূপক বা সিদ্ধল হিসাবে ব্যবহার করা যাইতে পারে।” এই সব হইতেছে, “Veils of Maya,” “Vesture of the Soul।” মিষ্টিক কবিদের (মোটরলিঙ্ক, রবীন্দ্রনাথ) রূপক-নাট্য পাঠে এই কথাগুলি স্পষ্ট করিয়া আমাদের নিকট বোধগম্য হয়। প্রথম দৃষ্টিতে এই নাটকগুলি আমাদের নিকট কেমন অদ্ভুত ঠেকে। ইহাদের ভিতর সাধারণ নাটকোচিত কোন প্রকার গুণই নাই। ইহাদের ভিতর না-আছে কোন চরিত্র-চিত্রণ, না-আছে কোন প্রকার movement বা conflict। রূপক-নাটকের

ভিতর আমরা পার্থিব যাঁহা কিছু দেখিতে পাই, সে-সব হইতেছে একটা “বিরাট সত্তার পরিচ্ছদ”। উহাদের ভিতর দিয়া কোন গভীরতম রহস্যের ধারোদ্ঘাটন করা হইয়া থাকে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘ডাকঘর’ একটা রূপক-নাটক। নাটক বলিতে যাঁহা বুঝি তাহার কিছুই ইহার মধ্যে নাই। ইহা একটা সরল প্রকৃতি শিশুর dialogue ব্যতীত আর কিছুই নহে। আমাদের ভিতরকার lyrical spirit-কে জাগাইয়া তুলিবে এমন একটা গানও ইহার ভিতর নাই। তথাপি ‘ডাকঘর’ অতুলনীয়। অমলের উদ্দাম বাসনা পৃথিবীর প্রত্যেক মানুষেরই অন্তরের একান্ত বাসনা, অনন্তকে পাইবার জন্ত আকুল আগ্রহ। ‘মুক্তি চাই গো মুক্তি চাই’ এই বাণী প্রত্যেক মানুষের অন্তরে নিয়তই প্রবল বাসনা বেগে ধ্বনিত হইতেছে। সকলেই সেই রাজার জন্ত অপেক্ষা করিতেছে, যে তাহাদের সমস্ত বাধা হইতে মুক্তি দিবে। এই প্রার্থনার আর শেষ নাই। বিশ্বমানবের এই চিরন্তন আকুলতা ও আকাঙ্ক্ষা রবীন্দ্রনাথ রূপকের সাহায্যে প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন।

মিষ্টিসিজম্ তথা রবীন্দ্রনাথের অলৌকিক প্রতিভা সম্বন্ধে আরও অনেক দার্শনিক ও শাস্ত্রীয় ব্যাখ্যা আছে। ‘জয়ন্তী উৎসর্গ’ গ্রন্থে শ্রীযুক্ত মোহিতলাল মজুমদার ‘রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও বাংলা-সাহিত্য’ শীর্ষক প্রবন্ধে বলিয়াছেন—“এ পর্য্যন্ত রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্য সম্বন্ধে যত কিছু সমালোচনা হইয়াছে তাহাতে কোন সাহিত্যিক আদর্শের সন্ধান নাই; তাহা ব্যক্তিগত ভাবোচ্ছ্বাস—সমালোচনা নয়, স্খালোচনা মাত্র”। বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অলোক-পন্থা সম্বন্ধে যাঁহা বলা হইয়াছে তাহা হইতে কাহারো মনে যদি উপরি উক্ত সন্দেহ উপস্থিত হয়, আশা করি তাঁহারা আমাকে এই বলিয়া ক্ষমা করিবেন যে, রবীন্দ্র-কাব্যকে আমি একটু অত্যধিক ভালবাসি। মিষ্টিক স্মৃষ্টি কবিদের কাব্যে যে প্রাণ-শক্তি ছিল তাহা আজিও মরে নাই। রবীন্দ্রনাথের অলোক-পন্থার ভিতর যে প্রাণশক্তি আছে তাহার বিচার করিবে মহাকাল।

“ছায়া ও ছবি”

শ্রীহেমচন্দ্র দত্ত

[তৃতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণী, বিজ্ঞান বিভাগ]

তার ঘুম ভেঙ্গে যায় পাখীর ডাকে। চোখ খুলে দেখে বাতায়নের ফাঁকে এক বলক স্নান আলো। সন্ধ্যার কথা মনে হয়, সমস্ত মন কান্নায় ভ’রে ওঠে। এই ঘরটা ছেড়ে আজই যেতে হবে, আবার অল্প জায়গায় নতুন ক’রে ঘর সাজাতে। অসহ্য ক্লান্তিতে চোখ দু’টা আপনা হতেই বুজে আসে……।

পাশের অশথ গাছে একটা পাখী অশান্তভাবে ডেকে চলে, সে চোখ বুজে শোনে। গের্মো পাখীর নিতান্ত গের্মো সুর। কিন্তু তবু ঐ সুর তার জীবনের ক’টা উজ্জ্বল প্রভাতের সঙ্গে অভিন্নভাবে মেশানো। ওর ভালোই লাগে শুনতে। কালও পাখীটা এমনি ক’রেই ডাকবে, কিন্তু সে তখন অনেক দূরে। মনটা কেমন ক’রে ওঠে। শেষের দিনে এই অজানা পাখীটার পরিচয় বুকের মাঝে গের্মে নিয়ে যেতে ইচ্ছে হয় …।

সে বিছানার উপর উঠে বসে, রিজুশ্রী ঘরটার চারিদিকে তাকিয়ে একটু চুপ ক’রে থাকে, তারপর দরজা খুলে ধীরে ধীরে বাইরে আসে। আকাশের দিকে চেয়ে দেখে, কালো মেঘে আকাশ গিয়েছে ছেয়ে……।

সন্ধ্যায় আকাশে মেঘ ছিল না। সুদীর্ঘ অবসরের প্রথম সন্ধ্যাটিকে যে হাসি ও গল্পে ভ’রে দিতে পারত, তাকে বিদায় দিয়ে এসে সে আকাশের পানে চেয়ে চুপ ক’রে বসেছিল। আকাশে তখন ফুটে উঠেছে কোটা কোটা তারা, আর অন্ধকার গাছগুলিকে ঘিরে জ্বলছে সহস্র সহস্র জোনাকি। সেই দিকে চেয়ে চেয়ে তার মনের ভার অনেকটা হাল্কা হ’য়ে এল, তার ছোট স্মৃতি-তৃপ্ত ঐ তারা-জোনাকি-ভরা অসীমের মাঝে আপনাকে হারিয়ে ফেলেছে যেন……।

তার মনে হচ্ছিল, এই সন্ধ্যাটা তার কতদিনের চেনা। কবে কোথায় যেন এই সন্ধ্যাটা তার মনে একটা অখণ্ড পুলকের ছোঁয়া লাগিয়ে চলে গিয়েছিল, আবার আজ ফিরে এসেছে। কিন্তু তবু আজকের সন্ধ্যার এই প্রাণ-ভরা সুরটার মাঝে কোথায় যেন একটা ফাঁক আছে, এর একটা তার যেন থেকে থেকে বেসুরো বেজে উঠছে। সে পরিপূর্ণ একটা সন্ধ্যার কথা মনে করতে চায়, এমনি একটা রাতে মায়ের কোলে মাথা রেখে গল্প শুনতে শুনতে সে ঘুমিয়ে পড়ছে যেন……।

মায়ের মুখ তার ঠিক মনে পড়ে না।

নিজের জীবনের দিকে পিছু ফিরে দেখতে চায়—চোখের সামনে ভাসতে থাকে টুকরো টুকরো ক'টা দৃশ্য। বাবার মৃত্যু-শয্যা, মামার বাড়ী, বাংলা স্কুলের বোর্ডিং...

বোর্ডিং-এর একটা রাতের কথা মনে পড়ে। স্কুলের মেজের উপর পাতা বিছানার উপর মাষ্টার মশায় ও অশ্রু ছেলেরা ঘুমিয়ে পড়েছে, কিন্তু সে কিছুতেই ঘুমতে পারছে না। পাশের ছেলেটার গায়ে ঠেলা দিয়ে সে বলে, “অসিত, ভাই ঘুম আসচে না, চল একটু বাইরে গিয়ে বসি।” ছ'জনে নিঃশব্দে বেরিয়ে এসে স্কুলের মাঠে পাতা একটা বেঞ্চে ব'সে গল্প জুড়ে দেয়—কত অবাস্তর কথা। সে সব কথা আজ আর মনে নেই। তবে একটা কথা সে যেন এখনও শুনতে পায়, কথার মাঝে অসিত হঠাৎ ব'লে উঠেছিল, “আর করটা মাস পরে আমরা কোথায় কে থাকব কে জানে।” সে একটু বিমনা হ'য়ে পড়েছিল, কিন্তু তখনই বড় স্কুলের কথা মনে হতেই মন উৎসাহে ভ'রে উঠেছিল, সে বলেছিল, “তা'তে হয়েছে কি? যেখানেই থাকি মাসে একখানা চিঠি তোকে লিখবই।”

অসিতের খবর অনেক দিনই নেওয়া হয়নি।

আর একটা দিনের কথা মনে আছে। বাঙ্গলার পশ্চিম সীমান্তের একটা ছোট সहर, সে তখন সেখানকার বড় স্কুলের ছাত্র। ম্যাট্রিকুলেশন পরীক্ষার মাত্র কয়েকদিন বাকী। তারা পাঁচজনে বেড়াতে বেরিয়েছিল। দূরে ময়ূরাক্ষীর হলুদ বালুর রাশি, আরও দূরে ছমকার নীল পাহাড়ের সারি মেঘের সঙ্গে মিশে গিয়েছে। মাঝে মাঝে ছ'একটা পলাশ গাছ লাল টুকটকে ফুলে ভরা। সামনে গেরুয়া রঙের রাস্তা, দুধারে আম গাছের সারি। তারা খুব জোরেই হেঁটে চলেছিল, আর মুখের ওপর এসে লাগছিল আশুনের মত গরম হাওয়া। ক্রমে দিন শেষ হ'য়ে এল—সন্ধ্যার অন্ধকারের সঙ্গেই চারিদিকে নামূল একটুখানি ফিকে জ্যোৎস্না। সেই আলো জাঁখারে ঘেরা পথ দিয়ে চলতে চলতে হঠাৎ থেমে গিয়ে সমীর ব'লে উঠেছিল, “পনের দিন পরে?”... ..

স্কুলের সে সব দিন কোথায় হারিয়ে গিয়েছে, এর আগে কোন দিন মনেও পড়েনি তাদের কথা। তারপর এই আমীরের চাকুরী নিয়ে সে কত দেশেই ঘুরে বেড়িয়েছে। শিকল দিয়ে জমি মেপে মেপে দেশের এক প্রান্ত থেকে অপর প্রান্ত পর্যন্ত পাড়ি দিয়েছে। অনেক ঘরই সে এর আগে ছেড়ে এসেছে, কিন্তু আজকের মত বেদনা সে ত' কোন দিন পায়নি।

অথচ আর একজন এখান থেকে অতি সহজেই বিদায় নিতে পেরেছে—সেও তারই মত ক'দিনের জন্তে তারই সঙ্গে আশ্রয় নিয়েছিল এই ঘরটীতে। তার আনন্দের ছোঁয়াচে তার নিরানন্দ জীবনটাও ক'দিনের জন্ত যেন সহজ হ'য়ে উঠেছিল।

হাঁগ, যাবার সময় তারও মনটা ভারী হ'য়ে উঠেছিল, ছোট্ট ক'রে শুধু বলেছিল 'যাই'। এই দু'দিনের সাথীকে বিদায় দিতে গিয়ে সে কথা হারিয়ে ফেলেছিল। সে জানত একটু পরেই তার মনে এই বেদনার এতটুকু চিহ্নও খুঁজে পাওয়া যাবে না। সে মনে মনে দেখছিল তার যাত্রা পথের দিকে চেয়ে...।

* * * * *

ছোট্ট একটা নদী, তীরে ঘন বাবুলার বন। সেই বনের ভিতর দিয়ে একটা ট্রেন ছুটে চলেছে। ট্রেনের একটা জানালা দিয়ে তার বন্ধু নিদ্রাতুর চোখে চেয়ে আছে। মুখে এসে পড়েছে নদী-বক্ষের দু'একটা মিটমিটে আলো, আর গায়ে এসে লাগছে শিরশিরে জলো হাওয়া। চোখ তার ঘুমে ঢুলে আসছে, কিন্তু তবু সে বাইরের দিকে চেয়ে ব'সে আছে, রাস্তার দিকে না তাকিয়ে বাড়ী ফিরে তার আনন্দ সম্পূর্ণ হ'য়ে ওঠে না...।

ভোর হ'য়ে এসেছে। এখনই তার বাড়ী পৌঁছানর কথা। বাড়ীর দরজায় দাঁড়িয়ে সে হয় ত' এতক্ষণ ডাক দিয়েছে।

'মা'।

চমকে জেগে মা বিছানার উপর উঠে বসেছেন—সেই ডাক আর একবার শুনবার জন্তে।

'মা'।

মা তাড়াতাড়ি এসে দরজা খুলে দেন। ছেলে মাকে প্রণাম করে, মায়ের মুখে হাসি। গোলমালে ছোট্ট ভাই জেগে গিয়েছে, প্রথমেই দাদাকে দেখে মায়ের কোলে মুখ নুকিয়েছে, তারপর এসে উঠেছে দাদার কোলে। তারপর কতো গল্প।

দুপুরে ছেলে খেতে বসেছে, মা কাছে ব'সে গল্প করছেন...

* * * * *

হঠাৎ সে চমকে ওঠে—দেখে গাল বেয়ে গড়িয়ে পড়েছে দু' ফোঁটা অশ্রু। যাকে বন্ধু ব'লে মনে করেছে, তারই আনন্দে চোখের জল ফেলে, নিজের কাছেই তার মাথা লজ্জায় হেঁট হ'য়ে যায়। সে তাড়াতাড়ি জিনিষপত্র গুছিয়ে নিতে আরম্ভ করে.....।

একটা গরুর গাড়ীতে জিনিষপত্র বোঝাই দিয়ে, সে স্টেশনের দিকে হেঁটেই চলে। সে মনে মনে দেখে রাত্রি-জাগরণ-ক্রান্ত বন্ধুর মিজিত মুখ, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে মনে পড়ে, অনেক দিন বাড়ী ফেরেনি সে, উল্লনটা হয় ত ভেঙে রয়েছে। রান্না চাপানোর আগে, সেটাকে আবার তৈরী ক'রে নিতে হবে.....।

রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদ

সপ্তম বর্ষ

গত ২০শে জুলাই (৪ঠা শ্রাবণ) শুক্রবার ফিজিক্‌স্‌ থিয়েটারে পরিষদের দ্বিতীয় অধিবেশন হয়। অধ্যক্ষ শ্রীযুক্ত ভূপতিমোহন সেন মহাশয় সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। ডাঃ শ্রীযুক্ত সরসীলাল সরকার, অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত তারাশ্রী মুখোপাধ্যায় ও বহু ছাত্র সভায় উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

স্বকবি শ্রীযুক্ত ষষ্ঠীন্দ্রমোহন বাগ্‌চী মহাশয় ‘রবীন্দ্রনাথের সমালোচনা সাহিত্য’ শীর্ষক একটা সারগর্ভ প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন। শ্রীযুক্ত সরসীলাল সরকার ও তারাশ্রী মুখোপাধ্যায় আলোচনায় যোগদান করেন।

অতঃপর সভাপতির একটা বক্তৃতার পর সভাভঙ্গ হয়।

১৮ই আগষ্ট (১লা ভাদ্র) শনিবার পরিষদের তৃতীয় অধিবেশন হয়। অধ্যক্ষ শ্রীযুক্ত ভূপতিমোহন সেন মহাশয় সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করেন।

শ্রীযুক্ত শৈলজানন্দ ভট্টাচার্য্য ‘মিষ্টিক রবীন্দ্রনাথ’ শীর্ষক একটা সুলিখিত প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন। লেখক বলেন, “বিশ্বের বহুধা প্রকাশের সাথে ভাবাত্মক যোগ ঘটলে অন্তর্নিহিত প্রেরণার মুখ খুলে যায় আর cosmic unity-র রহস্যের দ্বার ধুলোয় লুটায়; মিষ্টিসিজ্‌ম্‌ এই তত্ত্বেরই সম্প্রসারণ। এই ধরনের মিষ্টিসিজ্‌ম্‌ সকল কবির ভেতরই কিছু পরিমাণে আছে—কোনো বিশেষ সুরযোগে তা’ সাধারণের স্নমুখে আবির্ভূত হয়।” রবীন্দ্রনাথের মিষ্টিসিজ্‌ম্‌ আলোচনা করতে গিয়ে তিনি বলেন, “আমাদের ভেতর ব্যক্তিজীবন ও বিশ্বজীবন উপনিষদের ছোটো পাখীর মতো বাস করচে। বিশ্ব-জীবনটা আমাদের অন্তরের অবচেতন রাজ্যে অজানার আঁধারে আত্মগোপন করেছে। ব্যক্তিজীবনের সাথে মিলনেই তার সার্থকতা। যখন ব্যবহারিক জীবনের বেড়া ভেঙ্গে ব্যক্তিজীবন বিশ্বজীবনের সাথে মেশে, তখন তার অতীন্দ্রিয়ালুভূতি রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতায় দেখতে পাই। অসীম বিশ্ববস্তুর ভেতর সুরের বঙ্কার তুলচে—কবি উৎকর্ষ হ’য়ে আছেন। যুগযুগান্ত ধ’রে সসীম-অসীমের মিলনাকাঙ্ক্ষা শোনা যাচ্ছে—সেই জন্মেই আকাশ আলোময়, ফুল গন্ধ ভরা। এই ভাবটা রবীন্দ্রনাথের মিষ্টিসিজ্‌মের একটা প্রধান ধারা।” রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপর উপনিষদের প্রভাব লক্ষ্য করতে গিয়ে লেখক বলেন যে, উপনিষদের ব্রহ্মের বিশ্বালুগ ও বিশ্বাতিগ এই ছোটো রূপকেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ নানা ভঙ্গীতে প্রকাশ করেছেন। গীতাঞ্জলি-পর্যায়ের ভগবান কেবল বিশ্বালুগই নন বিশ্বাতিগও বটেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর বেশির ভাগ মিষ্টিক্‌ কবিতাতেই এ ছ’প্রকারের

