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FOREWORD

With the present issue, the Presidency College Magazine celebrates its Silver Jubilee. Even a cursory glance at the contents will show that the response to the Editor's invitation has been most gratifying. I think that he deserves our congratulations for the rich fare he has provided.

The last twenty-five years have been momentous in the history of the world and the College has also experienced changes in its methods and ideals and of outlook. The present issue being the handiwork of men of different generations, may easily serve as an index of the changes which are taking place beneath the placid surface.

Long may the Presidency College flourish which has fostered Western education from its very first beginnings in the country and long may its organ, the Presidency College Magazine, prosper!

B. M. S.

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

SILVER JUBILEE NUMBER

Edited by Nirmal Chandra Sen Gupta

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THE PORTRAIT OF THE BUDDHA

The original is with the Most Hon'ble
the Marquess of Zetland.

(See Page 544)

By *D. C. Ganguly*,
(In Presidency College 1897—1901)

ENGRAVED & PRINTED BY
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Silver Jubilee Number

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Vol. XXV

MARCH, 1939

No. 2

EDITORIAL

Twenty-Five Years on

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE first appeared in November, 1914. On other pages the founder-editor, now Head of the University Law College, describes its birth. A life of twenty-five years has made the Magazine, to quote the last editor, an institution. To-day it is, in a very real sense, a live and animate thing, with a character of its own. It is the most important medium which gives expression to the corporate life of the College. It is an index to the tendencies influencing our present activities. It pulsates with the life of the College. Years of hard toil and steady improvement, during which its standard of excellence as the mouthpiece of the premier College of Bengal has been uniformly maintained, have given it something of prestige and distinction; it has undoubtedly inherited a great tradition. The Editorial Roll can already boast of names which have since achieved indubitable distinction in the different walks of life. A short sketch of the career of the Magazine, such as is going to be attempted here, can hardly give an adequate idea of all that it means and stands for.

In our narrative we propose first to discuss the purposes with which we started and how far we have been able to follow them. We shall next describe some of the features that once were, but are no more, parts of the Magazine and pass on to the new features that have been substituted for the old. We shall devote a separate section to the 'agitations' and grievances of students which we have supported and ventilated. Before concluding we shall also touch upon some of the landmarks in our life, the points in our growth, and such glimpses

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE

of the life-story of the College as a perusal of our pages helps one to have.

THE FOUNDATION AND THE AIMS

Before the Magazine appeared in print, it served a year of apprenticeship in handwriting with Mr. Pramathanath Banerjee as editor. Next year the Magazine was 'confirmed' and the printed copy came out. Mr. Banerjee gives a vivid description of how the permission of the then Principal, Mr. H. R. James, was obtained, of the brilliant articles that graced the first issues, and of his difficulties as editor. Our task here is to discuss the ideals which Principal James set before our journal twenty-five years ago. In his *Introductory* to the first number of Presidency College Magazine, which we have reproduced in full in this number, Mr. James catalogues three functions of the Magazine in order of importance: first and foremost, the Magazine must be an organ of the corporate life of the College; secondly, it should give information about other colleges and about matters of common interest in the University; and lastly, it may print contributions of literary and scientific interest from members of the College. The third function is quite "legitimate," but is placed "a long way after the other two." As he says:

This is to be the *College Magazine*, an organ of college life. It is to treat of current events and interests, and the interests of the *College*. It requires no mean art, no slight effort, no slender stock of perseverance, to attain these ends adequately.

Hence Mr. James warns the Magazine against too great emphasis on the literary side:

Experience shows that there is a danger of the more proper functions of a college magazine falling into the background and of literary contributions bulking too largely.

Now how far have we been able to keep ourselves confined within the limits set by the great Principal? It is needless to point out, as a past editor remarked, that our journal has drifted from its original track. The premonition of Mr. James seems to have been well founded. The function which was relegated to the last place has ostensibly come to be the most important; and the internal affairs of the College on which Mr. James laid such emphasis have to go with only a few pages in small print. The question naturally arises: Should we not revert to the ideals of the founders? To many Mr. James' words have an appropriateness which demands a strict obedience. On the other hand, to go back to infancy, when our journal is celebrating its Silver Jubilee, would be but folly in the eyes of many others.

The ex-editor referred to decided to follow the golden mean and co-ordinate the two functions as far as possible. But we should not forget that when the golden mean fails to be golden, it is meanly mean; and too much insistence on the *College* has the danger of making our College Magazine less of a magazine. A College Magazine, says our first editor, is an expression of the sentiments of the students of the college—their hopes, aspirations, fears and anxieties. It should of course give a picture of the contemporary life of the College; it may with profit have 'peeps into what other colleges are doing'; but it should also offer an opportunity to the members of the College to cultivate their literary gifts, to come out of the 'besetting sin of shyness' through the medium of print. This College, we cannot forget, is in a very real sense the mother of modern Bengal. "Every man who is any man in Bengal is a Presidency College man." To maintain the rich traditions of the past, to keep the torch burning, we should not scruple to open our pages to our "future Tagores." The time has certainly been reached when the third function of Mr. James should be brought up from the rear and placed in the same line as the first two. Our deviation from the originally planned track is not without justification.

SOME FEATURES OF THE MAGAZINE

A survey of the features of the Magazine and their vicissitudes would by itself make an interesting story. The first important feature, which has continued to be one of our regular features throughout the twenty-five years of our life, is the Foreword contributed to the first number of each volume by the Principal of the College for the time being. The Foreword is never long but is always important and interesting, sketching the ideals of the College, the current difficulties, the results of our manifold activities from year to year, the weak spots in our system and their correctives. We have reproduced in this number the special Introductory of Principal James to our first number. We have referred to the now celebrated Foreword of Principal Barrow to our Vol. VIII, which showed the need for a regular Bengali section. We have already quoted from the Foreword to the first number of the current session in which the Principal exhorts the students to overcome the besetting fault of shyness. On special occasions our Principals have contributed short Forewords even to the second or the third number of the year, the present number being an instance. The Foreword is so useful because the Head of the College often utilises it for a stock-taking of the previous session and for introducing the needs of the current one.

Apart from the Principal's Foreword the most regular feature is of course the Editorial Notes. Our editors have never been tired of experimenting with the form in which and the headline under which they set forth their musings on College and current affairs. Beginning simply as *College Notes*, the editorial was soon called *Editorial Notes* to emphasise its special character. Then an energetic editor, pioneer in many respects, brought out an issue with a full-fledged *Editorial* in the fashion of public journals, relegating the usual contents of Editorial Notes to a new section, *Notes and News*. His immediate successors failed to find issues worth a special editorial but concentrated solely on the *Notes and News*. Two sessions ago the special *Editorial* was revived, and the *Notes and News* changed into *Chronicle and Comment*.

The special editorials have mostly been on problems of particular importance to the student. In one editorial the now celebrated controversy over the utility of examinations initiated by the booklet, *An Examination of Examinations*, by Sir Philip Hertog and Dr. E. C. Rhodes, was discussed threadbare; and the issue attracted such attention that a symposium on examinations was published in Vol. XXIII, No. 3, among the contributors being Dr. W. A. Jenkins and Principal Zachariah. Recently we have widened our horizon and looked to this "changing world" (Vol. XXIV, No. 3) and its "tendencies" (Vol. XXV, No. 1).

The section now called *Chronicle and Comment*, which as we have shown is an evolution from the original *College Notes*, is now mainly a catalogue of College intelligence.

The founders of the Magazine, actuated by the ideas of Mr. James, introduced two regular features which are no longer in existence. One was 'University News', and the other 'A peep into other colleges' (written by a correspondent who sometimes used the significant pen-name, "C. Spy"). To-day we no longer keep ourselves confined to the limits set by Principal James; but if these features have been discontinued, the cause is not so much lack of interest as lack of willing correspondents. The *University News* gave information regarding important meetings of the Senate and the Syndicate, public lectures organised by the University, and the part played by the members of our staff in University affairs: its last appearance was in Vol. VIII, No. 1. The section on *Other Colleges* had a much earlier death, appearing last in Vol. IV, No. 2.

The earlier editors introduced two more features which, if continued, would have been a source of genuine satisfaction to every lover of the College. The first was an "old Presidency College men" series, and

the second an "old Presidency College teachers" series. As is shown by the cumulative index which we publish in this issue, altogether eleven articles appeared in the first series. Besides, we had articles on the lives of Derozio (Vol. I, No. 3) and Richardson (Vol. II, No. 2), who were perhaps the most distinguished teachers of the old Hindu College out of which our College has sprung.

Another feature which often finds a place in our pages is the College reminiscences of distinguished old boys. As the cumulative index shows, our journal has on many occasions printed these highly interesting memories. The present number is particularly rich in this respect. The value of this feature cannot be exaggerated. As a past editor observed:

The history of a college, if it wants to escape being dull, must consist of first-hand reminiscences from people who have known and felt—ex-students and ex-professors.

To-day we no longer try to limit the scope of our journal. We have given up the attempt to set up rules which must be followed in each of our numbers. Apart from the *Foreword*, the *Editorial* and the section on *Ourselves*, we have, strictly speaking, no fixed features, but invite our students, old Presidency College men and members of the staff to contribute short and interesting articles on subjects of general interest. There is one rule, however, which we always try to follow; and that is to give representation to the different branches of study pursued in the College. But as it is a Magazine for the whole College, we cannot generally print highly technical essays.

THE BENGALI SECTION

But the greatest innovation since the foundation has been the bifurcation of the Magazine into an English and a Bengali part. The Magazine, as originally started, was purely in English. The demand for a Bengali section was, however, strong from the very beginning, and ten years later a full-fledged Bengali section was introduced with great success.

The founder-editor has given two reasons why the earlier numbers were not bilingual. In the first place he refers to the "step-motherly recognition" then accorded to the Bengali language. Secondly, "Mr. James' sense of art or his lack of knowledge of the beauties of the Bengali language would not allow the Magazine to bifurcate itself." To-day when we have a regular and most successful Bengali section, when in fact the bilingual character of our journal is taken for granted, we are quite willing to ascribe the absence of Bengali in the

earlier issues to the English Principal's ignorance of Bengali and the general neglect that was then the lot of our mother-tongue. But how is it that objection could have been raised against a bilingual Magazine on the score of art? Is there any likelihood of the artistic sense being injured if a magazine has two sections in two different languages? Is the break in uniformity artistically condemnable? Speaking for ourselves, we do not think so. For it must be borne in mind that our Bengali section is not in any way a replica of the English half. The Bengali section is quite independent and separate: it is in effect a magazine in itself. In 1926 the Bengali half was demarcated from the English by means of a blank page in between, which in 1929 was changed to a more artistic partition. We are thus really supplying two magazines in one cover. Moreover, in India it is an invariable practice for a college magazine to be poly-lingual: we are after all a college magazine.

The first Bengali contribution ever printed in our journal found its place, however, in the very first volume. At the Founders' Day celebrations of 1915, Mr. Bankim Chandra Mitra, then a Judge of the Small Causes Court, recited a Bengali poem composed for the occasion, which was printed in the third number of Volume One, Page 272. In that year Professor Khagendranath Mitra formed a committee of students to start a Bengali Literary Society in the College; the Society was, however, started two years later and the report of the inaugural meeting is found in Vol. III, No. 2. In September, 1917, Rabindranath Tagore delivered an address in Bengali before the Society, which was printed in Vol. IV, No. 2, and which, together with an address of congratulation to Dr. Prabhu Datta Shastri on his getting the title of *Vidyasagar*, is our second Bengali publication. In the next number (Vol. IV, No. 3) appeared two more Bengali articles: a report of the Bengali Literary Society and a paper on Vaishnava poetry read before the Society. Then there is a big gap, no Bengali print catching our eye from the Fifth to the Eighth Volume. But the demand for a Bengali section was becoming more and more insistent, and at last even a Principal recognised the necessity. In his Foreword to the first number of Volume Eight, Principal Barrow voiced the oft-repeated query of the students: "Are Bengali contributions never admitted into this Magazine?" "If not," he continued, "I suppose that this abstinence from the use of your own language is deliberate; but it seems to me that the Magazine is thereby rendered unable to perform its most interesting and important function, which is (I should have thought) to provide an exercise-ground for the young and ambitious." He went on to emphasise the point that "that mysterious thing, style,

is only produced by literary genius working in the medium of its mother-tongue," and concluded by asking, "where are our future Tagores?" The then editor in the *Notes and News* (Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 4) declared, "We cannot but fall in with the suggestion made by the Principal," but he could not make up his mind whether the Magazine should be transformed into a bilingual one or a separate magazine in Bengali should be started. He, for one, preferred the second alternative and appealed to the students to double the amount of their subscription. The appeal having taken such a grossly material form, nothing came out of it. The first number of Volume Nine saw another Bengali article—the report of a speech delivered by Rabindranath Tagore before the College Union. In the second number of that year, a student, while cataloguing his grievances, made a strong plea for a Bengali section:

That Bengali is religiously avoided from the pages of the College Magazine is also in the nature of a practice. If this ban of untouchability be removed, the editor will to a certain extent be spared the dreadful vision of a magazine with no printed sheets between the covers. The Presidency College is expected to produce some of the future celebrities of the Bengali literature. It is a pity that her magazine should not enjoy the music of their infant cooings (Vol. IX, No. 2, p. 199).

The next editor, now an eminent member of the staff, decided the issue once for all by resolving to bifurcate the Magazine. His first number contained only one Bengali article—a report of a speech by Saratchandra Chatterji before the Bengali Literary Society, but from his second number to this day we have had a regular Bengali Section. The motion for introducing the Bengali Section was moved before the Magazine Committee by Mr. Akshay Kumar Sircar (General Secretary of the Magazine, 1922-23) and seconded by Mr. Atikar Rahaman (see Volume X, No. 2, p. 158). Among the first contributors to the new section were Professor Charuchandra Bhattacharyya and Professor (then Mr.) Humayun Kabir, who are still our valued contributors, as even the present number shows.

OUR GRIEVANCES

For the last 25 years the Magazine has been the most important channel for voicing the grievances of the students to the gods that be, and a survey of its career will be incomplete without a reference to the various 'agitations' that have been carried on in its pages. The foremost and most ancient grievance seems to have been the demand for a College Hall. From the very first volume our Magazine has

devoted much attention to this lamentable blank in our College life. In his second number, the founder-editor wrote:

The want of a College Hall has long been severely felt; and more and more every year as the effort after a common collegiate life has become more conscious. Without it we cannot effectively have a College Union, no permanent stage, no histrionic club, no big College meetings. The possession of a Hall may enable us, in future, to start a *Presidency College Club* which is so much to be desired as a common meeting place of past and present students of the College. On all accounts the need of a College Hall is imperative. It is essential to the completeness of corporate life in a college.

The appeal for a College Hall was first made by Principal H. R. James in his address to the College delivered on December 16, 1910. The appeal to the "Old Boys" to make the Hall their gift to the College was taken up by Sir Deva Prasad Sarbadhikari in 1911 and was renewed at the first celebration of the Founders' Day, on January 20, 1913, when Lord Carmichael opened the Baker Laboratories. The Magazine from its very inception took up the matter and very few of its numbers are without some reference to this glaring need. Principal after Principal struggled hard to convince the authorities of the necessity. Sometimes success seemed to be within our grasp. In the Principal's Foreword to the first number of Volume Thirteen, we find the assuring sentence, "government has given sanction to a scheme which will provide a College Hall, additional lecture rooms, a new observatory, playing fields, etc." On another occasion a College Hall Fund was opened and some subscription was collected. But the College Hall has yet to come into existence. The annual reports of the Principal and the editorial comments in the Magazine still emphasise our poverty in this respect. But to-day our cries are professedly cries of despair; our repeated disappointments have damped us down. In Vol. XIV, No. 1, we find the editor remarking with reference to the Hall, "How long shall we have to harp continually on the same tune, we wonder! The grievance promises to be perennial." So too the editor of Volume XVI remarks in his first number, "The College Hall seems to be as remote as ever." But we have not yet lost all faith. Specially the change in the governmental system has filled us with new hopes, for the overwhelming majority of our present legislators and some of our ministers are our 'Old Boys.' On the last Founders' Day, which was presided over by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the Principal again referred to the need and the Chief Minister has given the assurance that he will see that the grievance may soon be a thing of the past. In this number, too, a past Principal makes an appeal for the hall. In an article on *The College Hall*, printed in the third number of Volume Fourteen, Principal James asked, "Is the idea

of a College Hall an idle dream, or is it a true vision?" The query still stands.

The second thing for which we have agitated ever since we started, and which goes with the first, is a College Association. On the subject we again refer our readers to the appeal of our ex-Principal, Mr. T. S. Sterling. Besides our editors who have been staunch supporters of the 'agitation', many others have used our pages for this purpose: we may refer to *A Plea for an Old Boys' Club* by Dr. (then Mr.) Nabagopal Das, printed in Volume XX, Number 2. Here too, success was almost achieved. The Editor of Volume XI had 'much pleasure in announcing the formation of an Old Boys' Association in our College, (XI, 3, p. 211). But it never functioned. Again, two meetings of past students and past and present members of the staff, the first held on the 10th January, 1934, under the chairmanship of Principal B. M. Sen, and the second held on the 10th April, 1934, under the chairmanship of the late Mr. Basanta Kumar Bose, then the seniormost ex-student of the College, authorised a Provisional Committee to enrol members and decided to hold the inaugural meeting of the Association when no less than fifty members would be enrolled. The Presidency College Magazine began to advertise the Association. But the "fifty faithfuls" are not yet found. Still we firmly believe that every true lover of the College must re-echo the wish expressed by Mr. Sterling that he may sit one day in the Presidency College Hall as a member of the Presidency College Association.

Another important grievance of the students which the Magazine is never tired of ventilating, has been the high rate of fees charged by the College. The poverty of our country has become a byword, and here we face a paradox when higher education is sought to be spread by making it more expensive. Our inordinately high fee-rates lie at the root of all our present-day decline. If Presidency College has no longer that monopoly in the field of examinations which once became a part of its connotation, so to say, the main reason must be the gradually rising scale of fees which is frightening away most of our potential scholars from our gates. Our professors, wrote an ex-editor, do not profess to practise spiritual alchemy. To-day we do not get more than a mere fraction of the best students of the University. With supply so rapidly dwindling, it is not fair to demand from us results which we can show only if we can again attract the right type of students. The unreality of the situation was well expressed by an editor who remarked, "The College fees seem to know nothing of the economic depression outside" (XIX, 1, p. 7).

The management of the College Library is another of our serious grievances. Here the first and the commonest cause of complaint is the pandemonium which rages in the Library and which makes work there impossible. The main reason for this is the deplorable condition of the present Common Room which, as has been well said, 'repels rather than invites.' "So every leisure hour finds the Library crammed with eager talkers and the resulting noise is something phenomenal." Secondly, the use of the Library for Service Examinations is often a misfortune to college students. The B. C. S. Examination, for instance, which is usually held between February and March in our Library, prevents our B. A. Examinees, specially the Honours men among them, from getting the benefit of the Library at the time when they need it most. Thirdly, the Library seems to be hopelessly understaffed. The axe of retrenchment has worked havoc with its management. Students have now to wait long before a bearer can be found to serve their requisition slips. The author index is hopelessly antiquated: enquiries show that the management cannot spare a hand to bring it up to date. With the passing of years our Library has amassed a collection of books that can rouse the envy of any educational institution, but no arrangement seems to have been made to house the expanding stock of books in a systematic manner, with the result that there is further delay in supplying the demands of students.

The Magazine has also raised its voice in protest against the very few prizes awarded by the College to its distinguished students at the different examinations. Our second editor, referring to the matter, wrote:

Our own College has very little to show in the matter of endowments for the awarding of prizes and scholarships to proficient students. It is certainly an anomaly that having the largest number of them the College should offer so few rewards to keep them up to the mark. It strikes us that nothing but good can result by multiplying prizes and scholarships even now.

His successors in the editorial office have now and again emphasised the need, specially as a compensation to the rapidly rising rate of fees. The few part-free studentships are mere drops in the ocean. The Students' Aid Fund, maintained mostly with monthly contributions from the staff and an annual contribution from students at the time of the Autumn Social, is of course a splendid example of voluntary effort. But what is wanted is generous creation of additional scholarships and once again we appeal to those who hold the purse-strings.

If the Founders' Day celebrations included a prize-giving ceremony, the interest in and the importance of the day would doubtless be much enhanced. Here, however, we are again faced with the

problem of an assembly hall. As the editor, already quoted, remarked: "No doubt a good deal of the spirit of emulation stimulated by the award of prizes is due to the fact that they are given away in public and the recipients are publicly honoured. We can have none of it for the simple reason that we have not got a College Hall."

Besides the editors, students have also used the columns of the Magazine to ventilate their grievances. We select two interesting examples. The first was a demand for a College Co-operative Society, made by a student in a letter to the editor of Volume XV. The second was a demand for a covered passage between the Baker Laboratories and the main building: it was put forward in the correspondence section of Vol. XVI, No. 3. Such a passage is indeed urgently needed.

OUR FINANCES

We now come to a vital point in our existence, our finances. Here, unfortunately, we cannot put up a very good show. When the Magazine started, an annual Government grant of Rs. 600/- was promised, while, as the first editor says in his vivid account of the foundation of the Magazine, Principal James was prevailed upon to sanction a compulsory levy on students. The annual subscription was fixed at one rupee and eight annas per student, and it has continued at that rate ever since. The Government grant, however, vanished after a few years with rather disastrous results for our financial stability. To-day our sole source of revenue is the annual subscription from students. But while income has thus remained practically stationary (it slightly fluctuates from year to year with the number of students on the rolls), expenditure has a tendency to rise. For with the passing of years, our activities are continually increasing, our standard is rising and our commitments are multiplying. The Presidency College Magazine must, after all, be worthy of Presidency College. Thanks to the prudent management of successive editors, it has so far successfully maintained its standard of excellence, but the strain has sometimes been rather severe.

The financial condition is best reflected in the size and number of the annual issues. Originally, as Mr. James' *Introductory* shows, it was proposed to have six issues during the whole session. The first editor, however, had time to bring out only three. In the second year we had five issues. Owing to the rise in the cost of paper and printing due to the War, only four issues were brought out during the next two sessions. Volume V reached the low-water mark: it had only two

numbers. Indeed, the position was then rather ominous. As the editor of Volume IV humorously remarked: "Owing its inception to the same year as the War, one may justly remark that the rate at which the Magazine is thinning down in volume and number, is rather appalling. Like the fast diminishing enemy ranks, may it not, in the near future, reduce to nonentity?" The first editor refuses to pledge his word whether the Magazine was conceived on the 4th August, 1914, but the analogy is striking.

Volume VI had three issues, but Volume VII again reached the low level of two issues. Volume VIII brought out three numbers all right, and the next editor stabilised the matter there: "Henceforth there will ordinarily be three issues a year—in September, December and March" (IX/1, p. 1).

The rule then laid down has been followed so far, with the exception that the December Number has been changed to January and the March Number to April. Though this arrangement has, on the whole, been successful, we are, really speaking, leading a precarious hand-to-mouth existence. The slightest increase in expenditure on one number now jeopardises the very life of the other two. In 1929-30, when the Magazine changed over to its present get-up and in fact turned over a new leaf in every respect, the finances were badly depleted, and the after-effects persisted throughout the next two sessions. The result was that in 1931-32 we could bring out only two issues. So also this year the publication of the Silver Jubilee Number has forced us to drop the January issue and to merge two numbers in this Special Number. The College could spare us only Rs. 200/-.

The revival of the original Government grant will doubtless ease our circumstances and create for us that atmosphere in which only we can hope to have a healthy growth. Failing that we must appeal to the generosity of our staff, who up till now have not borne any share of our financial burdens. May we not hope that as members of the College they will not let its mouthpiece decline for want of funds? If our appeal be not a practical proposition (for the calls on our staff are already numerous), we must turn to our original constituents and ask them to see if they can increase their annual subscription. To quote an ex-editor:

With the meagre income which the Magazine has at present, it is impossible to bring out decent issues, on which the prestige of the College so much depends. We don't want to be lavish, but neither do we want to be stingy. In every kind of expenditure there are two minimum limits; one below which economy is impossible, and another below which it is possible but may be extremely undesirable. If we are able to afford it, we must not go below the second of

these limits. If, however, we are merely concerned with bringing out a number of printed pages, without caring for decent business, the possibilities of economy are many and varied (Volume XVI/3, p. 184).

SPECIAL NUMBERS

The brief account of our financial conditions given above amply shows why it has not been possible for us to bring out many special numbers. We have, however, done what we could, and, including the present number, we have had five special numbers. The first editor was also the first to bring out a special number. His effort took the form of a supplement and was issued along with his third number as *The Presidency College Magazine Convocation Supplement*. In it were published in full the Convocation speeches of His Excellency the Chancellor (Lord Hardinge) and of the Vice-Chancellor (Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary). The second editor, who along with the tenth editor enjoyed the distinction of editing the Magazine for two successive sessions, brought out a Special Number in his second term. On him fell the distinction of bringing out a number to commemorate the first hundred years in the life of the College and he fully justified the trust imposed on him in *The College Centenary Number* of the Magazine, published as the third number of Volume Three. This number contained important contributions dealing with our past history and reminiscences of distinguished ex-students: we have tried to follow up its ideas in the present issue. In it we find a continuous history of the Hindu College and the Presidency College from 1817 to 1916, in three separate articles; the College reminiscences of Sir Gooroo Das Banerjee, Sir (then Mr. Justice) Abdur Rahim, Mr. Shyama Charan Ganguly and others; some reflections on the centenary of the College by Sir P. C. Ray; a poem, *On the Centenary of the Presidency College*, by Professor Monmohan Ghosh; and a Masque celebrating the event by Principal H. R. James. It was a rich number. The next two special numbers were brought out by the tenth editor in March, 1924, and March, 1925, as memorials to Professor Monmohan Ghosh who died on January 5, 1924. The 1924 number mainly contained reminiscences of the great professor and poet by his pupils, while the 1925 number published all the poems of the late professor together. It is a pity that no more memorial numbers were issued to mark the departure or death of other famous college personalities. It is particularly regrettable that when the news of the death of our founder, Principal James, reached us, we could do no more than write a short paragraph on that great soul. Nor could we show greater honour to the memories of the late Principal H. M. Percival and Dr. P. K. Ray.

SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

In our life of twenty-five years we have published nearly 8000 printed pages, and the subjects dealt with have necessarily been numerous and various. The cumulative index which is published in this number shows the variety of the topics we have been interested in. The index which is arranged according to authors, also shows who have been our most regular and valued contributors. Naturally we have depended most on students on the rolls and existing members of the staff, but we have also been favoured by some eminent personalities in the sphere of education. For instance, Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary, when Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, wrote an *Appeal to Old Presidency College Men* in the second number of our first volume, and Sir Michael Sadler, when here with the University Commission known by his name, also contributed an article to our journal (VIII/1). Valuable contributions have often come from members of the staff and a rather disconcerting testimony to the value of the articles published in the Magazine is provided by the number of clipped pages in the Library copies of several past issues!

A feature of our Magazine has been the translations from the literature of other languages published in our pages. An outstanding example is the translation from Dante (Purg. XXX) published by Professor J. W. Holme in the fourth number of our second volume. Rabindranath Tagore, of course, supplied the original of most other translations. The celebrated *Tajmahal* was translated both in verse, by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice K. C. Sen (IV/3), and in prose, by Prof. S. N. Maitra (XVI/3). Mr. Sen, as the index shows, contributed many other translations from Rabindranath, so also did Mr. Kamal Krishna Ghosh and Rai Lalit Mohan Chatterjee Bahadur. A Bengali translation of the whole of the thirteenth canto of Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa* was contributed by Mr. Govinda Prasad Ghosh to Volume XVI, No. 2, and Prof. Hidayat Hussain translated some quatrains from Saif-ud-din Bakhrazi (III/4, IV/1, IV/2). Prof. Gourinath Bhattacharyya contributes translations from Bhartrihari to this number.

Some of the priceless gems of Prof. Monmohan Ghosh appeared first in our pages (we published an anthology of his poems in our Volume XI, No. 3). Principal James also contributed some poems to our journal. Dr. Phiroze Dustoor, an ex-editor, wrote some lighter poems for us; specially deserving attention are his *College Cantos* (IX/1 and XI/1).

Attention may be drawn to interesting articles on the past history of the College which the Magazine has published from time to time.

Several of them were contributed by our Librarian, Mr. G. N. Dhar. The College Centenary Number is particularly rich in this respect. In this number the late Prof. J. N. Das Gupta sketched the history of English education in India and the Hindu College from 1813 to 1855, an anonymous writer carried the story to 1906, and Mr. H. R. James wrote on *Progress, 1906-1916*. In the second number of Volume XI, Mr. W. C. Wordsworth brought the history up to 1924. In this number we have reprinted the last three articles together with a survey of our College from 1924 to 1938 so as to bring the story up to date.

The hostels attached to the College have always claimed a page or two of the Magazine. Eden Hostel Notes regularly appear in the section on *Ourselves*, and students of ours residing in the Baker Hostel also sometimes send us interesting records of their life. A brief note on the history of the Eden Hindu Hostel was contributed by Mr. P. Mukherjee to Volume XI, No. 2.

All this may produce the impression that as regards contributions we have always had enough and to spare. But though some editors seem to have been particularly fortunate in this respect, a perusal of the editorials strongly brings out the fact that our most ancient grievance is not the absence of an assembly hall, but the paucity of good contributions. The Magazine came out first in 1914 amidst tremendous enthusiasm, but as early as 1917 we find the editor lamenting: "We cannot help confessing that of late we are painfully conscious of the paucity of contributions worth publishing from the members of the College, past and present. In fact, the interest that used to be taken in the past is visibly on the wane." The editor went on to quote, as many of his successors have quoted in their turn, the words of H. R. James: "When Presidency College does have a magazine, it is incumbent on every member of the College to do what he can to make it a success." In another number, the editor was justly indignant:

"We make our appearance this time," said he, "unusually thin and emaciated. Also we have been unable to maintain our wonted strict regularity in appearance. We do not wish to make commonplace apologies for this. Our critics, both sympathetic and unsympathetic, would do well to remember that the concern of the Magazine is neither a mercantile firm nor a bank from which they were justified in expecting a return of their principal multiplied two or three times. We shall give exactly what we receive, and not a whit more. There is no transaction, no speculation. We do not presume to spin webs like spiders. To expect us to perform that function is to expect too much. It is all plain dealing. Still we are under the painful necessity of confessing frankly that for sheer dearth of contributions we are unable to maintain our standards of journalistic perfection."

Another subject of editorial comment has been the preponderance of the poetical in the contributions. One editor remarked: "Poems have reached him (the editor) which have caused him to exclaim with Pope—'It is not poetry but prose run mad,' and even pieces of drama in which the tragic muse smiled and the comic slept." Another editor, commenting on the same phenomenon, says:

It is often said that this is an age of leisure and lesser love of poetry. But to the editor of the College Magazine it has proved a false dictum. The amount of poetical matter that is hanging heavy on the editor's hands would make it appear that the young aspirants are out to enliven the hitherto prosy pages of the Magazine with the outpourings of their still unsophisticated hearts.

To encourage contributors the Magazine Committee in 1924 declared that a medal would be awarded to the best article of the year. Vol. XI (p. 296) shows that the medal was awarded to Birendranath Ganguly for his paper on 'Pauperism' (printed in X/2). Unfortunately that was the only time the medal was awarded.

Many have been the things which the editors of our Magazine, like all great editors, have dealt with. They have discussed changes in the College and the grievances of the students; they have gloried in the achievements of the College and refuted our fault-finders; they have suggested improvements; they have talked of the outside world; they have even dabbled in some politics. Some of them have been admirably chivalrous; the admission of three lady-students in 1917, made one of them comment: "It is with much pleasure that we note the welcome presence of three lady-students among the freshers.....Would that such admissions were ever on the increase and less like angel visits few and far between." Incidentally, the Magazine has not been partial to one sex only. We have had occasional lady contributors: we may mention Miss Shantisudha Ghosh who contributed articles, both in English and Bengali, to our Volume XV.

Many editors have tried to break from dull uniformity and introduced welcome varieties in their numbers. We should like to refer to some conspicuous successes in this respect. The first discernible venture is to be found in Volume VII of 1920-21 when a delightful feature, *In Lighter Vein*, interesting *Selections* from reputed journals, and a series of brilliant articles, gave the Magazine a new turn. Volume XVI (1929-30) introduced a *Page of Miscellany* containing, among other things, selections from standard journals and entertaining excerpts from contemporaries. Volume XXII (1935-36) also had *Gleanings* from reputed journals. Volume XXIII (1936-37) introduced the interesting features, *Guide to Periodicals* and *Book Surveys* which are still continued.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have reached the end of our story. We have purposely refrained from giving a chronological account, for we thought that an analytical sketch would be more interesting than chronology. Twenty-five years are the life-time of a generation, and what the Magazine was at the time of its inception can hardly be judged from what it is now. Revolutionary and baffling changes have swept over the face of the world since that misty morning in November, 1914, when the Presidency College Magazine issued its first number. The World War and its all-changing consequences; the great depression from which we are thinking to have just emerged; the onward rush of scientific and technological progress; the experiment of the League of Nations, its rise to importance and its sudden débacle; the rise of new ideologies and the new alignment of world forces—all these make the world of 1939 remarkably different from the world of 1914. Our Magazine has also felt in full the rule of time. Through these twenty-five long years the usual ups and downs of life have not been absent in its case. It has had its lean seasons of depleted funds and dearth of contributions; it has had also seasons of plenty when funds were full and contributors able and willing. It has felt the fury of both the high and the low. In a previous birth (about 1905) it drew the wrath of Government because of some offending article, while on another occasion it had the experience of seeing its pages torn and a bonfire made of them by furious students because of an editorial comment which they thought had offended the memory of a great leader. At present the days of violent changes of fortune seem to have been passed and the Magazine has entered upon a period of comparative quiet. Slowly and gradually it has built up a wide reputation, so that in this number it is hailed as the best of all college magazines by a past Principal of the College, the Principal of a sister college and the Principal of the Law College. Its future is now assured. For a student-editor the task of guiding its publication is at once a great privilege and a great education. The present editor, whose fortune it has been to take charge of the Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the Magazine, must express before concluding his survey of the career of the Magazine his deep debt to, and admiration for, his predecessors, most of whom are now well known in their spheres of life.

We wish to thank Prof. Taraknath Sen (Editor 1929-30) for having kindly gone through the Editorial in manuscript and suggested many improvements.

—ED.

Chronicle and Comment

College Intelligence

THE term is drawing to a close and the College is rapidly assuming the end of the season air. The Second and the Fourth Year Classes have already ceased to exist. The seminars have changed their officials, and the new officials are waiting for the new session to show their worth. Everywhere there is a tired feeling of undue prolongation of the dying year, a feeling no doubt stimulated by the accumulating heat in the Calcutta sky.

Here in the College we are observing the usual routine of work, and the College is doing its work well. Since we appeared last, the M. A. and M. Sc. results have been out and the College has retained its usual places of distinction. In the Inter-University Debating Competition and in the Inter-Collegiate Competitions, some conspicuous successes have been won. In the sphere of athletics and sports, too, we have kept our colours flying (the details are printed elsewhere). But an unfortunate accident to one of the competitors in the heat led to the abandonment of the College annual sports.

Founders' Day

Founders' Day this year was as usual a delightful function, and gained additional importance from the fact that it was not possible to observe the Day last year. In this number in which we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of our birth, we cannot overemphasise the sanctity we attach to this day of commemoration of our illustrious founders. One would wish we could observe the birthday of our *Alma Mater* in a more impressive manner than is now done. If we could arrange on this day a reading of the best seminar essays, recitations and debates by our students, some play staged by the members of the College, the day would probably leave a better memory on the average student than is the case now when but for the Principal's Report and the Presidential speech there is not much to interest the ordinary student. Our old numbers show that in the past we have often tried to make the day's proceedings a bit colourful, on one occasion by staging *As You Like It* in the College courtyards, on another by holding a cricket match between the past and the present students. Indeed, the social aspect of the day appears most important. As

matters now stand, it provides the only occasion for a gathering of the clan, for a meeting of the old and the new members.

The College Union

The College Union this year has shown an admirable spurt of activities for which we should thank the office-bearers. The opening social was received, the Autumn Social and the Steamer Party were celebrated with the usual success, while the debates and the other sections have also been prominent. The need of a closing social to mark the summer break-up has become conspicuous in such a successful session.

Visit of the Australian Boys

The Australian student-tourists who visited India this winter were entertained by the Principal and Mrs. B. M. Sen at a tea-party in the Science Library. There were also arrangements for some Indian instrumental music which the visitors appreciated much. Our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Sen for the enjoyable evening.

We should like to refer in this connection to the great value of such tours. A talk with the Australian students reveals how much they have learnt from their tour. One wonders when similar tours would be a possibility to the Indian student ; the Australians' tour, we understand, was partly financed by their Government. Even a trip to some of the historic places in India, not to speak of an overseas tour, would do much to widen the outlook and freshen the mind of our students.

The Staff

Two of our senior professors have just retired from service. Dr. Panchanan Neogi of the Indian Educational Service, Professor of Chemistry, who had been fruitfully associated with the College for more than a dozen years, retired in December last. Prof. Ashutosh Maitra has been appointed to act in the B. S. E. S. in his place and Dr. Subimal Ghosal, transferred from Krishnagar, has taken the place of Professor Maitra.

Professor Debendranath Sen, Head of the Department of History, has retired as well after a very successful career. The farewell parties arranged in his honour were eloquent proofs of his pupils' sense of gratitude and loss. It was a real privilege to come in contact with Professor Sen. His unique gentlemanliness and fervid devotion to duty could not but impress even the most ordinary mind; his personality was

a beneficent influence for all his students. Mr. Prabirchandra Basu Mullick, B.A. (Cantab.), an ex-student of the College, is acting in the vacancy pending the appointment of a permanent successor to Professor Sen.

Dr. Suresh Chandra Sen Gupta, Laboratory Assistant in Chemistry, has been promoted to the Lecturers' grade and posted to Krishnagar. Mr. Subodh Chandra Sen, our well-known Physical Instructor for more than a decade, was transferred to the Inspectorate in December last; his place has been taken by Mr. Himangshu Sarkar, M.Sc., who has already made himself immensely popular by his keen sense of duty and living interest in his students.

Before we appear again, we are going to suffer a number of serious losses. Professor Prafullachandra Ghosh, Head of the Department of English, will retire on May 2, 1939, thus concluding a great career of more than thirty years spent wholly at Presidency College. Professor Nibaranchandra Bhattacharyya, Head of the Department of Physiology, will also retire before the College re-opens for the next session; he has been a valued member of the staff since 1905. So also Professor Dwijendrakumar Majumdar of the Department of Physics will part company with us before the next session. All three, we need hardly add, are also distinguished ex-students.

Mr. Surendranath Ganguly, the Head Assistant of the College, is, we learn, going to retire next month: the College will surely miss such a conscientious worker.

Changes in Teaching Arrangements

Arrangements for the separation of Pass and Honours teaching in almost all subjects are now complete. The authorities have been approached for granting us affiliation in Biology and classes in that subject are expected to be started from next session.

Felicitations

Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, ex-Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, was awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature (*honoris causa*) by the University at a special Convocation. Our congratulations to our former editor.

Obituary

We mourn with the rest of India the sudden and untimely death of Lord Babourne, Governor of Bengal, Chancellor of Calcutta University and our official Visitor.

It is our painful task to record the most unexpected death of Mr. Haridas Banerji of our Sixth Year History Class. A brilliant student, handsome and amiable, his untimely death is a great shock to his numerous friends. We regretfully announce the premature death of Mr. Subhendu Shekhar Basu, M.Sc., P.R.S., who was an officer in the Statistical Laboratory attached to the College. A gentleman to his finger-tips, Mr. Basu was one of our most brilliant ex-students and had already made his mark in the domain of scientific experiments.

It is our painful duty to record the deaths of Dr. S. C. Bagchi, ex-Principal, University Law College, and Mr. G. C. Bose, ex-Principal, Bangabasi College: both were veteran educationists. Indian scholarship has lost one of its shining lights in the death of Sir Brojendranath Seal. In the passing away of Mahatma Hansraj, the Arya Samaj has lost a revered leader and the Lahore D. A. V. College its founder. A great figure has passed away from the Indian stage in the death of Maulana Saukat Ali.

The world of letters has become the poorer in the demise of Prof. Lascelles Abercrombie, the noted critic, and of W. B. Yeats, the Irish poet and the Nobel Laureate for 1923. Socialism has lost one of its ardent exponents in the death of Karl Kautsky. One of the commanding personalities of modern times, a creator of World-History, has departed in the death of Kemal Ataturk, which melancholy event took place on November 10, 1938.

The Indian Scene

Here in India we are passing through strenuous times. The advent of responsible government in the provinces had led to renewed rivalry and dissension between communities and rivalries are often taking a violent shape. Assumption of office by the Congress has given a fresh impetus to Kisan movements and communist activities. Mahatma Gandhi's fast at Rajkot has given a new turn to the upheaval in the States. And one of the consequences of the controversy over the Congress Presidential election has been to make federation remoter than ever. The country is in transition and the pace is being accelerated everyday. Summing up a debate in the College Union on whether students should participate in politics, the chairman remarked that instead of joining politics students should watch politics. Nowhere is there a more interesting spectacle of political evolution than in India at the present day.

Foreign Affairs

The supreme question now facing the world seems to be whether war can be avoided in an atmosphere of ever-increasing armaments. To the optimistic theory that in view of the waste and destruction of modern warfare which does not discriminate between victor and vanquished, dictators will never force an issue to actual war for they are not insane, it has been replied that the utterly uneconomic nature of expenditure on armaments which are not to be utilised shows that dictators mean war, if they are not insane. On the other hand, peace by itself can seldom appeal to highly nationalised states. The peace maintained after the Czecho-Slovak crisis was certainly not a peace with honour though *The Times* took pains to show that justice did not become injustice simply because a dictator wanted it. The Spanish tangle seems to be on the point of being liquidated in favour of the dictators, though the democracies have hastened to recognise on their own account the *fait accompli* so as to forestall a complete totalitarian triumph. And in the East Japan is shamelessly waging war on China to force on that unfortunate country a Japanese peace.

Our Silver Jubilee

The present number marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of our birth. For the last three seasons we have been looking forward to this number with eagerness. Since that day of November, 1914, when we first appeared, we have never looked back. This number marks a stage in our growth. We have spared no pains to make it a success, but the success of a magazine run solely by students is bound to be qualified in many respects. We hope our readers will bear this point in mind. As regards the general tone of our articles, we have to stress one fact: we are the organ of the students of a college who have inherited many rich traditions and hope to leave many more.

The first article in this number is a reprint of Principal James' *Introductory to Presidency College Magazine* contributed to our first number: it sets out the purposes with which we started. Next, our first editor describes the foundation of the Magazine. An article by Mr. Wordsworth on Mr. James then initiates a series of articles on our famous past Principals. Next we print the articles contributed by our Principals. Then comes a series of interesting reminiscences contributed by some distinguished ex-alumni. Next is printed a translation of Rabindranath's *Balaka*. Next there are two articles on education followed by a symposium on the Wardha Educational Scheme. Next we have printed the other articles trying as much as we can to arrange

articles on the same subject together. In a section on our contributors we have tried to show the intimate relationship existing between our contributors and the College. Finally, we have prepared a cumulative index for our issues during the past twenty-five years. The Bengali section opens with a poem by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore; then follows a discussion on Bengali literature during the last twenty-five years with a separate article on Bengali poetry. Some reminiscences of Sir J. C. Bose are then followed by the general articles. A report of the *Rabindra Parishad* and a cumulative index conclude the section.

Acknowledgements

We must express our deep gratitude to those of our famous ex-students who have responded so generously to our appeal. We thank in particular Mr. O. C. Gangoly for the brilliant frontispiece he has provided for us.

Before concluding we thank the members of the staff who were always ready to help us whenever we required assistance. We express in particular our gratitude to the Principal, Professor P. C. Ghosh, Professor H. K. Banerji and Professor S. C. Majumdar. Mr. Bimalchandra Sinha, our editor during the last session, has given us material help in performing our task, and Mr. Pratapchandra Sen, the last editor, did much of the spadework for this number: our best thanks to both of them. Finally, we express our deep indebtedness to Professor Taraknath Sen who, though no longer in the College, is never tired of helping the Magazine of which he was one of the ablest editors. We must not also forget to mention the sympathetic treatment we have all along received from our printer, Mr. K. C. Banerjee of The Modern Art Press.

Introductory

H. R. JAMES

IT is entirely in accordance with the fitness of things that Presidency College should have its magazine. I believe this to be the opinion not only of the large majority of present members of the college, but also of all who feel any interest in the college, whether through links of personal association, present or past, or merely from general interest in University education. Because I am convinced of this, I very willingly accede to the request of the editor to contribute to the first number a few words of introduction.

To some it may seem strange that such a magazine has not long been in existence. I do not, however, think time will be well employed in offering any apology or explanation for the fact that there is at present a void which the new magazine aspires to fill. The subject has from time to time been discussed in the college and a Presidency College Magazine was started at least once in recent years and ran a short course.

The reasons which make it desirable that we shall have a college magazine are practically those which have determined other colleges to have magazines, and they apply with special force in proportion as Presidency College may claim a high place among colleges. It is, I believe, in part out of consciousness of special responsibility that Presidency College has in this particular lagged behind other colleges: if some say culpably, I have no great quarrel with them. What I am very clear about is, that when Presidency College does have a magazine, it is incumbent on every member of the college to do what he can to make the Presidency College Magazine a success. We have hesitated—perhaps too long. We now take the decisive step of issuing our first number. We are under obligation to take care that our magazine is started on sound lines and is maintained permanently.

Nothing can better contribute to these two ends than a clear and accurate view of the functions which a college magazine has to fulfil. Rightly understood, a college magazine is an organ of the corporate life of the college. It is at once an expression of the common life and a quickener of its activities. It fulfils these functions better in proportion as it keeps 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. But inasmuch as a college is related to other colleges and to the University, a college magazine should, in the second place, find space for news from other colleges and keep its readers informed of matters of common interest in the University. This is its second natural function. A third is to foster literary and scientific interest by printing contributions from members of the college which reach a sufficiently high standard.

This third function is quite legitimate, but I place it a long way after the other two. Care must be taken that it is kept duly subordinate. Experience shows that there is a danger of the more proper functions of a college magazine falling into the background, and of literary contributions bulking too largely. However great the temptation, and to whatever cause it may be due, it is to be resisted, or a college magazine altogether misses its true function. This is to be the *college magazine*, an organ of college life. It is to treat of current events and interests, and the interests of the *college*. It requires no mean art, no slight effort, no slender stock of perseverance to attain these ends adequately.

If our college magazine fulfils its functions as I conceived them, it will do the following things. It will give us information valuable to us in our ordinary college life:—notice of events which concern the college as a whole or sections of it; the constitution of clubs, seminars, societies; accounts of meetings; changes in the routine of studies; information concerning scholarships and prizes; reports of matches; social news of all sorts; University news and general educational news. News must of course be kept within limits, and the limits are given precisely enough by bearing on the interests of college life.

In order that these functions may be discharged effectually, in other words, in order that the information may be useful, there are other conditions which must be fulfilled: (1) publication must be fairly frequent; (2) publication must be punctual. It is hoped to meet the first condition sufficiently by making publication monthly from July to November, omitting one month for the Puja Vacation, ordinarily, as this year, the month of October. The date of publication will ordinarily be the first Monday in the month. This year it is proposed to publish the first number in November. There will be six issues in the year—three from July to September, three from November to March.

The regularity of publication will depend on the energy and good management of the editor and committee, and this will require the assistance of a staff of correspondents: one for college societies, one

for the Eden Hindu Hostel, one for outside college news, one for University news. It is also hoped to find a correspondent among the members of the teaching staff.

It is proposed also to recognize the historic connection between the college and the Hindu and Hare Schools. A column will be kept for news from each of the two schools (so long as the schools have not their own school paper), and each school will be invited to appoint a correspondent.

Two very important considerations remain. Success is not attainable without the solid support of the college at large. In particular, the committee and correspondents must depend, to a large extent, on the active and intelligent co-operation of Secretaries of College Societies. The production of the magazine will also involve considerable expenditure. The financial problem has been met by a proposal emanating from the Magazine Committee and approved by the Students' Consultative Committee and by the Governing Body of the College, that a subscription shall be levied throughout the college from every student in the same way as the athletic subscription. The Governing Body have further agreed to supplement, if necessary, the revenue to be derived from this source.

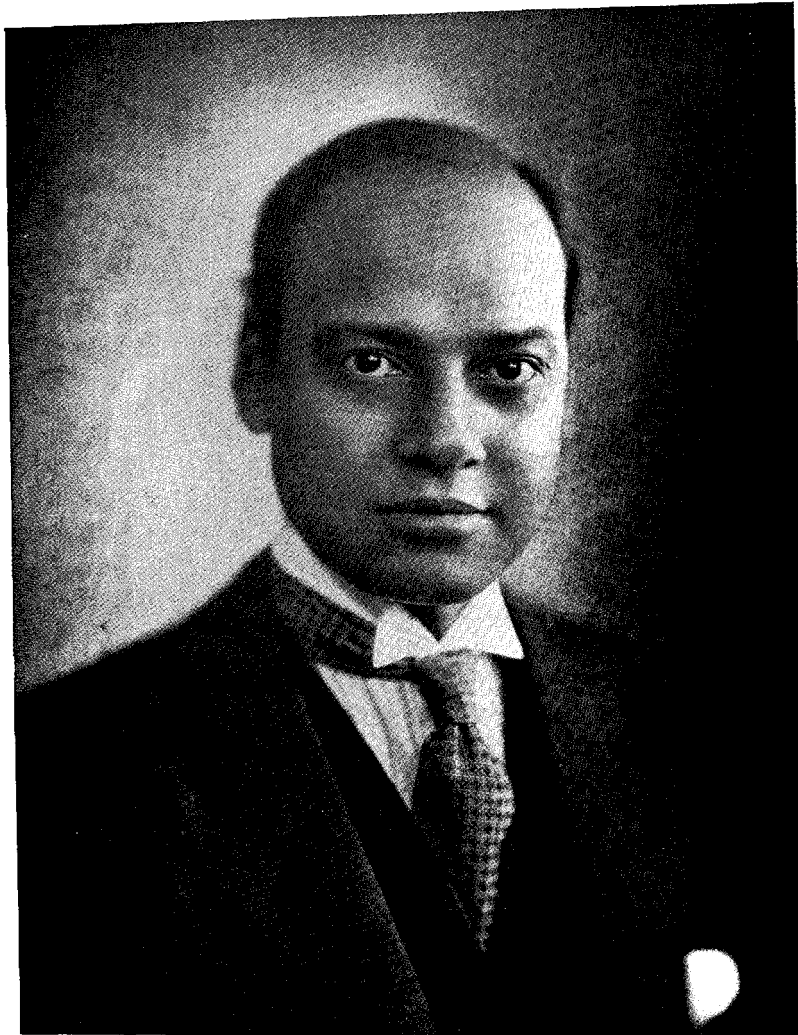
In conclusion, I ask on behalf of the Committee for an indulgent reception of this first number and for friendly support from all. We trust we have already the support of every present member of the college. We hope also for substantial support from past members who retain an affection for the college, and who may be glad to keep alive the associations by which they are bound to us.

THE FOUNDER



The Late Mr. H. R. James

THE FIRST EDITOR



Mr. P. N. Banerjee

Printed by
The Bengal Autotype Co., Cal.

Foundation of the Magazine

PRINCIPAL PRAMATHANATH BANERJEE

FEAR is often described as the parent of morality. All our lives we are afraid of some body or of some thing sometimes known sometimes absolutely unknown. I am always afraid of my pupils of whom the present editor of the Presidency College Magazine who has issued an inexorable *ukase* is one. He has commanded me to dig out of the burial places of my memory the story of the birth of the Presidency College Magazine. It saw the light of day a quarter of a century ago when I was a student of the sixth year class of the premier college of Bengal which, for good or for evil, has made me what I am to-day. The idea of starting a magazine for the College originated in August, 1914. I cannot pledge my oath at this distance of time and recall to memory whether the idea came to my fellow students on the 4th of August, 1914. 4th of August is a date written in world's history in characters of blood. Mr. H. R. James, whose hellenistic heritage all his pupils enjoy, was then the Principal of the College. Myself and my fellow student Mr. Jogesh Chandra Chakravorti, now Registrar of the Calcutta University, approached him with a request to accord permission to us to start a College magazine and stabilize it financially. Mr. James was a liberal of the Oxford school. He did not believe in the theory of patriotism through conscription, and therefore he was opposed to the idea of a compulsory subscription. Voluntary efforts in our country in those days could not have sufficient strength to sustain the magazine for any very great length of time. We, therefore, grew despondent.

One fine evening Principal James was going home on leave in September, 1914. Both of us went to see him off to bid him *bon voyage*. He was naturally very pleased to see his pupils. When the guard of the train blew his whistle we asked him whether he would change his mind and levy a compulsory contribution from the students of the College for the maintenance and upkeep of the magazine. Our Principal was then probably thinking of sweet home. In any event, whether in a moment of pleasurable excitement or through deliberation I cannot say, he nodded approval. The train steamed off. We came back to College, mightily pleased. When the Principal came back from his leave to join his post of duty we presented him a chartist petition

signed by a vast majority of the students of the College asking for an imposition of compulsory subscription. The magazine came into being, Principal James chose me as its first editor. Mr. Jogesh Chandra Chakravorti acted as the first general secretary.

In our days the student-editor enjoyed absolute freedom of action. The best article which appeared in the first issue of the magazine was the one, I recall to-day, from the pen of one of our old pupils—Mr. S. K. Haldar, a member of the Indian Civil Service. In a year of battles and sieges, Mr. Haldar chose as his subject the Sixteenth Decisive Battle of the World—“Arts vs. Science.” Mr. Haldar in the article in question quoted a resolution moved by Malthus that “the number of Artists was increasing frightfully in geometrical progression. Everyone who is worth anything is now producing volumes. It has become absolutely necessary to check this growing spirit of authorship.” Milton is supposed to have declared “that his sentence was for open war.” Even in those days Wordsworth (not Prof. Wordsworth) was supposed to have opposed the motion. The question was put to the vote, we read with bated breath, and carried with acclamation. Shakespeare is alleged to have said:

“Here we have war for war, blood for blood.

Controlment for controlment, so answer Science.”

Thereupon Ganot, a physicist, answered: “The temperature of both parties being constant the volume of the wild gas of your speech will vary inversely as the pressure we will exert upon it.” Mr. Haldar saw tumult then. Shakespeare shouted:

“Throw Physics to the dogs:

Avaunt and quit my sight, let the earth hide thee.”

Milton screamed: “Hence loathe melancholy science.” Dryden cried: “Revenge. Revenge.” He forgot his “all for love.” Gray no longer had his eyes on “pleasure at the prow,” and cried in the anguish of his soul:

“Ruin seize thee, ruthless thing.

Confusion on thy banners wait.”

I worked with Mr. Haldar a year ago on an irrigation committee. I do not know whether the sun-dried system to which he has been wedded has dried up his pungent humour. Possibly even he requires now adequate irrigational facilities.

Even in those days the need for a College Hall was felt keenly. The magazine asked for the expression of sympathy from all the old boys of the College for this noble object. Mr. James' plaintive appeal

and the Vice-Chancellor Dr. Devaprosad Sarvadhikary's contribution of 'One Rupee from a Sanyasi' as noted in the first issue of the magazine have not yet been able to open sesame. Whether Alibaba and his Forty Thieves will rule over the destinies of the proposed hall still living in imagination, future alone can show.

As editor I was faced with a great crisis. My Professor and Tutor Mr. E. F. Oaten who subsequently became Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, had, in course of his speech, called certain students of the Eden Hostel 'barbarians.' I knew my Professor well; he was deeply versed in classical lore and he used the expression 'barbarians' in the Greek sense of the term. He was however misunderstood. Our Eden Hostel correspondent strongly protested against the expression used by the Professor, in the columns of the College magazine. The correspondence was published under the authority of the editor. Mr. Oaten got very annoyed and went up to the Principal and asked for the deletion of the offending paragraph. He further demanded an apology from the correspondent. The veteran student-editor, following well-known journalistic etiquette, declined to disclose the name of the correspondent. He declined further to publish an apology. The Principal upheld the liberty of action on the part of the editor. He requested Mr. Oaten, if he chose, to insert a contradiction in the correspondence column. Mr. Oaten was very angry and did not follow the advice of the Principal, with disastrous consequences which overtook the Principal, the College and the Professor after I bade good-bye to it in July, 1915.

Mr. R. N. Gilchrist of the Indian Educational Service, now Labour Commissioner and Reforms Officer to the Government of Bengal, was nominated by the Principal to represent the tutorial staff on the Board of Editors of the Presidency College Magazine. His assistance and his guidance I shall never forget. In our days the College magazine acquired the reputation of being the best amongst all college magazines. This reputation it has maintained during the course of the last quarter of a century. A college magazine is an expression of not only the sentiments of the students of the college, their hopes, aspirations, fears and anxieties, but it crystallises and consolidates the free flow of opinion, a factor which is frequently misunderstood by the *patriarchate*. Principal James' words, in the inaugural note ushering in the College magazine to public view, uttered quarter of a century ago, might bear repetition: "Rightly understood, a college magazine is an organ of the corporate life of the college. It is at once an expression of the common life and a quickener of its activities. It fulfils these functions better in proportion as it keeps 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. But inasmuch as a college is related to other colleges and to the University, a college magazine should, in the second place, find space for news from other colleges and keep its readers informed of matters of common interest in the University. This is its second natural function. A third is to foster literary and scientific interest by printing contributions from members of the college which reach a sufficiently high standard."

In our days the magazine was not bilingual in character. The Bengali language was then just receiving a tardy and step-motherly recognition. Mr. James' sense of art or his lack of knowledge of the beauties of the Bengali language would not allow the magazine to bifurcate itself, and that is the main reason why the whole of the magazine was written in the English language.

Like all men and women who have passed the meridian of their lives, I wistfully cast my looks behind, and often in the stillness of night before slumber overtakes me, I live in my fancy the days of my youth. The Presidency College Magazine enjoys a snug niche in the caverns of my recollection. I wish the magazine years of utility, prosperity and joy.

Henry Rosher James

WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH

I FIRST heard of Mr. James at Madras, on my way out to join the Indian Education Service in Bengal. I knew few people in India, but in Madras, where my boat waited for two days, was Mr. Ferrand E. Corley, who had recently joined the staff of its Christian College. At Oxford, where Mr. Corley after a distinguished undergraduate career was a Fellow of St. John's College, he had been one of my tutors for Greats, in philosophy; with him for two years I had walked and drunk tea and discussed Plato and Aristotle and Bacon and Kant. Not that we were of the same college. It is common at Oxford to send men 'out' to tutors, and the Fellow of my own college who might otherwise have taken me in part of my philosophy was a Greats examiner and therefore properly handed his pupils over to others.

It was Mr. Corley who first spoke to me of Mr. James. He did not know him. I am not aware that they ever met. "You are in luck," he said, when I told him I was to work at Presidency College. "You'll come under James. He has done fine work at Patna, and is famous as far afield as this. That will be a good introduction to India."

I was in luck. A few days later I met Mr. James, and surprised him. For it was the end of January, the college year was coming to an end, no one had apprised him of my existence, and he was not aware that he was in need of another professor of philosophy. Such were the ways of education department. However, he gave me some light work to do by way of digging myself in to new conditions of life. And I have ever since been grateful that he made room for me in his time table. For those were the only months in which I taught philosophy in India, and in them I made the acquaintance of some senior students, distinguished men among them now, who have been friends ever since. New regulations and courses were in the air, new needs had to be provided for; Mr. James thought I had the qualifications to help in another department, so the beginning of the next session saw me a professor of political economy, with some history as an additional duty. Students and professor struggled together, with much dust and heat and not entirely without success, until Mr. J. C. Coyajee, a brilliant economist, came along to give his brilliance to that department. In due course I was taken away to Writers' Buildings, as Assistant Director to Mr. G.

W. Kuchler, who in his time had served the college finely. Then for a while I was Inspector of Schools for the Presidency Division, from which I was appointed to the College as Principal when Mr. James, finding himself intolerably treated, resigned prematurely.

I served under him for four years, and enjoyed his friendship for four more. After he left India I did not meet him again, and heard from him only once or twice, though I often heard of him from friends associated with him in England. So at this point I may say that I consider him to be the finest, the sincerest, the most thoughtful and considerate educationist I have ever met. To get acquainted with Bengal through Presidency College was a great privilege for a young Englishman. To get acquainted with it through Presidency College under the rule of a man like James was a blessing for which gratitude must always be inadequate. His example, his generosity in dealing with the problems that came up, his readiness always to make allowances and not to condemn if he could help it, his insistence that an educationist was a man following a calling and under obligation to give his best, of mind and spirit and body, to his pupils and not an official just doing as he was told, were inestimable training. There was nothing rough and ready in his judgments and actions. Every matter that came before him, however trivial, would receive anxious attention day after day. I have known him ponder for weeks over a student against whom action had been recommended by someone. But when he had made his decision no importunity would induce him to change it.

The explanation of all this was that he never thought of his students in the mass. Though in charge of over 1000 students, he never forgot that each was an individual, to be studied for himself, to be dealt with as an individual with his own mind and outlook and scale of values to be taken account of.

This was only one of many fine qualities. He was a scholar by instinct as well as achievement, and all who worked with him felt that through scholarship could be attained an inspiring glimpse of what was best in humanity. He was accessible, always ready to listen and advise and help. He was devoted to the welfare and good name of the college and students. He thought of these not as young men given to his care for four years, but as men whose whole life was entrusted to him for the making. He had a habit of asking himself and others: "What will be the effect of this, if I decide on it, twenty years hence?"

Life did not go easily with him. He was too fine an educationist, too much the idealist, to be happy in the conditions that prevailed. Secretariats, he would say, cannot in the nature of things be adequate

directors of education; they cannot read students' minds or think of their futures, yet they will not give due freedom of action to those in close touch with them who can. For this reason he was not loved by everyone who worked in the Secretariat. Some thought him an impatient idealist and an impracticable visionary. He was a visionary. That is, he always saw visions of what his students might become if they were so handled as to get the best out of them. But the prejudice among those who did not understand damaged him, kept him out of the Director's chair (where he would have been unlike any Director India has seen), and finally drove him out of India in disgraceful fashion. A piece of violent indiscipline, not unconnected with political excitement, had to be dealt with. Government without consulting him or the Governing Body, which was busy with the matter, ordered the College to be closed. Mr. James protested, hard; this was a matter for the Governing Body, by the constitution and by every principle of education. Government insisted, Mr. James persisted, he was accused by the Member in charge of education of being insulting, and he asked for permission to retire from the service of Government, before his years were done. A Governor who believed him in the right cynically allowed what he thought the wrong to prevail. Had Mr. James appealed to public passion in any manner (public opinion was on his side) things would have been awkward. But, being a scholar and humanist, he was an expert in conduct and went quietly, effacing himself, and so carrying off the victory. It was the worst piece of injustice in high places that I have come across. It was my painful duty to succeed him. He made it easy. "We needn't talk about this. I am sorry it has happened. So are you." We shook hands, and I never saw him again.

It was war time, public schools in England were depleted of their staffs, and one gladly snapped up Mr. James as sixth form classical master. Except for his own recreation he had not touched his Latin and Greek for twenty-five years. Yet, a friend of mine who was on the staff there with him has told me, he settled down to his new work as freshly, and with the same mastery, as if he were just down from the University. He was on terms with his boys at once; they recognized his scholarship, his idealism, his grace in doing things, his easy strength of discipline, his enjoyment of wit and humour. The man who had taught Shakespeare and Wordsworth and Burke in India found it no great change to teach Virgil and Homer and Thucydides in England. All were alike in being noble expressions of the human spirit. When the war was over and younger men were available for school teaching, Mr. James retired. But not into idleness. That he could not do. He

found occupation to his taste in producing editions of Latin and Greek authors, in writing a charming book on the debt the world owes to ancient Greece, and in sitting on an Oxford Committee to consider the relation of the University to the age. The gods play ball with us, said a Latin writer. On that committee sat also the man who was chiefly responsible for the sad end of Mr. James' career in India, and one of its most important sub-committees, to do with the relation of Oxford to the Empire, saw the two working amicably and indefatigably in the service of the University that brought them up.

Mr. James was a Queen's Scholar of Westminster, one of the oldest and most famous of England's public schools. It has an ancient connection with Christ Church, Oxford, and there he went with a 'Westminster Scholarship.' (A brother who became head master of Monmouth Grammar School, I believe, went through the same process). Westminster and Christ Church have given many good men to India. Mr. James was a classic, which means that after a general education he did Latin and Greek (with probably French and German) in his last years at school, and Classical Moderations (Latin and Greek, languages and literature) and Greats or Literæ Humaniores (the humane or refining studies), Latin, Greek, Roman and Greek history, ancient, mediæval and modern philosophy, at Oxford. Greats is a course from which men emerge with a variety of tastes and purposes. Mr. James was equipped to be not only a teacher of Latin and Greek or philosophy, but also a scholar in English. His fine and famous translation of Boethius is one indication of his interests. But the whole of his life's work shows the imprint of a fine training on a fine mind and nature. Elected a Junior Student (which means Fellow) by Christ Church after splendid successes in his examinations, he might have settled down to teaching at Oxford, in time to become Head of a college there. But he was induced to come to India instead, and Bengal profited. He always gave it his best, and it was a fine gift. If to his friends (he did not seek many) he was reserved and generally austere, that was due partly to his nature, which was deep rather than expansive, partly to his absorption in his work and students which left him little time or energy for relaxation in friendship. Life treated him hard, but he had compensations in himself, and perhaps when, broken by injustice, he left with a serene face the scene where he had served his generation so finely, he found some comfort in the reflection that he had never let down his standards and ideals to oblige anyone. I do not know. He never spoke his thoughts, or said one thing to the public that in amazement saw his career ruthlessly ended for no fault that it could find. But his work

HENRY ROSHER JAMES
W. C. WORDSWORTH

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endures, and thousands of men have been the better because for some years they were in close contact with him.

When off duty Mr. James could be as playful as a schoolboy. Games he was not particularly interested in, though he thought them good for young people and was often out to see the college teams at work. It distressed him that so few of his staff were interested in their students' activities outside the class room. He himself loved walking and simple living, in the hills, or in Europe. He often spoke of his delight in making tours of Greece on foot and with ancient classical Greek as his linguistic resource. A vacation was for him a rest through change of scene and activity. The conventional interests of 'Society' bored him stiff, whether in term time or on holiday.

Many of his innovations in college life and organization flourish to-day. He was always alert for improvements, to remove obstacles and get grit out of the wheels, so that students could get the full profit of their efforts. Conditions that waste any part of a student's time and energy are a crime, he would say. Always he strove to enrich his students' lives, to give them opportunities of developing all aspects of their personality. This magazine is one example. Under his inspiration it was established 25 years ago.

C. H. Tawney, C. I. E.

MR. Tawney was Senior Classic in his year (1864), but as he had weak lungs he was advised by his doctors to live in a warm climate. This brought him to India, as it did another "universal doctor," Professor Homersham Cox.

On coming to Calcutta, Mr. Tawney immediately set himself to learn the classical language of the land. How great a master of Sanskrit he became can be seen from his translations of *Katha-sarit-sagar*, *Uttar-Rama-charit* and (in verse) the *Centuries of Bhartrihari*.¹ His teacher was Pandit Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna and a fast friendship grew up between the two, so that Mr. Tawney used to address the great Mahamahopadhyay as "Mahesh," who in return called him by his Christian name.² When Mr. Tawney retired, his library was sold by auction, and I bought some of the Sanskrit classics and Scott's Poetical Works, with his pencil corrections and notes. Evidently the tropical languor had not always spared him, for the margins of his Scott were decorated with his pencil sketches of battle-axes, halberds, etc.

He spent all his service years in Calcutta and at the Presidency College. It was only on the eve of his retirement that he was for a short time (1893) promoted to be Officiating Director of Public Instruction, but "the appointment was not pucca." Bengal then lay under the sceptre of Sir Charles Elliot, who had made a rule that executive officers (among whom the D. P. I. ranked as one) must do at least 80 days' touring in the year. Considering Mr. Tawney's age at the time and his past life, it was a very great hardship for him to visit the mofussil, where the amenities of civilised life were almost unknown and transport was primitive. At last Mr. Tawney told his friends, "If the Governor proves savage, I shall retire"; and retire he did shortly after rising to the highest office in the Education Department.

It is said that Mr. Tawney was refused admission to the United Service Club, which was then reserved for the I. C. S. men and the

¹ One student of our class was Manas-ranjan. But as diacritical marks were not used, Mr. Tawney took the *s* to be a *visarga*, and in calling the rolls, made a *sandhi* and called out Mano-ranjan.

² The mischievous boys who had fathered upon the great Nyayaratna the classic expression "Give the door" (though he disavowed it in a printed declaration), used to say that Mr. Tawney in calling *Mahesh*, turned the *e* into an *i*!

military. So, he had to live at the Bengal Club, where the amenities were much poorer and the grounds less spacious. Mrs. Tawney was often absent at Home and hence the Club was her husband's Indian home. One evening an Indian gentleman called on Mr. Tawney at the Club and found him sitting at a corner window of its library reading in the fading day light. Oriental languor had not conquered the flower of Cambridge, though he took no exercise except walking, and outdoor games were unknown in the higher official world in that age.

For several years Mr. Tawney was Registrar of the Calcutta University in addition to being Principal of the Presidency College. Much of the routine work in the former office was done by the masterful Assistant Registrar, (Rai Bahadur) Troilokyanath Banerji, which made things easier for Mr. Tawney. He had, however, to attend the Syndicate and Senate meetings in person and also daily sign letters at the Senate House, in the small room at its north-eastern corner, which was then only one-storeyed. Mr. Tawney could be seen daily walking slowly along the footpath of College Street from the Senate House, by the Hare School, to the gate of the Presidency College, his bearer preceding him with a japanned despatch box.

All his love was for his College. The complaint made by Mr. H. R. James in his book on *Education and Statesmanship in Bengal*, that the Educational Service is the one branch most neglected by Government, is borne out by facts. Anybody and everybody was considered fit to be appointed an educational officer if he was a European Officer and had taken a degree (—in one case *not* taken) in the pre-historic past. When one such *sahib* was sent to the Presidency College, Mr. Tawney wrote back officially, "The Presidency College seems to have become an asylum for indigent Europeans. The latest addition to its staff is a gentleman who has failed even as an Indigo planter." The post of Professor of Science fell vacant at Dacca College, and in that age of the "vanishing Rupee" the Secretariat wanted to economise by appointing a low-paid demonstrator to the charge of that department. Mr. Tawney was then officiating as D. P. I. and his official reply to the suggestion was, "If Government wish to abolish the Science classes at the Dacca College, I can do so by a telegram. But I refuse to be a party to a fraud." Such a man cannot be confirmed as D. P. I. He actively supported Sir J. C. Bose and Mr. H. M. Percival, who were outside the charmed circle of sixteen-anna I. E. S. men.

His best beloved pupils, truly worthy of such affection, were "the Senior Ashu Babu" and P. K. Lahiri. The leaving certificate that he gave to the Senior Ashu Babu contained the classic expression, "I am

glad to see that the acorn which I planted in you has sprung into a mighty oak." This Ashu Babu was the winner of the Premchand Roychand Studentship (Rs. 10,000/- at that time) by examination, in the first year of its institution. He beat (Sir) Gurudas Banerji, who by offering a larger number of subjects had piled up a higher *gross* total of marks, but Ashutosh's papers showed superior *quality* and he won when the University followed the rule of the I. C. S. examination of deducting 30 per cent of the marks secured in every subject and—so we were told—of doubling every mark scored above 70 per cent. Mr. Tawney presided at the meeting held at the Metropolitan Institution to mourn for the premature death of P. K. Lahiri (1890), when a very fine elegy written by a Presidency College student was read, and the students of this College mustered as strongly as Lahiri's own pupils. Mr. Tawney's system of interpretation was exact and choice paraphrasing, and P. K. Lahiri had inherited this gift.

But, at least in his later days, Mr. Tawney never looked any of his students in the face. There was a standing joke among us on this fact, which took the form of an imaginary leaving certificate given by Mr. Tawney to one of his pupils. It ran thus: "So-an-so is passing out of the Presidency College. He has read for five years with me, but I do not know his face. It appears from the rolls that he has been a student here for five years and there is nothing known against his character."

Wisdom had decided that an M. A. Course composed entirely of literature would be too light for the highest honours of a University. Therefore our M. A. English Syllabus at Calcutta was "weighted" by the addition of Anglo-Saxon and English Philology (compulsory), as the corresponding course at Allahabad was by the addition of political philosophy (*viz.*, Mill, Maine and Fitz-James Stephen against democracy). Mr. Tawney always took the Anglo-Saxon class, knowing very well that Indian youths would naturally neglect it. The subject came twice a week for some months, till Skeat's *Anglo-Saxon Primer* (the text-book) was finished. The teaching consisted in Mr. Tawney calling upon the students in the order of their names to read and construe (in English) one paragraph of the extracts at the end, while he corrected their mistakes. He noted in the roll-book which students had done their tasks on a particular day, and on the next occasion started from the next name in the register. As will be imagined, quite one-third or even more of the students, *i.e.*, most of the doomed men for the day absented themselves from the Anglo-Saxon class, though attending regularly on "safer" days. Mr. Tawney, when calling up the due student by his

name from the register and finding him absent, used to remark caustically, "He has got the Anglo-Saxon fever. It is a quotidian,—a quotidian tertian. It comes every third day." (This was from Falstaff).

One day one of our friends did his translation without a mistake. This excited Mr. Tawney's suspicion; he took from the student's hand the copy of Skeat from which he was reading and found an interlinear translation of the whole in pencil! Without speaking one word, Mr. Tawney handed the book back to its owner. The student collapsed into his seat in equal silence. (We had to construe standing). In most cases Mr. Tawney's remark was "You are construing through a brick wall,"—because nobody would prepare this subject except during the holidays on the eve of the University examination.

This brings me to his method of teaching. He made it an invariable point to give us a minute description of the colour, form, etc. of every English flower that we came across in our poetry books, for he realised the absurdity of expecting Indian boys to enjoy the beauty of a flower which was a mere name to them. Our Sanskrit commentators do not realise this truth, hence they explain every flower as *pushpa-bishesha* indefinitely, as a *certain* flower.

The whole of Shakespeare and much of Milton and Chaucer too were constantly present in his memory and the aptest parallel passages came out of his lips without the least delay or effort. The whole of Villier's *Rehearsal* was done by him in the class in one day; he merely read the dialogues with the proper variation of tone and voice, (but no gesture), and the meaning became perfectly clear, without needing one word of commentary.

For Shakespeare's Historical Plays, he used Kreyssig's German commentary, which lay open before him; (he was a master of the Teutonic languages). And for anything relating to the late 18th century he consulted Massey's History of England,—Lecky being a later innovation that he did not care to read.

To a favourite Indian pupil (long before my time) who had asked him how to improve his style, he had given the advice, "Read Lamb, Landor and Ruskin." We cannot imagine more inimitable models for Indian writers. But Mr. Tawney was a purist in words. He repeatedly told us that *Le Contrat Sociale* should be rendered into English as *The Social Compact*, and not as *The Social Contract*, because the sense of the French word *contrat* differs from that of the English *contract*.

He was equally particular in his pronunciation: he always spoke of Crum/el (Cromwell), Moor (Sir Thomas More), Dro-ee-da (Drogheda),

and so on. One luckless student before us had explained "the Attic bird that sings darkling and in shadiest covert hid tunes her nocturnal note" as the bird sacred to the tutelary goddess of Athens. Mr. Tawney never forgot this howler. He used again and again to warn us, "The Attic bird is the nightingale and not the *owl*, as an unfortunate student of the Presidency College wrote."

His comparison of the *Skylark* of Shelley with that of Wordsworth was eminently sensible and went to the very root of the matter. He pointed out how the two poets were fundamentally contrasted in spirit in their interpretation of the bird's song; Wordsworth looking upon the bird as the type of the wise who soar but never roam, while to Shelley the bird is emblematic of those who can happily forget their earthly ties and duties and soar into a world of "escape."

The only personal reminiscence that he vouchsafed to us was when he described the process of snuffing a candle. He then told us how in English homes this task was thrown on small boys and how he used to hate it. But he was not without humour as we can see from the following anecdote told by Sir J. C. Bose. Our eminent scientist paid a visit to Mr. Tawney's suburban home in his retirement, accompanied by Lady Bose in a colourful Oriental *sari*. An English friend who was with them whispered to the gaping station-porters "*Bee-gum* of Hyderabad." (No member of that "Exalted" family had yet crossed the black waters). Mr. Tawney who had come to receive them smiled and said, "My landlady will now put her prices up, seeing that I keep such princely company"!

One day, at a meeting of the University Syndicate, some European teacher spoke scornfully of "helping these lame geese to cross" when an Indian Headmaster's letter was found to contain the word *anomaly* spelt with an *i* at the end. Mr. Tawney, as Registrar, quietly asked the Vice-Chancellor whether a certain letter which had been officially addressed to the University by the European Principal of the Sibpur Engineering College, should be printed in the proceedings as it was. It was found to contain gross mistakes of grammar! This silenced the objector.

But he could be strict, too. The Senior Professor of Sanskrit never read any student's exercise paper; the utmost that he did was to return them to the class after a month with a pencil tick mark on the cover, and even that tick mark was not always put. The bundles did not look like having been opened by him. So, the students at last began to write whatever they pleased and get their papers back without detection. After many months, the Professor, probably by a lapse of memory,

opened the first paper in the bundle. It contained a scathing commentary on the teaching of Sanskrit at the Presidency College naming names. The result was that next day Mr. Tawney marched into the class and asked, "Who is M. L. Advani"? The man from Sind had sinned. Mr. Advani, the over-eloquent pleader for the class, was immediately removed and sent down from College and University. He went to England, was called to the Bar, and rose high in the judicial service in Sind.

When Sir Charles Elliot gave a steamer party to College students, a deputation of us went to Mr. Tawney to ask how we should dress. His reply was, "Wear anything you please, but do not put the shirt outside." It was before the Boer War.

College sports were unknown then. Once a brain-wave passed over us and we started a P. C. Tennis Club. When the Secretary called on Mr. Tawney, he replied, "I don't mind subscribing, but will it last?" A prophetic saying; it did not last even two months, though ample subscriptions were received.

It was astonishing what a large amount of class teaching Mr. Tawney did in addition to his office duties and work at the University. These are the incidents about him that I remember in this my anec-

DOTAGE.

Some Memories of Dr. P. K. Ray

DR. NARESCHANDRA SEN-GUPTA

OF my many memories of the Presidency College at the end of the last century there are none over which I should like to dwell more than those of Dr. P. K. Ray. For I owe more to his teaching and even more to contact with him than to any other of the distinguished teachers of those days under whom I had the privilege to work.

Dr. P. K. Ray was not great as a social figure. Indeed I never knew till I had left College that he had a social side of his life. When I knew him socially, I found that his intellectuality, earnestness and sincerity brightened up his social contacts which had little of conventionality in them.

In College and out of it I knew him as a scholar, thinker, teacher and an enthusiast.

As a scholar, he had the quality, which is comparatively rare, of studying the work of any author, objectively, without being swayed by feeling on account of the opinions expressed by the author. This enabled him to get into the heart of every author he read and to understand him as well as he could be understood.

The result of this objectivity in studying philosophies was a rare capacity to expound, fully, fairly and without a bias, every school of philosophy, whether it was the atheism of Charvaka, the materialism of Democritus or Epicurus or the idealism of Kant or Hegel or the realism of Martineau or even the latest philosophies of Eucken or Bergson.

He had no patience with those who, for the sake of smashing an opponent, started with a misreading or misrepresentation of him. Even Martineau, whom he genuinely revered as his Guru and whose philosophy he mainly accepted, did not escape his criticism when he so misrepresented. Dealing with one such passage where Martineau dealt with Hegel's views, Dr. Ray told us straight off, "This is not at all a fair representation of Hegel."

As most people are apt to misrepresent and misunderstand opposing view-points, Dr. Ray always suspected second-hand sources. He asked us always to read the author himself and not to take his philosophy from another exponent. Where the original was not available,

and one had to take second-hand information, he was very reluctant to accept statements which were not creditable to the author of the philosophy expounded. Thus dealing with Charvaka's philosophy he warned us that in all probability Madhavacharyya's representation of that philosophy was a travesty of the real philosophy of Brihaspati and it is quite possible that there was a real materialistic philosophy which is not fairly represented in the rhetorical passages quoted by Madhavacharyya.

If there was a devout theist among philosophers it was Dr. P. K. Ray and yet he could study with penetration and expound with sympathy and understanding the most thorough-going materialism of, say, Haeckel.

It was not as if he belonged to a type of scholars who can be likened to a sponge, who could absorb everything, because they have no philosophy of their own. Dr. P. K. Ray, on the contrary, had a very definite philosophy of his own, a philosophy which he imbibed in youth at the feet of Martineau, but which years and years of most extensive and intensive study of philosophy only strengthened all the more. But his faith in his own philosophy did not make him bigoted. He maintained throughout his life the great catholicity of the genuine scholar who keeps all the doors of his mind open to all and judges theories on their absolute worth and not by prejudices.

As a teacher, the outstanding characteristic of Dr. Ray which made him so loved by the few but so little popular with the many, was that he did not believe in the prevailing idea of teaching in those days. The best teacher was usually expected to do everything for the pupils, so that the pupil had only to absorb the lectures to succeed. Dr. Ray hated that sort of work. Even in the Pass classes, he never solved all problems for the students nor read a book line by line to explain it. He gave lectures covering large portions of the subject which gave just enough knowledge in outline to enable the student to read for himself.

In the Honours and the M. A. classes his chief work, apart from introductory lectures, was to introduce his students to books and to encourage them to read them. He introduced the seminar method which is now so familiar, but which in those days was practically unknown in Calcutta colleges, except in Dr. P. K. Ray's classes.

And what a wide range of studies he made us go through, quite outside the curriculum! I myself read a good many books on physiology and biology, practically all important books on evolution from Darwin to Haeckel; I even had to pick up elements of geology. In philosophy proper, there was absolutely no limit to what he wanted us to read,

including such stiff things as Hegel's works and, worse still, expositions of Hegel by widely differing schools of thought, when all that the University syllabus expected us to know was a general exposition of Hegel's philosophy such as you find in Schwegler's *History of Philosophy*.

Talking of Hegel, I shall never forget Dr. Ray's lectures on Hegel's philosophy. I have never heard or read a more lucid or brilliant exposition of Hegel. He took as the text on which he lectured the very brief exposition by Schwegler. And Dr. P. K. Ray, who usually swept over the subject of whole volumes of books in one lecture, spent a whole hour in expounding five lines of Schwegler's exposition of Hegel. At this rate he went on from day to day till he had finished the Logic portion. After that he directed us to a whole library of Hegelian literature, the bulk of which he expected us to read—and at least two of us actually read a great deal of them.

He encouraged us to take up questions of philosophy and to write essays on them after reading up. Some subjects he set for us, which two or three of us studied under his guidance and on which we produced papers. But he expected us to do more work on the same lines. I took particular delight in doing so, with the result that I wrote a fairly large number of essays on philosophical subjects. Having always had a facile pen I enjoyed this work. I remember two most ambitious of these essays, the first was a materialistic solution of the fundamental problems of philosophy, which was mainly based on studies of Tyndall, Haeckel and of Lange's *History of Materialism*. The other was a less ambitious essay entitled "From Kant to Hegel."

With the last paper is associated an amusing episode which is now of melancholy interest to me. Mr. Lalit Chandra Guha who was my fellow-student whose recent death I mourn, used to come to my cubicle at the Hostel and we often compared notes of work. Apparently he apprehended that I was his only competitor for the first place in philosophy. He, therefore, pried on my work with an eagle eye. When he discovered these essays I had written, he ridiculed me for wasting so much labour writing all that and twitted me on my *cacoethes scribendi*.

A couple of months later when we were sitting on the last day of the M. A. degree examination, Lalit almost looked aghast when he read the question paper. That was the essay paper, and the most manageable of the three subjects out of which a choice was given to us was "the development of philosophy from Kant to Hegel." Poor Lalit thought that as I had already written a complete essay on this identical subject he had no chance against me. He, therefore, took another alternative with the result that he got badly beaten in the essay paper.

Dr. Ray had not ceased to teach after he ceased to be a teacher. As an Inspector of colleges he often taught the teachers of colleges he visited, at any rate his own old pupils. When I was teaching in the City College, I had to take up Economics in addition to some philosophy papers. That was the first year under the new regulations which introduced a new subject—General Philosophy—with an impossible syllabus and but little guidance in the matter of standard to be followed. Dr. Ray's help in suggesting books to form a basis for lectures was very welcome to me. He also asked me what I had read in Economics and when he heard that I had not read List, he gave me his own book to read.

In this and much else that I could recount for a long time, Dr. Ray showed what a great enthusiast he was in the matter of education. He never was satisfied himself with just doing his allotted routine work and he did not want his students to be so satisfied. He always sought to inspire his old students to pursue their studies to develop their capacities and kept digging at them as long as they were within his reach.

His enthusiasm was almost child-like and often led him to lengths which were deemed eccentric by most people. But, on this one question of education he would not let his enthusiasm be overpowered even by any sense of conventional proprieties.

Harrington Hugh Melville Percival

“ Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect ”

AS these verses were read out in a deep, mellow voice with a somewhat nasal twang, the eyes of us all in the class were automatically lifted from the book and fixed upon the man reading them, so closely did he seem to answer to the description. Indeed rectitude is the word that comes immediately, at the very mention of his name, to the mind of one, who knew Hugh Melville Percival, rectitude in physical as well as in moral bearing—a tall figure with never a stoop in his carriage, walking or sitting, an intellectual forehead with deep-set piercing eyes, a personality that seemed to live in a world of its own. His appeal to us was not merely through his unrivalled scholarship nor wholly through his rare ability as an inspiring lecturer, the value of whose lectures it would be presumption in me to praise. It was based mainly on his personality. He was an institution in himself.

Mr. Percival appeared to be so much above the common run of men that to exchange even half a dozen words with him in familiar talk was to us a daring, though coveted, adventure. Undemonstrative as he was by nature, his exterior was rather forbidding, and one never suspected that underneath that icy external reserve there was a warm current of kindly human feelings, which sprang up into sudden view on the day of his retirement from the College, when unique demonstrations were spontaneously evoked of the love that bound him to his pupils and his pupils to him.

A brief account of the happenings on that memorable day (April 12, 1911) may not be amiss. Mr. Percival took his classes as usual, finishing his work at one in the afternoon. He then went to say good-bye to Principal James. Coming out of the room, the first group of men he met was one composed of the clerks and of the menial servants of the College. He took his leave of them, and the servants specially were all visibly moved. He then walked up to the head of the staircase, where a solemn sight presented itself. The members of the teaching staff, with the exception of the European group, all stood

there; and he shook hands with and said good-bye to each. The staircase was lined on both sides by deep ranks of students of the first and second year classes, all standing in silence and in perfectly good order; and as the old master slowly descended down the narrow lane in the midst, his eyes glistening with tears, there was not one dry eye in that assembly. At every step he took, flowers were showered on him. Higher class students were waiting below, and when he came near them, one man came up to me and asked me to request him to consent to being photographed with them. On my communicating their desire, he replied with a catch in his throat, "Anything, anything, to please them." He was then taken to the inner quadrangle, which was then open ground, and photographed with the students. When he came back to enter his carriage, he found that the horses had been unyoked and the carriage gaily decorated with flowers. He was almost bodily lifted into it, and a team of students drew it all the way to his house in Park Street. Some two hundred students silently walked behind in that hot April sun. Arrived at the house, Mr. Percival attempted to make a speech, but broke down completely. "I have no family, and therefore I love you so much," was all he could say. Every student, Hindu and Mahomedan, came up and took the dust of his feet. He then charged me as his 'oldest pupil in the gathering' to take them back to the College, conducting them, he was careful to add, 'along the shady side of the street.' There was no formal meeting to bid him farewell in set speeches composed of conventional phrases. It was a farewell gathering the like of which was never seen, nor ever will be.

The softer side of his nature came more and more into evidence as time passed. As an instance of this gradual change in his outer bearing, I may be permitted to record a personal experience. In 1906, three years after leaving College, I had occasion to write him my first letter, and I was not surprised to get his reply couched in polite but extremely cold and formal language. He addressed me as "Sir" and ended his letter with "Yours faithfully, H. M. Percival." Three years later when I had the privilege of working in this college under him as Principal, his letters all began with "Dear Praphulla Ghosh" and ended with "Yours sincerely, H. M. Percival." His first letter to me from England a year and a half after his retirement, contained the more familiar "My dear Praphulla" and the usual "Yours sincerely." When we resumed our correspondence fourteen years later in 1926, "Yours sincerely" gave place to "Yours affectionately"; and shortly after, up to the last letter he wrote a month before his death (November 15, 1931), his communications all ended with the benediction "With *āshirvād*, Yours affectionately, H.-M. Percival". The stoically stiff

formality had all disappeared and the throbbing emotional side of his nature asserted itself.

In the first letter I received after fourteen years' silence, in 1926, he wrote: "It is years now since I last wrote to you or heard from you, but during all this time I have thought and thought often, as I now reckon up, of those I knew at the College, not with the same feeling for all without distinction, but with different degrees, but all degrees having some one thing in common—and that one common point is kindness, for time does, as it should, make us forget and remember, both on the *right* side. * * * You will readily believe what I have said above about my not having forgotten the College and those in it, but you will be taken aback a little to be told that I have often dreamt of them—as going to lecture, not finding my books, not finding my way to the lecture room, etc., etc. You may laugh at this—there is no harm if you do." Two months before death he wrote: "Twenty years more or less have gone since I saw my old pupils with the eyes of the body, but this length of time and these 7,000 miles of distance have not prevented my seeing them in my mind's eyes, whenever something brought to memory College days, and one or other of them; and this led from one to another and to others, and to the thoughts of the great bond that keeps together through long time and long distance, teacher who has done his best and pupils who feel that he has done so." In almost every letter he made anxious enquiries about my health and gave instructions for improving it, with the solicitude of a parent. Who ever thought in those earlier days, when he was here with us, that the old man had so much blood in him?

The same note on the bond that should keep together teacher and taught is struck in a letter he wrote in 1929 to Professor Taraknath Sen, who was then editor of the Presidency College Magazine. "I am an old student of the College—it is sixty years now since I entered it—", he wrote, "and I was a teacher in it for thirty-one years. These long years, as student and as teacher, were, when I look back, years of happiness to me; and since then during my retirement, their memory has been a reflected happiness. From the warmth with which you write of me and of my old, affectionate pupil, * * *, now your teacher, I like to think that your chosen subject, like his and mine, is English; but almost at once I see that I would be wrong in thinking that such a feeling can be due to such a cause, and no other; for the same feeling of affection, felt and returned, can exist, and does and should exist, between teacher and pupil, whose mental aptitudes and chosen subjects are different. For, is it not true that studies so different as those that strengthen the reason and those that purify the emotions have a

common basis? And is not that basis character? The older, the teacher, has a character formed; the younger, the pupil, comes to him to have a character formed: the one attracts, the other is attracted; and where there exists this *moral* magnetism, there is this affection called *forth*, between teacher and taught, however different their *intellectual* trends may be. This happy bond is not the surface bond that the same liking shared by both can firmly tie; but it is a deeper bond that draws mind itself to mind, and holds them firm and long together; and when thus held, to the younger mind in the corporate life of the College, the fulfilling of duty becomes a pleasure, its share in the upholding of peace and order warms into a glow, and puts into this corporate life a *soul*. Without this soul, corporate college life becomes a discipline, exact, cold, affectionless, such as exists in other forms of corporate life—army, factory, trade union—which under such discipline, may well continue to live, but under which *alone* college corporate life would lose its soul and die. . . . See that it does not so die." Noble words expressing a noble ideal!

While he was here in India, he cut himself off severely from all social attractions. A bachelor, he lived a rigidly secluded life. And nature had her vengeance in time. A pupil of mine, who visited him at London, told me that when he went to see him, he found him surrounded by little boys and girls of the locality whom he was helping in their studies. Mr. Muller, proprietor of the private hotel in London where he spent his life of retirement, also testified to his fondness for children. "He was very fond of our children", he wrote, "who seemed to give him much pleasure, and he would let them do anything, play with his books, and upset his whole room. We often were very cross with our children, but he never wanted us to punish them or to send them out of the room." On the pages of a *Variorum Hamlet*, owned by him, which is now in my possession, there are to be found pencil scribblings in a child's hand. With this family he lived all his time in England, and he once wrote to me about them: "The management of this house is with people with whom I stayed all these years, both having been small schoolgirls once, now married and getting on in life, with little ones who in turn are now my friends."