এমন স্তম্ভসম্মিলন ঘটিয়েচেন যে, তাতে নিত্যনবনবায়মান সৌন্দর্যের উৎস উথলে উঠে।

অতঃপর শ্রীযুক্ত সরসীলাল সরকার রবীন্দ্রনাথের একটা চিঠির ছিন্ন অংশ পড়ে' শোনান।

অধ্যাপক তারাপদ মুখোপাধ্যায় ইংরেজ কবি ব্লেক, ওয়ার্ড্‌স্‌ওয়ার্থ ও শেলীর সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের তুলনা ক'রে বলেন যে, এই সব মিষ্টিক কবিদের মিষ্টিসিজ্‌মের ধারা বিভিন্ন হ'লেও বিশ্বের অন্তরে যে চরমসত্য বিরাজ করচে তার সাক্ষাৎলাভ ও তার সঙ্গে মিলনের তীব্র আকাঙ্ক্ষা প্রত্যেকের মধ্যেই আছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের মিষ্টিসিজ্‌ম আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে তিনি বলেন যে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ মিষ্টিক কবি ব'লে তাঁর সব কবিতার উপরই মিষ্টিসিজ্‌মের বোঝা চাপিয়ে দেওয়া ঠিক হবে না। তিনি বলেন যে, মিষ্টিক্যাল experience খুব ক্ষণস্থায়ী, এই ক্ষণস্থায়ী experience-এর প্রভাবে যে সকল কবিতায় একটা authentic thrill ফুটে উঠেছে কেবল সেই সব কবিতাকেই মিষ্টিক বলা যেতে পারে। এই প্রসঙ্গে তিনি 'নয়ন ভুলানো এলে' এই গানটাকে বলেন খাঁটি মিষ্টিক কবিতা।

শ্রীযুক্ত সুরধীরকুমার ঘোষ ও কালিদাস লাহিড়ী আলোচনায় যোগ দেন।

অতঃপর সভাপতির একটা বক্তৃতার পর সভাভঙ্গ হয়।

কালিদাস লাহিড়ী

সম্পাদক



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রবীন্দ্রকাব্যে বাংলার পল্লীচিত্র

শ্রীশান্তিকুমার মুখার্জী—তৃতীয় বর্ষ।

কবিতায় সমগ্রতা ও বিচিত্র্য এই দুয়েরই সমান গৌরব। জীবনের কোন এক সময়ে হয়ত জোয়ার আসে এবং তাহা পুলকশিহরণে সমস্ত প্রাণমন পূর্ণ করিয়া রাখে। কিন্তু তাহার কাল উত্তীর্ণ হইলে ভাঁটার স্রোত আসিয়া পড়ে। যে ‘সমস্ত’ এতকাল পূর্ণ ছিল, ভাঁটার মুখে সে সরিয়া যায়। কিন্তু কাব্যে জোয়ারের পরিপূর্ণ উচ্ছ্বাসকে বাঁধিয়া ফেলে; তাহাতে ভাঁটা পড়িবার আশঙ্কা থাকে না। কেননা বিশ্বের পরিপূর্ণ সুর কবির বাঁশীতে বাজে, জীবনের সমস্ত বৈচিত্র্যই কবির কাছে সমাদর পায়—পরিণাম তুচ্ছ হইয়া পড়ে।

কবিতার একটা শক্তি আছে তাহার নাম পরিপূর্ণ প্রদর্শনী শক্তি। এই শক্তির সাহায্যে “কবিতা যাহাকে দেখায় তাহাকে একেবারে পরিপূর্ণ করিয়া দেখায়।” যখন যেটি দেখা দেয় তাহাকেই চরম বলিয়া মনে হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ সম্বন্ধে এই কথা অত্যন্ত সত্য। তাঁহার কাব্য নিজস্ব সম্পত্তি নহে; তাঁহার অনুভূতি সকল সময়ের সকল মানবের অনুভূতি। কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ যদি একই পথে আপনাকে চালনা করিতেন তাহা হইলে জীবনের নানা বৈচিত্র্যের সুর আমরা তাঁহার নিকট পাইতাম না। তিনি আপনাকে একের মধ্যে আবদ্ধ করিয়া রাখেন নাই এবং সেই জন্তই আমরা তাঁহার নিকট যখন যেটি পাই তাহাই অতুলনীয়। তাঁহার “ক্ষণিকা”র তিনি সৌন্দর্যের সন্মাসী, “মানসী”তে তিনি প্রেমকে নিবিড় করিয়া ধরিয়াছেন। অথচ কবি যখন “ভোগক্ষুদ্র যৌবনকে” “মধ্যাহ্নে মাঠের মাঝে” বসাইয়া “ভারশূন্য প্রাণে বাংলার গ্রাম্য প্রকৃতির” নীড়ের মধ্যে শান্তির আশ্রয় খুঁজিতেছেন, তখন তাঁহার সে জীবনকেও আমরা প্রশংসা ও শ্রদ্ধার চক্ষে দেখিয়া থাকি। অতি সাধারণ গ্রামের “রাঙা মাটির পথ” তাঁহাকে “মাটি করিয়া দেয়”। ও পথ তাঁহার মন ভুলায়।

“গ্রামছাড়া ঐ রাঙা মাটির পথ

আমার মন ভুলায় রে!

(ওরে) কার পানে মন হাত বাড়িয়ে

লুটিয়ে যায় ধুলায় রে!

(ও-যে) আমার ঘরের বাহির করে

পায়ে পায়ে পায়ে ধরে—

(৩-যে) কেড়ে আমার নিয়ে যায় রে

যায়রে কোন চুলায় রে !

(৩) কোন বাঁকে কী ধন দেখাবে,

কোন খানে কী দায় ঠেকাবে,

কোঁষায় গিরে শেষ মেলে যে—

ভেবেই না কুলায় রে !”

এইরূপ একটি “আকুল শাস্তিবিপুল বিরতির” মধ্যে গ্রামের সমস্ত সৌন্দর্যকে নিঙুড়াইয়া নিঙুড়াইয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেকে ব্যাপ্ত করিয়াছেন। কোন বড় কথা তিনি বলেন নাই এবং বিশেষ করিয়া সেই জতুই সৌন্দর্যের অতলতার মধ্যে তিনি ডুবিতে পারিয়াছেন। “ক্ষণিকায় কোন বড় কথা বলিবার ছিল না বলিয়া, ‘শুধু অকারণ পুলকে’ ক্ষণিক সৌন্দর্যের মধ্যে পরিপূর্ণ আনন্দে ডুব দিবার প্রয়োজন ছিল বলিয়া তাহা বাংলার গ্রাম্য প্রকৃতির অমন সুন্দর চিত্রমালা হইয়া উঠিয়াছে।” পল্লীগগন যখন মেঘে মেঘে ঘোর হইয়া আসে তখন কবির হৃদয় “ময়ূরের মত” নাচিতে থাকে।

“হৃদয় আমার নাচেরে আজিকে

ময়ূরের মত নাচে রে।”

আবার যখন—

“গুরু গুরু মেঘ গুমরি’ গুমরি’

গরজে গরজে গরজে

গরজে গগনে।

ধেয়ে চলে আসে বাদলের ধারা,

নবীন ধাত্ত ছলে ছলে সারা,

কুলায়ে কাঁপিছে কাতর কপোত,

দাঙ্গুরী ডাকিছে সঘনে—”

তখন কবির নয়নে—

“.....সজল মেঘের

নীল অঙ্কন লেগেছে।”

অবশেষে—

“ঝরে ঘনধারা নবপল্লবে,

কাঁপিছে কানন বিল্লীর রবে,

তীরে ছাপি’ নদী কল-কল্লোলে

এলো পল্লীর কাছেরে।”

এবং সেই সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কবির হৃদয়

“ময়ূরের মত নাচেয়ে।”

“বাদলের ধারা” যখন “ঝরঝর” করিয়া ঝরিতে থাকে এবং “আউসের ক্ষেত জলে ভর-ভর” হইয়া উঠে, তখন ঘরের বাহির হইতে মন চায় না। সেই সময় হঠাৎ মনে পড়ে “ধবলীকে” ত গোহালে আনা হয় নাই।

“ওই ডাকে শোনো দেখু ঘন ঘন,
ধবলীরে আনো গোহালে।
এখনি আঁধার হবে, বেলাটুকু
পোহালে।”

যাহারা মাঠে গিয়াছিল তাহারা হয়ত ফেরে নাই, তাই—

“দুয়ারে দাঁড়িয়ে ওগো দেখে দেখি
মাঠে গেছে যারা তারা কিরেছে কি ?
রাখাল বালক কী জানি কোথায়
সারা দিন আজি ধোয়ালে।”

ঘাটে যাওয়ারও উপায় নাই, কেননা—

“ঝরঝর-ধারে ভিজিবে নিচোল,
ঘাটে যেতে পথ হ'য়েছে পিছল,
ওই বেণুবন দুলে ঘন ঘন
পথপাশে দেখে চাহিরে।”

অতএব

“ওগো আজ তোরা যাসনে ঘরের বাহিরে।”

তারপর বর্ষা আর নাই—শরৎ আসিয়া গ্রামের দুয়ারে দুয়ারে আগমনীর গান গায়। সেদিন “একাদশীর খণ্ডশশী” যখন “পল্লীশিরে” উঠিয়া আসিল, তখন সকলেই একে একে ঘরে ফিরিল। কিন্তু একজনের কি খেয়াল—সেই সময়ে কিসের আসায় সে তাহার কুঁড়েঘর হইতে বাহির হইয়া ভাঙ্গা হাটে ছুটিয়া চলিল। কবি তাহাকে ডাকিয়া বলিতেছেন—

“ভাঙা হাটে কে ছুটেছিল পসরা ল'য়ে,
সন্ধ্যা হ'ল, ঐ যে বেলা গেল রে ব'য়ে।
যে-যার বোঝা মাথার পরে ফিরে এল আপন ঘরে,
একাদশীর খণ্ডশশী উঠ'ল পল্লীশিরে।

পারের গ্রামে যারা থাকে, উচ্চকণ্ঠে নৌকা ডাকে
হা হা করে প্রতিধ্বনি নদীর তীরে তীরে ।
কিসের আশে উদ্ধ্বাসে এমন সময়ে,
ভাঙা হাটে তুই ছুটেছিন্ পসরা ল'য়ে ॥”

তাছাড়া এই কি হাটে যাবার সময় ?

“হৃষ্টি দিল বনের শিরে হস্ত বুলায়ে,
কা কা ধ্বনি খেমে গেল কাকের কুলায়ে ।
বেড়ার ধারে পুকুর পাড়ে, বিল্লী ডাকে ঝোপে ঝাড়ে,
বাতাস ধীরে প'ড়ে এল, স্তব্ধ বাঁশের শাখা ।
হের ঘরের আঙিনাতে শ্রাস্তজনে শয়ন পাতে,
সন্ধ্যা প্রদীপ আলোক ঢালে বিরাম-স্বধা-মাথা ।
সকল চেষ্টা শাস্ত যখন এমন সময়ে
ভাঙা হাটে কে ছুটেছিন্ পসরা ল'য়ে ॥”

এই সব বর্ষাবাদল ছর্যোগের দিনে মাঠে ঘাটে ঘোরায় বিপদ অনেক ।
কিন্তু “মেঘলা দিনে” মাঠে মাঠে ঘুরিয়া বেড়াইতে কবির বড় ভাল লাগে ।
একদিন ঐরকম ঘুরিতে ঘুরিতে তিনি হঠাৎ দেখিয়াছিলেন—

“কালো মেয়ের কালো হরিণ-চোখ ।
ঘোমটা মাথায় ছিল না তা'র মোটে,
মুক্ত বেণী পিঠের পরে লোটে ।”

সে কবির “কুম্বকলি” । কুম্বকলির “কালো হরিণ-চোখ” তিনি দেখিয়াছিলেন
হঠাৎ ; কেননা—

“ঘন মেঘে আঁধার হ'ল দেখে
ডাকতেছিল শ্রামল ছুটি গাই,
শ্রামা মেয়ে ব্যস্ত বাকুল পদে
কুটীর হ'তে ত্রস্ত এল তাই ।
আকাশপানে হানি' যুগল ভুরু
শুনলে বারেক মেঘের গুরু গুরু ।
কালো, তা' সে যতই কালো হোক
দেখেছি তা'র কালো হরিণ-চোখ ॥”

সেই সময়—

“পূবে বাতাস এল হঠাৎ ধেয়ে,
ধানের ক্ষেতে খেলিয়ে গেল ঢেউ

আলের ধারে দাঁড়িয়েছিলাম একা
 মাঠের মাঝে আর ছিল না কেউ ।
 আমার পানে দেখলে কিনা চেয়ে
 আমিই জানি আর জানে সেই মেয়ে ।”

এই রকমে কবি “ময়নাপাড়ার মাঠে” একটি সরলা গ্রাম্য বালিকার দেখা পাইলেন । সে “মাথার পরে দেয়নি তুলে বাস, লজ্জা পাবার পারনি অবকাশ ।”
 কৃষ্ণকলিকে ময়নাপাড়ার মাঠে রাখিয়া আমরা আসিয়া পৌঁছিলাম কবির “খঞ্জনা” গ্রামে । কবি আমাদের পরিচয় দিতেছেন—

“আমরা দুজন একটি গায়ে থাকি
 সেই আমাদের একটি মাত্র স্থখ ।
 তাদের গাছে গায় যে বেয়েল পাখী
 তাহার গানে নাচে আমার বুক ।”

দুজনের মধ্যে একজন কবি নিজে ; আর একজন কে ?

“আমার নাম ত জানে গায়ের পাচজনে,
 আমাদের সেই তাহার নামট রঞ্জনা ॥”

দুজনে “একগায়ের” থাকেন,

“দুইটি পাড়ায় বড়ই কাছাকাছি
 মাঝে শুধু একটি মাঠের ক্লক ।”

কিন্তু

“তাদের বনের অনেক মধুমাছি
 মোদের বনে বাঁধে মধুর ঢাক ।”

“ক্ষণিকা”য় এইপ্রকারে কবি ছোট এবং সাধারণ কথা লইয়াই গ্রাম্য সৌন্দর্য প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন । “মানসী”তে আমরা আরও একটু গভীরতা পাই । “বধু” কবিতায় আমরা দেখি গ্রাম্য বালিকার গ্রাম্যজীবনের জন্ত চরুবার আকুলতা ; রাজধানীর “পাষণ কাষার” মধ্যে গ্রামের খোলা মাঠ, পাখীর গান, বনের ছায়ার জন্ত অবিরাম ক্রন্দন ইহাদের সকলের মধ্য ইহাতে আমাদের মানসনেত্রে ফুটিয়া উঠে একটি অপূর্ব পল্লীচিত্র এবং আমরা সম্মুখেই যেন দেখিতে পাই—

“বামেতে মাঠ শুধু সদাই করে ধু ধু,
 ডাইনে বাঁশবন হেলায়ে শাখা ।
 দাঁঘির কালোজলে সাঁঝের আলো ঝলে,
 , দুধারে ঘনবন ছায়ায় ঢাকা ।

* * * *

শরতে ধরাতল শিশিরে বলমল
 করনী খোলো খোলো র'য়েছে ফুট' ।
 প্রাচীরে বেয়ে বেয়ে সবুজে ফেলে ছেয়ে
 বেগুনী ফুলে ভরা লতিকা ছুট ।”

তাহার পর

“মার্চের পরে মার্চ, মার্চের শেষে
 সুদূর গ্রামখানি আকাশে মেঘে ।
 এধারে পুরাতন শ্রামল ভালবন
 সঘন সারি দিয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে বেঁসে ।
 বাঁধের জল রেখা ঝলসে, যায় দেখা,
 জটলা করে তীরে রাখাল এসে ।
 চ'লেছে পথখানি কোথায় নাহি জানি ।
 কে জানে কত শত মূর্তন দেশে ।”

সেই পল্লীবালার মত আমাদেরও মন গ্রামের দিকে ছুটিতে থাকে এবং তাহার
 জগ্ন অজানা এবং অক্ষুট বেদনাভরা সহানুভূতিতে অন্তর ভরিয়া যায় যখন সে আপন
 মনে ভাবিতে থাকে—

“দেবেনা ভালবাসা, দেবেনা আলো ।
 সদাই মনে হয় আঁধার ছায়াময়
 দীঘির সেই জল শীতল কালো,
 তাহারি কোলে গিয়ে মরণ ভালো ।”

বর্ষায় যখন নদী কূলে কূলে পূর্ণ হইয়া উঠে, গগনে “ঘন বরষা” এবং মনে
 “নাহি ভরসা”, তখন কবি হঠাৎ জানিতে পারিলেন বর্ষা আসিয়া গিয়াছে । তখন
 আর উপায় নাই, ক্ষেতের মধ্যে জল থৈ থৈ করিতেছে, যে যাহার কাজ সারিয়া যবে
 গিয়াছে । নিজের চারিদিকে চাহিয়া দেখেন তিনি “একেলা” ।

“একখানি ছোটো ক্ষেত আমি একেলা,
 চারিদিকে বাঁকা জল করিছে খেলা ।
 পরপারে দেখি আঁকা তরুছায়া মসী মাখা
 গ্রামখানি মেঘে ঢাকা প্রভাত বেলা ।
 এ পারেতে ছোটো ক্ষেত আমি একেলা ।”

তারপর শরতের দ্বিপ্রহরে যখন

“জনশূন্য পল্লিপথে ধূলি উড়ে যায়
 মধ্যাহ্ন বাতাসে, স্নিগ্ধ অশ্বখের ছায়

ক্লান্ত বৃদ্ধা ভিখারিণী জীর্ণ বস্ত্র পাতি'
ঘুমায়ে প'ড়েছে, যেন রৌদ্রময়ী রাস্তি
ঝাঁঝী করে চারিদিকে নিস্তরক নিয়ুম।”

তখন শাস্ত্র গৃহকোণ ছাড়িয়া মন আর অগ্রসর হইতে চায় না। তবুও হয়ত
বাইতে হইল। সেই সময়—

“চলিতে চলিতে পথে হেরি দুই ধারে
শরতের শস্ত ক্ষেত্র নত শস্ত ভারে
রৌদ্র পোহাইছে।”

কিন্তু বিমুখ মন বাধ্য হইয়া চলিতে থাকিলেও ক্রমে অবসন্ন এবং বিষণ্ণ হইয়া
পড়ে। তাই যখন

“..... বেলা ধীরে যায় চ'লে
ছায়া দীর্ঘতর করি' অন্ধখের তলে।”

তখন বৃকের ভিতর যে মন কাঁদিতে থাকে তাহারই সহিত

“নেঠো হরে কাঁদে যেন অনন্তের বাঁশী
বিধের প্রান্তর মাঝে।”

তারপর কবিকে কোন দূর গ্রামে আসিয়া বাস করিতে হইল। তিনি প্রবাসী,
কিন্তু “প্রবাস-বিরহ ছঃখ মনে নাহি বাজে”। কেননা তিনি “যেন সকলের মাঝে
মিলিয়া গিয়াছেন। তাঁহার মনে হইল “বহুকাল পরে, ধরণীর বক্ষতলে” ফিরিয়া
আসিয়াছেন। এই প্রবাসী “ধরণীর বক্ষতল” ভাল লাগিবার হেতু কি? হেতু—

“পশুপাখী পতঙ্গম সকলের সাথে”

তাঁহার আবার পরিচয় হইল “নবীন প্রভাতে”। তাহা ছাড়া দ্বিপ্রহরে তিনি
দেখিতেছেন—

“ক্ষুদ্রশীর্ণ নদীখানি শৈবালে জর্জর
স্থির স্রোতোহীন। অর্দ্ধনগ্ন তরী'পরে
মাছরাঙ্গা বসি, তীরে ছুটি গোকুর চরে
শস্ত্রহীন মাঠে। শাস্ত্রনেত্রে মুখতুলে
মহিব রয়েছে জলে ডুবি' শূন্য ঘাটতলে
রৌদ্রতপ্ত দাঁড়কাক স্নান করে জলে
পাখা ঝট'পটি। শ্যাম শপ্ততট তীরে
খপ্পন ছুলায়ে পুচ্ছ নৃত্য করি' ফিরে।

চিত্রবর্ণ পতঙ্গম স্বচ্ছ পক্ষুভরে
 আকাশে ভাসিয়া উঠে, শৈবালের পরে
 ক্ষণে ক্ষণে লভিয়া বিশ্রাম। রাজহাঁস
 অদূরে গ্রামের ঘাটে তুলি' কলভাষ
 গুঞ্জ পক্ষু ধৌত করে সিন্ত চঞ্চুগুটে।
 গুঞ্চ তৃণগন্ধ বহি' ধেয়ে আসে ছুটে
 তপ্ত সনীরণ, চ'লে যায় বহুদূর।
 থেকে থেকে ডেকে উঠে গ্রামের কুকুর
 কলহে মাতিয়া। কভু শান্ত হান্বাস্বর,
 কভু শালিকের ডাক, কখনো মর্মর
 জীর্ণ অশখের, কভু দূর শূন্যপরে
 চিলের স্তম্ভীত্র ধ্বনি কভু বায়ু ভরে
 আর্তশব্দ বাঁধা তরণীর, মধ্যাহ্নের
 অবান্ত্র করুণ একতান, অরণোর
 সিন্ধুছায়া, গ্রামের স্মৃগু শান্তিরাশি।”

তাহার মাঝখানে কবি বসিয়া আছেন “একা পরবাসী”।

সেই প্রবাসে দিনের পর দিন হয়ত কাটিয়া গেল। তারপর হঠাৎ একদিন
 প্রভাতে কবি দেখিলেন কে যেন আসিয়াছে—সে তাঁহার “নয়ন-ভুলানো”—

“আমার নয়ন-ভুলানো এলে

আমি কী হেরিলাম হৃদয় মেলে!

শিউলিতলার পাশে পাশে

বরা ফুলের রাশে রাশে

শিশির ভেজা ঘাসে ঘাসে

অরণ-রাঙা চরণ কেলে

নয়ন-ভুলানো এলে।”

রবীন্দ্রকাব্যে বাংলার পল্লীচিত্রের এই এক দিক। ইহা সৌন্দর্যের সর্বঙ্গবিকাশ।
 এইবার পল্লীসমাজের দিকটা দেখা যাক।

“নিক্কতি” কবিতাটিতে পল্লীর দূরপন্থের কলঙ্ক দেখান হইয়াছে। বাংলা দেশের
 পল্লীগ্রাম সমাজের যে বন্ধনে বহুকাল ধরিয়া তাহার নিজ জীবনকে নাগপাশের মত
 বাঁধিয়া রাখিয়াছে, তাহার কবল হইতে নিজেকে মুক্ত করা ছুঁকর। তাহা ছাড়া পল্লীবাসী
 মুক্ত হইবার চেষ্টাও করে না। যে সংস্কারের মধ্যে তাহারা আজন্ম বদ্ধিত হইয়াছে
 তাহার অস্বাস্থ্যকর আবহাওয়ার সহিত তাহারা পরিচিত হইয়া গিয়াছে। সমাজে
 বংশমর্যাদায় উঁচু হইয়া থাকিবার একটা দুর্দমনীয় প্রবৃত্তি এবং সেই প্রবৃত্তির সহিত

অযৌক্তিক ধনলিপ্সা তাহাদের নীচমনা করিয়াছে এবং তাহারা আপন সন্তানের ভবিষ্যৎ, অবশ্যস্বাবী দুঃখের পঙ্কিলতায় নিমগ্ন করিতে ব্যথা অল্পভব করে না। তাই অর্থের লোভে এবং কোলীচ গর্ব বজায় রাখিবার জন্ত “মঞ্জুলীর” পিতা এক বৃদ্ধের সহিত তাহার বিবাহ স্থির করিলেন, তখন—

“না কেঁদে কয়, ‘মঞ্জুলী মোর ঐতো কচি মেয়ে,
ওরি সঙ্গে বিয়ে দেব, বয়সে ওয় চেয়ে
পাঁচগুণে সে বড়ো,
তা’কে দেখে বাছা আমার ভয়েই জড়সড়।
এমন বিয়ে ঘটতে দেবো না কো।”

বাপ বলে, ‘কান্না তোমার রাখো,
পঞ্চাননকে পাওয়া গেছে অনেক দিনের খোঁজে,
জানো না কি মন্ত কুলীন ও যে।
সমাজে তো উঠতে হবে সেটা কিছুকউ ভাবো,
ওকে ছাড়লে পাত্র কোথায় পাবো।”

কিন্তু মায়ের প্রাণ কোলীন্যের খাতির করে না। মায়ের সুখশান্তি ছাড়া মা আর কিছুই চায় না। তাই—

“মা বলে, ‘কেন ঐ যে চাটুর্জ্জের পুলিন,
নাইবা হ’ল কুলীন,
দেখতে যেমন তেমনি স্বভাবখানি,
পাস্ ক’রে ফের পেয়েছে জলপানি,
সোনার টুকরো ছেলে।

এক-পাড়াতে থাকে ওরা, ওরি সঙ্গে হেসে খেলে
মেয়ে আমার মানুষ হ’ল ওকে যদি বলি আমি আজই
একখনি হয় রাজি।”

কিন্তু পুলিন “সমাজে সবতলায়” আছে ; অতএব

“বাপ বলে, ‘খামো,
আরে আরে রামো,
ওরা আছে সমাজে সবতলায়
বামুন কি হয় পৈতে দিলেই গলায়।
দেখতে সুনতে ভালো হ’লেই পাত্র হ’ল রাধে,
স্ত্রীবুদ্ধি কি শাস্ত্রে বলে সাধে’।”

তারপর

“যে দিন ওরা গিনি দিয়ে দেখলে ক’নের মুখ
সেদিন থেকে মঞ্জুলিকার বুক
প্রতিপলের গোপন কাঁটায় হ’ল রক্তে মাখা।”

আমরা জানি—

“মায়ের স্নেহ অন্তর্ধ্যামী, তার কাছে তো স্নান কিছই ঢাকা
মায়ের ব্যথা চ’লতে খেতে শুতে
ঘরের আকাশ প্রতিফলনে হান্চে যেন বেদনা-বিদ্রুতে।”

কিন্তু

“অটলতার গভীর গর্ভ বাপের মনে জাগে,
হুখে হুখে ঘেষে রাগে
ধর্ম থেকে নড়েন তিনি নাই হেন দৌর্বল্য।”

* * * *

“অবশেষে বৈশাখে এক রাতে।
মঞ্জুলিকার বিয়ে হ’ল পঞ্চাননের সাথে।”

বিবাহের দুই মাস পরে মঞ্জুলিকা “সিঁড়ির মুছে শিরে” “বাপের ঘরে ফিরে এল।”
মেয়ের দুঃখ মায়ের কাছে অসহ, “অবশেষে নিব্বল মায়ের তাপ।” তবু একবার শেষ
চেষ্টা তিনি করিয়া গেলেন। স্বামীকে অনুন্নয় করিয়া বলিলেন—

“যার খুসি সে নিন্দে করুক, মরুক বিধে জ’রে
আমি কিন্তু পারি যেমন ক’রে
মঞ্জুলিকার দেবোই দেবো বিয়ে।”

কিন্তু বাপের কাছে “ধর্মের পথ কঠিন বড়ো”।

মায়ের মৃত্যুর পরে

“.....হবে

সবেমাত্র এগারো মাস হবে

গুজব গেল শোনা

এই বাড়িতে ঘটক করে আনাগোনা।”

তারপর একদিন দেখা গেল মঞ্জুলিকার পিতা বর সাজিয়া বিবাহ করিতে চলিলেন।
কেননা যদিও তাঁহার পক্ষে

“.....বিয়ে করা বিষম কঠোর কর্ম,

কিন্তু গৃহধর্ম

স্ত্রী না হ’লে অপূর্ণ যে রম,

মনু হ’তে মহাভারত সকল শাস্ত্রে কয়।”

সমাজের এইসব কলঙ্ক ছাড়াও আছে অত্যাচার এবং অবিচার। বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে
যত “উপেন” আর যত তাদের “দুই বিঘা জমি” তাদের সকলের উপর জমিদারের শ্রেনদৃষ্টি।

“বুঝেছ উপেন, এ জমি লইব কিনে।”

উপেন সজলচক্ষে হাত জোড় করিয়া বলিল—

“.....করুন রক্ষে গরীবের ভিটাখানি ।
সপ্তপুরুষ ষেথায় মানুষ সে মাটি সোনার বাড়ি,
দৈশ্বের দায়ে বেচিব সে মায়ে এমনি লক্ষ্মীছাড়া ।”

তখন—

“আঁধি করি’ লাল রাজা ক্ষণকাল রহিল মৌনভাবে,
কহিলেন শেষে জুর হাসি হেসে, ‘আচ্ছা সে দেখা যাবে’ ।”

পরে মাস দেড়েকের মধ্যে উপেনকে “ভিটেমাটি” ছাড়িয়া পথে বাহির হইতে হয় । কারণ ধনী জমিদার “করিল ডিক্রি, সকলি বিক্রি মিথ্যা দেনার খতে” ।

এইরকম কত চিত্র যে কবি আমাদের সামনে ধরিয়াছেন তাহা একটি একটি করিয়া দেখাইতে হইলে এ প্রবন্ধ দীর্ঘ হইয়া পড়ে । বাংলার পল্লীগুলির ভালমন্দ, দোষত্রুটি, সমাজের অত্যাচার অবিচার, এসবই তিনি তাঁহার নিপুণ তুলিকার স্পর্শে সজীব করিয়া তুলিয়াছেন । কিন্তু শত দোষত্রুটি থাকা সত্ত্বেও বাংলার পল্লী তাঁহার মাতৃস্বরূপা, বড় প্রিয়, বড় মধুর তাঁহার জন্মভূমি । এই মায়ের গানে তাঁহার মন ব্যাকুল হইয়া উঠে ।

“নমো নমো নমঃ, হৃন্দরী মম জননী বঙ্গভূমি,
গঙ্গার তীর স্নিগ্ধ সন্মীর জীবন জুড়ালে তুমি ।
অবারিত্ত মাঠ, গগন ললাট চুমে তব পদধূলি,
ছায়া-হ্নিবিড় শান্তির নীড় ছোট ছোট গ্রামগুলি ।
পল্লবঘন আম্রকানন, রাখালের খেলাগেহ,
সুন্দর অতল দীঘি-কালোজল নিশীথ শীতল স্নেহ ।
বুকভরা মধু বঙ্গের বধু জল ল’য়ে যায় ঘরে,
মা বলিতে প্রাণ করে আনন্দান চোখে আসে জল ভ’রে ।”

এ প্রবন্ধ এইখানেই শেষ করি । উপস্থিত আমরা দেখিলাম যে, বিশ্ব-কবির মনে যে ভাবের জোয়ার আমাদের সবার মনের কিনারায় চেউয়ের আঁঘাতে বিশ্বয়ের সৃষ্টি করে ফেনায় ফেনায়, সে ভাবের আবির্ভাব এবং সঞ্চারণী শক্তিতে পল্লীচিত্রের নানা অংশ ইন্দ্রধনুর সপ্তবর্ণের মত প্রকাশ হইয়া পড়ে । আমরা বুঝি যে কিছুই হারাই নাই, “অগীত গান এবং অফোটা ভাষা” ইহাদের কিছুই মিথ্যা হয় নাই ; কেননা—

“পূর্ণের পদপরশ তাদের পারে ।”

নারী

শ্রীচন্দ্রশেখর আঢ়া, এম, এ,
(ভূতপূর্ব ছাত্র)

অবলা সে নহে কভু, বলদৃষ্ট পুরুষেরি মত ;
অপূর্ব বিচার-বুদ্ধি হেরি নিত্য গৃহকর্ণে শত ;
শোভন বুনন, শিল্পে কেউ নহে তার সমতুল ;
রন্ধনে দ্রৌপদী যেন অগ্নে তার রসনা আকুল ।
লেখনী চলিছে দ্রুত মাসিকের পাতায় পাতায়,
স্বতীক্স বিদ্রুপ-বহ্নি অন্তঃস্থলে প্রবেশিয়া যায় ।
সভায় বক্তৃতা দিল বীরবাণী পৌরুষ ভাষায়,
যৌবনের তপ্ত রক্তে দোলা লাগে তরঙ্গ লীলায় ।
কুসুম কোমল কভু, কভু দেখি পাষণ কঠিন,
বিরহে-মিলনে তার সচকিত, সবে প্রতিদিন ;
বঙ্কিম ভুজঙ্গ পথে ছুটে তার প্রাণ-নির্বাহিণী,
হৃজের রহস্তভরা, সে যেন গো অপ্সরা-নন্দিনী ।
আকাশ উদার কভু, কভু স্থির গন্তীর সাগর,
অমৃত মধুর প্রেম, বুকভরা নিঃসরোবর ;
আবেগ-কম্পিত-কণ্ঠে স্নমধুর প্রীতি আলাপন,
জীবন সফল মানি লভি তার সঙ্গ স্মশোভন ।
উর্বশীর মত রূপ, লেলিহান প্রদীপ্ত অনল,
কটাক্ষ ইঙ্গিতে তার ত্রিভুবন যৌবন-চঞ্চল ;
সাহস নাহিক পাই করিবারে গৃহে আমন্ত্রণ,
জীবন-সঙ্গিনী করি দিতে তারে প্রেম নিবেদন ।
সুনির্দিষ্ট লক্ষ্য তার আকাশের ঞ্জবতারা স্থির,
লঘুচিত্ত বাল্য সম তবু সে যে ত্বরন্ত অস্থির ;
অঙ্গুলি হেলনে তার বিশ্ব সাজে সমর সজ্জায়,
কভু বা হাসিয়া ওঠে রিক্ত বিশ্ব স্বর্গের শোভায় ।

একচক্রার বিল

হেমচন্দ্র দত্ত

তৃতীয় বর্ষ (বিজ্ঞান)

বড়দিনের ছুটির ক'টা দিন এবার বাঙ্গলার কোন নিভৃত পল্লীগ্রামে কাটিয়ে দেবার উদ্দেশ্য নিয়ে সহর ছেড়ে বেড়িয়ে পড়লাম। যেখানে এসে পৌছলাম, সে গ্রামের নাম 'একচক্রা'। একচক্রা যে নকল নয়, খাঁটি পৌরাণিক—এর প্রমাণ পেতে খুব বিলম্ব হ'ল না। গ্রামের দক্ষিণে প্রকাণ্ড বিল একেবারে মহাভারতের সমসাময়িক। বকাসুরের সঙ্গে যখন ভীমের যুদ্ধ বাধে, তখন তাদের পায়ের আফালনে বসুমতীর শরীরের এই অংশ একটু তুবড়াইয়া এই বিলের সৃষ্টি। প্রথমদিন এই বিল যে তরল পদার্থে পূর্ণ হ'য়ে উঠেছিল তা' ঐ মৃত জানোয়ারটার তাজা রক্ত। বিলে এখনও হাজার হাজার রাজা শালুকের ফুল ফোটে। এখানকার লোকে এগুলিকে বলে "রক্ত-কম্বল"; তাদের বিশ্বাস যে, ঐ ফুলগুলি সেই আত্মরিক রক্ত হইতে এখনও জীবনী-শক্তি সঞ্চয় করে। তা ছাড়া, বিলের মধ্যে খোঁজ করলে মৃত অস্তুরটার পাথর-হ'য়ে-বাওয়া হাড়-গোড় এখনও ছ'একখান পাওয়া যেতে পারে। এককালে যে সেগুলি প্রচুর পরিমাণেই পাওয়া যেত, গ্রামের মিউজিয়াম ধষ্টীতলায় তার প্রমাণ আছে।

এর পর একচক্রার প্রামাণিকতার বিরুদ্ধে সন্দেহ করা অসম্ভব হ'য়ে উঠল। যে ভদ্রলোক আমাকে এই সমস্ত আখ্যান শুনিয়েছিলেন, তাঁকে গ্রামের ছোট বড় সকলেই রায়জী ব'লে ডাকে—আমিও তাঁকে রায়জী বলেই ডাক্তাম। তাঁর কথা আমি নির্বিচারে মেনে নিয়েছি দেখে তিনি আমার উপর বেশ খুসী হয়েই উঠলেন।

বেশ লাগতো আমার বিলের ধারটা। বৎসরের এক সময় বিলে যথেষ্ট পদ্ম ফুল ফোটে, কিন্তু এখন তার একটা পাতা পর্যন্ত দেখা যায় না। কেবল লম্বা লম্বা শুকনো ডাঁটাগুলো শীতের হাওয়ায় শির শির ক'রে কাঁপে। ফুলের মধ্যে কেবল ফিকে-বেগুনি-মেশানো শাদা রঙের কলমী-ফুল। বিলের মাঝে অনেক দলপিঁপিঁ চ'ড়ে বেড়ায়—লম্বা লম্বা পা ফেলে যখন তারা এক জায়গা থেকে দ্রুত আর এক জায়গায় ছুটে চলে, তখন ঐ কলমী-লতার ফুলগুলি আস্তে আস্তে ছলে ওঠে। এই পচা শ্রাওলা এবং কলমী-ফুলে ভরা ধূসর রঙের বিলের মাঝে মাঝে ছ'এক ঝড় রক্ত-কম্বল দেখে সত্যিই মনে হয়, কে যেন ওখানে রক্তের ছোঁপ লাগিয়ে দিয়েছে।

বিকেল বেলা রোজই আমি বিলের ধারে বেড়াতে বেরুতাম। একদিন সেখানে রায়জীর সঙ্গে দেখা। ছ'জনে গল্প করতে করতে এগিয়ে চললাম। তিনি বিলের

অতীত গৌরবের বিষয়ে অনেক কথাই বলছিলেন। এক নামে এই বিলে যে সব শালুক জন্মাতো তাদের দৈর্ঘ্য হ'ত একুশ হাতেরও বেশী, বর্ষাকালে বিলে বড় বড় বান আসত, সঙ্গে আসতো তার চেয়েও বড় বড় কুমীর এবং হাঙ্গর। এই সমস্ত বানকে বলা হ'ত ঘোড়া-বান। কবে কোন আঠার সালের ঘোড়া-বানে রায়জী মশায় বাস্ত-ভিটা-ছাড়া হয়েছিলেন, তার বিস্তৃত বিবরণ শুনতে শুনতে চলেছিলাম। এক জায়গায় একটা পড়ো বাড়ীর মত দেখে তাঁকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলাম, “আচ্ছা, রায়জী মশায়, ঐ যে দ্বীপের মত একটা জায়গা দেখা যাচ্ছে, ওখানে ঐ পড়ো বাড়ীটা এল কেমন ক'রে?”