Here, as in England, he lived the simplest of lives. In his house at Calcutta, he kept only one servant, a Hindu factotum. Himself the plainest-dressed of men, he could never away with persons of flaunty manners. Nor did he change his mode of life when he removed to London. Mr. Muller wrote to me: "He would never buy any clothings for himself unless my mother-in-law asked him to do so, and more often she went and bought it for him, as he never wanted to

spend any money on himself. As long as anything could be mended, he thought it was good enough for him."

He was a friend of the poor. I knew of many students here whom he helped with monthly stipends, regularly sent to them by post precisely on the second day of the month. At London he made himself familiar with slum life, and went about doing good. A note in a memoranda book found among his papers after his death runs thus: "Peace to ragged ones in Gds. and Streets. Great many now to be met owing to schools being closed. Met both the tailor's and the cab-cleaner's families. The eldest girl of the former said their mother was going to give them new clothes for going to school in." Mr. Muller too bore testimony to his kind-heartedness in eloquent terms: "He was always such a kind, considerate and fair gentleman, never thinking of himself or studying his own personal comforts, but he was always thinking of the welfare of others and he always helped wherever he could. Whatever anybody who knew him wanted to know, or if they were in trouble, they always came to "Uncle Percival," as we called him; although at times my wife used to tell him not to be kind-hearted to some people who did not deserve his consideration, he would still help them, and overlook their faults."

Strictly correct in his dealings with men, Mr. Percival had a deep faith in God and in the life hereafter. Brought up as he was in a devoutly religious-minded family—his mother was a Roman Catholic and his father of the Protestant profession—it was a living faith in him, which he hinted at even in incidental remarks embedded in the notes to the texts he edited. It found expression in a touching letter he wrote two months before death, in reply to a letter of mine in which I had communicated to him the desire of many of his old pupils to erect a memorial to him. "I cannot but feel pleasure", he wrote, "—no vanity mixes with it—at what you say about the portrait and the intended memorial. But this pleasure I must keep to myself as a secret treasure; I must think of myself as dead to what is being done; and as the dead may see and hear from the next world what is said and done about them in this by those he has left behind in it, but cannot communicate with them, so must I be silent to you all for what you are saying and doing about me." No confession of a faith in the life to come could be more sincere.

Born at Chittagong (January 25, 1855), educated first in his native town, then at Dacca from where he passed the First Examination in Arts with a Senior Scholarship of the First Grade (1871), and afterwards at Presidency College, Calcutta (1872), previous to his departure

to England (1873) with a Gilchrist Scholarship, which he won at an open competitive examination, he was Indian to the core of his heart. "We Indians" was a phrase one constantly heard from him. "With all our English education", he wrote to me once, "we are still by nature Indian. The coolness of Western teaching cannot damp the warmth of Eastern impulse innate in us, easterners on this earth. And I hope it never will; it is a precious gift of nature, which in her wisdom that we cannot see into, she withheld from these westerners of higher latitudes, when she bestowed something else on them, that has made them the foremost among mankind in things material, but not foremost in things of another nature. Only there is a danger for us; only if *right* impulse is also *steady* impulse, it can make a better world than steady reason has succeeded in making."

On the 19th of January, 1880, after his return from England, he was appointed Professor of English at Presidency College, a post he held for thirty-one years, retiring from his duties on the 12th of April, 1911. He was appointed on the invidious terms on which Indians generally were in those days employed in the Education Department; and his pay never rose above two-thirds of the salary then enjoyed by people, on chromatic considerations, many of whom were not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes. It was but natural that he should have at one time keenly felt it. But he lived to rise above such vexations of spirit. In one of his letters he distantly referred to the disappointment he had once felt. "There was", he wrote, "a matter of mind—some deep sense of wrong or something of the kind—also concerned, but that feeling has passed away. I take a different and better view of things than I did in former years. I feel indifferent where once I felt aggrieved, above wishing for things where I once wished for them, cast aside ideals—I had them too—as misconceived, and tried to form others on a better understanding of the actual around me." In another letter of a somewhat more personal note, he wrote to me as follows: "You say you feel depression of mind. You do not specify and I do not wish you to specify. Without it I can understand your feeling, for I have felt it myself for many bygone years; but unlike you I feel it no longer. I trust you will live long enough to reach this happy ending of what was once a long-drawn unhappy struggle. For this change in me I account in this way: To do my work in the best way I could was in *my* power. To have that work recognised by others was in *their* power, not in *mine*. Therefore whether this recognition came or not was no business of *mine*. It cost me a long struggle to cease to care for that recognition. Some people set their hearts upon their work and also upon recognition of it—in

money, in titles, etc. Keep your heart set on your work, and drive out of your heart any wishing or wailing for its recognition, if on self-examination you find that that wish has entered it and rankled in it. It is a poison." St. Bernard's *Ama nesciri*, "Be content to be unknown," seems to have been the motto of his life.

Of his equipment for the post he held and of the distinction he brought to it, it is needless to speak at length. His scholarship was many-sided and deep. Literature was not his only love. He was, as *The Statesman* in an obituary note on him said, "a polymath, always ready to help out his colleagues and help students in history, philosophy and other interests." Eunapius calls Cassius Longinus, the preceptor of Porphyry and conjectural author of the treatise *On the Sublime*, "a living library and a walking museum." I remember the late Professor Manmohan Ghosh, another person whose connexion with Presidency College shed lustre on it, using similar language of Mr. Percival. Once Mr. Ghosh had referred to him a number of obscurely allusive passages in one of Lowell's books, and when on the following day Mr. Percival supplied him with the information asked for, Mr. Ghosh came up to me and said in his characteristic elegant way, "I have just turned over a leaf of that encyclopædia."

Up to the day of his retirement, he regularly took the highest classes in English literature, in History, in Political Philosophy and in Economics. And these lectures were most carefully prepared. The materials for them, specially in subjects like History, Political Philosophy and Economics, he gathered from original documents, of which there was a goodly collection in his library. Even when lecturing on Burke's American Speeches in our class, on which comprehensive notes are easily accessible to the student, he gave us valuable historical notes from Hansard, a source to which no other lecturer would ever have dreamt of going.

Rigidly methodical and regular in his habits, he could easily get through with an appalling amount of work. When he officiated as Principal of the College for nine months, he did not cut a single lecture from his routine of 18 hours' work as professor. He personally looked into the details of office work including accounts (there was no bursar in those days), would go round punctually at seven minutes past ten every day to see if others were at their work in the classes. His example and vigilance exercised a silent, wholesome influence on the working of the College as a whole.

The nature and amount of work he did as professor will appear from the following time-table of his lectures in the year of his retire-

ment, a glance at which will make the hardest-worked among us feel not a little humbled.

| | 11-12 | 12-1 | 1-2 | 2-3 |
|-----------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Monday | ... 4th yr. Hon. Eng. | 3rd yr. Eng. | 6th yr. Eng. | 5th yr. Eng. |
| Tuesday | ... 3rd yr. Hon. Eng. | 5th & 6th yrs. Pol. Econ. | 4th yr. Eng. | 6th yr. Eng. |
| Wednesday | ... 4th yr. Hon. Eng. | 3rd yr. Eng. | 6th yr. Eng. | 5th yr. Eng. |
| Thursday | ... 5th & 6th yrs. Pol. Phil. | 5th & 6th yrs. Hist. | 4th yr. Eng. | 5th yr. Pol. Phil. |
| Friday | ... 3rd & 4th yrs. Hon. Hist. | 5th & 6th yrs. Pol. Econ. | 4th yr. Eng. | 5th yr. Eng. |
| Saturday | ... | | 5th yr. Hist. | |

I cannot think of another man competent to teach such a variety of subjects to the highest classes and capable of lecturing four hours at a stretch from day to day at the advanced age of fifty-five. The mere physical effort would be killing, not to speak of the severe intellectual strain involved in delivering such lectures as he did.

One thing which could not escape the most casual observer of Mr. Percival's ways was his punctuality. Precisely to the stroke of the hour appointed for his work, would the familiar old phaeton draw up under the portico of the College, and the tall figure be seen mounting the steps. It was a daily affair. One might set one's watch by his movements. In this connexion I might relate an interesting incident. When, shortly before retirement, he made a gift of his library to the University of the Punjab, he asked me to accompany him on the appointed day (March 13, 1911) to the Court of the Registrar, Calcutta, to attest to his signature to the deed of gift. The hour fixed for appearance before the Registrar was three in the afternoon. That day was an examination day at the College, and we both finished our work at one. We drove to his house in Park Street, where he took his lunch. We then spent some time in leisurely talk, and on my asking him in the midst of our talk if we might not start for the Registrar's court, he looked at his watch and said, "No, we could afford to wait a little longer." After a few minutes he looked at his watch again and said, "Now let us go." We got into his carriage and drove to Charnock Place, where the Registrar's court then stood. We got down, walked into the enclosure, mounted the iron staircase, passed along a long corridor, stepped into the Registrar's room, and the clock on the

wall rang out three. I confess I felt an uncanny sensation creeping over me. Dr. Woolner, Registrar of the University of the Punjab, who was to receive the gift on behalf of his University, was not yet in. He was late by more than half an hour. When we were returning home, I could not help asking Mr. Percival how he could be so very exact in calculating the time. He smiled and said, "One could be punctual if only one wished to be so. I had gone home from College along this route yesterday and had carefully noted the time taken."

The library he thus gave away to the University of the Punjab was one of the richest of its kind. It was not very bulky, consisting of only 6500 volumes, of which the biggest sections were of History, Biography and Antiquities (2097 vols.) and of Economics, Law, Politics (1244 vols.). But some of its contents were rare and invaluable. Original documents like the Commons' and Lords' Committees' Reports, Reports and Papers on the affairs of the East India Company, Parliamentary Blue-Books on Indian affairs, the Rolls Series of the Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages (247 vols.), the Hakluyt Society Publications (112 vols.), Guizot's *Memoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France* (31 vols.), Petitot's *Memoires Historiques de France* (131 vols.), Ante-Nicene Christian Library (24 vols.), Sacred Books of the East (49 vols.), Cobbett's Parliamentary History (36 vols.), Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (three series, 1066-1836, 86 vols.), English Law Reports (88 vols.), Gazetteers of the different Indian Provinces were some of its treasures. There was also a large collection of travel literature (400 vols.), "Reading them amounted to travelling cheap in those countries", he once said to me.

The story of such a rich library going to the Punjab is interesting. Some time before retirement, he printed a catalogue of his books, and sent copies to the Indian Universities then in existence, asking them to inform him by a certain date if they wanted those books. He also sent a copy to his own College. Calcutta did not reply, Presidency College remained silent, Madras and Bombay thought that the library would be too costly, and mistaking the nature of the offer, politely declined it. The Punjab alone promptly replied, expressing its anxiety to possess the books, but pleaded the poverty of its funds. And the entire library went there as a *free gift*.

For an instance of the meticulous accuracy of his scholarship even in subjects like Indian History, which he built up by assiduous study in such a library, I may refer the inquisitive to his report on an essay on Sivaji submitted for the Griffiths Memorial Prize in 1907, which

reveals his intimate knowledge of all the authorities on the subject available at the time (*vide* Minutes of the Syndicate, Cal. Univ., Jan. 28, 1909). His notes on Samson Agonistes, on Faerie Queene I, written before the days of O. E. D., testify to his wide, first-hand knowledge of ancient and mediæval literature, both on the literary and on the linguistic side. His special evening lectures on Indian Economics (1905), delivered at a time when there was no easy digest on the subject available to the student, were attended by men like Sir Gurudas Banerji. In his student days, he graduated with high Honours in Classics and in French at London, attended the Senior Greek Classes under Professor Blackie and the Latin Classes "for advanced students" under Professor Sellar at Edinburgh as a 'preparation for the M. A. in Classics at London', which he passed creditably in 1879, taking the second place next to the Gold Medal. He also attended classes in English Literature under Henry Morley and in Philosophy under Croom Robertson at London. In addition, he attended at Edinburgh full courses of lectures in Zoology, Geology and Botany, as 'a relaxation from his regular work', and obtained a "Certificate of Merit" from the Faculty of Medicine at that University for having passed an examination in these scientific subjects with more than 60% of the total marks.

In his lectures to his classes, however, he avoided all show of scholarship, never dabbled in -isms and -ities, those labels, which, as has been well said, are easy "devices for saving talkative persons the trouble of thinking". His incisive comments were pithy and rich in suggestiveness. They often demanded alertness of mind on the part of his listeners. Once while taking a junior class through Wordsworth's Sonnet Composed upon Westminster Bridge, he came to the passage, "The City now doth, like a garment, wear The beauty of the morning", and, quickly adding "which she will presently put off for the working dress of smoke", passed on to the next verses. The following marginal note he wrote against the title of the first section, "The Uses of Great Men", in his copy of Emerson's Representative Men (a book he kindly gave me before leaving India): "Emerson *will* not say 'Worship,' he *will* not say 'Heroes', at least in the title, but (or *because*) Carlyle says 'Hero-Worship'. Emerson's Repr. Men (1849) is an echo (or challenge) across the Atlantic to Carlyle's Hero-Worship (1840). While to the English Humanist the Concrete Man—the Hero—is Everything, to the American Democrat the Man—the Hero—is Nothing, but the Idea he represents is Everything". His comment on the word "Descend" in Shelley's "For he is gone where all things wise and fair Descend" was "Shelley does not say 'Ascend.' " - To keep pace with him in all such

quick, thought-provoking side-hints meant for his students an intellectual exercise the value of which cannot be over-estimated.

And what shall I say of his interpretation of poetry and specially of Shakespeare? It revealed to us a new world of beauty and thought into which the profane herd of critics were never allowed to intrude. He did not much care to know what other people thought about his favourite writer. In 1926 I sent him three well-known books on Shakespeare, including Bradley's justly popular lectures. He wrote back saying: "I had seen none of these before, and was uneasy whether they might not upset me and my notions. They have not done so." One of these books he facetiously characterised as "the product of a grasshopper mind." "It hops without reason or rhyme, and neither reason nor rhyme nor common sense of common men can guess whither, how far, how high the next hop will be. It hops out of the subject, takes many hops before it returns to the subject and then hops out of it again." On Croce's chapter on Shakespeare, he remarked: "Croce I cannot be hard upon, for one reason, but a reason that is all sufficient: it is this—he says that Shakespeare is to be judged by our emotions; and one who tries to judge him so, has a claim to indulgence for any faults. His biggest fault is that he forgets his own standard and becomes metaphysical now and then (he is a Hegelian). But so is Bradley now and then, without rising to any height that Croce reaches. Bradley is painstaking, has read Shakespeare carefully, draws his conclusions conscientiously; but what he so draws and states might have been stated more effectively in one-fourth of the space he takes up. He does not understand the minor characters in *Macbeth* and he misunderstands the scene between Macduff and Macolm. I see he uses those crutches, the Tests, (down to decimals on the subject of 'stopped' and 'unstopped' I think)—crutches that people who can walk reverently on their own two legs behind Shakespeare, should disdain to use."

On actors of Shakespeare's plays he was not very enthusiastic either. He wrote to me in 1912: "You ask me if I go to see Shakespeare plays acted in the theatres here. I went to two plays, R. and J. and *Macbeth*. It would be unkind and unjust to run down the acting because it did not come up to my expectations. But the fact remains that your and my expectations are those of *students* of Shakespeare characters and of human nature, while the performances on the stage are those of *actors*. And students and actors of Shakespeare often differ in their interpretation of the meaning. I was deeply disappointed—this is all that I can allow myself to say—and have not been to a

theatre ever since." Once again discussing with me the merits of a recently published book on Shakespeare by a well-known actor-critic, he wrote: "Do you think this is a sweeping conclusion?—Don't believe the criticisms of theatre-people about Shakespeare. You and I are Shakespeare readers and feel; they are Shakespeare actors and make-believe to feel."

The best commentary on Shakespeare was according to him the reader's own personal experience of life. Writing in 1926, when I proposed to him the editing of some plays of the dramatist, he said: "All these years of silence, I have not read much of Shakespeare, but much of other subjects, wholly unconnected with him; but one result has been, so I fancy, to make me grow older in mind; and this growth has enabled me to understand him better, so too, again, I fancy." This statement reminds one of what Huxley once said: "No man ever understands Shakespeare until he is old, though the youngest may admire him, the reason being that he satisfies the artistic instincts of the youngest and harmonises with the ripest and richest experience of the oldest."

There was one remarkable thing about my old master. He was ever ready to change his opinions, if on maturer consideration he found them untenable. He was never shy of owning himself in the wrong. While editing Shakespeare for a proposed series which he himself named 'The India Shakespeare'—editions which he tenderly called "my last lectures to invisible classes, and to the memory of those visible classes, whose faces I could see when I talked to them"—he was always revising his draft notes. "It is an old thing about me", he wrote, "that I can improve on revision. After a thing has left my hands I have ever felt sorry that I let it go in that state and felt that I could improve it, if I took it in hand again." Some time after he had sent me his draft notes on *Hamlet*, he wrote: "The Hamlet Ms. is the weakest of all those you have had from me and needs a thorough overhauling." Speaking of his lectures in the past to his old Shakespeare classes, he was not slow to confess that he had "often overlooked and misunderstood things, which was a very great matter." "I entirely mistook till now," he wrote in 1926, "the character of Malcolm; you see how essential that is. Another: 'the dismal treatise' (*Mac.* V. iv. 12) puzzled me all these years, and the true meaning flashed on me—that is the word—not until I was actually writing the draft notes. In J. C. Casca's talk about the points of the compass I mistook entirely in past years, and the true meaning came to me, not when I had racked myself over it, but suddenly again. * * * If you ever attended the class when I did *Lear* in it, you may remember

that I passed over things in the Fool's songs and in the mad scenes in the farm house and at Dover. I did *not* understand them then: I do now."

Notwithstanding the severe gravity of his outward demeanour, his sense of humour was of the keenest. His quiet comments on humorous passages, sometimes only a sly look, made them highly enjoyable. Those who had the good fortune of reading Lamb with him will readily assent to it. Lamb is one of the most difficult writers to handle in a class lecture. What Lamb says of Milton and Shakespeare is eminently true of himself. More than one person listening to your reading of Lamb, and "it degenerates into an audience." But Mr. Percival "always felt at home in lecturing on Lamb", as he himself said. While seeing his edition of *The Tempest* through the press, I doubted the propriety of his use of the word 'moral' in connexion with Ariel and asked him if 'immortal' would not be more appropriate. The humour of his reply was crushing: "The word is 'mortal,' *not* 'immortal.' Could you bear to think of Ariel in advanced immortality, going about in a venerable beard, sweeping the air (we cannot say 'ground') upon errands a future Prospero might send him on, or upon quests of his own fairy pleasures—a hoary old Briddhānanda Mohan? No, you could not. But you would like to think of him as leading a supernatural butterfly-life, and a venerable old butterfly, whether fairy or lepidopterous, revolts us." The reminiscences of his early life, which he wrote and sent me at my earnest request, are replete with humour. I cannot resist the temptation of quoting one or two passages. Here is an account of his migration to Presidency College after passing the First Examination in Arts from Dacca in 1872: "I left the (Dacca) College for the Presidency College 3rd year class, which and the 4th year were then held in the building afterwards occupied by the Albert College. I was less fortunate in my reception in the classroom by the Calcutta-ites than I had been with the Dacca-ites. The Calcutta boys were well-bred, gentlemanly every way, not even excepting one—their privilege, their prerogative, was to occupy the front benches, nearest the chair. This they enforced in the following ingenious way: Three or four of us provincial boys one day conspired to come early and to occupy seats in a front bench, hitherto occupied by Calcutta boys. Here there was a flagrant invasion of rights by boys, who had hitherto been quite well treated, as long as they knew and kept their proper places, but the Bāngāls from Dacca and worse, the Bāngāls of Bāngāls from Chittagong (Chātgayas, Ram! Ram!), had forgotten themselves and they must be reminded. So one Calcutta-ite pushed himself in like a wedge between two Ch.-ites, and so pushed out one man at the end of the bench.

Another C.-ite wedge inserted itself between two Ch.-ites, and another bench-ender was pushed out. And so on it went, till all the intruders had been pushed out, without a single Bāngāl or Bāngal of Bāngāls being touched. Could firmness tempered by politeness go further? This pushing out of us, Mofussilites, from the first benches was done in a perfectly dispassionate way. An abstract problem of elimination in Algebra or one of displacement in Hydrostatics would not, and could not, have called forth more passion than this 'putting out of the threshold' (Lat. *limen*) did.' Of the staff of the College in those days there are delightful sketches. "Mr. Sutcliffe was Principal then, and was known as the 'Head Duftry' of the College, because of his unremitting attention to office work in every detail, and in his hands the head duftryship became the most efficient Principalship. But what appealed to me was not efficiency of this kind, but efficiency in lecturing; and before I joined College, I had formed an ideal of the *personality* of such a lecturer, that I looked forward to realization in that of Mr. Tawney. My ideal was that of a being more than mortal, ever sitting like a demigod in a chair, and ever lecturing, ever superior to mortal ills and wants. How was this silly ideal broken by the reality! Mr. Tawney, a small, grey-headed gentleman with a forward stoop! Mr. Tawney, who was once a consumptive, and was saved by going to Madeira and then by coming out to the climate of India! . . . Mr. Croft, as he then was, took our Philosophy. Handsome, Byronic, he looked to effect. Other Professors came round from their room and entered the classroom by one of its doors, and in so doing, had to stoop under the punkha rope. Mr. Croft would not pass under that rope for anything, but he made Bukhtwar throw open the folding doors between the two rooms, which that sardar and his assistant used to do with grand effect—with something like the flash of lightning and the peal of thunder—and Mr. Croft would enter, erect, stately. The very peons and durwans pronounced his name as "Kurrapat Saheb," to give it all the importance of a polysyllable, while they made Mr. Tawney's name small by changing it to "Toonee Saheb" from some association in their minds with that very smallest of small birds." Here is a reminiscence of his earlier days at the Chittagong High School: "At the Annual Examination of the 4th class, a Mahomedan gentleman, Deputy Magistrate, was honorary examiner. With graceful tact he asked Pandit Mahasay to be seated next him, as advisory member, and gave him the mark-sheet to make entries in. I went up, read very well out of the Rijupath; how I explained, I forget. Pandit: (doubtfully) '*Debo nāki*'? Examiner: (emphatically) '*Den moshāy,*' and I got very high marks for good parrot-like reading and for youthful

looks. Class friends, who had a better measure of my Sanskrit, chaffed me on my good luck. Ramkumar mockingly told me (*too-ing* me, as Coke thou-ed Raleigh) "You got marks for *tor tel-kājolā mukh*."

Nature had denied Mr. Percival one gift. He was not an effective reader. Never did he read out a whole passage of good poetry or prose; he only punctuated it all through with his brilliant, epigrammatic comments. He was no elocutionist. In this respect Mr. James was superb. Mr. Manmohan Ghosh *too* had a musical voice which made his reading of verse enjoyable. It was a poet reading poetry. Yet Mr. Percival had a good ear, and his occasional scansion of verses showed his sensitiveness to their rhythmic effects. All this was to be expected, as his chief recreation was music. He had an organ on which he regularly played every day. His library contained a good collection of the sonatas, operas, symphonies, oratorios of masters like Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Handel, Cherubini, Chopin, Rossini. Beethoven was his special favourite. "He is the very Shakespeare of music," he told me once. After retirement he regularly indulged in his favourite hobby. His London landlord wrote to me after his death: "When indoors, he would do some writing, or read a book, and play his organ for about an hour or longer." He was also a regular concert-goer. On a torn envelope found among his papers there is a characteristic note in his hand in blue pencil (he was paper-sparing like Alexander Pope): "Attended no concerts during the War, August, 1914 to December, 1918." That was the man.

He had a passion also for collecting reproductions of paintings by old masters and of other works of art. These representing almost every school of European art and quite a number representing some schools of mediæval Indian art fill twenty-eight thick albums. A passionate lover of poetry, he was a lover of whatever was Good, of whatever was Beautiful.

I cannot better end this tribute to the memory of my master than by quoting the testimony borne to his character by a simple business-man like his London lodging-house-keeper, who had an opportunity of observing his ways at close quarters for several years: "We believe that it would be very hard to find a better or a fairer or a more self-sacrificing man in this world, and I am sure whoever knew him for some time personally must think the same and be proud to have known or been associated with such a great man."

A Trip to Kenya

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

I congratulate the *Presidency College Magazine* on attaining its Silver Jubilee, and I hope your special number will be a success. As to your request for an article, I fear I am too much out of touch with Indian education to attempt anything serious. Possibly a rather discursive letter about a trip I took this summer with my daughter to Kenya may interest a few of your readers.

It was the first time I had been out of Europe since I left India eight years ago. I am somewhat of Dr. Johnson's mind regarding life on board ship. If I remember, he compared it unfavourably with life in jail; though it is true he had never been on board a modern liner, or even in jail. But though a modern liner is comfortable enough, the inability to get away for a single minute from one's floating home and one's fellow-passengers is to me a perpetual source of tedium and irritation. Still, it was pleasant to see again the marvellous blue of the Mediterranean, that historic sea; and interesting to watch again, as I watched with excitement for the first time a generation ago, the strange beings who coal ship at Port Said, looking as if they had just emerged from the lower regions; and to recognize the stark lines of the rocks of Aden, surely one of the grimmest-looking places on earth.

What an amazing medley of blood there must be along the shores of the Red Sea, with Africa on one side and Asia on the other, and a long, long history of slave-raids in the background.

So far it was all familiar: but after passing Guardafui we had now to turn South and 'cross the line.' It was the beginning of July; and, strange to say, when we crossed the line it was rather a chilly morning. I had wondered whether there would be any of the traditional buffoonery, with Father Neptune and his attendants rising from the waves and subjecting to the ordeal of the bucket and the shaving-brush those who were indiscreet enough to admit that they had never crossed the line before; but nothing of the kind took place. I was told, though I cannot vouch for it, that some years ago an unfortunate novice, who presumably suffered from a weak heart, was so roughly handled that the shock was too much for him: so Father Neptune has retired from business, at any rate where passenger-liners are concerned.

Mombasa, where one disembarks for Kenya, is a pretty place, with a typically tropical appearance; by which I mean chiefly that there are large numbers of plam-trees about. There is a pinkish-looking fort, made of coral, which has an interesting story. It was built centuries ago by the Portuguese, that little nation which produced so stout a breed of navigators, and once, on the strength of an edict of the Pope, claimed half the globe. (Is there any single episode which sheds so vivid a light on the influence the Papacy once exercised in Europe?) A Portuguese garrison was besieged in this fort for months by the Arabs. It held out till it was at the last gasp, and then surrendered; and a Portuguese squadron which had been sent to relieve it arrived a day too late.

A night's journey in the train, with a climb of several thousand feet, brings one to Nairobi, the capital of Kenya: a pleasant, rather pioneerish-looking town, with many fine buildings, and some rather ramshackle ones, standing side by side. Kenya is what journalists call 'a paradise for sportsmen,' which means that large numbers and many varieties of animals are to be found here: elephant, lion, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, giraffe, zebra and many kinds of buck, large and small. Lions are said to be numerous, though I did not have the luck to see one; and the mildest-mannered men will tell you stories, which may even be true, of their adventures. One man, for example, told me how he was driving home one night in the dark when his engine gave out, and he had to sit in the car for three-quarters of an hour while a pride of seven lions sniffed round the windows and the bonnet. (By the way, for those interested in words, *pride* has a curious history. In mediæval England, when hunting was a passion, and the Art of Venery was practised with great ceremony, every beast and bird of which huntsmen condescended to take any notice had its own appropriate 'noun of multitude.' Comparatively few of them have survived in modern speech. The correct term for a group of lions was a 'pride' of lions. I should imagine (though I have not a large enough dictionary to tell me) that this term must have been obsolete for centuries. The Kenya settlers have revived it; and you may now hear 'a pride of lions' spoken of any day, quite casually and without affectation.)

I saw a number of interesting birds. I had never seen pelicans before, except in the Zoo and in St. James's Park in London. These have presumably had their wings clipped and look merely grotesque; but I was delighted to find that pelicans are strong and graceful fliers and take off very easily from the water. We saw three pelicans, by the way, with many other water-birds, on a large lake on which several of us had gone out in a rowing-boat, at the suggestion of our hostess,

'to look for hippo' (hippopotamus). It occurred to me to wonder what would happen if the hippo took it into their heads to look for us; but as a mere visitor to the country I did not think it my business to raise any objection. However, we did not see any hippo, nor did any hippo see us.

The Secretary Bird, a large long-legged creature with a white plume, supposed to resemble a quill-pen, striking out from the back of its head, is not I think found in India. It carries on an unending war with snakes, and is protected by law in consequence. It is said to dance about on its long legs trampling on the snake till the latter has lost its power to strike; and then to carry it to a height and let it drop. It would have been fascinating to watch this operation, but though I saw several Secretary Birds strutting about, I did not see any of them find a snake.

The smaller birds seemed to me on the whole markedly less striking and attractive in colour than Indian birds. An honourable exception, however, is a beautiful little bright blue bird, the African starling.

A thing that puzzled me a good deal was the absence of vultures. Go into the *mofussil* in Bengal any day and you will hardly fail to see vultures circling overhead; and personally I think the sight of these great soaring birds, with their effortless flight, one of the most fascinating that nature has to offer. People who hastily dismiss vultures as 'hideous' and 'revolting' forget that there is a beauty of motion as well as of colour and form. One would have thought that in a huge country swarming with game of every kind there must be plenty of scope for vultures; but during the weeks I spent in Kenya I do not think I saw a single one, and only two or three kites. Perhaps the jackals and hyenas leave them nothing to eat.

Much the most remarkable sight I saw in the way of birds was the flamingoes on Lake Naivasha. There must have been scores, perhaps hundreds of thousands of these delicately-coloured birds; so that from a distance the surface and shores of the great lake looked as if they were covered with a pink wash.

I imagine that a geologist could hardly find a more interesting part of the world to visit than Kenya. The place abounds with the craters of extinct volcanoes. One of these, among the largest in the world is, I believe, eight miles across. To stand on the edge and look down on the immense floor of the crater, covered with forest trees that look like bushes, is an impressive experience. But Kenya's prize exhibit, from the geologist's point of view, is the Great Rift Valley.

It was the late Professor Gregory, the famous geologist (who incidentally visited Calcutta, a good many years ago now, as a member of the University Commission), who gave it this name and was the first to recognize its true character. It is a huge trough bounded on each side by a steep rocky escarpment; and according to Gregory, as I understand, it is part of a surface-crack which extends southwards through Lake Nyasa and northwards through the Red Sea into Palestine. Anyone who takes even an amateurish pleasure in geology will find Gregory's book *The Great Rift Valley* of interest.

The Equator runs across the slopes of Mount Kenya, and I believe occasional snowfalls occur on it at that point. I was told a story of a much-travelled man who tried to impress a lady he met on board ship by telling her that this was the twentieth time he had crossed the Equator. She replied that she had no idea how many times she had crossed the Equator, as it ran through the middle of her kitchen.

Having had enough of the sea, I decided to go from Nairobi to Cairo by air. I had made several flights before, but this was much the longest I had ever attempted. It was to take roughly two and a half flying days, say 19 or 20 hours actual flying. Imperial Airways find it convenient to use sea-planes for the route between South Africa and England; and as there is no water at Nairobi for these planes to come down on—to 'land' on, as the pilots say—they go from Mombasa on the coast to Kisumu at the northern end of the Victoria Nyanza. (Nyanza by the way merely means water or lake). Accordingly one has to go from Nairobi to Kisumu by a small feeder-plane. This was a pleasant journey, as we flew over the Great Rift Valley and much prettily-wooded country.

An advantage of air-travel, which will presumably disappear as the number of travellers increases, is that one is treated with the utmost individual attention and politeness, as though one were a temporary duke or rajah. There is no scrambling for places, jostling with one's fellow-passengers, or shouting for porters. (As a matter of fact the amount of luggage one is allowed is so small that porters are unnecessary). Nor is one bothered with constant payments for taxis and meals, or with the choice of hotels at stopping-places. All that is done for one and included in a comprehensive charge. This is very agreeable, though it does not affect my opinion that the invention of the petrol-engine is one of the greatest curses that ever befell mankind.

Flying, though it saves an immense amount of time and trouble (and is proportionately expensive), is something of a disappointment to those who may have hoped for thrills. Except when the machine rocks

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or bumps or drops in a 'pocket,' which is not too pleasant, one has no sensation of flight: after all, one is merely a piece of luggage in a box. And, except when it is taking off and landing, one has no sensation of speed. Thousands of feet up in the air there is nothing to catch the eye and enable it to measure one's rate of progress—no houses or trees or telegraph-poles. One thing flying does give, and much more effectively than any mountain-top—a bird's eye view. It is a familiar phrase—so familiar that one hardly thinks of its literal meaning. Well, here you have it literally: not the viewpoint of a creature bound to earth and looking along the ground, but of one poised aloft and scanning the wide expanse beneath.

On arriving after a couple of 'hops,' (Kisumu to Khartoum, Khartoum to Cairo), I casually took up a paper in my hotel and saw that there had been a bad accident at Kisumu the day after we left. A plane had crashed into a hill-side, and all six men on board had been killed. It was not a passenger-plane, and I understand the unfortunate pilot had taken a risk, forbidden by the regulations, which he would not have taken had he been carrying passengers.

Cairo at the end of July seemed at least as hot as Calcutta, and I noticed, as I had noticed at Mombasa, that Africa seems hardly to have discovered the electric fan. One small fan about 16 inches in diameter in the dining-room of a large hotel, and not a single fan in any other room, seemed an inadequate allowance.

I was only able to stay two full days in Cairo, and could not therefore see very much. The Egyptian Museum, a vast building, is to archaeologists one of the most interesting places in the world; but one must have a good foundation of knowledge and plenty of time to get much pleasure or profit out of it. It was intensely hot and airless; and having duly inspected and admired the treasures from Tutankhamen's tomb, I became a prey to that feeling of sick fatigue which museums are too apt to induce. There is only one sensible way to visit a large museum: to go with a definite object, see what you have come to see, and go away again.

Next day I drove out to see the Great Pyramid, the Sphinx, and the Temple of the Sphinx. The Pyramid, built of enormous limestone blocks, is undeniably impressive, though the conception is surely rather crude. It is merely an elaboration of the heap of stones piled over a dead man to keep away the jackals. I think Macaulay remarks somewhere that architecture is the one art in which mere size is of first-rate importance; for what, he goes on to ask, could be meaner than a pyramid twenty feet high? I thought the inside of the Pyramid more

impressive than the outside. As one makes one's way to the burial-chambers along the low narrow corridors through those tremendous blocks of stone, all so smoothly cut and so exactly placed thousands of years ago, one is oppressed by the thought at once of the immensity and the futility of the labour.

'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'

The Pyramid still stands, it is true, unlike the statue in Shelley's sonnet: but of the thousands who have seen it, even of the Egyptians themselves, how many have known so much as the name of the king who was buried in its heart?

There is a saying that every stone of the Great Wall of China (which at least was built for a rational object) cost a life. Doubtless the same is true, at a moderate estimate, of the Pyramid. I could not rid my mind's eye of a disagreeable picture of thousands of slaves straining and struggling under the whip; and 'Great Men,' I reflected without much originality, 'are a curse. I wonder why the common man will go on idolizing them.'

A short ride on a camel takes one to the Sphinx and the small adjacent temple. These structures are of granite, not limestone, and raise for the casual sight-seer an even more puzzling question than the Great Pyramid: how, with what tools, were these colossal blocks cut, shaped and placed in line as precisely as could be done by the most powerful modern machinery?

Four days in a French ship took me from Alexandria to Marseilles, where I found Europe sweltering in a heat-wave. London seemed even hotter than Marseilles; and I looked back with regret to the pleasant coolness I had enjoyed a few days before in the neighbourhood of the Equator.

J. R. BARROW.

A Letter to the Editor

Sands, St. Brelade,
Jersey, C. I.

DEAR MR. SEN GUPTA,

I have been meaning for a long time to write to thank the Editors of the Presidency College Magazine for enabling me, by the receipt of the Magazine, to keep so regularly in touch with the activities of the College, and I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity afforded by your letter of October 8th, not only to send my thanks for you and your predecessors, but also my heartiest congratulations to the College on the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Magazine. When I returned to Presidency College, as Principal, in 1924, it had already firmly established itself as one of the most important signs of the outstanding position of the College in the academic life of Bengal, and it has always been a great pleasure to me to notice how admirably the high standard of achievement has been maintained during more recent years.

Your request for an article reaches me at a time when I am more than usually busy, and having to prepare at rather short notice a paper for the Science section of our local Société Jersiaise, I fear that it is impossible for me to do more than send these few lines in reply. What specially interested me in the September number of the Magazine was the news of the unveiling in the new future of the memorial to my old Principal, Dr. P. K. Ray. Curiously enough, I do not seem to have among my books a copy of the College Register; so I am rather uncertain of my dates, but as far as I recollect, I first made his acquaintance about 1903, when he was still Principal of the Dacca College, and I happened to be visiting European schools in Dacca during a short period of deputation as Inspector of European Schools. Dr. Ray was then living in the Dacca Circuit House opposite the old club in the town, and I am still conscious of the benefit I derived from the long talks we had together every night after dinner on the problems that confront every newly-joined member of the Education Service.

My wife and I have just returned from a long visit to the Scandinavian countries, and what we saw there makes me wonder whether great changes in our outlook on education are not long overdue, both in England and India. Denmark after Sleswig had been snatched away from her in 1864, seemed on the point of national disintegration: and yet—by the influence and teaching of one man, Bishop Grundtwig

(who himself died less than 8 years later)—Denmark is now one of the most prosperous and—to all appearance—happiest nations in the world. All this has been achieved through, on the one hand, the Folk Adult High Schools, and on the other co-operation, especially in the development of Agriculture. Both these are the outward and visible signs of the acceptance by every Dane of the inward and spiritual value of Bishop Grundtewig's rallying cry in the 60's of the last century to his fellow countrymen "All for one, and one for all."

With sincerest good wishes for the success of the Magazine's Silver Jubilee,

Yours sincerely,

H. E. STAPLETON.

A College Association and a College Hall

T. S. STERLING

IT is with great pleasure that on the invitation of the present Editor (as well as of the Editor of last year) I take up my pen to greet my old colleagues and students and to salute this magazine on the occasion of its Jubilee Year.

Although it is now some eleven years since I left Presidency College, I have never ceased to take a keen interest in all that concerns the welfare of the College where I spent many happy years.

I therefore venture to take this opportunity of putting before you for your consideration two matters which, in my opinion, vitally concern the future well-being of the College we all hold dear.

The first is the formation of a Presidency College Association, membership of which would be open, at the cost of a small entrance fee, to all past and present professors and students.

From what I know of your present Principal, I feel sure that he would lend his support to the foundation of the Association, and his advice and help in this matter would be invaluable. So also would be the assistance of Professor K. N. Mitter, Professor S. C. Mahalanobis, Professor Sir P. C. Ray, Professor A. N. Mukerji and Professor P. C. Ghosh, to recall only a few of the colleagues who contributed to the pleasure of work at Presidency College.

An Association such as I suggest plays an important part in university life. It is the means of bringing together in one body all those who are now and have, in the past, been interested in the work of the College. It fosters good relations between past and present students; it forges a link between the generations. There is always a tie of sentiment between students of the same college; an association gives that sentiment a chance of practical expression. We are proud to acknowledge the fact that Presidency College has sent out men who to-day hold high positions in the educational, legal, professional and commercial worlds. It would considerably enrich the life of the present student if through this College Association he could be brought into closer touch with these older sons of his *alma mater*, could hear at first

hand their reactions to the life around them, their opinions on the social and political problems which he, too, will so soon have to face.

Each student leaves his college precincts to become the citizen of a larger world; it is never too early for him to learn something of the duties and difficulties of citizenship from those who are actually experiencing them.

At first, naturally, the activities of the Association would be slight, and probably limited to the more immediate needs of the College and its students. It would, for instance, offer advice to students who had not yet decided upon their choice of a career. It would help and advise old students who have perhaps not been so fortunate as some of their fellows. But as membership increases, its sphere of influence will widen and in time to come we shall, I hope, see a Presidency College Association playing an important part in the national life of Bengal. There is much that we could do, acting through an Association, to serve not only the needs of our students, but the broader ideal of humanity. The futility of isolated effort has long caused those working for the advancement of social conditions to form associations, through the agency of which alone can effective expression be given to the demand for social reforms and for the establishment of those conditions which will make the pursuit of ideals effective. We could, for example, secure representation on the various important committees dealing with social, political and legal matters. By this means our professors and students would be brought into closer contact with the social work of the country. We could, through the association, study industrial and economic problems at first hand. We could make ourselves acquainted with the problems of village life, with such matters as the establishment and maintenance of public libraries, in short, with all those various activities which contribute to that higher standard of living and culture which we all so earnestly desire to attain. Viewed from this standpoint, the formation of a Presidency College Association would seem to be but the necessary sequence to the formation of the College itself, for is it not the aim of all educational institutions to produce useful citizens for the state?

The mere acquisition of knowledge is not the be-all and end-all of education. It is not enough that a man leaves college having acquired sufficient knowledge to enable him to pass his examinations and to enter a business or professional life. Such knowledge forms but the dry bones of scholarship and is of small importance unless in the process of acquisition a man's mind has been trained, his outlook broadened, his character developed so that he may face with courage and fortitude the problems which life will set him. Education is useless

unless it develops in the student a desire to raise the standards and the culture of his race to a higher level than has yet been reached, a desire to help his fellowmen, particularly those who have not had the benefit of his education.

Many problems confront us in this world of ours to-day. We are in the midst of far-reaching social changes. It is not given to us all to become statesmen and legislators, but it is up to each one of us to do his bit. Let us then found a Presidency College Association as a vehicle for the practical expression of our ideas. Through it let us work to bring about that enlightened social legislation which gives us the only chance of human progress. The work will not be easy, but where there is a desire, a strong overpowering will, there can always be found a way. The measure of a man's capacity is not his achievement but his desire. As Browning says:—

“ Ah! but a man's reach should exceed his grasp
Or what's a Heaven for?”

The other matter which I should like to bring before your consideration is that old outstanding question of a College Hall. Nearly thirty years ago Principal H. R. James suggested that old Presidency College men should show their gratitude to their College by making a gift of a College Hall. When the appeal was made a brilliant student, then in his last year at college, promised that if such a scheme were put into operation he would give as a contribution towards it his first month's pay on obtaining a post.

Unfortunately the matter was allowed to fall into abeyance and it is a matter of great regret that in 1935 and again in 1936 the Principal had to ask in vain for a College Hall. In 1935 Principal B. M. Sen said, “ We consider it an anomaly that ‘ the premier college of Bengal ’ has to do without a Hall. It is really a great drawback that we cannot accommodate more than 350 people at any college function and even those in a lecture theatre.”

Would it not now be a suitable moment—when we are celebrating the Jubilee of the College Magazine—to remedy this anomaly? Will the old students show, as Mr. James suggested, their love for and their appreciation of their old college by endowing it with a college hall? Cannot a subscription list be opened here and now? I cannot think that it would be long before the requisite sum was forthcoming.

In conclusion let me once more beg of you all to give your serious consideration to these two matters which I have brought before you. They are neither of them novel ideas; they are both of them long overdue. To some extent they are inter-dependent, for if we form a

Presidency College Association we must have a suitable college hall in which to hold our meetings.

Some day in the not-too-distant future I hope once more to visit Presidency College, to renew my acquaintance with my old colleagues and students. I have the happiest recollections of my old students, of their affection and gratitude, of their lively appreciation, of their zest for their work, and of their remarkable achievements. I look forward to the day when I shall once more visit the scene of so many happy memories. When that day comes I hope that as a member of Presidency College Association I shall sit in Presidency College Hall.

In Retirement

R. B. RAMSBOTHAM

THE Editor, searching his files for possible contributors, has been good enough to invite me to send an article on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Magazine's birthday. First, let me wish the Presidency College Magazine and all who read it many happy returns of the day: secondly, I beg leave to express admiration for the robust and handsome appearance of the publication: it can certainly stand the challenge of comparison with any similar literary production, and perhaps a rather biased admirer like myself may state, here and now, that I do not know of any other college magazine that is so good.

And now, after compliments, let me proceed to the contribution. I have pondered long on this matter: I have asked myself, shall it be grave or gay; shall it be long or short? The second query was easily answered; after some misgiving I decided to inflict on the Editor some comments on Retirement. The average servant of the Government of India leaves his work at the age of 55, if he survives, for compulsory leisure: he has, in many cases, looked forward to the time when his travellings will end and he will settle himself in his own land. But when the actual separation comes, when work has to be handed over to some one else, the long-expected release is not so joyful as it had appeared to be in the distance.

Many Indian friends and colleagues of mine never seemed to be elated when Government said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; hand over to so and so, and go and live on one-third of your present income": and, welcome as a pension is, it must be admitted that it has a chastening effect as a substitute for full pay. It is not, however, the question of the loaves and fishes that makes retirement less attractive at close sight, for the Government is a generous master to those who serve it well and faithfully; the most difficult feature in retirement for the average government servant to deal with is that the rhythm of life has gone, and the machine in which he was a contented and interested cog has ejected him and replaced him with a spare part.

The Englishman perhaps feels this more than his Indian colleague for the following reasons. He has lived thirty years or more in India, and he has learned to love the country and its people: India has been

such a kindly foster-mother to him, that he is almost more comfortable in his foster-mother's house than in his own motherland. He has nearly all his interests in India: Indian politics have supplanted home politics in his mind; the comforts of his daily life, his kindly courteous Indian friends, his own countrymen who share his feelings for India, and the countryside itself have taken a firm grip of his mind and imagination. Even the climate has moulded him to its own organics; he gets a real taste for certain features of Indian cooking, and, in a word, he feels at home.

The real obstacle, however, to his retirement from active service is his profound conviction that he is only just beginning to be useful. The Englishman who has served the Government in India for thirty years has much reason to blush when he reflects on his service. With the best of intentions, he was often ignorant and ill-mannered; he had to learn that honest and honourable men can hold two perfectly sound points of view on almost everything: he often gave offence when he intended no offence, and he often took offence where no offence was intended. He was conscious of receiving the most warm-hearted kindness from Indians in every rank of life, and he was often troubled at his inability to show these kind friends how deeply he treasured in his heart the happy recollections of work and leisure in their company. All these thoughts pour into the mind of the retiring Englishman, and it seems to him that just when he is beginning to understand something of India, he is forced to give up working there.

Times have changed much in the last twenty years: India is demanding that her own children should do their mother's work, and not aliens, and yet I hate to think that those of us who love India, who have worked for her, and spent a large portion of life eating her salt, should ever be regarded by her as aliens. I prefer to think that we are still her foster-children, who love her and wish her well.

It is right and proper that the work of India should be done by Indians, and that Indians should direct and administer their own motherland, but one Englishman ventures to assert that India will not be a loser if she retains in her service some of those foster-children who love her much and to whom she owes, also, something.

As one who had the pleasure of working among Indian citizens who are now beginning to take their place in the various grades of their country's service, I express, with all my heart, the hope that India will not allow herself to be depleted from her ancient traditions of dignity, courtesy and forbearance, and that she will preserve and protect that great virtue, so prominent in India, hospitality, which is in danger of

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being trampled out of existence in many other places. To a well-wisher, it seems that a certain readiness to discard tradition in India is in danger of gathering strength. Nothing gives me more pleasure in London than to see an Indian in Indian clothes. The Indian has invented the most dignified and the most inexpensive form of dress yet known to man: it can be worn at the King's Court, or in a humble private house, it can be worn at a royal parade or at a friend's garden party; I refer to the black achkan and the white pajamas, worn by Moslem-Hindu alike all over the North of India: it is a manly, dignified, sensible dress and can be worn equally well with the safa or the tarban or the pagri. Well, I must not go rambling on.

Sed modo vos animae dulces reminiscen, amici,

but I can't help thinking of you my dear friends, as Ovid, the Latin poet, whom I quote, says in words more graceful than I can frame. And in thanking the Editor for his courtesy, permit me again to remind Indian readers that there are in England many grateful and devoted lovers of Mother India.

Some Reminiscences

SIR JEHANGIR C. COYAJEE

I BEGAN to dream of Presidency College fully a year before I actually joined it. My tutor in Economics—one whose name is now a household word in Economic circles all over the world—informed me, in February or March, 1910, that a new chair of Economics was being founded in the Western Presidency and that I might have a chance of securing it. That was all very well and it was a fine prospect indeed, I reflected; but in order to have that chance realised I must take a first in the Economics Tripos; and not the ablest or even the most complacent undergraduate of Cambridge can feel sure of that. My natural and constitutional diffidence had been greatly enhanced by the fact that I had committed the indiscretion of having joined Cambridge as an Advanced Student. That meant that I had either to take a First or to return without a degree. However, Fortune smiled on my labours; and from the very first day of my examination I began to feel the tide of confidence rise in me. I began to feel happier as one paper after another was disposed of. Some time after I left for London and there I received a telegram of felicitations from my kind friend T. T. Williams (afterwards Professor of Economics at Dacca). Then came the day when I passed through the "Gate of Honour," placed my hands in those of the Vice-Chancellor and accepted the obligation, as well as the status, of a graduate of the University of Cambridge.

I now began to think seriously of the Chair of Economics at the Presidency College. My task in securing it proved comparatively easy for I had been fortunate enough to secure the good opinion of and credentials from Prof. Marshall and Mr. Keynes, while Prof. Foxwell was on the Board of Appointment. I had also been nominated a Research Student of Caius College and could point to nearly a decade of teaching in a variety of subjects—including such a diversified assortment as Economics, History and Persian—at different colleges of the Bombay Presidency.

Such is the prestige and such are the traditions of Presidency College that no one can enter it—whether as a teacher or as an alumnus—without experiencing feelings of pride and joy at one's good fortune in belonging to such an institution. I had been uncommonly proud of my connection with Elphinstone College; and I had revered the memory of its

distinguished Principals—among whom could be numbered Sir Alexander Grant (afterwards Principal of Edinburgh University) and Dr. Wordsworth—the grandson of the great poet. But now I was entering the premier college of India which could boast of an even longer apostolic succession in the educational sphere. Hence humility and elation struggled within me as I entered the imposing portals of Presidency College on 17th March, 1911. I well remember the moment when I was ushered into the dignified and scholarly presence of the late Mr. H. R. James, who was then the Principal. On the same day I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. P. C. Roy of whose halo of scientific glory I had caught glimpses from afar. I was also introduced to a much younger colleague—Prof. W. C. Wordsworth—who was to prove in course of time his great versatility of talent in the fields of education, administration and journalism. I lost no time in making him my guide, philosopher and friend amidst my new surroundings. I remember that during my first week of work at the college I expressed to him my diffidence regarding my future success as a lecturer in such a distinguished environment. His generous encouragement, however, soon heartened me for my work.

A word might be said here about the various Principals under whom I was privileged to work—Messrs. James, Wordsworth, Stapleton, Barrow and Ramsbotham. They were all men of high character and principles as well as of sound scholarship and administrative capacity. Yet in the case of all of them the same generalization will hold good—that their good fortune was in no way commensurate with their good intentions or their undoubted abilities and equipment. The waters were troubled and the times were difficult. Those were the days of the first impact of the political movement on the student world. The relations of the Presidency College to the Calcutta University also were as yet undefined, and it was difficult to run the two institutions in double harness. The *modus vivendi* had yet to be evolved which would correlate the functions and activities of the two great institutions. It was the College that had been the mother of the University and it could not reconcile itself as yet to the thought of having to take the second place. The shadows of some eminent outsiders—some belonging to the political or bureaucratic spheres, others noted in the world of education—fell across the paths of several of these Principals of our College. It is, therefore, all the more necessary to emphasise and draw attention to the merits of these heads of the College. Foremost amongst them stood Mr. James who combined literary merit and a high sense of duty with a gentlemanly character and a lofty courtesy. His knowledge of the classics was profound, and his literary capacity is shown in his

translation of Boëthus. One of his addresses during the Great War was reminiscent of the great speech of Pericles on the position of Athens in the Peloponnesian War. He did me the honour of presiding on several occasions at the addresses which I delivered on various topics and phases of the Great War; and indeed the members of our staff owed a great deal to his steady encouragement and generous sympathy. After his retirement he contributed a number of valuable articles to the *Statesman* narrating the fortunes of the Indian Educational Service, which should provide valuable material for the future historian of our College.

That historian will also note the versatile talents of his successor—Mr. W. C. Wordsworth—who proved himself equally distinguished as an educationist and as a journalist. He could say with Principal Hadley (of Yale University) that he has spent one-half of his life in delivering lectures and the other half in writing leaders. Indeed even in his present *avatar* as a journalist he finds time to keep in touch with the University and its educational affairs. With his successors—Messrs. Stapleton, Barrow and Ramsbotham—we come to Principals whose forte lay in their administrative work and capacity, though Mr. Stapleton also did good work in the field of the history of oriental chemistry, and Mr. Ramsbotham in the sphere of history. I was so convinced of the merits of Mr. Barrow as an administrator that I implored him to continue in his position as Principal in spite of some difficulties. I was certainly not overjoyed when on my return from Geneva I received an official communication appointing me his successor. It was indeed no easy task to take over the reins from such experienced and firm yet tactful hands.

It would be ungrateful on my part not to make particular mention of at least some of my colleagues of the Common Room. And yet here I am working under great difficulties. I remember the dictum of the Roman historian that it is impossible to mention all and yet invidious to omit any. Moreover, in the case of a college of the magnitude and size of the Presidency College—which can boast of a staff of sixty or more—one cannot come into anything like close contact with all one's colleagues. At any rate I am thankful that I never had a moment's trouble with any of my colleagues; rather I regarded the Common Room as one of the best of clubs—and a very intellectual one too. And the more I see of club life in my retirement the more I come to appreciate the Common Room society of those days. It is not in many clubs that one can admire the poetic talents of a Manmohan Ghose or the literary flavour of the conversation of a Sterling, a Holme or a P. C. Ghosh. My interest in historical studies also revealed to me how strong

our College was on the historical side which was represented by professors like Oaten and Zachariah among others. It might be justly said about Prof. Oaten that he was surpassed by none of his colleagues in the matter of friendship for and sympathetic behaviour towards his pupils or in his zeal for securing vocational openings for them. It was indeed an irony of the subject which he professed that his career as a college Professor should have been terminated prematurely. It was a piece of good fortune, however, that we had Prof. Zachariah to continue his work. We have all read and admired Prof. Zachariah's educational reports; but only a few of us have noted how his coat pockets used to bulge with the multiplicity of quarter sheets which conveyed his historical erudition to the class-rooms. These closely written sheets of Mr. Zachariah and the bulky type-written tomes of Mr. Oaten often set me thinking of the "rolls" of paper in which Lord Acton is said to have digested his historical reading and which he bequeathed to his University.

I have room only for mentioning two or three more members of our happy Common Room. I refer to Professors Adityanath Mukherjee and S. C. Mahalanobis, not only because of their learning but also because they are men of affairs whose advice I sought when it was necessary to avail myself of their wide knowledge of University matters. Both these gentlemen are possessed of extraordinary energy and vitality, though in this sphere Prof. Mahalanobis can beat us all by a good many lengths. Only the other day when I was in Calcutta on work connected with the Indian Coal Mining Committee, I had the pleasure of meeting him on his seventieth birthday. As he looked neither older nor younger than he used to do some three decades ago I could only infer, either that he was a Rosicrucian, or that he had resorted to the interesting process of *Kāya Kalpa* with greater success than some other eminent men.

I would draw the particular attention of the future historian of our College to the great share it took in the development of the teaching work of the University. It goes without saying that without the labours of Sir J. C. Bose and Sir P. C. Ray the University could not have reached the present advanced stage of its teaching in Physics and Chemistry. The College Professors of Literature have also had a lion's share in advancing University studies in their sphere. I would not have mentioned our contribution to the University work in Economics and Politics but for recalling with pleasure the excellent work done by Professors Gilchrist and Panchanandas Mukherjee as well as my co-operation in that sphere with Prof. C. J. Hamilton and his successor Prof. P. N. Banerjee. They were good enough to assign to me the

General Theory of Economics as well as International Trade as my share of the University teaching in Economics; and I worked on these lines for about sixteen years. Even before this formal division of work, however, Prof. Manohar Lal (the first occupant of the Minto Chair) and myself had arranged to share the work. As we lived in the same apartment it was easy for us to arrange and adjust our spheres of work. I remember with pleasure the long discussions we used to have on economic topics and the privilege I enjoyed of utilising to the full his fine library of economic literature.

I might be indulged in a reference to my work as editor of the *Bengal Economic Journal* for nearly a decade—partly because it furnished a practical side to my function as a lecturer in Economics and partly because I had for my colleague as co-editor another Presidency College Professor—the late Mr. Panchanandas Mukherjee. It was of course a pleasure to work with him as well as with Mr. Donovan—the Registrar of Co-operative Societies—and with his successor. It was because of my work as editor that I was invited by Mr. R. B. Ewbank, the brilliant Registrar of Bombay, to take a hand in writing his “Indian Co-operative Studies” to which a chapter was contributed by one representative co-operator from each of the provinces of India. My own contribution was on the topic of “Urban Banks in India.” Soon after the publication of the book I was agreeably surprised on receiving a kind and encouraging letter from Dr. Marshall, showing that in the midst of his great and manifold activities, he had been closely watching my humble career in India. Similarly when I brought out my book on the Indian Fiscal Problem I received another letter from that *doyen* of English economists commending my work as “strong, well-balanced and suggestive” and expressing the hope that my publication “will have an important share in the evolution of Indian Economic policy.” It was indeed my good fortune to be the recipient of a great deal of encouragement from various quarters but for which I should not have ventured into the sphere of authorship. Thus Prof. C. J. Hamilton who founded the *Indian Economic Journal* induced me to become his co-editor and to write for that journal for some years. Similarly Mr. Pat Lovett, the distinguished editor of the *Capital* requisitioned work from me on various occasions. It was indeed a great privilege to collaborate even occasionally with such a capable writer and genial personality. In 1918 the Government of Bengal appointed a Committee to enquire into the difficulties in connection with the circulation of One Rupee notes, under the chairmanship of Mr. J. A. L. Swan, I.C.S. Among the members were the Accountant-General, Bengal, the Hon’ble Raja Reshee Case Law, C.I.E., Mr. W. D. R. Prentice (Commissioner,

Presidency Division), the Post-Master-General, Bengal, and myself. This was the first of the series of Commissions and Committees on which I was privileged to work. I mention these matters here because such appointments pushed forward notably my economic studies and writings. Thus on returning from my work on the Indian Fiscal Commission I was elected President of the Indian Economic Conference and chose for the subject of my Presidential Address *Protectionism in India*. Soon after the Patna University nominated me to be the Benaili lecturer for the year, and the address was expanded into the book *Indian Fiscal Problem*. Similarly after my work on the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, the Madras University honoured me by appointing me to the Sir William Meyer Foundation, and my study of *Indian Currency and Exchange* was the result. Again, it was after my three years' work as delegate at Geneva that I undertook to write *India and the League of Nations*. Encouragement from the Bengal Royal Asiatic Society and its energetic secretary Mr. J. Van Mannen, C.I.E., led to the publication of my *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran and China*. This very year the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute honoured me by electing me to its Government Research Fellowship and I have been just going through the proof-sheets of a volume on *Studies in the Shahnamah*.

I have deliberately kept for the last place in this narrative the most important and interesting aspect of my career—my relations with my pupils. And here I have to express great thankfulness—for I have been as fortunate as any teacher, at least in this country. Whether I consider the unbroken series of triumphs which my pupils achieved at the University examinations, or the places they now occupy as Professors, or in the Civil, Provincial, Railway and Financial Services, or our friendly and harmonious relations throughout, I have reason alike for unalloyed satisfaction. About the termination of my tenure of Professorship at this College I had a list prepared of the various successes annually achieved by my pupils at different examinations and the results of the investigation surprised me, even though I was aware, all the time, that Presidency College constituted the central intellectual ganglion of Bengal. I remember a long discussion which I once had with Prof. Hamilton on the topic—whether first class alumni were born or could be made. We reached the conclusion at last that the real and sure first class men were born; but that the first class contained a fringe or margin into which a good coach could push some fairly promising pupils who were not, as it were, born to it. I had ample material before me to guide me in the discussion. For the very first batch of my pupils contained men like Panchanandas Mukherjee, Azizul Huq and P. C.

Chowdhury. The Economics class had members who shone in many walks of life, but we were particularly partial to the Finance Service to which we supplied a P. C. Chowdhury, a Sen Gupta, a Chatterji, a Govinda Das and many other eminent members. We have enriched economic literature through the exertions of Professors J. C. Sinha, J. P. Niyogi and H. L. Dey. Even those who did not write on Economics enjoyed their studies and responded instantly and fervently to the development of economic thought. I well remember the enthusiasm which was called forth in the class by the appearance of new works produced by Marshall, Taussig and Keynes. My pupils were indeed generally ahead of me in acquiring information regarding the appearance of such works.

I can best conclude these random notes by putting forward a constructive idea. The energies of the History Seminar should be utilised in producing a history of the Presidency College. Members of that Seminar should not only look up the records but should interview Professors—both those in harness and those who have retired. Only by such co-operative effort we can hope to have a monument worthy of the work, influence and traditions of Presidency College.

The Principle of Chance in Modern Physics

PRINCIPAL B. M. SEN

EVER since the dawn of Science, and by science is meant a systematic study of Nature through experiments and observation, one of the generally accepted axioms has been the Law of Causality—every effect has a cause, just as every cause has its effect. It has been held to be one of the foundations of rock on which the superstructure of scientific developments was erected. No philosopher at the time of Bacon or after him till very recently would dream of questioning what seemed as intuitional as one's own consciousness.

But in recent years there has arisen what may be called the Principle of Chance. Loosely speaking, it may be stated in the form that things happen in this universe not because they must, but because they are infinitely more probable than other contingencies. The toss of a coin is proverbially a matter of chance. The Captain of a cricket team would not dream of disputing that his chance of having the first knock decided by a toss, has been anything except fair. In common parlance, he would be said to have fifty-fifty chance. But the toss of a coin falls within the province of mechanics in which sufficient data being given, the result can be deduced by mathematical reasoning. It is only necessary to know how the coin is balanced, where and how it is struck and other small details to be able to work out exactly how it will fall. It seems therefore that a mathematically-minded Captain—and a prodigious mathematician he must be to work out the sum in his head in the brief space of a split second,—would have an immense advantage over the ordinary run. I pass on this idea to Selection Boards of Cricket with the hope that they will profit by it.

It is assumed from intuition that if the operation of tossing is repeated a large number of times, the ratio of heads and tails would tend to become one. The story is told that the head of a firm tossed for a chance of seeing the Derby with his assistant three times before it would come out right. But if he had betted on the ratio becoming one or very near one for a large number of tosses, his chances would have been a certainty. In fact, this imaginary experiment is taken to be the basis of the modern science of statistical mechanics.

Granted this fundamental how does it apply to experimental science? In the modern Kinetic theory, gas molecules are supposed to

be moving with prodigious velocities in all directions at random and some are moving much faster than others. It is a very effective mix up. But to the ordinary mortal the difference is not perceptible. What he does perceive are the average effects such as pressure and temperature. If a fire is lit in a room, it becomes heated because there are better chances of the more energetic particles passing from the fire into the room than in other directions. The familiar process of putting the kettle on the fire and expecting the water to boil, is no longer a matter of certainty. It is a matter of chance that the water should boil rather than freeze, though the former effect is infinitely more probable. Considering that millions and millions of kettles are put on the fire every day, a tired housewife should not be surprised if she finds a lump of ice when she wanted some hot water for her tea.

But it must be remembered that statistical mechanics is essentially concerned with mass effect. The average effect of a large number of constituents can only be considered. Clerk Maxwell conceived a demon possessing extra fine sensibilities. He possesses a vessel with a trap-door which he opens whenever he sees an extra fast particle approaching and shuts down at once if it is a slow one. The result is that this supernatural being is able to separate the fast particles from the slow ones. The former would possess greater energy or higher temperature than the latter and by allowing the heat to flow from the higher to the lower temperature work can be created. He would, therefore, be in a position to get work out of nothing so to say or to run a perpetual machine, the dream of the ancient physicist just as the touchstone was the dream of the alchemist. As no such demon has been found outside the pages of fairy tales, the physicist has to be content to leave matters there.

In recent times Heisenberg has enunciated his Principle of Indeterminacy, which states that it is impossible to know accurately both the position and momentum of a particle, and the more accurately you know the one, the more indeterminate does the other become. In essence, the argument depends on the fact familiar to every experimenter that you cannot measure any physical object without affecting it. If one wishes to measure the temperature of a tub of water, one has to dip the bulb of the thermometer in it—a fact which makes some change in the temperature of the tub itself. When the measurement is of an optical nature one must be prepared to neglect the impulse of light.

It is a well-known fact of optics, that there is a limit to the smallness of an object that can be viewed under a microscope. This depends on the wavelength of the light employed. We shall suppose that the

art of the oculist has been developed to such an extent that γ -rays, which have the smallest wavelength known to physics, can be employed. The lucky physicist possessing the wonderful invention sets himself to visualise an electron. But he would be surprised that nothing comes out of his extra powerful instrument. The reason is that as soon as a γ ray strikes an electron, it drives it out of the field. In other words, the effect of the measuring process is large referred to the object of measurement.

The uncertainty principle, therefore, strikes a very discordant note in the even music of classical mechanics, in which both the position and the momentum are supposed to be absolutely determined by some means with which we are not concerned. It may be urged on the other hand that classical mechanics deal with abstractions. But the practical nature of the problems must come to the fore when the results of calculation have to be compared with the results of observation. Otherwise it must degenerate to Pure Mathematics which, according to a competent mathematician, does not know what it is talking about nor if what it is saying is true or false.

The uncertainty principle has received unexpected support from another quarter. The nature of light has been the subject of deep controversy ever since Newton split up white light with a prism. He himself suggested that the source of light emits light in the form of bullets. This hypothesis held ground until Fresnel showed that light could bend round corners. This brought into existence the wave theory in which light was supposed to be propagated in waves in an elastic medium, called ether. This new theory held sway for more than half a century until attempts were made to discover any trace of this illusory substance. All attempts to detect its effect on matter failed and for many years the only role of this substance in Physics was to act as the subject of the verb "to undulate."

Then came more refined experiments made possible by the discovery of electrons. It was then found that many facts could only be explained by assuming that light acted as if there were particles of light. Experiments were also devised to show that elementary particles of matter also behave as waves. It is a characteristic and consequence of the wave theory that light superposed on light can produce darkness. Similar phenomena have been observed with particles of matter also. The position is, therefore, an extremely paradoxical one. What were believed to be waves have been proved to behave as particles and what were known to be particles have been shown to behave like waves. It is quite likely that these are merely different phases of the same phenomena.

The opinion has, therefore, been widely held that matter has the dual capacity of particles and waves, which role it will play depends on the circumstances. It would be difficult to justify such a standpoint without attributing to the particles some form of consciousness. It seems as if the particles have to make up their minds, when they are being subjected to experiments, whether to behave like particles or waves.

However incredible this may appear, we have to remember that on the other side of the controversy the principle of determinacy does not lead to less serious difficulty. If every cause must have an effect and every effect must have a cause, the conclusion is irresistible on a materialistic basis that every action of every creature was predetermined at the beginning of creation whenever that might have happened. I do not know if the exponents of the law of Karma are prepared to go to such lengths.

Some Reflections on the Jubilee of the Magazine

THE Presidency College Magazine enters on its twenty-fifth year and I am glad to say that there has been no breach in its continuity. As the mouthpiece of the premier educational institution in Bengal, it should be an example unto others. I was a witness of the birth of the Magazine and have watched its career with great interest. The Presidency College is a direct lineal descendant of the old Hindu College and its *alumni* have always held and are at present holding the most conspicuous places in various public careers in the shape of distinguished judges of the High Court and other positions of eminence. Almost all the leaders of the bar as also many eminent physicians and public men are products of this venerable institution.

My connection with the College, both as a student and as a teacher, extends over thirty years. I shall always retain a vivid and grateful recollection of my connection with the Chemical Department. As a pupil and colleague of the late Sir Alexander Pedlar I began my career under very happy auspices and I look back upon that time with feelings of pride.

All my best chemical activities are associated with the laboratory of the College and it was there that the foundation of the Indian School of Chemistry was laid. The first doctor of science of the Calcutta University, Rasiklal Datta, as also the succeeding batch of chemists,—Drs. Bimanbehari Dey, Hemendrakumar Sen, Nilratan Dhar—whom I have always regarded as the initiator of Physical Chemistry in India—then again Jnanendrachandra Ghosh and Jnanendranath Mukherji, Pulin Behari Sarkar, Priyadarajan Roy—all have earned foreign reputation. I am leaving out of account two of my most eminent pupils, Satyendranath Bose and Meghnad Saha who have made their mark in the world of mathematics and physics, and who need no special mention here.

My pupils were always my beloved friends and companions. I shared their joys and sorrows and made myself one with them. They shared with me all the social and political aspirations of the day. I hope the Presidency College would continue to be, as it has ever been, the centre of progressive thought and action and would

maintain the high intellectual standard which has always distinguished it. I also hope that the Presidency College Magazine would, as the mouthpiece of that institution, maintain its high reputation.

P. Gray

Presidency College as I knew it

HIRENDRANATH DATTA

I AM an 'old boy' of the Presidency College which I joined in 1884. Having received an invitation from the Editor of the Presidency College Magazine to contribute an article to its Silver Jubilee number, I gladly avail myself of the opportunity, to jot down at random my reminiscences of the Presidency College as it was fifty years ago. This ought to prove of interest to the young men and maidens who now fill the forms of the College (Is 'form' the right word? I don't know. I passed my M. A. examination in 1890 and my English must be getting musty by this time). I am not aware whether the new fad of co-education is yet in full swing in the College (In my time, there were only two prospective 'sweet girl-graduates' in the whole College and a separate bench was allotted to them).

I recall with interest that my joining the Presidency College was accidental. I had passed the Entrance Examination (the name 'Matric' had not then come into use in University parlance) from the Metropolitan Institution, founded by and connected with the honoured name of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Contrary to expectations, I was not among the first ten and was able to secure only a fifteen rupees scholarship. So it was thought that I would do better if I joined the Presidency College, the premier College of Bengal and I left the Metropolitan Institution, in which but for this accident I would have continued my studies.

Long before that, the Old Hindu College had bifurcated into the Hindu School and the Presidency College. Professor Sutcliffe was the most notable among the Principals of the College. I say this from hearsay, because he had retired from service before I joined the College and I had no opportunity of meeting him. But I had it from his pupils—notably from the late Mr. Sarada Charan Mitter, who afterwards became a High Court Judge, and from my own maternal uncle, who was a favourite pupil of Mr. Sutcliffe, and who after he had finished his education rendered Shakespeare's Hamlet into Bengali,—that Principal Sutcliffe was a very sympathetic Professor and entered with alacrity into the joys and sorrows of his pupils. He realised to a large extent in his person the old relationship which subsisted in ancient India between a *guru* and his *shisyas*. In those spacious days, the imparting of educa-

tion had not degenerated into commercialism, nor had schools and colleges been turned into so many education-shops carried on, on the principle of barter—with the maximum of tuition-fees extracted from pupil and the minimum of labour and care on the part of the teacher. In my opinion, the commercialisation of education is a blot on the modern system and runs counter to the whole spirit of tuition as it obtained in this country. *Vidya* is a sacred treasure to be imparted in a spirit of humility and reverence—as put in an ancient book—“*Hriya deyam, Bhiya deyam, Sambida deyam, Sraddhaya deyam, Asraddhaya na deyam.*”

Of Sir Alfred Croft, who for years filled the office of Director of Public Instruction with distinction, I cannot speak from personal knowledge, because I had never a chance of meeting him.

When I entered the Presidency College, the principalship was held by Prof. Charles H. Tawney, a very erudite scholar and a great Shakespearean. In the old days, when the Clarendon Press series and other annotated editions of Shakespeare's plays were not yet in the market, Mr. Tawney's Shakespeare-scholarship was of great assistance to the students.

I was a student at the Presidency College for over 6 years and during part of my time Mr. Tawney was our Principal and when reading for my Degree Examinations I came in touch with him. Somehow Prof. Tawney did not impress me very much. Probably by this time he had lost his old verve and vigour. He still retained his penchant for scholarship. I remember one day he came to the class a bit late and told us that he had been engaged with the help of a learned Pandit to unravel the opening sentence of Banabhatta's *Kadambari* in the original, which many of my readers probably know, is prodigious in length and bristles with about a hundred long-drawn adjectives. This shows that not content with his favourite classics in Latin and Greek, Prof. Tawney was cultivating the acquaintance of Sanskrit. However that might be, many of us felt that he was no longer interested in the vocation of teaching and had become constitutionally incapable of imparting interested guidance to the young and sometimes acute minds, with which he came in contact. One of the text-books we had to read was Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. One day, one of us had the temerity (I don't know whether that is the right word) to ask this question—“What is lice-grass?” The question apparently annoyed Prof. Tawney. He put a counter-question—“You don't know the meaning of 'lice-grass'?—You see the plural of mouse is mice, of louse is lice but the plural of house is not hicc.” I am sure the baffled inquirer was cured

of his folly—once for all. We had to read Shorthouse's 'John Inglesant' for our M. A. Examination. It was a rather rambling novel. Prof. Tawney drew our attention to a review of this book in the *Saturday Review* and told us that we should read the book at home and if any difficulties occurred, we might come to him. *John Inglesant* purported to give the history of an English youth in the days of Charles I. He had much to do with the Roman Catholic Communion and narrowly escaped becoming a convert to that denomination. The book contained many technical details of Roman Catholicism and also many musical terms—because the hero, as depicted in the novel, was a bit of a musician also. Availing myself of Prof. Tawney's general invitation to us to consult him regarding *John Inglesant*, I ventured one day to approach him with my Catholic and musical difficulties. The Professor had no sympathy for me. He said rather airily 'Oh! I have never taken part in a Roman Catholic Communion. As for musical technicalities, I have not yet developed a ear for music.' So I came away. Fortunately the examiner was as indifferent to these matters as my professor, and so, in spite of my shortcomings I was able to secure a First Class First at the University Examination.

Prof. Tawney had another limitation. He was unable (or shall I say unwilling) to look his pupils in the face. His eyes would be glued either to the book which he was holding for the time being or to the tips of his black boots. This caused us much amusement and boys being boys, some of us used to indulge in a somewhat flattering comparison. Having studied Kalidasa's *Raghu Vansa* (the cantos relating to Sri Ram Chandra and his consort Sita), we had developed an admiration for the picture drawn by the poet of that immaculate wife, when brought to trial for her supposed infidelity when forced to stay in Lanka. When she came to the court-room, she was clad in the yellow garb of the *Sannyasini* and from bashfulness her eyes were riveted to her feet—*काषाय-परिवीतेन ख-पदापित-चक्षुसा*. So, we, in our wickedness used to speak of our revered professor as the hatted and booted he-Sita.

During my time at the Presidency College, besides Mr. Tawney, we had two other Principals—Mr. Bell and Mr. Pedler who was afterwards knighted. Mr. Pedler was the Professor of Chemistry. He was a fine experimenter as I came to learn from my fellow-students (in those days the F. A. Course had not been bifurcated and we read Ganot's physics but not Roscoe's chemistry). Thus I came only into indirect contact with Mr. Pedler.

Before I passed the F. A. Examination, the University had instituted the 'A' Course and the 'B' Course for the B. A. Examination and as I

took up the 'A' Course there was no opportunity for me to take any lessons in Chemistry. But in those days, Physics was a compulsory subject for the F. A. Examination and that brought me into contact with Profs. Booth and Gilliland and last but not least with Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose. Mr. Booth was a fine man and a devoted votary of Science. Like the old-type Pandit, he was somewhat abstracted and would usually come to the lecture-room after we had been kept waiting for ten or fifteen minutes. He would pull out his own watch, look at the College clock and invariably say 'Clocks as a rule go wrong.'

In those days the Presidency College had not the Science Theatres and Laboratories with which it is now equipped. The arrangements for science-teaching were rather primitive. We had a certain number of instruments but their array was by no means formidable.

I have already mentioned the name of Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose. He joined the Presidency College when I was still in the First Year Class. He was then just finding his way and had not yet developed that wizardry in science which in a few years was to make him famous. But already he was giving promise of future greatness by his expertness in handling instruments. It is one of the glories of my life that I belonged to the first batch of students who passed out of Sir J. C. Bose's hands. In after-life, after Sir Jagadish Bose had achieved greatness and I also had made my mark, I had many opportunities of meeting Sir Jagadish. He always regarded me with affection and used to recall with pleasure that I had belonged to the first batch of his students at the Presidency College.

When I joined the Presidency College, there were no arrangements for games; but this want was soon removed. We had a Professor of English, Mr. G. A. Stack. He was a fine journalist but never took kindly to the drudgery of teaching. Naturally, we were dissatisfied, and to placate us he presented the class with a football. The boys took up the game with avidity and thus football was introduced. We played in the green lawn between the College building and the Hare School. I never became a good player though I felt interested in the game. I remember a youth—Mustafi—a classmate. He was a rather diminutive man but could kick up the ball so high that one almost lost sight of it.

For the B. A. Course I took up English, Sanskrit and Philosophy as my subjects and as there was no prohibition in those days, about ten brilliant students took triple honours in their respective subjects. This was a serious strain on our mental resources but we persisted and went through somehow, most of us securing First Class Honours in all three subjects. We had a particularly strong set—the most brilliant

being Mr. Upendra Lal Mazumdar who had topped the list both at the Entrance and F. A. Examinations. He possessed a very acute mind and prodigious memory. Being ambitious in those days I tried hard to overstep him but failed, though I came a close second in the educational race. Mr. Mazumdar afterwards became Accountant-General but otherwise he has not fulfilled the promise of his youth. Fortunately Mr. Mazumdar is still in the land of the living, but where are the other 'old familiar faces?'

Mr. Webb and Mr. Rowe whose "Hints" had made them famous in the education world, were unpopular with the boys, being rather stiff and aloof. But they were undoubtedly good professors. I never made friends with Mr. Webb, but was on cordial terms with Mr. Rowe; I gave him as I received and had no difficulty in getting on with him.

Of the three Professors of English, Mr. Percival impressed me most. He was a real friend to his students. He hailed from Chittagong and we heard that Corsair blood flowed in his veins, and from that point of view he was non-Indian. He was a fine scholar—a painstaking teacher and had the subjects he taught at his finger's ends. He was very sympathetic and I recall with gratitude that when owing to my continued illness and incapacity to read (for many months the doctors forbade my looking at a book, so that I would be a mere passive listener to what a person specially engaged for the purpose would be reading out to me), the question arose whether I should be sent up for the F. A. Examination without the preliminary college test, Professor Percival smoothed the difficulties in my way. One particular habit of Mr. Percival I can recall. Though he had to teach for three or four hours every day (he was then a junior professor and not being white-skinned was treated somewhat superciliously), he would never sit on his chair when delivering his class lectures but would remain standing behind the chair and go on speaking.

As I have said, philosophy was one of my subjects for the B. A. Course. At that time Prof. Gough was the Senior Professor of Philosophy and my first lessons in the subject were imbibed from him. Prof. Gough had a formidable reputation as a philosopher. But I had no opportunity of testing this, as he was with us for barely a month or six weeks. Later in life, I read Prof. Gough's criticism of the Upanishads, which to my mind showed a woeful misunderstanding of the subject. I found out that in his time Prof. Gough had been an inveterate note-dictator to his class and in the year preceding my joining the Third Year Class, so many as nine of his students had secured first class marks in the M. A. Examination in Philosophy on the strength of his

notes, without having had to read a single page of a printed book—a singular distinction! Prof. Gough was succeeded by Dr. P. K. Ray in the chair of Philosophy. He came from Dacca and was preceded by a somewhat bad reputation. One of his Dacca pupils, who had joined the Third Year Class of the Presidency College, assured us that Dr. P. K. Ray was no good, etc., etc., and being gullible youths we believed this wise man of the East. But before a week was over we discovered our mistake. We found that Dr. Ray was not only a philosopher himself but, if I may paraphrase the words of a famous Knight, he was the *cause* of philosophy in others. His system of teaching was very good. He would not cram his pupil's minds with philosophical odds and ends but would try to arouse (and in this he often succeeded) the latent philosophical talent in the pupil. And I can say honestly that what little success I have been able to achieve in later life in the realm of philosophy I owe entirely to Prof. P. K. Ray. He and the more serious-minded among the philosophy students soon became friends. He would invite us to his house and there discuss philosophical problems with us on terms of equality. When later in life I published my first book on Hindu Philosophy (for which I had meanwhile developed a special partiality), I took the liberty of presenting one of the earliest copies to Dr. P. K. Ray and he encouraged me with words of commendation.

I had many opportunities of meeting Dr. P. K. Ray in after life and in fact never lost touch with him. The last time I met him was after he had lost his only son. (Some years before that he had retired from service). He was then a broken man and was looking forward to his approaching end with philosophical detachment. He reminded me by his attitude of a phrase in Shakespeare—'Readiness is all.' As old Manu phrases it,—'Do not hunger for life nor hanker after death; keep yourself ready to respond to the Master's call whenever it comes.'

These reminiscences will be incomplete unless I say just a few words about our Debating Society in the College, whose meetings would be presided over by one or another of the Professors. I took a leading part in the debates, because I was a keen controversialist in those days. I remember one occasion when a flippant fellow-student had traduced Bharata Chandra, the court poet of Krishnagar. I took up the cudgels in his behalf and fairly floored my antagonist. Our Sanskrit Professor Sreejut Nilmoni Mookerjee presided over the debate and he supported my views. At another meeting of the Debating Society I had occasion to cross swords with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. He was my junior at the College by one year. He was already developing his talent for debate, which in later life reached efflorescence and made him so formid-

able on the platform. I am afraid that on this occasion I came out second best. The debate was about 'The Evolution of Genius.' Mr. C. R. Das who was the principal speaker, in an eloquent speech maintained that genius was born, not made. I pressed for the opposite view and tried to demolish his thesis but, as I have said, with indifferent success. Dr. P. K. Ray who was in the chair intervened in the debate and with his usual suavity smoothed matters.

I can go on with my reminiscences and fill page after page—in fact take up the whole of this Jubilee number. But that would manifestly be unfair. So here and now I put a curb to my garrulity.

Three Years at Presidency College (1888-1891)

RAI BAHADUR GOPALCHANDRA GANGULI

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

I HAVE been requested to jot down my reminiscences of the Presidency College. Apart from the Platonic doctrine of reminiscences, according to which all knowledge is recovery of things known to the soul in previous existences, reminiscences generally relate to things outward but I consider myself a part, though infinitesimal, of my *alma mater*, and so I can only with filial piety acknowledge herein the debt of gratitude to her. The College is to me not only a sacred building, a temple with a long roll of zealous priests and devout worshippers who have shaped the history of Modern Bengal, but a subtle force which has infused life and spirit into my bones, and revitalized me, making me what I am.

RELATION BETWEEN THE STAFF AND THE STUDENTS

Gurus and Sishyas

From my early years, I cherished the ambition of becoming one day a student of Presidency College, because I had heard a lot about David Hare and Peary Charan Sarkar of hallowed memory from my father, late Sreeram Chandra Ganguli, who once sat at their feet, and the Presidency College was associated with these veterans. The opportunity came at last in 1888, just half a century ago, when I joined the III Year B. A. Class. Our Professors were Principal Tawney, Professors Rowe, Webb, Mann and Percival in English, Dr. P. K. Roy in Philosophy and Prof. Nilmani Nyayalankar in Sanskrit. In those days the educational world was comparatively young in Bengal and the Presidency College, founded about 30 years ago, was imparting literary education of the most advanced kind. Ours was the age of poetry and imagination and so instead of dissecting our Professors, we, with the zeal of neophytes, venerated them without a question, and were eager to catch what fell from their lips. It is true they did not mix with us freely and we did not even go to their waiting room which we considered, more or less, as a sanctum. They were to us "Oceans of Learning" and our business was to drink deep from those Pierian springs. As men, they were living examples

of "plain living and high thinking" and as such, sources of inspiration. They were teachers first and teachers last ; they wanted to teach us ; they were our *Gurus*. We were students first and students last ; we wanted to learn from them ; we were their *Sishyas*. All we aimed at was "knowledge" and we strove hard to increase it from more to more, feeding our mind "in wise passiveness," but not exactly in the Wordsworthian sense. The spirit of research was not in the air and the giants among us did not dream of adding to the stock of human knowledge. With this reverential attitude towards our Professors, we benefited much by their teachings and more by their examples.

FEWER LECTURES AND GREATER USE OF THE LIBRARY

There was no over-lecturing in those days. If I remember aright, there were about two lectures a day in the B. A. III Year Pass Class, four in each subject, besides a few in honours subjects, and the students could attend honours classes in all the three subjects. In the M. A. English Class, we had during the first six months one lecture a day, and during the last four months two lectures a day. Thus we were obliged to read some of the text-books unaided, and the College Library was our sheet-anchor. For solving some difficulties in Carlyle's *Hero-Worship*, a text-book in M. A. English, I sought the help of Prof. Rowe, who went with me to the Library straight and took a number of books. Two or three days later, he explained the difficulties, adding that I should have solved them myself with the help of the Library books. This advice of my revered Professor I bore in mind while I was a Professor for four decades. For example, in the nineties of the last century, while a Professor at Krishnagar College, I could not trace the source of the opening lines of Black's *Life of Goldsmith*. But acting according to the above advice I began to read Goldsmith's works and came across the lines in *History of Animated Nature*. While revising the book in the Dacca College later, I could give my pupils this information. Afterwards I could satisfy a Professor at Ravenshaw College who wanted to discover the source of these lines. Professorial work is, as every serious student knows, all-absorbing and knows no dilettantism.

VALUABLE LECTURE-NOTES

I went to College early every day for fear of being relegated to one of the back-benches and carefully took the lecture—notes which were so much in request that a publisher paid me for them a sum in the neighbourhood of Rs. 100, and some of these notes as "Notes on Burke's American Speeches" went through several editions. I sent

my notes by post to my friends. One of my sons, Anil Chandra, a former student of Presidency College, at present of Lincoln's Inn has, I think, inherited this habit of taking notes and his notes, I hear, are eagerly sought by his class-mates, Indian and European.

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS, THEIR UNDUE IMPORTANCE

Everybody knows examinations were unknown in our *tols* and they are at a discount in advanced countries to-day. After all, they are not infallible tests and they tend to inflate some of the brilliant alumni. Unfortunately examinations were made much of in our time and our energies were mostly consumed in preparing for them, year in year out, because success in life mostly depended upon success in the University Examinations.

PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE

Compulsory attendance at lectures in each subject was introduced when we were in the IV Year Class. This arbitrary system is not in vogue in the Western Universities. It means waste of time of the teachers and the taught, and unnecessary work of the College Office and of the University. What is worse, it encourages vice as some students take the help of others in being marked present in the class register, though actually absent. The offence cannot be detected when the class is large. Lectures should be attractive in themselves so that students of neighbouring colleges would be eager to attend them. When attendance is compulsory, undesirable students cannot be got rid of. A truant is far better than a talkative student who like discordant music mars the harmony of the class and vitiates the whole atmosphere.

STUDENTS' MESSES

We had no College hostel. I lived with my elder brother Govinda Babu in a mess known as "Nadia Brahminical Club," because all the members were Brahmins hailing from Nadia. Our messmates were Lalgopal Chakraverti and Lalit Kumar Banerji, both of whom became highly distinguished Professors, the former in the Ripon College and the latter in the Bangabasi College. Though "Cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd," our social life was developed in our messes. We helped one another and learnt self-help, the best of lessons, when the cook or the maid-servant took French leave. Mess life was a medley, being generally serious and occasionally comic as the following incident will show: A young mess-mate was required to visit his father-in-law's place for the first time, but his elder brother was reluctant to send him

without a servant. At once another mess-mate, a brilliant student of the University, volunteered his services and accompanied the young man as a servant. Though noble in appearance he played his part so successfully that he passed for a good servant in the eyes of the superannuated head of the father-in-law's family.

THE STUDENTS' POLITICS:

We enjoyed our college life which might seem dull and monotonous in these days of infinite variety. We had hardly any politics of our own, but at the bidding of our idol, Babu Surendra Nath Banerji, we attended public meetings only to listen to his heaven-born oratory and to vote with him, when necessary. As a senior student of my College, I once had to move a resolution in a public meeting of the students organized by Surendra Babu and presided over by Babu Kali Charan Banerji. Unaccustomed as I was to public speaking, this was an ordeal to me, but afterwards public speaking was something in my line. The habit should be cultivated early and every serious college student should make it a point to take an active part in the College Debating Club meetings. I once read a paper in the Debating Club of another college because we had one in name in our College. This paper on "Chaitanya and His Times" was published in an English Magazine edited by a former editor of *The Englishman* who paid me an honorarium, and, what is more, so thoroughly revised my article that I still wish I had sent him more for his revision. One's style of writing is to be formed at school and partly matured at college. This is a distinct advantage in the race of life, whatever be the sphere of our activity.

THE EVEN TENOR OF OUR COLLEGE LIFE

The days of Cricket were over. Football, the most exciting of modern games, was yet to be. The gymnastic class existed in name and was honoured by not being attended. Social service guilds and other activities were quite unknown. Not to speak of the bogey of the Test examination, we had neither tutorial classes nor class-exercises and I can swear that except in the Sanskrit classes there was no occasion for testing whether we are literate or illiterate. There is no end of college functions to-day. In my time there were three functions in the premier College of Bengal. In the first, Prof. Webb invited only his History students to a tea party, in the second, Sir Charles Elliott, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, invited only the M. A. students to a steamer party and in the third when H. R. H. the Prince of Wales visited the College in 1890, all the students were

drawn up in rows, one behind another, in the College quadrangle and we were flattered.

MY CLASS-MATES

Deshbandhu C. R. Das, Sir B. C. Mitter, Mr. K. C. De, Mr. H. D. Bose, Prof. Jyoti Bhusan Bhaduri, Mahamahopadhyay Asutosh Shastri and Principal Satis Chandra De were some of my class-mates who became famous. We were nearly 100 in the III Year Class, over 150 in the IV Year and about 50 in the V Year English Class. Shy by nature I mixed with a few of my class-mates. I wish here to speak about one of them, as the space at my disposal is limited. Mr. C. R. Das impressed me as an earnest worker, a fine gentleman and a lover of Bengali literature. He took an active part in one or two meetings of the College Debating Club I attended. Unable to thrust myself on others and even to approach former acquaintances when they became great, I saw Deshbandhu 35 years after leaving College and that at Patna under pressure from my host's son. I doubted whether I would be recognised. My host's son spoke over the phone with Deshbandhu who wanted to see me and was waiting for me. He first of all enquired where I had been so long and then about myself and my sons, Charu, Bimal, Amal, Anil, Nikhil. In the course of conversation I learnt from him why he had given up his practice and how anxious he was as to how he would manage to live. He then expressed surprise that living so near him on the same road, my sons had not seen him. He was glad to hear about their books which I sent to him later. I shall never forget his words "Your sons have claim on me." He was so warm and his conversation, alas! the last with me, was so friendly! I wish all friends should be friendly, brothers brotherly and neighbours neighbourly.

PRINCIPAL TAWNEY

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not take this opportunity of paying my homage to my chief *Guru*, Principal Tawney, whose portrait is still in my room. Hamlet was the first book he read with us in the Third Year Class. His paraphrasing was wonderful, and his reading and intonation elucidated the text better than any notes. Though a recognized master, he never delivered lectures in the class without careful preparation. In the M. A. Class, we read with him *In Memoriam* and Pope's *Essays* on alternate days. But whenever by mistake he brought one book for the other, he made half the usual progress, presumably in the absence of preparation. He and the noble

band of his co-workers like Prof. Percival were truly Ruskin's "work-first" men.

Prof. Rowe while lecturing on Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* met with a difficulty in a certain word and suddenly left the class-room. He soon returned and said that Principal Tawney without looking at the book had told him off-hand that it was a misprint in Wright's edition. *Uttarram Charita* was a text-book in B. A. Honours Sanskrit. Mr. Tawney's translation of it was of the greatest use to us in understanding the text and we heard that he was a master of many other subjects. Sometimes he cared not for authorities, however great, in interpreting authors in his own way. Influenced by his example, I once explained to my pupils the word "strand" as "rivulet" in the Scotch sense in Scott's "And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand." The Director of Public Instruction, an accomplished English scholar, who was then inspecting my class, remarked in the "Visitors' Book" that the word "strand" does not bear that meaning in English. Confident that I was right, I referred the whole case to Sir James Murray with my reasons. Six years later, I found to my joy and relief the word so explained in the *New English Dictionary* with the very line from Scott by way of illustration.