রায়জী মশায় বললেন, “ওটা পড়ো বাড়ী নয়, একটা ভাঙা মসজিদ। তোমরা ইতিহাসে অশোকের কথা পড়েছ। ঐ ভাঙা মসজিদের সঙ্গে এমনি এক গাঁয়ে অশোকের কথা জড়িয়ে আছে।

“সে অনেক দিনের কথা, মুসলমান নবাবদের আমলেই হবে বোধ হয়। তখন ছ'জন জমীদার এই বিলের মালিক, ছ'জনেই মুসলমান। একবার ছ'জনের অধিকারের সীমা নিয়ে গোল বাধলো। ওই যে সন্ন নালায় মত একটা জায়গা দেখছো, ওই খানে। ছ'জনেই দাবী করতে লাগলেন যে নালাটা তাঁর সীমানার মধ্যে। ফলে দুই দলই লাঠিয়াল বরকন্দাজ নিয়ে নালায় ছ'পাশে এসে দাঁড়াল। তখন বেলা প্রায় ঝিকিঝিকি, সূর্য্যদেব পাটে বসেছেন। ছ'দলে দাঙ্গা আরম্ভ হ'ল; কিছুক্ষণ লাঠিলাঠির পর একদল অপর দলকে হঠিয়ে দিলে, হতাহতদের রক্তে নালায় জল লাল হয়ে উঠল।

“জয়ী জমীদার দূরে দাঁড়িয়ে সবই নিজে দেখলেন। নিজের দলবলকে নিয়ে আস্তে আস্তে তিনি গ্রামে ফিরলেন। কিন্তু জয়ের আনন্দে তাঁকে বিশেষ উৎফুল্ল দেখা গেল না। তিনি লাঠিয়ালদের এক এক ক'রে পুরস্কার দিচ্ছেন, এমন সময় সর্দার লাঠিয়ালের মেয়ে ছুটে এসে তাঁর পায়ের কাছে প'ড়ে ফু'পিয়ে কেঁদে উঠল, ‘বাপজানকে ওরা মেয়ে ফেলেছে, হজুর, শিরটাকেও কেটে নিয়ে গেছে।’ জমীদার কোন রকমে চোখের জল চেপে তাকে বাড়ী পাঠিয়ে দিলেন। তারপর লোকজন সঙ্গে ক'রে মশাল নিয়ে এই নালায় কাছে ফিরে এলেন। কয়েকজন মৃত লাঠিয়ালকে সেই রাতেই ওখানে কবর দেওয়া হ'ল, কিন্তু সর্দার লাঠিয়ালের মাথা কোথাও পাওয়া গেল না; শুধু শরীরটাকেই কবর দেওয়া হ'ল। জমীদার ঐখানে মসজিদ তৈরী ক'রে ফকির ভাবে সারা জীবনটা কাটিয়ে দিলেন। যতদিন বেঁচে ছিলেন, শোনা যায় তিনি মাথাটার খোঁজ করেছিলেন। এখন মরে গিয়েও তিনি সেই মাথার কথা ভুলতে পারেননি। মশাল জেলে রাতে এখনও তিনি মাথাটার খোঁজ ক'রে বেড়ান। বারা একথা জানে না, তারা ভয় পায়। বলে আলেয়া।”

একটু/থেকে রায়জী মশায় আস্তে আস্তে বললেন, “বিলের কথা মনে হলেই রক্ত-রক্তি, দাঙ্গা, মৃত্যু এই সবের কথা মনে পড়ে। আমাদের শ্মশানটাও এইখানে কিনা। তবু বিলটাকে কেমন যেন ভাল লাগে। বোধ হয় অনেক আত্মা এখানের হাওয়ায় ভেসে বেড়ায় সেইজন্তে।” এই পর্যন্ত ব’লে রায়জী মশায় বিলের দিকে চুপ করে চেয়ে রইলেন।

কোন কথা ব’লে পাছে এই বৃদ্ধের মনে কষ্ট দিয়ে বসি, এই ভয়ে আমিও চুপ ক’রেই থাকলাম।

বেলা প্রায় শেষ হ’য়ে এসেছিল। প্রায় সমস্ত জলচর পাখী আগেই উড়ে গিয়েছে। কেবল কয়েকটি পাণকোড়ি ডাঙ্গায় উঠে তখনও রোদ পোহাচ্ছে। আর কয়েকটা মাণিকজোড় তখনও আহারের আশা ছাড়তে না পেরে জলার মধ্যে ব’সে আছে।

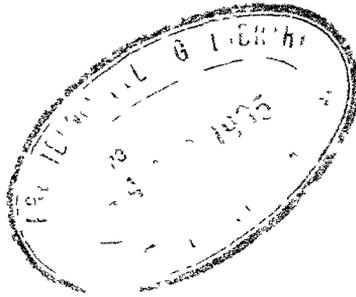
একটা লোক ‘পলোই’ নিয়ে ছপ্, ছপ্ শব্দ করতে করতে আমাদের দিকেই আসছিল। হঠাৎ এক ঝড় রক্ত-কম্বল দেখে সে হিংস্রভাবে সেটাকে টুকরো টুকরো ক’রে ছিঁড়ে ফেললে। তার এই অদ্ভুত ব্যবহার দেখে আমি বেশ একটু আশ্চর্য হয়েছিলাম। রায়জী মশায়কে জিজ্ঞাসা করব এমন সময় তিনিই বললেন, “ঐ যে লোকটাকে দেখ্ছ, এক সময় গ্রামে ওর চেয়ে সুখী লোক কমই ছিল। কৃষাণের কাজ করা ওদের জাতের ব্যবসা, কিন্তু ক্ষেতের কাজ ও কিছুই শিখলো না। কেবল মাছ ধরেই ওর দিন কাটতো। রোজগারও মন্দ হ’ত না। রোজ বিকেলে এক কৌচর কই-মাগুর মাছ নিয়ে গ্রামের দিকে ফিরত—তারই দামে ওর দিন চলতো। এমন সময় ছোট একটা ছেলে রেখে ওর বউ মারা গেল। ছেলেটাকে রাখবার কোন লোক ঘরে নাই, কাজেই ও তাকে সঙ্গে নিয়েই মাছ ধরতে আসত। বিলের পারের ওপর একটা তালপাতার ছাতার নীচে ছেলেকে বসিয়ে দিয়ে, তার হাতে কতকগুলো ফুল, পাণিফল এই সব এনে দিত। ছেলে খেলা করতে আরম্ভ করলে মাছ ধরার জন্তে ও বিলের মধ্যে নামত।

মাছ ধরা শেষ ক’রে ছেলেকে কাঁধে নিয়ে বাপ গ্রামে ফিরত। এমনি দিন কাটছিল। কিন্তু হঠাৎ একদিন বিপদ হ’ল। জঙ্গলের মধ্যে ঐ যে চকচকে জায়গা-গুলি দেখ্ছ, ওখানে জল অনেক, ওকে আমরা ‘খাই’ বলি। একটা খাইয়ের মধ্যে কয়েকটি লাল টকটকে রক্ত-কম্বল ফুটেছিল। ছেলেটা সেগুলি তুলবার জন্য জলে নাম্ছে, এমন সময় সে বাপের চোখে পড়ল। কিন্তু তখন ও অনেক দূরে, চীৎকার ক’রে ছেলেকে বারণ করত্বে গেল। কিন্তু ততক্ষণে ছেলে জলের মধ্যে তলিয়ে গিয়েছে। ছুটে এসে ছেলেকে তুললে, কিন্তু বাঁচাতে পারলে না। তখন থেকেই লোকটা

পাগল হ'য়ে গিয়েছে। চিরদিনের অভ্যাস মত বিলে এসে মাছ ধরে। কোন দিন মাছগুলোকে এইখানেই ফেলে দিয়ে যায়, আবার কোন দিন গ্রামের কোন লোকের ঘরে গিয়ে ঢেলে দেয়। কেউ যদি ডেকে চারটা খেতে দেয় ত খায়, নইলে উপোস ক'রে থাকে। কিন্তু রক্ত-কম্বলের ওপর আক্রোশ ওর আজও গেল না—রক্ত-কম্বলের ঝাড় দেখলেই ছিঁড়ে কুটা কুটা ক'রে ফেলে।”

এই ব'লে রায়জী মশায় চুপ করলেন। এই সমস্ত গল্প শুনে আমি কেমন যেন হ'য়ে পড়েছিলাম। বিলের এক জায়গায় এক ফালি পরিষ্কার জল ডুবন্ত হর্যের আলোতে ধারাল ছুরির মত ঝক্ ঝক্ করছিল। সেটাকে দেখে আমার কেবলই মনে হচ্ছিল যে সেই পৌরাণিক যুগের রাক্ষসটা আমাদের দিকে চেয়ে নিষ্ঠুরভাবে হাসছে।

হঠাৎ পাশের আখের ক্ষেতের মাঝ থেকে শেয়াল ডেকে উঠলো। চমক ভেঙ্গে উঠে বললাম, “চলুন, রায়জী মশায়, এবার ফেরা যাক।”







প্রকাশের বেদনা

শ্রীকালিদাস ঘোষ, এম-এ, বি-এল,
(ভূতপূর্ব ছাত্র)

(১)

কেন্দ্র হ'তে কেন্দ্রাতীতের সন্ধান—
দিবসের চিন্তা আর রজনীর স্বপন
জীবনের যত ব্যর্থ ক্রন্দন
সবই কি গোপনে,—
নিধবনি তলহীন স্তব্ধ নিরঙ্ক বৃকের কোণে
হারিয়ে যাওয়া সুরের মতন
আমার মাঝে, ঘুরিবে কেবল, চিরভ্রাম্যমান ?
প্রকাশ পায় নি ব'লে
মুখর জগতের কোলে
নির্দিষ্ট মূর্তি ধরে
বহির্জগত মাঝারে
প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া নিতে আপনার
স্বাধীকার—
অর্জিত, নির্দিষ্ট, প্রকৃত স্থান ?
বিড়ম্বিত প্রকাশের একি আহত অভিমান ?

(২)

উদ্বেল জলরাশি যেমন
আছাড়িয়া পড়ে
উপলরাজির 'পরে—
সংস্কৃত,
নহে ভীত,

আপনার বেগে
 অদৃশ্যের করুণা মেগে
 রচিয়া আপনার প্রমত্ত পথ,
 যাত্রা করিতে চায়
 আপনি জানেনা কোথায়
 হউক সে বহুদূর, নাই বা যাউক দেখা
 গন্তব্যপথের স্পষ্ট নির্দিষ্ট সীমারেখা
 তবু অজানা সে পথে
 চলে সে।

হৃদ্যম গতির গীতিমূর্ছনা
 ছড়াবে বিসর্পিত পথে
 ফেনায়িত অশ্রুর অগণিত কণা,
 তবু তাহার সে গতির
 আছে কি বিশ্রাম
 অথবা বিরাম ?

নাই বা হলো স্বচ্ছন্দে,
 তবু গতির অধীর আনন্দে
 মরার আঁধার থেকে, বাঁচার আলোর তলে
 বিপুল পুলকের উদ্দাম তালে,
 দুর্নিবার আকর্ষণে, জ্বলক্ষ্যের পানে
 ছুটিয়া চলে সে—
 বুঝি বা জানেনা কিসের আশ্বাসে
 যাত্রা তাহার
 গতি অনিবার,
 মরস্তের জীবন্ত হ'য়ে উঠিবার
 জ্বরন্ত বিজ্রপের নিশ্চয় একি অভিযান ?
 বিড়ম্বিত প্রকাশের আহত একি অভিমান ?

(৩)

বেদনার পুঞ্জীভূত মেঘকলাপ
চিস্তের গগনে
কালোতে আঁধারে মিশে
অবশেষে,
অবিরল ধারায়
বিগলিত করি আপনায়
সিঞ্চিত করি',
সর্বতাপ হরি'
রসহীন তাপিত চিত্ত
সরস স্নিগ্ধ তৃপ্ত
করিবে না কি তাহা ?
মিশে যাবে দূর গগনে
মেঘ গর্জন সনে
বেদনাক্রিষ্ট হিয়ার বিপুল "হাহা—" ?

(৪)

প্রকাশের অসীম আকাজক্ষা
বিদূরিত করি ভয়শঙ্কা
জড়তার সর্বনাশা আবরণ ছিন্ন ক'রে
দিবে না কি তাহারে,
মুহূর্তের তরে
অপূর্ব জাগরণের শিহরিত কম্পন,
আর অতৃপ্ত বেদন ?
অভিব্যক্তির নিবিড় আবেদন,
আপনি আসিয়া স্বরা
রচিয়া তুলিবে না কি রূপ
আপনার স্বরূপ
অল্পম স্বেচ্ছায় ভরা ?

আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতা

ত্রিভ্রাতৃশ্রী বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

পঞ্চম বর্ষ, ইতিহাস

— আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার স্বরূপ পর্যালোচনা করিতে হইলে, আমাদের সর্বপ্রথমে রবীন্দ্রকাব্য আলোচনা করিতে হইবে। রবীন্দ্রনাথই আধুনিক বাংলা কাব্যের আদি কবি। তাঁহার পূর্বে বাংলা ভাষায় যে ধরণের কবিতা লেখা হইত তাহাতে বিদেশীয় প্রভাব বহুল পরিমাণে লক্ষিত হয়। রবীন্দ্র-কাব্যসাহিত্যে এত ব্যাপক যে, সে সম্বন্ধে দীর্ঘ প্রবন্ধ লেখা যায়। অতএব বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে বাদ দিয়া আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতা সম্বন্ধে সামান্য একটু আলোচনা করিব। গোড়ায় বলিয়া রাখি, ষাঁহার এই ক্ষুদ্র প্রবন্ধে একটা নূতন কিছু আশা ফেরিয়াছেন, তাঁহারা হতাশ হইবেন। আধুনিক কবিদের সম্বন্ধে বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি নানা প্রকার আলোচনা করিয়াছেন। সেই সব বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে একস্থানে সন্নিবিষ্ট হইয়াছে মাত্র।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বাংলা কবিতায় যে বৈশিষ্ট্য আনিয়াছেন, তাহা বাঙ্গালীকে অত্যধিক পরিমাণে প্রভাবান্বিত করিয়াছে। কতিপয় শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীর কাব্য আলোচনা করিলে তাহা লক্ষিত হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের স্বকীয় পদ্ধতি অবলম্বন করিয়াছিলেন বলিয়া তাঁহাদিগকে “রবীন্দ্রপন্থী” বলা হইয়া থাকে।

এই শ্রেণীর কবিদের ভিতর সর্বপ্রথম সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের নাম উল্লেখযোগ্য। তাঁহার কাব্যের ভিতর ছন্দ ও সুরের প্রাধান্য আমাদের কাছে অত্যন্ত আকর্ষণ করে। তিনি ছন্দের যে বৈচিত্র্য দিয়া গিয়াছেন, তজ্জন্য তাঁহার নাম দেওয়া হইয়াছে “ছন্দের ফাঙ্কনী”। সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ ছিলেন মাটির কবি, পৃথিবীর সৌন্দর্য্য তিনি আকর্ষণ উপভোগ করিয়া গিয়াছেন। প্রকৃতির প্রত্যেক খুঁটিনাটি ঘটনা কবির দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করিয়াছে। মেঘ দেখিয়া পুষ্পের অন্তঃকরণে যে সংগ্রাম সূর্য হয় তাহা একটা অস্বাভাবিক ব্যাপার নহে। কিন্তু সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের হৃদয় কে তাহা এমন করিয়া দেখিয়াছে বা ভাবিয়াছে! মহাশয়বতার সুর তাঁহার কাব্যের ভিতর দিয়া আমাদের প্রাণে সাড়া দেয়; যেমন ধরুন “কয়াধু” কবিতাটা। এই কবিতাটির ভিতর কবির অস্ত্রায়ের প্রতি ঘৃণা এবং আর্তজনের জন্ত সহানুভূতি অত্যন্ত স্পষ্টরূপে প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। ইহা পাঠে আমাদের রবীন্দ্রনাথের কথা মনে পড়ে—

“অস্ত্রায় যে করে আর অস্ত্রায় যে সহ্যে

তব ঘৃণা তারে যেন তৃণসম দহে ॥”

শ্রেণ্যরকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বলিয়াছেন—

‘নীলকণ্ঠ করেছেন পৃথিবী নির্বিকষ।
আর তুমি ? তুমি তারে করেছ নির্মল।
এস বন্ধু, এস বীর, শক্তি দাও চিত্তে,—
কল্যাণের কর্ম করি লাঞ্ছনা সহিতে।’

বিধবা বালিকা মেয়ে একাদশীর উপবাসে আকুল তৃষ্ণার মাতার নিকট একটু জল চাহিয়াছে, অমনি পিতামাতা ভয়ে অস্থির হইলেন, “ধর্ম খসে যায় পাছে”। মর্মান্বিত হইয়া সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বলিয়াছেন—

“কে নেবে এই পুণ্যব্রত ? কে হবে মা’র পুত্র গো ?
একাদশীর তেপান্তরে খুলবে কে জলসত্র গো ?
কে নেবে মন্দারের মালা—মাতৃজাতির আশীর্ব্বাদ
আশায় আছি দাঁড়িয়ে যে তার কর্তে বিক্রম-শঙ্খনাদ।”

সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের ‘হোমশিখা’ গ্রন্থ সাম্য, মৈত্রী ও স্বাধীনতার মন্ত্রে অনুপ্রাণিত। সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যে আর একটা জিনিষ লক্ষ্য করিবার বিষয় এই যে, তাঁহার কাব্যে মৃত্যু ও ওপারের কথা নাই।—

“আন বীণা, বীধ তার, ঢাল হুয়া গাহ গান
যে গিয়েছে, কথা তার, কর আজি অবসান।” (“বেণু ও বীণা”)

এই অপূর্ণ অনুভূতি ও ‘পুলকজড়িত বিস্ময়’, এই স্নন্দর ধরিত্রীকে প্রাণ খুলিয়া ভালবাসিবার ইচ্ছা ও ‘নিত্য নব সঙ্গীতের হারে’ সাজাইবার ইচ্ছা ‘ফুলের ফসল’ গ্রন্থে আরও মূর্ত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। মৌলিক কাব্য-রচনার তাঁহার স্থান বঙ্গ-সাহিত্যে যেমন অত্যন্ত উচ্চে, তেমনি তাঁহার অনুবাদগুলি আর্টের চরম বিকাশরূপে সাহিত্য-ক্ষেত্রে চিরস্মরণীয় হইয়া থাকিবে। “তাঁহার অনুবাদগুলি যেন জন্মান্তরপ্রাপ্তি—আত্মা একদেহ হইতে অল্পদেহে সঞ্চারিত হইয়াছে। ইহা শিল্পকার্য্য নহে; ইহা সৃষ্টিকার্য্য” —(রবীন্দ্রনাথ)। সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যে lyric element অতিশয় মধুর হইয়াছে। তাঁহার—

“চামেলি তুই বল
অধরে তোর কোন রূপসীর
রূপের পরিমল !
কোন সে পরী গলার হারে
রেখেছিল কাল তোমারে,
কোন প্রমদার হৃদয় ভায়ে
হৃৎটুপে তোর দল।”

(‘চামেলির প্রতি’)

কবিতাটা রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘মাধবী হঠাৎ কোথা হ’তে এসে’ অথবা ‘সুহ্মা ডাল পালা তোর উতলা যে, ও চাঁপা ও করবী’ কবিতার ছায় পরম উপভোগ্য।

আজকাল কেহ কেহ তাঁহার কাব্যের প্রতি কটাক্ষপাত করিয়াছেন। এমন কথাও শুনিতে পাওয়া যায় যে, তাঁহার কাব্যে কেবল ছন্দকে লইয়া ছিনিমিনি খেলা হইয়াছে, উহাতে সারপদার্থ অতি অল্পই আছে। * ইহা নিছক মন-গড়া কথা। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁহার সম্বন্ধে বলিয়াছেন—

“জানি তুমি প্রাণ খুলি’

এই সুন্দরী ধরনীরে ভালবেসেছিলে। তাই তারে
সাজিয়েছ দিনে দিনে নিত্য নব সঙ্গীতের হারে।
অত্নায় অসত্য যত, যত কিছু অত্যাচার পাণ
ফুটিল কুৎসিত ক্রুর, তার পরে তব অভিশাপ
বর্ধিয়াছ ক্ষিপ্রবেগে অর্জুনের অগ্নিবাণ সম
তুমি সত্যবীর তুমি স্বকঠোরঃ নির্মল, নির্গম,
করণ কোমল।”

অতি অল্প বয়সেই সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের মৃত্যু হয়।

শ্রীযুক্ত যতীন্দ্রমোহন বাগচী রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবিত শিষ্যদের মধ্যে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ। তিনি একজন সত্যকারের কবি—সৃষ্টি তাঁহাকে মুগ্ধ করিয়াছে। তিনি দুঃখবাদীও নন, সুখবাদীও নন, তিনি জড়বাদীও নন, আদর্শবাদীও নন—তিনি কোন বাদেই ধার ধারেন না। তিনি মুগ্ধ নেত্রে এই সুন্দর পৃথিবীর অনন্ত বৈচিত্র্য ও সৌন্দর্য আকর্ষণ উপভোগ করিয়া চলেন। “কোজাগর-লক্ষ্মীর” অপূর্ব শ্রী দেখিয়া তিনি আনন্দে আত্মহারা হইয়া বলেন—

“কে বলে রূপ নাই দেবতার—কে বলে তাঁর মুক্তি নাই ?

যে বলে সে নয়ন মেলে আজকে রাতে দেখুক চাহি’।

দেখুক এসে অবিধাসী আমার মায়ের রূপটি কিবা,

চরণে তাঁর লুটায় কি না লক্ষ চাঁদের রৌপ্য-শিভা !” (‘অপরাজিতা’)

বসন্তকে উদ্দেশ্য করিয়া কবি বলেন—

“এস বসন্ত গীতে ও গঞ্জে বর্ষে সার্জি’—

কর ফুটন্ত মুদিত বাসনা-প্রহনরাজি ;”

(“বসন্ত সম্ভব” কবিতা—

‘নাগকেশর’)

নব-বর্ষার আগমনে প্রথম বৃষ্টি দেখিয়া তাঁহার আনন্দ আর ধরে না।

“এ বৃষ্টি বর্ষণ নয়—এ যে অমৃতের ধারা মধুময়”

(“নববর্ষা”—‘অপরাজিতা’)

* শ্রীযুক্ত দিলীপ রায়ের ‘অনামীতে’ বুদ্ধদেব বহুর একখানি পত্র ব্রষ্টব্য।

খাঁটী বাংলা লিরিকের একটা বিশিষ্ট রূপ যতীন্দ্রমোহনের কাব্যে বাঙ্গালীর রস-পিপাসা চরিতার্থ করিয়াছে। সব চেয়ে গৌরব তাঁহার ভাবার শুচিতা। রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিষ্যত্বের সার্থকতাই এইখানে। ভাবার মাধুর্যে অতি সাধারণ ভাবে তিনি অপূর্ব করিয়া তুলিয়াছেন। তাঁহার উৎকৃষ্ট লিরিকগুলিতে একটা অতি সরল ভাব বা অল্পভূতি বিশেষ ক্ষণ বা মুহূর্তের তীব্রতায় উদ্ভাসিত হইয়াছে। তিনি “lyric অল্পভূতিকে একটা dramatic sentiment-এ মণ্ডিত করিয়া তাহাকে আরও real ও concrete করিয়া তোলেন।” বস্তুতঃ এই dramatic element তাঁহার কাব্যের আর একটা বিশেষত্ব। উদাহরণস্বরূপ “অন্ধবধু” কবিতাটির উল্লেখ করা যাইতে পারে।

খাঁটী বাঙ্গালী জীবনের কবি বলিয়াও যতীন্দ্রমোহনের খ্যাতি কম নয়। বাঙ্গালীর পূজা-পার্বণ, বাঙ্গালীর স্মৃতি-দুঃখ, আচার-অনুষ্ঠান, বাংলার প্রকৃতি তাঁহার কাব্যসৃষ্টিকে অল্পপ্রেরিত করিয়াছে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ তাঁহার কাব্যগ্রন্থ হইতে দু-একটা অংশ উদ্ধৃত করিতেছি—

“তুলনী তরু শিহরি’ উঠে তোমার কর পরশে
দীপের শিখা কাঁপে, তোমার দৃষ্টিতে ;
সন্ধ্যাতারা তোমাতে হেরে’ জ্বলে সে হের হরমে
মন্দ বায়ু মুরছি মরে সৃষ্টিতে ;” (“বিধবা”)

শীতকালে পাড়াগাঁয়ের বর্ণনা করিতেছেন—

“এল শীত কাল—খেজুরের গাছে ভাঁড়ীটা রয়েছে ঝাঁধা,
আঙিনার কোণ ভরিয়া ফুটেছে গৃহের ছলল গাঁদা ;
সকালে কুয়াসা বৈকালে ধোঁয়া, সাথে উত্তর বায়
মাথার উপরে সারি দিয়া সাঁখে হাঁসেরা উড়িয়া যায়।” (“মঞ্জুর” কবিতা)

অতি অল্প বয়সে এই দুর্ভাগা দেশে অনেক বালিকারই কপাল পোড়ে ; মাত্র সতের বৎসর বয়সেও কত ভাগ্যহীনা বালিকার বাতনাময় জীবনের অবসান হয়, কে তাহার খোঁজ রাখে ! কিন্তু কবির নিকট তাহা দুঃসহ হইয়াছিল—

“সতের বয়েস যবে ত্যাজিল প্রাণ বাল্য
সপ্তদশ নিদাঘ সহি শুকালো বনমালা
গেল সে চলে তাহার সাথে ফুরালো মোর গান
সে দিন হতে মানি না তোরে দয়াল ভগবান”
(“নাস্তিক”—‘লেখা’)

‘লেখা’, ‘নাগকেশর’, ‘অপরাজিতা’ প্রভৃতি গ্রন্থে আমরা বাংলার প্রাণের সহিত পরিচিত হই। ‘সন্ধান’, ‘আমি’ ও কেয়া-ফুল’ প্রভৃতি কবিতাগুলিও অতুলনীয়।

যতীন্দ্রনাথের গতি সংঘত ও ধীর।

এখন আমরা কিরণধন চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও শ্রীযুক্ত করুণানিধান বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় সম্বন্ধে দু-এক কথা বলিব। রচনাভঙ্গির মাধুর্য, চতুর্ঘ্য, লালিত্য, সৌকুমার্য ও অনায়াস স্বাভাবিকতাই কিরণধনের কাব্যকে আমাদের অন্তরের ধন করিয়া তুলিয়াছে। শ্রীযুক্ত কালিদাস রায়ের মতে, intellectual sentiment-কে বাদ দিয়া কেবলমাত্র aesthetic sentiment-এর সাহায্যে কেমন করিয়া এযুগে রসসৃষ্টি করিতে পারা যায়, তিনি তাহা দেখাইয়াছেন। তাঁহার ভাষার মধ্যে একটা বৈশিষ্ট্য রহিয়াছে। ‘ছিন্নিদারি’ নামক কবিতাটির ভাষা আটপোরে হইলেও রচনামাধুর্যে তাহা অত্যন্ত স্নন্দর হইয়াছে। শিশু কবিতায় তিনি প্রসিদ্ধি লাভ করিয়াছেন। তাঁহার কাব্যে কোনও তত্ত্ব জাহির করা হয় নাই। প্রকৃত রসজ্ঞের ছায় তিনি কেবল রসসৃষ্টি করিয়া গিয়াছেন। এই জন্তই তাঁহার কবিতা আমাদের বিশেষ আনন্দ দেয়। কিরণধনের অনেক কবিতা পত্নী-বিয়োগের অভিজ্ঞতা ও অপরোক্ষ সহানুভূতি হইতে উৎপন্ন। বিশ্বমানবের চিরন্তন হৃদয়াবেগ ও হৃদয়ের হর্ষকথা তাঁহার ঐ সব কবিতার মর্মে মর্মে রহিয়াছে। তাঁহার কবিতা সম্বন্ধে আমরা কোন ইংরাজ লেখকের ভাষায় বলিতে পারি—“In those poems it is not always the author speaking but the voice of the human race speaking through him.”

করুণানিধান বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের কাব্যে ভাষা ও ছন্দের সৌষ্ঠব বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখযোগ্য। ভাষা সম্বন্ধে অতিরিক্ত সচেতনতার দরুণ তাঁহার কাব্যে ভাবের intensity অপেক্ষা সৌকুমার্য ও কোমলতা সমধিক প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। শ্রীযুক্ত মোহিতলাল মজুমদারের মতে তাহা বোধহয় অত্যধিক বাণী-চর্চ্যার ফল। উদাহরণস্বরূপ “শতনরী” হইতে ‘হিমাদ্রি’, ‘বাসনা’ প্রভৃতি কবিতাগুলির উল্লেখ করা বাইতে পারে। করুণানিধান প্রকৃতিকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া ভালবাসেন—

“ওই যে ওখানে অন্ধ-রাতে
শ্রোতটী বহিয়া যায়,
উহারি পুলিনে কোথায় শেকালী
লুকায়ছে বালুকায়।
এক একটী করে তারা জলে জলে
চাঁদের রূপালি হাসি পড়ে চলে
কাঁদে গো তটিনী ছল ছল ছলে
অফুরাণ বেদনায়।”

‘সন্ধ্যালক্ষ্মী’ কবিতাটী তাঁহার কাব্যানুপ্রেরণার অতি চমৎকার অভিব্যক্তি। কেহ কেহ এই কবিতাটীকে Collins-এর Ode to Evening-এর সঙ্গে তুলনা

করিয়াছেন। শ্রীযুক্ত মোহিতলাল মজুমদার বলেন, করুণানিধানের কাব্যে প্রধানতম দোষ হইল, *Mysticism* ও *Perception*-এর অভাব।

* * *

আধুনিক বঙ্গ-সাহিত্যে একটা মস্ত বড় পরিবর্তন সংঘটিত হইয়াছে। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর বাঙালী কবির কাব্য ছিল স্বপ্নরাজ্যে—পারিপার্শ্বিক পৃথিবীকে ভুলাইয়া সে স্বপ্ন পাঠককে মুগ্ধ করে। বিংশ শতাব্দীর বাঙালী-চিত্ত কিন্তু ইহা লইয়া পরিতৃপ্ত হইল না। নূতন করিয়া তাহারা পৃথিবীর দিকে চাহিলেন—মানুষের দিকে চাহিলেন। এই *anti-romanticism*-ই হইল এই যুগের কাব্যের বিশেষত্ব। খৃষ্টীয় অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর শেষার্ধ্বে ইংরেজী সাহিত্যে যে পোপ ও জনসনের ক্লাসিকাল যুগ হইতে অ্যান্টিরোমান্টিক যুগে পড়িয়াছে সে কথা সকলেই জানেন। সেখানেও দেখা যায় পৃথিবী ও মানুষের প্রতি অনুরাগ বৃদ্ধি *anti-romanticism*-এর মূলে রহিয়াছে।

‘কাব্য-পরিমিতি’র লেখক শ্রীযুক্ত যতীন্দ্রনাথ সেন এবং ‘বিশ্বরণী’র মোহিতলাল মজুমদার এই নূতনপন্থী কবিদের মধ্যে সর্বপ্রথম স্মৃত্যুতি অর্জন করিয়াছেন। ‘মরীচিকাতে’ যতীন্দ্রনাথের নূতন সুরের আরম্ভ হয়। এখানে তিনি ধরণীর ধূলি-কাদাকে লইয়া কারবার শুরু করিয়াছেন। কবি মানবজীবন বিশ্লেষণ করিয়া দেখিয়াছেন—এখানে তিনি হইলেন দ্রষ্টা বা দার্শনিক। সংসারের ছুঃখ কষ্ট যাহা মানবকে অনবরত যাতনা দিতেছে তাহা যতীন্দ্রনাথের সমস্ত চেতনা অধিকার করিয়া বসিয়াছে। এইজন্ত তাঁহাকে অনেকে ছুঃখবাদের কবি বলিয়াছেন। কবির ‘মরু মায়া’ নামক বিখ্যাত কাব্যগ্রন্থ এই *pessimism*-এরই প্রতীকস্বরূপ। ইংরেজী কবি Burns-এর ত্রায় তাঁহাকে কবিতার মশলার জন্ত দূরে যাইতে হয় নাই। “He found them all around him in the plough lands, in the cottages, in all creation as it lay around his own door.”