Principal Tawney was apparently absorbed in teaching, but inattention of the students occupying the back-benches did not escape his notice. He wanted all the M. A. students of the Anglo-Saxon class to prepare their lessons at home. A severe task-master, he spared not those who came unprepared or remained absent for "Anglo-Saxon fever," as he said. I came to his notice in the Anglo-Saxon class in which I tried my best to satisfy him. Outwardly cold, he was warm within. Pramatha Nath Mukherji, a student of M. A. Philosophy, who was getting a scholarship of Rs. 40 a month, was, on his recommendation, appointed a temporary lecturer in a Government College on Rupees One Hundred a month. On being told that the student who was rather ill-off would be a loser by accepting the temporary post, he recommended that the scholarship be given him in addition. We knew what his recommendation to the D. P. I. and the Government meant. I may here cite my own case. The Principal of the Uttarpara College in which I served once pressed me to see Mr. Tawney who, according to his information, was leaving India for his wife's illness. Just on seeing me, Mr. Tawney said, "I was thinking of you. Will you accept a post? Then take this note to my appointment clerk." I took the note, but without the help of the bearer I could not have delivered it as the Writers' Buildings were to me *terra incognita*. Taken by surprise, I hardly uttered any word, not to speak of

inquiring about his departure or his wife's illness or the post I was meant for. It is said that on being asked when he desired to retire he replied in his characteristic manner, "Positively on the 26th December, unless I am desired to retire earlier" and he did retire on the 26th of December, 1892. He was loved and respected for his vast erudition, his spirit of independence, his dignified bearing and love of righteousness. I owe everything to him who was so kind to me and with whom I had the privilege of corresponding regularly for nearly 30 years after his retirement.

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE FOR MY SONS

My sons, Charu, Anil, Nikhil, obtained senior Government scholarships in Orissa, but had to forfeit them for joining the Presidency College. The Principal of the College where they studied did not naturally like to part with them. The D. P. I. himself asked me why my sons were leaving their College. I told him "I love the College in which I have been serving, but I love my *alma mater* more." I sincerely wish that my grandsons like my sons should, God willing, join the Presidency College when the time comes.

Lastly I am grateful to the Editor of the Presidency College Magazine for thus enabling me to live once again in the golden past, forgetting the feverish present in which we are "In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave."

Fifty Years Ago

SIR ATULCHANDRA CHATTERJEE

THE Editor has done me the honour to ask me to write a short article stating some of the reminiscences of my time at the Presidency College in Calcutta. I am deeply grateful to him for the opportunity he has provided for jotting down a few memories of a time which may almost be called historical at the present moment.

It was just half a century ago, in 1888, that I passed the Matriculation Examination, then known as the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University, from Hare School with a small Government Scholarship and entered the First Year Class of the Presidency College. Except for a break of a few months in 1889-90, which for reasons of health and family circumstances I spent at Hughli College, I was a student at the Presidency College until the end of May, 1893. In the summer of that year I was awarded a Government Scholarship tenable in England and joined the University of Cambridge.

The Presidency College buildings in my time were much smaller than they are now. The main facade facing north and south had two lateral wings on each side in three floors. One of these wings ran parallel to College Street. The ground floor of the opposite wing was entirely occupied by the Library, where there was a splendid collection of books which the students could consult at any time, with tables for reading and writing. The rest of the ground floor was mainly devoted to the Physics Laboratory, of which the late Professor Sir Jagadish Bose was in charge. A part of the first floor was occupied by the office and rooms of the Principal of the College, and retiring rooms for the Professors. In the western wing of the first floor there were class rooms, with galleries, for Physics. The rest of the accommodation was devoted to lecture rooms and classes in the other subjects. A small detached one-storey building in the north-west corner of the main building housed the lecture rooms and laboratories for Chemistry. There were some classes held in the College in my time for the teaching of Geology, but for practical work the Geology students had to go to the Museum. There was no accommodation or arrangement for the teaching of any other Science subject. When I was there some Muslim students from the Calcutta Madrasa used to attend our classes in the First and Second Year. We had no connection with any other College. The University

had no system of post-graduate, or any other, teaching. Some of us used to go to the evening lectures in Physics of the Indian Science Association delivered by Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar and Father Lafont. They were both very popular and stimulating lecturers. Dr. Sarkar was a leading medical man in Calcutta in those days, practising Homœopathy, while Father Lafont was a professor at St. Xavier's College.

Without in any way wishing to disparage the excellent staff of professors and teachers that are at the Presidency College now, I may venture to say that we were very fortunate in the teachers under whom we were privileged to work in our time at the College. I remember that in the First Year Class we had an exceptionally brilliant circle of professors. We were taught English by F. J. Rowe and J. Mann. Rowe subsequently became Principal of the College. He had a charming personality, took a great interest in his pupils and taught us how to read and pronounce English prose and to appreciate the niceties of style. His method, I think, was more conversational than that of a set lecturer. He would ask one of the students to read a passage in the prose text-book we were doing, and then make us explain and comment on the passage that was read. He would then talk about all the points that arose therefrom. Mann was an accomplished scholar with a wide knowledge of English and classical poetry. He read with us Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* and Scott's *Marmion*. He did not make the students do the work in the way that Rowe did, but very effectively instilled in us a love for English poetry and for poetry in general. Mathematics we had the privilege of starting with Professor Bipin Vihari Gupta. He was both an excellent teacher and a humorous, kind-hearted and wise guide to the students under his care. We learned Sanskrit with Pandit Haris Chandra Kaviratna. He may not have been an exceptionally erudite scholar—I am not competent to pronounce judgment on the point—but he had very considerable experience and was an excellent teacher for beginners like ourselves. We used to read logic with Dr. Hoernle, who was then the Head of the Calcutta Madrasa, but used to come to the Presidency College to lecture on certain subjects. As is well known, he was a great authority in Sanskrit as well as Arabic and Persian, but the extent of his knowledge, like that of the mediæval school men, seemed to be universal. He spoke with a strong German accent, which sounded very odd to the ears of young students just fresh from school. We had to learn the histories of Rome and Greece. Mr. Stack used to teach this subject. No one attached much importance to it, and I think Stack left very little impression on the minds of his students. Last, but by no means least, I have to mention Sir J. C. Bose, who was then the junior professor of Physics and used to take

us in that subject. His lectures were always a great delight to all his pupils because even then he had a marvellous dexterity in experiments and demonstrations. So far as I can remember, he took very little interest in individual students amongst beginners like ourselves, but we could all see how he loved his subject and however unscientific some of us were in the bent of our mind, he succeeded not only in making us listen to him and watch him with rapt attention, but he had also the faculty of explaining in simple language some of the most abstruse scientific phenomena.

Later on in the First and Second Year Classes, we had the advantage of being taught by other professors as well, such as H. M. Percival in English, and C. Little in Mathematics. Percival was a comparatively young man in those days, but to us he seemed to know everything that was worth knowing in English or History. He was a dark Anglo-Indian, but so far as I knew he always identified himself with Indians, and although he did not mix intimately with the students in the way Rowe and Gupta did, it always struck me that he knew each student's capacities and limitations as well as was necessary. He always stood while lecturing to us, unlike the other professors in the non-scientific subjects. Little, I believe, was a very good mathematician, but he was a great disciplinarian and in those days we did not think that the extent to which he carried his disciplinary ideas was either necessary or good for us.

For the B. A. Examination my subjects were English, Mathematics and Physics with Chemistry. Apart from the names I have already mentioned in these subjects we had the privilege of being taught by several eminent men. I should like here to refer to only some of them, otherwise this article would become far too long. In the English subjects, besides the professors named above, we were taught by Principal Tawney and Professor Webb. Tawney was a man of vast erudition; he had been Senior Classic at Cambridge and was also a great Sanskrit scholar, although when he read Shakespeare with us there was no indication of his knowledge of any oriental language. He was a small spare man, quiet and reserved, with a dry humour, and, I believe, at heart he was a very kindly soul. He did not go out of his way to get to know individual students, but there is no doubt that he was a very observant man and knew more about us than we imagined. Webb was a minor poet and was closely associated with Rowe in the compilation of various text-books. But he made comparatively little impression on his pupils. In Physics we attended practical classes, held by Sir J. C. Bose, but I think Professor Bose devoted his time more to the M. A. students than

to us, since we did very elementary work in practical physics. In the lecture classes in Physics we were taught by Professor Booth, who was a remarkable personality. He was a big Irishman with a strong brogue, and in many ways very eccentric. I believe he was a very great mathematician and was also very good on the mathematical side of Physics. His method of teaching was unorthodox. Sometimes he would talk to us for a whole hour on Shakespeare instead of about Physics. He had a great contempt for shallow knowledge and for the ordinary examinations. All the same we liked him, and I may say most of us loved him.

Sir P. C. Ray was then the junior Professor in Chemistry. He was a fascinating as well as an inspiring lecturer, and took an immense interest in all his pupils. Later on we were taught Organic Chemistry by Sir Alexander Pedler who also was a very fine lecturer. He rose afterwards to be the Head of the College and Director of Public Instruction in Bengal. Sir P. C. Ray maintained his interest in all his pupils long after they left college and I have no doubt that the achievements of students from Bengal in modern Science are largely the result of the inspiring efforts of Sir J. C. Bose and Sir P. C. Ray. I always understood that Dr. P. K. Ray also exercised very great influence over his pupils and their future, but as I never had the privilege of reading with him I cannot speak from any personal knowledge.

In my fifth year I was reading English for the M. A. Examination but I did not sit for the Examination as I migrated to Cambridge.

In those days the Calcutta Presidency College was certainly considered to be the best in the whole University, and consequently attracted all able students who could afford to pay the comparatively high fees. Throughout my time practically all the highest places in the different examinations were secured by students of the College. Many of them in later life distinguished themselves in different professions. Perhaps I may mention the names of a few who were the object of admiration and emulation for all students of the College. There was Mr. Upendra Lal Majumdar; he stood first in every examination of the University which he took, and was known to have a very charming personality. Mr. K. C. De was also a brilliant student and afterwards had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service. Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar was popular with all his contemporaries and is now known as the foremost Indian historian. Junior to me in the College, but distinguished for their brilliant abilities and subsequent achievements, were Sir Bhupendra N. Mitra and Sir B. L. Mitter. We had no Common Room for the students of the College, and the opportunities were therefore limited for students of different years and classes to come into close contact. We

used to foregather in our respective class-rooms or on the wide varandahs of the College, and sometimes in the Library, but of course it was not possible to talk and gossip there. There was a College Debating Society which met once a week or once a fortnight, but only a fraction of the students took any real interest in the Society. Among those who did I may mention the names of Chitta Ranjan Das and Sir Charu Chandra Ghosh both of whom afterwards became eminent in their respective lives. I remember that in our First Year we started a Debating Society for our own class. The leaders who organised it were Surendra Nath Mallik and Jatindra Nath Basu. Both names later became familiar to everyone in Bengal. We took a certain amount of interest in politics and some of the students were enthusiastic followers of Surendra Nath Banerji and attended every meeting in Calcutta where he spoke. On the whole, however, I do not think that the average student in those days was so keenly interested in politics as he is at the present moment.

In one respect there has been a great advance in the College since my time. We had very little, if any, organised arrangements for games and recreation. If I remember rightly, there were a Cricket Club and a Football Club, but only a very small fraction of the students took any interest in them. The grounds available in or near the College were too small and unsuitable. In those days it was difficult to get to the Maidan for many of us who lived in distant parts of Calcutta. A large majority of the students came from outside Calcutta and lived in what were called students' messes, which varied greatly in comfort and the decencies of life. A large proportion of these students had only limited means. They worked hard and continuously. The whole object was to pass the examinations as quickly as possible and enter into some profession. There was no supervision over the messes. The Eden Hindu Hostel was started in my time, but accommodated only a very small proportion of the students.

On the whole I may say with truth and candour that, although from the point of view of intellectual preparation the College was well equipped, community life was deficient in many respects and there was comparatively little evidence at that time of the spirit of research and devotion to educational ideals which have been the notable characteristics of Bengal in recent decades.

Then and Now

R. N. GILCHRIST

WHEN the Editor of this magazine invited me to contribute to the Silver Jubilee Number, my first and almost unconscious reaction was to exclaim "How time flies"! The last few years of my official life have been so fully occupied that time has passed almost unnoticed, and when I reflected that it is twenty-eight years since I joined the staff of Presidency College, I was tempted to indulge the bent, natural to those advancing in years, of writing a few pages of reminiscences. However, as most of my life has been spent in the study, exposition or application of political problems, I have thought it more suitable to recall some of the more important developments of Indian political life which have come within my own experience.

But before I do so, I must recall the time spent happily at Presidency College. Those years include the foundation period of this magazine, the editors of which, past and present, I congratulate for maintaining its unbroken existence for a quarter of a century. I am glad to say I had some hand in its early history. For two years I had been editor of my own University magazine, and on joining Presidency College in 1911, I was very much surprised to find that the College had no students' magazine. The Principal, some enthusiastic students and myself, determined to remedy this defect. The present editor has been good enough to let me see the first issues of the magazine, and in one of them there is a reproduction of a photograph of those who co-operated in starting it. The plate contains four figures—the Principal (the late Mr. H. R. James), the editor and secretary, and myself. The editor and secretary, Pramatha Nath Banerjee and Jogesh Chandra Chakravarti, have since become well known figures in the University. Many others who have taken an active part in the conduct of the magazine's affairs have risen to high distinction; if I am not mistaken, one of those who in the early days appeared in the list of junior magazine officials later became President of the Indian National Congress.

In recalling those now far off days, it naturally gives me great satisfaction that the original workers laid sure and lasting foundations. No little credit for this must be given to the Principal, Mr. James, to whose memory I may be permitted to offer a humble tribute. I have

been told that Mr. Wordsworth, now of the *Statesman*, but then on the staff of the College, is contributing an article on Mr. James to this number. I shall, therefore, merely record my regard and respect for this great friend of Bengal and Bengali young men. To all connected with Presidency College during his principalship, professors or students, Mr. James's name is synonymous with single-minded devotion to the interests of the College and its students.

I joined the staff of Presidency College early in 1911, and to freshen my memory with regard to the College personnel of that time. I looked up the Bengal Civil List. It is a Civil List of the Bengal which included Bihar, Chota-Nagpur and Orissa, for the change of capital from Calcutta to Delhi and the re-distribution of provincial boundaries were made in the winter of 1911-1912. On looking through its pages I was somewhat startled to find that, of the long list of officers then in the Indian Educational Service, I am the only one now in the service of Government. Of my colleagues at Presidency College only one, I think, is now in service, namely, Professor Prafullachandra Ghosh, and he, a good old friend, tells me that he is on extension of service. Others (such as Professor Khagendra Nath Mitra, and Mr. S. C. Mahalanobis) have long since retired from Government service, but are still serving the University. Sir. P. C. Ray is still an active public figure, though his teaching days are over. Others—nature so demands—have passed the great divide—great men like Sir Jagadish Bose and Mr. H. M. Percival.

Examination of the Civil List of 1911 leads to one of the first of the miscellaneous reflections of a political nature which I propose to make. In 1911, most of the officers of the Indian Educational Service were Europeans; indeed, I think that, for a time, after the union of Eastern with Western Bengal, all the officers were Europeans, with possibly one exception. Yet, so rapid was political development in ten years' time, the Indian Educational Service, along with several other Imperial Services, was abolished so far as recruitment was concerned. Now, eight and twenty years later, the Service is practically extinct. On the completion of their service by a few officers, the Service will be a historical curiosity. With its demise will disappear, almost entirely, the European element in the administration of official education in Bengal. The old I. E. S. most effectively fulfilled its function. It was founded for the education of Indians, hence its main purpose was to compass its own destruction. It did so within much shorter a period than its founders could have contemplated.

What is true in education is true in all other spheres of administration. Of the large number of Imperial Services that existed in 1911, only two are left—the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Police. And not only are they fifty per cent. Indianised, but “simultaneous” examinations—an ideal scarcely whispered in 1911—have long since been introduced.

All this may mean very little to the present generation of students, but they were very vital issues for their fathers. So, too, the young men of to-day who have to read Political Science and constitutional history, cannot perhaps easily appreciate the extraordinarily quick development in the wider political life of the country.

In 1911, the Morley-Minto Reforms had just been initiated. India was then just emerging from a system of almost undiluted bureaucracy to parliamentary government. It is true that the Morley-Minto system was not meant to be the threshold to responsible government. Alarmed by the reports that his reforms might lead to an executive subservient to an elected legislature, Lord Morley felt obliged to say that they were in no sense to be regarded as a step towards a parliamentary system. In retrospect, such a statement seems almost childishly naive, for constitutional history does not suggest that a people can permanently be satisfied with the shadow of self-government. Nevertheless, in 1911, not even the most advanced thinkers would have ventured to forecast, that, twenty years later, India would be on the threshold not only of provincial autonomy, but of adult franchise. It is true that we have not yet achieved adult franchise, but Lord Lothian's Indian Franchise Committee of 1932 stopped short of recommending its adoption only because the administrative machinery of the country is not sufficiently highly developed to cope with it.

I wonder how many of the students of Presidency College realise that most of them were born under the Morley-Minto System. All of them must have been interested in the elections held two years ago, but do they appreciate the fact that at the time when they were born the electorate in Bengal consisted of about the same number of thousands as there are now millions? In the *Report of the Reforms Office, Bengal, 1932-37*, recently issued, I have drawn attention to this in the following words:—

The advance in electoral theory and practice in India has been so rapid that within the space of the normal service life of an Indian official it may be said that India has passed from a relatively narrow aristocracy to the verge of complete democracy or adult franchise. Many senior officials now in service can recall the days of nominated legislatures, which prevailed up to 1909. The reforms of Lords Morley and Minto, regarded in some quarters as so revolu-

tionary as to call for a statement from Lord Morley that they were in no way to be regarded as a step towards responsible or parliamentary government, created an indirect system of election through district boards and municipalities, with small separate electorates for Muhammadans, and separate constituencies for special interests. The number of electors in the direct elections for the Muhammadan community in 1919 was 6,346, and the combined electorate of municipal commissioners of certain specified municipalities, district and local boards, landholders for the divisions other than Chittagong, and municipal commissioners and landholders of the Chittagong Division, which formed the other constituencies, was 2,943; in other words, less than twenty years ago, the total electorate for that part of the community which now is approximately covered by territorial constituencies, was 9,289. From an electorate of approximately 9,300 to an estimated electorate of seven-and-a-half millions in the space of sixteen years—the Dyarchy was introduced in 1921—may fairly be termed rapid development.

The growth of the franchise is only an index of development in all directions. For many years we have had a system of parliamentary government. Under the Dyarchy half of the functions of Government—the transferred side—was conducted on the parliamentary system. Now there is practically complete responsibility. Little did Mr. Wordsworth or I, when we taught Political Science in Presidency College, away back in pre-war days, think that our students would become our ministers. For many years an old student of mine has been a minister; another, after being a minister, is Speaker of our local House of Commons; and many others are, or have been, members of the legislature. It warms the heart of an ex-professor to find his students in such responsible positions.

In social and economic life, advance has been equally noteworthy. Perhaps one of the most outstanding contrasts between 1911 and now lies in the development of women's education, and in the part they are now taking in public life. Few young women sought the benefits of university education thirty years ago; now, they are threatening to overcrowd the colleges. Politically, they are rapidly establishing a claim to complete equality with men. Seats are reserved for them in the legislature, and Lord Lothian's Committee has given its blessing to womanhood as well as manhood suffrage. Under the Dyarchy, the women's electorate reached the number of 41,931; at the first elections under the new constitution the number was 970,000. And soon—for the constitution so provides—every woman who is literate will become eligible to vote—a privilege not accorded to men. The new constitution also includes a provision (with certain reservations), that persons are not to be disqualified by sex from holding official posts.

With the change in the political complexion of the country has come a corresponding change in the attitude adopted towards political

studies. In 1911, political activity among students was taboo. There were restrictions even in respect to the type of book which might be prescribed. "Advanced" political thought—some of it (such as the works of Burke and Mill) must appear to us moderns as conservative—was thought not to be quite safe. But we have travelled far since then. From a French Revolution we have passed through a Russian Revolution, and Marx, Kropotkin and Lenin have to be studied as well as Aristotle, Hobbes and Locke. Without a knowledge of all types of political thought, a student cannot be expected to obtain a degree of the highest class: at least, as an examiner, I should certainly not concur in giving a first class to a student in the B Group of the M. A. Course of Political Economy and Political Philosophy unless he showed a grasp of modern "left" as well as "right" theory.

Now it may be said that it is an elementary civic duty of a senior student to become interested not only in politics but in the practical application of politics—in other words, he should interest himself in party politics. For every senior student (if he has reached his twenty-first birthday) is *ipso facto* a voter by having passed the Matriculation Examination. But, however desirable it may be in theory that a young voter should exercise his vote in an intelligent manner, my emphatic advice to students is to keep clear of party politics till they have taken their degrees and started their professional life. Pre-occupation with political affairs is apt to prove unduly absorbing at the expense of what is even far important for a young man—equipping himself properly for his career.

The new civic privileges of educated young men and women confer corresponding obligations. Education of the electorate, one of the main problems of all democracy, is a particularly insistent requirement in India, and here the young university graduate of Bengal has an urgent duty. The introduction of a responsible system of government, in which the executive is responsible to an elected legislature, is often looked on from too narrow a point of view. It is interpreted as meaning the subservience of the executive—the Cabinet, and the whole administrative system—to the members of legislature. But responsibility must be widely diffused. There must be a sense of responsibility not only among members of the legislature, but in the electorate. They must not make impossible demands on their leaders; in particular, they should not take any action which might tend to introduce party politics into the administrative system. The head of the executive, the Cabinet, is composed of party politicians, and must be amenable to the legislature, but a sharp distinction should be maintained between the executive "power" and the administrative machine. Indeed, the conventional

theory of Separation of Powers needs expansion nowadays to permit of a separation between the legislative, executive, judicial and administrative "powers" of government. No administrative system can be efficient, or effective, if it is liable to constant interference from the legislature. The function of an administration is to carry out the law, fairly and impartially, free from party and personal interests, and there is a crying need for leadership in this respect in our public life. Young university trained men and women can do a great deal to create a healthy public opinion in this respect.

Recently I have been mainly occupied in studying the first steps taken to bring in the new constitution—the election of our first legislature under Provincial Autonomy, and I have been impressed by one or two features which may be mentioned here (but my space is nearly exhausted).

One of the most urgent political requirements of these days is effective organisation of the electorate, and of its leaders, for the purpose of representation. This is not the work of a day, of course, but it seems to me that much public (and private) mind force is wasted. This is clearly brought out by an analysis of the first elections for the Bengal Legislative Assembly. Where parties are well organised, candidature is usually limited to two, or three persons, but at the first elections in many constituencies, excluding those in which seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes, there were many instances in which more than three candidates stood for election. The result is clearly shown in the following list of what in the *Report of the Reforms Office* has been called "hopeless candidature."

(I) GENERAL CONSTITUENCIES

| <i>Examples.</i> | <i>Number of votes polled by losing candidates.</i> | <i>Electorate.</i> |
|--|---|--------------------|
| 1. (Loser) 47 | ... | ... 21,394 |
| 2. (Last of four) 12 | ... | ... 20,232 |
| 3. (Loser) 35 | ... | ... 22,930 |
| 4. (Last of three) 73 | ... | ... 45,717 |
| 5. (Four candidates, three losers) 45, 14 & 10 | ... | ... 37,873 |
| 6. (Last of three) 168 | ... | ... 65,937 |
| 7. (Loser) 193 | ... | ... 54,399 |

(II) MUHAMMADAN CONSTITUENCIES

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|------------|
| 8. (Last of four) 19 | ... | ... 15,459 |
| 9. (Last of four) 44 | ... | ... 15,230 |

| <i>Examples.</i> | <i>Number of votes polled by losing candidates.</i> | | | <i>Electorate.</i> |
|------------------|---|-----|-----|--------------------|
| 10. | (Last of three) 60 | ... | ... | ... 27,787 |
| 11. | (Of three, two losers) 83 & 55 | ... | ... | ... 26,399 |
| 12. | (Nine candidates) ninth 58; four under 1,000 | ... | ... | ... 32,195 |
| 13. | (Of three, two losers) 101 & 61 | ... | ... | ... 18,881 |
| 14. | (Loser) 203 | ... | ... | ... 35,137 |
| 15. | (Last of four) 63 | ... | ... | ... 25,004 |
| 16. | (Last of three) 24 | ... | ... | ... 20,658 |

These figures speak for themselves.

Another direction in which a stronger public conscience is needed is in respect of non-genuine candidature, and here I may quote a paragraph of the Reforms Report.

No special reports were called on regarding the number of nomination papers rejected, but it appears that in all sixteen nomination papers were rejected in the case of the Assembly. As the tables show, there were 702 candidates for 203 contested seats, or an average of 3.5 candidates per seat and it is suggestive that of the withdrawals only six were made before scrutiny and 108 after; in other words 15.2 per cent. of the candidates withdrew after scrutiny. Of course no indication is available with respect to the cause of withdrawal, but one District Officer has expressed his views in unmistakable terms as follows:—

... it will not be out of place to mention that in some cases a person offered himself as a candidate for election with the sole object of realising money from some other candidate who was either anxious to get himself returned uncontested or desired very much that the other candidates would not seriously contest the election in order to ensure his return. This money-making game was played by some candidates and it seems that considerable money passed hands in this way. Some candidates withdrew their candidature on the prescribed date, while others sat on the fence and waited in the hope of increasing their demand till the eleventh hour and only a few days before the polling made an amicable arrangement undertaking not seriously to contest the election. In the latter case the whole election was nothing but a mere farce, as the return of a particular candidate was more than a foregone conclusion. It therefore seems desirable that some sort of provision should be made for withdrawal of candidature at least three days before the polling commences, so that the whole machinery of election may not be set in motion for nothing.

The real solution of these problems lies in more effective organisation, and the younger generation of politically-minded men and women, one hopes, will set themselves to this task. A leaven of clear thought and determined action is clearly called for from those best fitted to provide it.

One word more, before I finish these few notes. The most complex problem which calls for solution is the diffusion of education among the electorate. With the introduction of the new constitution, literacy and the franchise no longer go hand in hand. Hundreds of thousands of persons who cannot read or write a simple sentence now may take part in electing the legislature. Under the Dyarchy, literacy was assumed, and the voting system was arranged accordingly. Now voting is done by symbol, or picture; no one need be able to read or use a pen. The divorce of literacy and the franchise was deliberately made; but what of the next step? It lies not with London but with the local legislatures, for the new constitution has conferred wide powers on them in this respect. Is the next step to be adult franchise, a more realistic advance towards it, so that the province can adapt itself to progress in stages?

The present electorate, or rather potential electorate is somewhere about 7,000,000. Adult franchise would mean an electorate of about 24,000,000. At the first elections, the entire official force of government was immobilised from its normal work for a week—in some cases for nearly a fortnight. The cost of making electoral rolls and conducting elections is about fifteen lakhs of rupees. If the electorate is increased three or three and a half times, what will the effect be on the administrative system, and on the provincial budget? Under the constitution the maximum life of the Assembly is five years, but in a parliamentary system dissolutions may take place at any time. Suppose there were two general elections every five years, costing forty or fifty lakhs each, taking up two months of official time, to the exclusion of other business, what would be the effect on the province? Would it not be better first to spend the money in the diffusion of education among the people as a whole?

Such questions are neither rhetorical nor theoretical: they are imminent issues of local civic life. The students at Presidency College now will sooner or later be called to give an opinion on them. The questions are not easy, but they demand an answer, and I suggest that the sooner people begin seriously thinking about them the better. And they would make admirable subjects for discussion in College lecture rooms, seminars, or undergraduate organisations.

A Backnumber Speaks

MOHITKUMAR SEN GUPTA

IT gives me great pleasure to contribute once again to the Presidency College Magazine (which I edited in 1916 and 1917) after a lapse of over 20 years. My hearty felicitations to the present Editor to whom has fallen the distinction of bringing out the Silver Jubilee Number.

The opening of the Bengalee Section of the Magazine has resulted in the students contributing much more freely than in our days. Its future now seems to be assured satisfying as it does the student's urge for literary expression in his own tongue.

A college magazine is inevitably loaded with articles on academic subjects. It will make for variety and help to bring out unsuspected talent if other features of interest are introduced—prints of good photographs, if original drawings are too much to expect, appreciations of music, travel experiences, experiments in the matter of food and health and the like. Students who have interests other than academic generally fight shy of the magazine. They will probably have to be coaxed to making their first contribution.

In a college values must differ somewhat from what is experienced in the work-a-day world. It is, however, felt that it will be in keeping with the essential purpose of the College Magazine to make it more representative of the thoughts and activities of the students in the manner proposed.

Can a corner be found for old students also? They may have some interesting things to say on occasions. They are spread all over the country, in a variety of occupations, and although they are inclined to sit back thinking they are backnumbers, some of them, it may be hoped, can get into the stride without much difficulty. For instance, somebody may write about life in the Army. Normally this, of all services, has the greatest attraction for the young. In Bengal it is unfortunately otherwise. At present there are about 300 Indian Commissioned Officers in the fighting services of the Army, Bengal's contribution being less than a dozen. It is pleasing to note, however, that one of the first Indians to become a Major among the combatants is a Bengalee, Major Satya Brata Sinha Roy of the 1st/7th Royal Rajput Regiment. Another Bengalee, Captain Sushil Kumar Ghosh

has qualified for admission to the Staff College, Quetta, which he will join shortly.

The annual intake of Indian Officers recruited direct is now about 25. The total number of Commissioned Officers in the Indian Army is in the neighbourhood of 6000 so that the number of officers recruited annually is almost as many as in all Civil departments (Central and Provincial) taken together. When the pace of Indianisation increases the recruitment will be substantially more. Even without trying to convert those who are believers in non-violence, it may be claimed that there is room for useful publicity here. Ignorance of army life is without doubt one of the chief reasons for the terrible backwardness of Bengal in this important respect.

In the Royal Indian Navy and the Air Force the representation of Bengal is not so meagre, possibly because they offer more interesting careers. There can, however, be no doubt that Bengal has a lot of leeway to make up. Will Presidency College give a lead?

Reminiscences

PROFESSOR B. B. ROY.

FOR a Special Number one would like to write something with a bias on something far away and forgotten ; but the wish is not easily fulfilled. I have not reached "anecdote" but can write in a faintly reminiscent vein about matters which are still well remembered.

1916-20 were placid years at the Presidency College. The storms were over and as a student I found singularly little in the outside world to distract me. Mr. Wordsworth was Principal for a time and then Mr. Barrow whom I had known at Chittagong. Mr. Wordsworth is still fortunately in Calcutta writing to a wider circle than he had at the Presidency College, although he is still in touch with the younger generation and looks back on his teaching life with joy: this is not the time to write reminiscently about him. Mr. Barrow has retired from India and the present generation knows him not. A somewhat cynical and forbidding exterior concealed a good heart. There are many to-day who can remember much quiet help and advice from him which put them on the road to a career. His teaching was for the select ; it reached a high quality like his English which, in diction and phrasing, had both suppleness and distinction. But he had honest doubts about educational methods and the whole theory of "English education" in India and he never concealed those doubts.

I vividly remember the coming of Mr. Zachariah. He got himself liked the moment he came, although his lectures were in the beginning a little difficult to follow. His English was much like that of a cultured Englishman ; it had its charm but unsophisticated ears had to get used to it. He immediately created the impression of one who prepared his lectures carefully and took his life as a teacher seriously. His very shyness was pleasing ; but nobody dared "rag" him.

J. C. Coyaji, J. N. Das-Gupta, S. C. Mahalanobis, D. N. Mullick were all there lecturing to their classes and occasionally presiding at functions. Grave men, with many years of teaching behind them, they never encouraged familiarity ; but there was something pleasing about their aloofness.

Of the great Manmohan Ghosh I wrote some fourteen years ago in a Special Number of this Magazine: I need not write again. Laurence

Binyon in his Introduction to Manmohan Ghosh's Poems did me the honour of quoting a sentence from my article obviously with approval. Twenty-two years have elapsed since I first saw and heard him: I still think that as a creative teacher of English poetry (and prose) he has had few equals.

These are the men whom I remember with pride and joy. I cannot help thinking that theirs was a many-sided influence not only on those who had an eye on "good results" but on all members of the College.

I was a member of the English staff from 1921 to 1924 with a break of four months. I recall many happy memories. Some senior men, not in the English Department alone, were extremely helpful. I shall never forget how Dr. Adityanath Mookerjee helped me through a difficult philosophical passage in one of Haldane's essays. He had finished his day's work and was resting in an easy chair. I came up to him shyly and mentioned my inability to explain abstruse references to Kant and Hegel. "Let me light my cheroot first" he said in that deep, grave voice that we all remember him by. The Burma cheroot was lighted in the deliberate manner of the connoisseur and Dr. Mukerji stayed half an hour overtime reducing intricacies of Hegelian metaphysics into plain English.

My relations with students were cordial: they called me "a cocoanut" by which they meant that I was not as rough as I sometimes looked. My relations with the Educational Secretariat were not so happy. I need not dwell on them now although the columns of the Calcutta Press and a Bengal Government *communique* were full of them towards the end of 1924. Being young and full of vigour I fought hard; a quiet exit from the Educational Service did not seem worth while.

Reminiscences

PRAPHULLAKUMAR SARKAR

AS I am writing this, old memories come floating back to my mind—memories of six bright years of my youth. Every boy in those days used to dream of studying in the Presidency College. Makers of modern Bengal, persons who shone in every sphere of life, were almost all products of this great institution. It had a galaxy of professors whose fame travelled far beyond this land. It was therefore the ambition of every young man to breathe the air surcharged with their spirit and tread on the ground hallowed by their association.

The first few days of my college life brought strange experience and pleasant sensation. Prof. T. S. Sterling who took the English class told us that we had ceased to be boys and were grown-up men. This was a great compliment. What we appreciated more was the newly-gained freedom to join or abstain from any particular class as we liked—a freedom which was circumscribed only by a fear of loss of percentage, but was otherwise unfettered. Changing of class rooms after each period was also a great fun. But soon these novelties wore out and we settled down to studies. Senior students, in the beginning, looked down upon us, but gradually estrangement was followed by acquaintance and acquaintance ripened into friendship. We became members of a big family and took our share in the corporate life and activities of the institution.

I liked the row of tall *Deodar* trees in front of the College which had a dignified appearance. The spacious staircase presented an animated spectacle everyday at 11 a.m. when the students and the teachers would go up. Prof. M. Ghosh would slowly mount the steps, deeply enveloped in thought. Prof. J. N. Das Gupta would get down from the car and ascend the building with a stooping gait. Prof. Coyajee would come briskly with a smile in his lips. Prof. P. C. Ghosh would cross the floor with books in both hands. We watched these masters pass, standing in groups. We had Messrs. Barrow and Wordsworth as our Principal, by turn. Mr. Barrow was not communicative and a curtain of melancholy always hung over him. Mr. Wordsworth spoke to us with a sympathetic twinkle in his eye and took keen interest in all the affairs of the College.

What a care-free life it was in those days! No anxiety save those of the examinations. When I am nowadays faced with debits and credits, budgets and appropriations, financial reviews and annual accounts, there is a sub-conscious yearning to go back to the time when I could spend hours over Plato's *Republic*, Bertrand Russel's *Principles of Social Reconstruction* or Tagore's poems. But it is no good weeping over the past; to-day and to-morrow have their own attractions.

My most favourite spot in the whole building was the College Library. I wonder if the seating arrangements are now the same as before. There were three vertical lines of chairs, about twenty in each row. I, however, shunned these seats, as they were often invaded by a subdued tone of conversation from the neighbours. I preferred the solitary seats in between two almirahs facing windows on the western side of the hall. There I was left in peace and there was nothing to disturb me except the rustling leaves of the tree outside which sent whispers into my ears.

As years rolled by, I became a senior scholar. As a student, I was often seized with an overpowering desire to become a lecturer myself and the opportunity presented itself when Prof. Coyajee went away as a member of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency. To be a teacher in the same college where one was a pupil before, is a feather to one's cap and I had that satisfaction before joining the Accounts Department.

My pen picture is now complete. Perhaps this is my last contribution to the Presidency College Magazine which published many articles of mine. Although it is needless, I want to pay a tribute to the College to which I am profoundly indebted. Standing on the threshold of middle age, I salute my youth, I salute the institution where it flowered, and I salute the young men of to-day in whom I see it reflected.

Wild Swans

(From Rabindranath Tagore's poem *Balaka*)

RAI LALITMOHAN CHATTERJEE BAHADUR

Gleaming in lights of eve the winding Jhelum stray'd,
—Then dusk'd like a curv'd sword-blade
That in the sheath you hide;
Day ebb'd: with night's black tide
The stars, like offer'd flowers, floated down the stream:
The dark hill-foot did seem,
With rows of deodars pale
Like the slumber-stiff'd speech of the dreaming vale!

Then suddenly heard I
The evening sky
Was swept with flash of sound that pass'd away
Farther and farther off upon its endless way!
—O wild swans!
Drunk with the tempest's madness those your vans
With sound of laughter went
Awakening all the sleeping sky to wonderment!
The sound of your wings' stroke
Like *apsar* maidens broke
The holy meditation of the Brooding Quiet:
A-shiver set
The mountains in the dark that stood:
Shiver'd the deodar wood....

O swans in flight!
To me you've opened what the silence hid to-night:
Under it all I hear,
Far and near,
Sound of quick and quivering wings!
The grass that springs
Flaps its wings in the sod, its sky:
Deep and all unseen where they lie

WILD SWANS

L. M. CHATTERJEE

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In sprouts their wings have spread
The seeds in their dark bed:
The earth beneath me reels,
The very woods and hills
Are in flight, passing on and on
From isle to isle, from th' Unknown to the More Unknown!...

In my heart I seem'd to hear,
With myriad birds in flight
By day and night,
From its nest another Bird had flown
On some quest from shore to shore unknown!
From countless wings *this* music thrill'd the sphere—
“Not here, not here, elsewhere, some other where!”...

Failure of Modern Education

A Critique of Criticisms

DR. PRAFULLACHANDRA BASU

IN recent years our educational system has come in for a good deal of blatant criticism. Nobody claims the present system to be perfect. As one who has been a teacher for more than a quarter of a century I know the many imperfections which exist and which await sufficient funds and qualified men to remove them. Also a frank adjustment of education and social life is necessary.

But few have thought or written on these deep problems of life and education. The critics of modern education, especially in recent years, have not even touched the main problems. They are too superficial for that. Such criticisms have a background which is coloured and distorted by the pre-conceived ideas of the critics. The layman considers nothing as the job of the expert. And the march of so-called democratic ideas has put the laymen on a high pedestal. Here I should not be misunderstood. In the West democracy functions by always inviting and considering expert opinion on every problem. In India, unfortunately, this has not happened. Because the educated are unemployed, therefore they have been discredited and condemned *en masse*. The whole blame has been thrown on the system of education. The teachers have been condemned to such an extent that those who are in charge of schools are looked upon with contempt by all including their students and are probably themselves also ashamed of their vocation in life. Even students and the young educated men and women are generally considered to be worthless. This is no language of exaggeration. I could quote, in support of my statement, some of the most outstanding names in the public life of India.

The fact is that the maladjustment between social life and education has been due to causes which have less to do with education than with social life. By all means reform and re-organise education but you do not enhance culture or even adaptability—if you are merely hedonistic—by destroying or curtailing higher education.

This kind of criticism is a psychological reflex of the public men of the country. They have failed to ordain the affairs of the community in such a way as to harmonise social life with cultural progress.

Careers for young men and women have been so limited that the educated have little scope for careers which will advance the worldly progress of both themselves and the community. A well-thought-out and complete overhaul of the organisation of social life is more necessary than, or at least as necessary as, the overhaul of the educational system.

In India at present there is not a single occupation which is not very much crowded. Some critics want our educated unemployed to be settled on land as agricultural communities. So far as the unemployed are immediately concerned this method may be of some use. But it helps in no way the solution of a national problem, for the condition of peasants is such that obviously there is overcrowding in the agricultural line. Nor can you raise and maintain a vast country as primitive agriculturists and individual craftsmen. Every improvement of agricultural methods will liberate more men from the land, who must be absorbed elsewhere. No improvement in the work of the individual artisan can make him a successful competitor of the large-scale industries.

Other critics again, blame the boys for rushing to colleges and wasting time. This is not only wrong but savours of meanness. Boys have utilised every opportunity that the country offers as a training for career. The technical and vocational institutions in the country are only a few and the standard of training in most of them is of an inferior type. Yet all such institutions are overcrowded and all of them have to reject a large number of boys seeking admission into them. Our medical and engineering institutions are equally overcrowded. The criticism, therefore, is incorrect when it says that our boys do not avail themselves of the opportunities for training offered them. The question really is: what should the surplus population do? Will it be to the good of the country and themselves if a large number of boys were held up at the school or pre-school stage? That will create greater unemployment among coolies, hawkers, peasants, and factory labourers. That will also help to degrade the whole population.

Picture the condition of the country and see the tragic situation. In our country many epidemic diseases are practically endemic, hygienic conditions are absent, and direct health measures do not exist. Yet there is unemployment among qualified doctors. We require many more roads and bridges to facilitate communication within the country. Also more railways, shipping and other means of transport. Yet there is unemployment among qualified engineers. The country requires justice to be more widely administered even in the remotest parts. Yet

there is awful unemployment among those qualified in law. Social welfare work on a very wide scale is necessary. Practically the whole country is illiterate and we know that without education we can make no progress. Yet our graduates walk the streets in thousands without jobs.

I could go on multiplying such instances of social maladjustment where there is great need for work and there exist qualified men and women to do that work. Yet the latter are unemployed and the former remains undone.

The question is: who is responsible for this condition of the community's life? Obviously those who are in control of the country's destiny. Yet it is these people who try to throw the whole blame from off their own shoulders, which are its legitimate place, on to the shoulders of others, of anybody, in fact—the teacher, the university, and comical of all, the students. Students at any rate have little to blame. For without institutions for training they cannot get themselves trained. They cannot start such institutions. After receiving what training is afforded they are blamed for having had worthless training. And they find themselves at the end of a blind alley.

More, therefore, than anybody else it is upon the public men and controllers of social life that the responsibility for the present maladjustment lies heavily. Instead of indulging in irresponsible criticism and not quite honest effort to disavow their part in the evil, they must find careers for young men and women and see that the young are properly trained for such careers.

Finding of careers is a political, economic, and administrative problem which is beyond the control of the university, the teacher, and the student. The sooner this is realised the better will be the prospects of real solution of the national problem by fastening the responsibility on the proper quarters.

I do not say that the solution is easy or can be immediate. But so far criticism has been directed towards wrong quarters. The problem must be tackled by those who are in administrative charge of the country but at present it is expected that the university and the teacher will solve it. They must help in devising training institutions but before the latter can be successful there must be careers open to the products of these institutions. And opening of careers is wholly outside the purview of the university or the teacher or the student.

Education in a Changing World

PRINCIPAL JITENDRAMOHAN SEN

THE present is a period of transition in educational endeavours. Former methods of teaching, courses of study, have all been called to account. They have been accused of lagging behind; of destructing the progress of those salutary forces moving toward the goal of true democracy. It is felt by teachers that they have often hindered rather than furthered the full development of children. Many new educational theories are therefore abroad to challenge the old. There is genuine, widespread effort to restate the function of the school—to revise its operation in terms of modern social conditions. In this hour of the marshalling of vigorous new forces, there is imperative need for careful planning to avoid confusion; for calm analysis of the problems confronting us; for a sound point of view that will protect the school from theories rashly and hastily conceived.

Child development! This is the occupation of all of us who are associated with educational work, whether or not we consciously recognize the fact. For children will always grow, in the sense that they become different from the individuals they were at an earlier stage, in spite of schools, homes, good or bad conditions surrounding them. They will grow towards one sort of adulthood or another. It is because we have assumed the need for guiding this growth that schools have been organized, and teachers appointed. *The word development implies growth towards certain desirable goals.* In attempting to guide children's growth, the school has gradually assumed much of the responsibility for their complete development—their attainment of the best end in life that can be conceived.

But what is this best end? What constitutes complete child development? How is it best achieved? On these three significant questions there is at present considerable disagreement. As teachers we are constantly faced with the evidence of transition in school practices and confusion, if not of conflict, in educational viewpoints.

We are daily challenged to take stock of our ideas and our procedures. A conscientious teacher cannot but ask himself over and over again: "Am I really working for the most important outcomes? Am I proceeding in the most effective way to achieve these ends?" It is vastly more difficult to answer than to ask such questions. One is

literally forced to develop a *philosophy of life and of teaching* in order to answer them. One finds it necessary to clarify the aims of elementary education—to enumerate the real fundamentals in the growth of children. The *basic question* before the elementary school is this: What do children *need* for their fullest development, in view of their natures, and in view of the nature of the world in which they live? As teachers we need to analyze this problem in order to know whether we are working in the most effective way.

Life is a continuous process of expressing tendencies, of giving outlets to basic urges and wants. The young child brings with him on his first day at school a large assortment of tendencies to feel and to do, an inseparable mixture of inborn and learned traits. These are the raw materials of education. The happy, successful individual is the one who has acquired means of giving abundant, satisfying outlets to many of his fundamental tendencies, and who has learned to do this in ways that are socially acceptable.

This suggests the fact that *life is also a never-ending process of making adjustments*. From birth onward the child is forced to adjust to the world about him. For instance, the baby must eat some unpalatable food when he craves for sweet things. He must go to bed when he is eager to play. With each increase in his abilities to move about or to communicate he faces new problems of adjustment. He must conform to the conditions of the physical world. The law of gravitation gives him no little trouble, but there is nothing to do but conform to it.

Much more difficult to understand and to meet are the demands for adjustment made upon him by the necessity of living in the world with other people. So complex and incessant are the demands of modern life that large numbers of people never learn to make the necessary adjustments in satisfactory ways. Their maladjustment is usually evident in one of two forms:—(1) evasion of responsibility and withdrawal from reality, or (2) conflict with the requirements set up by society. One frequently sees pupils learning unsatisfactory modes of response when they are passively incapable or belligerently destructive.

The school, then, should be greatly concerned that children learn to express themselves richly and satisfyingly, through a fearless facing of reality, and through means that are socially acceptable so that happiness and satisfying adjustments may result. Thus the teacher's problem is twofold: not only must he provide many and varied opportunities for the expression of the child's basic tendencies, but he must also furnish such skilful guidance that the child comes to express

himself in ways that are socially desirable. The teacher needs to avoid two common misconceptions. The first of these is the conception that development results from self-expression, of all types, at all times, in all places, irrespective of outcome or consequence. *Such a conception put into practice can lead only to anarchy.* The other error is the insistence upon unquestioning, sometimes unthinking, conformity to adult standards without regard to the present life of the child. *Success in this effort must inevitably result in stamping out the child's individuality and initiative,* and in making him satisfied to follow, afraid to think. A child may grow in selfishness, in timidity, in moroseness, in dishonesty; or he may grow in thoughtfulness, in enthusiasm for adventure, in willingness to co-operate, tolerate, and understand, in dependability and integrity. The direction that growth will take depends upon the wisdom with which, as teachers and parents, we set up conditions and influences in the child's environment.

An effective programme of education must take the child as he is, and build upon his tendencies to respond and to act. We should be greatly concerned with the present characteristics of children, since these are the starting point for all attempts to develop other or better ones. It is not hard to enumerate the outstanding traits of normal children. Incessant activity, emotional activity—the irrepressible tendency to be doing something continually—is strikingly evident, so much so that a passive child is indeed cause for serious concern. Children prefer experience, first-hand experience, here-and-now experience, to all possible substitutes.

Children, as well as adults, are forever setting up aims, goals, ends, purposes. Life itself consists of the pursuit of those things which we value and consequently purpose to achieve. No healthy activity of mind or body occurs except in pursuit of a goal. Purpose is absolutely fundamental in life and in education.

It is helpful, once in a while, to consider what should constitute an ideal programme for a young child, irrespective of customary conceptions of the school and its activities. In planning such a programme, we would be sure to provide abundant, almost continuous physical activity, much of it out of doors, *including a training in basic arts and crafts of the country.* We would wish to insure that children worked and played together in numerous co-operative enterprises. We would insist that children have a wide variety of experiences, that they explore their environment in its manifold aspects, that they be encouraged to question, to experiment, to manipulate. We should think of the children's health and physical development and be alert for

indications of intellectual growth—clearer understanding of relationships, deeper appreciation of the significance of things. We would be equally concerned with the emotional life, the development of satisfying emotional outlets and the building up of wholesome emotional habits. Whether thinking of the individual and his welfare, or of the demands of social life, we would value highly and would seek upon all occasions to further initiative, self-reliance, co-operativeness, purposes in life, interest in the world about, intellectual and moral honesty.

If such are the needs of the child and the social traits valued by society, the school must work for these things. The teacher's function is to deal with the whole child, his development, and his adjustment to life with all its complexity. Life is complex, almost beyond comprehension. Adjustment is difficult, a life-long process. Only through the effective utilization of the learner's present activities and 'drives' to action, can full development and happy adjustment be secured.

The Wardha Scheme of Education : A Symposium

I

SIR ALBION BANERJI

A Criticism

MR. Gandhi starts with the assumption that English, having been made the medium of instruction in all the European branches of learning, has created a permanent barrier between the highly educated few and the uneducated many. He asserts that it has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses, and has maimed the educated classes mentally for life, and made them strangers in their own land.

It may perhaps be unknown to the present generation, especially as Mahatma Gandhi has made no reference whatsoever to it, that the controversy that he has now raised as between English education and the education through the medium of the vernaculars, is not a new one, and it is not only unfortunate but also misleading, that no reference has been made to the past history of such controversy in India. What is there in his exposition in cognition of the fact that whatever India owes to-day in the field of politics, social reforms and even nationalism is due almost entirely to the fight which was put up by the advocates of English education a hundred years ago, amongst whom Ram Mohun Roy was one of the most prominent? It was about that time in the early part of the nineteenth century, when the British Government persuaded by the Orientalists, first sanctioned the establishment of a Sanskrit college. In those days all the different parts of India were divided by long distances, and also linguistically, politically and socially, more so than they are to-day. There was no question, for example, of organising the spread of a common language such as Hindi, for the whole of India. The major portion of India was still under indigenous rule, and the consolidation of the British power in India, commencing from Fort Saint George in Madras, was only just commencing. At that time the people who were still conservative and jealous of their ancient culture were naturally more than they are to-day, anxious to preserve it against the encroachment that may be made by any foreign language, or Western ideals,

heralded by the European race, namely the British, which finally succeeded in establishing their rule in the country. At that time, Ram Mohun Roy stood by the side of the introduction of English education, and declared himself as an Anglicist, although he was versed in no less than twenty-four different languages of the world, and was himself a renowned Sanskrit scholar, and fought with all the texts of the old Hindu Scriptures, especially the Upanishad, against idolatry and all the corrupt forms of later Hinduism to establish the Monotheistic religion through the Brahma Samaj. One would have expected a man of his calibre and extensive attainments to take the side of Sanskrit against English, for no doubt his greatest work was religious reform, and that he did not expect to carry out with the aid of English, but with the aid of a knowledge of the Hindu scriptures and the spread of correct ideas of religion, based on the philosophy of the Upanishads, uncontaminated by any thing that came from the West. At this juncture, therefore, it will not be unprofitable to go back a hundred years in the cultural history of India as a whole, and see for ourselves, what were the leading considerations of that period that finally persuaded the British Government to encourage English education, which they knew, in the bottom of their hearts, would ultimately lead to their own political downfall.

Ram Mohun Roy wrote a letter to Lord Amherst, Governor-General in Council during the time when the controversy was at its height, on English education. I quote a few sentences from this letter. Referring to the establishment of a college in Calcutta he stated that it would enable the natives of India to be given education in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and Universal Sciences, which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection and which has raised them above the inhabitants of the other parts of the world. But he questioned the utility of establishing a Sanskrit school with Hindu pundits to impart such knowledge as is current in India. He said, "The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtleties since then produced by speculative men."

In spite of all the prejudice thus prevailing against the introduction of English education, through the efforts of Ram Mohun Roy the British Government established a Hindu College for English education in 1824. Those who have studied the history of education in India during the past century, know how after tremendous argument between the East India Company Directors and the Home Government, the controversy was finally settled by the famous dispatch of Sir Charles Wood, who is the grandfather of the present Lord Halifax,

and who was then the Secretary of State for India. Through the early days of the Indian National Congress, this political document was considered to be a second Magna Charta of India after Queen Victoria had issued her proclamation in 1858.

Can anyone deny that had the British Parliament then not ratified the policy of Sir C. Wood's dispatch, the political history of India to-day might have been quite different? Subsequent establishment of the Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, and the spread of English education, involving the study of English political writers like John Stuart Mill, Locke, Hume and Herbert Spencer, philosophers and scientists too numerous to mention, created a new outlook, and, in fact, contributed to the formation of a united national consciousness, favouring the political institutions of the West. Mahatma Gandhi now wishes to put the clock back a hundred years, perhaps overlooking the possibility that democracy shall become the accepted political doctrine suitable for India's future growth as a nation. I propose in this article to examine his scheme which, coming as it does from such a disinterested party, must receive throughout the country a very venerable and almost subservient attention. But we must not forget facts, nor can we overlook various technical difficulties which have marred the spread of education from want of foresight and historical perspective, even in the Western countries of the world. To put it briefly, the scheme contemplates the reversion to the mediæval period of history, ignoring the great currents that are flowing in between all the countries of the world to-day, brought about by the development of scientific knowledge, inventions, and a new National Economy in the field of production and distribution. Mr. Gandhi's scheme, in effect, is similar to the Charka, or the spinning wheel, as against factorial industries. His advocacy of Hindi as the lingua franca of India is, metaphorically speaking, similar in character to his economic doctrine of the Charka, fully contemplating a return to the old primitive state of Hindu civilization and Hindu social and political conditions, ignoring altogether the divergent elements, which have now been created by the impact which India has had with the Western world, for two hundred years, the results of which cannot be obliterated. It may be considered uncharitable for one to suppose that this is a plan in disguise to stop the tide of Democracy in India, and to give a place for Dictatorship or Autocracy as of old. This scheme is to be self-supporting, as explained by Mahatma Gandhi in the following terms: "Primary education extending over a period of seven years or longer, covering all the subjects up to the Matriculation standard, except English, a vocation used as the vehicle for addressing it to the

minds of boys and girls in all departments of knowledge, should take the place of what passes to-day under the name of primary, middle and high-school education. Such education must be self-supporting, in fact self-support is the acid test of its reality." He lays much emphasis on the principle handed down through the ages, not only through our own sages, but also Plato and Aristotle, that education should not have for its primary motive earning one's living. He further makes the rather unpractical suggestion, that primary education should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in the vocations learned, or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the State. As regards Universities, he says, higher education should be left to private enterprise and State Universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting from the fees charged for examinations.

These conceptions betray a conflict between two schools of thinking. First, those who advocate residential universities, of which India afforded the earliest example, and second, those who believe in examining machineries to turn out diploma and degree holders.

Let us consider for a few moments Mr. Gandhi's scheme in detail. It is based on the following principles: (1) The course of primary education should be extended at least to seven years, and should include the knowledge gained up to the Matriculation standard, less English and plus vocation. (2) Vocation should serve a double purpose, to enable the pupil to pay for his tuition through the product of his labour. (3) This primary education should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in the vocations learned, or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the State. (4) Higher education should be left to private enterprises, the State universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged.

Anticipating objections, Mr. Gandhi has answered a few of them by saying, that although there will be wastage of raw materials, there will be gain by each pupil. The State must absorb products for its own requirements, and finally, great will be the demand of such things as do not come into unfair competition with any indigenous manufactures.

To make the scheme spectacular and rouse in the minds of the people a glowing picture of rural and urban reconstruction, Mr. Gandhi describes the ultimate results in the following words. "My plan to impart primary education through the medium of the village handicrafts, is conceived as the spearhead of a social revolution, fraught with the most far-seeing consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral base

to the relationship between the city and the village, and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes." It is not very clear how the city is to co-ordinate in this scheme of industrial revolution in rural parts. The first comprehensive criticism of Mr. Gandhi's proposals was made immediately after it was published, by a great authority on education, Dr. C. R. Reddy. He asked the question, namely, whether primary education should not be the concern of the State, seeing that it has a certain amount of citizenship value. Mr. Reddy touches the true notes, when he foreshadows the possibility of Socialism as a practical doctrine in politics, bringing more of the public activities of the nation under Government direction and control, and in this opinion he does not differentiate between the responsibilities devolving on the Government under (1) Primary education and (2) University, Agricultural Engineering and other technological institutions, also research work. I shall not dwell on the controversy regarding the substitution of Hindi for English as the mother tongue. Raising the voice of doubt in regard to the very foundation of Mr. Gandhi's scheme, Mr. Reddy certainly does not agree to the view that university education and higher studies should be left entirely to private enterprise.

Let us take the opinion of another education expert, who is the Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University. He says the theory that education can and should be entirely self-supporting by the sale of the products of child labour is untenable, and the inevitable result would be that the child would come to be treated merely as a producer and not as a personality; furthermore the scheme implies that the teachers should be contented to carry on their work for little or no money. Recently at the convocation of the Mysore University a distinguished Madras educationist made some pregnant observations which are very relevant to the present subject. I record a few from his address. "I am not among those who believe that the system of education operated in 1835, and developed in the course of the century, was an unredeemed failure. It is futile to speculate what we should have been if the opposite school had won in 1835. It is conceivable that we should have been worse." Then again, he says, "The complete replacement of a living foreign tongue by the mother tongue is an efficient instrument of national culture in all the departments of national life and culture, and yet the obstacles in the way of making it such an instrument are appallingly great and almost insuperable."

Before I discuss the particular point, namely, the abolition of the English language as the medium of instruction throughout the country,

it would be well to go back again to a period, when the British policy regarding higher education for Indians, a century ago, decided to introduce Western education in English as against Oriental scholarship. According to Bentinck and Macaulay, English civilisation was sound, Hindu civilisation had various defects; for the administration and development of the country, English-knowing natives were required. When the final settlement of 1835 was made Macaulay hoped, optimistically, for the day when the "educated Indian would be English in taste, opinions, and morals, and the English connection with India would thereby be firmly and forever established."

We have already remarked in a previous paragraph in this article, that the British statesmen who made such a decision, never anticipated that English education, in the space of a century, would bring such a tremendous change in the moral and mental outlook of the people and would make them acquire the attitude of governing themselves, by the study of Political Science, Political Economy, and all the connected modern works relating to Democracy and Parliamentary Institutions. In spite of the British connection being firmly established, to the great disappointment, no doubt, of those who came in later years, it was found that there was a growing feeling in the country for the severance of that connection, and for independence, a political creed which has now been officially adopted by the Indian National Congress. But we must give credit to the Empire builders of England of that period, to the extent that at least two of the most famous in British Indian history, namely, Sir Thomas Munro and Lord Macaulay, did foresee as a result of that policy a change in the character of the Indian peoples, "to such an extent as to make them able to govern and protect themselves." These words are quoted from Munro's Minutes. Let us now turn to Macaulay. He was more emphatic than that, and his famous words, often quoted by Indian politicians, are worth repeating in this connection. He said, "Having become instructed in European knowledge, our Indian subjects may, in some future age, demand European institutions," and he added, "whether such a day will ever come, I know not, but never will I attempt to avert or retard it: whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history." The Indian cannot for a moment deny that the result of English education and the products of that education amongst the various groups of peoples in different provinces are such that, politically and educationally, India has small cause for shame. Now, therefore, in spite of the fact that Western learning has encouraged the growth of Nationalism so that India can work out her political destiny for herself, we are now asked by the greatest political leader of the day

to go back another hundred years and avoid everything Western with the main object of resuscitating village life, right from the bottom, and set up an educational system purely on the basis of guilds, thus indirectly perhaps bring about the re-establishment of a kind of class system, for all the various arts and crafts of India. The industrial condition for the production of commodities required by the Indian peoples of all creeds must necessarily create groups both in rural and urban areas, which may not all have the same standard of education, or the same political outlook and will thus be divided in interests.

Only three decades ago, as the chief executive head of the Government of Cochin, which by the way stands foremost in point of literacy in the whole of India, I formulated a scheme of education, which was improved in regard to its technical details by the great educationist, John Vansomeran Pope, whose services I obtained for a period for this special work. The main point outlying that scheme was that education should no longer be a kind of a hall mark for securing Government appointments. It was incumbent upon the people of India, especially the Cochin subjects of the Maharajah, to so educate themselves as to make them able to develop the resources of their own country. By this process the whole problem of unemployment would solve itself, and the educated classes would not consider the Government Services as the sole aim of their life's ambition. Vocational teaching was to be provided for by the new policy of Government, not only to develop cottage industry, but also by subsidy and pioneering to encourage capitalists to use their money, often hoarded and lying idle, for the purpose of production. This does not often happen because education was, for the most part, literary, and not practical, and secondly because the wealthier classes who had the capital, were too timid and often when they had modern ideas, they could not find competent men to initiate and work out their industrial schemes. The State therefore decided to raise the standard of industrial and technical education in all grades, and to initiate and invigorate the industrial policy, hoping that in course of time the people who are intelligent and the people who are wealthy could be brought together to bring about an industrial revolution throughout the country. It is a matter of common knowledge, that that policy has secured remarkable results in Cochin as well as in Mysore, where, untrammelled by any kind of old tradition regarding the spread of technical education, the rulers have been able to carry out their policy to suit the conditions of their own countries in a remarkable degree.

The idea of making education self-supporting is, to say the least, fantastic, apart from the objections which have already been pointed out by education experts. Pupils under training should not from the earliest stages be imbued with the idea that they must make something to pay for the training they are receiving. This means the commercialisation of education, which is so foreign to Indian traditions, not only amongst the Hindus, but also amongst the Moslems. In one sense, however, it may be argued that whereas on the one hand Gandhi wants to go back a hundred years and introduce mediæval methods and guilds, and re-establish a kind of industrial caste system, he on the other hand wants to introduce a new theory of political economy in the field of education, according to which education should be pursued for a living. Is not that a purely Western idea in all the civilised countries at the present time? By giving publicity to such an ideal surely Mahatma Gandhi forgets the spiritual tradition of the people of India, and the great havoc the present day material educational policy is causing in all the Fascist and Communist countries of the world, which are basing their whole system of education on no other principle than industrial production and Economic Nationalisation, neither of which, by the way, have to any appreciable extent solved the crucial problem of unemployment amongst the younger generation.

Can we ignore the fact that English education and Western culture, founded on true Eastern traditions, produced during the last hundred years some of the greatest men in the field of science, literature, politics and national economy? Only a few names need be mentioned: Gokhale, A. M. Bose (the first English Cambridge Wrangler), Tilak, Sir J. C. Bose, Dr. P. C. Ray, Sir C. V. Raman, Professor Radha Krishnan, Poet Tagore, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Lal Mohan Ghose. We have sent some of our best men to European Universities to secure the highest distinctions in the standards of Western education. What would have been the fate of these masterminds? Would they have gone to the front if they had no English education? Did not all who took the lead in the development of national life sit at the feet of Western scholars, which made them assimilate comparative methods of study? Is it not a fact that now we have dispensed with Western agencies in our universities and technical colleges, for the most part because our young men having been trained in European and American centres of education have returned to take a lead in imparting education in the various faculties of learning, following modern methods? This movement cannot be abruptly terminated. In fact it has to be continued for our young men to be fully trained in Army, Navy, Air-force and in all the branches of

national defence. This should not be confused with any movement towards the spread of mass education. The problem of mass education on a compulsory basis has its peculiar difficulties in India. Once our Government is nationalised, there will no doubt be no longer felt that hankering after English education in the primary standards. It is an admitted fact that everywhere the demand for English teachers in the primary schools in villages has been insistent throughout, but now with this nationalistic tendency to make vernaculars as the medium of instruction, the aim of a united India through a common language can be only Utopian ; in fact the result will be that India will be broken up and divided into separate political units on a linguistic basis. How far such a result will be consistent with the goal of independence for India, as a whole, is a moot question. Furthermore, what about text-books, even in a proposed common language like Hindi? And what about the supply of suitable teachers? It will take years for a province like Madras to get Hindi teachers amongst the Tamil and Telegu population, and in compact, homogeneous states like Mysore, where Kanade is the language, it will be impossible to substitute it as a compulsory language within even a generation.

It is hardly necessary to emphasise that the English language is the largest spoken in the whole world to-day, and who knows within another hundred years, if the Esperanto propagandists fail in their attempt to produce a common speaking language for the whole world, as they are bound to do, English will become, with many local variations, the universal language. Take the example of the United States of America. The nation consists of people drawn from various nationalities of Europe. These nationalities whether they be German, Swedes, French, Italians, or Slavs, still continue to speak their own native language within their own homes, but English is the common language of the country, the language of the newspapers, the language of the court, the language of the constitutional assemblies, in fact the language for every human activity throughout the country. As separate linguistic tendencies have not been crushed by such a process, why can it not therefore be supposed that when India becomes a Federation of States, the only logical outcome of her political emancipation will be the definite adoption of English as the common language of the country, as in America, leaving the provincial languages of which there are distinctly nine in number, to have their full play in their respective linguistic tracts. By such a process of decentralisation, it will be possible for such tracts to develop according to their own traditional lines. Education in the vernacular has already been brought to the highest limit and there is more chance of mass education

spreading through the guidance of the intelligentsia, who will then be able to devote their energies towards the interpretation of the West to the East with the aid of suitable text-books in the provincial vernacular on a cosmopolitan basis. These will then become competent agencies to prepare suitable vernacular text-books which, we all know, are still not forthcoming, although the attempt has continued for nearly a century. Politically speaking also, it will be most difficult for the different parts of India to work altogether for the common good, if each Province or State conducts their deliberations in their respective languages in their Parliaments. There will be no interchange of political ideas or industrial and economic co-operation between one part of India and another, without English as the medium of expression through the press and public speaking throughout the length and breadth of India.

The whole question, therefore, thus appears to an unprejudiced observer to be a most complicated one, and before the present system of education is tampered with, or revolutionised through the political pressure of a majority in the Indian Parliament, serious thought must be bestowed on any drastic schemes, such as that of Mr. Gandhi. Public opinion has to be tested, in fact a referendum embodying a definite set of interrogatories has to be circulated amongst all the educationists of India, selected for the three grades of education, namely, University, Higher and Middle school and Elementary.

Religion and moral progress present many other problems for reaching a sound settlement. India to-day shows more religious intolerance amongst groups and sub-groups comprised within them between the two main religions, Hindu and Moslem. Is it possible that India can be united politically under the proposed scheme of education, directed towards economical industrialism right from the bottom, overlooking religious and sectarian animosities amongst the people? Is it not reasonable to conjecture that in pursuing a commercial and materialistic scheme, which in fact it is, India will only be following the example of Bolsheviki Russia, where anti-religious propaganda is the foundation of the methods of the Soviet to train the young? Can it have ever been conceived that India will lose her religiousness, however divergent that spirit may be? I concede that if a Hindu is no longer a Hindu, or a Moslem no longer a Moslem in spirit, rigidly adhering to his own rituals and observances, it will be possible to standardise education on a commercial basis, thereby divorcing education from culture and from moral progress. How far such a divorce is conducive to national growth, is a question to which there can be only one answer.

I have already made a reference to the question of supply of teachers. My experience during those years in which I was in charge of the education portfolio in Cochin and Mysore clearly shows that the main difficulty in India in respect of any scheme of industrial education of the masses lies in the fact that we have no training institutions for teachers of industrial schools in villages, and many of the schools which started with the view to carry out the policy of teaching village arts and crafts, had to be closed down for want of such teachers. Mr. Gandhi's comprehensive scheme makes no provision for giving vocational education for school teachers during the seven years of the Elementary and the Middle school period.

There is yet another aspect which cannot be overlooked, namely, girls' education and education for adult women. There is no suggestion for the remodelling of girls' schools in rural and urban areas which are increasing rapidly, and it is not clear whether in the case of such schools Mr. Gandhi's plan will equally apply. In other words, will the girls during the course of their training also have to pay for their education by the sale of the articles which they make under the vocational system?

It is possible that these are considered to be matters of detail to be discussed later, but it cannot be denied that the administrative problems in the field of education are closely connected with the supply of qualified teachers in every grade, both for boys and girls, and secondly, the supply of trained industrialists, who can be considered competent to advise on the management of industrial schools, also on the development of cottage, home and other industrial concerns.

Taking, therefore, the scheme under discussion both in its general aspects as well as in detail, it seems to any one having some knowledge of the difficulties in India, that we should proceed with caution so that firstly, any system of education adopted has a guarantee of financial support to make it sound; secondly, it is not forced by theoretical doctrines upon the people, who are still in a state of transition pulled between two forces concurrently driving them in opposite directions, one arising from the spiritual, the other from the material aspirations of the culture of the East and West. Thirdly, it is more incumbent upon the framer of any new schemes to see to the security of the nation as a whole, socially, politically and economically, and to aim at that solidarity which can only be founded on a comprehensive planning embracing industrial, moral and literary education, stage by stage, through the medium of the languages of the various linguistic tracts in the first instance, and in the secondary stages through the

medium of a common language for the whole of India which must be English, as the most convenient and useful medium. In the secondary stage, the whole agency of control and supervision of education should be entrusted to an All-India Service. The harmonising of the principle of centralisation on the one hand in higher grades, and decentralisation in the other lower grades, seems to be the only practical solution of the present difficulty. It will also ensure the growth of a united Indian nation and at the same time provide facilities and opportunities for the development of a fine literature in the provincial vernaculars on modern lines, in each linguistic tract, thereby enabling the peoples to work out their own destiny in their own spheres to the best of their opportunity, in accordance with their varied local conditions which are so dissimilar in the different parts of the Indian Sub-Continent.

II

DR. RAMESCHANDRA MAJUMDAR

GENESIS

THE scheme of primary education sponsored by Mahatma Gandhi in the columns of *Harijan* in 1937 was considerably modified by a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain, appointed by the All-India National Education Conference convened at Wardha in October, 1937. The Report of the Committee gives the outline of a scheme of basic education, which is now generally known as the Wardha Scheme. For practical purposes we may adopt the Zakir Hussain Report as the basis of discussion, without reverting to the original ideas of Mahatmaji, which differ in some respects from it.

CHIEF FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

(1) The chief merit of the Scheme seems to be that it places before us for the first time a concrete practical scheme of education which is calculated to remove the recognised defects of the present system. For many years past we have come across vague denunciations and sweeping condemnations of the present system and insistent demands to adjust education to our needs, ideals, and environments; but apart from general phraseologies, no one has so far offered any concrete plan by which the ideals could be realised in actual life. The Wardha Scheme is the first attempt to work in detail an alternative system which would realise the high ideals which we all have in view. An ounce of facts is worth a ton of theories. So a concrete plan of education, fully worked out, is far more important than all the rhetorical outbursts and hysterical cries to which we have been treated so long by even eminent persons in various walks of life.

(2) The Wardha Scheme follows a sound educational principle by adding arts and crafts to purely literary education. Apart from training the eyes and hands and restoring the dignity of manual labour, it would give the students a vocational bias and equip them for some useful occupations by means of which they may earn their livelihood. The monotony of literary education would be broken by more pleasurable pastimes and this would cheer up the spirits and improve the mind and body of students. Education instead of being regarded as a drudgery would be a welcome diversion to the young pupils.

(3) The idea of correlating the entire system of education with the basic craft and the environment of the student is a commendable feature, provided it is kept within due limitations. Take for example Mathematics. It is a happy idea that the teaching of elementary arithmetic should be "closely co-ordinated with life-situations arising out of the basic handicraft and out of the great variety of actual problems in the life of the school and the community." A student might be given lessons in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, both simple and compound, in connection with spinning, weaving, carpentry, domestic accounts, etc., and in simple geometrical figures in connection with gardening, implements and tools used by him. Similarly, literature, history, geography, civics and hygiene, etc., may be co-ordinated to a more or less extent with the home or school life or the life of the community. It would create interest in subjects which are now distasteful to students, help in a better understanding of the basic problems and improve the reasoning capacities of the young minds.

Unfortunately in their eagerness for establishing the soundness of the abstract principle, the Committee seem to have gone too far. They have not recognised that beyond a certain limit, these subjects cannot be co-ordinated to well-known facts of surrounding life and must be taught from books on abstract methods. This is academically sound. For after the elementary stage the pupils must be taught to think in terms of abstract principles and derive information from study of books. As often happens, the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. In contrast to the purely literary education of the present type, the Committee seem to have entertained some sort of positive aversion to all literary educations not immediately associated with the basic craft. The concluding portion of the Report showing possible correlations of different subjects of studies with the basic craft of spinning and weaving is in our opinion the most unsatisfactory part of the report. Let us take an example. In Grade V the history syllabus comprises 'the story of Muslim Civilization in India and the World.' This is to be correlated with the basic craft of spinning and weaving, by such topics as 'the simple dress of the Prophet of Islam,' 'how cloth was produced in Arabia at the time,' etc. It appears to be the intention, though it is not clearly expressed, that, for the sake of correlation with the craft, the story of Muslim Civilisation should begin with the simple dress of the Prophet. In any case the idea seems to be somewhat fantastic. The proper study of the story of Muslim civilisation should begin with a graphic picture of the political and social condition of Arabia before the rise of the Prophet. If necessary, the picture may be correlated with Indian life by pointing out some common features such as worship of

images. To stress the importance of the dress of the Prophet, manufacture of cloth in Arabia, Indo-Muslim dress, etc., for the sake of the basic craft appears to be academically unsound.

(4) Similarly, a commendable feature of the Scheme is to so arrange the syllabus and teaching of social subjects like History, Geography, Civics, etc., as to develop in the pupil a proper understanding of his social and geographical environment and to inculcate the love of the motherland. But here again the principle has been carried too far. For example, the principles of teaching history as laid down on p. 23 of the report seem to demand a sort of history of India written to order. 'Emphasis is to be laid on the equality and brotherhood of man and the superiority of non-violence in all its phases.' A teacher faithfully following these general principles would naturally focus his attention upon such topics as the life and teachings of Buddha and slur over important subjects like caste-system and political struggles. History should by no means be reduced to a means of propaganda, even for what might be regarded as the highest ideals. The virtues and vices of the past have both lessons for us, and the main object of the study of history is to know facts as they were. The superiority of non-violence may be a very favourite topic to-day with us. But to mould the whole history of India from that point of view would be as great a folly as the attempts in some modern European countries to re-write their history with a view to supporting the particular political and social ideals which they seek to establish. This is highly objectionable on academic grounds. Its effect on Indian history may be illustrated by some examples. We all know that the ruthless and bloody conquests of Samudragupta heralded an era of peace, prosperity and national greatness, while many eminent scholars believe that the policy of non-violence preached and practised by Asoka was mainly responsible for five centuries of oppression and misery which India had to suffer. Should students of Indian history be kept ignorant of all this, or what is worse still, should the teacher or author of history be asked to distort facts and their consequences with a view to establishing 'the superiority of non-violence in all its aspects'? Truth must not be sacrificed even for the sake of the highest national ideal. And who knows that this ideal will not change in future, with the consequence that history will have again to be re-written with a view to shape itself according to new national ideals?

(5) Introduction of arts and crafts, as noted above, is a commendable feature. But even this may be carried to excess. The sole or even the main object of education ought not to be merely to turn out expert craftsmen. The Report says that the "Scheme is designed to

produce workers," but education should aim at producing thinkers as well. The Wardha Scheme seeks to make education compulsory from the age of seven to fourteen and during the whole of this period the main objective seems to be to turn out skilled workers in some craft like weaving, agriculture, carpentry, etc. In our opinion this is educationally unsound. There should be a break in this long course and we should begin at six and continue up to ten, and then later from eleven to fourteen. In the earlier stage the arts and crafts should be introduced more for their educative value in training the hands and eyes, than as distinct vocation. After this stage is over the students should have the option of either following a distinctly vocational course as contemplated in the Scheme or migrating to other types of schools which would lead ultimately to higher literary education in High Schools, Colleges and Universities, with opportunities for branching off at the end of each of these stages to higher vocational or technical courses. To mould all the students up to the age of fourteen in the same shape is as academically unsound as the present system, and it is not in the best interests of the nation that students with a literary bent of mind should not be afforded an opportunity of pursuing higher studies of a different kind. After all a nation, like a man, does not live by bread alone. The Report very correctly observes: "there is an obvious danger that in the working of this scheme the economic aspect may be stressed at the sacrifice of the cultural and educational objectives." This danger is real and great. In particular if the idea gains ground that the expenses of the school should be met, wholly or even to a substantial extent, by the sale proceeds of the products of manual labour of students, it is almost certain that teachers "would devote most of their attention and energy to extracting the maximum amount of labour from children" to the utter neglect of all cultural subjects. The pendulum will then swing to the opposite extreme. If the present schools offer a pathetic spectacle of a training ground of clerks, the future schools would have the dreary aspect of a factory of children-workers, particularly as the school will work for 288 days in a year, with five hours and a half for each day.

(6) The success of the Scheme depends, to a far greater extent than at present, upon the intellectual equipment of the teachers. The scheme realises this and suggests a comprehensive scheme of training teachers. It may be doubted, however, if the initial qualification proposed, *viz.*, "reading up to the Matriculation standard or two years' teaching experience after passing the vernacular Final or some equivalent examination" would be adequate. Neither this qualification, even with three years' training, nor the proposed pay of Rs. 25 or Rs. 20, is likely to secure the type of teachers who can make the

Scheme a success. It is to be remembered that, apart from the particular basic craft, the syllabus to be taught includes a knowledge of the following subjects:—

Mother-tongue, Hindusthani, Mathematics (including Arithmetic, Book-keeping and Geometry), History of Ancient, Mediæval and Modern World, Civics, Geography, Development of Trade, Transport and Industry, Economics, Political Theories and Institutions, General Science (Botany, Physics, Astronomy, Zoology, Physiology, Chemistry), Drawing, Music, Physical Training, Hygiene, etc.

It is true that only elementary lessons are to be given to the students, but even that requires a much higher knowledge on the part of the teachers. The Report does not give any precise direction about the number of teachers required, and does not deal with the all-important question of finance. It estimates the profit likely to accrue from such craft as spinning and weaving at Rs. 60/- per student during seven years, and calculating thirty students on an average for each teacher it claims that the scheme solves to a great extent the problem of the teachers' salary. This seems to imply that there should be only one teacher, on an average, for thirty students, for teaching them not only the basic craft but also the other subjects. The number of teachers as well as the pay (average Rs. 25/-) seems to be quite inadequate for efficient teaching.

(7) The Report passes very severe strictures on the system of examinations prevailing in our country. The substitute it suggests is, however, beautifully vague. "The purpose of the examination," it says, "can be served by an administrative check of the work of the schools in a prescribed area, by a sample measurement of the attainment of selected groups of students conducted by the inspectors of the Education Board." This must be worked in further details before we can be sure that it is better than the much maligned system of examination it seeks to displace.

(8) The syllabus excludes English but makes the study of Hindusthani compulsory. The same academic principle which supports the former, goes against the latter, specially when we remember that Hindusthani is as much a foreign language to some South Indian people as English. The compulsory study of Hindusthani is a political question and cannot be supported on purely academic grounds. A boy of eleven and twelve might more profitably devote the time he would spend in learning Hindusthani, to an intensive study of his own mother-tongue, particularly when we remember that perhaps not even one of them in

a hundred would have any necessity to use it in life, even supposing that he is in a position to do so after the lapse of ten years or more.

(9) The Report suggests the following Time-table:—

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------|
| The basic craft | ... | ... | 3 hours 20 minutes. |
| Music, Drawing, Arithmetic | ... | ... | 40 " |
| The mother-tongue | ... | ... | 40 " |
| Social studies and general science | ... | ... | 30 " |
| Physical training | ... | ... | 10 " |
| Recess | ... | ... | 10 " |

5 hours and 30 minutes.

The period of study is unduly long, and provision of light nourishment to all children during school hours as recommended in the Report must be rigidly enforced. The period allotted to (1) Social Studies and General Science, and (2) Physical training is extremely inadequate, even if we make due allowance for the fact that the basic craft would partly provide for both. In reality very little of social studies and general science would be taught along with the basic craft, and the manual labour involved in it is somewhat different from the regular and methodical physical training which a boy needs. The recess period also appears to be short save in cases where the basic craft is something like gardening which involves healthy outdoor work.

In conclusion it may be said the the Wardha Scheme is based on sound educational principles, but it needs considerable modification. This is fully recognised by the authors of the Report when they say that "a syllabus of this kind which aims at far-reaching reconstruction of educational practice, really requires a background of fairly extensive experimental work." While therefore we should all welcome the new scheme as a distinct advance upon the existing system we must not grow too enthusiastic, or what is even worse, regard it as somewhat sacrosanct. The Scheme must be regarded as a purely provisional and experimental one, to be improved upon as experience grows or as wisdom suggests. The greatest danger of the Scheme lies in its association with the name of Mahatma Gandhi as it makes it a taboo in the eyes of some and acme of perfection in those of others. In both cases it suffers from an unreasoned prejudice and is therefore less likely to attract that free and dispassionate criticism which alone can transform it into a healthy scheme of national education in course of time.

III

PROFESSOR MEGHNAD SAHA

LIANG Ch'i-Ch'ao, the Chinese philosopher, defined in very pointed language the object of education thus: "Education is the means by which the state nurtures its own kind of people, welding them together as a whole that they may be independent and struggle to strive in the world where victory goes to the *fit* and defeat to the *unfit*." We may judge from this point of view the Wardha Scheme of Primary Education. Any study of the scheme will show that the society which the new system visualises is one of peasants and small artisans who will be inspired by the Tolstoyan ideal of service and of Christian virtues. The education will be imparted through basic crafts—spinning and *Khadi*—and with the aid of day-to-day experience of life. The adoption of Hindusthani as the second language will enable the people of different regions to understand one another quickly and without difficulty.

The basic principles of this education was formulated long ago by John Dewey, the American educationist, and applied with remarkable success in the remodelling of the American system of primary and secondary education. But while Dewey's system aims at a society in which the average individual will be familiar with the technicalities of the modern mechanical civilisation and at adult life will find himself perfectly at home with its ways, the Mahatmaji who inspires the new scheme will have nothing to do with the demon of machine. After assuring the country of the emergence of a perfect society and everyone of a living wage and the right to freedom, the Mahatma expresses himself against the machine in no uncertain language:

"And all these will be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanisation of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialised talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands."

Even ardent admirers and followers of the Mahatma find it difficult to support him in his denunciation of the machine and of the machine age¹: if we apply the test of the Chinese philosopher, the system of education advocated by the Zakir Husain Committee will not make Indians fit for the present age.

¹ cf. Professor Nripendrachandra Banerji's review of the Wardha Scheme in *Science and Culture*, October, 1938.

To us, scientists, it appears that the Mahatma's system lacks in progressive vision, that is to say, it does not indicate how villages are to be linked to the cities, and how the industries which are indispensable for the nation's life and for the body politic (those connected with transport, communication, power, essential chemicals, etc.) are ever to be managed by Indians for the benefit of India. Apart from adopting a policy of *laissez faire* with regard to these urgent problems, his whole attitude towards the machine and the modern city-civilisation is one of *defeatism*. He looks at its evils but does not try to understand its mechanism of work, and he starts with the inner conviction that the machine civilisation must be intrinsically wrong. But may we submit that it is a wrong reading of history to say that the mechanisation of a vast continent like India would necessarily entail a bloody class war, or colossal expenditure, foreign experts or foreign machinery.

It is true that the Industrial Revolution in Europe caused great social dislocation and political unrest, but this was due to the fact that the discoveries of science were first utilised by capitalists for their private gain, and statesmen and leaders of thought were slow to realise their repercussions on society and at first adopted a policy of *laissez faire* towards them just as Mahatmaji proposes to do now. Hence it is that Industrial Revolution in the West expressed itself in class war. It was when the problems could no longer be avoided that western statesmen began to introduce their beneficent but contentious legislation in order to achieve social welfare. But it is the best of statesmanship to learn from the lessons of history: look at Europe's apt pupil, Japan, which has introduced the Industrial Revolution without the horrors of a class war or without having to borrow foreign technicians or foreign capital. What has been achieved by Japan can also be achieved in India provided the nation *will* so. It would be a happy day for India if the Mahatma can overcome his attitude of defeatism towards the machine, devote a little time to the mastery of the technique of modern civilisation, and then makes up his mind. We are quite sure that he will find that the machine, instead of being man's master, can also be made his slave, and that it is possible to utilise the machine for promoting social welfare much more efficiently than with the system advocated by him. He can then lead the nation to the right track with his usual energy of conviction and driving power. Otherwise we feel, that by diverting the attention of the nation from the only path which holds out prospects of relief against the present problems of poverty, unemployment and defencelessness, he will be committing what we may describe by the oft-quoted phrase as a 'Himalayan Blunder.'

Forces and Forms in Progress

PROFESSOR BENOYKUMAR SARKAR

NO other doctrine appears to be more dominant in the social thinking and constructive statemanship of to-day than that established by Lapouge in *Les Sélections Sociales* (Paris, 1896). It is in his message, namely,—that (1) the annihilation of the Aryan is inevitable ; (2) all the forms and processes of contemporary civilization are but cumulatively heading towards regression and decay ; and finally, (3) progress cannot be considered to be the rational conclusion from the data of world-history,—that contemporary philosophy, sociology and politics find a challenge as well as a problem.¹

The names of thinkers who, in recent years, have preached the doctrine of mankind's decline or regress are legion. From Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* (Munich, 1918-22), has come the formula that the West is headed for decay. Romain Rolland has popularized the notion that Western civilization is doomed. In the Italian demographer Gini's analysis of "the parabola of evolution," the European races are all exhibiting senescence with the exception, perhaps, of the Italians and the Slavs.² American sociologists are not immune to this decline-cult and some of them are anxiously discussing the question with reference to the decline in the natural fertility of the Eur-American population.³

In all these decline-cults of to-day the student of sociology is being forced to grapple with the problems of social longevity, growth and expansion, and along with them the question of social metabolism and transformations.⁴ It is in and through social mobility, vertical or horizontal, that group metabolism manifests itself.⁵ An examination of the dynamics of life or of the forces that serve to transform and reconstruct the races, classes, castes and other groups ought, therefore,

¹ *Les Sélections Sociales*, Chapters XIII, XV.

² Gini: *I Fattori Demografici dell' Evoluzione delle nazioni* (Torino, 1912), pp. 25-30, 36-40.

³ Hankins: "Civilisation and Fertility," a paper for the International Population Union, London, 1931.

⁴ Siredey: *Influence des Facteurs biologiques sur la diminution des naissances*, a paper for the International Congress on Population, Rome, 1931.

⁵ Sorokin: *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (New York, 1928), pp. 749-752.

to furnish the fundamental logic behind all discussions bearing on the nature of decline and progress.

All through the ages there has existed a type of mentality that is interested in viewing the things of the world from what may be described in general terms as a pessimistic angle. And the pessimism of Jeremiads appeals more or less to every man and woman. The reasons are obvious. First, there is no possibility of denying the fact that there is a certain amount or kind of misery and suffering always present, no matter how well-placed the individual or the group. And in the second place, every honest intellectual can find in the sceptical attitudes and warnings, or rather the "divine discontent" of the pessimists, undoubtedly some very powerful aids to self-criticism and social regeneration. Indeed, it is to pessimism that the world owes many of the energistic adventures in the "transvaluation of values" and upward trends in civilization. The value of pessimism as a constructive force cannot by any means be ignored.

In these discussions, as in all others bearing on social life, there is generally agreement that transformation is going on around us. But it is, as a rule, while appraising the value to be attached to social metabolism that the diversity of schools arises, each with its own shibboleth based naturally on personal equations. Spengler is convinced in his own way that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were more "creative" than the nineteenth and the twentieth, and there are many who ignore the beneficial influence of social assurance and other modern legislation on the standard of living and welfare of the masses.⁶

But even those who admit that economic and cultural progress has been advancing from group to group and class to class fail often to realize that much of the transformations generally known as class or "social" revolutions are at bottom expressions of "racial" ups and downs. It is these replacements or absorptions of certain races by others that constitute the anatomical background of world-culture. The eternal story of mankind is to be found in a nutshell in the stone implements of the Palaeolithic Ages, when the Mousterians had to give way to the Aurignacians and these latter were in their turn replaced by the Magdalenians and others. Migrations and race-contacts have always furnished the framework of organized social existence.⁷

⁶ The beneficial action of social assurance is admitted by Truchy in *Cours d'Economie Politique*, Vol. II (Paris, 1934), pp. 418-419, 422, 473-478.

⁷ Quennel: *Everyday Life in the Old Stone Age* (London). Marshall: *Mohenjo Daro and the Indus Civilization* (London, 1931). Mackay: *The Indus Civilization* (London, 1935).

In historic times the subversion of the Roman Empire in Europe and that of the Hindu and other Empires in Asia likewise have spelt the ascendancy of certain "racial" elements at the cost of certain others. So far as modern Eur-Asia is concerned, all the different processes of social metabolism involved in race-mixture, race-submergence and race-uplift have been going on until we find that physico-anthropologically the modern Indian's affinities with the ancients of his land are perhaps as problematic as those of the modern European with the ancients of his continent.

The world-process in group metabolism is visible under our very eyes in Bengal. In the social economy of Bengal there are some thirty tribes known as "aboriginals" constituting a diversified group of a million and a quarter and representing some three per cent. of the total population. The "big three" of these "primitives," namely, the Santals, the Oraons and the Mundas, are statistically responsible for nearly two-thirds of this number. But while the "big three" alleged higher "castes," the Kayasthas, Brahmans and Vaidyas, numbering something over three millions, have, during the last forty years, grown 137 per cent., the "aboriginals" have grown 319 per cent. The rate of growth is phenomenal, pointing as it does to extraordinary "differential fertility."⁸

This numerical growth, important in itself as it is, acquires a fresh significance when one observes that the "aboriginals" are to-day more "Hindu" than "tribal" or animistic in religion. Nearly 66 per cent. of the "big three" primitives are "Hindu." Furthermore, as a qualitative transformation the Hinduization of the "aboriginals" is interesting in another respect. The Hinduized aboriginals form a part, nearly 12 per cent., of what are generally called the "depressed classes" of the "Hindu" society.⁹

We understand, then, that some of the "aboriginals" of yesterday constitute to a certain extent the "depressed" classes of to-day. In other words, the social metabolism, which acts as a force in Hinduization hides the facts of, or prepares the way for, race-fusion and race-assimilation.

Nor does the "qualitative" aspect of social metabolism stop here. Among the "big three alleged higher castes," the Kayasthas were, during the last four decades, just below the Brahmans in number. But they were rising until to-day they have outnumbered the latter. In forty years, while the Brahman has grown 24 per cent., the Kayastha

⁸ *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part I (1933), pp. 141, 444, 448, 454, 480-848.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 481, 482, 485, 497, 498, 502.

has grown 58 per cent.¹⁰ To what is this growth of Kayasthas due? Not entirely to "relative" fecundity or "natural increment," *i.e.*, surplus of births over deaths as embodied in "differential fertility." A great deal is to be accounted for by invasions from other castes whose upward trends have been manifest for a long time. The non-Kayastha, perhaps one of the "depressed" of yesterday, has grown into the alleged high caste of to-day. And in this, again, is registered not only a vertical social or class mobility but a racial transformation as well. From the "aboriginal" to the alleged "high caste" Hindu, the gap may be great, but bridging the gap is sure and firm, even though slow. Social "stratification" is not as rigid here as Ammon would have us believe."¹¹

Altogether, the Bengali people is expanding although it is undergoing a profound social metabolism, *i.e.*, a radical change in "class" character and "racial" make-up. The transformations that have been going on in Eur-America to-day, because of the pressure of the Slavs upon the other races, apparently belong practically to the same category as those in India. As for the "quality" of "hybrids" or their capacity to carry forward the torch of civilization, eugenics is still discreetly inconclusive unless the exponent happens to have a conservative reform scheme on the anvil. But history announces that, notwithstanding the doctrine of Lapouge,¹² races may come and races may go but that civilization goes on for ever.

Attention may now be called to another field of group metabolism and social transformation. The net result of the total evolution has succeeded in making out of Europe a continent of 470 millions. India possesses 352.8 millions, *i.e.*, nearly three-fourths of the population strength of Europe. There is contemplated the erection of a federal structure from the different units of the Indian sub-continent. Naturally, one encounters difficulties from the standpoint of *Geopolitik*, "geopolitics," *i.e.*, of boundaries and group contacts. There is nothing exclusively Indian, oriental, or tropical in these problems. The political anthropology or rather the "geopolitics" of Europe, even after the reconstruction of Versailles, nay, after the Munich agreement of September, 1938, does not exhibit fewer inconvenient situations.¹³

Europe possesses some thirty-two or thirty-three different states independent of one another, each endowed with sovereignty in inter-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 454, 492.

¹¹ *Die Gesellschaftsordnung und ihre natuerliche Grundlagen* (Jena, 1895).

¹² *Les Sélections Sociales*, pp. 65-70, 442-444. See the criticism of certain aspects of Lapouge's doctrine in A. Niceforo: *Les Classes Pauvres* (Paris, 1905); F. Hankins: *The Racial Basis of Civilization* (New York, 1924).

¹³ K. Haushofer: *Geopolitik der Pan-Ideen* (Berlin, 1931).

national law. The prospects of Briand's Pan-Europa seem to be as remote to-day as they ever were. Measured by the European standard and according to European precedents, India might naturally be constituted of two dozen independent states. And that condition might not be condemned as a state of horrible disunion as long as the states-system of Europe is guaranteed on the map by the League of Nations.¹⁴ The multiplicity of states is not necessarily a deterrent to progress, political, economic or social.

The problem of "national" unity may be examined with reference to smaller areas. Let us take one of the "nation-states" such as owes its origin to Versailles, say, Poland. The number or percentage of the Polish people in Poland will throw light on the question of relative social metabolism. The Poles themselves are barely half of the people, nearly 53 per cent. The others are Ukrainians (21 per cent.), Jews (11 per cent.), White Russians (7 per cent.), Germans (7 per cent.), and so on. There are at least five different nationalities or language-groups in this new "nation-state." Thus the social metabolism of Europe is not based on unity even in small states. From the standpoints of Durkheim, von Wiese and other sociologists, such as interest themselves in *Beziehungslehre*, or the "science of relations" and social "forms" it is necessary to observe that in Europe as in India racial unity is not the dominant factor of nationality.¹⁵ The doctrine of progress is not vitiated because of these multi-racial complexes.

Let us glance at the domain of classes in "social" life and discuss some of the problems of "stratification." The nature of the remaking of man due to social metabolism and the reconstruction of the relations between groups will become clear from a new viewpoint. The fact that in England the Catholics had to be "emancipated" shows that in certain respects they constituted for ages the "depressed classes" of the British people. We may take the continental regions as they are to-day and examine the relations between Christians and non-Christians, say, the Jews in Eastern and Central, and South-Eastern Europe. The Minorities Section of the League of Nations knows quite well what they are. The "social" position of the Jews in the United States is another common instance of Christian prejudice *vis-à-vis* non-Christians with which the student of social morphology is familiar in the Western world.

Then, again, among Christians a peculiar aspect of social mobility is seen in the relations between Catholics and non-Catholics. The

¹⁴ Woytinsky: *Tatsachen und Zahlen Europas* (Wien, Pan-Europa Verlag, 1930).

¹⁵ B. K. Sarkar: *The Politics of Boundaries*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1938).

ecclesiastical law of marriage until a few years ago did not leave much room for intimate *camaraderie* between the different denominations. And, in spite of the secularization of marriage laws, the unities have failed to make much progress in intimate domestic life. Besides, the narrow "communal," clan or class spirit, as understood and condemned nowadays in India, is embodied in the political parties of some of the powers, great, medium and small. As long as parties could be freely established, in pre-Fascist Italy, for instance, the *Popolari* was Catholic. The German *Zentrum* was likewise a Catholic Party. In Rumania, there is a Jewish Party and also its antithesis, namely, the anti-Semite Party.

In the religious anthropology of Christendom, researchers are aware of the many sects among Protestants and the numerous doctrinal and other differences that distinguish the social strata from one another. The Christian missionaries in China are aware everyday of the pragmatic consequences of these diversities while dealing with the Chinese converts. They are perpetually at a loss to answer satisfactorily such questions, from the Chinese converts, as the following: "Whom are we to follow, the Baptists or the Episcopalians, the Evangelists or the Presbyterians? Who is your Jesus? and who is their Jesus?" and so on.

It is clear that the last word of societal reconstruction in the socio-religious sphere has not been able to remove the bones of serious contention from the Christian world. India can make no better showing. On the strength of inductive and statistical researches in social metabolism and transformation it is desirable to understand and to feel that there is something like identity, parallelism, and similarity between the East and the West. An adequate solution of "class-questions" still remained a desideratum, with the most highly developed Aryans, Nordics and what not.

An important factor in the remaking of mankind in contemporary times has been the reduction in mortality both in Europe and India. On this point certain observations are relevant. It is to be recalled that until 1905 Bavaria had an infant mortality rate of 248 per thousand live births. The Bengal rate came down from 221 in 1914 to 179. To-day Bihar has 148.¹⁶ But this level was not attained by England and France until 1896-1905, by Italy until 1905-1914, and by Germany until the

¹⁶ *Annual Report of the Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India, 1932, Vol. I (Delhi, 1934), pp. 21-22; Census of India 1931, Vol. I, (India, Part I, 1933), p. 92.*

post-war decade. At the present moment the Bihar rate is exceeded by Ukrainia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Hungary, Rumania, Russia, and Chile. High infant mortality is not the exclusive feature of Indian climate or race and Indian religion or social habits. We find here a very important contribution to the problem of social metabolism from the field of comparative vital statistics.¹⁷

It should be proper to consider the cost of social rejuvenation as a function of improvements in public health. From 1831 to 1871 there were five invasions of cholera in England, and during that period cholera and smallpox were as European as Asian. Typhus and typhoid are likewise not exclusively Oriental diseases.¹⁸ The processes involved in controlling these diseases in certain countries of Europe are well known. Down to 1848 there was no Public Health Act in England, and water-supply and sanitary conditions, especially in industrial and urban areas, were notorious. In 1848 the first Public Health Act was passed but there was no organization to enforce the Act. It was not until 1875 that county councils were compelled to employ "medical officers of health" and inspectors of nuisance on a decent salary. About that time the *Reichsgesundheitsamt* (Imperial Health Office) was established in Germany.

Public health service is a tremendous financial burden. In England 22 per cent. of the local rates is spent on health alone, the next item being education which absorbs 19 per cent. From the standpoint of social metabolism it is clear that it is neither the Christian religion, nor the temperate climate, nor the Nordic race, nor the general manners and customs of the people that have been able to stamp out disease. But in the first place, it is the law,—the fiat of the state, that has controlled the diseases, revolutionized the sanitary habits and transformed the character of the people. Secondly, it is the vast amount of expenditure lavishly bestowed upon the population that has succeeded in consummating the great remaking of society that has been accomplished to-day. Thus the rôle of *étatisme* in class metabolism and race metabolism cannot be overestimated.¹⁹

In India we have no Public Health Act and we are notorious for our lack of funds in regard to developmental or reconstructural

¹⁷ Sarkar: "*I Quozienti di Natalità, di Mortalità e di Aumento Naturale nell'India attuale nel Quadro della Demografia Comparata*" (Proceedings of the International Congress of Population, Rome, 1931, Vol. VI).

¹⁸ For the history of cholera, plague and pox in Europe see Woytinsky: *Die Welt in Zahlen* (Berlin), Vol. I (1928), pp. 110, Vol. VII, pp. 220-221.

¹⁹ *Annuaire Sanitaire International* 1928 (Geneva), England-Wales, p. 825, France, pp. 413-430 Germany, pp. 60-66, Italy, p. 537, Japan, p. 554; see also Truchy: *Cours II*, pp. 418-422.

projects. But thanks to our great publicist, Chittaranjan Das, the scheme of health centres was accepted by the Government of Bengal in 1925. The system comprises some 600 circles and is being financed by the District Boards. The Government's contribution is Rs. 2,000/- per centre annually. One can naturally expect that the chronological distance that one notices between Bengal or other Indian provinces and some of the advanced countries of the world in the field of health and sanitation, is likely to be spanned with a more energetic functioning of the state both in legislation and public finance.²⁰

Finally, I should like to touch upon technocracy as a metabolic agent in group life. The distinction between the East and the West, historically considered, is not a distinction in ideals or outlook on life but a difference in the grade or degree of the remaking of man. An objective measure is furnished by the achievements of technology. Down to the end of the Middle Ages there was hardly any distinction between the two wings of Eur-Asia in material and economic or cultural and social institutions or ideology. The Renaissance in India and China and other parts of Asia, which was in certain cases the joint work of Hindus or Buddhists and Mussalmans, was more or less identical with that in Europe in so far as arts and crafts, literature, religious reform, etc., are considered.²¹

The dynamics of social metabolism, in so far as it "historically" happens to be indifferent to religion, race or region, or rather affects them in a more or less uniform manner, should to this extent call for considerable modification of the laws of *Wirtschaftsethik* (economic ethics) for ancient and mediæval conditions as propounded by Max Weber. His viewpoint on Hinduism and Buddhism is conventional and one-sided and not based on the Indian data of "positive" sociology.²²

²⁰ *Indian Sanitary Policy* (Calcutta, 1927), *Annual Report of the Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India* (Delhi), *Statistical Abstract for British India* (Delhi), annual, section on diseases.

²¹ Sarkar: *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (Allahabad), Vol. I (1914), Vol. II, Part I (1922), Part II (1926); *Hindu Achievements in Exact Science* (New York, 1928); *Introduction to Hindu Positivism* (1938); "Hindu Political Philosophy" (*Political Science Quarterly*, New York, December, 1918); "La Démocratie hindoue" (*Seances et Travaux de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, Paris, July-August, 1921); *The Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus* (Leipzig, 1922); *The Futurism of Young Asia* (Berlin, 1922); "Aspects Politiques et Economiques de la Civilisation Hindoue" in *Revue de Synthèse Historique* (Paris, 1903); "Die Struktur des Volkes in der sozialwissenschaftlichen Lehre der Schukraniti" (*Koelner Vierteljahrshefte fuer Soziologie*, 1931).

²² *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tuebingen, 1922-1923), Vol. II.

But Leibniz, Descartes and Newton, representing as they did the beginnings of exact science, registered the parting of the ways for the Western world. And yet the new sciences did not bring about any economic and social transformation until the steam engine revolutionized the cotton industry in 1785. For the first time the West became differentiated from the East, or rather the "modern" began to evolve out of the mediæval or primitive.

For nearly two generations, however, Great Britain, the pioneer of industrial revolution, continued to tower above the rest of Eur-America into solitary greatness in the new field ushered into existence by modern technology. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Germany and France could claim a place in the scheme of this new societal morphology. By 1905 Germany had already caught up to the British achievements in technocracy, and the Anglo-German parity was established in industrialism.²³ In the science of social mobility it is not possible to think of a better illustration of "differential" group metabolism.

Not every European and American people has been able to march as fast as the German. Many of the races in the Balkan Complex, Eastern Europe, and Latin America happen to find themselves in the technological and socio-economic conditions of Germany or of France as they were about half a century ago, *i.e.*, in the earlier phases of the industrial revolution. The inequality of development is quite consistent with the facts of progress. It is more or less on the level of the "first industrial revolution" that India finds herself to-day. The profound transformations that are going on at present in the social structure especially of Germany, the United States and Great Britain, under the impact of trusts, rationalization, "technocracy of the latest type," collectivism, public ownership, "social control" and "economic planning" are tantamount to nothing short of what may be called the "second industrial revolution."

The distance in "social metabolism" between the second and the first industrial revolutions is a distance of some two generations at the utmost. But there is a profound economic and psychological nexus binding the two. The two metabolisms have need of each other. The regions of the first industrial revolution must, for some time yet, import machinery and part of the technical skill as well as capital from those

²³ Sarkar: *Economic Development*, Vol. I (Madras, 1926, 1938), "Indiens Entwicklung im Vergleich zu Eur-Amerika" (*Deutsche Rundschau*, Berlin, 1930), "Aspetti e Problemi della Moderna Economia Indiana" (*Annali di Economia*, Milano, 1930); *Die Entwicklung und weltwirtschaftliche Bedeutung des modernen Indien* (Stuttgart, 1931).

of the second industrial revolution for the normal functioning of their economic life. Incidentally, be it observed that although the representatives of the feudal aristocracy, like the landholders (*zamindars*) of Bengal, have contributed their capital to the modernization of their countrymen in technique, industry, science and culture, their combined financial resources cannot by any means be sufficient to promote an adequate industrialization of large areas inhabited as they are by millions of people. External finance must be imported. "Autarchy" is, therefore, being factually replaced by interdependence, nationalistic sentiments and protective tariffs notwithstanding.

The industrialization of the under-developed regions in India, as elsewhere, involves, therefore, a transformation of technique and social order, such as is well calculated to furnish employment to the working men in pioneering countries, and thus assist the promotion of these "industrial adults" to a higher standard of living. Durkheim's division of labour is operating once more to render the two metabolistic systems interdependent and to bring into life a new international "solidarity."²⁴

The sinister aspect of the technocratic predominance as embodied in the second industrial revolution is, no doubt, unemployment on a nation-wide scale, which looms so large in the economic crisis of the present day. But the first industrial revolution, which is being consummated at the same time, is well calculated to raise the purchasing power of the peasants in the under-developed countries as well as the financial strength of the landowning and middle classes. It cannot fail to expand thereby the markets for articles, tools and implements, *Produktionsmittel*, "instruments of production," rail and road materials, "quality goods," etc.—such as are produced in the regions of the second industrial revolution.²⁵

The establishment of industries—cottage, small, medium or large—in the under-developed countries, can in the long run be but an agent in the expansion of economic power of the "adults." Paradoxically enough, in order to combat unemployment in the countries of the second industrial revolution, their economic statesmen will have to work for the success of the "*Swadeshi* (indigenous industry) movements" in Eastern

24 C. Gide: *La Solidarité* (Paris, 1932), pp. 162, 167.

25 Sarkar: *Economic Development*, Vol. II (Calcutta, 1932, 1938); *Indian Currency and Reserve Bank Problems* (Calcutta, 1934); *Imperial Preference vis-à-vis World-Economy* (Calcutta, 1934); P. K. Mukerjee: *The Economic Services of Zamindars to the Peasants and the Public as Analyzed by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar* (Calcutta, 1934).

Europe, Russia, Asia and Latin America. So far as India is concerned, the Ottawa Imperial Preference has been of some help in this direction by safeguarding her markets in the United Kingdom as well as by facilitating the import of British capital. And as long as India is a part of the Empire Economy, it is to the advantage of her peasants and middle classes that her currency be normally linked up with the British.

The evils associated with the second industrial revolution, namely, the phenomena of unemployment may, therefore, be practically counteracted to a considerable extent by the developments implied in the first industrial revolution. The prosperity of the "adults" is limited by, and dependent on, the increase in the wealth and purchasing power of the "youngsters," and *vice versa*. The two industrial revolutions of to-day thus constitute one complex, and societal transformation is tending to bring the East and the West—the youngsters and the adults—together on to the solid foundations of international co-operation. The world-economic depression has bidden fair to be but an item in the transition of all mankind to a somewhat more elevated plane of living and thinking.²⁶ It is on the eve of an epoch of rejuvenation that the peoples of the world find themselves at the present moment. The facts of social metabolism *vis-à-vis* social mobility may appear to be very complicated. But students of objective and statistical sociology are perhaps justified in having faith in the reality of progress accomplished in spite of pitfalls and in spite of unemployment.²⁷

My position in connection with the indifference of social metabolism to race, region, religion, etc., can be well illustrated by the types of anti-machinism and hostility to technical progress²⁸ that manifest themselves under certain conditions of economic development. Bouthoul has established an equation between the revolt against machines in France and England during the early nineteenth century and that in China and India to-day. The almost instinctive demand for a "*trêve des inventions*" (invention-truce) and the sentiments against technical progress and "rationalization" that have seized mankind since the economic depression manifested itself in 1929 are nearly universal. Bouthoul's analysis should furnish a fresh stimulus to the objective study of social metabolism and human progress.

26 S. C. Dutt: *Conflicting Tendencies in Indian Economic Thought* (Calcutta, 1934).

27 E. Cannan: *A Review of Economic Theory* (London, 1929), pp. 421-422; Bouglé: *Socialismes Français* (Paris, 1932), p. 168; Haas: "Le Chômage et la transformation de l'éthique du travail" (*Revue Philosophique*, Paris, November-December, 1934), pp. 387-395.

This short study directs the attention of workers in social science to the necessity of emancipating themselves from the dogma of civilization as being the "function" of a particular "race." In the second place, they are called upon to conceive of the social "strata," classes, castes or groups in a community, as fluid bodies incorporating diverse racial elements at every point of time. And finally, the metabolistic dynamics of group life, *i.e.*, the factors or forces involved in social mobility and transformation are found to be diverse and pluralistic for every region, race and class, or stratum. Progress must consequently always be envisaged in terms of the upward trends of new regions, new races, new classes, and new forces. The eventual fall of the Aryan as suspected by Lapouge and Ammon does not and need not necessarily spell disaster to mankind and world-civilization. Culture is constantly being enriched or rejuvenated with new values. The doctrine of progress, therefore, has need to be adapted to these new facts and situations.²⁹

28 G. Bouthoul: "Population et Progrès Technique" in the *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* (Paris), March-April, 1935, pp. 189-191.

29 A. J. Todd: *Theories of Social Progress* (New York, 1924); W. E. Hocking: *Man and the State* (New Haven, 1926), pp. 429-431; P. Sorokin: *Social Mobility* (New York, 1937); J. B. Bury: *The Idea of Progress* (London, 1932); H. E. Barnes: *The History of Western Civilization*, Vol. II (New York, 1935), pp. 1054-1055.

The Rupee Ratio

PROFESSOR JOGISCHANDRA SINHA.

LIKE King Charles' head to Dick in *David Copperfield*, the problem of the exchange rate has always been with us, Indian economists. It does not date simply from the time of the Hilton Young Commission when the rate was fixed at 1s. 6d. Nor even from the days of the Fowler Committee when the rate was put at 1s. 4d. Nor again, even from the 'seventies of the last century, when the gold value of silver was steadily falling, depressing the exchange rate and unsettling the budget of the Government of India.

THE EXCHANGE PROBLEM AN OLD PROBLEM

If the truth must be told, the difficulty of the conversion of one type of currency into another has been with us from a very long time indeed. "In 1773 there were circulating in various parts of India 139 kinds of gold *mohurs*, 61 kinds of gold *huns* or South Indian coins (called *pagodas* by Europeans), 556 kinds of silver rupees, besides 214 kinds of foreign coins."¹ In Bengal, the condition of currency was perhaps worse. Gradually different species of rupees became the established currency in different parts of the province.² Not only were different kinds of rupees in circulation in different districts, but even in the same district different commodities had to be exchanged with different kinds of rupees!

EARLIEST CURRENCY COMMITTEE

It is no wonder, therefore, that the question of currency and exchange had to be considered by a number of Committees and Commissions. It is generally believed that the Mansfield Commission of 1866 was the earliest of such Committees. But from a study of the early records of the East India Company it appears that a Currency Com-

¹ Sir Jadunath Sarkar—*Economics of British India* (4th edition, 1917), pp. 287-88.

² J. C. Sinha—*Indian Currency Problems in the Last Decade* (1926-1936), University of Delhi, 1938, pp. 3-5.

See also J. C. Sinha's *Economic Annals of Bengal* (Macmillan), 1928, pp. 113-115.

mittee was set up by Lord Cornwallis as early as 1787 with Mr. Herbert Harris, the Mint Master in Calcutta as the Chairman "to ascertain the cause of the present discount in the exchange of gold *mohurs* into silver . . . [and to] propose in consequence whatever measures may appear . . . best calculated to obviate the inconveniences arising therefrom which are now so generally complained of."³ There was at least one non-official on the Committee and there was a minute of dissent appended to the majority report!

Thus it is evident that the problem of currency and exchange is an old one. It comes to us, however, in a new form every time, taxing our brains, ruffling our tempers, rousing our cupidity—haunting, alluring and frightening us in succession.

TWO OPPOSITE VIEWS ON PRESENT RATIO

The ratio question is once again with us. On December 14, 1938, the Congress Working Committee passed the following resolution:—

"The Working Committee have come to the conclusion that the best interests of the country demand that efforts to maintain the present exchange level should henceforth cease and urge the Governor-General-in-Council the necessity of taking immediate steps to lower the rate to one shilling and four pence to the rupee."

On December 16, 1938, the Government of India issued a communique in the course of which they stated:—"The Government of India wish to make it clear that they have no intention of allowing a lowering of the present exchange value of the rupee [They] have no doubt that it is their clear duty in the interests of India generally and the cultivator in particular to defend the present ratio to the utmost of their power"

Both of these views are equally emphatic. Both of them take their stand on "the interests of India." At the same time each is diametrically opposite to the other.

IS THE RUPEE OVERVALUED?

Three different arguments have been advanced in favour of lowering the ratio. In the first place, it has been argued that such lowering of the exchange will correct the present overvaluation of the rupee. This expression is used in different senses in different contexts. It is, therefore, necessary to consider its exact meaning so as to remove all

³ J. C. Sinha's article on "The Earliest Currency Committee in India" in the *Modern Review* (Calcutta), December, 1925, pp. 654-658.

chances of ambiguity. Speaking quite generally, there are two values associated with a particular currency, *viz.*, (a) *internal* and (b) *external*. The former signifies the command over a bundle of goods and services in India with which a rupee can be exchanged, and the latter represents the command over a corresponding bundle abroad, say England, with which the sterling equivalent of the rupee can be exchanged.

The case for the advocates of the lower ratio is that the latter bundle is heavier than the former bundle. If the exchange value of the rupee is lowered, the two bundles will be brought to a parity. This is quite logical. But the question is: is the second bundle really heavier than the first, and if so, to what extent?

PURCHASING POWER PARITY

The Swedish economist Prof. Gustav Cassel has suggested the expedient of what he has called the purchasing power parity which is arrived at by means of index numbers of prices in the two countries under consideration, but economists have assailed this theory from two sides, first, as regards the type of index numbers to be used for the purpose of comparison of price levels and, secondly, as regards the condition under which the theory is applicable. It is not my purpose here to go into these details. It has been shown elsewhere⁴ that the appropriate index number is what Keynes has called the Consumption Standard Index Number and the theory is applicable, to use the economic jargon, only when the barter term of trade remains unchanged. The latter condition rules out the possibility of the application of the purchasing power parity at the present time in the usual way.

Not only this, India is such a vast country with varied population with utterly different ways of living, that it is very doubtful, to say the least, if we can calculate a common Consumption Standard index number for the whole of India, although for the United Kingdom we may have a sufficiently reliable approximation to a national Consumption Standard index number.

EFFECT ON TRADE

The application of purchasing power parity is beset with so much difficulty that a second expedient has been suggested by Whale.⁵ To

⁴ J. C. Sinha—*Indian Currency Problems in the Last Decade* (1926-1936), pp. 68, 69, 137 and 156.

⁵ Whale's article on 'The Theory of International Trade in the Absence of an International Standard' in *Economica* (Lond.), February, 1936.

refer to the English and Indian bundles of goods and services once more, it is evident that if there is overvaluation, there will be an artificial stimulation in the import of the heavier English bundle into India and a corresponding disinclination on the part of Englishmen to purchase the lighter Indian bundle. In other words, if the rupee is really overvalued, our imports would tend to be stimulated and exports would tend to be discouraged. This tendency is at once an index and a measure of the overvaluation of the rupee.

But a recent statistical study⁶ by Mr. H. K. Datta and Dr. H. Sinha shows that during the period January, 1933 to March, 1937, our volume of exports rose faster than that of imports. It may also be pointed out that during the period 1931-1932 to 1935-1936, our exports to the United Kingdom rose by about the same percentage as our imports from that country.

It is too early, however, to come to a definite conclusion as to the overvaluation of the rupee from the changes in the value of our exports after March, 1937. This is nothing more than an indication of the well-known fact that in the early stages of a depression, prices of primary products decline much more than those of manufactured goods. As to the disproportionate fall in the value of our exports and imports, we should also bear in mind that the rise in our export prices was greater during the period of recovery. In any case, the recent movement in our foreign trade which is far from consistent, does not tell us whether the rupee is overvalued at all, and, if so, to what extent.

GOLD OUTFLOW

There is a third evidence of overvaluation. For instance, if the rupee is really overvalued, in other words, if the Indian price level is really higher than the sterling price level, that is to say, above what is warranted by the current exchange rate; in other words, if it is not economical to meet our foreign obligations by exporting goods and services,—then we have to export gold to meet the claims of our foreign creditors. Thus the outflow of gold from India is pointed out as an unmistakable sign of overvaluation. This contention would have been justified if India and the United Kingdom were both on the gold standard. When they are both off gold, and when there is no prohibition against import or export of gold, gold like any other commodity must be exported from a country where it is cheap and imported into

⁶ Article on 'Indian Foreign Trade (1933-37): Its Relation to the Exchange Rate' in *Sankhyā: The Indian Journal of Statistics*, Vol. 3, Part 4, pp. 405-412.

a country where it is dear. This fact has been clearly established by Dr. H. Sinha in one of his statistical articles.⁷ It follows, therefore, that neither the purchasing power parity doctrine, nor the trade figures, nor the gold exports furnish any satisfactory evidence of overvaluation of the rupee.

RAISING THE PRICE LEVEL

It has been stated above that the protagonists of a lower exchange rate do not depend on overvaluation alone. They have a second argument, *viz.*, that low exchange means high prices, and that the Indian price level is at present so low that it should be raised to a substantial extent by means of a lowered exchange rate. For instance, it is argued that the present sad plight of the cultivators is mainly due to the fact that on account of the fall in the prices of crops, their money income has gone down but their money expenditure for rent, debts, etc., has not been correspondingly diminished.

This seems quite sound, but there is a catch. How does a lowered exchange rate act on prices? What prices are affected first and what later on? What would be the extent of the rise in the case of different goods and services? For instance, if it is found that the price of cotton goods which the cultivator purchases is raised first and the price of jute which he sells rises later on, and, if further, the former increases say by 10 per cent. and the latter by only 5 per cent., his economic position may become worse than before on account of the lowered exchange rate.

As a matter of fact, the sequence of events is not so simple as is usually imagined by the advocates of a lower ratio. A lowered exchange rate tends to raise prices, but this effect is not the same in every country. If the foreign trade of a country is relatively more important than inland trade, this influence of exchange on prices is very close. But in a country like India where the inland trade is from ten to fifteen times as important as foreign trade, the effect of the exchange rate on prices must be rather remote. In other words, the exchange rate must be substantially lowered for ensuring any moderate increase in the price level, and there is an appreciable time lag.

In the second place, if we manipulate our exchange rate and prices, the other countries having trade relations with us, will not remain idle. For instance, if they find that on account of an artificially lowered

⁷ H. Sinha's article on "Indian Gold Exports" in the *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. XIII (1932-33).

See also *Indian Currency Problems in the Last Decade* (1926-1936), pp. 117-118.

exchange rate, we are able to sell our goods on better terms, which they will interpret as dumping our goods on them, they will naturally impose countervailing measures to safeguard their market. Even if they do not resort to such retaliatory measures, we must quote a lower sterling price than before in order to tempt foreign buyers to take our goods. Because we quote a lower sterling price, our internal rupee price cannot be very high as a result of the lowering of our exchange. Suppose for instance, the exchange rate is lowered by $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ and in order to tempt foreign buyers, we reduce the sterling price of, say linseed by 7 per cent. with the result that we shall be able to fix its rupee price about 5 per cent. higher than now. If this increase is sufficient to create a surplus over the cost of production, which must also tend to be increased on account of the lowered exchange rate,—it is then and then only that the cultivator will be benefited.

The position is indeed very obscure. If I may use the economic jargon once more, the effect of devaluation on prices depends on the price-and-cost structure within the country, the relation between goods of export and of domestic consumption, etc. The question has recently been considered in detail elsewhere⁸ and need not be discussed in this paper. In any case, it is quite clear that the advantage of devaluation is doubtful, to say the least, and in the second place, the advantage to any one class is at the cost of several others, and in the third place, such advantages and disadvantages can be found only during the transition period, when the exchange rate, prices of goods and services, and other money contracts such as debts are mutually adjusted and readjusted.

IMPROVEMENT OF TRADE BALANCE

The third argument in favour of a lower exchange rate is that it will lead to the improvement of our trade balance. It has already been stated that there was no serious cause for anxiety up to March, 1937. The position from that period and a little earlier is summarised below:—

BALANCE OF TRADE OF BRITISH INDIA

[Data mainly from the monthly *Statistical Summary* of the Reserve Bank of India. *N. B.*—From April, 1937, Burma's trade with foreign countries other than British India has been excluded but before that date, Burma's trade was included in the figures. A favourable balance is indicated by + (*plus*) and an unfavourable balance by - (*minus*).]

⁸ J. C. Sinha's article on 'Devaluation and Recovery in India' in *Sankhyā*, Vol. 3, Part 4, pp. 349-350.

THE RUPEE RATIO

J. C. SINHA

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(In lakhs of rupees)

| | Balance of Trade in merchandise (1) | Balance of transactions in treasure (2) | Total Visible Balance of Trade (3) = (1) + (2) |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| 1936-37 | | | |
| April to June | | | |
| (1st quarter) ... | +13.30 | +4.25 | +17.55 |
| July to September | | | |
| (2nd quarter) ... | +14.95 | +5.56 | +20.51 |
| October to December | | | |
| (3rd quarter) ... | +20.67 | +4.17 | +24.84 |
| January to March | | | |
| (4th quarter) ... | +27.94 | +27 | +28.21 |
| 1937-38 | | | |
| April to June | | | |
| (1st quarter) ... | + 8.01 | +2.23 | +10.24 |
| July to September | | | |
| (2nd quarter) ... | + 8.65 | +3.61 | +12.26 |
| October to December | | | |
| (3rd quarter) ... | +47 | +3.94 | + 4.41 |
| January to March | | | |
| (4th quarter) ... | - 1.70 | +4.30 | + 2.60 |
| 1938-39 | | | |
| April to June | | | |
| (1st quarter) ... | -47 | +2.08 | + 1.61 |
| July to September | | | |
| (2nd quarter) ... | +11.74 | +4.60 | +16.34 |
| October, 1938 | + 1.65 | +1.79 | + 3.44* |
| November, 1938 | + 1.96 | +72 | + 2.68** |

* Monthly figures taken from *Accounts Relating to the Seaborne Trade and Navigation of British India* for October, 1938, p. 3 and pp. 282-83.

** Monthly figures taken from the *Indian Trade Journal*, December, 22, 1938, p. 1458.

It is quite clear that our trade balance has deteriorated from April, 1937, with the result that there is an increasing difficulty in meeting our foreign obligations. "Home Charges" alone require now about £30 millions a year or roughly Rs. 10 crores every three months. In the 3rd and 4th quarters of 1937-38 our total visible balance of trade was exceedingly small, far less than Rs. 10 crores. The position then was serious in all conscience.

APPARENT REASON FOR DECLINE IN TRADE BALANCE

One reason for this undoubted deterioration in the trade balance is the separation of Burma from April, 1937. Before that date, Indian figures included Burma's trade, and as Burma had then, as now, a

favourable balance of trade, her surplus made our position easier. After that date her surplus is not included in our account. On the other hand, the value of our imports from Burma exceeds the value of our exports to that country.⁹ The result is that our deficit has become considerable.

THE REAL REASON

The separation of Burma does not, however, provide a full explanation. It may tell us, for instance, why the balance for April-June, 1937, was below that for January-March, 1937. But it does not explain why our balance of trade in private merchandise for 1936-37, after excluding Burma's trade with foreign countries other than India, was more than three times as large as that for 1937-38. The relevant figures for 1937-38 and the preceding two years are given below so as to afford a comparison.¹⁰

BALANCE OF TRADE IN MERCHANDISE (EXCLUDING BURMA) (In lakhs of rupees)

| 1935-36 | 1936-37 | 1937-38 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| +4, 48 | +50, 59 | +15, 42 |

We have, therefore, to look into the deeper causes for the decline in our balance not only in merchandise but also in treasure. It would be imprudent to rely on continued export of treasure, for, we can never have an inexhaustible supply either of gold or of silver. Our salvation lies in improving our balance of trade in merchandise. There is no escape from this, for circumstanced as India is, default of foreign obligations is out of the question in her case.

THE REMEDY

This surplus of exports over imports may be secured either by increased exports or by diminished imports or by both. We have now to examine to what extent these are likely to happen as a result of the devaluation of the rupee. Reference has been made above to the elasticity of demand. If, for instance, the foreign demand for the majority of our exports is elastic, we may by charging them a slightly

⁹ In 1937-38, our adverse balance of trade in merchandise with Burma was Rs. 14.68 crores. See *Review of the Trade of India* in 1937-38, pp. 200-201.

¹⁰ *Review of the Trade of India* in 1937-38, Table No. 3, p. 185.

lower sterling price than now, augment the sterling value of our exports considerably. If, on the other hand, the demand is inelastic, we cannot increase the value of our exports in this way even by quoting a lower sterling price. In fact, in cases where a reduction in price in terms of sterling merely extends foreign demand to a smaller proportion than the rate of cheapness, a greater volume of our exports will sell for a smaller sum in sterling. If we look into the statistics of our export trade we find about half a dozen commodities accounting for nearly 80 per cent. of the total, *viz.*, cotton, jute manufactures, tea, raw jute, grain, pulse and flour and seeds. So far as raw jute and jute manufactures are concerned, the foreign demand depends not so much on prices as on general trade activity, jute being a packing material. There are similar difficulties with regard to other commodities also. For instance, so long as cotton-spinning machineries in Lancashire are not adapted to the use of short staples, we cannot increase the value of our cotton exports there even by quoting lower sterling prices than at present. This is no idle speculation. We had a bitter experience during the depth of the last depression how inelastic the foreign demand for our exports generally was,—how we could not increase our exports even by quoting ruinously low prices.

With regard to imports also, the question is whether our demand for them is on the whole elastic. Marshall suggested long ago that the demand for imports on the part of countries like India whose own exports "owe more to special bounties of nature than to man's energy" is likely to be inelastic. It may, however, be argued that the demand for imports into India has become less inelastic to-day on account of the fall of income of our agricultural classes. But it is difficult to say *a priori* whether our imports will be appreciably reduced, as a result of devaluation. Moreover, the curtailment of imports might prejudicially affect the interest of our cultivators, if the price of necessities bought by them rises proportionately higher than the price received by them for their own produce—a fact mentioned already. In any case, the question of improvement of our trade balance through devaluation is debatable, to say the least.

THE PRESENT POSITION

What is then to be done? We began by quoting from Dickens about Dick. Shall we end by quoting once again from Dickens about Micawber? Shall we wait patiently in the hope that "something will turn up"? There is no case for such a policy of inaction, but at the same time there is no valid ground for taking an alarmist view of our

present exchange position. Although the comparison of the figures for the same month in two years, may not always be quite valid in the case of an agricultural country like India,¹¹ it may be recalled that our balance of trade in merchandise and treasure and also the total visible balance during October and November, 1938, were substantially higher than those for the corresponding months of the previous year, as shown below:—

| | Balance of Trade in Merchandise (in Rs. lacs) | Balance of Transactions in Treasure (in Rs. lacs) | Total visible Balance of Trade (in Rs. lacs) |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| October & November, 1938 ... | + 3,61 | + 2,51 | + 6,12 |
| October & November, 1937 ... | + 90 | + 2,27 | + 3,17 |

The price level, as revealed by the Calcutta Index Number of Wholesale Prices, has also been steady since September last.¹²

CONDITIONS ABROAD

The latest Trade Supplement to *Economist*, London, dated November 26, 1938, quotes several facts showing that economic prospects abroad are definitely re-assuring. The Primary Products Index Number of the *Economist* stood at 133.5, 134.8 and 134.9 respectively during August, September and October, 1938, respectively. This is no doubt partly due to the depreciation of sterling in terms of dollars. But that cannot be the chief reason. Business in the U. S. A. is definitely improving. The index number of production of that country rose from 77 in June, 1938 to 95 in October last,—a rise of over 23 per cent. in only four months.¹³ The standard of living in the U. S. A. is much higher than that of any other country of comparable size or population. It follows, therefore, that business prosperity in that country is an important factor in world recovery.

There are, however, bad patches. The position is not entirely free from anxiety. It is even doubted in some quarters whether the sterling resources of the Reserve Bank of India are fully adequate for supporting the exchange in all eventualities. But in spite of this, it may be pointed out that it is not in the devaluation of the rupee but in other measures that we must look for success in achieving an export surplus

¹¹ For reasons see *Indian Currency Problems in the Last Decade*, p. 89.

¹² Calcutta Wholesale Price Index was 95 (Base: July, 1914=100) for September, October and November, 1938.

¹³ *Economist*, London, November 19, 1938, p. 373. See also Trade Supplement to *Economist*, dated November 26, 1938, p. 12.

in a world hemmed in with so many trade restrictions—measures such as grading and standardisation of our exports, removal or reduction of the present export duties, entering into trade agreements and trade pacts with other countries. The post-war economic structure of the world has become rigid in so many directions that conscious state control has become a necessity, not only in the sphere of foreign trade but also in other fields of economic activity. It is time that we accept this patent fact.

This Unplanned Economy

PROFESSOR HIRENDRALAL DEY

I

HOW IT WORKS

THE Economic System in which we live is variously called as Individualistic or Capitalistic or Competitive or Unplanned Economy. The main principles on which it is based are: (a) liberty of action for every individual, and (b) free competition.

These two principles, short and simple as they are, have exercised a profound influence on us.

Let us first of all see how they have affected our position as consumers. Now, our forefathers who lived some two hundred years ago had perforce to lead a very simple life. Coarse food, rough and short garments, and thatched cottages constituted their standard of living. Because they had no idea or means of buying things from outside their small villages, they had to be satisfied with a few simple things.

How different is the life that we lead to-day! Even the poorest of us buy and use things produced by strangers in distant parts of the world. Our salt comes from Aden, clothes from Manchester, Japan or Bombay, and our little luxuries like cheap soaps, looking-glasses and toys come from the farthest parts of the world. And if we are fairly rich, we buy and use a large and ever-growing variety of articles of food, clothing, housing materials and toilet things from unknown persons in foreign lands. Moreover, our demand for most of our clothing and luxury articles is a changing demand. We require new variety of things almost every time we buy them. The *saries* or blouses or shoes or hats or bonnets or vanity bags or umbrellas of to-day will begin to bore us within a few days or weeks or months, and newer varieties of them will be in request. Our craving for novelties is insatiable and the climax of this tendency is reached in respect of modern films.

Now, the most curious and, therefore, the most interesting thing about our Economic System is that, for the most part, we never tell any producer in advance what things we are going to buy, and how

much of each thing and at what price we are going to buy. We earn our income, sometimes regularly and sometimes irregularly, go to the market, move from seller to seller, examine many things, reject most of them, and finally select and buy a few things that happen to catch our fancy for the moment and at prices that do not exceed the capacity of our purse.

How does it come about that we are supplied with an endless stream of goods and services, even though there is no all-knowing Dictator to guide production into the right channels?

In Russia, Germany and Italy, it is the Dictator who lays down what should be produced, how much of each thing and at what cost. He also controls the consumer with an iron hand. He has to use this and not that, and this much and no more. Therefore, in those three countries which are called totalitarian states, the producer has an easy task. He simply obeys the Führer or the Duce and is not responsible for his actions. On the other hand, he is guaranteed a sale, because the consumer has to buy, also under the Dictator's orders, what the producer has turned out. There is a single will which unites both producers and consumers, and consequently supply and demand always tend towards equilibrium.

But not so with our Economic System which prevails in India and other parts of the world. All of us have got perfect liberty of action—the consumer to consume whatever he likes and the producer to produce just as he pleases. There is an infinite number of consumers and producers acting in a thousand different ways.

Therefore, in the absence of a Dictator, what is the force that compels the producers to produce just those things and just those quantities of things, which the consumers will want to buy?

The answer is 'changing prices of goods and services.' If the price of jute is falling and those of sugar and cigarettes are rising, there is an unspoken order, a dictation if we like, to the effect that the cultivators of East Bengal must grow less of jute and more of sugarcane and tobacco. If the collections at theatrical shows are falling and those at cinema shows are rising, there speaks the inaudible voice of the Unseen Dictator that theatre-managers must cut down their production and picture houses must increase the number and variety of films. And it is an order not only for the producers and managers, but also for the players. Fewer and fewer of them should remain in or go into the theatrical profession and more and more of them should go into the cinema studio. Again, if the lawyers are earning less and less and doctors or engineers or chemists or wireless experts or commerce

graduates or bank assistants are earning more and more, this is the direction given by the unseen hand that students should go less and less to the Law Department and more and more to the Departments of Chemistry, Medicine, Engineering, Wireless and Commerce and most of all, of course, to the Department of Economics. Or, once more, if the costs of dowry are becoming prohibitive for most parents, there is a broad hint that they must train up their daughters also for some profession other than that of wifehood or motherhood.

But, what, if the direction given by changing prices is not obeyed? What will be the punishment, if the peremptory order of the unseen Dictator is disregarded? And what will be the reward, if it is obeyed?

Of course, politically or constitutionally, our producer has the liberty of action. If the producer in Germany or Italy or Russia ever dared to disobey the orders of the Dictator, whose voice is loud and hands are strong in the physical sense, his business would be seized, and he would be arrested, humiliated, dishonoured, sent to the concentration camp, or cast into prison or exiled to unknown destination or even put to death. But, our producer need not fear any of those awful consequences. His life and person and property will be quite safe. But, economically he will be ruined. If the cultivator of Bengal persists in growing jute of which the price is falling, he will earn less and less for his labour and will become insolvent. On the other hand, if he is wise enough to read and obey the orders of the unseen Dictator and grows sugarcane and tobacco, he will soon become prosperous. Mr. Henry Ford is now the richest man in the world, because he has been a very obedient follower of our Dictator. He has continuously changed the structure, capacity, engine, and luxuriousness of his cars in order to satisfy the changing ideas and requirements of the motorists. Let him be disobedient, let him neglect to read the dictates of the Economic System, his business will be gone and he will lose a great part of his fortune.

Thus, then, for a producer to read and obey the orders of the unseen Dictator is to ensure prosperity and for him to disobey those orders is to court disaster to his business.

As must have been realized by now, these orders are not announced in the form of governmental commands—'thou shalt do this and thou shalt not do that' on pain of punishment. They are expressed impersonally and quietly in the language of changing prices. And the sanction or authority behind these orders does not reside in physical force but in economic results—rewards and punishments in terms of gain and loss.

And the hope of economic rewards and the fear of economic punishment are strong and powerful motives that compel the producers to study and obey the dictates of changing prices regularly and assiduously. And it is a debatable question whether or not this unseen, impersonal Dictator of our Economic System is more powerful in compelling obedience from all members of the community than a very personal Hitler or Mussolini backed up by the bomb and the rifle.

Who is this Dictator whose will thus expressed through changing prices must be obeyed by the captain of industry, the great banker and the merchant-prince alike? Well, that Dictator is none other than our humble selves acting as a body of consumers. Our relative preferences for various goods and services are expressed through changing prices. It is because we are preferring silk goods to cotton goods, or films to theatrical shows, or the motor car to the hackney carriage that the prices of the former are rising and those of the latter are falling. But, preferences so expressed must be taken as commands, the reward for obedience being prosperity and the punishment for disobedience being poverty. Consequently, we may say that in the present economic system, it is the consumers who, acting as a body, exercise Sovereign Authority or Dictatorial powers if we like.

Or, varying the analogy, we may liken our Economic System to a modern democracy. In a democracy, it is the common men and women who, by their votes cast at the General Elections, decide which of the candidates shall be, and which shall not be, returned to Parliament and thus who shall be, and who shall not be, ministers. Similarly, in the Economic System, by choosing to buy this and not to buy that, we are always and everyday deciding who shall be a millionaire and who shall be a pauper. Every act of purchasing done by anyone is a vote cast in favour of some employer, labourers and investors, and against all others in the same trade, and the aggregate number of votes cast individually in this way decides from time to time who shall succeed and who shall fail.

In our Economic System, therefore, it is the multitude of consumers with their capricious and ever-changing demand, who exercise supreme authority. The inaudible voice that issues the commands and the unseen hand that gives the directions are those of the heterogeneous body of consumers. And the highest aim of the Economic System with its producers, merchants and bankers, is to satisfy the wants of these consumers in an economic or rational manner.

II

WHAT IT HAS DONE

First of all, it has left us full liberty of action. We consume or not consume, produce or not produce, just as we like. We can become teachers or doctors or engineers at our discretion. There is nobody to compel us to do this or that. And, as we all know, freedom of action is a great factor of happiness. We are responsible for what we do or do not do. And so we develop the power of initiative and judgment.

Secondly, the prospect of high reward and the threat of heavy loss held up by the Economic System have brought forth a rich crop of inventions and discoveries. The railway, the telegraph, the steamship, the gramophone, electricity, the radio, the film, and the aeroplane owe their origin largely to the spirit of free competition—the prospect of high rewards. If anyone can produce a good novel, or invent a new engine, or discover a new medicine, the economic system will shower high honour and endless riches on him. So that the incentive to invent and discover and produce better and better things is always at play. And we know that as a result of all these inventions our life has become vastly different from that of our forefathers of a hundred years and even fifty years ago. All mankind is tending to become one big family. And the common men and women of to-day in many countries live a life that is larger and more interesting than fell to the lot of kings and nobles some two hundred years ago.

The machine has immensely increased our productive power. Man can produce more and more by working less and less. Take the position of the housewife, for instance. A hundred years ago, she had a miserable lot. On the one hand, she was a domestic drudge, cooking, cleaning, rubbing and scrubbing all day long. On the other hand, she was a breeding machine with no will of her own. But, the water tap, the vacuum cleaner and electric light have lifted the burden of toil of her shoulders. She is enjoying more and more leisure. And the growth of wealth, leisure and education has made her self-conscious and self-confident and given her a large freedom to seek happiness in fine arts, literature, politics or social service.

And the life of men and women to-day is more regular, secure, refined and civilised than ever before.

III

WHERE IT HAS FAILED

But, how is it that, in spite of its remarkable achievements, the present Economic System is cried down by growing numbers of men

and women and even by responsible men and women? Why is it that we talk of adopting socialism or planned economy or the spinning wheel or such other revolutionary things? We are becoming increasingly dissatisfied, because there are some serious defects in its mechanism.

Firstly, though it has done marvels for select thousands and conferred substantial benefits on millions, yet it has kept many more in a degraded and miserable condition. It has produced great inequalities: the millionaire's magnificent palace stands in glaring contrast with the poor man's slum. The rich man's daughter can spend a thousand rupees a month on mere frivolities, the poor man's daughter cannot even decently clothe herself. Consequently, there is an acute sense of injustice felt not only by the poor but also by all sensitive and right-thinking men even in the upper classes. That is why we find such high-souled persons as Gandhi, Jawaharlal, Bertrand Russel, Wells and Shaw in revolt against the present system.

Secondly, it is claimed that the producer produces efficiently and therefore he makes a profit. But in many cases he does not bear the full cost of production. Suppose there is a cotton textile factory established in the neighbourhood of Shambazar in North Calcutta. It produces, sells and makes a good profit. The owner is enriched and we give him high praise. But the factory is responsible for giving out dirt and smoke, which increases the washing and medical bills of all the neighbours. That is to say, he has thrown a part of the cost of production on the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. And, consequently, he is not so efficient as he appears to be.

Thirdly, only if there is free and perfect competition, the producers will try to excel each other and produce efficiently and sell at the lowest possible price. If A charges a high price, B will compete with him and offer the goods at a lower price, and C at a lower price still, and so on. But free and perfect competition does not always exist. If all the sellers combine and form a monopoly, they will produce less and sell at a higher price. Thus, instead of being our servants, they will become our masters and exploit us. We shall get less and less for more and more of our money. Rockefeller and Carnegie became vastly wealthy, because they were monopolists. And, so, everybody by combining with his fellows tries to earn as much as possible by doing as little as possible. There was a time not long ago when Economy meant supplying more and more to people for less and less of money. But, now, in our enlightened and sophisticated age, Economy has come to mean getting more and more money by doing less and less work, so that in the end he would get the highest income who would do the least work. This is

how we have got the famous story of the school-girl who, having fully learnt from her teacher the new meaning of Economy, came home and asked her father, who was a Professor of Economic History, whether it was not a fact that he was a man who earned more and more of money by teaching less and less of history.

Fourthly, due to the lack of foresight on the part of producers, and due to their greed and ambition, they often tend to produce too much of various kinds of things. Sometimes they are encouraged to do so by the bankers giving too much credit. So long as they are producing too much, there is larger employment of labour and capital, and wages, salaries, rent and interest soon begin to go up. Prices and profits rise. Everybody looks prosperous and happy. But only for a short time. Very soon it is found that because they have produced too much, they cannot sell all of what they have produced. They make losses. They cut down production. Labourers are dismissed. Salaries and wages and interest and rent are reduced. Prices fall. There is unemployment and fall of income. Thus, the Economic System shows alternate periods of prosperity and poverty, over-employment and unemployment. And this produces much suffering and mental and moral degradation. There is progress on the whole. But the progress comes by fits and starts. It is not continuous. Consequently, there is a sense of fear, uncertainty and insecurity in the minds of all.

And, last, but not least, the producers under the present *Economic System* produce only those things which can be produced and sold at a profit. Now, it happens that many important goods and services cannot be produced at a profit. Therefore, they are not at all produced by private producers. Take University Education, for instance. The price paid by the students in the shape of tuition fees is not sufficient to pay the salaries of the Professors. It is an unprofitable business. So also a well run School or College. There is little doubt that the Presidency College of Calcutta is one such institution. Similarly with roads, public health, museums, and public parks. In most countries, these things are produced by the Government at a heavy loss, because, though they are not profitable from the pecuniary point of view, they are essential to a civilised community.

IV

WHAT, THEN?

On account of these flaws in the working of the Economic System, there is widespread dissatisfaction among many people. Some of them

may admit that the present system has done something. But they assert that that something is far from being adequate to enable all men and women to live the good life. They want that the Communist System of Russia or the Fascist System of Italy should be substituted for the Individualistic System. They demand that there should be Planned Economy, which would mean that the Government should guide and control all economic activities, so that the mistakes and selfish policies of entrepreneurs and inequalities of the system may be avoided, and greater production and better distribution of wealth may be brought about. But that would also mean the abolition of all liberty of action for producers, consumers, labourers and all others. In our country, for instance, a Planned Economy would demand that we should all work and earn, save and invest, and eat, drink and dress, and perhaps also mate and breed as we are bidden to do by, say, the Congress Committee, which will be guided by the findings of the Planning Commission, which in its turn will be guided by the recommendations of the Planning Committee. It would, also, of course, imply that the Planning Authorities have the power to enforce their decisions on all producers and consumers.

It is almost certain that Planned Economy will bring about greater social and economic equality, but it is not so certain that it will bring more wealth. It may cause equality of income, but there is no guarantee that it will cause equality in higher income. And it is also an open question whether it will make people, on the whole, more happy than they are now.

Anyway, one can say with confidence that Planned Economy will do one or two things at the very least. For one thing, it will very considerably lighten the burden of thought for most of us. And for another, it will materially simplify the task of the professors and students of Economics. They would no longer need to worry about Marshall, Pigou, Keynes, Robbins and others of the same race of sophists, calculators and economists. They would only need to learn the Principles and Methods of the Five-, Four-, or Three-year Plan, and know by heart all the statistics of the progress of the Plan, and just have faith that, in any case, the Plan is all right.

The Need for a Scientific Unemployment Survey

DR. NABAGOPAL DAS.

ALTHOUGH the subject of middle class unemployment has been in the forefront of all political and economic discussions ever since the end of the War, no *scientific* survey of its nature, extent and incidence has yet been attempted in any part of India. It is true that a few provincial Governments (*e.g.*, Bombay and Madras) have collected some sort of statistics on the subject, but as their investigations were not planned in a scientific manner (and these Governments themselves admit the limitations of their "sample" enquiry), we get in their reports only a very fragmentary picture of the situation. Nevertheless, some of their conclusions *are* revealing, in the sense that they reveal new facts and seem to disprove theories to which we are accustomed.

I shall take up one instance—the conclusions arrived at by the Bombay Presidency Middle Class Unemployment Enquiry of 1926-27. The work was carried out by the Bombay Labour Office in the following manner. A small schedule was drawn up on which information was asked of individuals relating to their age, caste, duration of unemployment, etc., and copies of this schedule were sent to various bodies and persons together with a circular letter with a request that the staff of the offices should be asked to distribute the schedules to persons whom they knew to be out of employment. In all, over twenty thousand schedules were circulated in the Presidency and out of these about twenty-six hundred were received back duly completed. A number of these were, however, found to have been incorrectly completed and eventually only about nineteen hundred schedules were accepted for tabulation. This tabulation showed three very interesting facts. First, nearly 50 per cent. of the unemployed persons covered by the returns did not possess what are generally regarded as minimum qualifications: in other words, they were really "unemployable." Secondly, of those who had remained out of employment for six months or over, nearly 90 per cent. were persons who had no special qualification or training whatsoever beyond the usual Matriculation or Intermediate certificate, or the Bachelor or Master's degree in arts. Thirdly, the bulk of the unemployed, *i.e.*, over 75 per cent. of them, were below the age of 32 and

over 60 per cent. of the total were between the ages of 17 and 26. In other words, unemployment was not as acute as seemed to be the popular notion.

Now, these are interesting deductions, but we do not know if we can accept these deductions at their face value. The enquiry referred to was neither comprehensive nor scientifically planned and its conclusions may, therefore, be questioned, not without some justification, by all keen students of the subject. The need for a scientific unemployment survey thus becomes all the more obvious and the question boils down to one of how to do it. That, however, is not easy to answer and it is to an exploration of the best possible method that all our energies should, in my opinion, be directed.

A Review of Contemporary Economics

MANILAL BANERJEE

THE story is told of Wagner that when he was writing his *Tristan* he was so much in doubt about getting readers among his own people that he imagined himself writing for a fictitious reader at Rio de Janeiro. This is, of course, no analogy for one who writes at this moment of time on the method and significance of that branch of knowledge which above all others is the "symbol and safeguard of rationality in social arrangements"—I mean the science of Economics. For the same sense of futility born of a lonesome spirit does not lie heavy on a writer on Economic subjects especially in these exciting and important moments we are passing through.

It may be of assistance to sketch here broadly the conclusions which this paper seeks to arrive at. My purpose is to show that much of our analytical economics is abstract, unreal and useless formalism. It is my purpose to attack the unreality of mind of many among the number of economists, the persistent and even missionary doctrinarianism entrenched in the academic teaching of the subject and "the ostrich attitude towards men and affairs in the midst of most complex and critical issues." Economists have found it no small pleasure to put up "smoke-screens of technical jargon to terrify ignorant antagonists." My point is that the economists have been no more than "rapt astronomers of the social universe deigning no aid to navigators in search of the desired haven." I proposed further to show that economics has been just a cunning system of apologetics for the particular mode of managing economic affairs with which most of the economists are familiar. (Or why should Professor Gregory think that a planned society "deprives itself of all those guides to rational conduct upon which the progress of economic life has depended!")

¹ For example, Sir Ernest Benn supposes that it must be necessarily wrong to aim at greater economic equality because Pareto suggested that "under certain conditions and leaving the effects of inheritance, fiscal policy, etc., out of account the curve of distribution in several countries tended (as the thought) to conform to a certain shape." On the other hand Ludwig Mises (in *Die Gemeinwirtschaft*) gives a theoretical demonstration of the impossibility of any planned economy.

I have no fear of losing readers. Of late an uneasiness has been expressed about the nature and insignificance of economics ; it has been the experience of many to hear increasingly frequent and emphatic expression of "disillusion and scepticism" resulting from a sense of the futility of the "complex train of thought which the theoretical economists to-day are pursuing." This dissatisfaction cannot, to my mind, be dismissed as symptomatic of an unreasonable impatience. Mr. R. F. Harrod in his Presidential address to Section F of the British Association² in last August had much to say on Mrs. Barbara Wootton's "jeremiad"—*Lament For Economics*. The profound disturbance caused to a theorist of high repute alone shows that the feeling of uneasiness is both widespread and well-founded. Mrs. Wootton's point against too grandiose claims for Economics, as Mr. Harrod admits, is unassailable. Mrs. Wootton says that she has heard many of her colleagues engaged in teaching economic subjects assert that they can no longer bring themselves to include any substantial slice of current economic theory in their courses because "it is sterile and unreal and because no matter how it is presented it only provokes ridicule or disgust." It is considered that the ability of the economists to interpret economic situations has not advanced appreciably during the last century and the sceptical estimate of the usefulness of much of contemporary economic theory is shared by a considerable proportion among the students who have been engaged in mastering the latest evolution of the theory. And one of the ablest of such students has described the diverse manifestations of economic theory as reminding him of "nothing so much as of the strange forms taken by certain reptiles in early geological epochs before they became extinct."³

My task has been rendered easier by the economists' deep divergences of opinion. Professor Lionel Robbins, of course, has the best will in the world of composing a disunity which according to him does not exist.⁴ Rather than opening the ranks still farther he would close them into an obtuse unity. But he is often embarrassed by unwelcome intruders from outside. "The statesman who said '*ceteris paribus* be damned!' has a large and enthusiastic following among the critics of economics"—thus remarked Prof. Robbins—I suppose in a sense of

² During its last session at Cambridge.

³ Mr. H. S. Booker, quoted by Mrs. Wootton *opus citatum*, is responsible for this analogy.

⁴ See his interesting article, "Live and Dead Issues in the Methodology of Economics," *Economica*, August, 1938. It is difficult to agree with Prof. Robbins especially when books like Hawtrey's *Credit and Employment* are being written.

sardonic humour—in his much-quoted *Essay*.⁵ Mr. Keynes is no less sardonic in his demonstration that the convenient *long run* is a misleading guide to current affairs because “in the long run we are all dead.”

It is long since Mr. Keynes pointed out in clear and unambiguous terms that “the theory of Economics does not furnish a body of settled conclusions immediately applicable to policy. Economics is a method . . . , an apparatus of mind, a technique of thinking.”⁶ It is surprising how lesser economists should still be believing in Economic Fundamentalism “with the New Testament left out and the Book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy inflated to unconscionable proportions by the addition of new and appalling chapters.”⁷ The surprise is greater in view of the general lessening of respect in which the *ipse dixit* of the economist is held. In the past few years the prestige of economics has taken a knock and Mr. T. S. Elliot won't include economics in any curriculum of liberal education. Mr. R. F. Harrod points out that the field of prescription is outside the proper “science” of economics. The judgment, he argues, whether two pence have more utility to a millionaire or a beggar is unscientific for lack of a test. This objection, Mr. Harrod remarks, would be weighty if economics were an exact science. “Yet in fact its achievements outside a limited field are so beset on every side by matters which only admit of conjecture that it is possibly rather ridiculous for an economist to take such a high line.”⁸ “Only by abandoning the theological claim to certainty can economists rebut the charge of scholasticism and claim scientific status.”⁹ Prof. Pigon would make Economics merely a handmaiden to Ethics. Prof. Robbins, I think, may be accused of devoting scarce time to controversy in the *Economic Journal* merely to reach some such meek conclusions as it is not possible to say that “economic science showed that free trade was justifiable, that inequality should be mitigated, that the income tax should be graduated and so forth.”¹⁰

In the first edition of his essay Prof. Robbins declared that the corollaries of economic theory were not based upon any facts of

⁵ *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, p. 112.

⁶ Mr. Keynes's General Introduction to the Cambridge Economic Handbook Series.

⁷ Mr. R. H. Tawney, *Halley Stewart Lectures*, 1929: Equality.

⁸ *The Economic Journal*, September, 1938, p. 396.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 401.

¹⁰ L. C. Robbins, *Interpersonal Comparison of Utility*, *Economic Journal*, December, 1938.

experience or of history but were "implicit in our definition of the subject matter as a whole:"¹¹ a statement which seemed sufficiently to characterise the theory as a system of tautology. But least of all could one charge Prof. Robbins with disregard for the practical implications of economic theory: in his *Economic Planning and International Order* he shows himself the last person to occupy himself with formal economic analysis. (In the second edition of his *Essay*, however, this revealing admission has been abandoned). In the *Essay* he explicitly mentions the "relations between the scales of relative valuations and the historical framework of institutions" which may be existing at any moment. He makes it quite clear that all valuations and equilibrium analyses start from a given distribution of both ultimate commodities and the command over factors of production relevant to the situation.¹² Mr. L. M. Fraser writing in criticism of Mrs. Wootton's *Lament* concludes that economists and their critics should subscribe to a number of articles of settlement one of which should be to abandon the use of the word science in any esoteric sense or to agree not to use it at all.¹³ In view of these frank apologies, if any economist betrays himself into reverence for economic laws, we can in a curt manner pass over what he may have to say as the attempt of a priest to be more papistical than the Pope.

To those who regard all this as no better than a fine choice of platitudes an apology is due for emphasising the too obvious. In my opinion the subject at hand stands in need of proper analysis. I proceed to an examination of the whole subject presently.

Prof. Pigou's distinction between the tool-makers and tool-users as elaborated by Mrs. Robinson is, I admit, "illuminating."¹⁴ Now the pure economist forced with the charge that he is of no use begs (with Mrs. Robinson) the accuser to "have patience while he perfects his tool" in the hope of bringing it to fulfil the practical man's requirements. The view that it is the ultimate purpose of the economists to "do good" casts no reflection upon such innocent theorists who claim no more than an indirect utility for their work. But the danger is more profound than this; and at the present moment the effectiveness of these tools even have been questioned. If these tools of the econo-

¹¹ *Opus Citatum*, 1st Edn., p. 75.

¹² Prof. Robbins's reference to Dr. Strigl (*Die Okonomischen Katagorien Undie Organisation der Wirtschaft*) is to be noticed.

¹³ Cf. Mr. Fraser's article, *Economists and Their Critics* in the *Economic Journal*, June, 1938.

¹⁴ Mrs. Joan Robinson, *Economics of Imperfect Competition*, pp. 1 & 2.

mists are unsatisfactory, surely no good result can come of "using these in a more slovenly way." What is the use of laboriously perfecting these tools if they are fundamentally unsuited to the purpose which they seek to serve? The necessity was never more urgent of examining "the initial presumption which made these theories worth following."

I may here briefly refer to the confusion in the minds of economists about the method that they should follow in economic studies. Mr. R. F. Harrod looks up to empirical studies with high hopes of "projecting new knowledge and new laws into the arena." In his "Empirical Studies" he lays down suggestions which to my mind are invaluable towards the progress of knowledge in economic subjects. Mr. Keynes recognises that "the collection and arrangement of comprehensive statistics are of vast importance in order to eliminate impressionism."¹⁵ It is curious that Mr. Keynes's *Applied Theory of Money* should be now singled out as an instance of inscientific approach to the problems of the real world. Prof. Jacob Viner again alleges that Mr. Keynes provides no suggestion in his *General Theory* as to how the various concepts of Mr. Keynes "would have to be re-stated in order to provide specifications for the construction of statistical series by which his conclusions as to the nature and mode of behaviour through time of the various functions could be inductively tested."¹⁶ Prof. Pigou would think more of the "malleability in the actual substance with which economic study deals."¹⁷ Prof. Robbins thinks of the impossibility of the economist day by day discovering in sisyphus-like activity his co-efficients anew and leads the London School "away from the real world of economic affairs."¹⁸ Mr. Maurice Dobb brought out his *Capitalist Enterprise and Social Progress* in an attempt to bridge the gulf between pure economic theory fenced by *ceteris paribus* and the complex real world.

The intelligent reader must try to give some reply to the unwelcome interrogators who express their doubt as to whether economists are at all useful in relation to the society around them. There are of course questions to which an answer is not provided. But the faculties of economics while "defending capitalism against capitalists"¹⁹ at the

¹⁵ *A Treatise on Money*, Vol. II, p. 407.

¹⁶ Cf. his learned discussion on the *Causes of Unemployment* in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November, 1936.

¹⁷ Cf. Pigou, *Economics of Welfare*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁸ Mr. A. L. Rowse, *Mr. Keynes and the Labour Movement*.

¹⁹ Prof. Jacob Viner's grim joke about the nature of the economists' business!

same time look into the root of the trouble and by preventing lay misunderstanding of the nature of economics must give the economic studies a pick-me-up. But the cure is long to come. In the meantime, those whom the subject interests must proceed with caution and try to develop their own viewpoints. There will be some who will raise a passionate clamour of extremes because they must hold an opinion at any cost. But the less adventurous have much to expect.

India and Iran

CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LANDS INHABITED
BY TWO BRANCHES OF THE ARYAN FAMILY.

PROFESSOR TAHER REZWI

OF all the different branches of the original Aryan stock of mankind, the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians appear to be conspicuous on account of the existence of relations between them ever since their separation from the main group.

The very word *Iran*, or *Iraena*, suggests that it is co-related to *Aryana*. The unity between these two branches was intact, it is said, within the second millennium B. C. Scholars locate the original home of the Aryans in the steppes north of the Black Sea and the Caspian, whence they migrated south-east in pre-historic times. They became divided in a land afterwards known as the Eastern Iran, and while one tribe, historically called the *Iranians*, remained there permanently, another one still pushed southward until it crossed the Hindukush and finally settled in its new home—the Punjab. The great river Indus has given to India a name which is significantly *Iranian* in its origin.

Primitive Indo-Aryans and Iranians both worshipped elements of nature. The skill of old sages and *rishis*—the authors of the sacred Vedas—brought about a sort of reformation in the creed of the Indo-Aryans, while in a later period the Mazdayasnian faith was preached among the Iranian people. And though monotheistic touch, or belief in One Supreme Being, is not wanting in the religious literature of both these nations, yet consideration having been given probably to the existing mentality of the masses, it is found that their religious reformers left the favourite deities as they were. Thus, if we come across Agni, Vayu, Surya, Varuna and Indra, invoked as gods by the Indo-Aryans, similarly we find the Avestan literature of the Iranian people full of praises for Atar, Mithra, Asha Vahishta, etc., besides Ahura Mazda. Fire and Sun, the Vedic *Agni* and *Surya* and the Avestan *Atar* and *Mithra*, became prominent in the religious sphere of India and Iran both.

The habits of both these tribes of the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians were those of an agricultural and pastoral people. They reckoned their wealth in terms of cows and oxen. A pious man according to Zend-Avesta was he who cultivated the land and did not

keep it barren. The cow is still held sacred by the descendants of the Indo-Aryans, while the Iranians abstained from taking meat for a pretty long time. The Gathas of Zoroaster lament on the fate of Jamshid who introduced flesh-eating among his men. Again, we find in the Yasna (XXIX), that the *Ox-soul* complains to Ahura Mazda in respect of tortures which it experiences at the hands of mankind. The well-known *Soma*, or Homa, plant has played an important part both in the Vedic rituals and the Zoroastrian cult from the very earliest times.

As the Indo-Aryans divided men into four groups, *viz.*, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras, so also the Iranians were divided into the priestly class, the nobility, the scribes and the men of profession and business. Among both of them, the king was believed to hold power through Divine decree, and the authority of the priestly class over matters spiritual and temporal was unlimited. In ancient India, the king's ministers were selected mostly from amongst the Brahmins, while the *Dastur-i-Dasturan* or the chief priest of the Iranians, had the privilege of holding the important office of the grand-vazir at all times.

The language of the Zend-Avesta is almost akin to that of the Vedic lore; and though the former, it is remarkable, is written from right to left, as against the Sanskrit style which runs from left to right, still there are a few books of the ancient Hindu religion which are found to have been written in the peculiar *Kharaoshti* script which goes from right to left in spite of the fact that it is purely Sanskritic. Again, the vocabulary of the language current in present-day Iran contains words mostly of Sanskrit origin.

The Avestan texts clearly prove their early acquaintance with places belonging to the region of the Indo-Iranian borders and even mention the names of rivers enumerated in the Rig-Veda; while the word *Punjab*—the name of the "Land of the Five Rivers," where the bulk of the Vedic hymns was composed—is evidently of Persian origin.

Historical relations between India and Iran, strictly according to the researches done up to date, do not seem to commence before the middle of the sixth century B. C., when Cyrus, the Emperor of ancient Iran, extended his dominion to Gandhara including the whole of the plain of present-day Peshawar district. It was from this ancient place, Gandhara (or Kandahar), that in a later period Indian culture was conveyed into Afghanistan and beyond, through the Buddhist doctrine and literature.

After Cyrus, Darius the Great invaded India and annexed the Indus valley to his vast Persian Empire. For a considerably long time tributes from the Persian province on the Indus enriched the royal treasury of Iran. The *Kharaoshii* alphabet, mentioned already, was apparently a legacy of the Iranian supremacy over India during this period. This form of script continued to be in use on the north-western frontier until about the fourth century A. D.

And then came Alexander the Great in 326 B. C. to invade India. He had already conquered the vast Persian Empire the boundaries of which reached as far as the river Indus. After the Macedonian's death his Indian provinces were taken possession of by Chandragupta Maurya who also received, after his wars with Alexander's successor, Seleukos, the territories of Kabul, Herat and Kandahar through a term of peace. Iranian influence on India during this period can easily be guessed from the fact that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* had made it compulsory for the king to sit 'in the room where the sacred fire has been kept burning' at the time when he consulted the physicians and ascetics. It was evidently a Mago-Zoroastrian practice. Traces of fire-temples which flourished during this period, have also been found out in Taxila and its neighbourhood.

Cultural relations between the Indians and the Iranians continued further on, as we see that Emperor Asoka's dominions included the countries of Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Mukran, etc., which in fact formed parts of the ancient Persian Empire.

But when in the middle of the third century B. C. Bactria, a province of the Seleukidan Persian Empire, declared its independence, the territories of the north-western India, including the Punjab, fell very soon into the hands of the Graeco-Bactrians. Demetrios, the fourth Bactrian king, was also called the "King of the Indians."

Another important Persian province, Parthia, had also become independent at the same time when Bactria separated from the mother-empire, and about the middle of the second century B. C. the country between the Indus and the Hydaspes came under Parthian supremacy.

Passing reference may be made here to Seistan, a province of ancient Iranian Empire. The very name of this place, derived from "Sakastan," reminds us of the nomad Iranian tribe, the *Sakas*, who became rulers of Western India for a considerably long time.

But the most epoch-making time was yet to come, when during the reign of the illustrious Emperor Kanishka the Great, of the famous Kushan dynasty (40-220 A. D.), the Indo-Iranian relations became still more conspicuous. Kanishka's dominions extended far and wide,

and it was during his time that Buddhistic Indian culture penetrated deep into the soil of Afghanistan, Bactria and the Iranian borders. And though Kanishka, himself belonging to the Yueh-chi tribe of the Chinese Turkistan, showed great favours to the Buddhistic church, yet it is a fact that he followed the Graeco-Parthian practice of adopting a loose form of Zoroastrianism. The princes of his line spoke the language of an Iranian form, while the coins of Kanishka show that he 'honoured a curiously mixed assortment of Zoroastrian, Greek and Mithraic gods, to which Indian deities were added.'

History, later on, turned quite a different page. With the Muslim-Arab conquest of Persia and the dismemberment of the Sassanian Empire, (A. D. 641), circumstances changed to such an extent that some enthusiastic bands of Iranian-Zoroastrians were forced to flee from their ancient Fatherland and settle permanently on the western coast of India. They have lived here ever since their migration from Iran, keeping intact their Zoroastrian tenets, though adopting Indian costume and even speaking Indian languages. The zeal of the Muslim converts of Iran, on the other hand, gradually led them to extend their sway over lands which lay beyond the Iranian frontier, and within only a few centuries their conquering hordes had entered the Indian territories. Successive generations of Pathans and Mughals, hailing from Afghanistan, Turkistan and Iran, became rulers of India for centuries together and practically made the country their homeland. Their stay in India for about a thousand years and their unreserved association with the people of this country, in every walk of life, have made them forget the lands of their forefathers, and they are now *Indian* in all respects just like the other children of the soil.

The empire of the Great Mughals extended in the north-west as far as Afghanistan and Iranian borders, and during the whole period when the star of the House of Babur continued to remain in its full splendour on the horizon of India (A. D. 1526-1707), there were diplomatic and cultural relations with the country of Iran which was at that time governed by the Safawide line of Kings (A. D. 1499-1722). When Humayun was forced to leave his throne under pressure from the Pathan chief, Sher Shah Suri, he took shelter in Iran. He was able to win back his lost dominion only with the help of those Persian soldiers whom the generous Shah Tahmasp of Iran had ordered to accompany him in his return journey to India. During the reign of Emperor Akbar the Great the relations between the two countries were still more cordial and friendly.

Effects of Persian influence on the face of this country are evident not only from the various works of art and architecture which came

into existence during the Mughal rule in India, rather the very manners and customs of the people of this land, their dress and their language, clearly point out to-day that Iranian culture has penetrated very deeply into the soil of India.

Persian was the court-language of the Emperors of Delhi, and as such it enriched the literature of India to a very great extent. Under the patronage of these Indian-born Mughals Iranian men of letters flourished in this country in large numbers. The Indians themselves—Hindus and Muslims alike—contributed handsomely to Persian literature and used to take great delight in cultivation of Persian poetry.

Kautilya's System of Espionage and its use in the Mudrāraksasa (Drama)

PROFESSOR RADHAGOVINDA BASAK

STUDENTS of ancient Indian history are aware of the fact that, generally speaking, monarchy, mostly hereditary and absolute, with a highly organised bureaucratic machinery, prevailed in our country. Espionage, as it prevails now under civilised governments everywhere in the world, formed also the chief, rather the essential limb of the body of administration in ancient India. It may be stated with certainty that no form of government can work efficiently without a strong institution of the Intelligence Department, or Secret Police, or what is called the “*gūḍha-puruṣa-praṇidhi*” in the Sanskrit Arthasāstras and Nītiśāstras. The Institution of ambassadors, or the *dūta-praṇidhi* as it is called in Sanskrit, may also be regarded as a section of the espionage system itself. The spies are *aprahāsa-cara* (secret workers) and the ambassadors *prahāsa-cara* (working almost openly). The oft-heard citations from old Sanskrit works, such as, “राजानश्चारचक्षुषः”, “चारचक्षुर्महीपतिः”, “स्वपन्नपि च जागर्ति”, “मारुतं व्रतं”, “राज्यप्रणिधिमूलं”, “राजानो दीर्घचक्षुषः” etc., serve as evidence on the importance of this institution of espionage. We all know that the chief duty of government is the maintenance of, and responsibility for, Law and Order in the community. But this task requires keen internal watch not only over the subject-people, the state-officers of all ranks, and even the female members of the royal harem, but also external watch over the doings of foreign kings and states. It is generally believed in some quarters that the relation between the State and the people, is, as it were, antagonistic, distrustful and suspicious, and so on account of the clashing of interest and want of mutual confidence, between them, precaution is always necessary on the part of the State. Hence organisation and maintenance of the Intelligence Department or the Secret Police is a vital necessity for administration, and the anxiety of government for the preservation of its morale and

discipline is quite natural. Report to Government by spies of the doings of people both of the State and outside, is of the utmost help for the upkeep of the welfare and happiness of society.

In this small article, I propose to give the readers an idea of the formation and function of the different orders of spies, as described by Kautilya in his Arthaśāstra and to show how far this system of espionage was followed by Viśākhadatta, the renowned author of the Sanskrit political drama, the *Mudrārākṣasa*. The confidential informants or reporters whose chief function is to collect information regarding the mental attitude of the people towards the throne, the devotion or otherwise of the State-functionaries to the king, the detection of crimes, the military and financial strength of the enemy-kings, etc., were divided into two main classes, the संस्थ's and the सञ्चारिन्'s, the operation of the former being static and that of the latter dynamic. The संस्थ spies are five in number, viz., कापटिक, उदास्थित, गृहपतिव्यञ्जन, वैदेहिकव्यञ्जन and तापसव्यञ्जन and the सञ्चारो spies four, viz., सत्री, तीक्ष्ण, रसद and परिव्राजिका or भिक्षुकी. It is clear then that there are female spies too in this system. Kautilya's Artha-śāstra states that these classes of spies should have a battalion of disciples or workers, and sub-disciples or sub-workers to assist them in their work. They could use cypher-codes संज्ञालिपि during transmission of informations. It may seem strange indeed that these spies could not even recognise the members of their own order, their identity remaining always undisclosed to each other. The संस्थ of spies were appointed by the Prime Minister (मन्त्री) in consultation with the king, but it appears that the latter alone could appoint the सञ्चारो spies, probably because they had to watch over the activities of the State-officers too. In all matters of administration of the criminal law (कण्टक-शोधन) the magistrates (प्रदेष्टा) were assisted by an army of spies. Sometimes agents-provocateurs enticed unfriendly people to commit seditious offences, etc., who were then punished for their crime. Regarding the nature of these spies, it may be said that the कापटिक is a skilful young man (छात्र), able to study the mental workings of persons, whom the Prime Minister should encourage by money (अथे) and honour (मान) and direct him thus:—"You should at once bring to my notice any evil-doing of any body as soon as it is detected, not forgetting to regard this king and myself (the minister) as the highest men of authority." ("राजानं मां च प्रमाणं कृत्वा यस्य यदङ्गुलं पश्यसि तत् तदानीमेव प्रत्यादिश ।") The उदास्थित spy is one who has fallen

from his former position of a recluse (प्रव्रज्या-प्रत्यवसित). As the head of his own class, this man shall be assisted by other so-called ascetics who would be provided by him with food and raiment and house-allowances out of the subsidies received secretly from government for conducting agricultural and economic works through his disciples, and he should appoint some other men as spies, when seeking employment, stating thus:—"You should undertake the king's work (espionage) with this your particular (sectarian) dress (be it that of a Bauddha or of a Jaina or a Pāśupata, etc.) and should again appear before me at the time of receiving your subsistence and salary" ("एतेनैव वेषेण राजायेश्चरितव्यो भक्तचेतनकाले चोपस्थातव्यम्") The गृहपतिव्यञ्जन spy is an agriculturist by profession, with large recourses obtained from government and he shall also appoint other persons of his choice and offer them food and pay out of the income of his field-products. The वैदेहिकव्यञ्जन spy is a trader or commercialist, and he should be the head of a party of other merchant-spies living on the income of commercial concerns, financed secretly by government. The तापसव्यञ्जन spy, again, is one appearing either with shaved head, or with braided hair. His place of residence is generally the suburbs of a city, where he is known to all people to be an ascetic having many other shaven-headed disciples or those with braided hair. He shall be reported everywhere by followers of trader-spies, to be living on small meals taken at intervals of one or two months, and also declared by his own disciples to possess supernatural power of forecasting events, which are really caused to happen by other secret spies of the सत्ती order. The Prime-Minister should ultimately be made to receive those who are announced by the spies to be persons possessed of fortitude, intelligence, eloquence and power and arrange for them food, subsistence and work, and he should appease with wealth and honour those who are disaffected for good reasons, and also cause others to be secretly done to death if they are disaffected without any ground, and also those who are seditious ("ये च कारणादभिक्रुद्धास्तनर्थमानाभ्यां शमयेत्, अकारणकृद्धान् तुष्णीदण्डेन राजद्विष्टकारिणश्च").

Of the सञ्चारी spies, the सत्ती variety consists of persons who are the king's relatives—but who, being in indigent condition, are in need of State maintenance. They shall be taught in sciences like palmistry, sorcery, juggling, magic, etc., and also in omens and auguries. The तीक्ष्ण spies are to be recruited from desperados, who show their bravado by risking their lives in encountering even infuriated

elephants and ferocious animals for earning money. Persons who are not bound by any tie of affection even to nearest relatives and are extremely cruel and indolent by nature are appointed to act as रसद spies, i.e., for administering *rasas* or poisons. The fifth class of wandering spies who are females, are women recluses (परिव्राजिका), women with shaved heads (मुण्डा), and woman of the Sudra class (वृषली). The so-called anchoresses shall be clever widows of the Brahman caste and seekers of employment—but they, being shown honour by the ladies in the king's harem, shall have access to the families of the *Mahāmātras* (State-ministers and counsellors). The field of work of these wandering spies, wearing disguises appropriate to different countries, dresses, arts or professions, languages and castes, will remain engaged amongst the high officers of State in the king's own kingdom for collection of informations. The तौक्षण spies employed ostensibly as holders of the umbrellas, vases, fans, shoes, and seats, or put in charge of the king's chariots and conveyances, shall communicate their findings regarding the public workings of the officers, to the सत्ती spies and the latter should relay the news to the संस्थ spies, who ultimately will despatch the same to the highest political quarters ; while रसद spies employed as food-makers, confectioners, bath-assistants, shampooers, bed-spreaders, barbers, toilet-helpers, water-drawers, as also servants assuming the guise of hump-backs, dwarfs, pigmies, deaf, dumb and blind men, and also actors, dancers, singers, players of musical instruments, jokes and bards, and persons assuming the dress of women, shall collect informations regarding the private characters of those officers and communicate the same to the संस्थ spies through the भिक्षुकी spies. There is reference also to the transmission of news through songs, verses, notes of musical instruments, secret letters, cypher codes and other symbols. The pretext made by informers for going out of the royal court consists also of feigned disease, lunacy, breaking out of fire, poisoning, etc. Dismissal from service, or severe punishment, was the reward of spies if they failed to procure reliable informations, tested by the principles of agreement of all versions received from different sources. Another most interesting class of spies is called उभयवेतन spies. They were generally appointed by the original master with a grant of salary for collecting information from enemy kingdoms, where they were secretly advised to take up appointment under, and serve, the foreign rulers too, by accepting a second salary, of course, without the knowledge of the latter regarding their

nefarious purpose. But these उभयवेतन spies shall be appointed after they had allowed their sons and wives to remain under State protection, but this was only meant to prevent the spies from betraying their original masters. Thus in short, were the spies of various denominations, set in motion by a king of ancient India, to ascertain the movements and activities, not only of enemies, but also of his own State-officers and subjects. There was also arrangement to detect enemy-spies by the help of the king's own spies of like profession ("परस्य चते बोद्धव्यास्तादृशरेव तादृशाः").

We shall now attempt to show how far Kauṭilya's system of espionage was utilised by Viśākhadatta in his most unique and purely political drama, the *Mudrārākṣasa*. The date of composition of this drama is a controversial question, but it was undoubtedly earlier than the ninth century A. D. The principal character of this drama is Kauṭilya (Cāṇakya or Viṣṇugupta, as he was also called), the Brahman premier of Candragupta Mauryya (323-298 B. C.). It is somewhat difficult to say if the Kauṭilya *Arthasāstra* was written by Kauṭilya himself in the 4th Century B. C., or it was a treatise prepared by the literary effort of a band of writers belonging to the Kauṭilya school of political thoughts and composed sometime before the 4th century A.D. In the former supposition, the author of the drama is removed from Kauṭilya by more than one thousand years and in the second, by only three or four centuries. The way in which the dramatist has embodied Kauṭilya's teachings in his book and the clear agreement in many political thoughts and the language in which they are garbed, lead us to support the latter supposition.

The plot of the drama derives its materials from history. It is generally believed that Candragupta Mauryya was an illegitimate scion of the Nanda family. The last member of that family who ruled in Magadha from Kusumapura (modern Patna) is named Sarvārthasiddhi in this drama. He had one Brahman minister, named Rākṣasa, a statesman of consummate ability and skill in diplomacy. Candragupta, though a powerful young man, was hated by the Nandas and hence he was anxious to become the political disciple of that most brilliant intellectual giant, Kauṭilya, whom he considered to be the ablest guide in his revolution against the Nandas.

Once Kauṭilya was very bitterly insulted by the Nandas, who ejected him perforce during a dinner-party from the highest seat of

honour he occupied, and the Brahman, being highly enraged, untied his locks of hair by taking a solemn vow to eradicate the Nanda family and place his protégé, Candragupta, on the throne of Magadha. In this work he was able to make the barbarian king, Parvataka, to rise in arms against the Nandas on a promise of bestowal as reward of one-half of the Magadha kingdom. The Nandas were utterly routed in this revolution and the capital city was occupied by Candragupta and his ally, Parvataka. The administration then became a सचिवायत्त one, *i.e.*, in which the will of the prime minister was supreme. The new monarch was under the full control of Cāṇakya. Rākṣasa found resistance vain and after having conducted Sarvārthasiddhi, the last member of the Nanda house, through a subterranean passage to a safe retreat where he retired to an ascetic life and afterwards put to death by Cāṇakya's machinations, he (Rākṣasa) fled to the camp of Prince Malayaketu, the son of Parvataka. The latter met with death on account of the working of a poison-maid (विषकन्या) who was sent by Rākṣasa designedly to kill Candragupta, but who was diverted by Cāṇakya's cunning to the camp of Parvataka who fell a victim to her. Thinking that all his own plans and works were sure to be destroyed by the Machiavellian intrigues of Cāṇakya, Rākṣasa approached Malayaketu for an alliance and began to arrange for an invasion of Magadha with the active help of other allies, the princes of Kulūta, Malaya, Kashmir, Sind and Persia. This is rather a preamble to the plot of the drama. Now its central theme is the winning over the hostile minister, Rākṣasa, by the play of diplomacy and politics of Cāṇakya, and making him accept ministership under Candragupta. All the deliberately planned designs and intrigues of Cāṇakya, mostly carried out by agency of expert emissaries, were directed to bring about the appeasement of the able minister, Rākṣasa. In this work Cāṇakya spread a large and extensive net of spies to watch the latter's movements and to throw him into the utmost desperate condition of surrender, and acceptance of office under his former foe, Candragupta. Rākṣasa himself also set in motion a whole host of secret spies to work out a rupture between the Mauryya king and Cāṇakya and to bring about the assassination of that king by foul means.

We shall now relate the names and workings of the chief spies engaged by both parties in the drama, so that we may have a clear idea of how far their characters were based on the Kauṭīliya method of espionage. Viśākhadatta makes Cāṇakya boast that he was not

sleeping over the question of how to force Rākṣasa to break away from his alliance with Malayaketu and to accept office under his own monarch and that he was making all possible efforts through his own faithful assistants to secure that end. He diverted the poison-maid (विषकन्या) spy, employed by Rākṣasa to kill Candragupta, to murder Prince Parvataka and thus disposed of an ally who was a sharer of half of the Maurya kingdom. But a scandalous rumour was falsely made to spread everywhere by Cāṇakya's order that it was Rākṣasa who got Malayaketu's father killed, so that he could ultimately bring about his estrangement from his alliance with Malayaketu. Towards this purpose, Cāṇakya engaged the most dangerous and intriguing emissary, named Bhāgurāyaṇa, to stealthily speak to Malayaketu to leave the capital (Pāṭaliputra) as the fact was that his father was caused to be murdered by Cāṇakya himself, and that his own life might be in danger had he continued to stay any longer in the metropolis. But again when the right time came he made the same foolish prince believe the report that it was Rākṣasa and not Cāṇakya, who was responsible for the death of his father, and thus he eminently succeeded in estranging that prince from his hitherto trusted minister, Rākṣasa. In a monologue in the drama Cāṇakya says that he has employed emissaries in various disguises, conversant with knowledge of various countries, dresses, languages, customs and modes of dealing, for gathering information about persons devoted to, or disaffected towards, his own side or that of his enemy ("प्रयुक्ताश्च स्वपक्ष-परपक्षयोरनुरक्ता परकजन-जिज्ञासया बहुविधदेशवेषभाषाचारसंचारवेदिनो नानाव्यञ्जनाः प्रणिधयः"). He also appointed trustworthy men to remain near his king, and to act vigilantly against the desperados (तीक्ष्णा) and men administering poison (रसदायिनः), employed by the enemy.

The most curious character as a spy was Cāṇakya's once class-friend (सहाध्यायि मित्रं), a Brahman, named Induśarhan, who acquired much proficiency in political theories taught by Śukra (उशनसी दण्डनीति) and also in astrology (ज्योतिःशास्त्र). Since the moment of Cāṇakya's taking the vow of vengeance on the Nandas, this friendly spy of his was made to enter into false friendship with all the ministers of the Nanda family, specially with Rākṣasa who placed high confidence in him. But he did all this at Pāṭaliputra in the garb of a Jaina mendicant (क्षणकलिङ्गधारी) under the pseudonym, Jīvasiddhi. It is this fellow who diverted the poison-maid to kill Parvataka at his friend's instance. But Rākṣasa could never realise the true character of

this man and so he had to declare when his rupture with Malayaketu was about to take place by the intrigues of Bhāgurāyaṇa, that his close friend, Jīvasiddhi, could never be an emissary of Cāṇakya and if that were really so, the enemies have occupied his very heart indeed (‘‘कथं जीवसिद्धिरपि चाणक्यप्रणिधिः ? इन्त रिपुभिम्म हृदयमपि स्वीकृतम् ।’’) Another interesting point in this connection is that this spy could not be recognised by another spy of his own party, namely, Nipuṇaka and the latter even reported to his own master that Jīvasiddhi was their foe and this produced a smile in Cāṇakya as it showed the success of his plan. This Nipuṇaka again was a spy engaged in collecting information on Cāṇakya’s behalf at the capital regarding the persons who were disloyal to the new king, but he worked assuming the garb of a wanderer with a *Yama-pāṭa* (a scroll of pictures illustrative of the exploits of Yama) in his hand. It was this spy who secured Cāṇakya the signet-ring of Rākṣasa which dropped down from the finger of the latter’s wife while pulling indoors her little son at the time of Nipuṇaka’s entry, for the exhibition of his pictures, into the house of the jeweller, Candaradāsa, the ever-faithful friend of Rākṣasa whose wife and son he had the courage to harbour in his own house. It is with the help of this seal (मुद्रा) that the Maurya premier got a forged letter sealed—the letter which, through the instrumentality of another spy, Siddhartaka by name, got copied by another ever-faithful friend of Rākṣasa, named Śakaṭadāsa. This letter was at a later stage of the drama was proved before Malayaketu to be a genuine one, alleged to be secretly despatched by his minister, Rākṣasa, to Candragupta, through the same spy, Siddhārthaka, who was Cāṇakya’s agent. This spy was first made to cultivate friendship sedulously with Rākṣasa’s real friend, Śakaṭadāsa and so when the latter was taken to be impaled to the execution ground by Cāṇakya’s order for disloyalty towards the king, he rescued him, on the secret advice of the premier himself, from the hands of the executioners and fled with him to Malayaketu’s camp where he met Rākṣasa and begged his permission to remain in his train by accepting office under him. This spy was arrested when he was about to escape without a passport from the camp of Malayaketu and when beaten, he gave evidence against Rākṣasa, stating that he was going out on a secret mission on behalf of that minister with that forged letter purported to be sent by him to Candragupta.

We must not forget that Rākṣasa also sent a large battalion of emissaries to gather news from the Magadhan capital about the rival

party, and also to try their hands to bring about the death of Candragupta, but his schemes in this regard were all frustrated by the actions of Cāṇakya's spies, who were ever so vigilant to discover the activities of his (Rākṣasa's) own emissaries. Thus there was one spy of Rākṣasa, Virādhagupta by name, acting in the disguise of a snake-charmer (आहितुन्डिक) under the name Jirṇaviṣa, for collecting informations from the capital. The carpenter, Dāruvarman, another of his spies, engaged to drop a mechanical gate on Candragupta when he enters the palace, finished work of decoration, foolishly enough, of the front gate of the palace with golden arches, even before receiving orders from Cāṇakya, who, therefore, suspected him to be a spy of the enemy and he was forced to meet with a fatal end. Another spy was Varvaraka, appointed to be Candragupta's elephant-driver, who met with unexpected death by a fall of an arch, meant to kill Candragupta. The fate of another spy of Rākṣasa, named Abhayadatta, who was a physician, employed to administer to Candragupta a medicine mixed with poison, was disastrous, as Cāṇakya detected it when he observed a change of colour in a golden plate and forbade the monarch from taking that medicine which the physician himself was, however, compelled to drink, and thus met with death. Another spy named Pramodaka was employed by Rākṣasa and had charge of Candragupta's bed-chamber, but when he made contradictory statements regarding the source of the plenty of money he squandered (which was obtained, of course, from Rākṣasa), he was suspected, and was executed in a strange manner by Cāṇakya's order. Bībhatsaka and other spies engaged by Rākṣasa to kill Candragupta during sleep, having lain in wait in a recess in the wall of the palace, were burnt to death when the king's bed-chamber was set on fire by order of Cāṇakya, who concluded by noticing a line of ants with particles of food carrying in their mouths issuing from some crevices in the wall, that the chamber must have been peopled by hidden men in the interior of the house.

Another spy of Rākṣasa was Stanakalaśa, the bard, who was sent to Kusumpura to eulogise Candragupta, whenever the monarch would begin to disobey the advice of Cāṇakya, and it was really reported by Cāṇakya's men that the king and his premier were not pulling on well with each other. But that was only a feigned quarrel and the spy-bard was found out to be a man of Rākṣasa. So the design of Rākṣasa failed in discovering this simulating difference of his rival with his monarch.

The most interesting figure amongst the agents of Cāṇakya was the mysterious man who was successful in executing the command of his master by trying to hang himself with a rope within the very sight of Rākṣasa in a garden in the suburbs of Pātaliputra, when the latter left Malayaketu's camp after his final rupture with that prince brought about by the evil advice of Bhāgarāyaṇa. This mysterious man on strong request to divulge the reason of his apparent suicide reported to Rākṣasa that he was resolving to put an end to his life before he could hear of the death of his own friend Viṣṇudāsa, who again was resolved to throw himself into fire because his own bosom friend Candanadāsa was being executed by order of Candragupta, because he did not accede to the repeated request of the Mauryya premier to deliver the wife and son of Rākṣasa over to him. Rākṣasa could not tolerate this grievous information, so cleverly arranged by Cāṇakya through this peculiar spy, and resolved to surrender his own person for rescuing his noble friend, Candanadāsa, from execution for the fault of sheltering his own wife and son during his absence.

Thus it is quite plain that Viśākhadatta very largely used Kauṭilya's method of espionage, as described and referred to above, in his drama, the Mudrarākṣasa.