মোহিতলাল মজুমদার যতীন্দ্রনাথের সমসাময়িক, তিনিও পূর্ববর্তী কবিদের *romanticism*-এর প্রতি বীতশ্রদ্ধ হইয়া পরিপূর্ণ বাস্তবপন্থী হইলেন। মোহিতলাল ‘বিশ্বরণী’র জন্ত শিক্ষিত সমাজে আদৃত। তিনিও ছুঃখবাদকে জীবনের পরম সত্য করিয়া ভুলিয়াছেন। ‘বিশ্বের প্রতি, বিশ্বসৌন্দর্যের প্রতি অত্যধিক অনুরাগের সাথে সাথে তাঁহার কবিতায় দেহবাদ আসিয়া দেখা দিয়াছে।’ জগতের ছুঃখ দৈন্তের মধ্যে মোহিতলাল শুধু মানুষকে, মানুষের কামনা বাসনাকেই সত্য বলিয়া মানিলেন।

—‘সত্য শুধু কামনাই নিখ্যা চির মরণ-পিপাসা

দেহহীন, মেহহীন অশ্রুহীন, বৈকুণ্ঠ-স্বপন,

বম্বায়ে বৈতরণী—সেখা নাই অমৃতের আশা
ফিরে ফিরে আসি তাই ধরা করে নিত্য আশ্রয় ।”

বৈষ্ণব কবি চণ্ডীদাস গাহিয়াছিলেন—

“শুনহ মানুষ ভাই
সবার উপরে মানুষ সত্য
তাহার উপরে নাই ।”

Walt Whitman-এর ছায় মোহিতলালের নিকট “.....nothing, not God is greater to one than one's self is.” *

এই অ্যান্টিরোম্যাটিক যুগের বার্তাবহদের মধ্যে ঝাঁহারা অত্যাধুনিক বা ultra-modern বলিয়া বিখ্যাত তাঁহাদের মধ্যে সর্বপ্রথম প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্রের নাম করিতে হয়। এই শ্রেণীর কবিদের স্মরণ হইল বিদ্রোহের স্মরণ, গতানুগতিকতার বিরুদ্ধে অভিমান স্মরণ করাই হইল তাঁহাদের প্রধানতম উদ্দেশ্য। প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্র মানুষের স্মরণার্থে, নিপুণ শিল্পীর ছায় আমাদের চোখের সম্মুখে ধরিয়াছেন। তাঁহার কবিতার আইডিয়াগুলি লক্ষ্য করিবার বিষয়।

‘প্রথমা’ লিখিয়া প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্র বিখ্যাত হইয়াছেন। এই কাব্যগ্রন্থটির ভিতর নিজের কথা যেমন বলিয়াছেন, প্রত্যেক মানুষের কথাও তেমনি বলিয়াছেন। এই Personal ও Impersonal-এর মিলন হইয়াছে ‘প্রথমায়’। মানুষের দুঃখকষ্ট তাঁহাকে প্রসীড়িত করিয়াছে—তাই তাঁহার কামনা—

“ধরা আজো জন্ম লয় নাই
তাঁহাদের প্রেম
ব্যর্থ নাহি হয় যেন এমন করিয়া
লোভের ক্ষুদার ফাঁদে ।”

বুদ্ধদেব বসু সম্পূর্ণ আধুনিক কবি। তাঁহার সম্বন্ধে বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি বিভিন্ন মত প্রকাশ করিয়া থাকেন। কেহ কেহ বলেন তাঁহার ছায় একজন versatile genius ও কবি ন ভুতং ন ভবিষ্যতি। এই শ্রেণীর সমালোচকদের ভিতর শ্রীযুক্ত দিলীপ রায়ের নাম করা যাইতে পারে। তাঁহার মতে বুদ্ধদেব বাংলার Byron. আর একদল সমালোচক তাঁহার লেখার প্রতি তীব্র মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন। মোহিতলালের প্রভাব বুদ্ধদেব বসুর উপর আছে; কিন্তু প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্র হইতেও তিনি অল্পপ্রেরণা পাইয়াছেন এবং সে-কথা তিনি নিজে স্বীকার করিয়াছেন। তাঁহার কবিতার theme

* Walt Whitman-এর Song of Myself কবিতাটি দ্রষ্টব্য।

হইল perennial love। কিন্তু অনেক স্থলে দেখা যায় এই প্রেমের ভিতর যেন একটা দৈহিক কামনা স্রাসিয়া দেখা দিয়াছে। “কিছুই প্রেমের মত নয়” এই কবিতাটিতে কবির যৌবনের অতৃপ্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। তাঁহার ‘বন্দীর বন্দনায়’ আমাদের নজর পড়ে sex-complex-এর দিকে।

অচিন্ত্যকুমার সেনগুপ্ত ‘অমাবস্তা’র কবি বলিয়া পরিচিত। গীতিকাব্যের উপাদান তাঁহার কাব্যে স্প্রুচুর। তিনি ঠিক pessimist নন, তিনি বিরহের কবি। তবে বিরহের কবি দুঃখবাদীও বটে। কিন্তু ব্যক্তিগত দুঃখ, বেদনা ও ব্যর্থতা ভুলিয়া তিনি অপরিমিত ভাবের ক্ষেত্রে অপরিমিত জীবন অনুভব করিতে চাহিতেছেন।

“সঙ্কতময়ী! প্রার্থনা করি, হয়োনা আবিষ্কৃত
তোমার মাঝারে যেন অনুভবি জীবন অপরিমিত।”

অনুভূতির নিবিড়তা, ছন্দোবদ্ধ সাবলীল গতি, ভাবপ্রকাশের অনায়াস ভঙ্গিমা, শব্দসংগ্রহের শিল্পচাতুর্য্য তাঁহার কবিতাকে স্প্রুপাঠ্য করিয়া তোলে।

আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতার ইতিহাসে পল্লীকবিতা একটা বিশিষ্ট স্থান অধিকার করিয়া আছে। পল্লীকবিতায় শ্রীমুক্ত কুমুদরঞ্জন মল্লিক, কালিদাস রায়, সাবিত্রী-প্রসন্ন চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও জসীমুদ্দিন সূখ্যাতি অর্জন করিয়াছেন। বাংলার প্রাণের সহিত কুমুদরঞ্জন মিশিয়া গিয়াছেন, তাই অজয় নদীর কলস্রোত দেখিয়া তাঁহার প্রাণ নাচিয়া উঠে, একটা পুরাতন অশ্বখ দেখিয়া তাঁহার যুগযুগান্তরের কথা মনে পড়ে। সমাজ কর্তৃক বাহারা নিত্য অবহেলিত হইয়া আসিতেছে, তাহাদের প্রতি তাঁহার কী দরদ! ‘শূদ্র তুমি ক্ষুদ্র নহ’ এই সামান্ত কথাটির ভিতর বিশ্বের মায়া মমতা প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। কুমুদরঞ্জনের সহজ, সরল মন অস্বাভাবিক কবিদের স্থায় sophisticated নহে।

কালিদাস রায়ও পল্লীর প্রাণের সহিত নিবিড়ভাবে জড়িত। পল্লীর কোনও খুঁটিনাটি ব্যাপার তাঁহার চক্ষু এড়াইতে পারে নাই। ‘কুড়ানী’ কবিতাটিতে পল্লীর একটু স্নন্দর বর্ণনা করা হইয়াছে। কুড়ানী বলিতেছে—

“ববা পড়িল পথে বাটে কান্দা, নিবে আসে
খরতাপ
তালের পাতায় বাধা ঢালাটিতে জল পড়ে
টুপ্‌টাপ্‌”

“বর্ষ কুরায় লাউ কুমড়ায় গোটা চাল ঝার ভরে,”

পুকুরে পুকুরে কলমী শুশুনী ভরে’ আনি ঝড়ি ক’রে।

নালাটা শুকায়, কাঁকড়া লুকায়, মাছ খুঁজে মরা মিছে,

গুগুলি শামুক কুড়িয়ে বেড়াই রাখালের পিছে পিছে।” (‘পর্ণপুট’)

ভোর না হইতেই যে পল্লীবধু গোময়-দ্বারা আঙ্গিনা আলিম্পন করে, দ্বিপ্রহরে গুরুজন, অতিথি, ভিখারী ও ছেলেপুলেদের স্নানাহার করাইয়া কোনমতে পাতের অন্ন উদরে পুরিয়া এঁটো পরিষ্কার ক’রে খিড়কির ঘাটে বসিয়া বাসন-কোসন ধোয় এবং সন্ধ্যাবেলা ফুলসীমক্ষে বাতি দিয়া তেত্রিশ কোটার দেবতার উদ্দেশে প্রণাম করে তাহা তিনি নিপুণ শিল্পীর আয় বর্ণনা করিয়াছেন। তাঁহার ‘কৃষাণ’ ও ‘কৃষাণীর’ ব্যাখ্যায় ক্ষণিকের তরেও আমাদের অন্ততঃ এক ফোঁটা অশ্রু বারিয়া পড়ে।

সাবিত্রীপ্রসন্ন চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের পল্লীজীবনের অভিজ্ঞতা বিশেষ ব্যাপক ও উদার। তাঁহার ‘পল্লীব্যাখা’ পরম উপভোগ্য।

মুসলমান কবিদের মধ্যে নজরুল ইসলাম গোলাম মোস্তাফা ও জসীমুদ্দিনের নাম বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। নজরুল ইসলাম বিদ্রোহের কবি। বিশেষণটা নিতান্ত অহেতুক নহে। তাঁহার কবিতার রহিয়াছে বঙ্কি-শিখা, নটরাজের নৃত্যছন্দ। তাঁহার ভাষায় আমরা যখন বলি “বল বীর চির উন্নত তব শির”, তখন ক্ষণিকের তরেও আমাদের স্বয়ং বীরোচিত গর্বে ফুলিয়া উঠে। কিন্তু তাঁহার ভিতর কবিজনোচিত মাধুর্য ও লালিত্যের অভাব নাই। ছন্দের মাধুর্যে ও ভাষার লালিত্যে তাঁহার গানগুলি বাঙ্গালীর প্রিয় বস্তু হইয়াছে। কিন্তু তাঁহার অন্তর্দৃষ্টি খুবই কম। ‘বিঙেফুল’ নামক কাব্যে তিনি শিশুজীবন চিত্রিত করিতে গিয়া ব্যর্থমনোরথ হইয়াছেন। কেননা তাহাতে সত্যকার শৈশবের ছাপ নাই। ‘দোলন-চাঁপা’ কাব্যে তিনি যে প্রেমের গান গাহিয়াছেন তাহা একান্তই দৈহিক।

নজরুলের সঙ্গে গোলাম মোস্তাফার তুলনা করিলে আমরা তাঁহার বৈশিষ্ট্য লক্ষ্য করিতে পারি। নজরুলের কাব্যে বাহা নাই, অর্থাৎ intensity, depth ও sincerity তাহা গোলাম মোস্তাফার কাব্যকে মধুর ও রসগ্রাহী করিয়াছে। কবি মোস্তাফা দ্রষ্টা নহেন, তিনি সৌন্দর্যের পূজারী। তাই তাঁহার কাব্যে কোনও তত্ত্ব জাহর করা হয় নাই। ‘হান্নাহানা’ কবিতাটিতে কবির সৌন্দর্য্যপিপাসু চিন্তের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। গোলাম মোস্তাফা মিষ্টিকও বটে। মিষ্টিসিজমের সংস্পর্শে তাঁহার কবিতা অত্যন্ত মনোজ্ঞ হইয়াছে। ‘সন্ধ্যারাগী’ এই কবিতাটিতে ইহার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়—

“সন্ধ্যারাগী, সন্ধ্যারাগী

এই কি মোদের গোপন মিলন, কেউ জানে না, আমরা জানি।

* * *

তোমায় আমার নদীর তীরে নিত্য সাঁঝে এমনি দেখা

লক্ষ ক্রান্তির তলায় তলায় আমরা দুজন একা একা #”

কবি জসীমুদ্দিন পল্লীকবিতা রচনায় সিদ্ধহস্ত। তাঁহাকে অনেকে বাংলার Burns বলিয়া থাকেন। তাঁহার অনেকগুলি কবিতা অপূর্ণ শ্রীতে মণ্ডিত, কিন্তু তাঁহার কাব্যে কতকগুলি দোষও আছে। ‘কবর’ নামক কবিতাটা বাস্তবিকই চমৎকার এবং এরূপ ভাল কবিতা আরও অনেক আছে। কিন্তু তাঁহার প্রধানতম দোষ এই যে, তাঁহার expression-এ যথেষ্ট affectation লক্ষিত হয় এবং তাঁহার ভাষা প্রাদেশিকতা-দোষে ছুষ্ট। অনেক সময় তিনি নিজের ঠাইল জোর করিয়া আনিয়া কবিতা মিলাইয়াছেন। মামুলি রীতি ও বৈচিত্র্যের অভাব তাঁহার কবিতাকে অনেক সময় monotonous করিয়া তোলে। জসীমুদ্দিনের বিখ্যাত কাব্যগ্রন্থ—‘নক্সী কাঁথার মাঠ’, ‘রাখালী’ ও ‘বালুচর’।

সুফী মোতাহের হোসেন এবং ‘ময়নাষতীর চর’-এর লেখক বন্দে আলী মিরজাও কাব্য রচনায় পারদর্শিতা লাভ করিয়াছেন।

আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতায় ধাঁহারা অনুবাদের আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করিয়া যশস্বী হইয়াছেন, তাঁহাদের ভিতর প্রথমেই ৬সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্তের নাম উল্লেখযোগ্য। শ্রীযুক্ত কান্তিচন্দ্র ঘোষ ও নরেন্দ্র দেব ওমর খৈয়মের অনুবাদ করিয়া বিখ্যাত হইয়াছেন। ইহাদের ভিতর কান্তি ঘোষের অনুবাদই অধিকতর সুখপাঠ্য। শ্রীযুক্ত কালিদাস রায়ও অনেক বিদেশী কবিতার বাংলা অনুবাদ করিয়াছেন।

মহিলা কবিদের ভিতর প্রথমে মানকুমারী বসু ও ৬কামিনী রায়ের নাম করিতে হয়। প্রথম লেখিকার কাব্যে intellectual sentiment বা ছন্দের পারিপাট্য না থাকিলেও তাহাতে রসের প্রাচুর্য্য রহিয়াছে। তাঁহার ‘ভিখারিণী মেয়ে’ উপভোগ্য। তবে তাঁহার কাব্যে একটানা ঘরোয়া কথার সুর “কাব্য কুমুমাঞ্জলি”কে অনেক সময় একঘেয়ে করিয়া তোলে।

৬কামিনী রায়ের কাব্যে ব্যর্থতার সুর অনেক স্থলেই স্পষ্ট হইয়া উঠিয়াছে।

“যত যায় দিন, মোরে ঘিরে অন্ধকারে

না হেরি সে দিবা জ্যোতিঃ, না শুনি সে বাণী।

শৈশব কল্পনা স্বপ্ন ভাবি কতবার—

সে সকলে;”—

(‘মালা ও নির্মালা’)

“এ জীবন শুধু কি স্বপন

সবি কি গো ছায়া মাত্র সার?”

(“আকাঙ্ক্ষা”—‘মালা ও নির্মালা’)

শ্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজ ম্যাগাজিন

"না বুঝিয়া হার পশিহু সংসারে,
 ভীষণ-দর্শন হেরিহু সব,
 কল্পনার মম সৌন্দর্য্য, সঙ্গীত
 হইল শ্মশান, পিশাচ রব।" ("হৃথ"—'আলো ও ছায়া')

এবং

"পশ্চিমে আশার রবি ডুবেছে আমার
 চাকিছে জীবন ক্রমে গাঢ় অন্ধকার ;
 বিবাদের বোঝা শিরে বসিয়ে সাগর তীরে,
 ভাসিতেছি অশ্রুনারে, কিসে হই পার ?" ("স্বাপ"—'মাল্য ও নির্মাল্য')

অবশ্য মাঝে মাঝে কবি হৃথের সন্ধান পান—

".....
মানবের তরে
 আছে উচ্চ হৃথ, লক্ষ লক্ষ হৃথ উচ্চতর
 না স্বজিলা বিধি কাঁদাতে নরে।" ("হৃথ")

তখন তিনি বলেন—

"এতক হৃথের মাঝখানে
 আজি আমি কাঁদি কোন প্রাণে ?
 থাম্, অশ্রু, থাম্"। ("থাম অশ্রু থাম"—'আলো ও ছায়া')

প্রকৃতিকে তিনি অত্যন্ত ভালবাসেন। 'সৌন্দর্য্য ও ভালবাসা' নামক কবিতাটিতে মনের সহিত বহিঃপ্রকৃতির মিল সুন্দর প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। তাঁহার অনেক কবিতায় নিজের জীবনের ছাপ রহিয়াছে।

শ্রীযুক্তা রাধারাণী দেবী বাধা-নিষেধের ডোর না মানিয়া নিজেকে সম্পূর্ণ বিকাশ করিবার জন্ত ব্যস্ত হইয়াছেন। 'লীলা কমলের' প্রত্যেক পাতায় পাতায় সূক্ষ্মপ্তির ঘোর হইতে মুক্তির নিঃশ্বাস আমরা শুনিতে পাই। কুঁড়ির ভিতর বন্ধ থাকিয়া পুষ্প এতকাল কাঁদিয়া মরিয়াছে, অকস্মাৎ মুক্তি পাইয়া তাহার আনন্দের সীমা নাই। রাধারাণী দেবীর কবিতায় এই ভাবটী সদা-পরিষ্কৃত।

'বুকের বীণার' লেখিকা শ্রীঅপরাজিতা দেবী কে তাহা আমরা অত্মপি জানি না। তিনি যেই হউন, সামাজিক নিষেধকে তিনি একটুও ভয় করেন না। স্কুল কালেজী মেয়েদের psychology তাঁহার কবিতায় চমৎকাররূপে বর্ণিত হইয়াছে। তাঁহার কবিতা অল্পীলতা দোষে ছুই বলিয়া কেহ কেহ মত প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন। এই বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কথাই প্রকৃত উত্তর। তিনি বলিয়াছেন, যাহারা বলে ঐ কবিতাগুলি অল্পীল, তাহাদের মন অশুচি।

“লেবরেটরী”

হেমচন্দ্র দত্ত—৩য় বর্ষ (বিজ্ঞান)

কবি এসে দরজায় আঘাত করে। বলে, কশ্মির দোর খোল।

আহ্বান আসে, ভিতরে এস বন্ধু।

কবি ভিতরে আসে। সমস্ত ঘর জুড়ে এক বিশ্রী গন্ধ। স্নো-পাইপের সোঁ সোঁ শব্দ কানে তালা ধরিয়ে দেয়। ধোঁয়ার-ঝাপসা শিশি-বোতলের মাঝে সাপকের মুখের প্রশান্ত হাসিটুকু আবছা দেখা যায়। আন্তে আন্তে স্নো-পাইপের গর্জন খামিয়া আসে, ধোঁয়া কাটিয়া যায়।

কবি বলে, তোমার কাছে এসেছিলাম, একটা জিনিষের খোঁজে।

তুমি একদিন আসবে সে আমি জান্তাম, কশ্মী উত্তর দেয়।

কিন্তু নিঃস্ব তুমি, আমাকে দেবার ত তোমার কিছুই নাই। ব’লবে আমায় বন্ধু, কি নিয়ে তুমি এখানে দিনের পর দিন কাটিয়ে চলেছ? নীলকণ্ঠের কণ্ঠ উজাড় ক’রে পূজার ডালি সাজালে, কিন্তু তোমার পূজার বেদী যে শূন্য হ’য়ে রইলো।

মৃত্যুকে ঘিরে তোমার আসন তৈরী হলো; জীবনের ছোঁয়াচ কি তাতে কোন দিনই লাগবে না? তোমার দোরের পাশের তরুলতার মুহূর্ত স্পর্শে তুমি কোন দিনই কি শিউরে ওঠ নি?

উঠেছি বৈকি কবি। দুটা অণু অসীম আকাশের মাঝে খেলা ক’রে বেড়াচ্ছিল। একদিন এক ছুটু মেয়ের চালাকিতে জব্দ হ’য়ে দু’জনে হাত ধরাধরি ক’রে পৃথিবীর বুকে নেমে এল। তারপর কতো জায়গায় ঘুরে, আজ তরুলতার আগায় উঠে উন্মুক্ত আকাশের দিকে চেয়ে লজ্জায় ওরা লাল হ’য়ে উঠেছে। আমি চোখ খুললেই দেখতে পাই।

তোমার এই রহস্যলোকে আমায় নিয়ে যেতে পার না, দর্শী?