Western Contribution to Sanskrit Scholarship

PROFESSOR SUSHILKUMAR DE

THE study of Sanskrit by European scholars now extends over a little more than a century ; but it has passed through several successive stages, each of which has its distinctive character. In the early part of the century we meet with a group of scholars of great eminence who acted as the pioneers of the study. In those days men came out to India not to study but to act ; and amid the profusion of incident and the pressing needs of an ever-growing administration, the formation of a large leisured class, devoted to literary or antiquarian pursuits, was almost an impossibility. It is strange, however, that there were in those days a few Englishmen in this country who found leisure and energy to learn and record something more than what could be acquired through the ordinary experience of routine or the occasional excitement of emergencies. It is perhaps still more strange that the earliest group of European students of Sanskrit consisted of a school of literary antiquarians. One would suppose that the urgent wants of these who had to conquer a country with the geography of which they were by no means perfectly acquainted, and to govern nations of whose institutions and character they were entirely ignorant, should have directed the course of investigation. To some extent, indeed, the choice of studies was influenced by immediate administrative needs, but it is not wholly correct to say that the chief impulse was given by practical administrative exigencies. While British soldiers were busy acquiring territories and making the best shift they could to extemporise governments for foreign nations, British students in India were enquiring whether chess originated in India, whether Pāṭaliputra was Patna or Chandragupta was Sandrakottus, and what was the exact character of the Indian and Arabian divisions of the Zodiac. Charles Wilkins was translating the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785) and the *Hitopadeśa* (1787) ; Sir William Jones was publishing a translation of the Code of Manu (1796) and admiring the poetry of *Ṛtusāmhāra* (1792) and *Sakuntalā* (1798) ; H. T. Colebrooke was assiduously collecting and studying Sanskrit manuscripts, ransacking the Vedas for the records of a faded faith, bringing out the lexicon of Amara and the grammar of Pāṇini,

translating the epic *Kirātārjunīya* and publishing essays on Hindu Philosophy, Sanskrit Grammar, Lexicography, Fables, Arithmetic and Astronomy; and H. H. Wilson was compiling a Sanskrit Dictionary (1st ed. 1819 ; 2nd ed. 1832) and a treatise on the Hindu Theatre (1827). The first European student of Sanskrit, instead of delineating the strange society that was before him, was looking into the Institutes of Manu and other old records for the picture of India as it existed nearly two thousand years ago. It was with this purely literary or antiquarian object that the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded in 1784, chiefly through the enthusiasm of Sir William Jones. It was, however, a fortunate circumstance that oriental study at its commencement took this bent. These researches, at first sight so far removed from the practical exigencies of the time, were destined to supply the direction which assuredly guided future investigation and scholarship.

Yet, how was it that Oriental study took this peculiar bent at the very outset? Why were Sir William Jones (1746-1794), Sir Charles Wilkins (1750-1836), Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837), Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1860) and their distinguished followers, purely academic scholars of the literature of a dead language instead of being students of the living society before them? The answer is that they brought with them to India the English ideas of their day. The education of an English gentleman in the last half of the 18th century and in the beginning of the 19th was an education in classical literature. A person was entitled to be thought a learned and accomplished man, not in so far as he approached the type of a Faraday or a Huxley, not in so far as he approached to the type of a Bentley or a Porson. You might have been totally ignorant of the most elementary principles of every science and might have been utterly unable to understand any of the modern languages, but it was absolutely necessary that you should have studied the *Æneid* of Virgil, that you should have been able to compose a neat exercise of Latin Elegiacs, and to conjugate the Greek irregular verbs. The education of the man of the world in those pre-scientific days was not distinguished from the education of a school-master. The indirect result of this training was, of course, most salutary. No intelligent mind could be brought into contact with the masterpieces of ancient literature without gaining in pliability and strength. But it was not the direct aim of this classical education to enlarge the mind by imprinting upon the imagination a vivid picture of the rich and varied life of the two great ancient societies in the full vigour of their political activity, their æsthetic enjoyment, and their speculative power. It valued the great monuments of ancient

literatures more for their artistic excellence than because they preserved the records of ancient civilisations.

It was by a classical education of this type that the tastes of the first generation of European scholars in India had been formed. On coming to India they discovered a language as dead as ancient Greek, and with far less influence on any existing society than the language of Justinian. They discovered verses as melodious as those of Homer, as skilful as those of Horace or as grand as those of Æschylus. They discovered a form of speech unrivalled even by Greek in the complexity of its grammatical forms, and in the susceptibility of its words to the most delicate subtleties of meanings. They approached their discovery in the spirit of a literary critic and a grammarian. If Sir William Jones and Henry Colebrooke had passed their lives in England as leisured country gentlemen, they would have probably translated Virgil or Ovid, or have edited one or two Greek dramatists, or have done part of the work of Jelf or Buttman or Donaldson. As it was, they fortunately saw in the study of Sanskrit an analogy of Greek or Latin. They investigated and interpreted the Institutes of Manu and the old Sanskrit plays and poems with that keenness of perception, that patience in research, and that accuracy and caution which they would have applied to the fragments of the Twelve Tables, or to the choruses of Sophocles.

In so far as Oriental learning retained its literary and philological character, its influence was wholly beneficial. There was, however, one application of the knowledge of Sanskrit which was concerned directly with the practical affairs of the world, but which cannot be said to have brought about entirely beneficial results. When the government of the provinces devolved upon the British people, it became absolutely necessary that some kind of civil law should be administered. The mischief that would have ensued upon a wholesale introduction of English law was speedily perceived. The English rulers of India, accustomed to the idea of voluminous written law, instinctively turned to the treatises of Hindu and Muhammadan law for the rules and principles which they felt their own system could not adequately supply. It is true that the Hindu legal commentaries and the traditions and digests of the Law of Islam may more properly be compared with the *responsa prudentum* of the Roman Jurists than with the massive collection of English case law. But the earliest Indian administrators felt that they had the surest footing, then obtainable, in the existing legal literature of the country. Warren Hastings, who was among the first members of the Asiatic Society of

Bengal, ordered the compilation of a general digest of Hindu Law in Sanskrit, entitled *Vivādārṇava-setu*, of which an English version by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed was published in 1776. European authors vied with native lawyers in the elucidation of Hindu and Muhammadan Law. Colebrooke's *Digest* was published in 1797-98; Sir Francis Macnaghten wrote the *Considerations on the Hindu Law*; Sir William Macnaghten compiled the text-book which was for a long time the standard authority on the principles of Hindu and Muhammadan Law. The exertions of the Macnaghtens were equalled by those of Sir Thomas Strange and Baillie. These works have profoundly influenced the course of justice and have moulded innumerable decisions. With the experience of the present time, it is easy to condemn as too facile this old dependence on what may be called closet law. It is possible that a rigidity has been given to the rules of Hindu and Muhammadan law which they perhaps did not possess under Indian modes of administering justice. It has become the fashion to decry precedents and to complain about the destruction of native customary institutions by our Law Courts. In most cases, the written law of the Dharmasāstra and their different interpretations were probably much removed from the usages that actually obtained among the people; and it is gradually realised that the rule of decision should be primarily custom, and that the strict principles of the Hindu law should only be applied in so far as they have not been modified by custom. It may be that the written law in the first stages of its administration has been applied with too much dogmatism and precision. But the first Indian administrators had before them a choice of evils. They had either to invent new rules for nations of whose institutions they were consciously ignorant; or they had to make the best of those written records which were available. They chose the latter course. Whether the practical effect of their choice of records was beneficial or not, the historical value, however, of these records cannot indeed be denied. The harm which their choice may have occasioned is amply compensated, from the point of view of the student of law, by the fuller and more critical knowledge of two great legal systems, which is already leading to striking discoveries in the field of Comparative Jurisprudence.

The translation of some of the Sanskrit masterpieces by Sir William Jones and Henry Thomas Colebrooke, no doubt, aroused a romantic interest in Sanskrit, and Goethe's admiration of *Sakuntalā*, thus made accessible, is too well known. Colebrooke was neither a poet nor a literary man, but by manysided interest and his assiduous acquisition of a great collection of manuscripts he helped in creating scholars and laid the foundation of Sanskrit studies in Europe. The writings of

Sir William Jones and his followers, however, would have drawn the attention of the European public very slowly but for an incident which occurred about this time and led to the practical knowledge of Sanskrit being introduced on the continent of Europe. Alexander Hamilton, an Englishman who had acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit in India, happened to be passing through France on his way home in 1802. Hostilities between England and France breaking out afresh just then, a decree of Napoleon, directed against all Englishmen in the country, kept Hamilton a prisoner in Paris. During his long involuntary stay in that city, he taught Sanskrit to some French scholars, and especially to the German Romantic poet, Friedrich Schlegel, who was in Paris till 1807. One of the results of Schlegel's studies was the publication by him in 1808 of his work on the language and wisdom of the Indians (*Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Inder, ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumskunde*), which created a great deal of interest in the scholarly world of Europe and became largely responsible for enthusiastic fancies about the ancient wisdom of India. The Bibliothèque Nationale of France had at this time about two hundred oriental manuscripts, which were catalogued by A. Hamilton and L. Langlès. Under this inspiration and with the help of these manuscripts, A. L. de Chézy (1773-1832), the first scholar and Professor of Sanskrit in the Collège de France, edited *Sakuntalā* (1830) and taught the language to Augustus Wilhelm von Schlegel, Friedrich Schlegel's brother, who afterwards became the first Professor of Sanskrit at Bonn in 1818. The work of these scholars aroused so much zeal for the study of Sanskrit in Germany that the vast progress made since their day in Oriental studies has been mainly due to the labours of their countrymen. These two brothers were also the critics and leaders of the German Romantic school of literature; and one of the reasons why Sanskrit studies were favoured so much in Germany was that these young Romantic poets found in Sanskrit literature a realisation of some of their ideas of poetry, and the Oriental literature was to them both a revelation and an inspiration.

One of the fellow-students of A. W. von Schlegel, Franz Bopp (1791-1867), came to Paris in 1812 and learnt Sanskrit from Chézy. In 1816, Bopp's linguistic studies led him to publish his epoch-making treatise on the Conjugational System of Sanskrit in comparison with those of Greek, Latin, Persian and German (*Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanskrit Sprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache*). This work laid the foundation of what is known to-day as the science of Compar-

ative *Philology*, a science which has since been further developed by the labours of a series of brilliant scholars.

The great results which have been attained by this science may be regarded logically as the consequence of the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal; for Sir William Jones had already suggested, though tentatively, that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin (to which he added Old Persian, Gothic and Celtic) should have "sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists." But the discovery of Sanskrit rendered it necessary that its relation to the other Indo-European languages should be fixed with scientific accuracy. This necessity led to the comparison of the structure and growth of the different languages, Sanskrit, Iranian, Greek, Latin, Celtic, Teutonic and Slavonic, with a view to determine not only their inter-relation but the laws of their growth. Connection between the tongues of remote parts of the world was indeed presumed, but the nature and degree of the connection were not yet defined. Philologists now began an accurate and exhaustive comparison of the grammar and vocabulary of different languages, with a view to discover the general laws of their development. This led to the verification of the hypothesis that the structure and growth of language are regulated by definite and ascertainable laws, which has made Comparative Philology a possible science. The laws of phonetic change were discovered, and a genealogical classification of languages was made. It was demonstrated that there is an unmistakable affinity between Sanskrit, Iranian and most of the Indo-European languages, indicating that all of them were sister off-shoots of a common stock, and that there probably was in the far distant past, a tribal or racial connection between the peoples of Northern India, Persia and Europe.

It is not indeed scientific to assume that community of languages is conclusive evidence of the community of race. In the case of the Indo-European nations the theory of their common origin does not rest merely upon a grammatical analysis of the languages. The theory is strengthened by the concurrent testimony of the jurist, the student of mythology and the historian of religion, all of whom support the conclusions of the philologist. Accepting the theory, therefore, as possessing the amount of certainty which is ordinarily attainable in historical investigation, historians began to interrogate language for the purpose of discovering the degree of civilisation reached by the original Indo-European race before its dispersion, and by the different branches of the stock when they were still mutually connected with each other after severance from the parent stem. Thus, Comparative Philology

came to the aid of the historian and created a new kind of historical evidence. It did not yield picturesque narratives of battles, or romantic stories of dynastic struggles of kings. But it approximately fixed broad epochs and revealed what was the state of society at those epochs in those nations to whose history it was applied. Thus the work of the philologist proved valuable to the historian of civilisation ; and Franz Bopp, who derived from his study of Sanskrit a totally new insight into the nature of languages laid the foundation of a new science, which furnished the key to the understanding of forgotten civilisations and the possibilities of which are not yet exhausted.

Thus ends the first stage in the reviewed study of Sanskrit by European scholars. It was chiefly the German scholars who made it clear to the world that Indian literature, philosophy, history and language may justly claim the attention not only of local administrators, or even of a new section of specialising philologists and antiquarians, but also of the philosophic historians, the philosophic student of language, the comparative critic of literature, in fact, of every thinker of the West, as well as of the East.

Towards the third decade of the 19th century, the study of languages and of the history of ancient civilisations received a new impetus from the discovery of the large mass of Vedic literature, which constitutes the earliest systematic records of the language and thought of one of the most important branches of the Indo-European race. The Vedic study not only strengthened the foundations of the science of Comparative Religion, but it also started entirely new lines of enquiry. In the earlier stages of Sanskrit studies, of which we have spoken just now, i.e., roughly up to 1830, the European scholars became acquainted with that later phase of the ancient language and literature which was more familiar to the Indian Pundits and which is commonly known as Classical Sanskrit. The Vedic language or its literature had not yet been systematically investigated, although Colebrooke, as early as 1805, furnished valuable information on this subject in his essay on the Vedas. They knew little about the Veda and knew nothing at all of Buddhism. It was Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852), a pupil of Chézy and Professor at the Collège de France (1832), who introduced a critical study of the Veda, as of the Avesta, and awakened interest in the Pali language and Buddhism. Although Burnouf's teaching was cut short too soon (d.1852), there were among his pupils, Rudolf von Roth and Friedrich Max Müller, who started critical study of the Vedic respectively in Germany and England. Before this, about 1837, Friedrich Rosen, a German scholar, had conceived the plan of making

this more ancient literature and language known to Europe from the rich manuscript collection of the East India House. His edition of the first Aṣṭaka of the *Ṛgveda* was published in 1838; shortly after this came Stevenson's edition of the *Sāmaveda* (1842), which, however, was soon superseded by the edition of the same work published by Thomas Benfey in 1848. In the meantime, Rudolf von Roth, who is justly regarded as the founder of Vedic Philology, published in 1846 his little book on the Literature and History of the Veda (*Zur Literatur und Geschichte des Weda*), and gave a lasting impulse in the direction of a critical study of the earlier and more important literature of India. His efforts were ably seconded by Friedrich Max Müller, who was trained in France as well as in Germany, and who brought out (1849-1875) the first complete edition of the *Ṛgveda* with Sāyana's commentary, and also by Theodor Aufrecht who is memorable also in other ways in the history of Sanskrit studies, but who published in Leipzig, concurrently with Max Müller an edition of the *Ṛgveda* (1861, 1863) and later on an edition of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. The work of these pioneer Vedic students was later on continued by a brilliant band of German scholars who undertook to give to the study of Indian philology, literature and history a sure basis by drawing into the sphere of their investigation the oldest monuments of Indian literature, the Vedas.

The difficulty and magnitude of the work of these scholars can be realised when we consider that these Vedic records were composed in an ancient language and embodied a world of ideas far removed from those which can be obtained by the study of classical Sanskrit literature alone. There was, no doubt, the voluminous commentary of the Vedic scholar, Sāyaṇa, who lived in the first half of the 14th century A. D. At one time it was thought (and it is still thought by the orthodox scholars in India) that this commentary had preserved the true meaning of the original, and was sufficient for the study. Wilson, who became the first professor of Sanskrit at Oxford (1832), proceeded on this idea in his translation of the *Ṛgveda*. But Roth propounded the view that the aim of Vedic interpretation should be not to ascertain the meaning which Sāyaṇa, who lived in the 14th century, or even Yāska who lived eighteen centuries earlier, attributed to the Vedic hymns, but the meaning which the Vedic authors themselves intended. The commentators, though valuable guides, showed no continuity of tradition from the time of the Vedic poets themselves, interpretation only arising when the hymns had already become obscure. It was easy for Roth to show that even Yāska, not to speak of Sāyaṇa, is not consistent in his explanations, but often gives two or more alternative or optional senses to same word, or quotes alternative opinions of

predecessors whose interpretations are often conflicting. Roth, therefore, held that one was justified in saying that the authority of the orthodox interpreters should not be received as final, unless it is supported by probability, by context, by other similar passages, by grammar, etymology and other considerations. His criticism was destructive ; but it was also constructive in that he proposed to subject the Vedic text to comparative and historical treatment. He set himself to collect the same words used in different contexts, passages parallel in form and matter, with due regard to considerations of grammar, etymology and probability, ransacking the whole of Vedic literature, and further called in the assistance rendered from without by the comparative method, utilising the help afforded not only by the Avesta, which is so closely allied to the *R̥gveda*, but also by the results of Comparative Philology, resources unknown to the traditional scholar.

Thus, Roth adduced a healthy critical attitude towards the study of Vedas, and furthered it by laboriously compiling, in collaboration with Otto Böhtlingk, his famous Sanskrit Dictionary (*Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*) in seven volumes, published by the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and Sciences between 1852 and 1875, the product of 23 years' labour. In this Dictionary he has treated each word historically, giving copious references from the existing literature, tracing the different shades of meaning assumed by each word from the Vedic down to the classical times.

In combating orthodox and conservative Sanskritists, Roth no doubt went to the extreme of not paying sufficient attention to Indian interpretation. He is thus too prone to conjecturing; and relying too much upon reason, he allows one prejudice to take the place of another. In spite of their obvious limitations, the Indian commentators are valuable; the obstruction of Vedic, as of all studies, comes in when they are taken as infallible. It is now more clearly recognised that no aid to be derived from Indian scholarship should be neglected; and scholars who followed him give more weight to native tradition than was done by Roth himself. Modern Vedic research is the product of less than a century; and when we consider the fewness of the labourers in the field, the progress made already in thus critically studying the whole mass of Vedic literature, and in solving many important problems presented by it, has been surprising.

One result of the Vedic study was, we have seen, the transforming of philology into the science of language. The other practical effect was the creation of what may be called Comparative Mythology, and later on, Comparative Religion. All these studies are correlated; and in a

sense, the science of language may be regarded as the parent of Comparative Mythology. Philology pointed to the mental infirmity, "the disease of language," which confused metaphor with fact. In the popular sense mythology is a system of belief and therefore not easily separable from religion; but it also indicates a particular form of mental error. It means the process whereby a phrase which was originally a metaphor is in course of time mistaken for the expression of a matter of fact; or more generally, it means an exhibition of the tendency to give a new and wrong explanation of the meaning of a word, of which the original signification has been forgotten, including invention of stories to account for proper names or incidents. The metaphors which speak of the earth as the mother of all living beings, and of the heaven as embracing the earth, are perfectly plain to us, and we are in no danger of being misled by these poetical personifications. But it was these metaphors which brought Dyaus and Zeus into being and which made Zeus the lover of Demeter and Dyaus of Pṛthivi. Mythology is thus the process which brings theogonies and myths into existence; but the origins of theogonies and myths were not discovered till the science of language lifted the veil of mystery which shrouded them. Philology pointed out how personifications were confused with persons, metaphors with matters of fact. It laid down the principle that the derivation of words was to be sought not merely in those languages in which they occurred, but also in the roots and in the forms which the words assumed in kindred languages. It was the application of this principle to the names of mythological personages that provided the clue to the interpretation of the myths and folklore of the Indo-European nations. Here again the discovery of Sanskrit gave an impetus of exactly the same kind as it did to the study of languages. It was realised that the mythologies of nations with a common descent must be explained together. In this matter the study of Vedic mythology was of great value, for it forms one of the most ancient heritages of the Indo-European races. It presents, to a great extent, a more primitive form of belief than any other European mythologies, and therefore gives a clearer picture of the development of myths and of religious ideas than most other ancient literary monuments of the world. Hence it came about that an acquaintance with the literature of Vedas resulted in the foundation of Comparative Mythology, chiefly through the writings of Adalbert Kuhn and F. Max Müller, although Sir William James was the first to point out the similarities between the Indian and the Greco-Roman mythology.

About the year 1834, a great change is noticeable in the spirit and direction of Oriental studies in India. It was in this year that James

Prinsep published the archæological labours of Masson at Kabul and of Court and Ventura in the Punjab. At about the same time the fight between the Orientalists advocating an Eastern education for Indians and the Anglicists urging the advantage of communicating to the East the benefits of Western science and literature was taking place in Calcutta. Macaulay as the President of the Board of Education gave his memorable decree in favour of Western education, and his characteristic condemnation of Oriental learning is well known. The fact was that the value of Western science was beginning to be recognised, and there was as yet no widespread acknowledgment of the vast importance of Oriental antiquity to the student of language, of history, of mythology, of religion, of ancient law and society. Oriental scholarship in those days was defended on the comparatively weak ground of the intrinsic excellence of Oriental literature. The time had not yet come when the effect of Oriental scholarship upon the philosophy of history and society, upon the science of language could be shown. Thus the Anglicists won the day. It was perhaps as a consequence of the same intellectual movement that the school of literary antiquarians was succeeded by a school of archæological explorers, who abandoned the study and the desk for the temple and the cave, and who left off translating Sanskrit texts to decipher the inscriptions on monuments and the legends on coins. Detailed maps and plans took the place of glowing description. The evidence examined was addressed to the senses ; it consisted of the still existing relics of bygone ages, the coins of old dynasties, the votive tablets of buried generations and the shrines of forgotten priests. Here, again, we trace the growing faith in scientific methods, which is a characteristic of the second epoch of Oriental studies by European scholars and which created the new studies of Indian Epigraphy, Palæography and Numismatics. The foundation of these studies was first firmly laid by the memorable deciphering of the Aśoka inscriptions by Prinsep; and they have in course of time led to far-reaching results in the proper understanding of Indian history and antiquity.

It is sometimes difficult to convince people who have no imaginative interest in the past that any practical good can come of digging up brass and silver and pottery, of making out old alphabets which nobody ever uses, and of reconstructing old languages of which nobody living has ever heard. To such persons the enthusiasm of men like Prinsep and Bühler is unintelligible. They can no more comprehend it than they can comprehend an enthusiasm for collecting old rags and bones. They are apt to regard an archæologist or a collector of coins and manuscripts as, at best, a kind of harmless monomaniac. Still,

even the least imaginative and most practical of mankind would scarcely venture to affirm that history is an altogether superfluous branch of human knowledge. But to require that history should be written without the aid of archæology is to ask the historian to fling away gratuitously one of the best kinds of evidence available to him. It is the function of the archæologist to supply a most important part of the evidence upon which the history of antiquity is based. Nor is it political history alone that is indebted to archæological inquiry. The discovery of the Aśokan inscriptions was as great a boon to the historian as to the student of language and the student of religion. The character of an age is imprinted upon its coins, upon its architecture, upon all its works of art. The ancient Indian sculptures are fraught with meaning to the enquirer into the theological ideas and religious practices of the East. The discoveries of the archæologist, thus, form an important contribution to the study of the æsthetic or religious ideas as well as of the political facts of ancient times.

Closely connected with these studies is the collection of manuscripts of Sanskrit works: for the manuscripts are to the student of literary history what the inscriptions and coins are to the political historian. In this field also the Europeans were the pioneers in modern times. The vast and rich collections of Sanskrit manuscripts at the India Office, Bodleian, Berlin and Paris, which are preserved with great care, have been built by individual private collections of scholars like Colebrooke, Mackenzie, Wilson, Burnouf and others. The Colebrooke Manuscripts at India Office alone are valued now at £10,000 or more. The systematic search for manuscripts was first undertaken by the Asiatic Society of Bengal which resulted in rich finds in Bengal, Nepal, and adjoining provinces, chiefly through the efforts of Rajendralal Mitra and Haraprasad Shastri. From 1873 to 1893, G. Bühler, F. Kielhorn, R. G. Bhandarkar and P. Peterson have made similar searches in Kashmir, Rajputana, Kathiwar, Kacch, Sindh, Khandesh, Central India and Bombay Presidency, and they were able to purchase several thousands of manuscripts, now deposited in the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute. Hultzsch, Kuppaswamy Shastri and others have done the same for Madras Presidency. Bühler's search brought to light the whole body of forgotten Sanskrit *Alarūkāra* and historical *Kāvya* literature, while Peterson discovered a large number of Sanskrit poems and Jaina writings. Without the labours of these scholars, chapters of Indian literary history would have remained unwritten and unknown. In the beginning of the 19th century, Sir William Jones and A. W. Schlegel knew only of a dozen separate works in Sanskrit. Adelung's bibliography published in 1830 refers to about 300 works, while Weber

in his lectures (1852) mentions about 500. The stupendous *Catalogus Catalogorum*, compiled by the Aufrecht from all available catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts of the libraries and collections of Europe and India and published as a result of forty years' labour in the years 1891, 1896 and 1903 give us an alphabetical register of not less than 5,000 separate works and authors. It must not, however, be supposed that these searches and collections have exhausted the resources of the country in this respect. The extent of the operations in each province has, of necessity, been limited, and there are not many organised departments of manuscript search now in this country. But all these searches have brought to our knowledge the existence of manuscript-material which should prove enough to encourage us in carrying on more detailed and more strenuous search for such treasures ; for we have to bear in mind that every day thousands of manuscripts (and this is no exaggeration) are crumbling to pieces and are being lost, past recovery.

We have now an idea of the extent of European scholarly activity in the second period of its history. In the third period there was a further extension in all these directions. This period, commencing after the middle of the last century, is difficult to characterise in concise terms, because the activity of the scholars in this period rapidly extended itself over the whole field of Indian linguistic development, all phases of its religious belief and philosophical speculation, in fact, all branches of its knowledge. The Indian studies to-day cover a domain so vast that the life and strength of one man are no longer sufficient to cope with it. It will not be possible for us to give even a rough idea of the activity of this period within the limits of this essay, and enumerate all the advances made in the several branches of Sanskrit learning. But we may draw attention to the extension of research in several new directions. Towards the middle of the 19th century, scholars became interested in the study of Pāli and Buddhism. In 1826 Burnouf, in collaboration with Lassen, published his *Essai sur le Pāli* and in 1844 appeared his *Introduction a l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, which began the study of Pāli and Buddhism in France, Germany, Russia and England. The modern Pāli study is absolutely the creation of the European scholars, among whom the name of Rhys Davids stands foremost ; and it has developed so much to-day that it would require a separate book to deal with the mass of information now available on the subject. The two series, Bibliotheca Buddhica and the Pāli Text Society (founded in 1882) publications have now made accessible the great Piṭakas which constitute the canonical books, as well as commentaries and other works of the

various Buddhist schools. But the scholars did not rest after exploring the Indian sources of information ; they have gone beyond these to Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian sources. It was soon found out that Indian culture had at one time extended beyond its own limits to other surrounding countries ; and to understand this culture it was necessary to take into account information available from these sources. Hindu and Buddhist texts which are now lost in India in Sanskrit or Pāli are preserved in Tibetan and Chinese translations, or are buried in the deserts of Central Asia. The Iranian studies have been found to have an intimate bearing on the early Indian ; and since the Hittites have come to the fore, a knowledge of Asia Minor is also involved. Thus, the venue of research was extended, and it included in its scope investigations in Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian and Central and West Asian languages and documents, as well as in those of Further India and Indonesia.

The other extension of Indian research was directed not to a field beyond India, but within India,—to the study of Prakrit, Apabhraṃśa and the modern Indian languages, although it cannot be said that workers are as numerous in these fields as they should have been. In this sphere also the European scholars have signalised themselves by giving a scientific basis to Prakrit studies ; and one must regret that this work is being only slowly taken up in India without that widespread enthusiasm which it deserves. The Indian dialects did not attract attention until at a late period, when Beames published his *Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages* in 1872. On this subject much work has been done, and a great impetus was given to this study by Grierson by his separate publications as well as by his monumental Reports of the Indian Linguistic Survey in several thick quarto volumes ; but this field is yet comparatively untrodden.

From this very imperfect and necessarily hurried account of Oriental scholarship among European scholars, some idea, it is hoped, will be made of the extent and importance of their contribution to Oriental learning. At the time when European scholars took it up, the study of Sanskrit had declined in this country. In judging of the magnitude of the work now accomplished, this should be borne in mind, as well as the fact that the workers have been far fewer in these than in other analogous fields, while the literature in quantity far exceeds that of Greece and Rome put together and is fraught with greater difficulties of study. The whole range of this literature has now been roughly explored, and the great bulk of its valuable productions has been edited or translated. The very fact that the extensive summary of contemporary knowledge about India (in four thick

volumes) published by Christian Lassen, a pupil of A. W. von Schlegel, between 1843-62, under the title *Indische Alterthumskunde*, is already obsolete to-day, is an eloquent testimony of the colossal progress, which Indian studies have made from the second half of the 19th century. The detailed investigations in each department are now so multifarious and larger number of works is being so continuously published that it is hardly possible for one scholar to specialise in all ; and comprehensive works embodying the result of these researches in each department has now become a necessity.

But the work of the Orientalist is far from being complete. Many of the fields are not yet thoroughly explored ; and even those which have been explored still await workers to systematise the collected data or supplement them by the study of details. Older problems have to be examined anew with a stricter method ; and while new avenues of knowledge are thrown open every day, there is not only wider vision and larger fields to pursue, but also the necessity of checking error and doubt, and resumption of research on unforeseen bases and in new directions. The task of a modern investigator is perhaps more arduous and less grateful than that of his predecessors. The days have gone by when the scholars, who were pioneers in these studies, were at once in a position to lay before the learned world a mass of new, important and often startling facts. On the scholar of our time there falls the duty of defining more accurately, and, not infrequently, correcting the outlines drawn by his predecessors with bold, perhaps overbold, hand. Upon him lies the burden of limiting sweeping generalisations and reproofing the premature enthusiasm of first discoverers, of tracing more hidden connexions, of distinguishing finer shades and nuances of thought, phrase or fact, of applying more delicate critical tests. Work of this kind demands great critical acumen and attention to details, great sobriety and fairness of judgment, infinite labour and accuracy.

But the Oriental scholar in Europe had been serious about his work, and had recognised the importance of his study, not from an utilitarian but from a scientific point of view. It is because he did so that the study progressed so much within a limited time. As a natural result of this, Oriental scholarship has received recognition in European universities as a cultural subject. But, at the present time, Oriental studies in Europe seem to be entering upon a new phase. It cannot be said that it is flourishing as well to-day as it did in the last century, at least in purely Indian subjects. It is true that the old methods are neither abandoned nor superseded, but they have given birth to new lines of enquiry which are diverting scholarly energy

from purely Indian studies. The interest has diffused itself beyond India to the whole of the Orient ; and as a natural consequence, there is a decline in purely Sanskritic or Indian studies. The subject has grown so vast and comprehensive that while specialising has become a necessity, superficial scholarship is also becoming inevitable. The political and other interests have ceased to operate with the same force as they did in the first half of the last century. The tide of scientific investigation is now turning from the past to the present, and the tendency is rather to seek explanations of the existing facts of Indian society in the analogous facts of other ages and countries, than to amass evidence for the purposes of purely Indian antiquity. To understand India, records of countries surrounding India are being searched and examined. No doubt, important discoveries are being made in Central Asia, Tibet, China and Further India ; new lines of investigation are being opened and enriched ; progress is being made in comparative studies ; but the study of Sanskrit or of purely Indian subjects is not pursued with the devotion and energy of former years. Chairs of Sanskrit are still maintained in all the greater European universities and the importance of study is still recognised; but earnest and really capable students are now fewer, and they are not perhaps actuated with the same enthusiasm and love of the subject as of old. It is doubtful if the younger generation of scholars in England, Germany and France will be able to keep up the reputation of their great predecessors, the Altmeisters; and one of the leading German Sanskrit scholars of the present day expressed his apprehension that modern Oriental studies, which Germany has helped so much to build up, would no longer retain their former hold upon young Germany.

The reason is not far to seek. Leaving aside the fact that the circumstances which led to a zealous study of Sanskrit in Europe in the past are no longer existing and that other interests have superseded them, we must bear in mind that the European scholar works, of necessity, under enormous difficulties and disadvantages, which only strong enthusiasm can overcome. Apart from the difficulties that a foreigner must feel in acquiring an alien tongue, he has no access to the living traditions of India, to the indigenous scholarship which still exists in the land. It is by a laborious process that he can realise the peculiar conditions of Indian life and character, its temper, its surroundings, its modes of thought, its institutions, customs and practices. No doubt, he is unfettered by local bias and prejudices ; he is not bound by traditional orthodoxy and its stereotyped views. He possesses the historical faculty and has also a far wider intellectual horizon, equipped

that he is with the resources of scientific scholarship. Whatever contributions he had made to Oriental learning he has made in virtue of these qualities. But here also his limitations come in, and some of them are serious limitations. He is not in direct touch with Indian life and thought, with Indian scholarship and tradition, which have got their value and cannot be neglected. It is indeed a wonder that, starting with serious handicaps, the European scholar has been able to do what he has done, and has placed the entire a study upon a proper scientific basis.

If the current of Oriental enquiry is no longer a strong and fertilising stream in Europe, is it not desirable that we in India should make an attempt to divert it to its old native channel and see that it does not lose its force and volume for all time? Orientalism in the last century lost ground in this country and gained far more in Europe; but is it not time that it should be brought back to its native soil? Scientific study of Oriental subjects should now shift its centre from Europe to India, which should in the fitness of things, be the most important centre of such studies and attract scholarly pilgrims from abroad. Sanskrit learning must have its permanent home in the land of caves and temples ; this study cannot be transported westward for all time. The contribution of European scholars has done much, but it cannot be expected to do everything. It would not do for us to ignore or depreciate their work in spite of their inevitable limitations ; for in not taking account of them, we would confess ourselves out of date ; and surely there is room enough to take up, supplement, and if necessary, rectify their work.

We must confess with regret that there is sometimes a tendency in India to speak of the work of the European scholar with some amount of ignorant contempt. No one pretends that the European scholar, any more than the Indian, is infallible ; he has obvious limitations. He may not always have been right in his conclusions ; but it cannot be denied, except by the ignorant or the prejudiced, that they have, with wonderful and selfless devotion, within less than one century, against enormous odds and with extremely limited resources, succeeded in giving a proper scientific basis to the whole study and in infusing a spirit of historical and literary criticism, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. It is misguided conservatism which prompts us to stick to old methods and ways, because they are old ; it is misguided patriotism which makes us glorify everything Indian, because it is Indian ; it is prejudice and sometimes ignorance which make us refuse to admit, without examination, any merit in foreign scholarship. Perhaps it is a kind of oversensitiveness which resents

foreign intrusion in a field which should have been peculiarly our own, and talks glibly of independence. But oversensitiveness is a sad complaint, and is very often a sign of weakness. In the sphere of intellect and spirit, in the field of learning and research, there is room for all. It is time that we should fully recognise the importance of modern methods of scholarship as applied to Oriental studies. The European scholar should also lay aside his prejudice or misapprehension about the erudition of indigenous Indian scholars. Both of them should now co-operate in building up a branch of learning in which the contributions of the one are sure to be complementary to those of the other. It is useless to deny that we have much to learn from the European scholar ; on the other hand, the European scholar will surely profit by a closer contact with Indian scholarship. It is not necessary to glorify the one in order to depreciate the other. Each has its value, and free interchange of thought is a necessary condition of intellectual progress. The Indian scholar need not be afraid of growing poorer thereby. The more freely learning is given, the more abundantly it will enrich itself. That will be a glorious day for Oriental scholarship when, in spite of Kipling's dictum, the East and the West will meet in spirit, in a sphere which is of common interest to both.

The Vākyapadiya of Bhartrhari

(Translated into English)

PROFESSOR GAURINATH BHATTAÇHARYYA

[In the domain of Sanskrit grammar, Bhartrhari occupies a position second only to Patañjali, the author of the Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣya. But it is a matter of regret that in spite of the fact that grammar has been continuously studied in India from the very ancient times to the present day, an important work like the Vākyapadiya, which not only discusses the philosophy of Sanskrit grammar but makes also invaluable contributions to the stock of grammatical speculations in various ways, has come to be almost forgotten in course of years. What is most deplorable is that the tradition has almost died out and as we are separated from the author by hundreds of years we feel it extremely difficult to represent it accurately at this distant date. But the writer feels proud to say that he has been fortunate enough to be initiated into highly respectable traditions as he happens to be the direct disciple of Paṇḍit Hārāṇacandra Śāstrī of Benares, the most renowned student of the late Mm. Sivakumara Śāstrī and thus belonging to the school of savants represented in succession by the late Paṇḍits Jagannātha Śāstrī, Kāśinātha Śāstrī, Rājārāma Śāstrī and Bāla Śāstrī, the last being the preceptor of Mm. Sivakumara Śāstrī.

Here we write a translation of the first forty-three stanzas of the first chapter, known as the *Brahmakāṇḍa*, which may be described as the introductory portion of the work. The text of the original which is rendered into English is the one published in the Benares Sanskrit Series. It may not be out of place to state here that this seems to be the first venture of a scholar to translate the monumental work into a foreign tongue.]

I

Which Absolute (*Brahman*) is without origin and death, as the Word-Principle (and) ubiquitous and wherein appears the world-process in the form of object.

[The first five stanzas form a *kulaka* and should be read together.]

2

Which described as one (and one) alone (and) different due to the influence of powers (*śaktis*) stands as different, as it were, from the powers (*śaktis*), (their) non-difference notwithstanding.

3

The unimpeded powers (*śaktis*) of which pervaded by Time-force (*kāla-śakti*) (undergo) six transformations beginning with birth, (which are) the sources of the difference of phenomena.

4

And of which one (and) origin of all (is) this manifold order in the form of the enjoyer and the enjoyable and in the form of enjoyment.

5

The *Veda*, the means of attainment and image (of that) though one has been described separately by the great sages to be of many branches, as it were.

6

The state of many forms of difference and that (of their) being subsidiary to one sacrifice (and) that of a fixed power (of denotation) of words are seen in the branches of that (the *Veda*).

7

Smṛtis of various forms and dealing with seen, unseen and both seen and unseen consequences have been brought to light from indications by those versed in the *Vedas*, depending on it (the *Veda*) alone.

8

Various theories based on individual opinions are approved by monists and dualists on an examination of the *arthavāda* passages and (other) texts bearing semblance to them.

9

Among them the knowledge alone which has one word as its denoter, which is related to *Pranava* (and) which is not hostile to any theory is said (to be) the real truth.

10

Different branches of learning of that Creator of worlds founded on primary and secondary supplements (and) sources of knowledge and impression grow.

11

The learned call grammar, the direct helper of that Absolute (*Brahman*), the best of (all) penances (and) the first supplement of the *Vedas*.

12

This (is) the straight road to what (is) the transcendental principle of speech assuming difference of forms (and) what (is) the purest light.

13

Words alone are suggestive of the principles underlying the use of imports. Knowledge of the principles of words is not (possible) without grammar.

14

That, the doorway to emancipation, the medicine for the impurities of speech (and) the purest of all sciences shines among sciences.

15

As all import-universals (are) related to world-universals, so this science (is) the chief resort of (all) sciences in this world.

16

This (is) the first foothold in the flights of steps (leading) to emancipation. This (is) that straight royal road for seekers of emancipation.

17

Herein the cogniser versed in the *Vedas* having overcome ignorance, notices the pure form (the *Brahman*) made up of the *Vedas* (and) the source of the *Vedas*.

18

Which is the best form of speech, the nature whereof is veiled (and) which pure light shines like (an ordinary) light through fire in darkness.

19

Which light (people) worship (when they) go beyond (the plane of) the cognition of concrete object and action relating to transformation after having passed (the region of) light and darkness.

[Verses 17-19 form a *sandānitaka* and should be read together.]

20

Wherein the indications of speech like symbols giving rise to recollection of letters shine like reflections through the *sūtras* having word in the beginning.

21

Wherein different letters of the *atharvans*, the *āngiras*, the *sāmans*, the *ṛks* and the *yajus* are separately cognised.

22

Having mastered that grammar which (though) one is variously divided due to the difference of operations, the transcendental Absolute is realised.

23

Word, import and their relationship were declared to be permanent by great sages, the authors of the *sūtras* along with the *vārtikas* and the *bhāṣyas*.

24

Which imaginary imports of words and which imports of a fixed character, which derivable words and which (words) again expressive of sense.

25

Stand in the relation of cause and effect or in the nature of competency and which (are) helpers in religion and cognition; (and which are) relations (of imports) to chaste and unchaste (words).

26

Those have been partly shown in this science by means of indications and through specific mention (of words). Some only are taught for edification according to *āgamas*.

27

Chaste (words) sanctioned by tradition (handed down) from the enlightened (are) means of merit; but (though) there is non-difference in the matter of signifying import, unchaste (words are) contrary.

28

Eternal or created they (words) have no beginning. This is called eternality through (continuity of) existence as (it applies to the case) of those endowed with life.

[Verses 20-22 and 24-26 form a *sandānitaka* and should be read together.]

29

Nobody is capable of making this arrangement (which is) not meaningless. So the (grammatical) science (which is) without a beginning (and which) deals with what is chaste, is arranged.

30

And without the *śāstras* religious merit is not established with (the help of) inference. What (is) the knowledge of even the sages also proceeds from the *śāstras*.

31

And one cannot set aside those continuous means of religious merit which lie fixed by means of inference as these (means) are well-known to people.

32

Powers (*śaktis*) being different due to difference of conditions, clime and age, determination of objects through inference (is) very difficult.

33

That power (*śakti*) of an object, the power (*śakti*) whereof is definitely known is retarded in the matter of different accomplishments of results in connection with special substances.

34

An object though carefully inferred by those expert in drawing inference is proved to be otherwise by others who are more learned.

35

Proficiency in gems and silver of those who know them, which (is) inexplicable to others, develops from practice—(it is) not derived through inference.

36

Attainments born of actions alone of demons, manes and spirits lie beyond perception and inference.

37

Knowledge of the past and of futurity, (in the case) of those to whom the 'light' has manifested and whose minds are not disturbed, does not differ from perception.

38

Utterance of those who through the eye of the sage see super-sensuous and non-perceptible objects, is not contradicted by inference.

39

How can another turn him aside who does not doubt like his own knowledge one's cognition (and who) stands on the side of perception?

40

With regard to these two objects—' this (is) virtue ' (and) ' this (is) vice ' need for *śāstras* (is) the same to (all) men including the *cāṇḍālas*.

41

And he (who) adores this *śāstra*, which like consciousness runs continuously, cannot be led away by means of inferences.

42

Damnation is not rare to one who depends on inference most as (fall is natural) to a blind man running on an uneven (track after feeling) with the touch of hands and the like.

43

So the law of words is begun by the learned depending on the *śāstra* (which is) not made and on *smṛti* which has a basis (to support it).

Value of Anthropological Research

PROFESSOR KSHITISHPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAY

THE word anthropology conveys to the mind of the lay man, a vision of skulls, callipers and statistics. Not merely the ubiquitous man in the street, but serious students of sister sciences often overlook the fact that the study of man is not skin deep; or that it extends not only to the structure of his body, but to the social and economic milieu which he has created, and in which he lives. The importance and necessity of anthropological work is, on this account, little realised by even those who try to improve the condition of man in society.

In our country we have a tribal population of about forty millions. These primitive people have manners, customs and laws differing from those of their Hindu and Moslem neighbours. Obviously it would be unjust to apply to these people the laws framed on sacred books of Hindus or Moslems; and to compel them to conform to these novel rules. The early British administrators experienced this difficulty, not merely with regard to the tribal populations, but with regard to the bulk of the Indian people. To remove this difficulty felt by them, the British Government had a series of surveys made, of manners and customs, of tribes and castes, in the different provinces of India. These records are available in a convenient form in the bulky volumes of Risley, Crooke, Thurston, Russell and others on this subject. But the details collected, while useful as a preliminary survey, are too meagre to throw any light on the mental make up of the various groups of Indian people. Intensive field work, of the type needed, has been done only in Assam and Chotanagore, and among one or two other tribes or castes elsewhere.

At the present moment, especially, such study is very necessary. The Ministers in charge of Education in most of the provinces want to educate the masses. But what system of general education and what kinds of handicraft are best suited to the people? There is no doubt available a general knowledge of the needs and requirements of the Hindu and Moslem peasantry and city-folk. But, practically nothing is known about the vast tribal population. Will a scheme of education based on the requirements of the Hindu and Moslem peasantry suit a

tribe like Santals, or Chenchus? The anthropologist will reply in the negative.

Take again the question of fusing the heterogeneous elements in our population into a common nationality. Federation is a catchword glibly used by many. But what are the kinds of units you are going to federate? India may roughly be divided into a dozen cultural provinces. But even inside these areas there are elements which differ. It is not sufficient to refer to the diversity of races and cultures in other countries, such as Great Britain. The forces of disintegration that are inherent in such a complex population may be held in abeyance by temporary common economic interests. But real unity can be achieved only by a common cultural content, and abiding and common economic interests. The problem of our nation-builders is therefore to achieve this fulfilment, not merely in the case of the different groups of advanced but of backward and primitive population. But, a common cultural content or interest, cannot be attained, if nothing or only a little is known of the culture and organisation of a good portion of the people whose outlook on life is thus going to be modified.

There are other problems in national welfare, on which anthropological work throws light. A very important matter for students of the child mind is to know how the human brain has evolved; and to what kind of stimuli it may best respond. At the present time we do not believe that the human child repeats in its infancy the history of its race; but the data from the best modern schools definitely suggest, that the type of stimuli which helped in the evolution of the human brain calls forth an appropriate response from the human child more easily than those based on abstract concepts linked with knowledge gathered in historical times. Further work on these lines is likely to help us to build better schools for the children of the future.

In a short article like this, it is not possible to enlarge further, on this subject. I hope, however, that this note, brief as it is, will help to dispel a common error of the cultured regarding the science of human culture.

Growth Hormones in Plants

DR. J. C. SEN-GUPTA

IN the course of about the last 20 years Physiology has been refined in its essential features and has taken up a new face. In the study of human physiology calories, carbohydrates and proteids no longer stand in the forefront but vitamins have attracted an increasing interest on themselves; in the study of nutrition of plants, we know that it is no longer sufficient to speak of the well-known 10 (ten) essential elements of which the plant body is built but the so-called "trace elements" like boron, manganese and copper play an important role. Further, in human and animal physiology hormones have been known as regulators of metabolism and development and a large number of hormones have been proved. But among plants, one did not want to believe in the presence of hormones for a long time, and the first statements and references to their presence were received with doubt and mistrust. The final proof of their presence in plants worked almost as a sensation, though it has always been natural to assume the presence of hormones in plants.

A common fir tree has its typically regular stature, and if the vertically growing apical branch is removed, the next side branch which makes a definite angle with the vertical now grows vertically upwards and thereby forms a substitute for the apex and maintains the typical stature of the tree. The individual parts must therefore somehow or other work together with one another, which is self-understood for every organism which is supposed to be living. In order to do that the individual parts must have "knowledge" about other parts, they must send message to and receive message from one another. But, for this, the plant is not provided with a nervous system as in animals. The transmission of message is left to the natural way—through the transport of metabolic products, through a hormonal system which bridges over distances in space. The "necessity" of hormones in plants is thus certainly present. The hormone of stretching growth has now been proved beyond doubt and their chemical constitution known. Not only these natural hormones, even a large and still growing number of artificially prepared substances have been known which have the capacity of enhancing stretching growth in plants; the most well known among them is β -Indolacetic acid, the so-called Hetero-auxin. All these

substances can be widely different in their chemical structure but they have some similarities in certain aspects of their constitution.

Growth hormones have been obtained in large amounts from both plant and animal materials. The inclusive term "auxin" has been proposed for chemical usage; it has been employed interchangeably with the physiological terms "Growth-promoting substance," "Growth substance" "Growth hormone," etc.

Among the human and animal organisms significant amounts of growth substance has been discovered in human saliva, in animal and human urine, in malignant growths and the eye stalks of crustaceans. Human urine ordinarily contains from 1 to 2 mg. of growth hormone per litre, irrespective of age, sex or such pathological conditions as carcinoma and tuberculosis.

Among plants hormones have been demonstrated in many kinds of plants belonging to widely separated taxonomic groups. In the higher plants they have been found in the coleoptiles of grasses, stems of many seedlings, winter-buds, roots, pollen, fruits and seeds, even in potato tubers, leguminous nodules, etc. Growth hormones have also been found in many of the fungi, bacteria and also algæ. It seems extremely probable that further investigations will reveal the occurrence of growth regulating substances in all plants.

The places of formation of growth substance in the plants are generally actively growing tissues, such as the unfolding buds, the young shoots in which they appear to be formed more in the young leaves than at their axis, flower buds, unripe fruits and seeds. Old grown up shoots and the fully grown leaves contain no or almost no growth substance. In the coleoptiles of grasses they are found at the tip and wander from there downwards. There is probably also the other type the "Lupinus" type where the growth substance is found not only in the plumule but also throughout the length of the hypocotyl. The growth of fruits and seeds also takes place with the help of the growth substance.

The growth substance is stored in storage organs in the seeds, pollen grains and even potato tubers. Very interesting is the fact that in the germinating grass seeds, the growth substance is stored in the active form in the endosperm, it is inactivated in the scutellum and rises in this inactive preliminary stage of growth substance upwards in the coleoptile in whose tip they are transformed into the active stage. The tip is thus not the place of formation but of activation of the growth substance. It is likely that this inactive growth substance occurs not only in seeds and coleoptiles, but in numerous other plant organs.

From the place of formation or of activation the growth substance travels polar downwards in the stems and leaves. In the hypocotyl of *Lupinus* which forms the major part of the growth substance itself, very little transport of growth substance takes place. In apples, potato tubers and leguminous nodules a clear polar transport of growth substance is absent; the substance appears to spread in a diffuse manner.

Auxin works on the stretching growth and the saying, "Without growth hormone no growth" holds good completely in the case of higher plants with the exception of some tissues. But growth takes place only when the growth hormone meets tissues capable of growth. So that the growth hormone is in no way a magic wand, with whose help every cell can be made to grow. It can only let loose the existing capacity of the cell to grow.

The stimulation of growth by growth substance is tested by decapitating a young seedling and placing on one side an agar block containing growth substance, and by noting that there is greater growth on this side compared with the other "empty side," which means that a curvature takes place.

The action of the growth substance consists in the enlargement of the young cells *i.e.*, in the growth of the young cell walls. It is taken that the hormone acts first on the plasma, and thereby on the cell wall; it is perhaps more correct not to separate plasma and the cell wall, but to take the young cell wall as itself living and as an organ of the plasma. The growth substance causes an increase in the plasticity of the cell wall, by whose plastic distension growth takes place, and during the growth naturally an increase in the cell wall substance by intussusception must also take place. How this is actually brought about is not clearly known as yet. With the progress of our knowledge on the exact mechanism of growth, perhaps the plastic distension and the increase in cell wall substance will come under a harmonic process caused by growth substance.

A close relation between the quantity of growth substance and growth has been established. It has been seen that at low concentrations by the one-sided effect the growth or curvature is proportional to the quantity of growth substance. By increasing the concentration a maximum is reached, beyond which a rise in concentration has no effect on growth. And by very high concentrations again, a negative effect is obtained.

It was observed in the case of young roots that on decapitation their growth is accelerated, and on applying growth substance on the cut surface it was retarded again. It was concluded from this that the

growth substance retards growth in roots, or the substance formed at the tip of roots was called a "growth retarding substance." But later work on the effect of different concentrations has shown that the same substance is effective in the case of roots and shoots, but that the roots are very sensitive as regards concentration, and that at the tip the concentration is so great for the roots that it produces a retardation. On removal of the tip the concentration of the growth substance is very much lowered and an acceleration of growth takes place. Thus the growth hormones in very low concentration accelerate growth in roots, so that the difference between shoot and root in this respect lies in the fact that the root is very much more sensitive than the shoot to growth hormone.

The difference in the geotropic behaviour of the roots and shoots is also due to this difference in sensitiveness. In both the organs, by geotropic stimulation the growth hormone accumulates on the lower side. In the shoots an increase in the hormone on the lower side causes an increase in growth on this side, hence the upward curvature, whereas for the much more sensitive roots the concentration is over-optimal, it causes a decrease in growth on the lower side and hence the downward curvature. By artificially increasing the concentration of the hormone in the lower side of shoots to over-optimal, it has been proved that shoots can also be made to curve downwards.

Another effect of growth hormone is found in secondary growth in trees, on the whole in the activity of the cambium. Resting cambium can be made active by the addition of very small quantity of growth hormones, and the cambium which is very active in nature has been found to contain a large quantity of growth hormone. In the trees growth substances are found in the unfolding buds from where they are translocated through the branches to the cambium. The result is that secondary growth sets in. When the cambial activity stops in autumn growth hormones also disappear from the cambium. There is therefore no doubt that the growth hormones are the natural regulators of cambial activity. Initiation of cambial activity by growth hormones may consist only in the stretching growth of cells and not in cell division, though how this could possibly take place exactly, is not clearly known.

Lastly, the acceleration of root formation by growth hormones has been clearly seen. When a cut twig is dipped in a solution of growth hormone or a paste applied for a few hours, root formation is very much accelerated, though this is not true for all species of plants. This factor is made use of by cultivators in different ways. From this finding it is

extremely probable that in the branching and enlargement of root system of intact plants in nature also, the growth hormone plays a very important part.

If we thus look at a tree, the growth hormone decides about the unfolding or resting of buds, and ultimately about the formation of the branch, leaf, flower and fruit. The leaves and branches take up their respective position after reacting to geo- or phototropic stimulus with the help of growth hormones. The cambial activity also begins and continues in the presence of growth hormones. Under the soil the root development is also influenced by growth substances. One can therefore almost say that the growth hormone reigns as a king over the whole tree, as the highest servant of his state, but does not work as a despotic tyrant, but for the welfare of the whole tree.

It has been found that the growth hormones that have been isolated and experimented on generally, are only some of the numerous other hormones and can only produce effect together with other hormones. Some of these substances found to be effective with the hormones are biotin, aneurin which is vitamin B₇, and ascorbic acid vitamin C. The vitamins, which were investigated only from the standpoint of human and animal nutrition, have now been found out to have been produced by the plants for their own utility.

The most important and complicated question is what role does the individual hormone play in the plasma? It has been found that plasma or cell wall which has become old scarcely reacts to growth hormones. Potato and tomato with virus disease also react very feebly to growth hormones. It can, therefore, be taken that a normal condition of the plasma is an indispensable condition for the reaction of the growth hormone. But the exact relation between the growth hormones and the plasma is one of the most important questions which has yet to be solved.

Contemplation and Rapport

PROFESSOR MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR

THERE are two imperative demands in us, to know and to enjoy. The former is the demand of thought, the latter is the demand of life. Thought raises a construction out of the facts presented to experience not by empirical associations, but by an architectonic process immanent in it. Philosophy presents this power of thought in its organic construction. It gives in its highest penetration the synthetic vision of reality. This synthetic vision endows reality with certain liveliness and force, for synthesis is more than a bare presentation of details in integration. It makes out the *unique* character of reality, especially the living unity which it is and the living joy which it breathes. Whenever thought rises to this height, it leaves its barren skeleton and becomes something that is living and real.

Still thought does not exhibit the fully living character of reality, for the synthetic character which thought presents is more understood than felt, and, therefore, it lacks the emotional content which religion implies and on which it thrives. The intellectual love of God is more than thought, it is amor wherein the spiritual consciousness emerges and acquaints us with Essence and Being. It is here that the philosophic contemplation gives way to the spiritual enthusiasm. A feeling of rapture gets hold of us, investing us with divine joy and grace. It introduces us to subtler movements of life, aroma of peace and spiritual blessedness. It would be height of folly to suppose that mystical ecstasy is not the voice of a substantial harmony with the substance of things and with its movements. Professor Santayana says: 'Though substance may be forgotten, and only light and music may seem to remain, its massive harmonies in substance justify those mystical feelings, if anything justifies them at all.' If all the spheres did not revolve according to law the morning stars would not sing together and the God of Aristotle would not think his eternal thoughts. Even enthusiasm, therefore, when not rarefied, expresses respect for substance and happy union with its motion. This indeed is a truism. This respect for substance and identification with its motion are what endow mystical life with its uniqueness and individuality. It is, therefore, not mere feeling nor an enthusiasm outflowing into rapid movements. Its proper development is associated with wide harmony, with ease of movement

and wealth of being. The harmony of being with intensive adaptation is only natural to it. The adaptation becomes more complex, though at times it is not so much evident, because of the recoil of the being upon itself in the height of realisation. This recoil is a necessity to make the wideness a living realisation and adaptation mobile.

The overflowing exuberance follows from the incompatibility of nature and spirit and the incapacity of nature to follow the indication and intimation of spirit. The finest exhibition of mystical life is possible when the least resistance put up by nature is removed and spirit gets easy and spontaneous expression; when the informing of spirit exceeds the capacity of reception through our psychic, mental, vital and physical being, the psycho-pathological phenomenon makes exhibition.

Though this adaptation and mobility are evident in mystical life yet it must not be thought that mysticism does not afford occasional escape from the limitations and cares of life in ecstatic happiness. Santayana led by realistic instinct doubts the value of this kind of exaltation which to him is like standing apart from the current of life and the rejection of the healthy and helpful realism. True, mysticism acquaints us with the height of existence where the diastole and systole of life are suspended and which cannot be covered up by the insistences of life. Vital insistences may occupy a great portion of our being. But it would be height of indiscretion to close the venues of diviner delights and refined wisdom by confining ourselves to active adaptations. The reach is very high and removed from ordinary access, but that does not make it unworthy of pursuit. It is attractive on the other hand, inasmuch as it affords relief from the tension of life. Even when activity follows contemplation, there our being is pitched into a great height and is led by spiritual impulse and not by animal instinct. A new source of energy is released which gives a new shape to our active expression and makes it spontaneous. Not only this, sometimes the feeling is definite that divine impulse becomes active which at once changes the meaning of our formations and adds a cosmic import to them.

This does not signify that mysticism is a form of ideal construction, an expression of creative intellect and creative will. The ideal construction follows the creative demand of our mental life and the ideal world is a mental formation but does not touch the still deeper currents of spirit. Philosophy cannot rise above mental construction. The ideal construction of Truth, Beauty and Holy, however noble and lofty, is the finest expression that our mind can make, but they touch only the fringe of spirit. The stir of spirit can hardly be satisfied with the creative ideas of our mental life and the contemplation of values.

It goes far beyond these values and their integration into a realm of supra-mental formation, into the transcendent depth of our being. There is the universe of the supra-mental light and life formations, beyond our mental formations, and mysticism acquaints us with it. It cannot be equated by its nature with any kind of mental formations, however fine. It opens up new path-ways to spirit and its creative expression.

Mysticism makes its appearance when the sense of the Numen possesses us, overcomes us and introduces us into the mysteries of spirit. This sense of Numen gives unique knowledge, since it throws a lurid light upon the inaccessible parts of our being.

This sense of Numen makes out the difference between contemplation and rapport. Contemplation is the best mental effort revealing the truths and the values of the mental order. It affords the highest intellectual delight and intellectual effort. Its highest scale is reached when existence is associated with value, where the demands of our being are met by unfettered freedom. The bent of philosophic mysticism has been towards the contemplation of the transcendent values, and the feeling it produces is one of meditative joy. Indeed philosophic mysticism has its bent towards intellectual intuition of the *harmonious setting* of existence and values. The sense of Numen carries us beyond this philosophic contemplation of existence and values and invests us with the dynamic currents of the overpowering spirit and fills us with divine life and holiness. The touch with the spirit enlivens our being and introduces rapport, a divine rapture and exhilaration. The holy spirit possesses us and takes hold of us and regulates all movements in us. This is the blessed commingling of life and spirit and is naturally believed to be more than the contemplation of existence and values. It is a kind of ingrafting of a superior force which allows us to see more than what philosophic sense can endow us with for it regulates our being with an ingress from inaccessible heights of spirit.

This type of mysticism is dynamic. The emphasis upon the ingrafting of spiritual force and investment of life with it opens a new chapter of realisation and experience and affords the understanding of the divine movement in life. Dynamic mysticism refuses to draw a distinction between the transcendent calmness and the movement of life and to seek the beatitude of life in transcendence neglecting the creative formation of life and spirit. It sees life in illuminative silence as well as in its creative play and finds divine beauty and meaning in expression and enjoys the thrill it produces.

The dynamic mysticism takes hold of our entire being and its forces and endows them with a new meaning, force and power. They are

exhibited in a new light that is not originally there. This light draws out their divine meaning, setting and radiance which they cannot indicate but for a finer revelation in a higher plane of consciousness. No doubt, these have their dynamic significance, but they acquire a new light in being associated with the life and revelation of spirit. In this association we pass on from contemplation to rapture. The philosophic contemplation of truth, beauty and goodness has its profundity, but the search of spirit gives an additional dignity and produces a rapport of the soul. This is not possible unless life rises to the height of appraising the forces in divine light. The intellectual contemplation produces a quiet, absorbing feeling. The æsthetic contemplation invests the whole creation with a charm and an attraction infusing serene delight. The moral beatitude reveals the order of creative ideals and values with its conquest of tension and resistance and its fine formation in the realm of ends.

But none of them afford the rapture of the soul, the divine rapport where the spirit has engrossing impress which is more exquisite in delight than the contemplation of the values. Nay, even the infusion of spirit adds a new dignity to the contemplation of ideals. And it becomes spontaneous. In the movement of spirit, the finest side of our nature comes to the fore, and our whole existence is exhibited with its hidden lustre. Beauty becomes more beautiful, holiness becomes holier, truth acquires a divine meaning. Truth is not only the summit of existence, it is also the essence of spirit; beauty is the impress of spirit upon matter; power is the pressure of spirit upon vitality; light is the reflection of spirit upon mind. This touch of spirit does not obtain in the contemplation of values, and does not make them so much absorbing and attractive. Spirit searches a new chord in our being and gives a new tune to it. To enjoy spirit in its creative expression and transfiguring power is what arrests our attention here. It is in short transvaluation of values. It cannot remain satisfied with the ideal movements. These satisfy the initial demands of our nature, but they cannot afford the felicity of the divine unfolding of life. In the ideal unfolding of life the sense, the mind, the intellect, the will get their fine formation, but the inner man, in his substance and spirit, does not get his complete spiritual fulfilment. And therefore, the demand is still there for a divine unfolding, besides ideal unfolding; and with this demand the occasion arises for the spiritualisation of our being in which man emerges out as essentially divine in nature and existence which is temporarily shadowed. There is an inertia in our nature, and the play of forces does not allow the complete revelation of our nature as dynamically one with God.

The new life takes varieties of expressions, and they depend upon the intensiveness of dynamic identification. The identification must be established in the central being because it gives the possibility of cosmic movements and provides for cosmic feelings. The ideal life also implies a re-orientation of our being; the springs of action are not left to themselves, they come under the dictation and influence of the ideal self. The natural and the actual get a new formation by the force of the creative values. But this ideal formation is still mental. The formative force is the sense of worth or appreciation mentally conceived. The transvaluation of values is a higher order of expression of our moral and spiritual ardour and becomes possible when the transforming power proceeds directly from spirit; the cosmic power helps us to transcend the world of mental formation and valuation and introduces us to the realm of spiritual formation and valuation. Here indeed is obtained the nucleus to a new order of movement in tune with and under the impress of the divine urge. This urge reveals itself in relation to the order of cosmic creation and also in relation to the order of supra-cosmic revelation. This becomes possible when the sense of Numen and the transcendent holy infuses its power within us and makes a direct revelation of the order of spirits. The normal moral or spiritual sense is here superseded by a super-normal spiritual sense, and personality gains a new consciousness, feels a new power and moves in the wake of the divine purpose. In this height of existence spirit exhibits absorption in rapport followed by intensive movement, when the energy that is conserved, finds its release.

Rapport introduces the implication not only of fellowship with spirit, but absorption into it. It is not the calm detached enjoyment of philosophic contemplation. It is rather passing into divine passion and ecstasy wherein the joyous movement of the spirit is exhibited. It emits spiritual moods of various kinds. This is new revelation in the life of spirit, where the soul enjoys a unique feeling which is inexpressible in words. This rapport does not proceed from any definite part of our being, it is the expression of the whole being in identification with the beloved. In dynamic identification the divine spirit possesses the seeking soul and infuses it with its power and force. The aspirant soul passes into a unity in the active side of its nature, and enjoys the infinite modulations of spiritual harmony. Surely such a possession is not thought of in contemplation of even active ideals. The contemplation of values is matter of transcendent reflection, but rapport is the actual identification with the divine spirit with all its creative expressions.

In our investigation of truth, naturally a time comes when the growing self-consciousness in man steps beyond the realistic way of reception

and the devious ways of thought, and encounters a supra-rational way by increasing its finer receptiveness and enlarging the range of his consciousness. And in this venture the mystic cannot be easily deceived, for the guidance he follows is the guidance of the unerring spirit.

The philosopher and the mystic start from the identical point, self-consciousness, but while the philosopher limits himself to its normal functioning and intuitions, the mystic acquaints himself with its growing ranges and its subtler expansions and therefore his venture is the natural fulfilment of the enquiries into self-consciousness and its functioning. The philosopher encounters the natural opposition between the self and the not-self and cannot over-ride it, and therefore only views the sections of conscious life, leaving its wide range untouched. The mystic is more appealing, because he is more adventurous in withdrawing his consciousness from its natural limitations, and hence his claim is higher. The philosopher accepts the grades of knowledge as sensuous, conceptual and intuitive; but his task is a construction upon the former two; even when he demonstrates the contradictions involved in the nature of thought, he takes his inspirations either from the creative aspect of consciousness or takes his rest in the absolute thinking that contradictions are somehow harmonised therein. But the philosopher is not sufficiently equipped to pass beyond the mental construction into the elastic life of spirit and to enjoy its delicate movements and subtle formations.

It is indeed a great privilege to be acquainted with the subtle turns in conscious life. The wider reaches of consciousness may understand better the laws of the limited expression, its meaning, movements and force, and may finally educate and transform it by shedding its own light upon them. The continuity of life and its expression can then be seen in their finer gradation through the sub-conscious, the conscious and the super-conscious, and the same thread of life can be traced through them; for they really present the same in its increasing elasticity and fineness. The law of formations in the lower movement of life then stands clear. Mysticism seizes upon the fine thread of consciousness to unlock the mysteries of existence. And in this attempt it has a scientific interest; for it unmasks the hidden depths of the supra-conscious life. Psychology cannot confine itself solely to normal mental activities, for whatever is conscious, is a matter of interest for psychology. The method that is followed is simple, for it is none other than introspection carried into the finer and higher reaches. The mystic is the self-experimentor, for his method is to give up conscious study and let the consciousness tell its own story in its wise passiveness. Really in this height consciousness is made free, and probably the one end in spiritual

philosophy is to taste the joy of this freedom of conscious life by the removal of its limitations and ignorance. It should not be lost upon us that mysticism has its chief attraction in acquainting us with the cosmic ways and ends and in releasing us from the short ways of life. This is especially true of Indian mysticism. Even in dynamic mysticism, this ideal has not been lost sight of. Though personality has been the chief basis or hold of mystical consciousness, the ideal has been the access of the conscious life unfettered and cosmic in its movements. The cosmic depth of existence with the free play of life has been the rock upon which mysticism fastens its anchor, the aspiration being the intimate acquaintance with the movement of life in infinite layers of existence. It is naturally this sympathy with the symphonies of life enjoyed in their concreteness as well as in their vastness that makes the mystical life a blessing and an attraction. Mystical life exhibits the unity of existence in a superior way; the details of existence are shown in the cosmic setting, and it is this knowledge and its ways that human mind in its profound aspiration must discover as the demand of our being. The real value of non-attachment lies in affording a release from the insurgent ways of life and in intimating us with the divine ways. Non-attachment releases us from the dubious ways and opens out the vista of wider sketches of life. It affords release from the mentalised ways of expression in art, history and philosophy and discharges new path-ways of expression born of extreme detachment. Mysticism in all its forms does not silence life and its creative expression; in some form, it emerges out with diviner synthetic note which pervades life. The mystical experiences are cosmical, these experiences are not cut off from our personal life. The personal here exhibits itself as the cosmical; at least, the dimension of our being and feelings show their cosmical nature, for they are elevated to a supra-mental plane where the character of our experience changes. The limitations of our experience is withdrawn and our consciousness is released from its historicity and environmental setting. The opening of our consciousness on the higher levels does not mystify our experience, but show its wideness and infinite modulations. It is indeed the privilege of dynamic mysticism to respond to the vertical and the horizontal expressions of spirit and to accept and not to deny the details of existence and to read them with cosmic meaning and significance. The conflict and discord are dissolved as soon as the access into the fountain spring is attained. This is not a mentalised understanding but a direct seeing into the heart of things.

Dynamic mysticism here in India has taken its chief expression in Vaishnavism and in Tantricism. Both of them have a philosophic approach to Truth, and in spite of the difference in the cast of thought,

their unanimity lies in the emphasis put upon the dynamic aspect of existence and upon psychic harmony of being as yielding final insight and access. A fine poise of being with complete detachment from the usual ways may be a necessity. It does not follow a philosophic understanding or contemplation but the psychic tremor of being. Dynamic mysticism relies more upon it than upon anything, for it reveals the mysteries of divine life which it is not possible for intellect to see or understand. The intellectual background is necessary to equip the understanding but the psychic insight is required to enter into the mysteries of the spirit and to enjoy them. A psychic unfolding may give us more than what even we can imagine and without this dynamic mysticism in its full particulars and possibilities can hardly be followed and appreciated.

College Magazines

PRINCIPAL KURUVILLA ZACHARIAH

A COLLEGE magazine is, in many ways, one of the most harmless of our public institutions. This may seem faint praise, especially in a Jubilee Number, but I mean it as high commendation. When we consider how often even the well-meant acts of well-meaning men result in evil rather than in good, how mixed are the issues of human endeavour and how powerless we are to separate the tares from the wheat, we shall be thankful for anything that does not hurt, even if it cannot heal. When man ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree, he not only knew good and evil, but he became helpless to do good without evil. The proof lies all around us. Few steps in human progress have been so long as the mastery of the art of flying and to-day we cower under the possible consequences of that art. Or, think of printing, the keystone of modern learning and education. What it gives on the one side, it takes away on the other. It places books in our hands, but the running brooks stray unnoticed to the sea. The newspapers tell us what happens with each tired sunrise from China to Peru; but truth is so cunningly mingled in them with falsehood, falsehood by assertion, falsehood by implication, falsehood by omission, that to extract it pure would strain the skill of a Bentley. One of the tests of an educated man is that he does not believe the newspapers. Inventions and institutions devised for the welfare and happiness of mankind become, by some inevitable alchemy, instruments of wrong and misery. Nearly everything we touch turns to dust and ashes. It is no light achievement in our world to refrain from doing harm.

One reason for this is that the college magazine seeks to do no good. It does not flaunt any high-sounding object like the advancement of learning or the dissemination of knowledge or, to use the ugly phrase, the mobilisation of public opinion. It does not thunder, it does not lighten. It does not claim the largest circulation in the country. It is content with a very limited audience and its aims are very modest, to tell what happens in the college from term to term and to clothe a few student essays with an illusion of immortality. It is a comforting thought that modern paper is so quickly perishable. In old days men wrote on stone or copper or parchment. Stones break, but the fragments remain and provide occupation for the epigraphist. Parchment

writing, even when scraped out, peeps through as a palimpsest. If paper were untearable and unburnable, the earth would soon sink under the load of learning. But, happily, in a generation or two it crumbles into dust; and, meanwhile, newspapers show an unexpected wisdom and pre-vision in providing sheets of a size convenient for making grocers' bags or lining shelves. It would be an evil day for college magazines when they put forth a programme or try to live up to an ideal.

Another advantage of college magazines is that, although they have the misfortune to be attached to an institution, they are not long controlled by any one person. Editors come and go with refreshing frequency—a year or two and their pages know them no more. Conscious of approaching freedom, they are not crushed by the burden of responsibility and can set about their task as light-heartedly as the moth that lives but for the day. It is true that the connexion with a college imposes some limitations. One has to pretend that one's college is the best; and, sometimes, a little of that heavy solemnity, so strangely characteristic of colleges in Bengal, descends on the magazine as well. But these are adventitious—the essence of the magazine is an easy carelessness, a swift glance at all the highways of youthful activity without lingering on any, a smelling of all the flowers in the garden without wearing either the white rose or the red.

There is a third point for the college magazine—that nobody reads it. This is specially important because attempts are sometimes made to use it to convey a lesson or a moral. Principals write serious 'fore-words,' but they fall as seed on stony soil and inspire neither reaction nor response. Old students write to extol their own days, but their self-deception deceives no one else, for no one reads them. Those only read the college magazine who write for it. Their attention may indeed be pardoned, for they limit themselves to their own productions and such a simple vanity does no harm to any one else. No critical eye sits in judgment on these children, who enjoy at once the stimulation of publicity and the indulgence of the home. Nowhere else can one enjoy this double privilege, a privilege specially valuable at that age which is at the same time most effervescent and most sensitive.

The college magazine is, thus, one of the few innocent activities in a sad, bad world. I have seen no better specimens of the type than the Presidency College Magazine. It is now older than most of its members. And, even when it is a hundred, I trust it will still preserve those qualities of freshness, variety and irresponsibility that alone make it worth while.

“Spooner Seed” or The Rebirth of a Poet

DR. PHIROZE E. DUSTOOR

I HAVE been asked by the editor to let the world know something of the steps by which I have attained my present reputation as a leading contemporary poet. And though I am doing it, let it not be supposed that I altogether like doing it. For it can surely give me little pleasure to recall the way in which this very editor and all others to whom I offered the first-fruits of my Muse fobbed me off every time with a curt rejection slip. Nevertheless I am writing this chapter of my autobiography so that the world may have one more proof that when editors sit on genius it is not genius that comes to grief. I am doing this, too, in order that the world may, for the first time, know that I should have remained still undiscovered were it not for that ancient mariner my wife, who had long since X-rayed me with the glittering eye of faith when cock-eyed editors were content to look the other way whenever a new manuscript of mine swam into their kennel. For, the day, some ten years back, that the first of my ebullitions was returned with a juicy editorial raspberry, the ancestor of a long ignoble line, she was convinced that I was one of the best. Nor is this all. Had she not imparted to me her conviction that the composition with which I leapt into fame was divine, “ Spooner Seed ” would probably have gone the way of all fuel and another poet have gone to his grave unwept, un-honoured and unsung.

And so to my story. Though Fleet Street long conspired to make the world believe that I was but a brother Jonathan and would never be a poet, the world need hardly be told now that I always was and always aspired to be considered a poet. I did not begin my literary career—and I am thankful I shall not now end it—with that other harmony of reviewer’s prose. I lisped in limericks for the limericks came. But, alas, however fast they came, and however fast I made them go to the literary market, not more than a bare couple succeeded in going *in* it. It is to the everlasting glory of *The International Salesman* that it was in that hospitable trade journal that those two—the sole survivors of a protracted Odyssey—came to journey’s end. Those of my admirers who wish to collect my early pipings will find the first of these on the inside cover of the last issue of Vol. 13. When

the Better Butter Campaign was at its height, the organizers of it availed themselves of this effusion for the price of a half a dozen parts.

“ There was a young man in Calcutta
Whose name was Marmaduke Ironside Strutter,
So they said, ‘ You are *the*
Right person to be
Municipal Inspector of Butter.’ ”

And when the manufacturers of Belisha Bumpers were offered the following one, they did not grudge the florin which enabled them to insert it on page 27 of Vol. 15:

“ There was a young lady of Kuala Lumpur,
Who daily got plumper and plumper;
Till they said, ‘ Sure you feel
Like an automobile;
Isn’t it time you were wearing a bumper?’ ”

But, of course, limericks don’t make a poet, though a poet may (as I did) make limericks. And so I turned to explore what an earlier bard has happily called “ fresh fields and pastures new.” But in that quarter where I sowed diverse odes and epics I reaped only a monotonous harvest of rude scraps of editorial paper. The domain of pindarics in particular turned out to be a veritable Vallambrosa thick-strewn with them; and, conscious though I was of having established a world record here, I felt little of the pride that puffeth up. Nevertheless I should have persisted writing in that strain to this day were it not that even the most pachydermatous poet feels compelled to throw up his lyre when he is at last informed that “ the editor cannot understand why Mr. Fathead—of course, as you know, I am not Mr. Fathead; but editorial impudicity knows no bounds—persists in pestering him with tomes of prose, putrid prose, which is none the less putrid for mincing in metrical petticoats.” The “ Lament for the Birth of Healthy Twin-daughters ” putrid prose! The “ Ode on Invitations to Immorality in Nonagenarian Widowhood ” putrid prose! The *Elegy on—but, by Helicon, it’s no use, and it was no use. I unstrung my lyre. I collected my manuscripts, and the light with which they might have illumined the world was, one winter evening, converted to domestic heat. And with that one decisive act I thought I had shed the few, last, sad, grey long-hairs of my poetic life.*

But my wife, who even then refused to regard me as anything but a shorn Samson of poetry, had a truer intuition. Indeed, were it not

for her, I should even to-day be going about with my light hidden even from myself under my own bushel. For she it was who discovered the other day that the long-awaited outburst had come at last and awakened me to the realization that I had found my second poetic wind. Then I knew that the poet in me had awakened to sleep never. Then I knew that no more would even the least of my outpourings be cast upon editorial middens to the refrain of "putrid prose." For, though I say it, there is in Fleet Street to-day not one unimaginative hard-boiled son of Belial but falls over his brother in the attempt to lap up the least savoury dripping of my brain. (Even this last fulmination you see may not be excised).

And curiously enough the poet in me awoke when the rest of me was asleep, really, literally asleep. For I went to bed one evening a no more than usually wretched reviewer of poetry—that is what I had sunk to after that winter evening when my poetic heat had returned to me *via* the fireplace—and the unblessed reviewer of poetry slept into poetry itself and awoke to find himself—or rather, to be exact, to be found by his wife—a poet once more.

It all happened like this. You perhaps take in that very high-class weekly *The Young Modernist*; if you've done that for the last five years you will have doubtless cast your eye over those poetry-reviews signed D. U. D. Anyway my wife and I always read them from beginning to end, for I had written them. (That, by the way, may have sharpened my wife's perception of the poet in me and prepared her for the Great Awakening). I "did" all the poetry for this select hebdomadal review. I was selected, the editor once told me, because of my catholic taste, my voracious poetic appetite, my out-ostrichingly ostrichy literary digestion. Of course I have my little preferences. I like the Golden Jubilee Victorians, but I adore the ultra-nudists of to-day; I admire the dot-and-go-one school, but I venerate the wheels-within-wheelers. I am impressed by the weighty Chesterbellocians, but I dote on the crisp Miss Sitwell. But whether I quite comprehend them or not, I invariably respond sympathetically to them all. It sometimes gives me great satisfaction to recall that the only shred of reputation possessed by many a young poet is the one in which my review of his work has clothed him; for where all have condemned out of hand, I alone have had the courage to speak out loud and bold in commendation. You may recall my glowing notice of that recent anthology, otherwise cruelly slated, "The Kinkajou Book of Super-Surrealist Poetry."

But I am here concerned only with the one with the caption "Elijah in Excelsis." That is not only my latest review; it is my last.

For with the writing of it I shed the critic's drab coat for the singing robes to which I had been born. No one to-day will, I am sure, doubt that I was born like the rest of them, and yet to the casual biographer of a later day it might well seem that it was only the reading of Elijah Pennyweight's latest volume *Verse and Verse* that made me a poet. I must confess I had the inexcusable habit of reading at least here and there in the volume I was about to review; and I do not deny that I did dip into one or two things in *Verse and Verse*. I will even go further. It was at the divine touch of one of the poems I read on this occasion that the dried up springs of my private Helicon began to flow once more. I refer to that little masterpiece *Balder*—, which with its author's permission, I set down here for the edification of those who have not read it in *Verse and Verse*:

BALDER—

Blind musk-rats in Cathay,
central-heated snails and sows

i am

no sport I say for barb-
ers

i said

the blood of Achilles was singing in my shoes
and snow

and hail

out out brief chandelier

a bove majore arrare minor discit

the

rest

is . . .

.

mum and jaberjee.

Transcendental, isn't it? Doubtless it is a trifle sentimental towards the end; but otherwise it is hard, metallic, manly, superb. And I for one was profoundly stirred. The music of these lines rang in my ears and when that night my body fell asleep I became a living poetic soul once more. In the early hours I woke with a fevered brow and could sleep no more. My wife would have given me a glass of cold water, but I demanded a bottle of ink, and, as the clock struck 3-30 on the

morning of the 1st April, 1930—how the details come back to me after all these years—I indited the first draft of "Spooner Seed" on a piece of brown paper which had wrapped a pair of insoles I had the day before bought at an auction, and which now reposes in the Huntington Library at San Marino.

Many of my readers will doubtless wish to compare this first draft with the version that ultimately appeared in this journal and also with Elijah Pennyweight's masterpiece, which I am ever ready to acknowledge as at least part-begetter of my poem. And so I reproduce that first brown-paper version.

SPOONER SEED.

O hunth of meat
and breaden sows,
 i sate
 your Hun,
 which
 breathes
 and
 soils. My fuse,
I mind, with this grain ploughs, must
hope its art
 For bit too oils.
The weakest blinds and hoe and snail and mice
 and isles
 of
 fighting frog that sprinter weds
 were—
 woe i sail—
As is a dowry to a hog.
Thor fen we bent to wed
 sans care,
and woolly coke and tipped our sea and subbed
 with tong
 and mirthful care,
 and
 razed
 the
 bubble
 steamingly.
But now

SPOONER SEED

F. E. DUSTOOR

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speep-sloiling Haypril's ear and clorning mass is mum
once core, the clock's shrill carrion

rill us weir
and make
us snare
when we would swore.

But satience
Pole!

Soon derm will tie and clorning mass
as

dight

by

may be voo'd by Shac.

So craze this rye:

Paypril ass!

Spooner seed!

Mail Hay!

How " Spooner Seed " was received by an eager generation is too well known to all my readers to be recounted here. Nor need I carry this autobiographical narrative any further ; even if I did I should be able to add nothing to the knowledge with which an energetic and cultured press has amply furnished the world. With the publication of " Spooner Seed " I had entered into my heritage.

POSTSCRIPT

Here is news for all lovers of poetry. My wife has just discovered that " Spooner Seed " has the rare virtue of being at once a traditional and an ultra-modern composition. For, with a little alteration here and there in the poem as it now stands it can be turned into the orthodox rhyme-and-reason poem so dear to the more old-fashioned amongst us. This can only be explained by that catholicism of taste to which I have referred above: my broad temper has in this piece succeeded, however unconsciously, in harmonizing two violently opposed styles of composition. But I know you are impatient to have this transmogrified version ; and I make a present of it to the readers of this magazine.

" SOONER SPEED ! "

" O month of heat and sodden brows,
I hate your sun, which seethes and broils ;

My Muse, I find, with this plain grouse
Must ope its heart ; for it too boils.

The bleakest winds, and snow, and hail,
And ice, and miles of frighting fog,
That winter spreads, were—so I wail—
As is a houri to a dog.

For then we went to bed *sans* care,
And coolly woke and sipped our tea,
And tubbed with song and mirthful air,
And razed the stubble beamingly.

But now sleep-spoiling April's here,
And morning class is come once more ;
The cock's shrill clarion will us rear
And make us swear when we would snore.

But patience, Soul; Soon term will die,
And morning class, as night by day,
Be shoo'd by Vac. So raise this cry:
' April pass! Sooner speed! Hail, May!''

POST-POSTSCRIPT

I suppose sooner or later the editor will ask me to tell my readers which of these two versions I prefer. I might as well tell them now. I think the avatar just the least little bit less divine. I won't point to the gew-gaw of rhyme as impairing its sublimity ; I will point to the excess of reason, the blatant good sense, which it displays. After all poetry is poetry.

Art and Literature

O. C. GANGOLY

ALTHOUGH Art differs from Literature widely, as mediums of expression, and also in technique and method of expression and more fundamentally, (as some æstheticians assert), in message and in substance, Art and Literature have frequently come in contact with each other and sometimes exchanged mutual influences. Fundamentally, the Message of Art cannot be put into the Language of our Dictionaries, that is to say Art cannot be explained, or interpreted, in terms of our verbographs. In other words, one cannot taste the *Rasa* (æsthesis) of art through the second-hand medium of literature. To enjoy the thrills of Art, the taste of Beauty, one must establish direct contact with Works of Art. To see the lion, one must not only peep into the lion's den, but stand face to face with the lion itself. No real knowledge of Art can be derived except by frequent experience of Works of Art, by incessant diving into the seas of Form and of Colour, spiritually experienced, artistically devised, and significantly designed—in appropriate devices or artifacts which emit the same flavour of emotion which the artist originally experienced, and which the artist desires that others should also experience and enjoy when they come to contemplate the artist's significant creation. When others come in contact with Art and experience, and, are thrilled by, the emotive flavour that it offers—some of them attempt to record their reactions to these things of beauty, and to analyse their experience, and to explain, (if, indeed, it can be explained), the nature and cause of their experience in terms of words. Out of this attempt has grown a formidable Literature of Art, which claims to describe in words, works of Beauty, to analyse the thrill and joy derived from contact with Art, or other emotional re-actions of Art and also to build a Psychology and Philosophy of Art,—in order to place the mysterious phenomenon of Beauty and its reactions on the human mind on a solid, logical, or rational foundation.

This can only be done long after the experience of Art has come to an end; for, while one is in actual contact with Art, that is to say, is completely absorbed in the contemplation of Art, the latter holds the beholder entirely in its grip, and, for the time being, the beholder is cut off from himself—that is to say, his individual consciousness is totally eclipsed by the thrill of his experience. And no analysis of the experience is possible during the duration of the experience. Of course,

in case of abnormal or ill qualified persons, whose receiving psychic apparatus is not attuned to an appropriate sensitive condition, no contact with Art is possible. Those abnormal persons, whose faculty of tasting Beauty has become rusty and does not function, never really contact works of Art, and never realize the significance of Form and Colour. They merely see without any vision of Art, without any realization of the significance of the Form and Colour of Works of Beauty. But those whose receiving apparatus is in a healthy condition and has been sharpened by frequent experiences, are capable of analysing their experiences, introspectively,—and to recall and repeat the experience in memory and then to describe and analyse the nature of the experience, with a view to offer rational explanations of the nature and essence of their æsthetic reactions—their thrilling adventures with Beauty.

Though an enormous amount of sentimental nonsense have been and are still being written on the subject-matter of Art in its various phases—a good deal of it have come from the pen of those who had no adequate experience with Works of Beauty. But no sound Psychology or rational Philosophy of Art can be built up without adequate experience with concrete works of Beauty by competent, trained, or gifted seers. Even competent critics have failed to contribute valid literary criticisms of works of Art on a rational foundation, owing to the inadequacy of the specimens of Art at their disposal. Thus the famous essay *The Lacoön* by Lessing, a valuable piece of Literature, has proved by the irony of time to be a wholly useless and invalid piece of Art-criticism, owing to the fact that the critic's vision and experience was severely limited by a very narrow field—which not only failed to cover the comprehensive field of Eastern and Western Sculpture, for not only the big continent of Eastern Sculpture had not (at the time) been discovered and experienced but of the Western School—not only the significant branch of Gothic Sculpture was as yet beyond the horizon,—but also the most significant phases of Greek Art—were not available for study—which was confined, at the time, within the narrow circle of the decadent phases of the Hellenistic School. Yet, the history of the Literature of Art goes back to very early times, and we find thinkers and philosophers from the earliest of times indulging in researches into the principles of beauty. Plato's speculation led to an identification of the Form of the Good with the Form of the Beautiful—a generalisation which has not fully covered all the diverse manifestations of Art. Aristotle, whose Theories of Beauty were based on a more comprehensive scheme, discovered a connection of Beauty with Pleasure. But the most valuable contribution made in ancient times to the theory of æsthetics was that of Plotinus. Having regard to the narrow compass

of specimens available for study, his generalisations are remarkably comprehensive, and some of them are valid even to-day. The art theories of the mediæval thinkers are typically represented by St. Thomas Aquinas (afterwards interpreted by Jacques Maritain, the leader of Catholic thought in France), who understood beauty as the result of "conformity between the Soul and Nature"—a doctrine which has found many later adherents. St. Augustine, though not a systematic theorizer, made an interesting contribution by asserting that "unity is the form of all beauty." But both the cycles of Gothic and Renaissance culture were too much engrossed in the creation and enjoyment of Beauty—to have any time or the necessary detachment to theorize about the nature of the Beautiful. The Renaissance thinkers were more concerned in developing a literature on the technical side of Art, rather than of mere theories. The Science of Picture-making, the Principles of Perspective, the Laws of Light and Shade, the Chemistry of Paints, the Systems of Proportion, and Artistic Anatomy,—these are the main themes of the Literature of Art during the Renaissance in Italy (16th—17th Century). Unfortunately, the Schools of Renaissance Painting and Sculpture have generated a series of Pseudo-scientific theories about Art—which had narrowed the field of æsthetic activity—to a scientifically accurate representation of natural forms, and had prevented, for three centuries, the understanding and appreciation of other Forms of Art beyond the narrow limits of Renaissance formulas. In the meantime, the theorists of Art (chiefly represented by German Philosophers) have not been idle. In 1790 Kant wrote his *Critique of Judgment*, which first suggested the "Play"—theory of Art—a suggestion developed by Schiller in his letters on the *Æsthetic Education of Man* (1795). Schopenhauer's speculations based on "Platonic Ideas" have inclined to treat art as a mode of knowledge, which later exponents have claimed, and which is superior to that of Science itself. Spinoza claimed from Art a refined and superior quality of vision—to cure the understanding of the normal human being and to purify his vision—so that he can get to know things "with good result, without error, and as excellently as possible." Montaigne, though a derivative rather than an original thinker, was the first to feel his way through the tangled webs of Renaissance æsthetics and first distinguished the function of Truth and of Imagination in Art. Taine, although he confused Art with the Natural Sciences, was the first to point out the function of the "dominant character" in a complicated composition of Art. He explained that in every complex work of art there is some one pre-eminent shape, colour line, melodic pattern, or meaning, in which is concentrated the characteristic value of the Whole. But it is at the beginning of the nineteenth century that we

find a bold revolt against the traditional limits of art, set by earlier theorizers. It was Eugene Véron (1825-1889) who first demonstrated that Art is the universal language of emotions and found room in his scheme for manifestations which were ruled out by previous speculators. Then came Tolstoy (1828-1910) with his assertion that communication of emotion is the indispensable measure of art. He has also emphasized on the moral interpretation of Art. He further claimed that Art should promote Christian virtues and the brotherhood of man, thus laying emphasis on the socialistic basis of Art. Yrjo Hirn (1870—), another contributor to the emotionalist theory, claimed that Art requires critical control in the act of expression, and hence, the use of intelligence (craftsmanship, skill) is necessary for bridling the chaotic expression of passion.

In Victorian England, the two leaders and exponents of Art, William Morris (1834—1896) and John Ruskin (1819—1900) supplement each other, though the latter by his torrents of fantastic rhetorics (of great literary quality) overshadows the solid contribution of Morris to the development of the vital connection between Art and Life,—by inspiring, by teaching and practice, the growth of craftsmanship—and the application of Art to Industry. Ruskin's voluminous and brilliant writings on theories of æsthetics, now, unfortunately, mostly out of date, have survived in his able exposition of the principles of Gothic Art, and in his criticism of Turner's landscapes. His sweeping tirade against the expressions of Oriental Art based on hasty generalizations from wholly inadequate data and specimens is an unfortunate blot in his criticism of Art of which he was the foremost apostle in Victorian England—which did not fail to discover numerous fallacies in his fine fulminations as evidenced by the judgment in the famous libel action *Whistler vs. Ruskin*. The new outlook based on the study of new manifestations of Art, from different parts of the world, brought about revolutionary changes in the theories of Art, and built up new criterions for the understanding and evaluations of Art, coming from different orders of culture and characterized by differing ideals of civilization and thought. Thus, the famous Lectures of J. M. Whistler entitled *Ten O'Clock*, inspired by the exotic Art of the Far East, was in many respects a direct contradiction of the views put forward by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses* on Painting delivered at the Royal Academy in 1769. During the last fifty years—a new system of æsthetics has been called for by the admission of many novel and exotic expressions of Art, formerly ignored, or ruled out by Victorian prejudices and the narrow canons of Renaissance Art. As a great historian of art has said: "Gothic, Byzantine, Primitive and Asiatic Art, these suddenly revealed them-

selves as they had never been revealed to any previous generation. These things had long been *looked at*: now, all at once, we really *see* them." This new outlook, this new vision, this new understanding has opened new vistas of æsthetic thoughts and theories which have produced a voluminous body of the Literature of Art which outweigh in their quality and quantity all that has been thought of, or written in the preceding centuries. In this manner Art emits new rays from its myriad-faced forms, from age to age, which discover and illuminate ever new provinces, added to the Kingdom of Art, and which beget new systems of æsthetics and their appropriate Literature to explain, interpret and justify their new manifestations.

The First Portrait of the Buddha

RABINDRANATH ROY

THE Frontispiece to this Volume reproduced in Colour is my excuse for this article which exploits one of the legends recorded in the collection of Buddhist stories which goes under the title of the *Divyāvadāna*—the 'Celestial Sagas', a collection which is not much older than the second century A. D., but which undoubtedly incorporates materials many of which antedate the Christian Era.

It is well-known to students of Indian Antiquities that hundreds of Images of the Buddha, in stone, belonging to the Mathura School and to the Gandhara, Amaravati and the Gupta Schools have come to light, most of which belong to the period between the first to the sixth century A. D. It is a moot question of debate among scholars and archæologists as to when the first Image of the Buddha was formulated. On the coins of Kaniska (c. 78-128 A. D.) effigies of the Buddha are figured, and, recently, a seated figure represented on the coins of Maues (80-58 B. C.) has been sought to be identified as a representation of the Buddha.* If we are to trust the authenticity of the legend which we are going to cite here, the first Portrait (if not the first Image) of the Blessed One appears to have been painted during his life time. And the story narrates with considerable circumstantial and picturesque details how the Portrait of the Buddha of "Immeasurable Radiance" (*Amitābha*) came to be set down on canvas.

Rudrāyana, the Prince of Roruka, some place near the Scinde (*Sindhu-deśa*) sent his ambassador to the Court of Bimbisāra of Magadha with a magnificent present of a bejewelled armour of exquisite workmanship, consisting of five pieces (*pañcāṅgopeta-maṇi-varma*). King Bimbisāra was very much impressed with the gift and was much perplexed in choosing a return gift to the Prince. In his perplexity the king sought the advice of the Lord Buddha Himself who suggested that "a Portrait of the Blessed One painted on canvas should be sent." The king sent for his Court-Painters and commissioned them to paint the portrait of the Tathāgata. But the Royal artists exclaimed "The

*The whole problem of the history of the Buddha Image has been very ably treated by Mr. O. C. Gangoly in a paper on "The Antiquity of the Buddha-Image" published in the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* (Berlin), XIV, 2/3 Heft, 1938, pp. 41-59.

Lord Buddhas are, indeed, inaccessible to plastic presentation. It is not within our powers, therefore, to grasp and depict the Exemplum of the Blessed One" (*Te na saknuvanti Bhagavato nimittam udgrāhitum*). When the situation was referred to the Buddha, He explained: "They cannot grasp the lineament of the Buddha owing to lassitude, that is to say, owing to lack of appropriate concentration" and He asked them to bring their canvas which they did. Then he stood and cast His Shadow on the wall, and, when the lineaments of the Portrait were transcribed, He bade them to fill it in with appropriate colours (*rangaiḥ purayata*) and he further suggested that an outline of His Doctrine together with a couple of verses (*gāthā*) should be super-scribed on the Portrait. The verses contained the following injunction:

"The Spiritual reign of the Buddha calls you out, of your home,
armed with all your strength
And to give battle to the Army of Death to attain Deathlessness,
by trampling
On the Evil One with the tread of elephants (1)
He who roams with unmistaken steps within the orbit of the
Discipline of Righteousness
(He) transcends the Cycle of Births and puts an end to the
tragedy of human misery (2)."

"If they ask what do these words import, tell them this is the Cure and Elixir of Misery—this is true teaching, this is education, this is edification." They wrote out what they were asked to do. Then the Lord addressed King Bimbisāra as follows:—"Maharāja! Please write to Rudrayāna: My dear Comrade, I am sending you a Precious Gift which the Three Worlds shall unite to revere. To honour this, please arrange a procession several miles long with the road-way decorated *en fete* (*arddha-tritīyāni yojanāni mārga-śobhā kartavyā*) and you should yourself come out to meet this Effigy accompanied by your fourfold army and then having placed it in a place of large space and dimension" (apparently to gather a crowd), "cause it to be opened and revealed with great pomp and appropriate worship, ritual and ceremonies (*mahatīm pūjām satkāram kṛtvā udghāṭayitavyam*). If you do that you will acquire considerable spiritual merit." The request communicated by the Royal message to the Prince of Roruka was carried out to the letter. Just at the psychological moment there arrived at the place a company of merchants from Central India, who immediately recognized the Portrait of the Blessed One and they sang out in one voice: "Adoration to the Lord Buddha!" The assembled

crowd had not heard the name before, and they were moved to a state of Beatification and horripillation (*āsruta pūrvam ghoṣam śrutvā sarva-roma-kupānī āhṛṣṭānī*). The seed of the Cult of Worship of the Buddha must, indeed, have been sown on that occasion.*

*I am indebted to my friend Mr. Bibhutibhusan Bhar for helping me with the translation of the text of the *Divyavadāna*.

Life and Letters

ASOK MITRA.

PROUST once suggested that a book should be reviewed after it has acquired a posterity. It is the craze of keeping up-to-date in the book-world that has grown into a vicious convention in book-reviewing to review a book as soon as it is out and only once in a particular paper. Books are best and most fairly reviewed when they have made their impact felt in society. A very late review of an important book is perhaps never too late. The volumes of commentary on Plato every year are in a way annual reviews of Plato's works.

Sesher Kavita is an important Bengali book. It has had a history and it has acquired a certain posterity. A review of the book, therefore, must necessarily be some sort of a review of an aspect of Bengali life before and after its writing. It is clear at this time of the day that it crowns an epoch and has sounded its knell.

Modern Bengali Society begins in 1793. The date is a real milestone, coinciding with the inauguration of the Permanent Settlement. The break with the era before 1793 was rather sudden, almost a split. With the great Bengali officers of the Moghuls and the Nawabs an epoch in Bengali life closed completely and left no trace. With the introduction of the Permanent Settlement began a new society of the new rich. The building of the new society was further helped by the new education.

The new landlord belied the expectations of Cornwallis. He did not become the prototype of the English landlord. Rather, he proved of little help to the country, and gradually lost touch with things. He was irresponsible and idle. This led progressively to diminishing returns and narrowing margins of profit. The commerce of the country also was destroyed by the activities of the various institutions of the East India Company. The Investment, the dastak, the new bank, and later on the various English firms struck down with superior resources indigenous commercial enterprise and paralysed it for a long time to come. Similarly, the man who piled up money in the newly opened vocations could not invest it in profitable channels. There was thus no outlet for so much human energy, now forcibly pent up under the pressure of circumstances, while, in the case of the landlord, his record

during the last century and a third has been one of increasing poverty. All this struck back and ate into the vitals of the nation's life, breeding defeatism and a sense of futility. The result has been increasing poverty and a sense of frustration. To all this must be added the effect of the incurable national malady of indolence, apathy and lack of enterprise.

For all this growing poverty, dislocated national economy, and frustration of the landlord, the businessman, and the man in the vocations, there were left the sole consolations of the new learning. The new education fell on happy ground and took Bengal by storm, creating a diversion for pent-up energies in other spheres of life. This new education gave the key to a new world of the mind which served as an escape from the bitter memories of failure and disappointment in the practical sphere. It paved the way for the liberal attitude, assisted by small jobs, banking and small investments. But liberalism itself without money-making tended to look rather anachronistic. It is interesting to find Bankim and Tagore's heroes reading Mill, Burke and Bentham in remote villages in arm-chairs, oblivious of their anachronistic environment. On the other hand the growing poverty of the classes, due to lack of enterprise, swelled the ranks of the suburban middle class. The poorer the latter became the more they thirsted for the glory that is past. Escape into day-dreams became a regular apparatus of compensation for frustration in actual life. To this was added social snobbery, the tendency to hold the candle to social superiors and look down upon social inferiors. Further, the demand for the man of Western education in the Government services supplied an ostensible pretext for this pleasant escape. But the supply in this case soon outstripped the demand. The result was twofold. On the one hand, the section which secured employment saw its salvation in a job and a wife. On the other hand the section that was deprived of an assured monthly income sank deeper and deeper in day-dreams. The one became apathetic and lifeless, the other a dreamer of dreams. Thus began a dissociation of life from letters, with its attendant train of romanticism and wish-fulfilment; a process that has continued to this day. Divorced from life letters became, from the beginning, a luxury and a mode of emotional compensation. Literature in the next place had a favourable start when it managed to get comfortably stuck to the magnificent snobbery of Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

This presumably has been the historical background of *Sesher Kavita* which gives the book its peculiar double appeal. It sanctifies with the glory of a false culture each petty imbecility of the idle rich, and secondly, it quickens the imagination of the day-dreamer. It appeases both its hero and its reader, situated respectively at the upper

and lower ends of the social scale. That is why Amit Ray has had so many incarnations in the upper strata of our society and an evergrowing body of admirers in the lower. The book thus fully threshes out the unreality of the relation between life and letters as it exists even to-day, and hence marks the end of an epoch.

Perhaps the greatest crime that literature can commit, besides to be dull, is to be sentimental. And *Sesher Kavita* is sentimental, and, unfortunately, of the untidy sort. It lacks the essential moral tone and seriousness which are the hall-marks of greatness and are present in all the great works of Tagore. It is the story of the spoilt child who is curious about everything, serious about nothing, has nothing to do, hates doing anything particular, finds time hanging heavy on his hands, takes a bout of tennis or a bout of love-making, begins and ends life as a scape-grace. Love-making or boat-racing, it makes no difference to him; it is the play that matters. Any civilized society should be ashamed of such a narcissistic parasite. It is the immorality of a society which fattens and deteriorates the rich and sweats the poor to death. The crowning pity of all this immorality is that it is invested with such a glory of sweet sentimentality, resignation, and righteousness that it captivates. Add to all this the sensationalism of the jilted lover, the awakening of the virgin to love, the glories of ideal widowhood, the juvenescence of the elderly widower, the self-dramatizing self-pity of the author, the cheap indictment of the Society-girl and the intriguing atmosphere of Society. Indeed, the book should be classed together with the pictures as an emasculating opiate working havoc in society. It is the portrait of a class stricken with paralysis due to inactivity; which finds itself useless in society and, calling to its aid seductive Romance, makes an apology for its existence under sufferance. But that sufferance has had too long a lease and now must be stopped in the interest of the generations that follow. The influence of the book has been ruthless with youths and the latter must now be ruthless with it.

When it came out the book was acclaimed as a masterpiece in Bengali prose style. But even the language and style of the book betray hollowness and artificiality. The style betrays the lack of a solid social reality to take its roots in, and exhibits signs of decay and cerebral anæmia. The language is not free from grammatical inaccuracies—a serious lapse in Tagore. The author's feeling for language has outstripped his feeling for things. This is only natural because in Tagore's works the things are always the same, unvarying as the countryside of Bengal, and the language is the result of a process of refinement pursued to breaking point. Language has been refined, twisted and strained to a point where it defeats and indeed loses all

purpose and all vigour, and becomes a travesty of individualism devoid of any social content. Such refinement lacks a future, is purposeless and lifeless. It is like trying to substitute facecream and powder for the glory of health that has fled. The conscious straining to be witty and brilliant irritates. Wit is best when spontaneous. *Sesher Kavita* has much of the flashiness of the wit of Birbal when he nods. The style, as much as what it portrays, has led Bengali life and letters up a blind alley from which the moderns are trying to veer round. But already, unfortunately, this pretender has wrought much havoc in the field, and even threatened with eclipse Tagore's legitimate claimants.

Student Movement in Bengal

PURNENDUKUMAR BANERJEE

THE days are full of enthusiasm for students' organizations. It will not be out of time to go back to the past for a while to consult our experience and to see if we have anything to learn from our life and activities in the past. Nor shall it be right to pre-suppose that this review is idle, for much of our energy and enthusiasm, as we shall presently see, was driven into a channel that was neither desirable nor profitable, and the history of our past does not do us great credit, as is apparent from the defunct condition of student organizations which at the time of their inception held high promises.

For all practical purposes, the first students' organization was started in 1927. But there was something in its genesis that was far from satisfactory. It did not grow out of a natural enthusiasm of the students for self-expression. The All-Bengal Students' Association was started by a number of students who found themselves up against their college authorities and who, according to their version, had been most unjustly treated. This is important to bear in mind, for it will explain a good deal of their future activities. There was little urge indeed to drive the energies of the students into constructive channels. It was conducted more or less on a trade-union principle and little emphasis was given to any healthy, co-operative, intellectual development of the students. It was assumed that the interests of the students and the educational authorities clashed more often than not and it became the main business of the Association to safeguard the interests of the students against the encroachment of the authorities on their just rights.

FREQUENT STRIKES

The logical sequence of this attitude found expression in the ever-recurring strikes conducted by the Association to bring the educational authorities of different schools and colleges to their senses. Whatever wisdom the authorities gathered from this new development it was clear that no cause was too weak or too frivolous to raise the slogan that the students' interests were in danger. The official organ of the Association, the *Chhatra*, devoted a section to the strikes and quarrels conducted by the Association in different educational institutions of Bengal. It looked as if the whole *raison d'être* of the A. B. S. A. lay in the number

of strikes conducted by it to a successful issue, and judged from this standard it certainly justified its existence. But if the history of the Association for some months was confined to these strikes and so, to say the least, to achievements negative in character, its later history is more deplorable still. For, however unreasonable and frivolous the issues of these strikes might be, they at least were related to the students and their life.

But presently the Association allowed itself to be exploited by the political factions in the province. Students have always been the pawns in the political games of our elders. Those who were for the existing government wanted the students not to take part in active politics—meaning their interests. The hostile political leaders wanted the students to belong to their party and act according to their bidding and to serve their party interests in the name of the country. The A. B. S. A. did not hesitate in the years 1928 and 1929 to take their cue from the B. P. C. C. and to fall in line with the B. P. C. C. The students of Bengal were divided into two camps and conducted among themselves the battle of their elders. The A. B. S. A. played in the hands of one party in the B. P. C. C. and new association B. P. S. A. took its inspiration from the other. There was no excuse of any movement in the country at the time to demand of the students their active services. Bengal politics was a sorry spectacle of feuds arising out of the claims of rival leaders and their followers to represent the Congress in Bengal. The leaders of these rival groups sought their following among the students and the students allowed themselves to be the camp-followers of these groups and fight out their battle. This is the subsequent history of the two students' organizations.

A BLACK CHAPTER

It is, to my mind, a very black chapter in the history of the student movement in Bengal—this strife and conflict which has nothing to do with the rights, interests, grievances, indeed anything that may relate to the word 'student.' Indeed, the students' organizations except in so far as their members were students, were a misnomer. In their interests and activities, they proved to be the organization of anything but the students. Their one interest was politics—not the politics of student politicians but the politics of some ambitious and exploiting elders.

I think, I must make my position clear here. I do not quarrel with politics at all. I do not say that politics is not for the students. On the other hand, I believe, students must take an intelligent interest in

politics as in sociology and other subjects. Only that interest must on no account be inspired by and blindly guided by a thoughtless acceptance of what our elders would have us accept. I think, it is one of the great duties of the students—not simply one of the best rights—to engage themselves in political thinking and to prepare themselves for the formation of unbiased opinion on political as well as other matters. It is for the students to go in for a corporate intellectual existence unaided—for aid here means hindrance—and unencroached upon by the thoughts of the politicians of our country, whether pro-government or anti-government. Let the students feel their independence and separate existence. They were so far pawns in the political games of the interested parties in the past. Let them give up that rôle in the future and feel and make others feel their importance, independent of any outside relation in the national life of their country.

I tried above to show that the past experience of the student movement in Bengal has been anything but glorious and I maintained that if we were to profit by that experience we must be fully appreciative of the nature of that experience and be on our guard to avoid the pitfalls which once proved disastrous to the healthy growth of the student movement. I have indicated that it was subservient to the political institutions and their leaders without any reference to the welfare, whether physical, mental or moral or even political, of the students, as the rival students' associations used to take their respective cue from the rival hostile factions in the then Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. In view of that experience, it is imperative on the exponents of the new student movement to have clear and definite aims and functions of any student movement and to define its scope. There must be no room for ambiguity in the enunciation of its objective and the formulation of its policy.

A STAGE OF PREPARATION

Though the definition of a student as one whose business is study is liable to be misinterpreted in a narrow sense, yet there is a substantial element of truth in this description if we use the word 'study' in a very wide sense without restricting it to text-books or even books only. Student life is a period for preparation—preparation for all the problems that face the individual and the community, for the calls, pleasant or unpleasant, that are made upon man in society. The politician equips himself in his student life for all the exigencies that may and will crop up and perplex him in his political career; the religious reformer gets himself prepared in his student life in all those matters which have a bearing on his work of reform. As a general rule this study, this pre-

paration suffers if the student is expected to take active part in the heat and dust of practical politics or of practical works of reform. In cases of emergencies and in abnormal times, the general rule may be and is bound to be modified, but under normal circumstances it is no part of a student's business to commit himself to any particular line of action. It is enough for him if he can devote himself to a dispassionate study of his subject in all its bearings.

If this principle is admitted the founding and working of students' association will present problems less diverse and dangerous and fewer opportunities of exploitation than did the working of students' association ten years earlier. If the students' association be started on the principle of physical, mental and moral development and progress of the student community, its programme and its policy would not militate against any interest in the country. In this age of conflict, it is often implied and taken for granted that every movement carries within itself the germs of conflict with other forces. But in the case of the student movement, except that it will set itself in opposition to all kinds of inertia, there is hardly any possibility of conflict with any section of society. There is no reason to suppose that the students will find themselves in opposition to educational authorities. If the members of any institution do not look to the interests of the students—a case which is hardly possible, for they are paid to be of use to the latter—it is not difficult to bring them to a better sense of their duty by drawing public notice to it. But it has been seen in the past that whatever differences arose between the students and the teachers, they never sprang from lack of interest on the part of the teachers. Almost always it had been a case of outside influence and extra-academic, often political, activities of an aggressive character that determined the difference. Indeed, there cannot be any reason why the educational authorities should object to and oppose activities of the students to make themselves more fit to face the problems of their country.

MEASURE OF AGREEMENT

It is therefore imperative to understand that no students' association can function properly if it labours under the impression that its ideals are in any way antagonistic or hostile to the teaching authorities. It must, however, be stated here, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, that the students' association is not to acquiesce in any attempt of the authorities to commit them to any extra-academic policy or action, whether political or social, if that goes against the self-respect and best interests of the students. But I hope, and it is reasonable to hope, such occasions, if they occur at all, must in their nature be very few and far

between. Normally, I am convinced that the measure of agreement between these two sides will and should always be great, for without any understanding co-operation between the two the course of the student movement is bound to suffer.

It is now clear that the students' associations must function as a body deriving its strength from the educational institutions and must be in close touch with them. It will keep a direct touch with the university which must, if it is conscious of its functions and duties, give its blessing to it. Indeed if the students' association can justify its existence by demonstrating its ability to understand students' problems, if it can honestly and earnestly devote to them that amount of responsible thinking and emotional drive which is indispensably necessary to bring about a regeneration of the Bengali youths, the university is bound not simply to give it its official recognition, but even to ask for its advice in matters of educational policy. For the cause of education and regeneration of youth is one which cannot succeed by one-sided activity either of the university or of the students. A co-operation based on the capacity for responsible thinking and courage and for honest acting on the part both of the university and the students as a whole is the *sine qua non* of any regeneration of youth. And as I have said, given a recognition of the right aim and a vision of the true untrammelled by the confusion of the false in both the university authorities and the students, it will be found that no question of conflict can arise between them, for their aim is identical. Their ideal is the same and it will be found soon that their methods will equally be the same. The country is in need of young men who should not simply supply leadership but sustain it, who must know both how to command and to obey, who must possess the art of responsible thinking and honest acting based on a first hand knowledge of things and who must possess that character which springs from intellectual honesty and moral integrity and which is softened by a larger humanity. The production of this youth should be the ultimate objective of the university and of the students' association.

Coincidence ?

DEBDAS SEN

"Shelley was then nine years of age, and Wordsworth twelve; George IV was King, Canning, Prime Minister; and though ten years had passed since the battle of Waterloo, the Corn Law Repeal Act had not yet been framed."

(Quoted by A. J. A. Symons in an essay on tradition in biography in *Tradition and Experiment in Present-day Literature*.)

IS it a mere coincidence that Orm wrote his *Ormulum* in the year of the Great Charter? Why was Froissart but a child one year old when the Hundred Years' War started? Why should Chaucer be born within ten years of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a naughty collection of tales? And, again, why should Chaucer die exactly ten years before Froissart, unless the lives of these three distinguished children of the Middle Ages moved in concentric circles? Because I do not believe in coincidences I am not prepared to admit that the close of the Wars of the Roses and the publication of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* just happened in the same year. Things do not just happen.

I am a great believer in proverbial wisdom. Coming events, so runs the time-worn proverb, cast their shadows before. This is illustrated in the death of Leonardo da Vinci which was foreshadowed by the appearance of More's *Utopia* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in the preceding year. Shakespeare and Galileo came almost hand in hand into this world; but the same year saw Calvin's and Michael Angelo's death. This, I think, illustrates the law of compensation.

The seventeenth century has a hardly less significant chapter of apparently accidental coincidences. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* was published in the year of the Gunpowder Plot, while La Fontaine was born in the year in which Burton produced his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. It is memorable that the First Folio of Shakespeare was printed in the year of Pascal's birth, and that Galileo and Cardinal Richelieu died in the year in which Newton was born, which was as it should have been. For between themselves Galileo and Newton would have made Europe too hot. But why did Richelieu die in the same year? If it is a mere coincidence (by the way, is it?) that the Great Fire of London broke out in the year Moliere wrote his *Le Misanthrope*, it is

I have taken the usually accepted dates to be true—D. S.

certainly not by accident that Taylor wrote his *Holy Dying* in the year following that of Descartes' death.

In the next century the Battle of Blenheim took place in the same year that Swift wrote his *Battle of Books* (two battles in the same year,—a year, it appears, of battles). Rousseau was born a year before the Treaty of Utrecht, and Addison died when Rousseau was seven years old. Lessing and Burke were born, and Congreve and Steele died, when Kant was a child of five. Pope died a year earlier than Swift, presumably because it would have been too sensational for the same year to record the death of two of the greatest satirists in English literature. Dr. Johnson brought out his *Dictionary* in the year of the Earthquake at Lisbon; to the shocked Earl of Chesterfield and the countrymen of Boswell the *Dictionary* was indeed in the nature of an earthquake. Sterne produced his *Sentimental Journey* in the year in which James Watt invented the steam-engine, and Arkwright the spinning jenny; and who, by the way, is more sentimental than the inventor of mechanical power which seeks to save the good right hand from much sweating? Goethe wrote his *Sorrows of Werther* in the year in which Louis XVI started his sorrowful career as King of France. And when did Boswell give to the world his immortal *Life of Dr. Johnson*? Why, of course, in the year of Mirabeau's death. And in what other year did the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* die than that which witnessed the fall of Robespierre?

Byron produced his *Hours of Idleness* in the year of the 'idleness' of the slaves due to the abolition of the slave-trade (out of exultation, for was not Byron a great apostle of freedom?). Dickens was born in the year which saw the publication of Grimms' *Fairy Tales* and he never forgot it, for his mind always moved in a fairy world. The Reform Bill was passed in 1832; and the greatest reform it effected was to close the Romantic period of English literature. Mrs. Browning died in the year which saw Victor Emmanuel on the throne of Italy, just robbing this unfortunate Italian King of the distinction of claiming a great English poet as his subject.

It is remarkable that Landor and Hawthorne died in the same year; so too did Kingsley and Hans Andersen, Darwin and Emerson. In doing so they were but following the glorious example set by Shakespeare and Cervantes. And they have been imitated in our own age by Conrad and Anatole France. Yeats is just dead; and who knows but that by another strange coincidence 1939 should also witness the tragic end of the present writer? which would mean the death of two great writers in the same year. But there is no joy in such reflection, though fame is an 'infirmity of noble mind.'

Presidency College—1924-1938

[We had originally intended to reprint the articles on the past history of the College so as to give a compact history, but owing to want of space we had to drop the idea. We are, however, bringing the story upto date from 1924 at which Mr. Wordsworth's review stops.—ED.]

Development of Presidency College from 1855-1906—

Vol. III, No. 3, p. 176.

Progress, 1906-1916—H. R. JAMES . . . Vol. III, No. 3, p. 179.

Presidency College, 1916-1924—W. C. WORDSWORTH,

Vol. XI, No. 2, p. 155.

THE preceding articles by distinguished principals of the college give us the earlier history of the progress and expansion which enabled the college to attain and consolidate its proud position among the educational institutions in Bengal. The pace of this advance has slowed down considerably but the reputation of the college has on the whole been well maintained. Mr. Wordsworth's article brings the history down to 1924 in which year Mr. Stapleton became principal.

A committee appointed by the government in the previous year to report on the scope of work of the college had made a number of recommendations the most notable of which, the strengthening of the staff and the raising of the fees, were given effect to. As many as fourteen new appointments were made in July 1926 and this accession of strength was a timely one.

The raising of the fees gave rise to a good deal of adverse criticism coming as it did at a time when professors of established reputation were leaving the college; and it was felt that the old rate was high enough when compared with fee rates in other college. Apart from the economic depression in Bengal which made the public take less kindly to the enhancement of fees, a large circle of friends of the college were genuinely apprehensive that the higher fee rates would keep out of the college the class of students who had contributed so much to the building up of its academic prestige. But financial considerations outweighed all others and the enhanced rates of fees have continued, though an attempt has been made by the provision of a number of part-free studentships to make the burden lighter for poor students

of real ability who desire to avail themselves of the opportunities offered at Presidency College.

It was during Mr. Stapleton's tenure of office as principal that a register of old students of Presidency College was compiled—a memorable work, perhaps the first of its kind in this country—and the college at long last acquired a playing field of its own. As Mr. James tells us in his article in the college centenary number of the magazine, a scheme of improvement providing for better laboratories, a playing field and a college hall had been approved as long ago as 1907. The scheme of the playing field took nearly twenty years to materialize, and after this the authorities of the Education Department seem to have felt that they had done enough for the college by providing three and a half lakhs of rupees for the acquisition of land for the playing field and the building of a new astronomical observatory. But the hall has not been built yet, though successive principals have brought this anomaly of a college without a hall to the notice of the authorities year after year with great perseverance. At the time the playing field was acquired and the observatory built the intention of the government not to spend any more money on the college was so evident that an earlier proposal to raise funds for the hall by inviting subscriptions from old students was revived. But this did not produce any great results and we are still living in hopes that the money will be found by the government.

Another notable improvement effected at this time was the provision of more accommodation for readers in the Arts Library by the removal of books from the hall to steel shelves on the upper walls of the rooms adjacent to the Library. The Arts Library has now room for a large number of readers, and nothing except the habits of the readers themselves and their want of leisure during the hours the Library remains open stands in the way of our realising the aim Mr. James had in view, when he revised the library rules in 1908, of "making reading in the Library the first object and taking out books only secondary."

Within a few years after the departure of Mr. Stapleton the senior staff of the college was further depleted by the transfer or retirement of some professors who had worthily maintained its great traditions. There has been some compensation for these losses in a succession of distinguished principals like Mr. R. B. Ramsbotham, Mr. J. R. Barrow, Sir Jehangir Coyajee and Mr. B. M. Sen.

Mr. Barrow's second term of office as principal was a time of great stress, perhaps the greatest in the history of the college. The series of crises which the college was called upon to face from January 1928 to

September 1930 were different from those of the past when indiscipline among students had led to serious consequences. Political influences which had first began to make themselves felt in the educational world in 1920 had now assumed formidable proportions and the driving power behind the attacks made on educational institutions in 1929 and 1930 was almost wholly political. The situation was the more difficult because the technique of picketing, first resorted to in educational institutions after the famous Nagpur Conference of 1920, had been perfected in the course of numerous strikes that had since been organised in colleges throughout the country. The college was fortunate in having Mr. Barrow as its principal in these difficult years. He met with wonderful firmness and patience the attempts made by students in August 1929 to force the hands of the authorities of the college, and when the greater crisis came in 1930 he and the members of the staff were not altogether new to the difficult task that was imposed on them.

The college opened in July 1930 soon after the arrest of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Pandit Jawaharlal, and almost immediately it had to face a very determined attack made on it. Its gates had to be guarded by the police if the work was to be carried on, and this seems to have driven the forces arrayed against it to more determined efforts. The gates were constantly assailed by bodies of demonstrators who did not belong to the college, and clashes with the police gave rise to ugly situations. The prolonged tension was only occasionally relieved by a humorous interlude like the lifting by the professors themselves of a bulky demonstrator from his recumbent position on the staircase, or the sudden descent of a body of fair demonstrators on the college followed by one or two sheepish looking husbands who evidently disapproved of the activities of their better halves.

In the end the college emerged triumphantly out of the prolonged struggle, though its resources of tact and patience were well nigh exhausted. All who love Presidency College owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Barrow who did so much to enhance its prestige by handling the crisis with magnificent courage and patience.

The years that have followed have happily been peaceful ones. The financial stringency felt throughout the province during these years has had its effect on the development of the college. The heavy expenditure incurred in maintaining it has been closely and repeatedly scrutinized, and the final outcome of the economy campaign of the government has been a rather drastic reduction of the office establishment.

But the strength of the teaching staff has not been reduced, and for this mercy received the college is thankful. It has enabled us to

separate the honours classes entirely from the pass and to inaugurate a scheme which aims at giving special assistance to promising undergraduates who intend to appear in the public service examinations after taking their degrees. Candidates appearing in these examinations from Bengal are handicapped for want of proper coaching facilities and it is in the fitness of things that Presidency College with its splendid resources should take the lead in this matter.

The athletic and social activities of the college have had their vicissitudes but the record is a good one on the whole. The football, cricket and hockey teams have acquitted themselves with credit from time to time and have produced individual players of exceptional merit. Our reputation in the tennis world is still an enviable one though our past supremacy in inter-college tournaments has been successfully challenged. Rowing has been taken up with zeal, and some of our rowing men have found places in university crews.

The college societies have not languished though at times the enthusiasm to run them efficiently has been lacking. The debating society has been active in recent years and some good debates have been held. The historical and literary societies have had their good as well as their lean years, and the College Dramatic Club has maintained its reputation by producing good plays.

The brilliant university records of a large number of students who have passed through the college in recent years and the continued vigour of our social and athletic activities prove unmistakably that the traditions of the college have been well maintained even in the atmosphere of lethargy that seems to pervade the academic world to-day. One of the causes of this lethargy is a growing sense of futility among the students who come to our colleges and this is not surprising when one considers the present economic situation and the alarming increase in unemployment among our educated young men as a consequence of the terrible overcrowding of the professions and of the ranks of those who want to enter the government and other services. But it is hardly fair to make the educational institutions and particularly the colleges responsible for the existing state of affairs.

H. K. B.

Our Contributors

[We intend in this section to give a bare indication of the intimate relationship existing between Presidency College and our contributors to this issue.—Ed.]

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- O. C. GANGOLY—Ordhendu Coomar Gangoly, Solicitor.
Student, 1897—1901. Besides the Frontispiece, contributes the article 'Art and Literature.'
- H. R. JAMES—Henry Rosher James, M.A. (Oxon.), I.E.S.
Professor of English, 1900; Principal, 1907—1916. Deceased.
- PRAMATHANATH BANERJEE—M.A., B.L., P.R.S., Barrister-at-Law.
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- W. C. WORDSWORTH—M.A. (Oxon. and Lond.), I.E.S. (Retd.).
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- DR. NARESHCHANDRA SEN-GUPTA—M.A., D.L., Advocate.
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- "P"—Praphullachandra Ghosh, M.A., P.R.S.
Student, 1898—1903. Temporary Lecturer, 1904 and 1906—1907; Professor of English since 1908.
- J. R. BARROW—M.A. (Cantab.), I.E.S. (Retd.).
Officiating Principal, 1917—1923; Principal, July, 1929 to October, 1930.
- DR. H. E. STAPLETON—M.A., B.Sc., D.LITT. (Oxon.), I.E.S. (Retd.).
Professor of Chemistry, 1900—1905; Principal, 1924—1928. Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, 1928—1933.
- T. S. STERLING, M.B.E.—M.A. (Cantab.), I.E.S. (Retd.).
Professor of English, 1909; Officiating Principal, 1926—1927.
- R. B. RAMSBOTHAM—M.A., B.LITT. (Oxon.), F.R.HIST.S., I.E.S. (Retd.).
Officiating Principal, 1928—1929.
- SIR JEHANGIR C. COYAJEE—B.A. (Cantab.), LL.B. (Bombay), I.E.S. (Retd.).
Professor of Economics, 1911; Offg. Principal, November, 1930 to August, 1931.
- SIR P. C. ROY—Professor of Chemistry, 1889—1916.
- HIRENDRANATH DATTA—M.A., B.L., P.R.S., Solicitor.
Student, 1884—1890.
- RAI BAHADUR GOPAL CHANDRA GANGULY—M.A., Retired Professor, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.
Student, 1888—1891.
- SIR ATULCHANDRA CHATTERJEE—B.A. (Cantab. & Cal.), I.C.S. (Retd.).
Student, 1888—1893. Late High Commissioner for India in London.
- R. N. GILCHRIST, C.I.E.—M.A. (Aberdeen), I.E.S. (Retd.).
Professor of Economics, 1912—1916. Lately Reforms Commissioner, Bengal.

- MOHITKUMAR SEN GUPTA—M.A. Indian Audit and Accounts Service.
Student, 1911—1917. Second editor of the Magazine and editor for two successive terms.
- PROFESSOR B. B. ROY—Birendra Binode Roy, M.A.
Student, 1916—1920. Offg. Professor of English, 1921—1923 and 1923—1924. Now Professor, Scottish Church College, and on the Editorial Staff of *The Statesman*.
- PRAPHULLAKUMAR SARKAR—M.A. Indian Railway Accounts Service.
Student, 1919—1923. Offg. Professor of Economics, 1925.
- RAI LALITMOHAN CHATTERJI BAHADUR—M.A. Retired Chairman, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dacca.
Student, 1891—1892.
- DR. PRAFULLACHANDRA BASU—M.A., B.L., PH.D.
Student, 1907—1911. Now Principal, Holker College, Indore and Vice-Chancellor, Agra University.
- JITENDRAMOHAN SEN—B.SC., (1913), M.ED. (Leeds), Diploma in Education, Oxford.
Now Offg. Principal, Krishnagar College.
- SIR ALBION BANERJI—M.A. (1892), I.C.S. (Retd.).
Late Dewan of Mysore and Cochin.
- DR. RAMESCHANDRA MAJUMDAR—M.A., P.R.S., PH.D.
Student, 1907—1911. Now Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University.
- PROFESSOR MEGHNAD SAHA—D.SC., F.R.S.
Student, 1911—1915. Now Palit Professor of Physics, Calcutta University.
- PROFESSOR BENOYKUMAR SARKAR—M.A., docteur en geographie honoris causa (Teharan).
Student, 1901—1906. Now Lecturer in Economics, Calcutta University.
- PROFESSOR JOGISCHANDRA SINHA—M.A., P.R.S., PH.D.
Student, 1909—1915. Professor of Economics since 1932.
- PROFESSOR HIRENDRALAL DEY—M.A., P.R.S., D.SC. (Econ.), (Lond.).
Student, 1914—1920. Head of the Department of Economics, Dacca University.
- DR. NABAGOPAL DAS—PH.D. (Econ.), (Lond.), I.C.S.
Student, 1926—1930. Now Employment Adviser, Government of Bengal.
- MANILAL BANERJI—Student, Third Year Economics.
- PROFESSOR TAHER REWZI—M.A.
Student, 1923—1927. Lecturer in Persian and Urdu since 1928.
- PROFESSOR RADHAGOVINDA BASAK—M.A., PH.D. (Dacca).
Professor of Sanskrit since 1933.
- PROFESSOR SUSHILKUMAR DE—M.A., P.R.S., D.LITT. (Lond.).
Student, 1905—1911. Temporary Professor of English, 1912. Now Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Dacca University.
- PROFESSOR GOURINATH BHATTACHARYYA—M.A., P.R.S.
Student, 1925—1931. Lecturer in Sanskrit and Bengali since 1936.
- PROFESSOR KHITISHPRASAD CHATTERJEE—M.SC. (Cantab.).
Student, 1915—1919. Now Professor of Anthropology, Calcutta University.
- DR. J. C. SEN-GUPTA—Jatischandra Sen-Gupta, M.SC. (Cal.), D.SC. (Heidelberg).
Professor of Botany since 1929.
- PROFESSOR MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR—M.A., PH.D.
Student, 1905—1907. Professor of Philosophy since 1933.
- PRINCIPAL KURUVILLA ZACHARIAH—M.A. (Oxon.), I.E.S.
Professor of Economics, 1916; Professor of History, 1916—1930. Now Principal, Islamiah College.

- DR. PHIROZE E. DUSTOOR—M.A., D.LITT. (Allahabad).
Student, 1915—1921. Editor, 1920—1921. Offg. Professor of English, 1922—1923 and 1924—1915. Now Reader in English, Allahabad University.
- RABINDRANATH ROY—B.A. Student, 1927—1931.
- ASOK MITRA—B.A.
Student, 1932—1938. Editor, 1936—1937.
- PURNENDUKUMAR BANERJEE—Student, Sixth Year History.
Twice General Secretary, Presidency College Union, 1935—1936 and 1937—1938.
- DEVDA SEN—Student, Fifth Year English. Has also prepared the cumulative index in English.
- H. K. B.—Professor Hirankumar Banerji, M.A., B.LITT. (Oxon.).
Professor of English since 1924. Treasurer of the Magazine.
- RABINDRANATH TAGORE—was a student for one day (see the Poet's Convocation Speech 1937).
- PRAMATHA CHAUDHURI—M.A., Barrister-at-Law.
Student, 1885—1889.
- PROFESSOR KHAGENDRANATH MITRA, RAI BAHADUR—M.A.
Student, 1896—1899. Professor of Philosophy, 1907—1927. Now Ramtanu Lahiri Professor of Bengali, Calcutta University.
- PROFESSOR SASHANKASEKHAR BAGCHI—M.A.
Lecturer in Bengali since 1931.
- PROFESSOR AMULYADHAN MUKHERJI—M.A., P.R.S.
Student, 1918—1924. Now Professor of English, Ashutosh College, Calcutta.
- PROFESSOR CHARUCHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA—M.A.
Student, 1901—1904. Demonstrator in Physics since 1906.
- PROFESSOR ASOKNATH SHASTRI—M.A., P.R.S.
Student, 1921—1927. Offg. Lecturer in Sanskrit, 1933—1936. Now Lecturer in Sanskrit, Calcutta University.
- PROFESSOR HUMAYUN KABIR—M.A. (Cal. & Oxon.).
Student, 1922—1928. Editor, 1926—1927. Now Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University.
- SUDHANGSHU KUMAR HALDAR—B.Sc., I.C.S.
Student, 1919—1924. Now District and Session Judge, Rangpur.
- HIRONMOY BANERJI—B.A., I.C.S.
Student, 1922—1927. Now Additional District and Sessions Judge, Sylhet.
- AMALESH TRIPATHI—Student, Third Year Economics.
- ALAKCHANDRA GUPTA—Student, Fifth Year English. Has prepared the cumulative index in Bengali.

OURSELVES

NOTES AND NEWS

We commented on the fine showing of the College in the Intermediate and the B. A. and B. Sc. Examinations last time. In the M. A. and M. Sc. Examinations 12 students of our College were placed in the First Class, 12 in the Second and 4 in the Third.

Mr. Purnendukumar Banerjee of Sixth Year History won a medal in the Inter-University Debating Competition organised by the Calcutta University Law College. Mr. Subrata Banerjee of Fourth Year History, won prizes in the Inter-collegiate Recitation Competition. Mr. Ranen Sen of Sixth Year Physiology was awarded the Best Man's Prize in his group in the Inter-collegiate Muscle-posing Competition.

The College secured the largest number (*viz.*, 10) of Athletic Proficiency Certificates awarded by the Calcutta University. Mr. Ananda Mukherjee of Second Year Arts broke his own record in the Pole Vault in the B. O. A. sports. Mr. Mukherjee and two more of our students, Messrs. A. Bhattasali and Mijjan, represented Calcutta University in the athletic contests with the Punjab University.

The College Football team fought its way to the Final in the Elliott Shield and finished third in the Inter-collegiate League Competitions: our College had one representative in the Junior International. In Cricket four of our players represented Calcutta University against Bombay in the *Inter-Varsity match*, while Mr. Nirmal Chatterjee of Second Year Arts was also in the Bengal Provincial team in the Ranji Championship. In Rowing we were the runners-up in the League and Knock-out in the fours and the Knock-out in sculls. We won the Calcutta University Hard Court Tennis Tournament and stood third in the Inter-collegiate Hockey League. In Basketball we annexed the Panna Memorial Trophy.

One of our students, Mr. Amiya Kumar Mukherjee, was selected for appointment to the Indian Audit and Accounts Service on the results of the last year's competitive examination, while we had a dozen representatives among the successful candidates at the B. C. S. Examination held in February, 1938.

UNIVERSITY AND GOVT. PRIZES AND MEDALS

M. A. & M. Sc.

PRABODH CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA—*Hemchandra Gossain Gold Medal and Prize and University Gold Medal and Prize.*

NIRMAL CHANDRA MAJUMDAR—*Hemchandra Mukerjee Silver Medal and University Gold Medal and Prize.*

NALINI CHAKRAVARTI—*University Silver Medal and Prize.*

RABI RAY—*University Silver Medal and Prize.*

HEM CHANDRA DATTA—*University Gold Medal and Prize.*

GURUCHARAN MUKHOPADHYAY—*University Gold Medal and Prize.*

ARABINDA RAY—*University Silver Medal and Prize.*

ADINATH LAHIRI—*University Prize.*

RABINDRA NATH MITRA—*Chandranarayan Gold Medal.*

B. A. & B. Sc.

- PRANKRISHNA CHATTOPADHYAY—*Vidyasagar Silver Medal.*
 SADANANDA CHAKRABARTI—*Abinashchandra Gold Medal.*
 NIRMAL KUMAR SHOME—*Tawney Memorial Prize.*
 GAGANBIHARI BANDYOPADHYAY—*McCann Silver Medal.*
 ATUL CHANDRA MUKHOPADHYAY—*Shamacharan Ganguli Prize and N. Ghosh Gold Medal.*
 NIRMAL CHANDRA SEN GUPTA—*Shamacharan Ganguli Prize and N. N. Ghosh Gold Medal.*
 PRATAP CHANDRA SEN—*Thakurdas Kevv Gold Medal, Adhar Chandra Mukerjee Commemoration Prize and Bipinbihari Memorial Prize.*
 DALIMKUMAR GUHA—*Gangaprasad Gold Medal, Shamacharan Ganguli Prize and Tripundeswar Mitra Gold Medal.*

I. A. & I. Sc.

- MANILAL BANDYOPADHYAY—*Sindhubala Silver Medal and Gwalior Gold Medal.*
 AMALES TRIPATHI—*Bankimchandra Silver Medal and Dwijendralal Ray Scholarship and Prize.*
 ARUNKUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY—*Gwalior Gold Medal.*
 NIKHILENDU RAY—*Rai Radhikaprasanna Mukerjee Bahadur, C.I.E., Prize.*
 PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER—*Gwalior Prize.*
 DWIPENDRA NATH SEN—*Gwalior Prize.*

UNIVERSITY AND GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

B. A. & B. Sc.

- DALIMKUMAR GUHA—*One Dwarkanath Tagore Scholarship of Rs. 50 a month.*
 PRASANTAKUMAR BISWAS—*One Ryan Scholarship of Rs. 40 a month.*
 ATULCHANDRA MUKHOPADHYAY—*One Hindu College Foundation Scholarship of Rs. 40 a month.*
 BHUPENDRAMOHAN MAJUMDAR—*One Hindu College Foundation Scholarship of Rs. 30 a month.*
 NIRMALKUMAR SHOME—*One Hindu College Foundation Scholarship of Rs. 25 a month.*
 NIRADBARAN MUKHOPADHYAY—*One Presidency College Graduate Scholarship of Rs. 25 a month.*
 ALAKCHANDRA GUPTA and SADHANCHANDRA GUPTA—*Two Presidency College Graduate Scholarship of Rs. 12 a month each.*
 SATINATH BHADURI, DEBAPRASAD GUHA, RANENDRANATH NIYOGI and NIRMALCHANDRA SEN GUPTA—*Four Post-Graduate Jubilee Scholarships of Rs. 32 a month each.*

I. A. & I. Sc.

- GURUBANDHU CHAUDHURI, AMIYA KUMAR BASU, ARUN KUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY and MAHABIRPRASAD KEDIA—*First-grade Senior Scholarships.*
 MANILAL BANDYOPADHYAY, SUDHANSUSEKHAR MITRA, RATHINDRANATH RAY and NIKHILENDU RAY—*Second-grade Senior Scholarships.*

ORIGINAL WORK BY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF

As in previous years, many of the members of the staff were engaged in literary and scientific work of an original character. Mr. M. M. Haq published two papers on old Persian manuscripts. Mr. Taber Rezwi contributed four papers on Persian poetry, theology and sociology. Dr. U. N. Ghosal contributed two chapters to the Cambridge History of India and published four papers on ancient Indian history and culture. Mr. S. C. Sarkar wrote a monograph in Bengali on Post-War Europe which would be shortly published in the Calcutta University Bengali series. Dr. J. C. Sinha wrote a book on Indian Currency Problems published by the University of Dacca. Dr. M. N. Sircar had to his credit a number of essays and discourses on philosophical subjects and Dr. N. K. Brahma published a book on Causality and Science.

On the Science side, Mr. N. M. Basu had the distinction of presiding over the Physiology section of the Indian Science Congress. During the year, he carried on researches on the action of drugs and continued his enquiry on diet and nutrition. Mr. S. M. Banerji published a paper on Human Pathology and Bacteriology. Dr. M. Qudrati Khuda published three papers on Organic Ring Compounds. Dr. J. C. Sen-Gupta wrote two papers on Plant Physiology which are in course of publication in a reputed German Journal. Mr. P. C. Mahalanobis wrote a series of papers (some singly and others jointly) on statistical subjects. Mr. B. M. Sen published a paper on the Nuclear Structure of Light Atoms.

SEMINARS AND SOCIETIES

The Economics Seminar, says Mr. Malay Kumar Talukdar, the outgoing Secretary, had a successful session last year: five meetings were held under the chairmanship of Dr. J. C. Sinha, and the following papers were read by 4th Year students: (1) *Reconstruction of Rural Credit* by Mr. Dhanurdhari Bose. (2) *Permanent Settlement in Bengal* by Mr. Rabindranath Nath. (3) *Sugar Industry in India* by Mr. Dhanurdhari Bose. (4) *Labour Unrest in India* by Mr. Nirimal Kumar Roy. (5) *Federal Finance in India* by Mr. Manishimohan Sen.

The Politics Seminar, says Mr. Atul Chandra Patra, the outgoing Secretary, held its last meeting under the chairmanship of Prof. D. G. Chattoraj when Mr. Manishimohan Sen of 4th Year read a paper on *The Theory of Democracy and its Downfall*.

The History Seminar, according to the Secretary, Mr. Jyotindranath Sen, held two meetings. In the first Mr. Nripen Sen of Third Year read a paper on "The Grievances of the Allies against Athens in the Confederacy of Delos," and in the second Mr. Sunil Sen of Third Year read a paper, "Pre-Maurya-Kingship was not a Despotism." The History students gave a special farewell to Prof. D. N. Sen.

The Philosophy Seminar, says Mr. M. A. Raquib, the Secretary, held its last meeting with Dr. P. D. Shastri in the chair, when Mr. Raquib read a paper on "The Sources of Religious Insight—Faith *vs.* Reason." The meeting was attended by the philosophy students of both Presidency and Sanskrit College.

The Hindi Literary Society held its anniversary meeting on the 3rd December, with Mr. P. D. Shastri in the chair. The chief guest was Sir Badridas Goenka. The Society, the Secretary, Mr. Jagannath Prasad

Ruia, tells us, contributed Rs. 51/- to the Rajputana Famine Relief Fund.

Students of Botany undertook the following excursions: (1) Chilka Lake, Berhampore and Vizagapatam—with Dr. J. C. Sengupta, (2) Port Canning with Dr. J. C. Sen Gupta, (3) Diamond Harbour with Dr. J. C. Sen Gupta and Prof. K. G. Banerji, (4) Shillong and Khasia Hills with Prof. S. C. Banerji.

COLLEGE UNION NOTES

FOUNDERS' DAY

Our annual Founders' Day was celebrated this year with due solemnity on Saturday, the 28th January. About 300 guests—mostly distinguished ex-students, ex-members of the staff, prominent educationists of the city, guardians of present students and past executives of the College Union—responded to our invitation. They were all cordially received by Principal B. M. Sen and Mrs. Sen, aided by the present members of the staff and the members of the College Union. 'Tea' was served to the guests on the College lawns and to the students in the Physics Laboratory rooms, and there were arrangements for refreshments for orthodox guests and students as well.

The Tea party over, a meeting was held in the Physics Theatre at 6 P.M. On the proposal of Principal Sen, seconded by Mr. Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, Secretary of the College Magazine, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Chief Minister and Minister of Education, Government of Bengal, took the Chair.

In presenting the annual Report of the College, Principal Sen paid a glorious tribute to the memory of our Founders—Maharaja Tej Chandra Bahadur of Burdwan, Gopee Mohan Tagore, Jay Kissen Singh, Raja Gopee Mohan Deb and Ganga Narain Dass. He gave a general review of the various activities of the institution and of the achievements of our fellow-students during the last year in spheres both academic and extra-academic. He referred to the many needs of the College and made a feeling reference to two of our crying needs, *viz.* the erection of an Assembly Hall and the provision for a number of full-free studentships for our poor meritorious scholars.

Mr. Justice C. C. Biswas, an Old Boy of the College, replying to the Principal's welcome, on behalf of the guests, said that it was about 30 years now since he had left the College, but there had hardly been a day when he did not realise, consciously or unconsciously, the fact that he had spent the best years of his life here, and the influence which those few years had exercised on his career. He was quite sure that that feeling was shared by everyone present on the occasion. Wherever they might be and in whatever position they might be placed, they could not forget that they belonged to Presidency College. He sometimes wondered as to what Bengal would have been to-day if there were no Presidency College. The College was to be judged by the character of the men it had turned out, men who had been leaders of their community, ornaments of society and giants in the various walks of public life. It was a great tradition which the students of Presidency College had inherited, and Mr. Justice Biswas believed, that every one of the students, past and present, felt that it was up to him to make himself worthy of that tradition. He

referred to the memory of his illustrious professors who valued personal contact with pupils more than anything else. The professors and pupils in his time, remarked Mr. Justice Biswas, were happy people, and he trusted that the happiness had struck firmer roots through the passing years.

Mr. Purnendu Kumar Banerjee, an ex-Secretary of the College Union, in a remarkable speech, observed that some of the grievances that the grand-fathers of the present generation of students had in their days, remained unredressed even now—that the want of an Assembly Hall was the hoariest of these grievances, and he hoped that the premier College of Bengal, which is the Premier's College as well, should no longer go without one of the most indispensable academic equipments.

In his presidential address, the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq said it was after the lapse of 43 years that he was there under the shadow of those walls within which he spent six years of his student career. Within this period of nearly half a century India had witnessed momentous changes, changes almost unparalleled in the history of any country, in any age or clime. One of those great changes had been a very great advance, he might say, by very rapid stages, in the domain of education. As a Bengali he was proud to be able to assert, without any fear of contradiction, that in this march of progress Bengal had been in the vanguard of all the other provinces and had won for India a place among the nations of the world. What Bengal had done for other provinces in this respect, Presidency College had done for the other educational institutions in Bengal. From the very beginning it had set up a high standard not merely in teaching but also in bringing about a close relationship between students and teachers and building up that part of college life which was the essence of modern systems of teaching and which had worked such wonders in Western countries and was giving striking results in all educational institutions where that experiment had been tried.

He recalled that some of the most brilliant men who had had distinguished careers in various walks of life were his college colleagues. Some of them had left the world, leaving only their memories behind, but there were others who were still in the land of the living. These were men whom this province might be well proud of. They were Sir N. N. Sircar, Law Member to the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir B. L. Mitter, Advocate-General of India, and Dr. Dwarkanath Mitter and Sir Manmathanath Mukerjee, ex-Judges of the Calcutta High Court. Among those whom the country had lost he might mention the names of Sir Bhupendranath Mitter, Sir Charu Chandra Ghose and Sir Provas Chandra Mitter. In those days the students revered their professors who were sympathetic to the students to the very core of their being and tried to put their pupils to the right path in the matter of educational advancement. In this connexion Mr. Huq mentioned among others the names of Professor Tawney, Sir Alexander Pedler, Sir J. C. Bose and Sir P. C. Ray.

As for the pressing needs of the College, the Premier observed, the question was really one of funds and since the present Government were committed to do all they could for the advancement of education, they could not shut their eyes to the genuinely urgent demands of the premier College of Bengal. He stated that this year he had been able to provide

a sufficient amount of money for the award of scholarships for poor and needy students in schools and colleges, and he was sure that Presidency College would come in for a fair share of those scholarships. But that did not solve the problem, and if the Government wanted to maintain the high standard of efficiency of Presidency College and the reputation it had justly acquired among the educational institutions of the province, they must be prepared to spend sufficient money not merely to provide for her current needs but also for all projects that would enable the College to make substantial progress, and not be content with merely carrying on the work of teaching under conditions unimproved and unsympathetic to the real needs of the time. It might be a very heavy sum, but the money must be found. He admitted the justice of the claims of Presidency College, and although he had not been able to give any tangible proof of his love for the College, he could say that there would be no lack of efforts on his part to help this institution.

He assured the meeting that it might be possible—he was not making a promise—to remove the legitimate want of the College regarding an assembly hall. He would discuss the whole question with the Principal (the zealous guardian of the rights of the College, as the Premier styled him) and hoped that by the time the next Founders' Day was celebrated, some of the grievances of the College would be things of the past. He also hoped that in the near future, through the united efforts of ex-students, present students and professors, he would be able to build up the College which would be a glory not merely to Bengal but to India as a whole. The present generation of students should remember that they were the standard-bearers of those who had preceded them and that they were really the repositories of traditions of a high order. The country expected that they would be able to uphold the best traditions of the College and prove themselves worthy citizens, devoted to the cause of Presidency College and to the cause of the advancement and prosperity of our common motherland.

Mr. Pratap Chandra Chunder, Secretary, College Union, speaking on behalf of the College, thanked the Premier and the guests for the honour they had done us by responding to our invitation. He assured Mr. Justice Biswas that the present students of the College are happy people too, happy with their Principal, professors and fellow-students. He expressed his gratefulness to the Premier for his sympathetic assurances regarding our needs and hoped that the Premier would find it possible to make financial provision for our Assembly Hall at the time of the preparation of the next budget.

Every inch of available accommodation in the Physics Theatre was more than used up at the meeting, and we felt how distressing it was not to have even standing room when Bengal's Premier came to address Bengal's premier College.

FAREWELL TO PROFESSOR D. N. SEN

A farewell meeting was held in the Physics Theatre on the 8th February, 1939, to bid good-bye to Professor Debendranath Sen, Head of the Department of History, who retired from service in November last. Principal B. M. Sen presided.

The Principal spoke in terms of high appreciation of Professor Sen's sterling integrity and simplicity of character, his catholicity of views, sincerity of purpose and devotion to duty, and observed that his retirement was an irreparable loss to the teaching staff of the College. Professor Mahendranath Sircar, Mr. Purnendu Kumar Banerjee and Mr. Nikhil Chandra Maitra paid their tributes of respect and admiration by dwelling on Professor Sen's many qualities of head and heart, his sound scholarship and his fatherly interest in the welfare of his students. After this, Mr. Pratap Chandra Chunder read the address presented to Professor Sen by his beloved pupils. Some mementoes, tokens of love and respect, were also handed over to Professor Sen.

The Principal then unveiled a portrait of our revered professor. It is a fine portrait, glittering on the metal surface inside a convex glass and bound in a chromium frame. The portrait, which is now put up in the Arts Library, was presented to the College by Professor Sen's colleagues in the History Department and his pupils.

Professor Sen, who used to radiate love and good-will among us, said in his characteristically sincere reply, that he had found love and friendliness at the College, and that so long as these lasted, the steady progress of the College as a centre of culture was insured against all risks of temporary lack of balance. The students, he knew, are by nature obedient: they always love and obey the teacher who knows how to compel love and respect.

The farewell meeting was very well attended. Practically the entire body of Arts students and almost every member of the professoriate in Arts and Science had come to associate themselves with the function.

STEAMER EXCURSION

The annual Steamer Party came off on the 11th March last. The Port Commissioners' B. S. *Buckland* left Chandpal Ghat at 12 noon and returned at half past six in the evening. The excursion was really delightful. Light refreshments on board the steamer were more than light this year, for the substantial menu included dishes of *puri*, meat, chutney and other dainties, with which our professors and fellow-students liberally refreshed themselves. The hours were spent in great enthusiasm. Songs were sung and pieces from master poets recited by students. On principle, no professional musicians were invited this time. A young magician, Master Debkumar Ghoshal, entertained the party with his excellent performances. Magic could hardly be more magical than what it was in the feats of this boyish exponent of 16.

The trip was a great success, for which we owe thanks to Messrs. Bibhuti Mukerjee, Bhupen Datta and Joges Bose, all past executives of the College Union, but for whose tireless co-operation in management the outing would not have been the great joy it was.

PRATAP CHANDRA CHUNDER,
General Secretary, College Union.

[We regret that lack of space has forced us to withhold the usual features of GUIDE TO PERIODICALS, LAST YEAR'S BOOKS, and LIBRARY BULLETIN, and desire to express our thanks to those members of the staff and our fellow-students who compiled these features for us.—ED.]

Index—1914-1939

[Our best thanks are due to Mr. Debdas Sen of the Fifth Year English Class for preparing this Index. This index, however, is not exhaustive. First, the Editorials and the various Notes and News, which are invariable features of the Magazine, have been omitted. Secondly, we have been compelled to leave out certain articles, for, curiously enough, quite a number of pages has been found missing in some of the earlier volumes: pages which have obviously been clipped out (with an easy conscience!) by some person or persons who found them useful but who lacked the patience to summarise them—Ed.]

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ছন্দ

গগনব গগনে ধাঁড় হাঁকি
বিদুরোখী মধুরাহিনী
বিশ্বাসী

অক্ষয়কোষে গগন ছন্দ কাগান
বনপ্রসবিতা মাঝাত।

স্বপ্নমাধুর লেখায় মাঝাম
ধাঁড় গানী

অলম্মপাথক ছন্দ উত্তর

ধৃত্তে বসায় মাঝাত।

অসুখতল স্বপ্নন কবে ছন্দ,
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কল্প মাঝা কল্প মাঝাত।

ছন্দ নাহিল হামবসিত্তে গগনে,
মুখিত্তে গগন লক্ষ্মীসিং প্রসবিত্তে,
ছন্দ ছন্দিল প্রমথ পাথক

কল্প গগন মাঝাত ॥

১৩ অক্টোবর
১৯৪৫

বিদুরোখী

আলোচনা

পঁচিশ বছরে সাহিত্য

(১)

শ্রীপ্রমথ চৌধুরী

আপনি গত পঁচিশ বৎসরের বঙ্গ-সাহিত্য সম্বন্ধে আমাকে ছুঁ-চার কথা বলতে অনুরোধ করেছেন। এ বিষয়ে কিছু বলতে আমি ইতস্ততঃ করি। কেননা, আমার সাহিত্যিক জীবনের জন্মতিথি এই পঁচিশ বৎসরের মধ্যেই পড়ে। আর নিজের লেখা সম্বন্ধে বক্তৃতা করা শোভন হয় না। তারপর রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্য কেবলমাত্র এই কালের চৌহদ্দির অন্তর্ভূত নয়। রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্য চিরনবীন, কিন্তু তাঁর নবীন সাহিত্যও তার পূর্বসাহিত্যের সঙ্গে সম্পূর্ণ বিচ্ছিন্ন নয়। এইটুকু মাত্র বলা চলে যে, তাঁর নবীনতা আজও ক্ষুণ্ণ হয় নি। লোকে বলে যে প্রতিভার অর্থ—নব নব উন্মেষশালিনী বুদ্ধি; রবীন্দ্রনাথের এ বুদ্ধি যে আজও বক্ষা হয়নি, তা বলাই বাহুল্য।

আপনি জানতে চান যে, বঙ্গ-সাহিত্যের নব ধারা কি। আমি আধুনিক সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে সম্যক পরিচিত নই, সুতরাং আমার পক্ষে তা বলা কঠিন। তবে মনে হয় যে, নব-সাহিত্যের কোন স্পষ্ট নব-ধারা নেই; যদি থাকত তাহলে তা' আর দেখিয়ে দিতে হত না, সকলেরই তা চোখে পড়ত।

নব-বঙ্গসাহিত্য বিলেতি সাহিত্যেরই অনুগামী। আর বিলেতি সাহিত্যের ত্রিধারা আছে,—যাদের নাম classical, romantic ও realistic। এ তিনটি কথার আর ব্যাখ্যা করব না। আমরা তাই আমাদের সাহিত্যের ত্রিধারা আবিষ্কার করতে ব্যস্ত। বাংলার classical সাহিত্য নেই। বা-কিছু পুরোনো তারই নাম classical নয়। তবে যে নব ধারার কথা উঠেছে, তা realisticও নয়। বাকী থাকল এক romantic ধারা। আমাদের সাহিত্যের ধারা আজও romantic সাহিত্যের গণ্ডি পেরোয় নি। একটি উদাহরণ দিই। ৮শরৎস্রের সাহিত্যের স্বার্থ নাম কি?—৮শরৎস্রের মৃত্যুর পর নানা লোকে তাঁর সমস্ত উপল্যাসকে realistic বলে অভিহিত করেছিলেন। আমার বন্ধু শ্রীযুক্ত অতুলচন্দ্র গুপ্ত একটি ইংরাজী প্রবন্ধে বলেন যে, ৮শরৎ-সাহিত্য ষোল-আনা romantic, মোটেই realistic নয়। রোমান্টিক সাহিত্যকে realistic বলে ভুল করবার অভ্যাস ইংরেজদেরও আছে। ইংলেণ্ডে কিছুদিন পূর্বে Arnold Bennet নামে একটি Best-seller গ্রন্থলেখক ছিলেন, যিনি নব realistic সাহিত্যের অগ্রগণ্য লেখক বলে পরিচিত হন। J. B. Priestley নামক প্রসিদ্ধ

নভেলিষ্ট আবিষ্কার করেছেন যে, Bennet romantic লেখক ব্যতীত আর কিছুই নন। রোমান্টিক সাহিত্য বহুরূপী এবং কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে বর্ণচোরা ও realismএর বেনামীতে চলে যায়।

সম্প্রতি গানের কথা ও সুর দ্বন্দ্ব-সমাস কি না, এ নিয়ে মহা দ্বন্দ্ব উপস্থিত হয়েছিল—ফলে বহু সাহিত্যিক ওস্তাদ হয়ে উঠেছিলেন এবং কোন কোন ওস্তাদও সাহিত্যিক হয়ে উঠেছিলেন। এ বিষয়ে কি চূড়ান্ত মীমাংসা হয়েছে তা জানি নে। বোধহয় যা হয়েছে তার নাম 'draw'; কিন্তু সাহিত্যের ভাব ও ভাষার সন্ধি-বিচ্ছেদ করা অসম্ভব। ভাষা ভাবের দেহই হোক আর বাহনই হোক, এ উভয়কে পৃথক করা চলে না। এ কথা বোধহয় সকলেই স্বীকার করেন এবং এ কথার বিরুদ্ধে আশা করি কেউ উচ্চবাচ্য করবেন না; এমন কি নীরব কবিরাও সরব হয়ে উঠবেন না।

গত ত্রিশ বৎসরের ভিতর বাঙলা গল্প যে সাবালক হয়ে উঠেছে, সে বিষয়ে সন্দেহ নেই। বাঙলা গল্পের কান্দি পুষ্ট হয়েছে এবং শক্তিও বেড়ে গিয়েছে। এর কারণ কি, সে বিষয়ে বক্তৃতা করব না। শুধু এর প্রমাণস্বরূপ ছ' চারজন গল্প রচনার উল্লেখ করব। গল্প এখন নানা বিষয়ে হাত বাড়িয়েছে ও তাদের দখল করেছে।

প্রথমতঃ সবুজ পত্রের লেখকদের মধ্যে শ্রীযুক্ত অতুলচন্দ্র গুপ্ত সর্বাগ্রগণ্য, অবশ্য রবীন্দ্রনাথকে বাদ দিয়ে। আমার এ কথা যে সত্য, তা' তাঁর "কাব্য জিজ্ঞাসা" পড়লে সকলেই দেখতে পাবেন। গুপ্ত মহাশয় করেছেন কাব্যের দার্শনিক বিচার—অবহেলাক্রমে নয়, অবলীলাক্রমে।

১সতীশচন্দ্র ঘটকের "গাছ" অতি চমৎকার লেখা। এ লেখার বিষয় হচ্ছে botany এবং botany science ব'লেই গণ্য। বিজ্ঞানও যে কত সহজ ও সরল ভাষায় লেখা যায়, "গাছ" তার একটি উৎকৃষ্ট নমুনা। "পরিচয়"-পত্রের চারুচন্দ্র দত্তের "পুরানো কথা"র গল্প—মনোমুগ্ধকর। এ গল্প শুধু চলে না—থেলে বেড়ায়। তারপর উক্ত পত্রের নবীন লেখক আবুসয়ীদ আয়ুবের দার্শনিক প্রবন্ধের প্রসাদগুণ—অসামান্য। দর্শন যে সাহিত্যের রূপ ধারণ করতে পারে, এই লেখাই তার প্রমাণ; এবং প্রবোধচন্দ্র বাগচির "মধ্যাশিয়া ও ভারতবর্ষ" পুরাতত্ত্বের একখানি আদর্শ ছোট গ্রন্থ। বহু facts আয়ত্ত করা ও সাজিয়ে গুছিয়ে বলা, রচনার একটি বিশেষ গুণ। এ গুণের পরিচয় তাঁর লেখায় আর্গাগোড়া পাবেন। শ্রীযুক্ত বুদ্ধদেব বসুর বাংলা গল্পে শক্তির পরিচয় স্পষ্ট।

অক্ষয় লেখকরা পণ্ডে ছাকামি করতে পারেন, কিন্তু গল্পে ছাকামি অচল। যে ছ' চারটি লেখকের নাম উল্লেখ করলুম—তাঁদের লেখা থেকেই গল্প রচনার শ্রীবুদ্ধির

পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। আর একটি কথা, বহু মুসলমান লেখকও খাসা গল্প লিখছেন; ত্রিশ বৎসর পূর্বে এ সম্প্রদায়ের লোক এ হেন বাঙলা লিখতে পারতেন না। এর থেকে আশা করা যায় যে, একালের যা' ধর্ম অর্থাৎ পলিটিক্স—তাও শীঘ্রই বিদেশী ভাষায় আঁচল ছাড়বে ও মাতৃভাষারই আশ্রয় নেবে। ভবিষ্যতে বঙ্গসাহিত্যে কত ফুল ফুটবে, তা বলা অসম্ভব; কিন্তু ফল ফলবে প্রচুর।

(২)

অধ্যাপক রায় শ্রীখগেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র বাহাছর

প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজের সঙ্গে আমার সম্বন্ধ ৪২ বছর আগের। তখন আমি ছাত্র। তরুণের কোতূহল ও আনন্দ নিয়ে প্রবেশ করেছিলাম কলেজে। তখন অধ্যাপক ছিলেন বেশীর ভাগ খেতাজ। কিন্তু খ্যাতির ভাগ ছিল বাঙ্গালীরই বেশী—জগদীশচন্দ্র, প্রফুল্লচন্দ্রের প্রতিভায় শুধু বাংলা নয়, সমস্ত ভারত তখন মুগ্ধ। আর একজন ভারতবাসী সেদিন খুব নাম করেছিলেন খেলায়—তিনি বাঙ্গালীও নন, প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজেরও নন। কিন্তু তাঁর নাম করলে সে কালে আমরা ছাত্রের দল খুব গৌরব বোধ করতাম—তিনি হচ্ছেন বিখ্যাত ক্রিকেটার রণ্জি। কলেজের বাইরে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে নিয়েও আমরা মেতে উঠতাম। নতুন রাস্তা হারিসন রোডের মোড়ে, গোলদীঘিতে রবিবাবুর কবিতার তুবড়ি ছুটতো তরুণদের প্রফুল্ল মুখে। কিন্তু এখন যেমন রবীন্দ্রনাথের সম্বন্ধে বড় একটা মতদ্বৈধ শুনতে পাওয়া যায় না, তখন এমনটি ছিল না। সেদিনে বেশ একটি প্রতিকূল হাওয়াও বহিত। অনেকে কোমর বেঁধে লেগে যেতেন প্রশংসা করতে যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতা অস্পষ্ট ধোঁয়াটে, অর্থাৎ তেমন কিছুই নয়। এই দলের মধ্যে সুরেশ সমাজপতির নাম বেশী করে মনে পড়েছে। সুরেশ বাবুর সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যে পাণ্ডিত্য ছিল, আর তাঁর মেরুদণ্ড ছিল সোজা। সব রকম ন্যাকামির উপর তিনি ছিলেন খড়্গহস্ত। সে সময়কার সাহিত্যের উপচীর্ণমান ধারাটিকে ঠিকপথে চালিত করবার জন্ত তাঁর আগ্রহের অবশি ছিল না। সাহিত্যে তিনি যে সমালোচনা পদ্ধতির পত্তন করেছিলেন, তাতে অনেক নিরঙ্কুশ কবিকে কবিতার ইন্ধুক্ষেত্র ত্যাগ করে পলায়ন করতে হতো। তাঁর সে 'সহযোগী সাহিত্য' বছরদিন নীরব হয়েছে। তার অহুকরণ কেহ কেহ করলেও, সে সব প্রতিভাহীন প্রচেষ্টা শিষ্ট সমাজে সমাদর লাভ করতে পারে নি।

'সাহিত্য' কাগজখানি ছিল ছোট, কিন্তু বিষয় গৌরবে তার মূল্য ছিল অনেকখানি। এখন শ্রেষ্ঠ মাসিক পত্রিকাগুলি ছবির চটক দিয়ে, পঞ্চরঙের বাহার দিয়ে পসার করছেন, কিন্তু সাহিত্যের এ সব বালাই ছিল না। রবিবাবুর লেখার জন্ত উচ্ছ্বাসে নীলাম-ডাকাও ছিল না। কিন্তু অনেক শ্রেষ্ঠ লেখক লিখতেন এই কাগজখানিতে। উমেশ বটব্যাল, হীরেন্দ্র দত্ত, রামেন্দ্রসুন্দর, ব্যোমকেশ মুস্তফী, নবীন সেন, অক্ষয় বড়াল, বীরবল, হেমেন্দ্রপ্রসাদ, অক্ষয়কুমার মৈত্রেয় প্রভৃতি লেখকগণের লেখায় এই মাসিকপত্রখানি অলঙ্কৃত হ'তো। সুরেশ সমাজপতির ও

‘সাহিত্যের’ নাম প্রথমেই করলাম এইজন্য যে বর্তমান সাহিত্য-সৃষ্টির প্রসঙ্গে তাঁর স্থান উপেক্ষণীয় নয়। ‘সাহিত্য’ এই পঁচিশ বছরের ইতিহাসের প্রথম ধাপটি গঠন করতে সাহায্য করেছিল একথা স্বীকার করতেই হবে।

‘ভারতবর্ষ’ প্রথম প্রকাশিত হয় ১৩২০ সালে। দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল রায় এই কাগজখানির পরিচালনা করেন। কিন্তু তিনি এর প্রকাশ দেখে যেতে পারেন নি। প্রকাশকের ব্যবসাবুদ্ধি এবং সম্পাদক জলধর সেনের অমায়িকতা পত্রিকাখানিকে সৌষ্টব মণ্ডিত করেছে। ‘প্রবাসীর’ পত্তন এলাহাবাদে। সেইজন্য এর নাম ‘প্রবাসী’। কিন্তু রায়ানন্দবাবু বাংলায় এসেও নামটি ঠিক রাখলেন। আমরা যে নিজের ঘরে পরবাসী এই তত্ত্বটি বেশ মিলে গেল। আর রায়ানন্দবাবুর পরিচালনা শুধু প্রবাসীর এমারৎ সূচক হলো। অক্সফোর্ড ইণ্ডিয়ান ইনস্টিটিউটের পাঠগৃহে এই একখানি মাত্র বাংলা কাগজ রক্ষিত দেখলাম। এ কম গৌরবের কথা নয়। সাময়িক পত্রের উন্নতি ও প্রসারের জন্য বর্তমান যুগ স্মরণীয় হ’তে পারে, এ বিষয়ে সন্দেহ নেই। সাপ্তাহিক ও দৈনিক (বাংলা) পত্রের উন্নতিও কম লক্ষণীয় নয়। এই সকল উন্নতির জন্য সাহিত্য গত পঁচিশ বছরে এমনই একটা গতি লাভ করেছে যা পঁচিশ বছর পূর্বে আমরা ভাবতেও পারি নি। এই সকল পত্রের দ্বারা যত লোকের মানসিক ক্ষুধা মিটাতে হচ্ছে, বাঙ্গালীর মধ্যে সাহিত্যেরও তত চাহিদা বেড়ে চলেছে। এই চাহিদা বাড়বার একটি বিশেষ কারণ হচ্ছে যে, পৃথিবীর উপর দিয়ে নানা দিকে নানা ঢেউ বয়ে যাচ্ছে। এমনই একটি অস্থিরতা চঞ্চলতা বা আবেগ মানুষের জীবনে এসে গেছে, যে নিত্য নতুন সৃষ্টির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নিত্য নতুন জানার প্রয়োজন হ’য়ে পড়ছে। ইউরোপের মহাযুদ্ধের পরে মানব সভ্যতার ভারকেন্দ্র অনেকটা সরে’ সরে’ যাচ্ছে। অর্থনীতি, রাষ্ট্রনীতি এমন কি চরিত্রনীতি পর্যন্ত নতুন আকার ধারণ করছে। মানুষের মামুলি সমস্যাগুলির দ্রুত পরিবর্তন হচ্ছে। সাহিত্য-বিজ্ঞান এরই সঙ্গে ছন্দ রক্ষা করে’ চলেছে। কাজেই গল্প, কবিতা, নাটক একথয়ে হ’য়ে যেতে পারছে না। নতুন সৃষ্টির অবকাশ পাওয়া যাচ্ছে প্রচুর, আর তার জন্য নতুন নতুন লেখক, নতুন নতুন কবির আবির্ভাব হচ্ছে। যারা পুরাতনের হাল শক্ত করে’ ধরে’ বসে’ আছেন, শ্রোতের শেওলার মত তাঁদের কোথায় ভাসিয়ে নিয়ে চলেছে! তাঁরা আর থই পাচ্ছেন না কোনও দিকে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপস্থাসগুলিতে এই শ্রোতের টানের বিরুদ্ধে বেশ একটু দাঁড়াবার চেষ্টা দেখা যায়। কিন্তু ‘নৌকাডুবি’ ঠেকায় নি। তাই যখন শরৎচন্দ্র নামলেন, তখন সব লোকের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী বেন হঠাৎ বদলে গেল। আমাদের ছাত্রাবস্থায় বঙ্কিম বাবুর যে সম্মান ছিল, রবিবাবু পরে যে সম্মান অধিকার করবার জন্য মনোনীত হয়েছিলেন, একদিন

উপন্যাস সাহিত্যে সে সম্মান শরৎচন্দ্র অবলীলাক্রমে লাভ করলেন। বিরাজ বউ, পল্লী-সমাজ, গৃহদাহ, শ্রীকান্ত, মেজদিদি, শেষ প্রশ্ন, পথের দাবী প্রভৃতিতে বাঙ্গালীর প্রাণ যেমন সাড়া দিল, তেমন সাড়া বোধ হয় আর কখনও দেয় নি। শরৎচন্দ্র ছাড়া আরও অনেক ঔপন্যাসিকের আবির্ভাব হয়েছে এই যুগে, যারা চিন্তাধারার মধ্যে কোনও না কোনও বৈচিত্র্য আনতে চেষ্টা করেছেন। এঁদের মধ্যে বিভূতিভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের পথের পাঁচালী নাম করেছে। শৈলজানন্দ মুখোপাধ্যায়, প্রবোধচন্দ্র সাত্তাল প্রভৃতির লেখন্যও বেশ একটা তাজা, সহজ, সবল ভাবের স্বাক্ষর পাওয়া যায়। এই স্বচ্ছন্দ অভিনব ভাবের অভাবে জলধর সেনের গল্প পিছিয়ে পড়েছে। নরেশ সেনগুপ্তও তেমন এগুতে পারছেন না বলেই আমার মনে হয়। প্রভাতবাবুর এমন তরতরে ঝরঝরে লেখা—এও যেন পিছনের তাকে যাবার যোগাড় করেছে। বুদ্ধদেব বসু, অচিন্ত্য সেনগুপ্ত, প্রেমেন্দ্র মিত্র প্রভৃতি বর্ণনার মধ্যে সবলতা ও সরসতা আনবার চেষ্টা করে' আদৃত হয়েছেন। চারু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় চন্দ্রের উৎপাত থেকে আত্মরক্ষা করে' ছোট গল্প এবং উপন্যাস রচনায় সূক্ষ্ম মস্তিষ্কের পরিচয় দিয়েছেন। রবিরশ্মিতেও চন্দ্র উদ্ভাসিত হলো না, এটা আশ্চর্য! সকলের নাম করতে পারলে হয়ত ভাল হতো, কিন্তু তার মুষ্কিল এই যে যদি কোনোটি বাদ পড়ে যায়, তা হ'লে বিপদ। বাস্তবিক আমাদের এই যুগে মানিক বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, সৌরীন মুখোপাধ্যায়, সরোজকুমার ঘোষ প্রভৃতি অনেক গল্প ও উপন্যাস লেখক আবির্ভূত হয়েছেন যারা পুরাতন ধারার মধ্যে নূতনত্ব সঞ্চার করে' বাঙ্গালী পাঠকের চিত্ত মাসের পর মাস সত্যিকার সাহিত্য রসে অভিভুক্ত করতে সমর্থ হয়েছেন।

পুরাতনকে যঁারা এখনও ঘরে বেঁধে রাখতে চাইছেন, তাঁদের মধ্যে অনুরূপা দেবী বোধ হয় সর্বপ্রধান। এখনও এমন লোক অনেক আছেন যঁারা আমাদের সনাতন আদর্শকে উপেক্ষা করতে ব্যথা অনুভব করেন। শ্রীমতী অনুরূপা তাঁদের কাছে খুব প্রিয়। কিন্তু প্রতিমাকে বিসর্জন না দিয়ে যদি ঘরে তুলে রেখে দেওয়া যায়, তা হ'লে বেশী দিন তার সৌন্দর্য যেমন উপভোগ করা যায় না, আমাদের প্রাচীন আদর্শের সশঙ্কেও সে কথা বলা যেতে পারে। ঔপন্যাসিকদের মধ্যে আরও অনেক মহিলা আছেন। নিরুপমা দেবী, শৈলবালা ঘোষজায়া, প্রভাবতী দেবী সরস্বতী, ইন্দिरা দেবী, কাঞ্চনমালা দেবী, গিরিবালা দেবী, আশালতা দেবী, রাধারাণী দেবী, সীতা দেবী, শান্তা দেবী প্রভৃতি। মনীন্দ্রলাল বসু, অন্নদাশঙ্কর রায়, তারাশঙ্কর বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় প্রভৃতিও ভাল লেখক।

রবিবাবু গোরা ও ঘরে বাইরে লেখার পরে যে সকল উপন্যাস লিখেছেন, যথা যোগাযোগ, শেষের কবিতা, চারু অধ্যায় প্রভৃতি, সে সকল তাঁর লেখার গুণে যতটা আদর পেয়েছে, নূতনত্বের দিক দিয়ে ততটা পায় নি বোধ হয়। কিন্তু উপন্যাসে তাঁর অধিকার

থেকে একটু নেমে দাঁড়াতে হ'লেও কবিতায় তিনি অনেক দূর জয় করেই চলেছেন। তাঁর সেদিনকার জন্মতিথির কবিতা দেখে মনে হয় এখনও তাঁর ক্ষমতা অক্ষুণ্ণই আছে। তাঁর গীতিমাল্য, বলাকা, পলাতকা, পূর্ববী, মহুয়া প্রভৃতি তাঁর বিজয়বাণী ঘোষিত করছে দিগ্দিগন্তে এই পঁচিশ বছরেরই মধ্যে। এগুলি বঙ্গভাষার চিরদিনের সম্পদ হয়ে থাকবে, সে বিষয়ে কোনও সন্দেহ নেই। তাঁর নোবেল প্রাইজ পাওয়া বাংলা সাহিত্যকে কুটীর-শিল্প শ্রেণী থেকে একেবারে বিশ্বপণ্যে পরিণত করেছে। এর জন্তে সাহিত্যের দৃষ্টি কেবল যে অনেকটা প্রসারিত হয়েছে, এ কথাই আর ভুল নেই। অনেক কবি ও ঔপন্যাসিক ডার্বি খেলার টিকিটের মত নোবেল পুরস্কারের দিকে একটু আধটু নজর রেখে থাকেন এ কথা গোপনে বলা যেতে পারে।

কবিদের মধ্যে অনেকের নাম মনে আসছে, যারা রবিবাবুর মত দুর্লভ কবিত্ব-শক্তির অধিকারীর পার্শ্বেও সগর্বে দাঁড়াতে সমর্থ হয়েছেন। যারা এই যুগে অধিকারীর দোহার রূপে গীতি কবিতার অল্পকূল পবনে তরী ভাসিয়েছেন, তাঁদের মধ্যে সত্যেন্দ্র দত্ত, যতীন্দ্রমোহন, কালিদাস, করুণানিধান, অতুলপ্রসাদ, প্যারীমোহন সেনগুপ্ত, নরেন্দ্র দেব, কুমুদরঞ্জনের নাম সন্মানের সহিত উল্লেখযোগ্য। যারা একটু নূতনত্ব এনেছেন তাঁদের মধ্যে কাজি নজরুল, যতীন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত, সুরীন্দ্র দত্ত, জসিমউদ্দীন, দিলীপকুমার, বন্দেআলি মিশ্র প্রভৃতির কবিতা বেশ উপভোগ্য। এঁদের অনেকের কবিতায় একদিকে পল্লীর রূপ বেশ ফুটে উঠেছে, অপর দিকে বিদেশের ছাপও বেশ স্পষ্ট ধরা পড়ে। ঔপন্যাসিকেরাও বিদেশের শ্রেষ্ঠ লেখকদের অনুকরণে নতুন নতুন চিত্র ও পরিবেশ গড়ে তুলছেন। ইব্‌সেন, বার্গাডশ', টুর্গেনিভ', আনাতোল ফ্রান্স, টলষ্টয়, এচ. জি ওয়েলস্ প্রভৃতির আমেজ অনেকের লেখায় দেখা যায়। সুরেন্দ্রনাথ মৈত্র ব্রাউনিংকে বাঙ্গালী সাজে বের করেছেন। এ সকলই বাংলা সাহিত্যের সজীবতার লক্ষণ। ভবিষ্যতের ইতিহাস লেখক এই সূত্রগুলি অনুসরণ করে' বাংলা সাহিত্যের সমৃদ্ধির রূপ উদ্ধার করবেন।

ইতিমধ্যে রসসাহিত্যে একজন হঠাৎ এমন অভিনব সৃষ্টি করে' বসলেন যার সম্বন্ধে বলা যেতে পারে যে বায়রণের মত তিনি একদিন সকাল বেলা উঠে দেখলেন যে তাঁর খ্যাতি চারিদিকে ব্যাপ্ত হয়েছে। রাজশেখর বসু সাহিত্যসমাজে কোনও দিন আনাগোনা না করেও একদিন আসর জমিয়ে বসলেন তাঁর 'গড্ডলিকায়'। পরে তাঁর কজ্জলী, হনুমানের স্বপ্ন বেরিয়েছে—হাসির বেশ নতুন বিকাশ। কেদারনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের লেখায়ও এই হাস্যরসের প্রয়াস সুপরিষ্কৃত। কেশব গুপ্তও হাস্যরসের অবতারণায় কৃতকার্ণ হয়েছেন।

নাটকের নদীতে যে বেশ বাণ ডেকেছে, একথা বলা চলে না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কয়েকখানি নাটক এই যুগে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। অচলায়তন ও ডাকঘর এর কিছু পূর্বে সমাদর লাভ করেছিল। তারপরও ছ' তিনখানি ভাল নাটক বেরিয়েছে, যেমন নটীর পূজা, শেষরক্ষা, রক্তকরবী। ১৯১২ সালে গিরিশচন্দ্রের তিরোধান হয়। এর পরে ক্ষীরোদ-প্রসাদ বিজ্ঞাবিনোদ কয়েকখানি নাটক লেখেন। কিন্তু তাঁর আলিবাবা ও প্রতাপাদিত্যের গৌরব রক্ষা করবার মত একখানিও হলো না। ক্ষীরোদবাবুর সম্বন্ধে একটি গল্প মনে পড়ছে। তাঁর একখানি নাটক দেখবার জন্য তিনি একবার আমাকে অহরোধ করেছিলেন। আমার আর অবসরই হয় না। একদিন ট্রামে আসতে আসতে সেই গল্প করছিলাম এক বন্ধুর কাছে। বলছিলাম 'ক্ষীরোদবাবু তাঁর 'দুর্গাদাস' নাটকখানি দেখবার জন্যে আমায় বিশেষ করে' অহরোধ করেছেন'। আমার বন্ধুর পাশে একজন অপরিচিত জড়লোক বসে ছিলেন; তিনি চোখের কোণে প্লেয়ের হাসি টেনে বললেন, 'ক্ষীরোদবাবু আপনাকে তাঁর 'দুর্গাদাস' অভিনয় দেখবার জন্যে বলছেন, বটে?' তাঁর সুরে বেশ স্পষ্ট বুঝা গেল যে আমি নিছক মিছে কথা বলে' জাঁক করছি এই তাঁর বিশ্বাস। তিনি তীক্ষ্ণভাবে বললেন, 'মশায়, ক্ষীরোদবাবুর ত 'দুর্গাদাস' নয়। দুর্গাদাস ডি. এল্‌ রায়েবের লেখা।' আমার মনে পড়লো, তাই ত বটে। কিন্তু একই বিষয় নিয়ে দুজনে নাটক রচনা করতে কি পারেন না? যা হোক, সেই অপরিচিতের তীব্র প্লেয়ের পরে আর কথা জোয়ালো না। প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজের আগেই ট্রাম থেকে লাফিয়ে পড়লাম। তার পরে সে কথা ভুলেই গিয়াছিলাম। শীতের শেষে যখন গরম জামা তুলে ফেলা হয় তখন তার পকেট থেকে বেরুলো ক্ষীরোদবাবুর চিঠি! দেখলাম তিনি থিয়েটারের ম্যানেজারের বরাবর চিঠি দিয়েছেন My dear Durgadas Babu. নিজের দুর্বুদ্ধিতার জন্যে একটু দুঃখ হলো বটে; কিন্তু এই ভ্রান্তি-বিলাসে না হেসে থাকতে পারি নি। থিয়েটারের জন্যে নাটক লেখায় অপারেশন মুখোপাধ্যায়, মনমথ রায়, শচীন সেনগুপ্ত প্রভৃতি দুই একজনের বেশী কেউ নাম করতে পেরেছেন বলে বোধ হয় না। তার এক কারণ এই যে থিয়েটারের জীবনে ভাঁটা পড়ে গেছে। সিনেমা এসেছে এদেশে এই পঁচিশ বছরের ভিতর। বিদেশী নাটক বা অনাটক আমাদের দেশের পয়সা লুটে নিচ্ছে। কিন্তু আমাদের দেশে কতকগুলি শ্রেষ্ঠ লেখকের গছ লেখাকে নাটকে রূপান্তর করা হয়েছে যেখানে, সেখানেই অল্পবিস্তর দান্য বেঁধেছে। অল্প কেউ যে খুব প্রসিদ্ধিলাভ করেছেন নাটক নিয়ে তেমন মনে হয় না। রবীন্দ্রনাথ মৈত্র অতি অল্প বয়সেই চলে গেলেন, নগ্ন মানময়ী গার্লস্‌ স্কুলে যে প্রতিভার পরিচয় পেয়েছিলাম, তা পরিণত বয়সে হয়ত কত স্মরণ হতে পারতো। মানময়ী গার্লস্‌ স্কুল সিনেমায়ও প্রদর্শিত হয়েছে।

সিনেমাতে যে সাহিত্যের উপর অনেকটা প্রভাব বিস্তার করছে, একথা স্বীকার করতেই হবে। কিন্তু তার ফলে ডিটেক্টিভ্ উপন্যাস ব্যতীত আর যে কোনও স্থায়ী সাহিত্য গড়ে উঠেছে, তা বলা যায় না। উপেন্দ্রনাথ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় প্রমুখ দুই একজন ভাল লেখকও এদিকে মনোযোগ দিচ্ছেন। সিনেমার কল্যাণে খানকয়েক মাসিকপত্রও বেরুচ্ছে। বেতারবিস্তারও এদিকে বেশ একটি নতুন রাস্তা খুলে দিয়েছে বাঙ্গালী সাহিত্যিকের জন্ত। প্রসঙ্গক্রমে সঙ্গীতেরও উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে, কেননা আমাদের দেশে সাহিত্য ও সঙ্গীতের সঙ্গে অনেক স্থলে হরগৌরী মিলন হয়েছে। অর্থাৎ যা' সাহিত্য তা'-ই সঙ্গীত এবং যা' সঙ্গীত তা'-ই সাহিত্য। বৈষ্ণব কবিতা ও কীর্তন সম্বন্ধে একথা বেশ ভাল ভাবেই খাটে। গত পঁচিশ বছরের মধ্যে এই সঙ্গীত-সাহিত্যের কিছু উন্নতি হয়েছে। অনেকে কীর্তনের সমাদর করছেন এবং এই হিসাবে বৈষ্ণব সাহিত্যেরও চর্চা করছেন। বৈষ্ণব সাহিত্যের পঠন পাঠন অনুশীলন পূর্বাপেক্ষা কিছু বেশী হচ্ছে। দীনেশচন্দ্র সেন, সতীশচন্দ্র রায়, নগেন্দ্র গুপ্ত, সারদাচরণ মিত্র, প্রমথনাথ তর্কভূষণ, নীলরতন মুখোপাধ্যায়, রাধাগোবিন্দ নাথ, বিভাসপ্রকাশ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, হরেকৃষ্ণ মুখোপাধ্যায়, বসন্তরঞ্জন রায়, মণীন্দ্রমোহন বসু, স্কুমার সেন প্রভৃতির নাম এই প্রসঙ্গে উল্লেখযোগ্য। দীনেশবাবু বঙ্গভাষা ও সাহিত্যের যে অমূল্য ইতিহাস লিখেছিলেন, গত পঁচিশ বছরের মধ্যে সে-দিকটা আর বেশী দূর অগ্রসর হয়েছে বলে মনে হয় না। তিনি প্রাথমিক উপাদান সংগ্রহের কাজই করেছেন; তার পরে আরও যে সব মালমশলা সংগৃহীত হয়েছে সেগুলি কাজে লাগাবার সময় এসেছে বোধহয়। এদিকে বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষদ কিছু কাজ করছেন। প্রাচীনকালের সম্বন্ধে অনেক কথা পরিষদের মারফতে জানতে পারা যাচ্ছে। এগুলি ঐতিহাসিক সংকলনে বিশেষভাবে কাজে লাগবে। কিন্তু আগেকার পরিষদ-পত্রিকাগুলি দেখলে যে সব গুরুতর বিষয় সম্বন্ধে গবেষণার আলোচনার সঙ্গে পরিচিত হওয়া যায়, এখন আর সেরূপ হচ্ছে না।

আগে যেমন বাঙ্গালী পণ্ডিতেরা ইংরেজিতে তাঁদের রচনা প্রকাশ করতে না পারলে কিছুতেই স্বস্তি বোধ করতেন না, এ যুগে সে ভাবটি অনেকটা কেটে গেছে। অবশ্য তার জন্তে রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক পরিবর্তনই বেশীর ভাগে দায়ী। নিজের দেশ সম্বন্ধে, নিজের ভাষা সম্বন্ধে, সাহিত্য সম্বন্ধে যে সজাগ ঐচ্ছিক ভাব এখন দেখতে পাওয়া যায়, পঁচিশ বছর আগে এমনটি ছিল না। বাংলা ভাষা ঠিক অবজ্ঞাত না হলেও, ১৯০৫ সালের আগে বাংলা ভাষার সম্বন্ধে আমাদের ঠিক এমন মনোভাবটিও ছিল না। এই যে আত্মবোধ দেশে এসেছে, সাহিত্যের উপর এর প্রভাব বড় কম নয়। এই চেতনার ফল সাময়িক সাহিত্যেও বেশ সুপরিষ্কৃত। মাঝখানে একখানি কাগজ বেরিয়েছিল—সবুজপত্র।

অনেক উচ্চশিক্ষিত, ইংরেজি ভাবধারায় অনুরূপাণিত ব্যক্তি তাতে লিখতেন। প্রমথ চৌধুরী, অতুল গুপ্ত প্রভৃতির লেখায় সবুজপত্রের পৃষ্ঠা অলঙ্কৃত হতো। সমালোচনা সাহিত্যে উভয়ের অবদানই বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। সমালোচনা ব্যতীত প্রমথ চৌধুরীর আর একটি স্মরণীয় কৃতিত্ব হচ্ছে ভাষার গঠন সম্বন্ধে তাঁর চেষ্টা। তিনি চলতি ভাষার পক্ষপাতী হিসাবে যা করেছেন, তা অনেকের মনঃপূত না হতে পারে, তবে অনেক লেখকের পক্ষে তিনি যে সাহিত্যমন্দিরের একটি নতুন দরজা খুলে দিলেন, এ বিষয়ে কোনও সন্দেহ নেই। এই চলতি ভাষার আর একজন পক্ষপাতী বিনয়কুমার সরকার। এখন ইনি একজন সব্যসাচী বলে গণ্য। ইংরেজি বাংলা দুই ভাষাতেই তাঁর লেখা অফুরন্ত। এই তিনজন লেখকই চিন্তাশীলতার জন্ত খ্যাতিলাভ করেছেন। সমালোচনা ও ইতিহাস, অভিধান ও জীবনচরিতও অনেক দূর এগিয়েছে। এই সব বিভাগে মহামহোপাধ্যায় হরপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী, প্রাচ্যবিজ্ঞানমহর্গব নগেন্দ্রনাথ বসু, অক্ষয়কুমার মৈত্রেয়, রমাপ্রসাদ চন্দ, রাখালদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, শশীভূষণ বিজালঙ্কার, হরিচরণ শাস্ত্রী, মলিনীকান্ত ভট্টশালী, সুনীতিকুমার চট্টোপাধ্যায়, জ্ঞানেন্দ্রমোহন দাস, যোগেশচন্দ্র বিজ্ঞানিধি প্রভৃতির নাম মনে পড়েছে।

শিশুসাহিত্যে দক্ষিণারঞ্জন মিত্র মজুমদার, যোগীন্দ্রনাথ সরকার, যোগেন্দ্রনাথ গুপ্ত, সুনীর্মল বসু, বরদা মজুমদার, বঙ্কিম দাসগুপ্ত, আশাপূর্ণ দেবীর নাম করতে হয়।

উপসংহারে শুধু এইটুকু বলতে চাই যে অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে এই প্রবন্ধ রচনা করতে হলো বলে সাহিত্যের সব দিক বিচার করতে পারি নি। প্রধানত স্মরণশক্তির উপর নির্ভর করতে হওয়ায় হয়তো অনুরূপ ভঙ্গ হয়েছে। যে সকল লেখক বা লেখিকার নাম করতে পারি নি, তাঁদের কাছে ক্ষমা ভিক্ষা করি। ছোট প্রবন্ধ বলেও বটে এবং সকলের লেখার সম্বন্ধে আমি সুপরিচিত নই বলেও বটে, বহু গুণী ও রসিক ব্যক্তির নাম হয়তো ছাট পড়েছে।

অধ্যাপক শ্রীশশাঙ্কশেখর বাগ্‌চী

বিগত পৌনে দুইশত বৎসরের মধ্যে বাঙালী স্থায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠা অর্জন করিয়াছে দুইটি ক্ষেত্রে, একটি বাঙালীর সাহিত্য আর একটি বাঙালীর স্বদেশী আন্দোলন। বাঙালীর কৃতিত্বের পরিচায়ক এই দুইটি জিনিষ বাহিরের দিক হইতে বিভিন্ন হইলেও বস্তুত একই মানস-ধর্ম-সঞ্জাত। বাঙালীর স্বাদেশিকতা একটা দিয়া ভাববিলাসে পর্যাবসিত হইয়া আছে আর বাঙালীর সাহিত্যসৃষ্টিতেও একটা তরল ভাবাতিশয়া স্পষ্ট হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। রাজনীতিক্ষেত্রে বাঙালী হয়ত অগ্রাশ্রম প্রদেশের করিৎকর্মা ধুরন্ধরগণের নিকট হাটয়া যাইবে, কিন্তু সাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে বাঙালী যাহা করিয়াছে তাহার তুলনা ভারতবর্ষে অন্তত আর মিলিবে না। আমাদের এই হতভাগ্য জাতির একমাত্র স্থায়ী গৌরব আমাদের সাহিত্য এবং এই একটিমাত্র জিনিষকে আশ্রয় করিয়াই এই দারুণ দুর্দিনে জাতির প্রাণশক্তি এখনও অটুট আছে। স্মরণ্য বর্তমান যুগে নানা আদর্শের সংঘাত জীবনকে যখন পীড়িত, দ্বিধাগ্রস্ত ও সংশয়ী করিয়া তুলিতেছে তখন আমাদের জাতীয় সাহিত্যের ধারাটি কোন্ পথে চলিয়াছে, ইহার অন্তর্নিহিত কোনও বিপুল সম্ভাবনা স্পষ্ট হইয়া উঠিতেছে, না বিকৃত, জাতীয় জীবনের পক্ষে অনিষ্টকর কোন রস পরিবেশন করিয়া জাতীয় জীবনকে বিযাক্ত করিয়া তুলিতেছে, এ সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করা সব দিক দিয়াই প্রয়োজন।

মাঝে মাঝে মনে হয় ডিরোজিয়ার আমলের 'ইয়ং বেঙ্গলের' ভাব আমাদের দেশে এখনও আছে। নতুবা স্বদেশের ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের প্রতি এই অবহেলা মিশ্রিত দাক্ষিণ্য শিক্ষিত সমাজে এত অধিক দেখা যায় কেন? নিষ্ঠা নাই, শ্রদ্ধা নাই, সাধনা নাই, যখন তখন সকলেই ইচ্ছামত নাবালক সাহিত্যের অভিভাবক সাজিয়া বসিতেছেন। বাঙলা দেশে বাঙলা ভাষা ও সাহিত্য অনুকম্পা ভিক্ষা করিবে কেন? সে নিজের জোরে তাহার যথার্থ আসন অধিকার করিয়া লইবে। অনুস্বার বিসর্গের বেড়া দেওয়া ভদ্রপাড়ায় যখন বাঙলা ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের প্রবেশের অধিকার ছিল না, ছায়া মাড়াইবার ভয়ে যখন পণ্ডিতগণ 'অব্রহ্মণ্যম্', 'অব্রহ্মণ্যম্' বলিয়া চীৎকার করিয়া চতুষ্পাঠীর প্রাঙ্গণ হইতে বাঙলা ভাষা ও সাহিত্যকে বাঁচাইয়া দূর করিয়াছিলেন তখন অসহায় ভাষা কীর্তনের আখড়ায় খোল বাজাইয়া, নোকার লাগি ঠেলিয়া, কৃষকের সাথে ধান কাটিয়া আর পল্লীর ছানা, ননী, ক্ষীর খাইয়া স্বাস্থ্যে উজ্জ্বল কান্তিপুষ্টিতে নয়নাভিরাম হইয়া তাহার বেদখলী সম্পত্তি দখল করিয়াছে। আমাদের নিরক্ষর দেশের জনসাধারণের

মানসিক ক্ষুধা জাগে নাই কিন্তু যখন ক্ষুধার্ভ হইয়া বিরাট দেশ জাগিয়া উঠিবে তখন সমস্ত দেশ জুড়িয়া ধানের ক্ষেতে পাতাবাহারের গাছ লাগাইয়া দেশের ক্ষুদ্রবৃত্তির ব্যবস্থা করিলে চলিবে কি ?