এখনও তার সময় হয় নি, বন্ধু। সে দেশের এলোমেলো আবহাওয়া তোমার সহ্যবে না। টুকরো টুকরো বেহুরোকে জুড়ে সেখানে স্থর তৈরী হয়, সে দেশের রামধনুর মধ্যে আছে কেবল পথভ্রষ্ট হ্যাতি-কণার তরল নৃত্য।

কবি বিদায় লয়। রুদ্ধ আক্রোশে স্নো-পাইপ আবার গর্জন করিয়া উঠে। সাপকের মুখ আন্তে আন্তে ঝাপসা হইয়া আসে।

প্রিয় ও পৃথিবী

শ্রীশান্তিকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়

তৃতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণী (কলা বিভাগ)

(১)

মোর এই শ্রাম ধরণীরে ভালবাসিয়াছি যুগে যুগে অনিবার
স্নেহময়ী এই মাটিকেই যেন চাহিয়াছি আমি বহু শতবার ।
ডাক শুনি মোর তাই যেন আজ দেবী, পৃথিবী বসুন্ধরা
আপন হইতে আপন হইয়া আশার মাঝারে দিয়াছে ধরা ॥
চারিদিক হ'তে এসেছিল যারা আমার তপ্ত হিয়ার মাঝে
সবার বাঁধন নীরবে কখন খসিয়া পড়েছে মৌন লাজে ।
সবার হইতে শ্রেষ্ঠ এখন আমার মাটির নবীন ধরা,
ভালবেসে তারে ভুলে যেতে চাই দেহের ক্ষুধা পাগল করা ॥
বড় বলে' যাদের ভেবেছিল মনে আজ তারা গেছে অনেক দূরে
আদর পরশে বুক ভরে' দিবে শ্রামা পৃথিবীই রয়েছে জুড়ে' ।
ভুল করে' তাদের বেসেছিল ভাল মিলায়ে মনের আড়াল কোণে,
ভুল করে' তাদের চেয়েছিল আমি মিলাতে আমার একার গানে ॥
তাদের আঁখি কালো হ'তে জানে একথা আমার ছিল না জানা,
আমার ছয়ারে অবোধ গতি আগল সেথায় ছিল না টানা ।
দুহাতে শুধুই বিলায়েছি আমি, ফিরায়ে দেয়নি একটি কণা,
দুটি হাতে তারা লুটিয়াছে শুধু, আঁকেনি হিয়ার আলিম্পনা ॥

(২)

উদাস গন্ধ-মাতাল বায়ু নূতন কাহিনী শুনায় ফেরে
অরুণ কিরণে শিশির বিন্দু আশীষধারা বহন করে ।
কল্যাণময়ী ধরণী আমার স্মৃতির আদরে ঘিরিয়া রাখে,
স্নিগ্ধ শ্রামল কোলেতে তাহার লুটাক তরু পুলক স্মখে ॥

সাম্নে আমার লুপ্ততা ধরা তপ্ত অশ্রলোরে
 নীরবে সদাই ডাকিছে আমারে মৌন বেদনাভরে ।
 সকল বিপদ লজ্জিয়া যেতে অধার বাসনা জাগে ।
 বিফল জীবন জুড়াইতে চাই রাঙা আবীরের রাগে ॥
 একটি একটি দিবস রজনী বহুদূর স্মৃতি আনে
 অতীতদিনের মর্ষকাহিনী করাঘাত ভালে হানে ।
 নিবিড় নিবিড় স্ননিবিড় হ'য়ে ব্যথার রজনী আসে
 অঁধার মনের গোপন কক্ষে আলো নাই কোন আভাষে ॥

(৩)

এবার ফিরিতে হোল ।
 ছিন্ন বীণায় নূতন তন্ত্রী আবার জুড়িতে হোল ।
 বন্দী নিশি অঁধার তুলি' সহসা চলিয়া গেল,
 বিমল উষার শিশিরস্নাত স্নন্দর রবি এল ।
 সাথী খুঁজে খুঁজে মরি ছুর্গম পথের কোথা সহযাত্রী
 কোথা পাব তারে, কেন আসিবে, তিমিরময়ী রাত্রি ।
 অন্ধ জীবনের চারিভিতে যারা একটু দিয়াছে আলা,
 নীরবে সয়েছে কুটিল কঠোর বিশ্ব গরল জালা ॥
 তাই ফিরিলাম—
 কালের পথে যাত্রী চলে নিশিদিন অবিরাম ।
 লক্ষ্য যদিও না পাওয়া যায়, ক্ষতি নাই কিছু, ওরে !
 চলার আনন্দ ঘনায় আসিবে থাকিতে হবে না ঘরে ॥

‘ঘরে বাইরে’তে চরিত্র-সমাবেশ

শ্রীজ্যোতির্শ্রয় সেন

তৃতীয় বর্ষ—সাহিত্য

‘ঘরে বাইরে’ পড়তে গেলে প্রথমই এর একটা বিশেষত্ব আমাদের চোখে পড়ে।— সে হচ্ছে এর পাঠকের সঙ্গে নিবিড় মিষ্টি সম্বন্ধ। সাধারণ প্রচলিত উপন্যাসগুলিতে নায়ক ও পাঠকের মারখানে কেমন যেন একটা খাপছাড়া দূরত্ব থেকে যায়। তার কারণ পাঠক নায়কের মুখ থেকেই কথাটা শুনতে পান না, সেই কথাগুলো আসে আর একটা মিডিয়ামের ভেতর দিয়ে—এবং সেই মিডিয়ামটা হচ্ছেন লেখক নিজে। এতে ফল দাঁড়ায় এই যে, নায়কের সঙ্গে পাঠকের একটা নিবিড় অন্তরঙ্গ সঙ্গ জেগে ওঠে না এবং তাতে ক’রে উপন্যাসের সৌন্দর্যের হানি হয়। কিন্তু ‘ঘরে বাইরে’তে আমরা এ দায় থেকে বেঁচে গেছি। এখানে নায়কের কথাগুলো লেখকের মিডিয়াম দিয়ে আমাদের কাছে এসে পৌঁছে না, নায়ক নিজেই তাঁর জীবনের আঁগা থেকে গোড়া পর্যন্ত আমাদের কাছে খুলে দিচ্ছেন। আর আমরা তাই মুগ্ধ-মুগ্ধের মত শুনে যাচ্ছি। আর এই যে আমাদের মধ্যে মধুর সম্বন্ধটা গড়ে উঠছে—এর পেছনে আছেন কবি, —তাঁর সম্মোহন যন্ত্র নিয়ে তাল যেন কোথাও কেটে না যায়—স্বর যেন কোথাও বেহুরো হ’য়ে না পড়ে। যেখানে যেটা যেমন ভাবে খাটে, কবি মারখান থেকে নয়, পেছন থেকে সেখানে সেইটে বসিয়ে দিচ্ছেন এবং তারি ফলে আমাদের কানে সেটা বীণার সুরের মত বাজছে।

সন্দীপ-নিখিল—

‘ঘরে-বাইরে’র ভিতর ঘটনার খুব আড়ম্বর নেই—এখানে শুধু আছে কতকগুলো চরিত্রের সমাবেশ। চরিত্রগুলোই হচ্ছে এর প্রধান সৌন্দর্য। লেখার প্রতি শব্দে প্রতি ছত্রে এমন ক’রে চরিত্র ফুটিয়ে তোলাবার ক্ষমতা আমরা আর কারো লেখায় দেখেছি কিনা সন্দেহ। শুধু কি তাই? রবীন্দ্রনাথ এখানে মিলিয়েছেন এমন ছটা চরিত্রকে যাদের মিলন ঘটাতে গিয়ে হয়ত সাধারণ লেখক ছুটো অদ্ভুত চরিত্রের সৃষ্টি ক’রে বসত। সন্দীপ আর নিখিলেশ দুই বন্ধু। বন্ধু—কিন্তু আমরা যাকে বন্ধুত্ব ব’লব, ঠিক সেটা নয়। তাদের মধ্যে অবস্থার সামঞ্জস্য নেই, লক্ষ্যেরও একতা নেই, এমন কি মনেরও মিল নেই। তবু তারা বন্ধু। কেন যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এমন ছটা অসমান চরিত্রকে বন্ধুভাবে আমাদের সম্মুখে ধরেছেন তা একটু তলিয়ে দেখলেই বোঝা যাবে। যদিও সন্দীপ আর নিখিলেশের চরিত্রে অদামঞ্জস্যের মাত্রা যথেষ্টই আছে, তবুও সকলের

গোড়ায় তাদের মধ্যে বড় একটা সামঞ্জস্য রয়ে গেছে—সে সামঞ্জস্যটা হচ্ছে প্রতিভায়। নিখিলেশের প্রতিভা ছিল, সন্দীপেরও ছিল। সন্দীপের ছিল চেঙ্গিস খাঁর, এটালার, তৈমুরের প্রতিভা—যা ধ্বংসের উপর আপনার বিজয় ভেরী বাজিয়ে চলত—যা নিজের উদ্দেশ্য সাধবার জন্য কোন কাজেই দ্বিধা বোধ করত না। আর নিখিলেশ—তার প্রতিভা ছিল সৃষ্টির জন্য—ধ্বংস সে সহিতে পারত না। তাই যখন বিমল বিলিতি জিনিষ পুড়িয়ে ফেলবার জন্য তার কাছে অনুমতি চাইল তখন সে স্পষ্ট করেই বলে দিল আমি বলছি গড়ে তোলবার কাজে তোমার সমস্ত শক্তি দাও, অনাবশ্যক ভেঙে ফেলবার উত্তেজনায় তার সিকি পয়সাও বাজে খরচ করো না। এই দুই ভিন্ন প্রকৃতির প্রতিভার সংযোগে এতে চরিত্র ফুটিয়ে তোলবার মস্ত এক সহায়তা করেছে। কালো আর শাদা পাশাপাশি রাখলে যেমন ছটোকেই খুব উজ্জ্বল করে দেখায়, তেমনি সন্দীপ আর নিখিলেশকে পাশাপাশি দাঁড় করিয়ে তাদের দুটো চরিত্রকেই আমাদের কাছে বেশী স্পষ্ট করে ফুটিয়ে তোলা হয়েছে। কারো কোন ফাঁক আমাদের চোখ এড়িয়ে যেতে পারেনি।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিখিলেশকে গড়েছেন সত্যের প্রতিমূর্তি করে—আর সন্দীপকে ঠিক তেমনি মিথ্যার কঙ্কাল করে। নিখিল দিনের পথের যাত্রী—আর সন্দীপ গভীর অন্ধকারের পথিক, তার হাতের কাছেই বা কি আছে, কিংবা পায়েই বা কি ঠেকে সে কিছুই জানে না। শুধু কল্পনার রঙ্গীন নিশান উড়িয়ে সে চলেছে—আর ভাবছে যেখানে গিয়ে সে পৌঁছবে সেখানে আলোয় আলো হয়ে আছে। সে দেশের কাজ করছে—দেশকে বন্দনা করে। লোকের মনে নেশা ঢুকিয়ে দিয়ে সে তাদের কাজ করাতে চাচ্ছে। নেশা যতক্ষণ টিকছে কাজও ততক্ষণ চলছে—কিন্তু নেশার ঘোর কেটে গিয়ে মানুষের সারা মনটায় যখন অবসাদের ছায়া এসে পড়ছে তখন কাজ আর এগোচ্ছে না। যেখানে লোকে দেশের স্বরূপ তদূরের কথা দেশ কি তাই জানে না, সেখানে এই অন্ধকার থেকে সমাজকে উদ্ধার করা তার কাজ নয়। বরং নেশার ঘোরে আরো কিম্বিয়ে দেয়াই তার উদ্দেশ্য। এর কারণ হচ্ছে, দেশকে সে ভাল করে ভাল বাসতে পারেনি। বাইরে সে দেখাচ্ছে, দেশ তার বড় প্রিয়, বড় আপন—কিন্তু এর তলায় কি যেন একটা অতৃপ্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষা তার মনে জেগে আছে। মনটা তার তারই দিকে ছুটছে—দেশের দিকে নয়। তাই সে নিজের অজ্ঞাতেই বলে যাচ্ছে—“আমি সমস্তই দেখতে পাচ্ছি। ঐ যে পর্দা উড়ে উড়ে পড়ছে, ঐ যে দেখছি প্রলয়ের রাস্তায় যাত্রার সাজসজ্জা চলছে—ঐ যে লাল ফিতেটুকু ছোট্ট একটুকু রাশি রাশি ঘষা চুলের ভিতর থেকে একটুখানি দেখা যাচ্ছে, ওবে কালবৈশাখীর লোলুপ জিহ্বা, কামনার গোপন উদ্দীপনায় রাঙা :

ঐ যে পাড়ে একটুকু ভঙ্গী, ঐ যে জ্যাকেটের এতটুকু ইঙ্গিত আমি যে স্পষ্ট অনুভব করছি তার উত্তাপ।” এই যে সন্দীপের স্বগিত কামনা, এ বড় উলঙ্গ। এত উলঙ্গ যে একে বাধা দিয়ে রাখা যায় না। তার কথা বলবার এমন ভঙ্গী, তার মত প্রকাশ করবার এমন দৃঢ়তা যে লোকে ভাবে, কথাগুলো অতি সাধারণ—না হ’লে, এমন অক্লেশে, অনায়াসে, বিনা দ্বিধায় একটা লোক ব’লে গেল কি ক’রে? এখানেই সন্দীপের প্রতিভা। যা ভাবতেও লোকের মনে দ্বিধা আসে, সেটাই এমন সহজ সুন্দর দৃঢ়ভাবে সন্দীপ সকলের কাছে প্রকাশ করে যে তাতে ক’রে কথাটার বীভৎসতা অনেকটা কমে যায় এবং তারি ফলে ওর প্রতি মানুষ সহজেই আকৃষ্ট হয়। আর এর পাশে নিখিলেশ—ত্যাগী সে, সত্যের একনিষ্ঠ সেবক সে। যেখানে দেখছে সত্যের মহিমা এতটুকু জান হ’য়ে যাচ্ছে, সেখানে সে নেই। স্বদেশীর ছুগ দেশকে ভাসিয়ে দিতে চলেছে, সব গ্রামে গ্রামে নগরে নগরে বিদেশী কাপড়ের ধ্বংসের অনুষ্ঠান চলছে, জমিদাররা জোর ক’রে তাদের এলাকায় বিদেশী আমদানি বন্ধ ক’রে দিয়েছেন, শুধু নিখিলেশের রাজ্যে তখনও বিদেশীর কারবার উঠে যায়নি। দেশ সেবকরা এলেন, অনুরোধ ক’রলেন, উপরোধ ক’রলেন—শেষে রাগ ক’রলেন, ভয় দেখালেন, কিন্তু নিখিল অটল। শেষ কালে এলো বিমল, তার বুকভরা বিশ্বাস নিয়ে, আর প্রাণভরা বাহু নিয়ে। নিখিল শুধু তাকে একটা কথা বললে—“দেশের জন্তে অত্যাচার করা দেশের উপরই অত্যাচার করা।” যে বিমলকে সে প্রাণ দিয়ে ভালবেসেছে, সেও আজ তার সত্য দৃষ্টির সামনে দাঁড়াতে পারল না। সাধক সে—মোহ তাকে বশ ক’রতে পারেনি। সে বুঝতে পারছে, তার বিমলা—তার জীবনের শ্রেষ্ঠ ফুল বিমলা—বাকে সে কণ্ঠের মালা মাথার মুকুট অপ্সর আভরণ ক’রতে চেয়েছিল, সে নেশায় পড়ে তার থেকে বহুদূরে সরে যাচ্ছে, সেখান থেকে তাকে বাঁচানো দায়। সমাজ বাকে বলে তার, সেই আজ পর হ’য়ে যাচ্ছে। তবুও নিখিল জোর ক’রে বিমলকে তার নিজের পথে আনতে চেষ্টা করেনি। কারণ সে জানত জোর ক’রে কাজ করানো সত্য নয়, ওটা মিথ্যা। তাই সে বলছে, “যত ছুঃখ যত ভুল সব যে ঐ সত্যকে না পেয়ে। সেই সত্যকে জীবন ভ’রে না পেয়ে দিনরাত এমন ক’রে কেমনে কাটবে? আর ত পারি নে, সত্য, তুমি এবার আমার শূন্য মন্দির ভ’রে দাও।”

বিমল—

বাংলার শতকরা সাড়ে নিরানব্বইজন মেয়ে যেমনি হয়, বিমল ছিল ঠিক তেমনি। স্বামী যখন তাকে বাইরে বের হ’তে বলেন তখন ঠিক চিরদিনকার বাংলার নারীর মতই সে বলে, “এতদিন যদি তার চলে গিয়ে থাকে আজো চলবে, সে গলার