বর্তমান বাঙলা সাহিত্যের পঁচিশ ত্রিশ বৎসরের ইতিহাস, উহার গতি প্রকৃতি সম্বন্ধে পূর্ববর্তী প্রবীন সাহিত্যিক দুইজন অনেক কথাই বলিয়াছেন। এই পঁচিশ বৎসরে যাহা আমরা পাইয়াছি তাহা একেবারে অকিঞ্চিৎকর নয়, কিন্তু যাহা পাই নাই তাহার আলোচনারও সার্থকতা আছে।

প্রথমের বাঙলা সাহিত্যের একটি গুরুতর অভাবের দিকে দৃষ্টি পড়ে—বাংলায় ভাল নাটক নাই। রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রতিভাও এক্ষেত্রে সোনা ফলাইতে পারে নাই। নাটকের ক্ষেত্রে অতি-নাটকীয় সহজ ভাবোচ্ছ্বাস আমাদের নাটকগুলিকে অভিনয় মঞ্চের বাহিরে শ্রেষ্ঠ সাহিত্যের মর্যাদায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে পারিল না। স্বল্পপ্রাণ মুহূর্ত্ত-জীবী গীতোচ্ছ্বাসের মত এক একটি দৃশ্য হয়ত অতি সুন্দর, কিন্তু বাংলা নাটকে পুরুষকারের অটল মহিমা বা নিশ্চয় নিয়তিলীলার অমোঘ আকর্ষণ নাই। হয়ত ইহার জন্ম বাঙালীর জীবনই দায়ী, বাঙালী অল্পে সন্তুষ্ট, সঙ্কীর্ণ গভীর মধ্যে কতকগুলি পারিবারিক ও সামাজিক স্তম্ভস্থ লইয়াই তাহার প্রত্যহের বিচরণ। তাহার জীবনে বৃহত্তর বা মহত্তর কোন আদর্শের সংঘাত নাই, বিশ্বজীবনের চঞ্চল প্রবাহ তাহাকে আকর্ষণ করে না। জীবনে তাহার কোন জটিল সমস্যা নাই, এক ফোঁটা চোখের জলে তাহার জীবনের সমস্তার গ্রন্থি খুলিয়া যায়, একটু হাসিতে তাহার জীবনের গভীর ব্যথার অবসান হয়। কিন্তু আসল কথা জীবনের বাস্তবতার দিকে নিপুণ দৃষ্টিসম্পন্ন, সমাজের সর্বস্তরের সহিত সুপরিচিত ও সহানুভূতিশীল কোনও নাট্যকার বাঙলা দেশে এখন পর্যন্ত আবির্ভূত হন নাই। পূর্বযুগের কতকগুলি উপন্যাসকে নাট্যরূপ দিয়া যে দেশে অভিনয়যোগ্য দৃশ্য কাব্যের অভাব পূরণ করিতে হয় সে দেশের নাট্য সাহিত্যের দৈন্ত আর প্রশংসা করিতে হয় না। আর বাঙালীর জীবনে ট্র্যাগেডির উপকরণ নাই এ কথাই বা স্বীকার করি কি করিয়া? আমাদের চারিদিকে আমরা নিরন্তর কি মনুষ্যত্বের লাঞ্ছনা ও অপমান প্রত্যক্ষ করিতেছি না? সমাধানহীন অনন্ত সমস্যা আমাদের জীবনকে ঘিরিয়া, দুর্ভোগ্য নিয়তির অমোঘ পাশে আবদ্ধ করিয়া অবিরাম গতিতে নৃত্য করিতেছে আর ইহার মধ্যে প্রতিনিয়ত সঞ্চিত হইয়া উঠিতেছে জীবনের অনিবার্য অপচয়। এই অন্তহীন বেদনার সুর যাহার চিত্তকে মথিত উদ্বেলিত করিয়া তুলিবে, সহানুভূতি দিয়া যিনি নরনারীর এই বেদনাকে ভাষায় ফুটাইয়া তুলিবেন, সেই নাট্যকার আজও আমাদের দেশে আবির্ভূত হন নাই।

লিরিক কবিতা ও ছোট গল্পে বাঙলা সাহিত্যের সমৃদ্ধি অবিসংবাদিত, ইহার জন্ম ওকালতির প্রয়োজন নাই।

আধুনিক সাহিত্যের একটা প্রধান লক্ষণ যে আধুনিক সাহিত্য মুখ্যত 'literature of interrogation.' মাহুস আজ আর কিছুতেই সন্তুষ্ট নয়, মনে তাহার অন্তহীন অতৃপ্তি। জীবন ও জগৎ সম্বন্ধে বিচিত্র দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী লইয়া আজ সে নানা দিক হইতে প্রশ্নের পর প্রশ্ন তুলিতেছে; ধর্ম অধর্ম, ভাল মন্দ, স্মৃতি তুর্নীতি, পাপ পুণ্য, উচিত অনুচিত—এক কথায় সহজে আর কিছুই মীমাংসিত হইতে পারে না, সব জিনিষেরই গোড়ার কথা ধরিয়া সে নাড়া দিয়াছে। রসসাহিত্য ইহার ফলে হইয়া পড়িতেছে বিচার, বিতর্ক, বিশ্লেষণে কণ্টকাকীর্ণ, সমস্তা হইয়া উঠিতেছে সাহিত্যের সর্বপ্রধান উপজীব্য। সাহিত্যের ইহাই decadence কিন্তু বিংশ শতাব্দীর সাহিত্যের ইহাই সর্বপ্রধান লক্ষণ। বাঙলা সাহিত্যে এই নবযুগের হাওয়া কতখানি আসিয়াছে জানা প্রয়োজন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সৌন্দর্য্যপিপাসু কবিচিত্ত সাহিত্যের এই আদর্শকে মুহূর্তের জন্মও স্বীকার করে নাই। শরৎচন্দ্র দুই এক স্থলে এই সমস্তার দিকে একটু খুঁকিয়া ছিলেন কিন্তু বাঙালী জীবনের মর্শদর্শী এই লেখকের রসসিদ্ধির নিপুণতাগুণে সব জিনিষই ("শেষপ্রশ্ন" ব্যতীত) অল্পম রসবস্তুর পরিণত হইয়াছে—সমস্তা কোনখানে উৎকট হইয়া উঠে নাই। শরৎচন্দ্রের উপস্থাস ও গল্পের প্রধান আকর্ষণ তাঁহার বর্ণিত গল্প ও চরিত্র—রাজনীতি, সমাজনীতি বা ধর্মনীতির এক একটি প্রবন্ধে তাঁহার উপস্থাসের উপজীব্য বিষয় বলিয়া শেষ করিয়া দেওয়া যায় না। অতি আধুনিক লেখকগণও realistic সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি করিতে গিয়া রোমান্টিক সাহিত্যই সৃষ্টি করিতেছেন।

আরও একটি কথা অনেক স্থানেই শুনিতে পাওয়া যায়—বাঙলা সাহিত্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের যুগ নাকি চলিয়া গিয়াছে। অসংযত ঔদ্ধত্যকে যেমন স্বাধীনতা নাম দেওয়া ভুল, তেমনি রুগ্ন কল্পনা ও আন্তরিকতার অভাবকে intellectual নাম দিয়া রবীন্দ্র প্রভাব মুক্ত হইলাম বলিয়া তৃপ্তি বোধ করাও একটা মস্ত বড় ফাঁকি। আধুনিক লেখকগণের মধ্যে বাঁহারা শক্তির পরিচয় দিয়াছেন তাঁহারা কেহই রবীন্দ্রপ্রভাবমুক্ত নন। বিষয়-বস্তু ও দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর দিক হইতে যে একটু নূতনত্বের পরিচয় ইহাদের লেখায় পাওয়া যাইতেছে ইহা কি ক্ষণিক খেয়াল না ইহা বাঙলা কাব্যের কোনও সুবৃহৎ সম্ভাবনার ইঙ্গিত করিতেছে তাহা বলা এখন একেবারেই অসম্ভব।

বাঙলা সাহিত্যকে আমরা কেবল অবসরের চিত্তবিনোদনের সামগ্রী বলিয়া মনে করি না। এই সাহিত্য দেশে দেশে প্রসারিত, যুগ যুগ সঞ্চিত মানবের বিচিত্র সভ্যতা ও সংস্কৃতি গ্রহণ করিয়া, আত্মসাৎ করিয়া বাঙালীর মনকে উদার, প্রশস্ত ও সমৃদ্ধ করুক।

পঁচিশ বছরে সাহিত্য

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শশাঙ্কশেখর বাগ্‌চী

কেবল রসসাহিত্যের মাধুর্যের মধ্যে আকর্ষণ নিমজ্জিত হইয়া থাকা জাতির পক্ষে বাঞ্ছিতও নয়, কল্যাণকরও নয়। বাঙালীর মনস্থিতা, বাঙালীর বিচার বুদ্ধি বাঙালীর ভাবোচ্ছ্বাসের সঙ্গে মিলিত হইলে আমাদের দেশে এমন সাহিত্যের জন্ম হইবে যাহা যে-কোনও দেশের সাহিত্যের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী হইতে পারে।

গত পঁচিশ বছরের বাংলা কাব্যের ধারা

(১৯১৩—১৯৩৮)

অধ্যাপক শ্রীঅমূল্যধন মুখোপাধ্যায়

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সে আজ ঠিক পঁচিশ বছর আগেকার কথা। আমরা তখন সব কৈশোরে পা দিয়েছি। ইস্কুলে পত্তপাঠ থেকে আরম্ভ করে মাইকেল মধুসূদনের মেঘনাদবধ কাব্যের ছাঁচারটে অংশ পড়ে বাংলা কাব্যের কিছু কিছু রস আন্ধান কর্তে শিখেছি। বাড়ীতে তা' ছাড়া হেমচন্দ্রের ও নবীনচন্দ্রের কাব্য এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত ইত্যাদি কিছু কিছু পড়েছি। এমন সময়ে ১৯১৩ খৃষ্টাব্দের নভেম্বর মাসে হঠাৎ একদিন খবরের কাগজে পড়া গেল যে শ্রেষ্ঠ সাহিত্য সৃষ্টির জন্ত ঐ বছরের নোবেল পুরস্কার বাঙালী কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে দেওয়া হয়েছে। সেই দিন আমাদের জীবনে, বাঙালীর জীবনে একটা স্মরণীয় দিন। যে পুলক বিশ্বয়ের প্লাবন সে দিন বাংলা দেশময় ছড়িয়ে গেল, তারই প্রভাবে বাঙালীর জীবনে ও ইতিহাসে একটা নতুন যুগের প্রবর্তনা হ'ল।

বাঙালী আত্মবিস্মৃত জাতি ব'লে একটা আক্ষেপ আছে বা ছিল। বাঙালী নিজের অতীত গৌরবের কথা জানে না, নিজের মধ্যে কত বড় ক্ষমতা বা সম্ভাবনা লুকিয়ে আছে তারও খোঁজ রাখে না। নিজেকে একেবারে হীন জ্ঞান ক'রে কেবলমাত্র পরের দাসত্ব আর পরের অনুকরণ ক'রে থাকে এই রকমই তখনকার ধারণা ছিল। কিন্তু এই আত্মবিস্মৃতি ও আত্মাবমাননার অন্ধকার কেটে আসছিল। বিবেকানন্দের দীপ্ত অভয় বাণী, রুঘু জাপানের যুদ্ধে সাদা আদমীর পরাজয়, বঙ্গ ভঙ্গের আন্দোলন, স্বদেশী যুগের নানা কাণ্ডকারখানা, উত্তেজনা—সব জড়িয়ে একটা নতুন চেতনা বাংলা দেশে এনে দিচ্ছিল। “নয়া বাংলা”য় বাঙালীর আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার আয়োজন পুরো দমে চলছিল। বাঙালীর এই আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা ও আত্ম-উপলব্ধির মহাযজ্ঞে শেষ ও প্রধান হব্য হ'ল রবীন্দ্রনাথের নোবেল পুরস্কার লাভ। সারা জগতের সামনে বাঙালীর গৌরব এমন ক'রে আর কিছুতে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় নি।

“গ্রামে গ্রামে সেই বার্তা রটি গেল ক্রমে”। তার ফলে বাঙালীর মনে তিনটে ধারণা বদ্ধমূল হয়ে গেল। প্রথম ধারণা হ'ল, “বাঙালী আজি গানের রাজা, বাঙালী নহে খর্ব”; অর্থাৎ রীতিমত একটা আত্মপ্রসাদ, এমন কি আত্মপ্রাধার ভ্রুব বাঙালীর মনের মধ্যে শিকড় গেড়ে বসল। তার ফলে, বাংলার সাথে ভারতের অত্যন্ত প্রদেশের

একটা পার্থক্য ক্রমেই বেড়ে উঠতে লাগল, সেই পার্থক্য আজও বোধ হয় বাড়ছে, এবং ক্রমে প্রায় দ্বন্দ্ব পরিণত হ'তে চলেছে। What Bengal thinks to-day, all India thinks to-morrow—এ কথা যে আর সত্যি নয়, তার প্রধান কারণ হচ্ছে যে বাংলা দেশ শিক্ষা দীক্ষা সংস্কৃতির দিক দিয়ে বাকি ভারতের সঙ্গে কোন যোগ রাখতে আর চায় না, কাজেই নায়কত্ব তার পক্ষে অসম্ভব হ'য়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। চিন্তা ও ভাবের জগতে একটা বিশিষ্ট “গৌড়ী রীতি”র চর্চা খুব চলেছে, তার ফলে বাংলা দেশ যেমন প্রাচীন কালের আর্য্যাবর্ত্তে একটা দলছাড়া স্থান অধিকার করেছিল, আজকাল হিন্দুস্থানেও বাংলার স্থান তেমনি দাঁড়িয়েছে।

দ্বিতীয় ধারণাটা হ'ল এই যে বাঙালীকে রাজা হ'তে গেলে গানের রাজ্যেই হ'তে হবে; অর্থাৎ বাঙালীর মোক্ষ হ'ল কৰ্ম্ম জগতে নয়, রসলোকে। সমস্ত দেশ ও জাতির মধ্যে একটা মধুর রসের চর্চা, স্কুমার শিল্পের আলোচনা ও কান্ত গুণাবলীর বিকাশের দিকে ঝুঁকি দেখা গেল। বোধ হয় এ প্রবৃত্তিটা আসলে বাঙালীর মজ্জাগত। বাংলা দেশ জয়দেবের ও বৈষ্ণব মহাজনদের দেশ, স্তত্রাং একটা উপলক্ষ পেলে বা অল্পকূল শ্রোতের সহায়তা পেলে সেই প্রবৃত্তি যে আবার প্রবল হ'য়ে উঠবে তা' মোটেই বিচিত্র নয়। যা হোক, রামমোহন থেকে বিবেকানন্দ পর্য্যন্ত বাঙালীর চিন্তাজগতের নায়কেরা মোড় ফিরিয়ে বাঙালীকে যে কৰ্ম্মযোগের পথে নিয়ে যেতে চেষ্টা করছিলেন, এখন থেকে বাঙালী সেই পথ ছেড়ে পুনশ্চ ভাবমাধুর্যের সম্মানে বের হ'ল। বাঙালী ব'লে উঠল, “আমি চাই না হ'তে নব বঙ্গ নব যুগের চালক”। পাঞ্চজন্ম শব্দের আওয়াজ ডুবিয়ে দিয়ে বৃন্দাবনের বাঁশী বেজে উঠল, নতুন ঢঙের কীর্তন, বাউল, গজলের সুরে বাংলা দেশ মুখর হ'য়ে উঠল।

তৃতীয় ধারণাটা হ'ল এই যে ইউরোপের সাহিত্য ও কলার মাপকাঠিতেই বাংলা সাহিত্যের জগতে নিরিখ বাঁধতে হবে। বাংলা সাহিত্য ভারতবর্ষ বা এশিয়ার অন্ততম সাহিত্য হ'য়ে প্রাচ্য মনোবৃত্তির বাহন মাত্র হ'য়ে রইল না; চর্চা ক'রে সাত সমুদ্র তের নদী পার হ'য়ে বিলিতি ও কন্টিনেন্টাল সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ স্থাপন করল। এটা একটা বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য ব্যাপার। ইউরোপ যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথকে কবিশেখরের সম্মান দিয়েছিল, তখন রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যে প্রাচ্যস্বলভ অতীন্দ্রিয় রস, প্রাচ্য ঋষির যোগ্য দার্শনিকতা, ইত্যাদিতে মুগ্ধ হ'য়েছিল। স্তত্রাং মনে করা যেতে পারত যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গৌরবে উৎফুল্ল হ'য়ে বাঙালী রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যের ঐ সমস্ত গুণেরই সমধিক চর্চা করবে। কিন্তু ফল হ'ল অল্প রকম। ইউরোপের চোখে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কদর হওয়াতে বাঙালী ইউরোপেরই ভাব, চিন্তা ও রুচির অল্পশীলন কর্তে আরম্ভ করল।

এ অনুশীলনটা হ'তে লাগল আদব কায়দা ব্যবহার বা পোষাকের দিকে নয়, কারণ স্বদেশী যুগের প্রবাহ বাঙালীর জীবনে সে দিক দিয়ে একটা ভিন্ন প্রবৃত্তি এনে দিয়েছিল। কিন্তু

শ্রামল অঞ্চলে মন আবরিয়া কায়

জগতের স্তম্ভরালে য়ার অবস্থান

ছিল, সেই বঙ্গভারতী সহসা যেন পৃথিবীর সব দেশের কলাদেবীর সঙ্গে এক দলে মিশে গেলেন।

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এর পরে বাংলা সাহিত্যে যে যুগের সূচনা হ'ল তাকে নানা রকম আখ্যা দেওয়া হ'য়েছে। কেউ কেউ এর নাম দিয়েছেন “সবুজ পত্রের যুগ”; কারণ এই সময়ে নবপ্রতিষ্ঠিত “সবুজ পত্রের” প্রবন্ধ, কবিতা, ভাষা, টীকা টিপ্পনীতে এই নব যুগের ভাব ও আদর্শ বেশ পরিষ্কৃত হ'য়ে দেখা গেল; “স্বীর পত্র” থেকে স্বীরবলী চুটকি পর্যন্ত সব লেখাতেই একটা নতুন মনোভাব, নতুন আদর্শ ফুটে উঠল। এই মনোভাবের একটা প্রধান লক্ষণ হ'ল ‘আর্যামি’ ও সনাতন পছার প্রতি একান্ত অশ্রদ্ধা। কেউ কেউ এর নাম দিলেন “বলাকা”র যুগ। কারণ এই সময়েই রবীন্দ্রনাথের “বলাকা”র কবিতাগুলি রচনা হয়, আর এই সব কবিতার নতুন ধরণের ছন্দ, ভাব, আদর্শের মধ্যেও নব যুগের সাহিত্যের একটা বিশিষ্ট পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। ভবিষ্যতে হয়ত কেউ এই যুগকে ‘শরৎচন্দ্রের যুগ’ নাম দিতে পারেন। কারণ এই কয় বৎসরের মধ্যেই শরৎচন্দ্রের সাহিত্যিক জীবন সীমাবদ্ধ, এবং তিনিই এ যুগের সর্বাপেক্ষা জনপ্রিয় ও সর্বসাধারণের উপর প্রভাবশালী লেখক ছিলেন। কিন্তু বেশ ভেবে দেখলে মনে হয় যে এ যুগকে রবীন্দ্রনাথের যুগ বলাই উচিত। এর যে নতুন মনোভাব ও আদর্শ তা’ রবীন্দ্রনাথই এদেশে এনেছেন, তাঁর লেখা থেকেই অস্বস্তি সকলে অনুপ্রেরণা ও উৎসাহ পেয়েছে, তার পদাঙ্ক অনুসরণ করেই আর সকলে সাহিত্য সাধনার পথ ও লক্ষ্য স্থির করেছে। উদাহরণস্বরূপ শরৎচন্দ্রের কথাই ধরা যাক। তাঁর প্রতিভা ও মৌলিকতা অবশ্য সবাই স্বীকার করবে, কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘নটনীড়’ ও ‘চোখের বালি’ প্রভৃতি উপন্যাস থেকেই তিনি যে নির্দেশ পেয়েছিলেন সে কথা তিনি স্বয়ং স্বীকার করে গেছেন। আজকালকার দিনে আমাদের মনের ভাব, চিন্তা, ভ্রম, সবই যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের দ্বারা অতিমাত্রায় প্রভাবান্বিত, সে বিষয়ে কোন সন্দেহ নেই।

এ যুগের সাহিত্যের মূলমন্ত্র পাওয়া যায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের “বলাকা”র প্রথম কবিতাটিতেই। “আয় রে সবুজ, আয় রে আমার কাঁচা” ব’লে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে উদাত্ত আহ্বান করেছিলেন, সে আহ্বান সারা দেশের হৃদয়ে ধ্বনিত হ’ল, তার অনুরণন আজও মিলিয়ে যায় নি। প্রাচীনপন্থী সনাতনীদেব দল থেকে, কাণ্ডজ্ঞান ও সাংসারিক বিবেচনার তরফ থেকে এই কবিতাটির যথেষ্ট প্রতিকূল সমালোচনা হয়েছে, কিন্তু এর মধ্যেই যে বাংলা সাহিত্যের নবযুগের প্রাণের কথাটি রয়ে গেছে, সে কথা অস্বীকার করার উপায় নেই। এর মধ্যে প্রধান কথা হচ্ছে—বিদ্রোহ; যা কিছু প্রাচীন, যার বৃদ্ধি বা পরিবর্তন নেই, যা “শিকল দেবী”র একটা প্রতীক মাত্র, তা একেবারেই অচল ও প্রাণহীন; স্তুরাং তারই বিপক্ষে বিদ্রোহ করাই প্রাণশক্তির ও জীবনের পরিচয়। তা নইলে জড়তার ঘুম ভাঙবে না; যখন “লাগবে লাড়াই মিথ্যা এবং সাঁচার” তখনই নতুন ক’রে সত্যের উপলব্ধি বা প্রচেষ্টা সম্ভব—এই হচ্ছে এর মূল কথা। এই বিদ্রোহ আসলে একটা প্রবল রোমান্টিক প্রবৃত্তির পরিচয় মাত্র; তাই তর্ক, যুক্তি ও অভিজ্ঞতার বিরুদ্ধেও এর অভিযান, তাই এ “বাঁধা পথের শেষে” পৌঁছে “অজানাদের দেশে” যেতে যায়, কাজেই “বাছা-বাছা” ভুল কর্তে এবং আপদকে ডেকে আনতে পেছপাও নয়। এই বিদ্রোহটা হ’ল এর নেতি বাচনের দিক। কিন্তু এর আর একটা দিকও আছে। এর আস্থা হ’ল তরুণস্বলভ মনোভাব ও প্রবৃত্তির উপর, তাকেই এ জগতের প্রাণশক্তির রূপ ব’লে মনে করে। স্তুরাং মানবতার উপরেই একটা বিশেষ জোর এ দিয়ে গেছে। তবে এই যে তারুণ্য এর মধ্যে মাত্র ভোগলোনুপতা নেই, এর মধ্যে একটা বিরাট আধ্যাত্মিকতা ও মুক্তির প্রয়াস আছে, সে কাম্য বস্তুকে উপভোগ করেও তাতে আসক্ত হয় না, “মুৎপাত্রের মত” তাকে পায়ে ঠেলে অজানা লক্ষ্যের দিকে এগিয়ে যেতে চায়।

এই বিদ্রোহ ও এই তারুণ্যের উদ্দামবৃত্তির উপর আস্থা এই নবযুগের সাহিত্যের বিশেষত্ব। অবশু রবীন্দ্রনাথের মধ্যে এই মনোভাবের যে একটা সূক্ষ্ম দিক বিকশিত হয়েছে, তা সকলের লেখায় হয় নি। যেটা স্থূল দিক সেইটেই বেশী ক’রে সাধারণ লেখায় দেখা যায়। সেইজন্মই “সবুজ” সাহিত্য নামটাই আতঙ্কের সঞ্চার করে। আতঙ্কের আসল কারণ সবুজ সাহিত্যের আদর্শের কোন হীনতা নয়, অধিকাংশ সবুজ-পন্থী লেখকের অযোগ্যতা-ই হ’ল এর কারণ। এই সমস্ত লেখকেরা শিব গড়তে গিয়ে বানর গড়েন, “তোলানাথের ঝোলাঝুলি” না বেড়ে যে কোন ভূত প্রেত প্রমথ’র ঝাঁচকা থেকে “ভুলগুলো” আমদানি করেন বলেই এতটা এর উপর বিতৃষ্ণা জন্মেছে।

যাই হোক—আদর্শের দিক দিয়ে যে একটা খুব গুরুতর পরিবর্তন সাহিত্যে এসেছে সে বিষয়ে সন্দেহ নেই। এর মূলে রয়েছে সমসাময়িক যুরোপীয় সাহিত্যের ও শিক্ষাদীক্ষার প্রভাব। অবশ্য এইটাই এর একমাত্র কারণ নয়, হয়ত স্বাভাবিক নিয়মে পরিবর্তনের ধারা অনুসরণ ক'রেই এই নতুন আদর্শ দেখা দিয়েছে। ক্ষেত্র তৈরি না থাকলে, ঋতু অনুকূল না হ'লে বীজ বপন ক'রে কোন সফল পাওয়া যায় না। লোকের মনের গতি ও রুচির সঙ্গে মিল না থাকলে মাত্র বাইরের প্রভাবে কিছু হয় না। তবু এক এক সময়ে একটা প্রভাব বাইরে থেকে এসে বিশেষ রূপ ও নির্দেশ সাহিত্যে দিয়ে যায়। এ ক্ষেত্রে বিংশ শতাব্দীর যুরোপের চিন্তাধারা ও সাহিত্যিক আদর্শ সেই রকম প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছে, এবং এই বিস্তৃতি ঘনীভূত হওয়ার অত্যন্ত প্রধান কারণ হচ্ছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নোবেল পুরস্কার লাভ। অবশ্য ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রথম থেকেই বিলিতি শিক্ষা ও সাহিত্যের প্রভাব বাংলা সাহিত্যে সংক্রমিত হয়েছে। কিন্তু গোড়ার দিকটাতে এই প্রভাব বাংলা সাহিত্যকে দিয়েছিল মাত্র একটা নতুন দেহ ও রূপ, কোন কোন স্থলে একটা নতুন স্তর। মধুসূদন বঙ্গ-ভারতীর চরণ থেকে মিত্রাক্ষরের শিকল ভেঙে দিলেন, তাঁকে অবাধ আবেগে ও বিচিত্র লীলায় বিচরণের স্বাধীনতা দিলেন, কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও তাঁর কাব্যের মূল ভাব ও প্রেরণা সনাতন-ই র'য়ে গেল। মধুসূদনের কোট-প্যাংলুনের নীচে সনাতন বাঙালী হৃদয়েরই স্পন্দন শোনা যেতে লাগল। বঙ্কিম ঐতিহাসিক ও সামাজিক উপন্যাসে, প্রবন্ধে যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে পাশ্চাত্য কাঁয়া চালিয়ে গেলেন, তাঁর ধর্মতত্ত্বেও অনেক পাশ্চাত্য মালমসলা স্থান পেল, কিন্তু তবুও মনে প্রাণে তিনি হিন্দু ও সনাতন-পন্থীই র'য়ে গেলেন। বঙ্কিমের দলের ছোট বড় সব লেখককেই এই গোত্রের বলা যেতে পারে। ছই এক জায়গায় নবীন সেন হয়ত একটু-আধটু মাত্র ছাড়িয়ে গেছিলেন, কিন্তু মোটামুটি একটা স্থির সনাতন আদর্শের প্রভাবই বরাবর প্রবল দেখা যায়। কোন রকম উদ্দাম ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্য এ যুগের সাহিত্যে পাওয়া যায় না। প্রাচ্য ও পাশ্চাত্যের মিলন যারা খুঁজেছিলেন তাঁরা পাশ্চাত্যের একটা রং ফলিয়ে প্রাচ্যকেই চালিয়ে দেবার পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। চন্দ্রনাথ বসুর মত অনেকে ত বোরতর প্রাচীন-পন্থী হ'য়ে উঠলেন, যেটুকু পাশ্চাত্য নবীনতা দেখা দিল তাঁর উগ্রতায় তাঁরা রীতিমত ভয় পেয়ে গেলেন। ফলে বাংলা দেশে new wine in old bottles না চলে বরং old wine in new bottles চলতে লাগল। পাশ্চাত্য প্রভাব বাংলা দেশের মনে এসে লাগলেও তাঁর হৃদয়ে তখনও বিশেষ পরিবর্তন আনতে পারে নি।

তা' ছাড়া যে প্রভাব যুরোপ থেকে এ দেশে এসেছিল তা' হচ্ছে ভিক্টোরীয় যুগের ইংরেজি শিক্ষাদীক্ষার প্রভাব। বঙ্কিম যুগের সাহিত্যের নায়কেরা অষ্টাদশ ও ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর ইংরেজি সাহিত্যের ছায়াতেই তাঁদের সাহিত্য প'ড়ে তুলেছিলেন, ইংলণ্ডের বাইরের পাশ্চাত্য জগৎ তাঁদের কাছে সুপরিচিত ছিল না। ভিক্টোরীয় ইংলণ্ডের সঙ্কীর্ণতা, স্বয়ংসিদ্ধ আত্মপ্রসাদ, আধ্যাত্মিক মোহ ইত্যাদি দোষ থেকে আরম্ভ করে তার দৃষ্টির ব্যাপকতা, গঠন-স্পৃহা প্রভৃতি গুণও বঙ্কিম যুগের ছিল। ভিক্টোরীয় ইংলণ্ডের শেষের দিকে যে পরিবর্তন শুরু হ'য়েছিল, যে নতুন ভাবপ্রবাহের ধাক্কা পুরাতন স্থির মত ও আদর্শ ভেঙে পড়'ছিল, তার কোন প্রভাব বাংলা সাহিত্যে আসে নি। কিন্তু এইবার স্নেহের খাল কাটা হ'ল। নব্য যুরোপীয় সাহিত্যের ভাবধারা বঙ্গ-সাহিত্যে একটা নতুন স্রোত নিয়ে এল।

কিন্তু এই প্রভাব বিশেষ করে দেখা দিল বাংলার কথা সাহিত্যে। কাব্যে এর প্রভাব যে বিশেষ ব্যাপক হয়েছে তা' বলা যায় না। কেন? মানুষ যাকে নিজস্ব করে নিতে পারে, যা' তার স্তম্ভ অন্তরাঙ্গার নিশ্বাসে প্রাণসে ধ্বনিত হয়, যা তার গোপন অন্তর্ভূতির তরঙ্গে তরঙ্গে আন্দোলিত হয়, তাই সে প্রকাশ কর্তে পারে কাব্যে। যা' কেবলমাত্র চিত্তকে স্পর্শ করেছে, যা' বিচার ও তর্ক সাপেক্ষ, যা' একটা অল্পসঙ্কীর্ণতা মাত্র মনে এনেছে, তা' গল্পে ও উপন্যাসে স্থান পেতে পারে, কিন্তু কাব্যে নয়। আধুনিক যুরোপের ভাবধারার সঙ্গে আমাদের অনেকের পরিচয় হ'য়ে থাকলেও তা' যে আমাদের নাড়ীতে নাড়ীতে সংক্রমিত হয় নি, তার ছন্দ যে আমাদের হৃদয়ের স্পন্দনের সঙ্গে একীভূত হয় নি, সে কথা একান্ত সত্য। এইজন্যই আমাদের জীবনে ও সমাজে এত সব মিথ্যাচার জমে উঠ'ছে। এই কারণেই কি সমসাময়িক বাংলা কাব্য বাংলা কথা-সাহিত্যের হিসাবে এত পিছনে প'ড়ে আছে? কারণ যাই হোক, এই নব্য যুগে বাংলা সাহিত্যে যে প্রেরণা ও সঞ্জীবনা দেখা যায় তার প্রকাশ কাব্যে হয় নি।

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বাংলা কবিতা যে গত পঁচিশ বছরে কম লেখা হয়েছে তা' নয়। শিক্ষিত বাঙালীর মধ্যে বোধ হয় এমন লোক কমই আছেন যারা জীবনে কখনও কাব্য লেখার জন্ম কলম ধরেন নি। তবু এই কবিতার প্লাবনের মধ্যে কোন নতুন সৃষ্টি বা প্রেরণা—যা' আমরা যুরোপের renaissance-র মধ্যে পাই—তার কোন পরিচয় পাই না। অধিকাংশ কাব্যের মধ্যে আছে মাত্র একটা গতানুগতিকতা ও অল্পকরণের স্পৃহা।

গতানুগতিকতা ও মামুলিয়ানার ফলে এই যুগের বাংলা কাব্যে অনেক সময় একটা পান্সে রোম্যান্টিক্ ভাব মাত্র দেখা যায়। আধুনিক যুগের বাংলা কাব্য বহু পরিমাণে রোম্যান্টিক্ লক্ষণাক্রান্ত। রবীন্দ্রনাথের পূর্ববর্তী লেখকগণও পাশ্চাত্য রোম্যান্টিক্ সাহিত্যের দ্বারা প্রভাবান্বিত হয়েছিলেন; বাংলার প্রাচীন বৈষ্ণব কবিরাও রোম্যান্টিক্, হয়ত রোম্যান্টিক্ ভাব বাঙালীর মজ্জাগত। রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজে ত সব দিক দিয়ে ষোল আনা-ই রোম্যান্টিক্। কিন্তু নানা দিক দিয়ে যে রোম্যান্টিক্ প্রভাব আজকাল বাংলা সাহিত্যে এসেছে, তা' যে আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যের পশ্চিমীকরণ বিশেষ সহায়ক হয়েছে তা' বলা যায় না। বরং এই যুগের কাব্যের ইতিহাসকে History of the Decline and Fall of the Romantic Poetry of Bengal বলা যেতে পারে।

আধুনিক বাংলা কাব্যের কয়েকটা বাঁধা বিষয় আছে। যেমন, পল্লীজীবনের মাধুর্য ও সৌন্দর্য; শিশু, দরিদ্র ইত্যাদির চরিত্রের ও জীবনের মাহাত্ম্য; কোন কল্পিত প্রিয়তার উদ্দেশ্যে প্রণয়োক্তি; প্রকৃতির মধ্যে মানব ভাবের আরোপ; এক প্রকার জলো ভক্তিরস; এক রকম সৌখীন ছঃখবাদ ইত্যাদি। এই সমস্ত বিষয় ও ভাব এক সময়ে পাশ্চাত্য রোম্যান্টিক কাব্যের উপজীব্য ছিল। সাত নকলে আসল খাস্তা হ'য়ে এগুলো এখন বাংলা কাব্যের গণ্ডিতে ঢুকেছে। কিন্তু প্রথম প্রথম যখন এ সমস্ত ভাব যুরোপীয় সাহিত্যে প্রকাশ পায় তখন তাতে যে তীব্রতা ও আন্তরিকতা ছিল, বাংলা কাব্যে সেটা বিশেষ প্রকাশ পায় নি। কাব্য লেখাটা এখন একরকম কারচুপি বা কায়দা বা বড় জোর কেরামতি মাত্র হ'য়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। ঞাকামি, জ্যাঠামি, পাকামির সঙ্গে কয়েকটা লাগসই বোল চালিয়ে দিতে পাঞ্জাই কাব্য হ'ল এই রকম একটা আন্দাজ চার দিকে ছড়িয়ে পড়েছে। কাব্যের যত আসল বস্তু—কবির নিজস্ব প্রতিভার উজ্জ্বল অন্তর্দৃষ্টি ও মৌলিক অল্পভূতি, তার কোন বিশেষ পরিচয় আজকালকার বাংলা কাব্যে মোটামুটি পাওয়া যায় না।

অনেক দিক দিয়ে এই অবনতির ইতিহাস এলিজাবেথের যুগে ইংরেজি নাটকের অবনতির ইতিহাসের অনুরূপ। সেক্সপিয়রের রচনায় ঐ যুগের ইংরেজি নাট্য সাহিত্যের শ্রেষ্ঠ বিকাশ ও চরম অভিব্যক্তি হয়েছিল। তাঁর পরে যারা নাট্য সাহিত্যে আবির্ভূত হলেন, দেখা গেল যে তাঁরা সেক্সপিয়রের নাটকের যা' বাহ লক্ষণ তা' সবই আয়ত্ত করেছেন, ঠিক সেক্সপিয়রের মত বিষয়বস্তু, রচনারীতি, নাট্যকৌশল তাঁদের লেখাতেও আছে। কিন্তু যে স্বগভীর অন্তর্দৃষ্টি, বিরাট ও উদার সহানুভূতি, সত্যদ্রষ্টার উপযুক্ত কল্পনাশক্তি সেক্সপিয়রের ছিল, তারই একান্ত অভাব দেখা যায় তাঁর অন্তর্দৃষ্টির

লেখায়। তার ফলে দেখতে পাই কখনও কায়দার অভাব, কখনও বা কায়দার আতিশয্য। শিল্পীর যে সংযম ও নৈপুণ্যে তাঁর ওস্তাদির পরিচয়, তারই সম্পূর্ণ অভাব। বাংলা কাব্যেও ঠিক তাই হয়েছে।

বাংলা রোমান্টিক কাব্যের শ্রেষ্ঠ অভিব্যক্তি হয়েছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখায়। তাঁর নোবেল পুরস্কার লাভের পর থেকে তাঁর কাব্যই লেখকদের আদর্শ হয়ে দাঁড়াল। প্রায় সকলের দেখা দিল 'রবীন্দ্রনাথ'—সেই রকমের ভাষা, ছন্দ, ভাব ও চিন্তা। রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাতের লেখার মত রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যকলারও ছবছ নকল চলতে শুরু হ'ল। ভাল ক'রে বাজিয়ে না দেখলে এই সব নকলনবীশ কবিদের অনেক লেখাকে রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচনা বলে ভুল হ'তে পারে। তবে একটু পর্যবেক্ষণ ক'রে দেখলেই বোঝা যায় যে এঁরা একটা রবীন্দ্রিক ঢং মাত্র শিখেছেন, তাঁর অনুভূতি ও অন্তর্দৃষ্টির লেশ মাত্র পান নি, কতগুলো ধার করা কথা ও ভাবের প্রতিধ্বনি মাত্র ক'রে আসছেন; খোড়, বড়ি ও খাড়াকে নানা ভাবে সাজিয়ে মনে করছেন যে গীতাঞ্জলি ও বলাকার তুল্যমূল্য কাব্য লিখলাম। আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যের দিকে তাকালে দেখা যায় যে এই খাড়া, বড়ি ও খোড়ের জঞ্জাল স্তূপাকার হয়ে উঠেছে। ঝুটো মালে বাজার ভর্তি হয়ে গেল, খাঁটি ঘিয়ের মত খাঁটি কবিতাও তুলত হ'য়ে উঠেছে।

সেই হিসাবে বলা যায় যে কোন কোন দিক দিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রভাব বাংলা সাহিত্যের পক্ষে যেন একটু ক্ষতিকর হয়েছে। তাঁর সঙ্গে তাঁর সমসাময়িক লেখকদের পার্থক্য অত্যন্ত বেশী। তাঁর প্রতিভার দান গ্রহণ করার যোগ্যতা বাংলা দেশের তখনও হয় নি, এখনও হয়েছে কিনা সন্দেহ। সমস্ত দেশের এক রকম মানসিক মন্দাধি রোগ হয়েছে বলা যায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের অনুকরণ কর্তে গিয়ে একটা কৃত্রিমতা সাহিত্যে ছড়িয়ে পড়েছে। গোবিন্দ দাসের মত কবি, যারা বড় না হলেও অন্ততঃ অকৃত্রিম, তাদের আবির্ভাব আজকাল আর সম্ভব নয়। যে পথ ধ'রে বাংলা কবিতা প্রাক-রবীন্দ্র যুগ পর্যন্ত অগ্রসর হয়েছিল, সে পথ এখন অচল হ'য়ে গেছে। স্বাভাবিক শক্তি ও প্রেরণার বশে প্রত্যেকে যে নিজস্ব রীতি সৃষ্টি করবে এবং নিজস্ব একটা অন্তর্দৃষ্টি নিয়ে কাব্য লিখবে, তা' আজকাল যেন আর আশাই করা যায় না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রদর্শিত পথে বাংলা কাব্য চলতে আরম্ভ করল—বড় তাড়াতাড়ি। সাহিত্যবোধ ও বিচার ক্ষমতা সাধারণের মধ্যে আরও একটু বিকশিত হওয়ার প্রয়োজন ছিল।

তবে সুফল যে একেবারে হয় নি তা' অবশ্য বলা যায় না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রভাবে ও তাঁর রচনার অনুকরণের ফলে বাংলা কাব্য অন্ততঃ শিল্প-সম্পদের দিক

দিয়ে খুব সমৃদ্ধ হ'য়ে উঠেছে। প্রথমতঃ ছন্দের কথাই বলা যাক। আজকাল নান্য বৈচিত্র্যময় চরণ ও স্তবকের গঠন, এবং সেই বৈচিত্র্যের মধ্যে ছন্দের মাত্রা, স্বরধ্বনি ও ব্যঞ্জনধ্বনির সৌম্য, স্বাভাবিক উচ্চারণ রীতির সঙ্গে তালের সামঞ্জস্য ইত্যাদি নিখুঁত রেখে কাব্য রচনার ক্ষমতা অনেক লেখকের মধ্যেই দেখা যায়। এই সাবলীলতা আজকাল এত সাধারণ হ'য়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে যে বাংলা কবিতার এই দিকে সামান্য ঝলনও আমাদের পীড়া দেয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রভাবের ফলেই বিলম্বিত লয়ের আধুনিক মাত্রাছন্দ, এবং ছড়ার ছন্দ আজকাল এত জনপ্রিয় হ'য়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে, এবং একই সব ছন্দের চটুল ও বিচিত্র বন্ধার আজকালকার বাংলা কবিতার একটা বিশিষ্ট লক্ষণ হ'য়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। 'বলাকা'র ছন্দে রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রতিভা যে অভূতপূর্ব ও অসাধারণ উদ্ভাবনী শক্তির পরিচয় দিয়েছে, তা-ও আজকাল আর অভিনব ব'লে মনে হয় না; সেই স্মৃষ্টি ছন্দ-ও যে আজকাল বাংলার কাব্য সাহিত্যে চলতি হয়ে গেছে, এতেই আধুনিক বাংলা কাব্যের শক্তির অশ্রুতম পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। তবে রবীন্দ্রনাথ খুব সম্প্রতি গুণ কবিতার যে ধরণের ছন্দ চালাবার চেষ্টা করছেন, তার ভবিষ্যৎ সম্বন্ধে এখনও কিছু নিশ্চয় ক'রে বলা যায় না। এ ছন্দের রীতি ও রহস্য আয়ত্ত করা স্মৃষ্টি, আপাততঃ ধারা এই ছন্দে রচনার চেষ্টা করছেন তাঁদের প্রয়াস সফল হয়েছে বলা যায় না।*

ছন্দ ছাড়া কাব্যের ভাষা ও বাক্যবিশ্রাসের দিক দিয়েও রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রতিভা একটা সফল বিস্তার করেছে। ভাষার দীনতা ও পঙ্ক্ততার জন্ম কাব্যের ভাব ফুটে উঠতে পারছে না, এ অপবাদ অন্ততঃ আজকালকার বাংলা কবিদের দেওয়া যায় না। বরং আগেকার দিনের বাংলা কবিদের লেখার সঙ্গে এখনকার কবিদের রচনার তুলনা করলে একটা অস্বাভাবিক ওজ্জ্বল্য যেন আমাদের ধাঁধা লাগিয়ে দেয়। বরং কখন কখন মনে হয় যে শব্দের বন্ধার, অলঙ্কারের বাহুল্য, বাক্যচ্ছটার তীব্রতা, কবি-কল্পনার বিলাস ইত্যাদি উপকরণে কাব্যের আসল রূপটি প্রায় চাপা পড়ে গেছে। কখনও কখনও এ ছাড়াও সন্দেহ হয় যে হয়ত কেবল বাইরের চটক-ই এ রকম কাব্যে আছে, কাব্যের আসল প্রাণটি—খাঁটি প্রেরণা, অম্লভূতি, নিজস্ব ভাব—হয়ত নেই।

আজকালকার বাংলা কবিতা প্রায় সমস্তই গীতিকা অথবা (একটা সেক্ষেত্রে কথার) চুটুকি-জাতীয়। অবশ্য এটা আধুনিক কালের যুরোপীয় লিরিক কবিতার প্রভাবের ফল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ "আমি নীরব মহাকাব্য সংরচণে" ব'লে কবিতাটিতে তাঁর প্রতিভার যে লক্ষণটির ইঙ্গিত করেছেন, সেই লক্ষণটি এখন বাংলা কাব্যের মজাগত

* এ সম্বন্ধে মংগ্রনিত Studies in the Rhythm of Bengali Prose & Prose-verse (Journal of the Dept. of Letters., Cal. Univer., Vol. xxxii) ১৪৪।

হ'য়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। এটা সম্পূর্ণ ভাল কিনা বলা শক্ত। কবি সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত তাঁর “হসন্তিকা”র ‘চুটকি’ কবিতাটার হাত্তোজ্জ্বল ভঙ্গীতে এ সম্পর্কে অনেক তর্কের আভাস দিয়েছেন। চুটকিতেই হয়ত আজকালকার মনের ও অমুভূতির বিশিষ্ট প্রকাশ সম্ভব। হয়ত তথাকথিত মহাকাব্যের বা সেকেলে ধরণের এপিকের মিল আর নেই। তবুও মনে হয় যে চুটকি কবিতা ছাড়াও বড় কবিতার একটা স্থান সব সময়েই থাকবে। কিন্তু আজকালকার বাংলা সাহিত্যে কাব্যপ্রতিভার পরিপ্রসারের নিদর্শন স্বরূপ কোন রচনা পাওয়া যায় না। The West Land-র মত ব্যাপক দৃষ্টি নিয়ে কোন কবিতাও যে সম্প্রতি রচনা হবে তার আশা করাই শক্ত। †

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গত পঁচিশ বছরে বাংলা কাব্যে মাত্র একজনই সত্য সত্য বড় কবি দেখা গেছে,— তিনি রবীন্দ্রনাথ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ অবশ্য বহুকাল আগে থেকেই উৎকৃষ্ট কাব্য রচনা ক'রে এসেছেন, কিন্তু তাঁর কাব্যজীবনের বিশেষত্ব এই যে কোন কালেই তাঁর ‘নিরুদ্দেশ যাত্রা’ একেবারে শেষ হ'য়ে যায় নি, সব সময়েই তিনি নতুন ক'রে জীবনকে দেখবার ও অনুভব করবার চেষ্টা করেছেন। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ কখনও পুরোণো, সেকেলে হ'য়ে যান নি,— আজও তিনি নবীন।

এই যুগের প্রথমেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁহার ‘বলাকা’র কবিতাগুলি রচনা করেন। অনেক দিক দিয়ে এই কবিতাগুলি রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যেও অতুলনীয়। ছন্দের গৌরব, ভাষার গাভীর্ষ্য, অমুভূতির তীব্রতা, দৃষ্টির পরিধি, উপলক্ষের গভীরতা, আধ্যাত্মিক জ্ঞানের দীপ্তি ইত্যাদি অনেক হিসাবে এই সব কবিতাগুলির একটা বিশিষ্ট গৌরব আছে। এখানে তিনি মানব-আত্মাকে যে মুক্তির অভয়বাণী শুনিয়েছেন তার সমতুল্য কিছু বাংলা সাহিত্যে আছে ব'লে জানি না। ‘পলাতকা’র কবিতাগুলিতেও এই ধরণের অন্তর্দৃষ্টি সাধারণ জীবনের কয়েকটি ঘটনার বিবৃতির মধ্যে দেখতে পাওয়া যায়।

এর পরে প্রবাহিনী, পূর্ববী এবং তার পরের কাব্যগ্রন্থগুলিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যজীবনের আর এক অধ্যায়ের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। পার্থিব জীবনের যে যে দিক তিনি আগে দেখেছিলেন, সে সব দিক এখন আর তাঁর দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছে না। জীবনের নানা পরিবর্তন, ক্রন্দ ও ছঃখের আড়ালে যে চিরন্তন স্তর রয়ে গেছে, তাই এখন তাঁর

† এ কথাও উল্লেখযোগ্য যে আজকাল বাংলা দেশে কোন বখাড়া নাট্যসাহিত্য নেই। এতেও জাতীয় সাহিত্যের প্রতিভার একটা দুর্বলতাই সূচিত হয়।

প্রাণে একান্ত সত্য হ'য়ে ক্লেজে উঠেছে। সেই সুরের জালে তিনি বার্ককোও এক নবীন যৌবনের স্বপ্ন তৈরি করছেন।

এই ভাবে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যপ্রতিভা “অজানা হইতে অজানার” বরাবর এগিয়ে চলেছে, তাঁর কাব্যে মানব-আত্মার অভিনব অভিজ্ঞতার, তাঁর জয়বাত্রার পরিচয় পাই। ঠিক এই জিনিষটা—এই নিজস্ব একটা উপলব্ধির, একটা আধ্যাত্মিক অভিব্যক্তির পরিচয় অত্যন্ত কবিদের লেখায় পাওয়া যায় না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরে যারা লিখেছেন তাঁদের দুজনের মধ্যে একটা ষথার্থ কবিপ্রতিভা ছিল। একজন—সত্যেন্দ্র দত্ত, অপরজন—নজরুল ইসলাম। সত্যেন্দ্র দত্তের অকাল মৃত্যুতে বাংলা সাহিত্যের একটা বিষম ক্ষতি হয়েছে। কিন্তু তিনি বেঁচে থাকতে থাকতে যে সমস্ত কবিতা রচনা ক'রে গেছেন, তাঁর পরিমাণ-ও সামান্য নয়। দুঃখের বিষয় তাঁর ষথার্থ কবিপ্রতিভা তাতে ঠিক ছুট ওঠে নি। সত্যেন্দ্র দত্তকে ‘ছন্দের যাদুকর’ বলা হ'ত। যাদুকরের মতই তিনি ছন্দ নিয়ে নানারকম অদ্ভুত ওস্তাদি ও কায়দা দেখাতে পারতেন। কিন্তু অনেক সময় “সিদ্ধাই” লাইভ কলে’ যেমন আধ্যাত্মিক উন্নতির পথ রুদ্ধ হ'য়ে যায়, সত্যেন্দ্র দত্তেরও তাই প্রায় হয়েছিল। ছন্দের কসরৎ ও কায়দা যে কাব্যের একটা লক্ষ্য বা উপজীব্য হ'তে পারে না, তা' তিনি প্রায় ভুলেই গেছিলেন। “হোমশিখা” প্রভৃতি আগেকার রচনায় একটা নিজস্ব উপলব্ধির যে সূচনা দেখতে পাওয়া যায়, তা' আর পরে বিকশিত হ'ল না। অথচ সত্যেন্দ্র দত্তের মধ্যে ছন্দ, ভাষা, কল্পনা, উচ্চ আদর্শ, আবেগ প্রভৃতি কাব্যের সব উপাদানই ছিল, তিনি লিখেছেনও নানা বিষয়ে; কিন্তু তিনি চমৎকার “সাময়িক কবি” হ'য়েই জীবন কাটিয়ে দিলেন, বাংলা কাব্যে একটা স্থায়ী বা নিজস্ব কিছু দিয়ে গেলেন না।

নজরুল ইসলাম এখনও জীবিত, কিন্তু তাঁর সশব্দেও প্রায় সেই আক্ষেপ করা যায়। তিনি বাংলা কাব্যে একটা নতুন সুর এক সময়ে এনেছিলেন। তাঁর বিদ্রোহ-ভাবাত্মক কবিতাগুলি রসের দিক দিয়ে উচ্চশ্রেণীর না হতেও পারে, হয়ত তার মধ্যে “sound and fury”-র প্রাচুর্য কিছু বেশী, তবু তারা যে একটা সাড়া এনেছিল তা' অস্বীকার করা যায় না। তাঁর প্রেমের কবিতাগুলি বোধ হয় কবিত্বের হিসাবে বর ভাল। তবে একটা অস্পষ্ট রোম্যান্টিক আকুলতা ছাড়া আর কিছু বোধ হয় তাতে নেই। যাই হোক তাঁর লেখা দেখে যে একটা আশা করা গেল, তা' বোধ হয় ফলবতী হ'ল না। আজকাল নজরুল যা লিখে যাচ্ছেন, তার মধ্যে কোন মৌলিক কবিপ্রতিভার প্রকাশ দেখা যায় না।

এঁরা ছাড়া আরও অনেকে এই পঁচিশ বছরের মধ্যে কবিতা লিখেছেন, যাদের রচনাকে ‘ভাল হয়েছে’ বা ‘বেশ হয়েছে’ বলা যায়। কিন্তু তাঁদের কাউকে ‘কবি’

আখ্যা দেওয়া যাবে কিনা, বাংলা কাব্যের ইতিহাসে তাঁদের একটা স্থায়ী আসন হবে কিনা খুব সন্দেহ। বেহারীলাল চক্রবর্তী, সুরেন্দ্রনাথ মজুমদার, অক্ষয় বড়াল ইত্যাদির সময় থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পর্যন্ত বাংলা গীতি-কবিতার যে সুর ও ভাব চলে আসছে তাই অবলম্বন করে তাঁরা সুপরিচিত নানা বিষয়ে কবিতা রচনা করে গেছেন। কিন্তু সেই পর্যন্তই। তাঁদের রচনাকৌশল সত্ত্বেও কবি হিসাবে তাঁদের লাঘবতা দেখে Coleridge-র সেই কথাই মনে পড়ে—“No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher।”

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অল্পদিন হ'ল কয়েক জন নতুন লেখক বেরিয়েছেন, যারা বাংলা কাব্যে একটা নতুন ধরণ আনবার চেষ্টা করছেন। অতি আধুনিক ইংরেজি কাব্যে যে একটা শিকল-ভাঙার দল বেরিয়েছে এঁরা তাঁদেরই স্পষ্ট ও প্রকাশ্য অনুকরণ করছেন। কিন্তু তাঁদের প্রয়াস কাব্য হিসাবে কিছু হচ্ছে কি না সে বিষয়ে অনেকেরই সন্দেহ রয়ে গেছে। অবশ্য অনুকরণ মাত্রেরই যে দোষের তা' নয়। Virgil-ও Homer-র অনুকরণ করেছিলেন, আমাদের দেশে মধুসূদন ও বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র অনুকরণ করেই বর্তমান বাংলা সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি করে গেছেন। কিন্তু অনেক সময়ই এই নবীন লেখকদের প্রয়াস—অক্ষয়ের অনুকরণ হয় ব'লেই ব্যর্থ হচ্ছে। তা' ছাড়া অনুকারকদের সর্বদাই মনে রাখা দরকার যে নতুন সৃষ্টিও পুরাতনের মধ্যে লুকিয়ে থাকে। ছন্দে মধুসূদন Milton-র অনুকরণ করেছিলেন, কিন্তু তিনি তাঁর ছবছ নকল করেন নি। বাংলা পয়ারের মধ্যে কি শক্তি নিহিত আছে, কি করে পয়ারকে ভেঙেই বাংলায় মির্টনি গান্ধীর্ষের অমিতাক্ষর তৈরি হ'তে পারে, এটুকু বোঝার প্রতিভা তাঁর ছিল। আজকাল যারা বিলিতি অনুকরণে গন্ত ছন্দে কবিতা লেখার চেষ্টা করছেন, তাঁদের রূতকার্য হ'তে গেলে মধুসূদনের মত অন্তর্দৃষ্টি ও সৃষ্টি ক্ষমতার পরিচয় দিতে হবে, নইলে “নৈব নৈব চ”। ভাবের দিক দিয়েও মনে হয় যে এঁরা ধারের উপরই কাজ চালাবার চেষ্টা করছেন, কাজেই এঁদের লেখা মনে কোন সাড়া আসে না। এঁরা ভুলে যান যে, বইপড়া বিচার যে প্রতিধ্বনি আমাদের মস্তিষ্কে থেকে যায় সেটা আর কবিজনোচিত মৌলিক অনুভূতি ও অভিজ্ঞতা এ ছোটো কখনই এক জিনিষ নয়। ভগবানের মহিমা সম্বন্ধে একটা প্রবন্ধ লেখা সহজ, কিন্তু এক লাইন কবিতা লেখা বড় শক্ত; বিলিতি কাব্য পড়া, এমন কি তার তাৎপর্য গ্রহণ করাও সহজ, কিন্তু তারই অনুকরণে বাংলায়

কবিতা লেখা খুব শক্ত কাজ। তাই আজকালকার কবিদের বলতে ইচ্ছা করে "Once read *thy* heart aright"।

তবে ক্ষমতা যে এঁদের মধ্যে নেই তা' নয়। ভাবার উপর বেশ একটা দখল অনেকেরই আছে। মাঝে মাঝে চমৎকার কল্পনাময়, ছন্দের ঝঙ্কারময় ছোটো চারটে লাইন দেখতে পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু সমগ্রভাবে একটা মৌলিক প্রতিভা কাব্যে হুটে উঠতে পাচ্ছে না।

বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে এখন একটা যুগসন্ধির সময় যাচ্ছে। এ সময়ে হয়ত কবিতার উৎকর্ষ আশা করাই চলে না। কিন্তু চণ্ডীদাস-রবীন্দ্রনাথের দেশে আবার কাব্যের নবীন জ্যোতিঃ দেখা দেবে, এ আশা অন্ততঃ আমরা পোষণ কর্তে পারি। ততদিন পর্যন্ত রসপিপাসু হৃদয়কে আশ্বাস দিতে পারি "জাগত রহ, চাতকী, হিয়া করি পুরত"।

আচার্য জগদীশচন্দ্র বসু

অধ্যাপক ত্রীচারুচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য

তখন স্কুলে পড়ি। সাপ্তাহিক 'বঙ্গবাসী' কাগজে একটি প্রবন্ধ দেখিলাম— 'জয় জগদীশ'। ভগবানের স্তুতিগান নয়; জগদীশচন্দ্র বসু নামে এক বাঙালী এমন সব বৈজ্ঞানিক আবিষ্কার করিতেছেন যাহাতে পাশ্চাত্য দেশের বৈজ্ঞানিকমণ্ডলী চমৎকৃত হইয়া যাইতেছেন। পরে আর একদিন এক কাগজে চারিজন ভারতবাসীর নাম প্রকাশিত হইল যাহারা নিজেদের কৃতিত্বে ভারতবাসীর মুখ উজ্জ্বল করিতেছেন। (১) সুরেশ বিশ্বাস—ইনি ব্রেজিলে গিয়া তথাকার সৈন্য পরিচালনা করিতেছেন, (২) অতুল চট্টোপাধ্যায়—ইনি আই-সি-এস পরীক্ষায় প্রথম স্থান অধিকার করিয়াছেন, (৩) রঞ্জিত সিং—বিলাতে গিয়া ক্রিকেট খেলায় ইনি সাহেবদিগকে হারাইয়া দিতেছেন আর (৪) জগদীশচন্দ্র বসু। কোন্ নাম আগে ছিল, কোন্ নাম পরে ছিল মনে নাই। তখন স্বদেশীযুগও আরম্ভ হয় নাই এবং বয়সও অল্প, কিন্তু তবুও ভারতবাসীর এই গৌরবের কথায় মনটা ভরিয়া উঠিল। কোনো দিন কি ইহাদের কাহাকেও চাক্ষুষ দেখিতে পাইব না?

কালস্রোতে কল্পনার ক্ষেত্রে হইতে তিনটি নাম ধীরে ধীরে মুছিয়া গেল, শেষেরটি শুধু জাগিয়া রহিল। এফ্-এ পাস করিয়া প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজে ভর্তি হইলাম, কিন্তু জগদীশচন্দ্রকে দেখিতে পাইলাম না, তিনি তখন বিলাতে। তাঁহাকে চাক্ষুষ দেখিলাম ১৯০৩ সালে যখন এম-এ ক্লাসে আমরা তাঁহার ছাত্র। ইহার পূর্ব দুই বৎসর আচার্য প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র রায়ের নিকট পড়িয়াছি, এখন জগদীশচন্দ্রের সান্নিধ্যে আসিলাম। অল্পদিনের মধ্যে এই দুই মনীষীর ব্যক্তিগত পার্থক্য ছাত্রমণ্ডলীর নিকট প্রতিভাত হইল। প্রফুল্লচন্দ্রের কাছে যাইতাম, পুস্তকের কথা ছাড়া অন্যান্য কথার আলোচনা হইত; তাঁহাকে শুধু ভক্তি করিতাম না, তাঁহাকে ভালবাসিতাম। জগদীশচন্দ্রের ব্যক্তিত্ব, তাঁহার প্রতিভা দূর হইতে আমাদের মনে শ্রদ্ধা জাগাইত; শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে একটু ভয়ও মিশান থাকিত। ছাত্রদের সহিত তিনি কলেজে বাংলায় কথাবার্তা কহিতেন না, কোন বাজে কথা বলিতেন না। প্রফুল্লচন্দ্রের সহিত যে ভাবে কথা হইত তাহার একটু নমুনা দিই। পদার্থ বিজ্ঞানের অধ্যাপক জ্যাকসন সাহেব আমাদের কাছে একদিন কি একটা রূঢ় কথা বলেন; বসু, তাহার পরদিন আমরা তাঁহার ক্লাসে গেলাম না। অবশ্য ইহার জন্য অধ্যক্ষ প্রসন্নকুমার রায় আমাদের কাছে এক টাকা করিয়া জরিমানা করেন; কিন্তু সে কথা থাক। কয়েক দিন পরে প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র আমাদের কয়েকজনের সহিত এ বিষয় আলোচনা করিতেছিলেন। তিনি বলিলেন—দেখ

জ্যাকসন সাহেব কি একটা সামান্য কথা বলেচে তার জন্ত তোমরা এতবড় একটা কাণ্ড ক'রে বসলে, আর আমি তো সদাসর্বদা তোমাদিগকে গালাগালি করচি, কিন চড় লাথি অবধি মারচি, কৈ আমাকে তো কিছুই বল না। আমাদের মধ্যে একটি ছেলে চট্ করিয়া বলিয়া উঠিল—কি জানেন শ্রাব, যে গরুটা ছুধ দেয়, তার ছুটো চাটোও সওয়া যায়। অবশ্য ভাষাটা ভদ্রতার সীমা ছাড়াইয়া গিয়াছিল, কিন্তু সেটা ভালবাসার আতিশয়ো। জগদীশচন্দ্রকে এইরূপ কথা বলা দূরে থাকুক তাঁহার নিকটে গিয়া কোন পড়ার কথা আলোচনা করা কোন ছাত্রের সাহসে কুলাইত না, অথচ ছাত্রদের প্রতি তাঁহার মেহ ও দরদ ছিল অসামান্য। বহুদিন পরে বস্তু-বিজ্ঞান-মন্দির প্রতিষ্ঠার সময় তাঁহার পূর্বতন ছাত্রদিগকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া তিনি বলেন—আমার সম্মুখে আমার অনেক প্রাজ্ঞ ছাত্র দেখিতেছি যাহারা জীবনের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে উচ্চতর দায়িত্ব ও বিশ্বাসভাজনতার পদে প্রতিষ্ঠিত। তাঁহাদের কৃতিত্ব আমার জীবনকে গৌরবান্বিত করিয়াছে। যাহারা জীবনে বশ ও সাফল্যলাভ করিয়াছেন আমি শুধু তাঁহাদের কথা বলিতেছি না, আমার অনেক ছাত্রের কথা বলিতেছি যাহারা পৌরুষের সহিত জীবনের দুর্বলতার মাথায় তুলিয়া লইয়াছেন এবং যাহাদের পবিত্র ও নিঃস্বার্থ জীবন অনেকের দুঃখময় জীবনে আনন্দের রশ্মিপাত করিয়াছে।

আগে শুনিয়াছিলাম যে জগদীশচন্দ্র প্রথম বার্ষিক শ্রেণী ও তৃতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণীতে পড়ান। এবার বিলাত হইতে ফিরিয়া আসিবার পর তখন তিনি আর প্রথম বার্ষিক শ্রেণীতে পড়াইতেন না, শুধু তৃতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণীতে সপ্তাহে একদিন না দুইদিন বক্তৃতা দিতেন। আমরা বি-এর কোঠা তখন পার হইয়াছি স্নতরাং ক্লাসে বসিয়া তাঁহার বক্তৃতা শুনা আর ঘটনা উঠিল না। কিন্তু অনেকদিন তাঁহার দৃষ্টিপথের বাহিরে থাকিয়া অনেক বক্তৃতা শুনিয়াছি। দুর্লভ বৈজ্ঞানিক তথ্য পরিষ্কার প্রাজ্ঞ ভাষায় এইভাবে প্রকাশ করা যাহা খুব দুর্বল মেধার ছাত্রেরও অন্তস্তলে গিয়া পৌঁছায়, সেই রকম বক্তৃতা পূর্বে বা পরে আর শুনিয়াছি বলিয়া মনে হয় না। ঘণ্টা বাজিবার অনেক পরে তিনি যাইতেন, ঘণ্টা শেষ হইবার আগেই ছাড়িয়া দিতেন, কিন্তু এই অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে যাহা বলিতেন তাহা অতুলনীয়। এই প্রসঙ্গে একটি ঘটনার কথা মনে পড়ে। লর্ড কারমাইকেল ও অনেক গণ্যমান্য ব্যক্তির উপস্থিতিতে জগদীশচন্দ্র একটি বক্তৃতা দিবে। তোড় জোড় হইতেছে, বহু নূতন পরীক্ষার বন্দোবস্ত হইতেছে। স্থির হইল রিহারসাল হিসাবে পূর্বে একদিন তৃতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণীর ছাত্রদের নিকট ঐ বক্তৃতাটি দেওয়া হইবে। বক্তৃতা হইল, কিন্তু আমাদের তেমন ভাল লাগিল না, বক্তৃতাটি সরুপ উচ্চস্তরে উঠিল না। আচার্যদেবকে কিছু বলিলাম না। নির্দিষ্ট দিনে বহু লোকের সম্মুখে আবার ঐ বক্তৃতাটি হইল। অপূর্ব! এইবার বলিলাম—আজ তো চমৎকার হইল,

কিন্তু সেদিন তেমন হয় নাই। তিনি বলিলেন—কি জান, সেদিন আরম্ভ করিয়াই দেখি সামনের বেঞ্চে একটি ছেলে ঘুমাইতেছে, তাহার দিকে তাকাই আর কি বলিব ভুলিয়া যাই। ঐরাবতের যখন এই অবস্থা তখন আমাদের চুনা-পুঁটি দলের শিক্ষকদের কি দশা আমাদের ছাত্রবাবাজীরা যেন স্মরণে রাখেন।

জগদীশচন্দ্রের যে সকল অগণিত ছাত্র কেবলমাত্র কলেজে তাঁহার সংস্পর্শে আসিয়া-ছিলেন তাঁহারা কিন্তু ভিতরের মানুষটির সম্যক পরিচয় পাইয়া যান নাই। তখনকার দিনে পাশ্চাত্য দেশ হইতে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ডিগ্রী লইয়া সরকারি কলেজে চাকুরি গ্রহণ করিয়া ট্যাই হাট ত্যাগ করার মধ্যে যে যথেষ্ট তেজস্বিতা আছে তাঁহারা শুধু এইটুকু মাত্র দেখিয়া গিয়াছেন। তাঁহারা শুধু দেখিয়াছেন, তিনি তাঁহার পুস্তক To my countrymen this book is dedicated বলিয়া উৎসর্গ করিতেছেন এবং বসু-বিজ্ঞান-মন্দির তাহার গাত্রে এই লেখাগুলি বহন করিতেছে—

ভারতের গৌরব ও জগতের কল্যাণ কামনায়

এই বিজ্ঞান মন্দির দেব-চরণে নিবেদন করিলাম।

তাঁহারা কাগজে পড়িয়াছেন, Public Service Commission-এ সাক্ষ্য দিবার কালে যখন তাঁহাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করা হয়, একজন ভারতবাসী অপেক্ষা একজন সাহেবের বেশি টাকার প্রয়োজন হয় কি না, তিনি তৎক্ষণাৎ উত্তর দেন, আমাদিগকে বেশি টাকা দিলে আমরাও আহাশ্বকের মত খরচ করিতে পারি; কিন্তু জগদীশচন্দ্রের দেশপ্রেম যে কতদূর গভীর ছিল তাহার অনেক কথা চিরদিন হয়ত অপ্রকাশিত থাকিবে।

জগদীশচন্দ্রের দৈনন্দিন জীবনযাত্রা খুব সাদাসিদে রকমের ছিল। কলেজ হইতে বাড়ি গিয়া চায়ের সহিত তিনি খাইতেন মুড়ি। মনে পড়ে সেদিনকার কথা। ময়মনসিংহে বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য সম্মিলনে তিনি সভাপতি নির্বাচিত হইয়াছেন। কলেজে এক টেলিগ্রাম আসিল, অভ্যর্থনা সমিতির সভাপতি মহারাজা কুমুদচন্দ্র সিংহ জানিতে চান জগদীশচন্দ্র ময়মনসিংহে গিয়া European style বা Indian style এ থাকিবেন। টেলিগ্রামটি পড়িয়া তিনি বলিলেন—এদের কি করিয়া মনে আসিতে পারে যে আমি সেখানে European style এ থাকিতে পারি; কতদিন পরে আমি আমার জন্মভূমির ক্রোড়ে ফিরিয়া যাইতেছি!

জগদীশচন্দ্রের গাভীর সাধারণত লোককে দূরে রাখিত; কিন্তু এটা তাঁহার জীবনের শুধু একটা দিক। অল্পদিকটার একটু পরিচয় দিই। একদিন কলেজে দেখা গেল তিনি এক টুকরা কাগজ হাতে করিয়া ঘুরিতেছেন, কাগজে বড় বড় অক্ষরে লেখা—‘চটও না’। আমরা তো কিছুই বুঝিলাম না; আস্তে আস্তে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলাম—

ও-কথার মানে কি ? সেইদিন তিনি কলেজ হইতে Public Service Commission স্বাক্ষর দিতে যাইবেন। বলিলেন—ওরা আমাকে চটাইতে চেষ্টা করিবে, চটিলে যা ভা হয়ত বলিয়া বসিব ; সামনে ঐ কাগজটা ধরিয়া বসিয়া থাকিব। আর একদিন বাড়ির এক ঘটনার কথা বলিতেছেন—আমার চাকরটার কাণ্ড শোন ; লেডি বস্তু যখন বাহিরে থাকেন তখন আমার টাকার দরকার হইলে বড়ই মুশ্বিলে পড়ি, তাই লেডি বস্তু নিকট হইতে ১০০ টাকার একখানা নোট চাহিয়া লইলাম ; কিন্তু রাখি কোথায় ? ড্রয়ারের তো চাবি নাই, আর চাকরটার একটু হাতটান আছে ; এদিক ওদিক চাহিয়া যখন দেখিলাম চাকরটা নাই তখন আলমারির একখানি বইয়ের মধ্যে নোটখানি লুকাইয়া রাখিলাম। কিছুদিন পরে টাকার দরকার হইল ; নোট বাহির করিতে গেলাম, এ-বই খুঁজি ও-বই খুঁজি কোথাও নোট পাই না, কোন বইটার রাখিয়াছি ভুলিয়া গিয়াছি ; চাকরটা ছিল সেখানে দাঁড়াইয়া ; আমার এই অবস্থা দেখিয়া সে আসিয়া বলিল—আপনি নোট খুঁজছেন তো ? সেটা ঐ বইটার মধ্যে আছে। জগদীশচন্দ্রের অনেক সরস গল্পের পুঁজি ছিল। একদিন এক গল্প বলিতেছেন—এক পণ্ডিত মহাশয় ছাত্রদিগকে বিদ্যাসাগর মহাশয়ের আখ্যানমঞ্জরী পড়াইতেছেন। পুস্তকের একস্থানে আছে—তিনি সঙ্গীক বিয়েনা হইতে সেন্টপিটার্জবর্গে যাত্রা করিলেন। অবশু বিয়েনা যে Vienna শহর পণ্ডিত মহাশয়ের তাহা জানা ছিল না। ছাত্র উঠিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করিল—আচ্ছা পণ্ডিত মহাশয়, বিয়ে-না হইতে অথচ সঙ্গীক, কি করিয়া হইল। পণ্ডিত মহাশয় মহা ফাঁপরে পড়িলেন, কিন্তু তৎক্ষণাৎ সামলাইয়া বলিয়া উঠিলেন—ওদের ওরকম হয়, ওদের ওরকম হয়।

তখনকার দিনে পূর্ববঙ্গের ছেলেদিগকে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের ছেলেরা—‘বাঙাল’ বলিয়া খেপাইত, আর শুধু ছেলে মহলে নয় বয়স্ক লোকের মধ্যে এটা চলিত ছিল। জগদীশচন্দ্র ছিলেন পূর্ববঙ্গবাসী, তিনিও এদেশের লোকেদের উপর মাঝে মাঝে চিহ্নটি কাটিতেন। একদিন বলিতেছেন—ওহে তোমাদের দেশের ছেলেদের বীরত্বের কথা শোন ; তখন আমি চন্দননগরে থাকি, একদিন এম-এ ক্লাশের ছাত্রদিগকে চন্দননগরে লইয়া যাইতেছি ; নৈহাটি দিয়া গঙ্গা পার হইয়া যাইব ; নৌকায় উঠিয়াছি, দেখি একটি ছেলে দুই হাতে প্রাণপণে নৌকাটি ধরিয়া চক্ষু বুজিয়া বসিয়া আছে, মুখখানা বিবর্ণ হইয়া গিয়াছে ; জিজ্ঞাসা করিলাম, তোমার কি হইয়াছে ? ছেলেটি বলিল—Sir, I have never been to sea before ; sea-ই বটে ; এই তো তোমাদের বীরত্ব ; আর একটা ‘বাঙাল’ ছেলেকে দেখতো, কি রকম সাঁতার দেয়। আর একদিন এক মজার ঘটনা ঘটিয়াছিল। বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষদে তখন ভয়ানক দলাদলি, একদিকে প্রবীণরা আর একদিকে নবীনরা ; জগদীশচন্দ্র সর্বসম্মতিক্রমে সভাপতি নির্বাচিত হইয়াছেন। একদিন সকালে তিনি

বসু-বিজ্ঞান-মন্দিরের বাগানে বেড়াইতেছেন, আচার্য রায়চন্দ্রস্বামীর ত্রিবেদী আসিলেন। তিনি প্রবীণ দলের একজন, নবীনদের সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করিতে করিতে ঐ দলের একজনের সম্বন্ধে বলিলেন—দেখুন, হেম দাশগুপ্ত যে লোক খারাপ তা নয়, তবে কি জানেন, ‘বাঙাল’, একটু উদ্ধত; বলিয়াই কিন্তু ত্রিবেদী মহাশয়ের হুঁস হইল কাহার নিকট বলিতেছেন বাঙাল; ত্রিবেদী মহাশয় পিছু হঠিতে লাগিলেন। ত্রিবেদী মহাশয় ছিলেন জগদীশচন্দ্রের ছাত্র, জগদীশচন্দ্র তাঁহাকে ডাকিয়া বলিলেন—কি বলিলে, বাঙাল হইলেই উদ্ধত হয়? বাঙালরা তোমাদের দেশের লোকের চেয়ে অনেক বিষয়ে ভাল, তবে, হাঁ, একটা বিষয় মানি, বাঙালদের sense of humour বড় কম। কথাটা সত্য কিনা জানি না, যদি সত্য হয় তো বলিতে হইবে জগদীশচন্দ্র ছিলেন ঐ নিয়মের ব্যতিক্রম।

আমাদের দেশের ছাত্রদিগের স্বাস্থ্য দিন দিন খারাপ হইয়া যাইতেছে এইটা তাঁহাকে বরাবর পীড়া দিত। ছাত্রেরা ঘরের বাহিরে খেলাধুলা করিবে, দৌড়ঝাঁপ করিবে, সাঁতার কাটিবে এই ছিল তাঁহার আন্তরিক বাসনা। বাস্যে তিনিও এইভাবে মানুষ হইয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার বাল্যজীবনের একটা ঘটনা বড় চমৎকার। জগদীশচন্দ্রের বয়স তখন ছয় বৎসর, তাঁহার পিতা তাঁহার জন্ম একটি টাট্টু ঘোড়া কিনিয়া দিয়াছেন। বালক জগদীশচন্দ্র অদ্ভুত সাহসের সহিত ঘোড়ায় চড়িয়া বেড়ায়। ফরিদপুরে তখন জগদীশচন্দ্রের পিতা ডেপুটি ম্যাজিস্ট্রেট; ফরিদপুরে একটি ঘোড়দৌড়ের আয়োজন হইয়াছে, অনেক ঘোড়সওয়ার উপস্থিত; বালক জগদীশচন্দ্র তাহার টাট্টু চড়িয়া এই ঘোড়দৌড় দেখিতে আসিয়াছে। দর্শকমণ্ডলীর একজন রহস্য করিয়া বলিল—থোকা, তুমিও দৌড়াও না। থোকা গম্ভীরভাবে এই প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করিল এবং ঘোড়দৌড় যখন আরম্ভ হইল থোকাও তাহার টাট্টু কে ছুট লাগাইল। ক্ষুদ্র পা দুখানি দিয়া জিন চাপিয়া ধরিয়াছে; দেহ ক্ষতবিক্ষত হইয়া যাইতেছে; দৃকপাত নাই, থোকা আনন্দে মশগুল হইয়া দৌড়িতেছে; অবশেষে বিরাট জনতার বিপুল জয়ধ্বনির মধ্যে থোকা ফিরিয়া আসিল, অবশ্য সবার পশ্চাতে; কিন্তু মনের ভাব, যেন সেই বাজিমাং করিয়া আসিয়াছে। দেহের ক্ষতের কথা কিছুই বলিল না, অবশেষে লোকে যখন দেখিল রক্ত বারিতেছে তখন তাহাকে বাড়ি পাঠান হইল।

মধ্য বয়সে জগদীশচন্দ্র কলেজের অবকাশ সময়ে প্রাচীন ভারতের শিক্ষা ও সংস্কৃতির কেন্দ্রসমূহ, ভারতের বিভিন্ন তীর্থস্থান, ভারতের কীর্তিগাথা মুখরিত বহু জনপদ পর্যটন করিয়া আসেন। প্রথম বৎসর তিনি বুদ্ধের স্মৃতিস্তূপ সাঁচি দর্শন করিয়া আসেন এবং তথা হইতে নর্মদা ও তাপ্তীর সংযোগ স্থানে উপস্থিত হইয়া স্থানীয় পুরাতন মন্দিরগুলি পরিদর্শন করেন। একবার রাজপুত শৌর্ধের কেন্দ্র চিতোর গমন করেন।

স্বাস্থ্যের জন্ত এক ছুটিতে আলমোড়ায় কিছুদিন বাস করিয়া তথা হইতে পিণ্ডারি হিমশৈলের দিকে যাত্রা করেন। ভূ-স্বর্গ কাশ্মীরে ছুইবার অবস্থান করেন। অল্প একবার ভুবনেশ্বরের মন্দির, উদয়গিরি, পুরী, কনারক দর্শন করিয়া আসেন। এক বৎসর ইলোরার ও অজন্তার গুহাচিত্র অবলোকন করিতে যান। আর এক বৎসর শিখর্মের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা গুরুগোবিন্দ সিংহের জন্মস্থান ও অমৃতসরের স্বর্গমন্দির দেখিয়া আসেন। প্রাচীন ভারতের শিক্ষাকেন্দ্র নাগন্দায় গমন করেন এবং তক্ষশীলার খননকার্য পরিদর্শন করেন। উত্তরে বদরীনাথ, কেদারনাথ হইতে দক্ষিণে মাদুরা, রামেশ্বরম্ প্রভৃতি তীর্থস্থান ঘুরিয়া আসেন। পথবাট তখন আরও দুর্গম ছিল, কিন্তু জীবনে জগদীশচন্দ্রের নিকট কোন বাধাই অনতিক্রম্য ছিল না। একবার যখন এক মন্দির দেখিতেছিলেন তখন মন্দিরের পুরোহিত ভিতরে প্রবেশ করিবার জন্ত বলায় জগদীশচন্দ্র অস্বীকার করেন, বলেন—আমি বিলাতফেরত, জাতিভেদ মানি না, ভিতরে যাইব না। পুরোহিত বলেন—আপনি একজন সাধু, অনায়াসে ভিতরে যাইতে পারেন।

জগদীশচন্দ্রের বাড়ি ও বসু-বিজ্ঞান-মন্দিরে যাঁহারা প্রবেশ করিয়াছেন তাঁহারা একটা কথা উপলব্ধি করিবেন যে শিল্পীর যে সৌন্দর্যবোধ, যে রসাত্মকতা থাকে জগদীশচন্দ্রে তাহা পুরামাত্রায় ছিল। তাঁহার বাড়ির বসিবার ঘরের তিনটি দেওয়ালে অজন্তার গুহাচিত্র, নন্দলাল বসু কর্তৃক অঙ্কিত; আর এক দেওয়ালে অবনীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের অঙ্কিত মাতৃ-মূর্তি—চারি হস্ত, অন্ন, বস্ত্র, শিক্ষা, দীক্ষার প্রতীক চারি হস্তে বিত্তমান। ঘরে সোফা, কোচ প্রভৃতি বিদেশী আসবাবপত্র নাই। গরদ, মুগা, চেলি প্রভৃতি মণ্ডিত বসিবার আসন। বিজ্ঞান-মন্দিরে বক্তৃত্য মঞ্চের উপর নন্দলাল বসু কর্তৃক অঙ্কিত এক ছবি—অসি হস্তে একজন এবং বাঁশি বাজাইতে বাজাইতে আর একজন একত্র চলিয়াছে—সত্য ও কল্পনার দুই প্রতীক। নীচে সপ্তাশ্বযোজিত রথে সূর্যের উত্থানে অন্ধকার বিনষ্ট হইতেছে ইহা অঙ্কিত করিয়া তাব্রফলক; জ্ঞানের আলোকে অজ্ঞানতা দূর হইল।

আজ প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ যে জগতের শ্রেষ্ঠ শিক্ষায়তনসমূহের মধ্যে নিজের গৌরব-ময় আসন অধিকার করিয়াছে তাহা জগদীশচন্দ্র প্রমুখ শিক্ষকদিগকে লাভ করিতে পারিয়াছিল বলিয়া। একবার এক চিঠির শেষে জগদীশচন্দ্র রবীন্দ্রনাথকে লিখিয়াছিলেন—আমাকে যদি শতবার জন্মগ্রহণ করিতে হইত তাহা হইলে প্রত্যেকবার হিন্দুস্থানে জন্মগ্রহণ করিতাম।

এই শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানে আচার্যের আসন শূন্য পড়িয়া আছে; তিনি এই হিন্দুস্থানে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া তাঁহার ত্যক্ত আসন গ্রহণ করুন।

বর্হিষি রজতং ন দেয়ম্

অধ্যাপক শ্রীঅশোকনাথ শাস্ত্রী

বর্তমান যুগ রজতেরই যুগ। ব্যাবহারিক ক্ষেত্রে কাঞ্চন দুঃখাপ্য হইতে হইতে ক্রমশঃ প্রায় অপ্রাপ্যের কোঠায় আসিয়া পৌছিয়াছে, আর স্বযোগ বুঝিয়া রজত তাহার গৌরবময় শূন্য আসন ধীরে ধীরে অধিকার করিয়া লইতেছে। কিন্তু প্রাচীন ভারতে রজতের এত অধিক গৌরব ছিল না। বৈদিক যুগে রজত-দক্ষিণারই নিষেধ ছিল—‘বর্হিষি রজতং ন দেয়ম্’।

কৃষ্ণ-যজুর্বেদের তৈত্তিরীয়-সংহিতায় এই বিষয়ে একটি অতি কৌতূহলকর উপাখ্যান বর্ণিত হইয়াছে (তৈঃ সং, প্রথম কাণ্ড, পঞ্চম প্রপাঠক, প্রথম অলুবাক)।

পুরাকালে দেবগণ ও অসুরগণের মধ্যে যুদ্ধ প্রায় লাগিয়াই থাকিত। একবার এইরূপ এক যুদ্ধে দেবগণ জয়লাভ করিয়া অসুরগণের নিকট হইতে মণি-মুক্তা প্রভৃতি প্রচুর সম্পদ বলপূর্বক হরণ করিয়া লন। তাহার পর পুনরায় দেবাসুরে যুদ্ধ উপস্থিত হওয়ায় অসুরবৃন্দ ঐ সকল ধনরত্ন সঙ্গোপনে রক্ষার উদ্দেশ্যে গ্রাসরূপে অগ্নির নিকট রাখিয়া দিলেন। যদি দৈবাৎ যুদ্ধে পরাজয় ঘটে, তাহা হইলে আপংকালে ঐ গুপ্ত অর্থের সাহায্যে কোনরূপে ব্যয়নির্বাহ হইতে পারিবে—ইহাই ছিল তাঁহাদিগের অভিপ্রায়। কিন্তু অবাচিতভাবে অজস্র অর্থ হস্তে পাইয়া অগ্নির বড় লোভ হইল। তিনি ধন-রত্ন সহ চুপি চুপি পলায়ন করিয়া আত্মগোপনপূর্বক বসবাসের চেষ্টা দেখিতে লাগিলেন।