দড়ি দিয়ে মরবে না। সে ঘরের চারকোণের মধ্যে তার স্বামীকে নিয়েই জুস্ফট। স্বামীকে পূজা ক’রে, তাকে ভালবেসে, সে জীবনটাকে ধন্য মনে করে। ঘরের মধ্যে যে স্বামীকে আপন ক’রে পাওয়া, সে পাওয়াই তার কাছে শ্রেষ্ঠ। স্বামী যখন বলেন, “আমি চাই বাইরের মধ্যে তুমি আমাকে পাও, আমি তোমাকে পাই। ঐখানে আমাদের দেনা-পাওনা বাকী আছে।” তখন তার মনটা সায় দিয়ে ওঠেনি, তারপর যখন এল সন্দীপ, তার ঝড়ের দম্কা হাওয়া নিয়ে, তখন সাধারণ নারীর মতই তার এতদিনকার সংস্কার, এতদিনের অনিচ্ছা ভেসে গেল। সে আপনিই ব’লে উঠল, আমরা কি কেবল লক্ষ্মী, আমরাই ত ভারতী।” সন্দীপ তাকে বানালো ‘মক্ষিরানী’। বিমলের পুরোধো জীবনে একটা নূতনের সৃষ্টি হ’ল। সন্দীপ তাকে শিখিয়েছে— “স্বজন প্রলয়ের সেই ভয়ঙ্করী ‘আমি’ চাই আজ মেয়েদের মধ্যেই মূর্তিমতী হ’তে। সেই জন্তেই ভীকু পুঙ্খ স্বজনের সেই আদিম বস্তুকে বাঁধ দিয়ে ঠেকিয়ে রাখবার চেষ্টা করছে, পাছে সে তাদের কুমড়া ক্ষেতের মাচাগুলোকে কলহাস্তে ভাসিয়ে দিয়ে নাচতে নাচতে চলে যায়।” আর বিমল ভাবছে, সত্যিইত তার এত শক্তি—সে যে মহিষ-মর্দিনী দশভূজা, প্রলয়ঙ্করী ছিন্নমস্তা, তার শক্তিতেই জগৎ চলছে। ক্ষণেকের জন্তে তার মনে পড়ে যায় শ্রামার সেই তাণ্ডব মূর্তি, যে একহাতে বল্ছে মাঠে, আর অস্ত্র হাতে ধরেছে খড়্গ। মূর্তিমান অত্যাচারকে ভেঙ্গে চুরমার ক’রবে সে—আর তার জায়গায় সে সৃষ্টি ক’রবে এক শান্তির রাজ্য—যেখানে সে মা, আর সব সন্তান। সন্দীপকে সে ছাড়তে পারে না—সেইত তাকে এই নিষ্ঠুর বাস্তবের থেকে রক্ষিত কল্পনার রাজ্যে নিয়ে যায়, যেখানে সে মাল্লবের চেয়ে অনেক উঁচুতে। আর এই নিঃসঙ্কোচ সঙ্গের ফাঁকে ফাঁকে সন্দীপ তার গোপন পিপাসা প্রাণভরে মিটিয়ে নেয়, আর মাতালের মত বিমল তাকে বড় আপন ব’লে মনে করে। এতে সন্দীপ উৎকট আনন্দ পায়—বিমলও পায়, কিন্তু সে ক্ষণেকের জন্ত। মদের মাদকতা মাতালকে যেমন কিছুক্ষণ বেশ মাতিয়ে রাখে, বিমলকেও সন্দীপের চাটুকথাগুলো তেমনি রঞ্জিয়ে রাখত—কিন্তু নেশা যখন ছুটে যায় মনটা তার বিষিয়ে ওঠে। মনের এই বিষকে চাপবার জন্তে সে আবার বিষ পান করে। তার জানবার শক্তিও থাকে না, সে কোন্ দিকে যাচ্ছে—ধ্বংসের দিকে, না সৃষ্টির দিকে। শুধু সে জানে পৃথিবীর শত শত বীরাজনার শ্রায় আলোর আলোয় সে যে আঁধারের বৃকে নিজেকে ভাসিয়ে দিয়েছে—সেই আঁধার স্রোতের একমাত্র সঙ্গী তার সন্দীপ। সন্দীপের এই সেচ্ছাকৃত সাহায্যের তলে যে কোন্ অর্থটা লুকানো আছে, সেটা সে বুঝে উঠতে পারে না। শুধু ধ্বংসের মুহূর্তে এসে যখন সে বুঝতে পারল, সে কোথায় চলেছে, তখন বহুদিনের স্তম্ভ মুগ্ধ নারীঘটা তার একবার শিউরে উঠল—সোজা মাল্লব বাঁকা সাপ দেখলে যেমন সরে

যায় রিমলও তেমনি ভয়ে, স্বপ্নায় সন্দীপের কাছ থেকে সরে গেল। সন্দীপের ভবিষ্যৎ কামনার চিরদিনের জন্ত যবনিকা পড়ে গেল।

বিমল-ছোট অমূল্য—

স্বর্ঘাটা উঠবার এবং ডুববার আগে যেমন সমস্ত আকাশটাকে রাঙ্গিয়ে তোলে, অমূল্যও তার আসা এবং যাওয়াতে বইখানাকে একেবারে রাঙ্গিয়ে গেছে। প্রথম সে এলো পিস্তল হাতে, বুড়ো খাজাঙ্কিকে দেশের জন্তে মারবে। ক'টি নিষ্পাপ মনখানা তার বলছে—এ অতি অস্বাভাবিক। তবুও মুখে তার সম্পূর্ণ অস্ত্র কথা। দেশের দুর্দশা তার বৃকে বড় নিবিড় ক'রে বেজেছে—তাই সে হিঁসাব ক'রে উঠতে পারছে না—কোনটা ভাল, কোনটা মন্দ। একজন বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছে—এই পথটাই ভাল—তাই সে ছুটে চলেছে সমস্ত দ্বিধা সঙ্কোচ কাটিয়ে, সব ভয় ভাবনার অতীত হ'য়ে। আপনভোলা প্রেমিক সে, পথপ্রদর্শক তাকে ব'লে দিয়েছে, 'স্বীকৃত, এই তোমার পথ'। খম্বুকে দাঁড়িয়ে ভেবে দেখবার তার সময় হয়নি। সে ছুটে চলেছে এক অনিশ্চিতের পানে, যেখানে তার সমস্ত আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষা এক মহাসত্যের পায়ে বাঁধা পড়েছে। তরুণ আয়ফোটা তার মন, শয়তান যা বলেছে, তাই সে মেনে নিয়েছে। কিন্তু বিমল যে 'মা', জেনে শুনে কেমন ক'রে সে শয়তানের সহচর ক'রে সন্তানকে ছেড়ে দেবে। বিশ্বজননী জগদ্ধাত্রী সে, তাকেই ত এখন রক্ষা ক'রতে হবে। তাই সে অমূল্যকে বলে, "তোমার পিস্তলটা আমাকে প্রণামী দিতে হবে। "কি ক'রবে দিদি?" "মরণ প্র্যাক্টিস ক'রবে।" তরুণ সোৎসাহে ব'লে উঠল, "এই ত চাই দিদি—মেয়েদেরও মরতে হবে—মারতে হবে।" কিন্তু তরুণের ধবংসের এত উৎসাহ বেশীদিন রইলো না। মানুষ খাটা কি মেকি সেটা চিন্তে শাল্লবের বেশীদিন লাগে না। তাই ছোট অমূল্যের কাছেও সন্দীপ উন্মুক্ত হ'য়ে পড়ল, আর তার জায়গায় এসে দাঁড়াল বিমলা এবং তারি মত বিশ্বের সব মাতা। তাই যখন সে শুনল জগতে সন্তানের দ্বারা মায়ের অপমান হচ্ছে তখন তার প্রাণ আর সহিতে পারল না। মায়ের মান রক্ষায় উপযুক্ত সন্তান নিজেকে বলি দিল। দেওয়ান জিজ্ঞাসা ক'রলেন— "ডাক্তার বাবু কি মনে করেন?" ডাক্তার ব'ললেন— "কিছু বলা যায় না। মাথায় বিষম চোট লেগেছে।" "আর অমূল্য বাবু?" "তার বৃকে গুলি লেগেছিল। তার হ'য়ে গেছে।" উপরে জান্নার ধারে দাঁড়িয়ে বিমলা সব শুনল। চোখ দিয়ে এক ফোঁটা জলও গড়িয়ে প'ড়ল না। অশ্রুর উৎস তার একেবারে শুকিয়ে গিয়েছিল।

শরতের শাদা শেফালিটার মতই অমূল্য রসে ভরপুর হ'য়ে মরার এসেছিল— আবার রৌদ্রে না শুকাতাই করে পড়ল—সমস্ত মায়ের জাতকে কাঁদিয়ে।

প্রাণে বড় দাগা পেয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ‘ঘরে বাইরে’ লিখেছিলেন। স্বাদেশিকতায় নামে যারা সমাজে কতকগুলি গুল্লাদ চোঁকাতে চেয়েছিল, তাদের ব্যবহার কবির প্রাণে সন্দেহেছিল। তাই এই বিশ্বপ্রেমিক তাদের বিরুদ্ধে তাঁর অসি ধরেছিলেন। যারা

যার আশায় আঁধারে ঘুরে মরছে প্রাণ তাঁর তাদের জন্তু কেঁদেছে। তিনি চেয়েছেন তাদের সোজা পথ ধরিয়ে দিতে, যেখানে ছিল নেই, চাতুরী নেই—যে পথে গেলে ফল নিশ্চিত কিন্তু বিপথে যাবার ভয়ও নেই। তাঁর নিজের মনে যে কথাগুলি গুমরে গুমরে উঠছিল তাই তিনি নিখিলের মুখ দিয়ে আমাদের কাছে পৌঁছে দিয়েছেন। আজ যে

অস্পৃশ্যতা আন্দোলন নিয়ে সারা ভারত মেতে উঠেছে, কবি বহুদিন আগে সেই বাণী আমাদের ঘারে এনেছিলেন। তাই নিখিলেশের মুখ দিয়ে তিনি বলছেন, “আমার মধ্যে

এ হয় গুহক ও একলব্যের ধারাটাই প্রবল, আজ যারা নীচে র’য়েছে তাদের নীচ ব’লে আমার থেকে ঠেলে দিতে পারিনে। আমার ভারতবর্ষ শুধু ভদ্রলোকেরই ভারতবর্ষ নয়।

আমি স্পষ্ট জানি আমার নীচের লোক যত নাবচে, ভারতবর্ষই নাবচে, তারা যত মরচে, ভারতবর্ষই মরচে।” কবির এই যে উপেক্ষিতের প্রতি স্বাভাবিক টান, মাটির সঙ্গে

ভালবাসা, এ ‘ঘরে বাইরে’র প্রতি ছত্রে মূর্ত্ত হ’য়ে উঠেছে। তার বড় আদরের ধন ভারতবর্ষকে তিনি চেয়েছেন বাস্তবের মধ্য দিয়ে, কল্পনার মধ্য দিয়ে নয়। তিনি চেয়েছেন

ঐক্য স্বদেশকে স্বাবলম্বী ক’রতে শিল্পে, বাণিজ্যে—সকল দিকে। তিনি দেখতে চেয়েছেন দেশের সকল সম্ভানের দেহে স্বাধীনতার বীজ অঙ্কুরিত—যাতে ক’রে দেশের ঝোঁকে

মানুষ কিছু ক’রে না বসে। মাতালের দেশকে তিনি বড় ভয় করেন। তাই নিখিলেশকে দিয়ে তিনি স্বদেশী শিল্প-প্রতিষ্ঠার চেষ্টা করেছেন তখনই যখন দেশে কোন মোহ উপস্থিত

হয় নাই। কারণ তিনি জানতেন যে, মোহই আনে লাগসা, আর এই লাগসাই নিয়ে যায় ধ্বংসের পথে। তাই নিখিলেশকে দিয়ে বলাচ্ছেন, “কেননা, আমি এই বলি, দেশকে

মান্দাভাবে, সত্যাভাবে দেশ ব’লে জেনে, মানুষকে মানুষ বলেই শ্রদ্ধা ক’রে, যারা তার সেবা ক’রতে উৎসাহ পায় না, চৎকার ক’রে, মা ব’লে, দেবী ব’লে মন্ত্র প’ড়ে যাদের

কেবল সম্বোধনের দরকার হয়, তাদের ভালবাসা দেশের প্রতি তেমন নয় যেমন দেশের প্রতি। এই যে দেশের নিবিড় ছাঁকা ভালবাসার প্রতি আসক্তি, এ রবীন্দ্রনাথ এবং

তাঁর মত আরো মায়ের দরবী সম্ভান ছাড়া আর কারো কল্পনার আস্তে পারে না। এরাই ত স্বদেশের প্রকৃত প্রেমিক! সংসারের অকুল পাথারে এরাই পথনির্দেশকারী

জ্যোতিষ্ক, বিশ্বের বিপুল কান্তারে এরাই একমাত্র পথপ্রদর্শক।

রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদ

নানা কারণে পরিষদের ৮ম বর্ষের কার্য আরম্ভ হইতে একটু বিলম্ব হইয়াছে আশা করি সকলের সাহায্যে সহানুভূতি পাইলে নূতন বর্ষের কার্য সুচারুরূপে সম্পন্ন করিতে সমর্থ হইব।

বিগত ৩০শে ফাল্গুন, বৃহস্পতিবার সন্ধ্যা ৩।০ ঘটিকায় কিংজিথ থিয়েটারে, রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদে বসন্তোৎসবের আয়োজন করা হয়। আচার্য্য অবনীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর উৎসবটীক পৌরহিত্য করিয়াছিলেন।

শ্রীযুক্ত পূর্ণেন্দ্রদাসের নির্দেশক্রমে উৎসবস্থানটী নব-কিশলয়, আত্র-মঞ্জবী, স্রাবীর ও পুষ্পাদি দ্বারা অতি চমৎকাররূপে সাজান হইয়াছিল।

উৎসব-আরম্ভ হইবার পূর্বে পরিষদের সভাপতি অধ্যক্ষ ভূপতিমোহন সেন, পরিষদের পক্ষ হইতে শ্রীযুক্ত প্রিয়ম্বদা দেবীর মুতু্যতে শোক প্রকাশ করিয়া বলেন, “তঁাহার মুতু্যতে আমাদের মস্ত বড় ক্ষতি হইল; কেননা তিনি আমাদের এই অল্পচলনটীক সহিত ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে জড়িত ছিলেন।”

অনন্তর উৎসব আরম্ভ হয়। শ্রীযুক্ত অক্ষিতা সেন ও ইন্দিরা দাস, বসন্তে আবাহন, বসন্ত, এবং বসন্তবিদায় সম্বন্ধীয় কয়েকটি সঙ্গীত দ্বারা সকলকে মুগ্ধ করেন শ্রীযুক্ত প্রশান্তকুমার মহলানবীশের আবৃত্তি দুইটী পরম উপভোগ্য হইয়াছিল।

আচার্য্য অবনীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর ~~সম্পূর্ণ~~ পূর্ব ‘পূর্ববী’ হইতে একটা কবিতা আবৃত্তি করেন। সদশ্রুগণকে সম্ভাষণ করিয়া তিনি বলেন—“... ..তোমাদের সামনে অনেকবার বসন্তোৎসব আসবে এবং আসছেও দেখছি। তোমাদের আনন্দের ছোঁয়াছ ও আঁচ পেয়ে যদি আমার সে বয়স ফিরে আসতো তবে দেখতে হতো একটা হলদে-কালো পাখি হয়ে উড়ে পড়েছি এবং কলেজেব দিক্-দর্শন যন্ত্রটার দাঁড়ে বসে গলাবাজি করছি—স্বমধুর বাসন্তি রাগিনীতে, তারপরে মিষ্টানে হোঁ দিয়ে চম্পট দিয়েছি বাসন্তি। তোমাদের মধ্যে সুরের যাত্রকর আছে। অনেকেই, উৎসবের নিমন্ত্রণ দিয়েছে তোমরা বুড়োকে, বুড়োকে সুরের ধাক্কায় সজীব করতো দেখি। দেখনি খরার দিনে শুকনো মাটির পরে যখন বৃষ্টির ফোঁটা নামে ভিজে মাটা ষাঠীয়া সম্ভাষণ মেথকে, বিস্ত্র বৃকের একটা মাত্র সুরভি নিখাস দিয়ে জানায়—আনন্দের অমৃত বর্ষণে সিদ্ধ হলেম। আমারও ঐ কথা—উৎসবের মধ্যে স্থান পেয়ে আপ্যায়িত হলেম।”

সম্পূর্ণ অভিভাষণটী অন্তত প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে।

শ্রীযুক্ত সবসীলাল সরকার ও বিজ্ঞেশলাল ভাট্টা ‘বসন্তোৎসব’ সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করেন।

সভাপতির বক্তৃতার পর আর একটা সঙ্গীত হয়। অতঃপর পরিষদের পক্ষ হইতে আচার্য্য অবনীন্দ্রনাথ এবং উপস্থিত ভদ্রমহোদয় ও ভদ্রমহিলাদিগকে ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করিয়া উৎসবের কার্য শেষ হয়।

জ্যোতির্ষ্ম বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়
সম্পাদক

To
Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose,
Kt., F.R.S.,
Emeritus Professor, Presidency College, Calcutta.

SIR,

We have met here to-day to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of your first connection with this College. On this happy occasion, we offer you our respectful greetings. You joined this Institution just half a century ago. Since then your relations with us have never ceased, your affection for us has never waned.

Sir, the link that binds you to us is one that can never be broken. Presidency College has been the nursery of your genius, and the glory of your world-famous discoveries in science has shed on it an imperishable lustre. It was here that your epoch-making researches had their origin, and your remarkable genius its full blossoming.

While working in the laboratories of this College, you first saw the lines of Physics, of Physiology, of Botany and of Psychology converge and meet. Inadequate apparatus and appliances could not discourage you. You carried on your twofold labour—construction and investigation, with unchecked ardour and unflinching energy. You have brought about a fertile union between the mysticism of the East and the experimentalism of the West. You have wrung from Nature her most jealously guarded secrets.

O Mighty Seer! You have discovered undreamt of points of contact between the realms of the living and the non-living. You stand to-day at the deep centre of all things, where dwells the One, where a sleepless Life surges through all things—those that move and those that seem to move not.

Oh Unwearied Worker! You have built up your long-dreamed of Temple of Science, where bands of devoted disciples are gathering from far and near to seek and find One in Many, Unity in Diversity.

We bow to you, Sir, in profound humility and deep reverence, and pray that you may long live in peace and happiness, and continue to help in building the greater India yet to be.

We remain,

Sir,

Yours affectionately,

THE STUDENTS AND THE STAFF OF
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE.

CALCUTTA:

The 21st January, 1935.

HIS REPLY

I deem it a rare good fortune to be invited at the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of fifty years of my uninterrupted connection with the Presidency College of which I have been gazetted as the Professor Emeritus. It is a matter of much gratification that more than 42 years ago, some of the most important problems relating to the properties of electric waves were solved for the first time at my laboratory in this College. These discoveries, as is well known, evoked great interest at all scientific centres in Europe and America and led to the recognition of India as a home of learning and as an important contributor in advancing world's scientific knowledge. It would be difficult for any one of the present generation to conceive of the almost insuperable difficulties under which the pioneer work had to be carried out at that early period. I, however, persisted in my belief that it is not for man to complain about circumstances, but bravely to confront and dominate over them. My belief has been fully justified by my later discoveries on the essential Unity of Life and its mechanism.

If you are to ask me in what way the students could best serve our country, I would urge that this could not be achieved by setting yourselves adrift from the necessary discipline enforced in a place of learning ; for the most irresistible force is that which is held in restraint and husbanded for the accomplishment of some great constructive work for the glory of India. In this pursuit you cannot be helped by ignorance, but by the patient acquirement of knowledge and thus win that strength and persistence without which no great work can be accomplished. Be therefore strong through endurance! You will then disdain laying down law for others, for the only law that is given you to enforce is on yourselves. Go forward then in life's great adventure! The more difficult is your task, the greater will be your power to accept the challenge for its accomplishment. When you have gained the vision of a noble purpose to which you must dedicate yourselves, then the doors which appeared to be closed shall open to you.

J. C. BOSE.