এ দিকে স্মৃতবলে দেবগণ এ যুদ্ধেও জয়ী হইলেন। জয়লাভান্তে ফিরিয়া আসিয়া দেখিলেন যে, ধনাধ্যক্ষ অগ্নি পলাতক। তখন তাঁহারা নানা স্থানে অনুসন্ধানের পর অবশেষে অতিকষ্টে অগ্নির সাক্ষাৎ পাইলেন। দেবতারা তাঁহার সন্ধান পাইয়াছেন দেখিয়া অগ্নি ছুটিতে লাগিলেন। দেবগণও তাঁহার নিকট হইতে অর্থ উদ্ধারের আশায় পশ্চাদ্ধাবন করিলেন। দেবগণের সম্মিলিত চেষ্টায় অগ্নি ধরা পড়িলে দেবগণ যখন তাঁহার নিকট হইতে গুপ্ত ধন বলপূর্বক গ্রহণ করিতে উত্তত হইলেন, তখন অগ্নি উচ্চৈঃস্বরে রোদন আরম্ভ করিয়া দিলেন। এই রোদন করার নিমিত্তই তাঁহার নব নামকরণ হইল ‘রুদ্র’।

রোদনকালে তাঁহার নয়ন হইতে যে সকল অশ্রুবিন্দু ভূমিতলে পতিত হইয়াছিল, তাহা হইতেই রজতের উৎপত্তি হইল। যেহেতু রজত অশ্রুজাত, অতএব ইহা অতি অমঙ্গলকর। এ কারণে মঙ্গল্য যজ্ঞাদির অনুষ্ঠানে রজত-দক্ষিণা-দান নিষিদ্ধ। যদি যজ্ঞে

রজত-দক্ষিণা প্রদত্ত হয়, তাহাঁ হইলে দক্ষিণাদাতার গৃহে সংবৎসর মধ্যে রোদনের নিমিত্ত উৎপন্ন হইয়া থাকে (অর্থাৎ সংবৎসর মধ্যে তাঁহার সংসারে ইষ্টজন-বিরোগ-হেতু রোদনধরনি শ্রুত হয়)।

তৈত্তিরীয়-সংহিতার আখ্যায়িকা অবশ্য আরও কিছু দূর অগ্রসর হইয়াছে। কিন্তু বর্তমান প্রসঙ্গে আখ্যানের সে অংশটুকু অবাস্তর বলিয়াই গণ্য হইবে। অগ্নিকে রোদন কল্পিতে দেখিয়া দেবগণের অন্তরে দয়ার উদ্বেক হইয়াছিল। তাঁহারা তখন বলিলেন, ‘অগ্নি, তুমি কি চাও?’ অগ্নি উত্তর দিলেন, ‘আপনারা আমার সম্পূর্ণ নিজস্ব একটি বজ্রভাগ নির্দেশ করিয়া দিন, আমিও আপনাদিগের ধনরত্ন সব ফিরাইয়া দিতেছি’। দেবগণ সম্মত হইয়া বলিলেন, ‘তথাস্তু। পুনরাধানের হবিঃ তোমারই ভাগে পড়িবে’। সেই সময় হইতে পুনরাধানে আহুতি অগ্নিদেবতার উদ্দেশে প্রদত্ত হইয়া থাকে।

এই বৈদিক আখ্যায়িকাটি যতই কৌতূহলোদ্দীপক হউক না কেন, আজিকার এই বিজ্ঞান-বাস্তবতা-বিচারনিষ্ঠার যুগে উহা ঠাকুরমার রূপকথার মতই অলীক বা আজগুবি বলিয়া বোধ হইবে। শুধু আজ কেন, সহস্র সহস্র বৎসর পূর্বে ভারতের প্রাচীন মীমাংসকদিগের মনেও উহার যথার্থতা সম্বন্ধে সন্দেহের উদ্বেক হইয়াছিল। পূর্ব-মীমাংসা-স্বত্রকার মহর্ষি জৈমিনি, ভাষ্যকার শবরস্বামী, বার্তিককার আচার্য্য কুমারিল ভট্ট, বেদভাষ্যকার সায়ণাচার্য্য প্রভৃতি শ্রেষ্ঠ মীমাংসকগণ সকলেই একবাক্যে বলিয়াছেন যে, এ আখ্যায়িকাটির আক্ষরিক অর্থ গ্রহণ করা উচিত নহে। কেবল এই আখ্যায়িকাটিই নহে, গৌড়া মীমাংসকগণ কোন বৈদিক আখ্যায়িকারই প্রত্যক্ষ-সত্যতা স্বীকারে ইচ্ছুক নহেন। বেদের যে যে অংশে কোনরূপ কর্তব্য কর্মের বিধান সংগৃহীত হইতে দেখা যায়, মীমাংসকমতে মাত্র সেই সেই অংশের প্রামাণ্য আছে। বেদের অজ্ঞাত অংশের স্বার্থে প্রামাণ্য নাই। এই সকল অপ্রমাণ অংশ প্রামাণিক বিধি-অংশগুলির স্ততিপূর ‘অর্থবাদ’ মাত্র। বৈদিক আখ্যায়িকামাত্রই এই ‘অর্থবাদ’-শ্রেণীভুক্ত—প্রাসঙ্গিক কোন না কোন বিধিভাগের প্রশংসায় পর্য্যবসিত। বর্তমান প্রকরণেও ঐরূপ একটি স্বাত্র বিধির উল্লেখ আছে। তাহা হইতেছে—‘বর্হিষি রজতং ন দেয়ন্’—যজ্ঞে রজত-দক্ষিণা-দান কর্তব্য নহে।

মীমাংসকমতে, বৈদিক যুগে রজত-দক্ষিণা-দানের নিষেধই এই আখ্যানাংশের মুখ্য প্রতিপাত্ত তাৎপর্য্য—ইহার অপর সকল উক্তিই গৌণ। প্রথমতঃ, অগ্নি যে রোদন করিয়া ‘রুদ্র’ আখ্যা লাভ করিয়াছিলেন—ইহার যথার্থ্য নিশ্চয় করা সম্ভব নহে। তবে ‘রুদ্র’ শব্দ ও ‘রোদন’ শব্দের মধ্যে একটা শব্দগত সাদৃশ্য আছে মাত্র; আর এই সাদৃশ্যটুকুর উপর নির্ভর করিয়াই কল্পনা করা হইয়াছে যে, রোদন করার নিমিত্তই অগ্নির ‘রুদ্র’ নাম-

করণ হইল। দ্বিতীয়তঃ, রজত যে অশ্রুজাত—ইহারও মূলে কোন সত্য নাই। তবে অশ্রু ও রজতের মধ্যে বর্ণগত কিঞ্চিৎ সাদৃশ্য আছে মাত্র—যদি অশ্রুবিন্দু কোন উপায়ে জমাট বাঁধিতে পারিত তবে হয়ত রজতসদৃশ দেখাইত। এই অতি ক্ষীণ সাদৃশ্যের উপর নির্ভর করিয়া রজতকে অশ্রুসম্মত বলিয়া কল্পনা করা হইয়াছে। তৃতীয়তঃ, যাগে রজত-দক্ষিণা দিলেই যে দাতার গৃহে সংবৎসর মধ্যে রোদনের কারণ (অর্থাৎ আত্মীয়বিয়োগজনিত শোক) উপস্থিত হইবে তাহারও স্বপক্ষে কোন যুক্তি নাই। ইহাও নিছক কল্পনা মাত্র; দ্বিতীয় কল্পনাটির উপরই ইহার ভিত্তি। যেহেতু রজতকে অশ্রুজাত বলিয়া কল্পনা করা হইয়াছে, অতএব রজতদানে অশ্রুর আবির্ভাবও কল্পিত হইল *। কুমারিল বলেন যে, এই সকল ভিত্তিহীন কল্পনার সাহায্যে লোকের মনে রজতদানের নিন্দা সম্বন্ধে একটা বদ্ধমূল ধারণা উৎপাদনের চেষ্টা করা হইয়াছে। যদি কেবল বলা হইত যে, যাগে রজত-দক্ষিণা অদেয়, তাহা হইলে কৃষক সাধারণ লোকে উহা ততটা গ্রাহ্যের মধ্যে আনিত না। কিন্তু শাস্ত্রে রজতের অশ্রু হইতে উৎপত্তি ও উহার দানে সংবৎসর মধ্যে শোকপ্রাপ্তির বিবরণ প্রদানের ফলে লোকের মনে রজত-দক্ষিণার প্রতি একটা নিদারুণ বিরাগ (বা ভীতির) উদ্বেক হওয়া খুবই স্বাভাবিক। আর তাহা হইলেই শাস্ত্রকারগণের যাহা নিগূঢ় অভিপ্রায়—যজ্ঞে রজত-দক্ষিণা-দানের নিষেধ—তাহা অতি সূচারূপেই সিদ্ধ হইয়া যাইতেছে।

বৈদিক যজ্ঞে রজত-দক্ষিণা-দানের এই নিষেধ পুরাণকার ও স্মার্ত আচার্যগণও সমর্থন করিয়াছেন। তবে ঠাঁহাদিগের এই সমর্থনের মধ্যে একটু বৈশিষ্ট্য আছে। ঠাঁহাদিগের মতে রজত দেবকার্যে বর্জনীয় হইলেও পিতৃকার্যে বিশেষ উপযোগী। পিতৃকার্যে রজতপাত্রাদির ব্যবহার অতি প্রশস্ত। রজতপাত্রে রক্ষিত জল দ্বারা পিতৃতর্পণ, রজতপাত্রস্থ ভোজ্যদ্রব্যাদি দ্বারা পিতৃশ্রাদ্ধ, শ্রাদ্ধে রজত-দক্ষিণা-দান, অথবা তদভাবে রজতসংস্পৃষ্ট জলাদি দ্বারা পিতৃকার্য, অথবা শ্রাদ্ধাদিকালে রজত দর্শন বা এমন কি রজতসম্বন্ধীয় কথা উচ্চারণ করিলেও পিতৃগণের অক্ষয়া তৃপ্তি সাধিত হইয়া থাকে। এই কারণে শ্রাদ্ধে দক্ষিণাস্বরূপ স্বর্ণ, রৌপ্য, তাম্র বা অল্প ধন যাহাই প্রদত্ত হউক না কেন, দক্ষিণাস্ত বাক্যের উচ্চারণ শেষে অন্ততঃ 'রজত' শব্দটিরও উচ্চারণ কর্তব্য

* শবরশাস্ত্রী ও কুমারিল ভট্ট এই কল্পনার আরও একটি কারণ নির্দেশ করিয়াছেন। অত্যন্ত উদারপ্রকৃতি যজমান যজ্ঞে পর্যাপ্ত রজত-দক্ষিণা প্রদান করিলে অর্থকৃচ্ছ্রতানিবন্ধন গৃহজনের পীড়া উপস্থিত হয়। এই অর্থভাবজনিত ক্রেশকেই রোদনসদৃশ বলিয়া অতিশয়োক্তি করা হইয়াছে যে, রজতদানে গৃহে রোদনের সূচনা হয়। এই সকল বিবরণ হইতে বুঝা যাইতেছে যে, তৎকালে রজতাদি ধনের ব্যবহার অত্যন্ত সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল।

বলিয়া বিহিত হইয়াছে *। মৎস্যপুরাণ বলেন যে, রজত শিবনেত্রসমুত্ত, অতএব পিতৃগণের একান্ত প্রিয় ; কিন্তু যজ্ঞে উহা অনঙ্গলকর ও দেবকার্যে বর্জনীয়। (মৎস্যপুরাণ, বঙ্গবাসী সংস্করণ, ১৭ অধ্যায়, শ্লোক ২১-২৩)। রজত শিবনেত্রোদ্ভূত বলিতে খুব সম্ভবতঃ তৈত্তিরীয়-সংহিতার পূর্বোক্ত আখ্যায়িকাটির প্রতিই ইঙ্গিত করা হইয়াছে।

কোন দেবকার্যে রজত-দক্ষিণা যে দিতে নাই—এ সংস্কার হিন্দুর প্রায় মজ্জাগত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। তাই আজিকার দিনেও যে কোন মৈবকৃত্য সম্পাদনের পর দক্ষিণা দিবার সময় রজতমুদ্রাকেও অনুকল্প হিসাবে 'কাঞ্চনমূল্য' বলিয়া উল্লেখ করা হইয়া থাকে। এ সনাতন প্রথার মূলে রহিয়াছে তৈত্তিরীয়-সংহিতার শাস্ত নিষেধ বাক্য—'বর্হিষি রজতং ন দেয়ম্'।

* পিতৃ-কৃত্য শ্রাদ্ধাদির সহিত শোক ও তজ্জনিত রোদনের অচ্ছেদ্য সম্বন্ধ বর্তমান। বোধ হয় এই কারণেই পুরাণ ও স্মৃতিশাস্ত্রে পিতৃকার্যে রজতের ব্যবহার এরূপ প্রশস্ত বলিয়া উল্লিখিত হইয়াছে।

শিক্ষা ও শিক্ষক

অধ্যাপক হুমায়ুন কবির

আজ শিক্ষার আদর্শ এবং ধারা নিয়ে অনেক কথা উঠেছে। যে শিক্ষা আমরা পেয়েছি এবং দিই, বর্তমানে আমাদের সমস্ত দাবী যে সে শিক্ষা মেটাতে পারছে না একথা অস্বীকার করবার উপায় নেই। এককালে বিদেশী রাজশক্তির নিজের কাজের সুবিধার জ্ঞান এ শিক্ষার পত্তন হয়, তাই দেশে সেদিন যে প্রাচীন শিক্ষা-পদ্ধতি ছিল, তাকে অকস্মাৎ পাল্টে দেওয়া হ'ল। পুরোনো বলেই তা খারাপ—এমন ধারণাও সেদিন অনেকের মনে খেলেছে। মেকলে স্পষ্টভাবে বল্লেনও অনেকেই তাঁর কথা মেনে নিয়েছিলেন যে, এক আলমারী বিলিভী বই সমস্ত আরবী-ফারসী-সংস্কৃত বইয়ের চেয়ে মূল্যবান বেশী। পুরোনোকে বাদ দিলে ততটা ক্ষতি হ'ত না, যদি তার বদলে দেশের প্রয়োজনের তাগিদে নতুন শিক্ষা-রীতি গড়ে উঠত। সেদিন কিন্তু তা হয়নি। দেশের কথা ভুলে গিয়ে মুষ্টিমেয় বিদেশীর শাসন এবং শোষণের সুবিধার কথা বিচার করেই সেদিন হয়েছিল শিক্ষার পত্তন, এবং সেজ্ঞান নীচে থেকে শিক্ষার ধারা গড়ে না উঠে উপর থেকে তাকে ঝুলিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছিল। তাতেও হয়তো বিপদ এতটা হ'ত না, কারণ অশথ গাছের শেকড় উপর থেকে নামলেও মাটিতে এসে তা রস পায়, কিন্তু যে নতুন শিক্ষার ধারা গড়ে উঠল, তার গুঁড়িতো ছিলই না, এমন কি শূন্য থেকেও তার শেকড় এসে মাটিতে পৌঁছল না, আল্গাই রয়ে গেল।

ইংরেজের সেদিন প্রয়োজন হয়েছিল কেরাণীর—যারা ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য এবং রাজকার্য চালাতে উচ্চতন ইংরেজ বণিক ও কর্মচারীকে সাহায্য করতে পারবে। তার জ্ঞান চাই ভাষায় খানিক নিপুণতা, বুদ্ধির বিকাশের কোন প্রয়োজন সেখানে নেই। চিন্তা করতে গেলেই নানা কথা আসে মনে, তার মধ্যে সন্দেহ সংশয় এবং প্রশ্নেরও অবকাশ বহু। তাই সেদিন যে শিক্ষার পত্তন হয়েছিল বুদ্ধির বিকাশ বা চিন্তার স্বাধীনতার চেয়ে ভাষাতত্ত্ব এবং তথ্যজ্ঞানের দিকেই ছিল তার লক্ষ্য। সে শিক্ষা তাই প্রশ্ন করতে শেখায় নি, নিস্ত্রস্ত নির্বিবাদে আদেশ পালনের মনোবৃত্তি রচনা করেই তা তৃপ্ত হয়েছে। সেজ্ঞানই আমাদের দেশে অক্ষর জ্ঞানের বিস্তার হয়তো বেড়েছে, কিন্তু শিক্ষিত অল্পমস্ত মনের সংখ্যা বড় একটা বাড়ে নি।

বহুদিন শিক্ষার এ গোড়ার গলদ ধরা পড়ে নি, কারণ শিক্ষার লক্ষ্য ছিল চাকুরী এবং শিক্ষার ফলে চাকুরী ছিল সহজলভ্য। কিন্তু চাকুরীর সহজলভ্যতায়ই সে শিক্ষার

গলদ বেরিয়ে পড়ল, কারণ একদিকে দেশের শিল্প-বাণিজ্যের বিনাশ এবং অন্যদিকে যাতায়াতের সৌকর্যে চাকুরী-আকাজকীর দল এত বেড়ে গেল যে চাকুরী হয়ে উঠল ছল্লাভ এবং শিক্ষার্থীর দল দেখল যে চাকুরী ছাড়া তাদের গত্যন্তর নেই। আজ দিন দিন সেই গলদ হয়ে উঠছে স্পষ্টতর—শিক্ষিত বেকারের দল তিক্ত অভিজ্ঞতায় শিথছে যে তাদের শিক্ষা তাদের চিন্তবৃত্তির উৎকর্ষ করে নি, কেবলমাত্র তাদের কর্মমুখিনতাকে সঙ্কুচিতই করেছে।

আজ তাই এ শিক্ষার বিরুদ্ধে এসেছে বিদ্রোহ এবং সে বিদ্রোহের ফলে শিক্ষার সার্থকতা সম্বন্ধেই উঠছে প্রশ্ন এবং সন্দেহ। কল্পমানে যে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার প্রবল বক্তা দেশে নেমেছে, প্রত্যক্ষ এবং পরোক্ষভাবে বর্তমানের শিক্ষা প্রণালীও তার জন্ত ঋণীকটা দায়ী। এক দিকে চাকুরী তার একমাত্র লক্ষ্য ব'লে চাকুরীর সুবিধার জন্ত সাম্প্রদায়িক কোলাহল এবং অন্তর্গক্ষে এ শিক্ষার ব্যর্থতা বোধে পুরাতনের প্রতি নতুন মোহে প্রত্যেক সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে পুরোনো আচার-পদ্ধতির অন্ধ পুনরুজ্জীবনের স্বেচ্ছা।

সময়ের প্রবাহকে কিন্তু ফেরানো যায় না, তাই একশো বছর আগে যে শিক্ষা-প্রণালী অকস্মাৎ বর্জিত হয়েছিল আজ তাকে ফিরিয়ে আনবার চেষ্টাও স্বাভাবিক হতে বাধ্য। তখনকার দিনে হয়তো তাই ছিল উপযোগী। কিন্তু আজ আর তার সে সার্থকতা নেই, আজ আবার সেই শিক্ষার ধারাকে জাগাবার চেষ্টায় জাতি পিছিয়ে পড়বে। অন্তর্গক্ষে চাকুরীসর্বস্ব এ শিক্ষা প্রণালীর নিজের মধ্যেই যে বিরোধ, জা দূর করতে না পারলে কেবলমাত্র সাম্প্রদায়িক কলহের মধ্যে বেকার সমস্যার সমাধান মিলবে না। হিন্দু সম্প্রদায় তো প্রায় একশো বছর চাকুরীর মৌল আনা না হলেও বারো আনা ভোগ করেছে, তবু আজ তাদের মধ্যেই বেকারের সংখ্যা বেশী এবং এ অবস্থার জন্ত মুসলমান উমেদার দায়ী নয়। কারণ যদি আজ একজনও মুসলমান চাকুরে বা উমেদার না থাকত, তবু কেবলমাত্র হিন্দু প্রার্থীদের প্রাচুর্যে দেশে বেকারের সমস্যা তীব্র হয়ে উঠত। ঠিক তেমনি আজ যদি হিন্দুকে চাকুরী দেওয়া বন্ধ ক'রে দেওয়া হয়, তা হ'লেও দু'চার বছরের মধ্যে মুসলমান উমেদারের সংখ্যা এত বেড়ে যাবে যে তাদের মধ্যে শতকরা পঁচাত্তরকেও চাকুরী দেওয়া অসম্ভব হয়ে দাঁড়াবে।

তাই সাম্প্রদায়িক কলহে বেকার-সমস্যা মিটেবে না—বেকার-সমস্যা মেটাবার একমাত্র উপায় দেশে শিল্প-বাণিজ্যের পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠা, শিক্ষার ধারা ও রীতিনীতি বদলে নতুন সমাজ-সংগঠনের ভিত্তি স্থাপন। বেকার-সমস্যার তীব্রতাই শিক্ষার ধারার দিকে আমাদের দৃষ্টি টেনেছে, অথচ শিক্ষার লক্ষ্য-ভ্রান্তিই যে বেকার-সমস্যার অত্যন্ত কারণ, সে কথা আমরা ভুলে যাই। শিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য ব্যক্তিত্বের বিকাশ, শিক্ষার লক্ষ্য সামাজিক মন সংগঠন।

সমাজের মধ্যেই ব্যক্তি, তাই এ ছোটো লক্ষ্য পরম্পর বিচ্যুত নয়; একই লক্ষ্যের ছ'টি বিভিন্ন দিক ব্যক্তিত্ব বিকাশ এবং সমাজ সংগঠন। তার জন্ম চাই বুদ্ধির মুক্তি, তার জন্ম চাই সমাজের সমন্বয় ও সঙ্গতি। অথচ আজ পৃথিবীতে ব্যক্তির সঙ্গে সমাজের দ্বন্দ্বই পদে পদে চোখে পড়ে। স্বাধীনতার ক্ষেত্রে বছর সার্থকে বিসর্জন দিয়ে মুষ্টিমেয় স্বার্থসিদ্ধি, অর্থনীতির ক্ষেত্রে লক্ষ লক্ষ লোকের অনাহার এবং বস্ত্রহীনতার উপরে মুষ্টিমেয় ধনিকের সম্পদ। হাজার হাজার শিক্ষিত বেকার, অথচ আমাদের দেশে শতকরা নব্বই জন নিরক্ষর। লক্ষ লক্ষ লোক অচিকিৎসায় কু-চিকিৎসায় মারা যায় অথচ ডাক্তারের নেই পসার, অথবা বহুক্ষেত্রে ডাক্তারের দেখাই নেই। এক কথায় যে স্বেচ্ছাচারী নৈরাজ্য আজ সমাজে চলছে, তার রূপান্তর না ঘুটলে শিক্ষার পূর্ণতাও ঘটতে পারে না।

সে রূপান্তর আনতে পারে শিক্ষক এবং শিক্ষা। তার জন্ম চাই শিক্ষারও রূপান্তর। চাকুরীসর্বস্ব যে শিক্ষা এতদিন কেবল আদেশ পাগল করতেই আমাদের শিখিয়েছে, মনের সজীবতার বদলে দিয়েছে মনের বার্বিক্য, তার বদলে চাই এমন শিক্ষার আদর্শ যার ফলে মনের প্রশ্ন আর মিটবে না, নিত্য নূতন জিজ্ঞাসায় ব্যক্তি এবং সমাজের ভিত্তি পর্যন্ত উঠবে টলো। চাই এমন শিক্ষা যার ফলে থাকবে দেহের সঙ্গে মনের সামঞ্জস্য, মনের সজীবতার সঙ্গী হবে দেহের সক্রিয়তা। আমাদের দেশের পুঁথিগত শিক্ষায় করকৌশলের বিকাশ হয় না, অথচ ইউরোপের সমস্ত স্বাধীন দেশেই প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় করকৌশলের উপর ঝোঁক বেশী। সেজন্মই দেখা যায় যে ইউরোপের শিক্ষিত লোকের ব্যবহারিক দক্ষতা আমাদের চেয়ে বেশী, তারই ফলে ত্রাদেশ দেশে যন্ত্র-শিল্পের এতখানি প্রশার সম্ভব হয়েছে।

শিক্ষায় আজ চাই এমন রূপান্তর যার ফলে শিক্ষার্থীর মনে আসবে প্রশ্ন, হাতে আসবে কৌশল। বিদ্রোহী মন এবং সক্রিয় হাত কেবল যে ব্যবহারিক জীবনে তাদের সার্থকতা দেবে তা নয়, চিন্তাজগতে এবং সমাজ সংগঠনের ধারণায়ও আনবে বিপ্লব। ওয়ার্ল্ড শিক্ষা পরিকল্পনার বিস্তৃত আলোচনা না করেও এটুকু বলা চলে যে জাকীর হোসেন কমিটি প্রাথমিক শিক্ষায় হাতের কৌশল এবং সক্রিয় মনের উপর যে ঝোঁক দিয়েছে, তার মধ্যে বিপ্লবকর সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে। সে সম্বন্ধে আরো বলা প্রয়োজন যে মরহুম ডাক্তার ইকবাল শিক্ষাধারার যে রূপান্তরের স্বপ্ন দেখেছিলেন, তারও মূলকথা বিদ্রোহী মন এবং সক্রিয় হাত।

সমাজ সংগঠনের পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শিক্ষকেরও অনেক অভাব অনেক অভিযোগ ঘুবে। শিক্ষক আজ সমাজে অনাদৃত—সমাজকে শিক্ষাদান করেও সমাজে তার স্থান নেই বললেই চলে। তার একটা কারণ আমাদের জড়বস্তৃতান্ত্রিক মন। পাঁচ মণ ধান যদি কেউ দান করে, তবে আমরা বলি দাতা, কিন্তু সমস্ত জীবন যার শিক্ষাদান ব্রত, তার

দান আমরা স্বীকার করিনে। আর একটা কারণ যে আমাদের সমাজে অর্থ দিয়েই আমরা সামাজিক মর্যাদার বিচার করি। সমস্ত দেশেই চিরদিন শিক্ষক অপেক্ষাকৃত দরিদ্র, তাই সমাজে তার মর্যাদাও স্বীকার হয় না। কিন্তু শিক্ষকের অমর্যাদার সব চেয়ে বড় কারণ শিক্ষকের নিজের অমর্যাদা। শিক্ষক দরিদ্র হয়েও উন্নীত থাকতে পারেন, কিন্তু বহু ক্ষেত্রেই তাঁর নিজের মনের হীনতায় তিনি সমাজের চোখে নিজেকে ছোট করে ফেলেন। সমাজ সংগঠনের যদি পরিবর্তন হয়, তবে আর্থিক বৈষম্য দূর হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শিক্ষকের অমর্যাদার একটা প্রধান কারণ যুচে যাবে। আজো আমাদের দেশের মতন আর্থিক অসাম্য পৃথিবীর কোথাও বোধ হয় নেই। আমাদের দেশে মাসে পাঁচ টাকা বেতনের শিক্ষকও আছেন, অথচ আমাদের দেশে মাসে ছই তিন হাজার টাকা বেতন ও মুনাকার জেলা ম্যাজিস্ট্রেটও দেখা যায়। বিলেতে এত বেশী বৈষম্য নেই, সেখানে রাস্তায় দাঁড়িয়ে পাহারা দেয় যে কনেষ্টবল, সেও পায় দুশো আড়াইশো টাকা মাসে, অথচ সমস্ত ইংলণ্ডের পুলিশের বড় কর্তারও বেতন মাসে হাজার বারোশোর বেশী নয়। সামাজিক সংগঠন তাই এমন ভাবে বদলানো চাই যে কারু ভাগে যেন বিলাসের প্রাচুর্য্য এবং কার ভাগে যেন প্রয়োজনের ছুভিক্ষ না ঘটে।

সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শিক্ষকের নিজের মনে আনতে হবে আত্মমর্যাদাজ্ঞান, নিজের কর্ণের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা। ফরাসী দেশে মাষ্টারের বেতন খুবই কম—সেখানে মাসে ৫০৩০ টাকায় শিক্ষকের কাজ সুরু। অথচ তবু ফরাসী শিক্ষকের সামাজিক মর্যাদা লোভনীয়। তার প্রধান কারণ এই যে ১৭১৮ বৎসরেই শিক্ষাব্রত সম্বন্ধে মনস্থির করতে হয়, এবং সমগ্র দেশব্যাপী পরীক্ষার ফলে শিক্ষক সংগ্রহে শিক্ষকের বিদ্যা-বুদ্ধি এবং আদর্শপ্রীতির বিষয়ে লোকের মনে সন্দেহ থাকে না। আমাদের দেশ আজ বহুক্ষেত্রেই সমস্ত চেষ্টায় বঞ্চিত এবং হতাশই গ্রহণ করে শিক্ষাবৃত্তি, তাই তার নিজেরও মনে থাকে না আত্মপ্রত্যয়, সমাজেরও নাই তার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা। যদি আমাদের দেশেও অপেক্ষাকৃত অল্প বয়সে—১৯২০ বছরের মধ্যে—শিক্ষাবৃত্তি সম্বন্ধে মনস্থির করার ব্যবস্থা হয়, তবে অর্থের স্বল্পতা সত্ত্বেও শিক্ষক সাধারণের শ্রদ্ধা পাবেন।

তাই আজ শিক্ষককে আবার নিজের সামাজিক সত্ত্বা এবং শিক্ষার আদর্শের কথা নতুন করে ভাবতে হবে। শিক্ষকের আত্মমর্যাদাজ্ঞান এবং শিক্ষার প্রতি সাধারণের শ্রদ্ধা না ফিরিলে দেশের কল্যাণ নেই, এবং তার জন্ত প্রয়োজন আমাদের চিন্তার রূপান্তর, আমাদের সমাজগঠনের আমূল সংস্কার। মানস এবং সমাজ জগতে সে বিপ্লব আনবার শক্তি এবং পথনির্দেশ আজ শিক্ষা এবং শিক্ষকের একমাত্র সমস্ত্রা।

ভূমিকম্পের কারণ

শ্রীসুধাংশুকুমার হালদার

আমাদের ক্লাবের নাম 'রাত যেন না বৃথা কাটে'। নাম শুনে যারা চমকান, বুঝতে হবে তাঁদের মনের মধ্যে গলদ আছে। সন্ধ্যার পর হতে সেখানে আমরা জুটি। সেখানকার মেসার হলেন তাঁরাই যাদের কোনো পিছুটান নেই, মানে তাড়াতাড়ি ঘরে ফেরবার যাদের কোনো তাড়া নেই। অধিবেশন চলে কোনোদিন রাত ছুপুর, কোনোদিন রাত ছোটো পর্যন্ত। সেক্রেটারীকে প্রত্যহ নতুন নতুন প্রোগ্রাম তৈরী ক'রে রাখতে হয় যাতে রাত্তিরে কারো হাই না ওঠে। ছই-তৃতীয়াংশ সভ্যের যদি হাই উঠল তাহ'লেই বুঝতে হবে রাত বৃথা কাটল এবং তাহ'লেই সেক্রেটারীর চাকরি যাবে, কেননা এই হ'ল ক্লাবের নিয়ম।

ক্লাবের এই পরম রমণীয় নাম দেখে পাড়ার নীতিবাগীশের দল কয়েকবার হঠাৎ সাজোপাজ নিয়ে স্থান দিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন, কিন্তু প্রতিবারই তাঁদের ক্রোধের উদ্বেক করেছিল কিছু না পাওয়ার নৈরাশ্য। আমরা অবিশ্বি প্রতিবারই বিনীত কণ্ঠে জিজ্ঞেস করেছিলাম, আপনারা কি আশা করেন সেটার যদি একটা আভাষ দেন, আগামীবারে তার যোগাড় রাখব। শুনে তাঁদের ক্রোধান্বিত আঁরো বেশী জ্বলেছিল। নাইট ক্লাব মনে ক'রে পুলিশও একবার রেড করেছিল কিন্তু আবগারী মাল যা পেয়েছিল তা' হচ্ছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের মছয়া। এর মধ্যে কবিগুরুর তরুণ বয়সের প্রেমের কাব্য হতে পরিণত বয়সে চোলাই করা সামগ্রী যা ছিল, মাদকতা তার যথেষ্ট থাকলেও পুলিশের আনরোমাটিক চোখ তা' দেখতে পায়নি।

যদিচ আপাততঃ মনে হতে পারে আমাদের সেক্রেটারীর চাকরীটি বজায় রাখা অতীব কঠিন তবু আশ্চর্যের কথা এই যে চাকরী তাঁর এতাবৎ কাল বজায়ই আছে। তার প্রধান কারণ ক্ষেত্র দা। আমাদের চেয়ে বয়সে তিনি অনেক বড়, পাকা পাকা গৌফ উঁচু হনু এবং উঁচু মাড়ীর মধ্যস্থিত উপত্যকা ভূমিকে যেন বাঁট দিচ্ছে। এই গৌফজোড়ার চেয়েও বেশী মর্মস্পর্শী ছিল তাঁর সামনের কয়েকটি দাঁত যারা ওপরের ঠোঁটের যবনিকা ঠেলে দর্শকদের দিকে হেলান দিয়ে তীরবেঁধা দৃষ্টিতে চেয়ে থাকত। ক্ষেত্র দা ছিলেন এঞ্জিনিয়ার। কত সনে পাশ করেছেন, কোথায় কাজ করেছিলেন, এসব হ'ল গবেষণার বিষয়। যান নি তিনি এমন স্থান নাকি ক্রিভল্লাটে নেই। শিকাগো থেকে হনোলুলু তাঁর নখদর্পণে। করেন নি হেন কাজও নেই। বিরাট

সেতুও যেমন অবলীলার বেঁধেছেন, ভাগীর বিয়েতে পঞ্চও তেমনি অবলীলার লিখেছেন। অফুরন্ত ছিল তাঁর গল্পের ভাণ্ডার। যদি কোনোদিন রেডিওর কলকজা বিগড়ে য়ে বা প্রাকৃতিক ছুর্যোগে গানবাজনার পরিবর্তে তার ভেতর দিয়ে বিড়ালের লড়াই শোনা যেত, কিংবা যদি কোনোদিন ভাড়া করা নাটুকে দলশ্রমে পৌঁছাত সময়ে, সেক্রেটারী গিয়ে ধরতেন ক্ষেত্রর দাকে। তারপর ঘণ্টার পর ঘণ্টা কোথা দিয়ে যে কেটে যেত তাঁর গল্পে কেউ তা টের পেত না।

কোয়েটার এবং উত্তরবিহারে ভীষণ ভূমিকম্প হয়ে গেছে, আমরা সবাই আতঙ্কে অতিষ্ঠ হয়ে আছি কলকাতায় কোনদিন বা মজলির ডাক শোনা যায়। যদি ভাড়াটে বাড়ীতে থাকি তবু প্রাণটা ত নিজস্ব। আমাদের দলের অতীশ, যাকে আমরা আদর ক'রে অতীশ দীপঙ্কর ব'লে ডাকি, সে গেছল মুজফরপুরে ভলেন্টিয়ার হয়ে। সে যখন ফিরল তখন তার চেহারা দেখে মনে হ'ল তারি ওপর দিয়ে যেন একটা ভূমিকম্প হয়ে গেছে। চোখ ছোটো তার জবাবুলের মত লাল, মুখে মদের গন্ধ। আমাদের দলের কেউ মদ খাইনে, নীতিবাগীশদের স্রমে নয়, দরকার হয় না ব'লে। ক্ষেত্রর দা বলতেন যাদের কল্পনাশক্তি নেই তারাই মদ খায়। আমরা সবাই হলাম আর্টিষ্ট, কল্পনা আমাদের প্রচুর। তাই অতীশের ভাবগতিক দেখে আমরা খুব ভয় পেয়ে গেলাম।

কনকনে শীত পড়েচে, আমরা কজনে বসেচি আমাদের নৈশ মজলিসে, আলোয়ানে বেশ ক'রে হাত পা ঢেকে। গরম গরম আলুর চপ ভেজে আনচে মেধো, সিগ্রেটের টিন ছোটো ঘন ঘন হাত ফিরচে। কারো কোনো ত্রাড়া নেই, বেশ ক্রমে আসর, এছেন সময়ে ঠাণ্ডা এক বলক হাওয়া নিয়ে অতীশ এসে হাজির হ'ল।

ভূমিকম্পে ভলেন্টিয়ারী ক'রে অতীশের কল্পনাশক্তি একেবারে লৌপ পেয়েচে, আমরা তার চোখমুখ-দেখে এবং মুখের গন্ধ পেয়ে স্তম্ভিত হ'লাম।

ভূমিকা না ক'রেই সে বলল, মদো খাউচি পারা। ক্ষেত্রর দা বললেন, ছিঃ অতীশ, তুই শেষটার মাতাল হলি। অতীশ বলল, মাতাল মাতাল কারো না বলছি। তোমার মতন দীতাল হওয়ার চেয়ে আমার মতন মাতাল হওয়া ঢের ভাল।

ক্ষেত্রর দা বললেন, বকিস-নে। তোর মনে ভয়ঙ্কর আঘাত লেগেচে। সব কথা খুলে বল, আমি ব্যবস্থা ক'রে দিচ্ছি। ব্যবস্থা ক'রে দিতে ক্ষেত্রর দা অধিতীয়।

বাস্তবিক অতীশ লোকটার অবস্থা দেখে আমরা সবাই মন-মরা হয়ে আছি। অতীশ হ'ল কবি। যদিও তার লেখা রবীন্দ্রনাথের বাংলাকব্যপরিচয়ে উঠে নি, তবু সে সত্যিকারের কবি। একটুতে তার মনকে এমন দোলা দেয় যে তাকে সামলানো দায়। তাই ভূমিকম্প দেখে তুমি আমি হয়ত সাড়হরে ছএকটা গল্প কাঁদতাম,

না হয়ত একটু শিউরে উঠতাম, কিন্তু অতীশ বেচারী মদ ধরল। কেউ কেউ কবিতা লিখেচে ঈশ্বর ব'লে কিছু নেই, যদি বা থাকেন তিনি স্বানুর মত নিশ্চল। অতীশ এসব পড়ে কাঠ হয়ে গিয়েচে। কবিতা লেখা ছেড়ে দিয়ে স্রেফ মদ খাচ্ছে।

অতীশ বলল, অনেক কৈবেচি ক্ষেত্র দা, কেন এই নিরীহ লোকগুলোর এমন ক'রে জীবন্ত সমাধি হ'ল। তোমাদের ঐ ছেলে ভুলানো ভগবানকে না হয় বাদ দাও। বিশ্বপ্রকৃতি ব'লে যদি কিছু থাকে, আমি ত দেখচি সে একটা গৌয়ার হাকিমের মতন খামখেয়ালী।

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, তাই ব'লে কি মদ ধরতে হয়। অতীশ উত্তেজিত হয়ে উঠল। বলল, এক নারীর মাথার ওপর ছাদ ভেঙে পড়েচে, ইঁটের ফাটলের ভেতর দিয়ে তার লম্বা চুল বেরিয়ে আছে। যেই হাত দিলাম, চুলগুলি হাতেই খসে এল। উঃ— এই ব'লে সে শিউরে উঠল। তারপর বলল, আমি তাই মদ খাচ্ছি, তুমি হলে গাঁজা খেতে হয়ত।

ক্ষেত্র দা চূপ ক'রে বসে রইলেন। দাঁতগুলি তাঁর ঠোঁটের অন্তরালে আত্মগোপন করবার বৃথা প্রয়াস করল। আমরা জানি এ হ'ল তাঁর চিন্তার লক্ষণ। খানিকটা এমনি গেল, তারপর তিনি বললেন, মনে করেছিলাম তোদের বলব না। কিন্তু অস্ত্রীশের দশা দেখে না ব'লে আর পারচি না। এ ছুটো ভূমিকম্পের কারণ আছে। সে কারণ আমি ছাড়া পৃথিবীতে আর কেউ জানে না।

অতীশ বলল, অহো অহো! ভূমিস্তরের অসমান সঙ্কোচন, হিমালয় পর্বতের চাপ, তুমি ছাড়া পৃথিবীতে আর কে জানে বল!

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, ওসব ভূয়ো কথা। ওর কারণ হ'ল—সরোজাক্ষ সেহানবিশ।

পরম করুণাভরে ক্ষেত্র দা গলা জড়িয়ে ধ'রে অতীশ বলল, বেচারী ক্ষেত্র দা! আহা তোমার দশাও এমনি হয়েছে! তফাৎ, আমি বাইরে প্রকাশ করচি, তুমি করচ না। ভুল করচ। তার চেয়ে চল ছ'জনে বেরিয়ে পড়ি। চৌরদীর হোটেলগুলো এখনো খোলা আছে। অল্প কিছু খাওয়া যাবে, তার সঙ্গে প্রচুর মদ। নিদেন পক্ষে ছ'একটা গিম্লেট।

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, বকিস নে। সরোজাক্ষ সেহানবিশ,—সে হ'ল এক মস্ত ইতিহাস।

আমরা সবাই তাঁকে ঘিরে বসলাম। ক্ষেত্র দার গল্প শুরু হ'ল—

সরোজাক্ষ সেহানবিশ আমাদের সঙ্গে এঞ্জিনিয়ারিং পাশ ক'রে ঢুকল চাকরীতে। রাস্তায় রাস্তায় খোওয়া মাপজোপ আর ওভারশিয়ারদের তপ্তি করা।

ছ'মাসেই তার অতিষ্ঠ লাগল। তখন আমাকে এসে ধরল, ফেল্ডার দা তোমাদের ফার্মে আমাকে নাও, খোওয়া মাপজোপ আর বরদাস্ত হয় না। সরোজের কথা ঠেলতে পারলাম না, তাকে নিলাম আমাদের ফার্মে। আমাদের তখন হাইড্রুলিক প্রেসের কাজ চলছিল পুরাদমে, সরোজকে দিলাম তার চার্জ। তার সে কী উৎসাহ, কী আনন্দ! বলল, শক্তির পরিচয় পেয়েছি দাদা, যাকে বলে সহস্রভুজা শক্তি। একগুণ চাপ লাখগুণ হয়, এ হ'ল আমার যন্ত্ররাজ বিভূতি। সরোজের মাথায় ছিল অদ্ভুত কল্পনা। সে ব'লত, এই যে ভারতবর্ষ পরপদানত, কেন জান? কেন না এ উষ্ণ দেশ। এখানে বছরের মধ্যে আট মাস মানুষকে প্রত্যহ চব্বিশ ঘণ্টা সেদ্ধ হ'তে হয়। তাতে কি ক'রে থাকবে তার উত্তম, কি ক'রে থাকবে তার কর্মপ্রেরণা। অথচ হাজার হাজার বর্গমাইল হিমালয়ের মাথায় জঙ্গলে আবৃত হয়ে পড়ে আছে, সেখানে আমরা থাকতে পারি না। হাওয়া ঠেতে স্নাইটজারল্যাণ্ড যাই, অথচ কত সহস্র স্নাইটজারল্যাণ্ড বানাতে পারি আমাদের দেশে। সরোজের আইডিয়া ছিল স্মসংখ্য কিউনিকুলার কিংবা রোপয়েলওয়ে দিয়ে পাহাড়ে ওঠবার রাস্তা সহজ ক'রে দেবে, সমস্ত স্কুল কলেজ অফিস ফ্যাক্টরী হবে হিমালয়ের চূড়ায় চূড়ায়। কনকনে শীতের রাজ্য সেখানে, মানুষ হবে সুস্থ, সবল, কর্মঠ। তার আইডিয়া ছিল হিমালয়ের লক্ষ লক্ষ ঝরণা থেকে স্নলভে বৈদ্যুতিক শক্তি তৈরী ক'রে তাই দিয়ে শুধু কলকজা রেলগাড়ী চালান নয়, তাই দিয়ে হাওয়াকে তরল ক'রে সমতল ভূমির গৃহে গৃহে ঠাণ্ডা হাওয়ার স্রোত বইয়ে দেওয়া। সে ব'লত শীতের দেশের মানুষ যেমন কয়লা জ্বালিয়ে নিজেদের গরম রাখে, আমরা তেমনি এখানে এয়ারকুলিংএর দ্বারা নিজেদের ঠাণ্ডা রাখব। সে ব'লত একদিন এ হবেই হবে, এবং সেদিন থেকে শক্তিতে, কর্মে, জ্ঞানে, বিজ্ঞানে ভারতবর্ষ হবে সমস্ত পৃথিবীর সেরা।

আমরা বললাম, এটা কিন্তু চমৎকার আইডিয়া। ফেল্ডার দা ব'লতে লাগলেন, এমনি ধারা চমৎকার আইডিয়া তার মাথায় কত যে অনবরত খেলে যেত তার সীমাসহরদ নেই। সে ব'লত ধূম্রাচ্ছন্ন খেলার গাড়ীতে ধীরমস্থর গতিতে দার্জিলিংএ ওঠা—এ একটা প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগের কাণ্ড, অথচ তারি গর্বে আমরা বাঁচিনে। এমন কল বানাব যে দার্জিলিংএ টান দিলে শিলিগুড়ি থেকে একঘর লোক পলক ফেলতে না ফেলতে দার্জিলিংএ উঠে যাবে। যেমন ক'রে লোকে ইনস্ক্রেকের হাকেলকারে ওঠে, যেমন ক'রে লোক ভিন্নভিয়ারসের মাথায় চড়ে। সে ব'লত, দার্জিলিং, শিমলা—হোং, কেবল ওঠা আর নামো; কোমর ব্যথা হয়ে পা ফুলে মরা আর কি। তাই স্নাইটজারল্যাণ্ড দেখতে সমস্ত পৃথিবীর লোক ভিড় ক'রে যায়। দার্জিলিং শিমলা দেখতে তারাই যায় যাদের কোনো চুলায় আর গতি নেই। সে ব'লত ডিনেমাইট দিয়ে পাহাড়ের চূড়া সব সৌরস

ক'রে দেব, উঠানামার হাঙ্গামাই থাকবে না। জঙ্গলগুলি থেকে মাথার চুলের উকুনবাছার মত ক'রে সমস্ত হিংস্র জন্তু বেছে মারব, যেমন স্নাইস্ আর্নসে ওরা মেরেচে। আমাদের দেশে যত লোক মরচে তার অনেক অংশ মরচে সাপের কামড়ে—কী জড়ত্বপূর্ণ জাতির লক্ষণ। আর হলিডে—এতো আমাদের দেশের লোক জানেই না। পর্বতপ্রমাণ মোটখাট মাথায় ক'রে চলা, পথে চোর ডাকাত ওৎ পেতে বসে আছে দিনরাত। এ সমস্ত বদলে দেবে সরোজ। সত্যিকারের হলিডে হবে তার মতে এই ধরণের। দার্জিলিংএর ম্যাল থেকে দিনে দশবারোখানা এরোপ্লেন ছাড়বে, সান্দাংকু যাবে, কাঞ্চনজঙ্ঘা যাবে, ধবলগিরি যাবে, গৌরীশঙ্কর যাবে। “Cheap day-return ticket to Mount Everest”—রাস্তায় রাস্তায় টুরিষ্ট এজেন্টেরা টিকিট ফেরি ক'রে বেড়াবে। কাঞ্চনজঙ্ঘার শীর্ষদেশে গ্লেশিয়ারের তীরে থাকবে বিদ্যুৎ দিয়ে গরম করা ছোট্ট এক অ্যাস্বেস্টসের হোটেল, সেখানে টুরিষ্টরা জলযোগ ক'রেও আসতে পারবে। স্কুলকলেজের ছেলুমেয়েদের নিয়ে যাওয়া যাবে মানস সরোবরে গ্রীষ্মের অবকাশে ভূতঙ্ক, উদ্ভিদতঙ্ক, জীবতঙ্ক শেখাবার জন্তে। নববিবাহিত দম্পতীরা মধুচন্দ্র স্থাপন ক'রবে কৈলাশশিখরের আইসটার্নেলের মধ্যে বিদ্যুতে গরম করা ছোট ছোট কেবিনে। লাল, নীল বাতিতে রাত্তিরে কাঞ্চনজঙ্ঘার গায়ে লেখা ফুটে উঠবে, ‘মহাত্মা গান্ধীর জয়। কংগ্রেসকে ভোট দিন’।

রনেন বলল, কি সুন্দর, কি সুন্দর। তা তোমার সরোজাঙ্গ সেহানবিশ কি কেবল থিওরী নিয়েই থাকতেন, না হাতে কলমে কিছু করবার চেষ্টা পেয়েছিলেন কোনো দিন ?

ফেস্তর দা বললেন, আঃ শোনই না ছাই সুবটা। তোমরা বড় অতিষ্ঠ। সরোজ ব'লত বাংলাদেশটা বিধাতার একটা সৃষ্টিছাড়া ছর্ষটনা, মানে বাংলাদেশ মানুষের ঠিক বাসোপযোগী হবার আগেই মানুষের দখলে এসেচে। তারি ফলে আজো এখানে বস্তায় ডুবে মরতে হয়। পলি প'ড়ে প'ড়ে যথেষ্ট উঁচু হ'তে আরো হাজার দশেক বছর লাগবে। অতদিন ধৈর্য ধ'রে কে ব'সে থাকবে ? তাছাড়া বাংলাদেশের বৈচিত্র্যহীনতাও বড় পীড়াদায়ক। লালমাটি, কাঁকর আর পাহাড় এখানে ওখানে আছে বটে, কিন্তু প্রায় পনের আনা হ'ল চ্যাপ্টা সমতল, আর নয়ত জলে কাদায় ভর্তি। সে একদিন আমরা বাংলা দেশের এক ম্যাপ দেখাল। দেখি ম্যাপের ওপর সোজা সোজা উত্তর-দক্ষিণ লম্বা কতকগুলো রেখা টেনেচে। আমি বললাম, ওগুলো কি ? ও বলল, ওগুলো হচ্ছে পাহাড়, আমার কল্পনার পাহাড়। বলল, যদি সমস্ত বাংলা দেশে প্রতি দশমাইল অন্তর এমন লম্বা লম্বা পাহাড় থাকত হিমালয় থেকে একেবারে বঙ্গোপসাগর পর্যন্ত, তাহলে ভারি সুন্দর হ'ত। বলল, পাহাড়গুলোকে বাসোপযোগী ক'রে তাতে স্থাপন করা হ'ত

লোকালয়, চমৎকার ঠাণ্ডা থাকত সেখানে সন্ধ্যা বছর। আর নদীগুলো বহিত দুই পাহাড়ের মাঝের উপত্যকা দিয়ে। বন্যাসুভ্য থাকত না কোনোদিন। ঠাণ্ডা ম্যালেরিয়ার মশা যেত মরে, বাঙালী জাতি সবল কর্মঠ স্বাধীন জাতি হয়ে উঠত। আমি বললাম, সব সত্যি, কিন্তু তুমি ত বিধাতাপুরুষ নও সরোজ, কাজেই ও সব উদ্ভট করনা ছেড়ে দাও। সরোজ বলল, শোন নি সুরোজের খাল কেটে, পানামার খাল কেটে দুই সাগরকে জোড়া হয়েছে, শোন নি বাতাস থেকে নাইট্রেট তৈরী করা হয়েছে, শোন নি এমন বিসাক্-গ্যাস তৈরী হয়েছে যাতে অনায়াসে তোমাদের মতন জড় নিশ্চেষ্ট দশ বিশ হাজারকে মেরে ফেলতে দশমিনিটও সময় লাগে না? তার পর একদিন সে বলল ছুটি চায়, কি কাজে তাকে বাইরে যেতে হবে চার মাসের জন্য। ছুটি নিয়ে সে চলে গেল। কাগজে দেখি সরোজ নাকি নানা জেলায় ঘুরে বেড়াচ্ছে আর লোকদের বিনাপয়সায় টিউব-ওয়েল খুঁড়ে দিচ্ছে। তাবললাম, এই রেঃ এবার ওর স্বদেশ প্রেম নলকুপের আকার ধরেছে। একদিন বলা নেই কওয়া নেই সরোজ এসে আমার টেবিলে প্রচণ্ড এক ঘুষি মেরে বলল, কেন্না মার দিয়া, ক্ষেত্তর দা। তাকে অনেক জিজ্ঞাসাবাদ করে যা জানতে পারলাম তা হচ্ছে এই। টিউব ওয়েল খোঁড়া তার একটা ছল মাত্র। মাটির নীচে দিয়ে জলের স্রোত চলেচে তাই তোমরা সবাই জান। সরোজের উদ্দেশ্য হ'ল বাংলাদেশের নানা জায়গায় মাটির কত নীচে গভীর জলস্রোত বইচে তা দেখা। সে নাকি দেখেচে এক এক দ্রাঘিমায় এক এক বিশেষ স্তরে গভীর জলস্রোত বইচে বাংলার নীচে। তার খিওরি হ'ল প্রকৃতপক্ষে বাংলাদেশ একটা বিরাট ভাসমান দ্বীপ, জলের ওপর সেটা বসান, কিন্তু সব জায়গায় মাটির সমান নীচে গভীর জল নেই। তারপর আমাকে বলল, এক এক দ্রাঘিমায় ঐ যে দেখচ এক এক বিশেষ স্তরে এক এক জলস্রোত, এ হ'ল বিধির স্পষ্ট নির্দেশ। এবার আমি বাংলাদেশকে নতুন করে গড়ব।

অতীশ বলল, বুঝেচি। বাংলাদেশ যখন জলের ওপরই ভাসচে, তখন লগি ঠেলে তাকে ভাসিয়ে নিয়ে যেরে শীতপ্রধান আবহাওয়ার মধ্যে নোঙর ফেলে দিলেই হ'ল, এই ত মতলব।

ক্ষেত্তর দা বললেন, আরে না না। তাও কি কখনো হয়। জলের স্রোত যে বিভিন্ন স্তরে রয়েছে। সরোজের আইডিয়া হ'ল বাংলাদেশের উত্তর-দক্ষিণে সারি সারি লাইন করে টিউব ওয়েল খুঁড়ে বাওয়া। তারপর সেই টিউবগুলোর ভেতর দিয়ে নীচের আবহ জলের ওপর হাইড্রলিক চাপ দিতে হবে। একগুণ চাপ পড়লে সে চাপ হাজার গুণ হবে। তারি ফলে চড় চড় করে মাটি ফুলে উঠবে, অর্থাৎ উত্তর-দক্ষিণে লম্বা এক এক পাহাড় গজিয়ে উঠবে।

আমরা বললাম, যতসব গাঁজাখুরী কল্পনা। ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, তা ত বটেই। আমিও সরোজকে সেই কথা বললাম। শুনে সে প্রথমে স্তম্ভিত হয়ে গেল। তারপর দম্বরমত বেগে উঠল। বলল, ক্ষেত্র দা, তোমাকে এঞ্জিনিয়ার ব'লে জানতাম, এখন দেখছি তুমি ভেতো বাঙালী, গ্রহণে-হাঁড়ি-ফেলা-কুসংস্কারাচ্ছন্ন বাঙালী। অনেক পুরুষের গোলামীর ফলে তোমার শ্লেথ মেন্টালিটি হয়েছে প্রবল, নির্দিষ্ট গণ্ডীর মধ্যে ব'সে থাকাই তোমার অভ্যাস, নতুনত্বের স্বাদ তুমি কি জানবে। আমি তাকে একটা চুরুট দিয়ে ব'ললাম, চুরুট খেয়ে মাথাটা ঠাণ্ডা কর। চুরুট সে ছুঁড়ে ফেলে দিয়ে বলল, ধুতোর চুরুট, তুমি আমাকে সাহায্য ক'রবে কিনা? আমি বললাম, কিসের সাহায্য? সে বলল, তোমার কারখানার বড় বড় হাইড্রলিক প্রেসগুলোকে আমায় দিতে হবে। আমি বললাম, সরোজ তুমি পাগল হয়েছে। তোমার সাম্রাজ্য একটা খেয়াল মেটাতে আমি এত টাকার জিনিষ নষ্ট করতে পারব না। সরোজাফ সেহানবিশের মস্ত এক দোষ বেগে গেলে তার জ্ঞান থাকে না। ধী ক'রে দাঁড়িয়ে উঠে ঘুসী পাকিয়ে আমায় বলল, আচ্ছা আমি চললাম। এখন আমায় তুমি তাড়াচ্ছ কিন্তু মনে রেখ আবার আমি আসব, তখন তুমি নিজেই সেধে আমার আটকে রাখবে। আমি বললাম, তোমার মতলবটা কিহে সরোজ, তুমি কি সত্যিসত্যিই পাহাড় তৈরী করতে চললে নাকি! সে বলল, তোমার সাহায্য না পেলে তা কি ক'রে করব। তার আগে আমি তোমাকে উপরি উপরি-দুব্বার প্রমাণ দেব, আমার নিজের ছোট, হাইড্রলিক প্রেসটার সাহায্যে,— এমন প্রমাণ দেব, যা তুমি জীবনে অবিশ্বাস করতে পারবে না। আমি বললাম, তার মানে? সে বলল, আমার ঐ হাইড্রলিক প্রেসটা দিয়ে মাটির নীচের জলের ওপর চাপ দেব, এমন চাপ দেব যে ভূপৃষ্ঠ কেঁপে উঠবে, এমন কেঁপে উঠবে যে তোমার শ্লেথমেন্টালিটির আফিমের আমেজে ব'দ হয়েও তা টের পাবে। তারপর তোমার কাছে আসব। তখন আগ্রহ ক'রে তুমি আমাকে আটকে রাখবে।

আমরা ব'লে উঠলাম, সর্বনাশ, তারপর!

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, তারপর যা হ'ল তোমরা ত সবাই তা জান।

অতীশ বলল, বল কি ক্ষেত্র দা, তুমি বিশ্বাস কর তোমার সরোজাফ সেহানবিশই এ দুই ভূমিকম্পের জন্তে দায়ী?

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, বিশ্বাস নয়রে ভাই, চাক্ষুষ দেখেছি। সে আমাকে টেলিগ্রাম ক'রে নিয়ে গেল মুন্সেরের বাইরে এক জঙ্গলে, এক টিনের বাড়ীতে। বলল, নিজের চোখেই দেখ। আমার যে কী অবস্থা তোমরা বুঝতেই পারচ। তার কথা ত বিশ্বাসই করি নি কাজেই তাকে বাধা দেবার কথা মনেই আসে নি। ঔৎসুক্য হয়েছিল,

দেখিই না পাগলাটা করে কি। শেষে সে যখন তার প্রকাণ্ড ইলেকট্রিক এঞ্জিনের হাতল ঘুরিয়ে দিল, ভূপ্রোথিত পিষ্টনে দানবের হাতের চাপ প'ড়ল, আমি তখন অবাক হয়ে দেখছি কি হয়। হঠাৎ খরখর করে মাটা কেঁপে উঠল, চারিদিকে সে কী ভয়ঙ্কর শব্দ, কী চীৎকার, কী মহাপ্রলয়।

অতীশ বলল, তুমি,—তুমি কিছু করতে পারলে না!

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, তখন আর করবার কিছু ছিল না। আমাদের মাথার ওপর বনবানু করে টিনের ছাদ ভেঙে পড়ল। সরোজ আর আমি অতিকষ্টে বেরিয়ে এলাম সে ভগ্নস্তূপ থেকে। গায়ে বত জোর ছিল তা দিয়ে সরোজের গলা টিপে ধরে বললাম, হতভাগা কি করেচিস দেখ ত! আজ তোকে মেরেই ফেলব।

অতীশ বলল, শুধু মেরে ফেলা, তার চেয়েও বেশী কিছু দরকার, জলবিছুটি কিংবা চাবুক। তারপর?

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, আমাকে আর মারতে হ'ল না, ভগবান তাকে এমন মার মারলেন যার চেয়ে বড় মার কল্পনা করা যায় না। সরোজাক্ষ সেহানবিশ এখন উন্মাদ—পাগল।

আমরা বললাম, পাগল! বল কি ক্ষেত্র দা!

ক্ষেত্র দা বললেন, সে ব'লে গেছিল না, এবার যখন ফিরে আসবে তখন আমিই তাকে আটকে রাখব। তার কথাই ফলল অবশেষে। আমিই তাকে আটকে রেখেছি,—পাগলা গারদে।

ক্ষেত্র দা চুপ করলেন। অতীশ বলল, পরিষ্কার বোঝা গেল। মাহুয যখন ভগবানের চেয়ে বড় হ'তে চায় তখন তার এই সর্বনাশই হয়, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আরো হাজার হাজার লোকের সর্বনাশ সে করে যায়।

অতীশ আবার মদ ছেড়ে কবিতা ধ'রেচে।

কয়েকদিন পরে ক্ষেত্র দা আর আমি পাশাপাশি বসে কাফির পেয়ালায় চুমুক দিচ্ছি। ক্ষেত্র দাকে জিজ্ঞেস করলাম, তোমার সরোজাক্ষ সেহানবিশ যদি না জন্মাত ক্ষেত্র দা, তাহ'লে হয়ত অতীশ দীপঙ্করের মনের দীপ বরাবরের জ্বলেই নিভে যেত।

ক্ষেত্র দা উত্তর না দিয়ে অশ্রুমনস্কভাবে আমার কাফির এঁটো পেয়ালটা টো করে সাবাড় করে দিলেন।

সাহিত্যিক আদর্শ

শ্রীহিরণ্য বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

বর্তমানে সাহিত্যিক আদর্শ নিয়ে বাংলা সাহিত্য-সমাজে বহু আলোচনা হয়েছে ও হচ্ছে। সাহিত্য নীতিদ্বারা নিয়ন্ত্রিত হবে কিনা এ প্রশ্ন ত অতি পুরাতন। সাহিত্যের বস্তু নির্বাচনে কতকগুলি বর্জনীয় বস্তু আছে কি না এই নিয়েও কয়েক বছর আগে তুমুল তর্কের সৃষ্টি হয়ে গেছে। সম্প্রতি আবার প্রশ্ন উঠেছে, সাহিত্যিক সার্থকতা নিছক রসবস্তু হিসাবেই নির্ধারিত হবে, না, তা' ব্যতীত আর কোন জনহিতকর কর্তব্য আছে। আধুনিক মানুষের আধুনিক দুঃখ কষ্ট বা শ্রেণী বিশেষের দুঃখ কষ্টের প্রতি মানুষের চিন্তাশক্তিকে আকর্ষণ করা এবং তা' দূরীকরণে প্রেরণা যোগান—এই সবও তার কাজ কিনা? এই নূতন প্রশ্ন নিয়ে, প্রগতি, অগতি, মন্দগতি প্রভৃতি নানা নামকরণের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে।

আসলে ধরতে গেলে কিন্তু এগুলি খাঁটি সাহিত্যিক প্রশ্ন নয়। সাহিত্য হ'ল সৌন্দর্যের সৃষ্টি। তা' সে কবিতারই আকার নিক, গল্পেরই আকার নিক বা প্রবন্ধেরই আকার নিক। সেটি একটি সমগ্র বস্তু। সেই সমগ্র বস্তুটির প্রাণ বা বিষয় হ'ল কোন একটি চিত্তাকর্ষক ভাব বা অল্পভূতি এবং তার দেহ হ'ল কথাসমষ্টি নিয়ে, যে বাক্যাবলী নিয়ে তা' সংগঠিত তাই। সেই বাক্যাবলীর যোজনায় চাই নৈপুণ্যসা ভাবপ্রবাহকে অভিব্যক্তি দিতে সমর্থ, সেই ভাবপ্রবাহের মধ্যেই চাই একটা আল্পর্কিক সামঞ্জস্য এবং সর্বোপরি চাই সেই ভাষায়, ভাবে, দেহে, প্রাণে এবং তাদের প্রতি অংশ বিশেষের সহিত পরস্পরের সর্বব্যাপী সামঞ্জস্য। তবেই একটি মনোহর সর্বাঙ্গসুন্দর রসবস্তুর সৃষ্টি হয়, একটি সাহিত্যিক রচনা জন্মলাভ করে। কাজেই সাহিত্য সম্বন্ধে মুখ্য প্রশ্নগুলির ভিত্তি হবে এই বিষয়গুলির উপর। সাহিত্যের মৌলিক প্রশ্ন হ'ল ভাষা ও ভাবের সামঞ্জস্যের প্রশ্ন, আধার ও আধেয়ের পারস্পরিক সম্বন্ধের প্রশ্ন, দেহ ও মনের পরস্পরের অধিকারের প্রশ্ন।

খাঁটি সাহিত্যিক রচনা ব'লে আমরা যা' গ্রহণ করি তা' হ'ল তিনটি জিনিস—কবিতা, গল্প ও প্রবন্ধ। নাটকের নামও এ সম্পর্কে উল্লেখনীয়, কিন্তু তাকেও গল্পের প্রকার-বিশেষ ব'লে গ্রহণ করতে পারি। 'পি ই এন' ক্লাবের নাম করণই হয়েছে এই তিন সম্প্রদায়ের সাহিত্যিককে নিয়ে। পত্রিকার সম্পাদকের কারবার এই তিন বস্তু নিয়েই। সেই সম্বন্ধস্থত্রেই বোধ হয় সম্পাদক শ্রেণীর সাহিত্যিকের নিকটেও 'পি ই এন' এর দ্বার

উন্মুক্ত। যাক সে কথা। আমি বলতে চেয়েছিলাম যে এই তিন শ্রেণীর রচনারই মৌলিক প্রশ্ন সর্বক্ষেত্রে এক। যাকে আমরা আভ্যন্তরিক সামঞ্জস্য বলে নামকরণ করেছি—অর্থাৎ ভাব পূরণরায় সামঞ্জস্য ও কথাকে পাত্রিপাত্রিরূপে সাজাবার দক্ষতা—সে সমস্ত সম্বন্ধে কোন সাধারণ নির্দেশ দেওয়া সম্ভব নয়। তার কারণ হ'ল এই যে তা' প্রতিটি বস্তু অনুসারে বিভিন্ন হয়। অর্থাৎ বিষয়বস্তু অনুসারেই সে সমস্তার সমাধান করতে হয়; প্রত্যেক রচনার সমাধান হয় তার স্বতন্ত্রে। কিন্তু ভাব ও ভাষার সামঞ্জস্যকে নিয়ে যে প্রশ্ন তা' সাধারণ; তা' প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীর রচনা সম্পর্কেই গ্বাটে এবং সে সম্বন্ধে একটি সমাধানই সকল শ্রেণীর রচনা সম্পর্কে সমান ভাবে প্রযোজ্য। সেই সমস্তার কথাই এবার আমরা আলোচনা করব।

এই সংক্ষিপ্ত প্রবন্ধের মধ্যে তিন শ্রেণীর রচনার বিস্তারিত আলোচনা সম্ভব নয়। পূর্বেই বলা হয়েছে এ সমস্তার সমাধান সর্বশ্রেণীতেই এক। কাজেই এ বিষয়ে বিস্তারিত আলোচনা কবিতার ক্ষেত্রে নিয়েই সীমাবদ্ধ থাকুক।

কবিতা দুইটি বস্তু নিয়ে গঠিত। এক—মনোহর ভাব বা অনুভূতি এবং দুই—সুন্দর ছন্দোবদ্ধ ভাষার প্রকাশ। অনুভূতি বা ভাব তার আধার, ছন্দোবদ্ধ ভাষা তার আধার—অনুভূতি বা ভাব তার প্রাণ এবং ছন্দোবদ্ধ ভাষা তার দেহ। এদের মধ্যে সম্বন্ধ অটুট এবং অবিচ্ছেদ্য। আদর্শ সুন্দর কবিতা রচনা করতে উভয়েরই প্রয়োজন আছে। যেমন মধুর ভাবের প্রয়োজন আছে, তেমনি ছন্দ ও ভাষার মাধুর্যেরও প্রয়োজন আছে। ছন্দ ও ভাষার প্রয়োজন, তাকে প্রকাশ দেবার জন্ত, তাকে মধুরতমরূপে অভিব্যক্তি দেবার জন্ত। যেখানে কবি এই নীতি মেনে কবিতা লেখেন, সেখানে কবিতা হয় ভাষার ভাবে সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট, তিলোত্তমার মত সুন্দর। সেই কবিতাই হ'ল প্রথম শ্রেণীর কবিতা।

আসলে কিন্তু এমনটি সব সময় ঘটে না। কেউ মনে করেন ভাবই একমাত্র কবিতার আধার, কাজেই ছন্দ বা ভাষার প্রতি লক্ষ্য রাখবার প্রয়োজন নাই। কেউ বা ভাবের ছন্দের নৈপুণ্যের দ্বারাই কবিতাশক্তির নৈপুণ্যের পরিমাপ হয়, অতএব ছন্দের প্রতিই বোল ফানা মন দেওয়া প্রয়োজন। এইভাবে দুইটি বিরোধী দলের সৃষ্টি হয়। জগতে এই রকমই হয়ে থাকে। নিজের প্রবৃত্তিগুলি পরিচালনা করার ক্ষমতা অর্জনের জন্তই সংঘর্ষ অভ্যাসের প্রয়োজন, সে প্রবৃত্তিগুলির উন্মুলনের জন্ত নয়; কিন্তু সম্যাসীর লক্ষ্য হয়ে দাঁড়ায় তাই। স্বাস্থ্য ও সৌন্দর্যের জন্তই শরীরচর্চার প্রয়োজন; কিন্তু পাণ্ডিত্যের নিকট এই দুইটি বস্তুই গৌণ হয়ে দাঁড়ায় এবং পাশ্চাত্য বলা কাহরণই শরীরচর্চার একমাত্র উদ্দেশ্য হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। মানুষের কর্মের ধারা এইরূপে বিভিন্নমুখী

গতিতেই প্রকাশ পায়। যে দল কবিতার ~~কিছু~~কেই প্রাধান্য দেন বেশী, আমরা তাঁদের 'ভাববাদী' বলতে পারি এবং ~~কিছু~~ ছন্দ ও ভাবকে প্রাধান্য দেন বেশী তাঁদের 'ভাষাবাদী' বলতে পারি। উভয়েই কিন্তু একপেশে দেখুয়তুষ্টি যে কবি মনোহর ভাষা ও চিন্তাকর্ষক ছন্দের প্রয়োজনীয়তা বোধ করেন না, সে কবিতা ভাবের পরিষ্করণ সম্যক্রূপে হয় না। সেই কারণে সে কবিতা প্রথম শ্রেণীর কবিতা বলে গণ্য হ'তে পারে না। সেইরূপ যে কবির সকল শক্তি, সকল কৌশল কেবলমাত্র বিচিত্র ছন্দ স্বজনে পর্যাবসিত হয়, তাঁর কবিতার বিষয় ছন্দের আড়ম্বরের মধ্যে নিজেকে হারিয়ে ফেলে, অনেক সময় মারাও যায়। সুন্দরী নারীর সৌন্দর্যকে পরিষ্কৃত করতে যেমন ভূষণের প্রয়োজন আছে, তেমনই তাঁর রূপকে অত্যধিক ভূষণের চাপে চাপা দেবার ভয় হ'তে পরিত্রাণ করবারও প্রয়োজন আছে। আদর্শ কবিতা যিনি লিখতে চান, তাঁকে এই উভয় সঙ্কট হতেই আত্মরক্ষা ক'রে চলতে হবে।

বাংলা সাহিত্যে ভাববাদী কবিতার প্রধান উদাহরণ হ'ল বৈষ্ণব পদাবলী। বৈষ্ণব কবিতা প্রধানতই মধুর রসের নানা সুরের নানা অবস্থার বর্ণনায় ভরপুর। সেখানে শব্দছটা হ'তে, ছন্দনৈপুণ্য হ'তে রসসৃষ্টিই প্রধান লক্ষ্য। অবশ্য তাঁর ব্যতিক্রমও আছে, যেমন বিদ্যাপতির কবিতা। কিন্তু বৈষ্ণব-কবি-শিরোমণি চণ্ডীদাসের কবিতার যে জিনিষ আমাদের আকৃষ্ট করে তা' হ'ল ভাবের গভীরতা। আধুনিক যুগের বিশিষ্ট ভাববাদী কবি হলেন অক্ষয় বড়াল। তাঁর 'এষা'র কবিতা তার প্রধান উদাহরণ। সে কবিতা পাষণ্ডহৃদয়কেও মুগ্ধ করে।

অত্যাধিক ভাষাবাদী কবির অভাব বাংলা সাহিত্যে সেকালেও হয় নি, একালেও নয়। ভারতচন্দ্র ও ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের কথা এই সম্পর্কে উল্লেখনীয়। আধুনিক যুগের ভাষাবাদী কবির প্রধান উদাহরণ হলেন সুকবি সত্যেন্দ্র দত্ত। তাঁর বেখানে প্রতিভা সব চেয়ে সুন্দর ও সহজ ভাবে ফুটে উঠেছে তা' হ'ল এই শব্দযোজনার নৈপুণ্য ও ছন্দ-সৃষ্টির ক্ষমতায়।

সুন্দর কবিতা রচনা যে ভাব ও ভাষা উভয়েরই সমান প্রয়োজনীয়তা আছে, একথা বাংলা সাহিত্যে প্রথম উপলব্ধি করেন কবি বিহারীলাল। এই শ্রেণীর কবিতার চরম নিদর্শন আমরা পাই আধুনিক যুগের জগদ্বরেণ্য কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতাসমূহে। উৎকৃষ্ট প্রথম শ্রেণীর কবিতা, যেখানে ভাষা, ছন্দ ও ভাব এই তিনের ত্রিবৈণীসঙ্গমে সৌন্দর্যের পূর্ণতম মূর্তিটি নিয়ে ফুটে উঠেছে, তার একটি নয়, দু'টি নয়, বহু নিদর্শন আমরা তাঁর কবিতায় খুঁজে পাই। ভাষা সেখানে অনবদ্য, ভাব চিত্তহারী, ছন্দ সচ্ছন্দ-গতি। ভাষার মাধুর্য হৃদয় ও মনকে মুগ্ধ করে, ভাবের গভীরতা মনকে স্পর্শ করে এবং

ছন্দের নৃত্য বরণার ধারার মত ব'য়ে যায়, সহজ, সুন্দর গতিতে। এই কথা প্রমাণ করতে উদাহরণ উদ্ধৃত করে এ প্রবন্ধের আকার বৃদ্ধি করার আমার ইচ্ছা নাই। তা' বোধ হয় নিশ্চয়োজন। তাঁর রচনার শব্দবিত্তাসে কষ্ট নাই, ভাবের সৌন্দর্যের হানি নাই। সে কবিতায় অনন্ত ভাষা এবং ছন্দকে অবলম্বন করে পবিত্র, মোহন, মর্মস্পর্শী ভাবধারা সচ্ছন্দগতিতে নেমে আসে, যেমন গতিতে বসন্তের আবেশের আকুলতা পাখীর গীতিতে, পুষ্পের গন্ধে, নানা বর্ণে, মলয়ের ছন্দে নিজের অভিব্যক্তি খুঁজে নেয়।

এই মুখ্য সমস্তা তিন সাহিত্য রচনার কয়েকটি গৌণ প্রশ্নও বর্তমান আছে। নীচে তার সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ দেওয়া গেল।

সুন্দর সাহিত্যবস্তু সৃষ্টি সম্ভব করতে হ'লে একদিকে যেমন চাই সাধনার প্রয়োজন, অন্য দিকে তেমনি চাই সেই সাধনাকে সম্ভব করার জন্য সাধনার অনুকূল অবস্থা। তার জন্য চাই প্রচুর অবসরের সুযোগ। আধুনিক অর্থনৈতিক যুগে কিন্তু সেটা নিতান্ত আর্থিক সৌভাগ্যে ভিন্ন সম্ভব হয় না। গ্রাসাচ্ছাদনের জন্য ক্রেতাসাধন শতকরা ২২ জনেরও বেশী লোকের ভাগ্যে লেখা আছে। কাজেই বিপুল সম্পত্তির উত্তরাধিকারী হয়ে না জন্মালে সম্পূর্ণ অবসরের সুযোগ জোটে না। যাদের প্রতি ভাগ্য এ বিষয়ে প্রসন্ন, সব সময় বাগুদেবী তাদের প্রতি প্রসন্ন হন না, কিংবা সে বিষয়ে সামর্থ্য থাকলেও শক্তিপ্রয়োগের ইচ্ছা সব সময় বর্তমান থাকে না। যেখানে কিন্তু এই তিনটি বস্তুর সমাবেশ হয়, সেখানে অভাবনীয় বস্তু লাভ সম্ভব হয়। ভাগ্যলক্ষীর অন্ধ খেলায়, এই তিন বস্তুর একত্র সংযোগের বলে আমরা রবীন্দ্রনাথের মত মনীষীকে লাভ করেছি। সখের সাধনা যে সাহিত্য সাধনার পরাকাষ্ঠী আনবার পক্ষে সব চেয়ে অনুকূল, এটি তার একটি প্রমাণ। এখানে অবসরের অন্ত নাই, কাজেই সাধনাও বিনা বাধায় বতব্বর সম্ভব অগ্রসর হ'তে পারে। ঠিক সেই কারণেই অন্নসংস্থানের জন্য যাদের খাটতে হয়, তাদের অবসর সময় সীমাবদ্ধ হয়ে যায় এবং সেই পরিমাণে সাধনারও ব্যাঘাত সৃষ্টি হয়।

সাধারণ সাহিত্যিকের পক্ষে এইটাই বড় সমস্যা। ভাব বা প্রেরণা 'কুটন' অল্পসারে মনের মধ্যে জাগে না, আর যখন আসে, তখন অনেক সময় সাংসারিক প্রয়োজনের চাপটা অধিক হয়; ফলে সে ভাবকে অভিব্যক্তি দেবার সুযোগ মেলে না। সখের সাহিত্যিকের ভাগ্যে এরকম 'ট্র্যাজিডি' প্রতিমাসেই বহুবার ঘটে। সেই হ'ল সখের সাধনার দোষ। সেই কারণেই যারা সাহিত্যকেই জীবিকা অর্জনের উপায় বা প্রফেসন করতে সমর্থ হয়েছেন, তাঁদের পক্ষে এ সমস্যা দূরীভূত হয়েছে এবং সাধনার অনুকূল অবস্থা তাঁরা ফিরে পেয়েছেন।

কিন্তু পেশাদারী সাহিত্য-সাধনার যেটি গুণ সেইটাই তার দোষ হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। সাহিত্য-সাধনাই যখন কোন মানুষের অর্থোপার্জনের উপায় হয়, তখন তার স্রুবিধা হয় এই যে সেইটাই তার জীবনের মুখ্য এবং একমাত্র কার্য হয়। ফলে অবসর তার প্রচুর মেলে। এইরূপে সময়বিষয়ে যদিও তার স্বাধীনতা ভাগ্যে জোটে, অন্য বিষয়ে এসে পড়ে পরাধীনতা। সাহিত্যরচনাকে অর্থকরী করতে হ'লে আবার কাঁটতির দিকে নজর রাখা প্রয়োজন হয়ে পড়ে। এমন সাহিত্যবস্তুর পরিবেশন করতে হবে যা' বেশী সংখ্যক লোক বুঝবে এবং আদর করবে। ফলে বস্তুনির্বাচনে স্বাধীনতা লেখকের হারাতে হয়। সাধারণের যে বিষয়ে রুচি সে বিষয়কে তিনি গ্রহণ করতে বাধ্য। ফলে ফরমাজী লেখার যা' দোষ সেই দোষ এ রচনায় বর্তায়।

এ ক্ষেত্রে সখের সাহিত্যিকের একেবারে নিরুৎসাহ হবার কারণ দেখি না। সখের সাহিত্যিকের আর কিছু সম্বল না থাক, এক বিষয়ে তিনি বিশেষ ভাগ্যবান, বিষয় নির্বাচনে তাঁর সম্পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা আছে। পরের ফরমাজকে অগ্রাহ্য করবার শক্তি তাঁর আছে। তা' ভিন্ন বর্তমান বাংলায় পেশাদারী সাহিত্যের পরিসর খুবই কম। বাংলায় অক্ষরজ্ঞ মানুষের সংখ্যা শতকরা দশও হবে না। সাহিত্য বস্তু পড়বার এবং উপভোগ করবার ক্ষমতা যাদের আছে তাদের সংখ্যা আরও কম। সেই ক্ষেত্রে বই রেচে লাভ করার মত অবস্থা খুব কম সংখ্যক লেখকের ভাগ্যেই জুটতে পারে। এই অবস্থার পরিবর্তন অন্তত অর্ধশতাব্দীতে ঘটবে ব'লে মনে হয় না। কাজেই সাহিত্যকে পেশা হিসাবে গ্রহণ করতে উপদেশ খুব কম মানুষকেই দেওয়া যায়। বেশী সংখ্যক সাহিত্যসেবককে এখন সাহিত্য-দেবীকে অবসর সময় বিনোদনের সাথী করেই সন্তুষ্ট থাকতে হবে, প্রতিদিন সাংসারবাজারে অবলম্বনস্বরূপ তাঁকে পাওয়া যাবে না। কিন্তু তাতে দুঃখ কি? সাহিত্যের প্রতি অহুরাগ যদি প্রবল হয় এবং মনের ইচ্ছার যদি অভাব না ঘটে, এই প্রতিকূল অবস্থার মধ্যেও সাহিত্য-সাধনাকে সার্থকতামণ্ডিত করা যায়। বাংলা সাহিত্যে ত তার উদাহরণ কম নাই। স্বয়ং বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রও এইরূপ সখের সাহিত্যিক ছিলেন।

সাহিত্য-সাধনাকে সাফাল্যমণ্ডিত করতে অল্প যে বস্তুটির বিশেষ প্রয়োজন তা' হ'ল বিষয় নির্বাচনে সম্পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা। এই হিসাবে সাহিত্য-সেবককে হ'তে হবে ব্যক্তিত্ব-বাদীর চরম নিদর্শন, তবেই তাঁর সাধনার পথ প্রশস্ত হবে। সাহিত্যকে সুন্দর করা, ভাবকে সুন্দরতম, মনোহরতম অভিব্যক্তি দেওয়া—এই হবে তাঁর চরম লক্ষ্য। 'আর্ট ফর্ আর্টস্ সেক্'—এই মনোভাবেরই বাণী। এই হিসাবে সাহিত্যসেবী সম্পূর্ণরূপে ব্যক্তিত্ববাদী। তিনি কোন ব্যক্তিবিশেষের ফরমাজ মত যেমন রচনা করবেন না, তেমন কোন নীতিবিশেষ বা কোন দলবিশেষের নির্দেশও মাথা পেতে গ্রহণ করে নিতে পারবেন

না। তাঁকে নির্ভর করতে হবে সম্পূর্ণ নিজের উপর। তিনি বশতা স্বীকার করবেন কেবলমাত্র সৌন্দর্যের, সৌন্দর্যই তাঁর একমেবাদ্বিতীয়ম্ উপাশ্রয় বস্তু। সুন্দর বিষয় বা মনোভাবকে অল্পরূপ সুন্দর বেশ দিয়ে প্রকাশ করাই তাঁর কর্তব্য। সে সৌন্দর্যের সন্ধানে তিনি যেখানেই যান, আপত্তি নাই, অক্ষত বস্তুটি সুন্দর হ'লেই তা' সার্থক হ'ল। সে বিষয় প্রচলিত সমাজনীতি বিরুদ্ধ হ'ক, বা আস্তাকুড়ে খুঁজে পাওয়া হ'ক, বা আঁধার হ'তে আবিষ্কৃত হ'ক, তাতে দোষ নাই। জহরী মুক্তা খুঁজতে সমুদ্রের তলায় শুজির সন্ধানে ফিরে, পুষ্পবিলাসী মালয়পক্ষ হ'তে পদকে উদ্ধার করতে দ্বিধা বোধ করে না। সাহিত্য-সাধকেরও সেইরূপ নির্ভীক হ'তে হবে, নিঃসংশয় হ'তে হবে। শরৎচন্দ্র এইরূপ উপাসনারই পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। ফলে তিনি কত অমূল্য সাহিত্যরত্ন সৃষ্টি করেছেন। তাঁর 'আঁধারে আলো', তাঁর 'রাজলক্ষ্মী', তাঁর 'সাবিত্রী', তাঁর 'রোহিণী দা'—প্রত্যেকই তাঁর আঁধারের মধ্য হ'তে আবিষ্কৃত এক একটা জ্যোতির কণিকা। ঠিক এই একই কারণে সাহিত্য-সেবকের কোন বিশেষ দলভুক্ত হওয়া সম্ভব নয়। কারণ তাঁকে তখন ফরমাজী রচনা করতে বাধ্য হ'তে হয়। কোন বিশেষ দলের মতসিদ্ধ রচনা 'প্রপাগাণ্ডা' হ'তে পারে, কিন্তু তা' খাঁটি সাহিত্য হ'তে পারে না। ভাল সাহিত্যসৃষ্টির তা' অন্তরায়। একক, একনিষ্ঠ এবং নিরালস্য সাধনাই সাহিত্যিকের সাফল্যের সহায়ক।

ঘরে বাইরে

শ্রীঅমলেশ ত্রিপাঠী

প্রাচীরের প্রতি মানুষের এক ছুঁনিবার মোহ আছে, প্রাচীরকে সে সহজে পরিত্যাগ করিতে চায় না, তাই নবীনের প্রতিষ্ঠা দুঃখের বর্ষার মধ্যে। মাল্য চন্দনে কেহ নবীনকে বরণ করে না, আত্মপল্লবে শোভিত ঘট ও কদলীবৃক্ষের মাঙ্গলিকে তাহাকে অভিনন্দন করে না, তাহার আগমন হয় গ্লানি, কুংসা ও অবিচারের বহ্যায়। যখন চিরাচরিত প্রথা, সংস্কার বা প্রাচীন মতবাদের অচলায়তনের সহিত নবীন মতবাদ ও নবীন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর সংঘর্ষ উপস্থিত হয় তখন তাহাকে অনেক লাঞ্ছনা সহ করিতে হয়। প্রাচীরের প্রতি মোহবশতঃ কেহ তাহাকে সহানুভূতির চক্ষে দেখে না আর সহানুভূতি ব্যতীত স্মবিচার অসম্ভব হইয়া উঠে। দুঃখের বিষয় এই সংক্রামক কুপমণ্ডুকতা সমাজ হইতে সাহিত্যে ছড়াইয়া পড়িয়াছে, সাহিত্যেও নবীন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর বিরুদ্ধে এক রক্ষণশীল অহুদার চক্ষু সদা সজাগ।

Ibsen যখন যুরোপীয় সমাজকে স্বল্প সমালোচনার কষ্টিপাথরে বিচার করিতেছিলেন এবং নবীন সামাজিক সমস্যা লইয়া Ghosts, Doll's House প্রভৃতি নাটক রচনা করিতেছিলেন তখন পাশ্চাত্য জগতে ভীষণ বিপ্লব স্রব হইয়াছিল। ঠিক সেইরূপ রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন ঘরে বাইরে ও চোখের বালি লিখিলেন বাংলাদেশের রক্ষণশীল কুপমণ্ডুক সম্প্রদায় ক্ষিপ্ত হইয়া নাসিকা-কুঞ্চিত করিল, মনে হইল সে স্বল্প রক্ষণপথে কোনদিন বায়ু প্রবেশ করিবে না। সমালোচনা-সমাজর্জ্বীর বারম্বার আফালনে পড়ে ও গড়ে জানাইয়া দিল যে উল্লিখিত পুস্তকদ্বয় বাংলার সমাজকে দুর্নীতির পাপপঙ্কে টানিয়া লইবে, বিনোদিনী বিধবা হইয়াও সমাজের বুকে বসিয়া বাহা করিল মছর কোন বিধানে তাহা ত্যাগ নহে, স্পৃহিত বর্ণাশ্রম ধর্ম তাহাতে মরণাঘাত পাইয়াছে, বিমলা কুলনারী হইয়াও যে পাপ করিল বাংলার অন্তঃপুর তাহাতে কলুষিত হইয়াছে।

উপরন্তু তাহারা এই ধুয়া তুলিল যে সন্দীপের মুখ দিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ সীতা দেবীর তথা হিন্দুনারীর সতীত্বের চির-গৌরবোজ্জ্বল আদর্শকে অপমানিত করিয়াছেন, নারীর সতীত্ব ও সংঘমের যে স্রষ্টা ভিত্তির উপর ভারতীয় সমাজ দণ্ডায়মান ছিল রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাহাকে বিচলিত করিয়াছেন। কেহ কেহ বলিল রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বাদেশিকতার অভিধানকে

আত্মহত্যা বলিয়া বিজ্ঞপ করিয়াছেন এবং সন্দীপের চরিত্র শ্রীঅরবিন্দের স্বাদেশিকতার বিজ্ঞপালেখ্য ব্যতীত কিছু নহে।

যে ঘরে বাইরে প্রকাশিত হইবার পর বহুদিন কাটিয়া গিয়াছে। যে আলোক আমাদের অনভ্যন্ত চক্ষু ধাঁধিয়া দিয়াছিল তাহার তীব্রতা অপেক্ষাকৃত কম। আমরা বুঝিতে পারিয়াছি ঘরে বাইরের ক্ষুণ্ণতাই ইহা নয়, উল্লিখিত অপবাদগুলি মিথ্যা এবং অর্থহীন। চোখের বালির কথা বলিতে আসি নাই, আজ ঘরে বাইরে সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলিবার চেষ্টা করিব।

যে ঘরে বাইরে উপাখ্যানমূলক উপভাষা নহে, তত্ত্বমূলক উপভাষা, আখ্যান ইহাতে গৌণ, একটি বিশেষ ভাবে মূর্ত্ত করিবার জন্ত চরিত্রগুলির সৃষ্টি, তথ্যটি কি প্রথম চৌধুরী তাহার বীরবলের হালখাতায় বলিয়াছেন—“শ্রীযুক্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঘরে বাইরে আমাদের জাতীয় সমস্তার ছবি এঁকেছেন, কেননা ও উপভাষাখানি একটি রূপক-কাব্য ছাড়া আর কিছু নয়। নিখিলেশ হচ্ছেন প্রাচীন ভারতবর্ষ, সন্দীপ নবীন যুরোপ, আর বিমলা বর্ত্তমান ভারত।” বর্ত্তমান যুরোপ স্বাদেশিকতার নামে যে হিংসা ও গোভের নির্লজ্জ সাধনা চলিয়াছে, শত শত নরমুণ্ড লইয়া স্বার্থপরতার উৎসব চলিয়াছে তাহার প্রভাব ভারতবর্ষের উপর কতখানি পড়িয়াছে এবং প্রাচীন ভারতবর্ষের আদর্শ তাহাকে কতখানি প্রতিহত করিতেছে ইহাই প্রতিপাত্ত। সন্দীপের প্রতি রক্তকণায় উলঙ্গ পাশ্চাত্য জড়বাদের জয় গান, নিখিলেশের অন্তরে প্রাচীন ভারতের শান্তি, মৈত্রী ও প্রেমের হোমশিখা অনির্বাণ, আর বিমলার মন বিধাত্ত, পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার প্রবল ইচ্ছাশক্তি ও বাহ্যিক চাকচিক্য তাহাকে জর্গিবার বেগে আকর্ষণ করিতেছে কিন্তু অন্তরস্থিত ভারতের শান্ত সমাহিত ধ্যানগম্ভীর মূর্ত্তি তাহাকে কক্ষচ্যুত হইতে দিতেছে না, বারবার টানিয়া টানিয়া রাখিতেছে, এইখানে ঘরের ও বাইরের সংঘর্ষ, ঘরে ভারতের প্রাচীন সভ্যতা—সহজ সরল অনাড়ম্বর অথচ বিরাট এবং উদার, বাইরে পশ্চিমের ক্রৈশ্ব্য-গ্ৰতি, ব্যসনচ্ছটা মোহনরূপ, কিন্তু স্পষ্ট সঙ্কীর্ণতা ও রূঢ় স্বার্থপরতা, শেষ পর্যন্ত বাইরের পরাজয় হইল। তবে ঘরের উপর সে একটা প্রবল পরিবর্তনের চিহ্ন আঁকিয়া দিয়া গেল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিশ্বপ্রেমিক, রবীন্দ্রনাথ অসীমের সন্ধানী। যাহা শুধু মন্বজগতের, শুধু দেহের উন্নতির জন্ত আপনাকে সীমাবদ্ধ করিয়াছে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাহার পক্ষপাতী নহেন, সন্দীপের চরিত্রের এই সঙ্কীর্ণতা তিনি স্বীকার করিতে পারেন নাই, তাহার বস্তুতাত্ত্বিকতাকে ব্যঙ্গ করিয়াছেন।

সন্দীপ নিটুপের ভক্ত, সে উচ্চকণ্ঠে বলে—“যেটুকু আমার ভাগে এসে পড়েছে সেইটুকু আমার, একথা অক্ষমেরা বলে ও ছর্কলেরা শোনে। বা আমি কেড়ে নিতে

পারব সেইটে যথার্থ আমার,.....যারা পড়তে জানে না, ধরতে পারে না, একটুতেই বাদের মুঠো আলগা হ'য়ে যায়, পৃথিবীতে সেই আধমরা একদল লোক আছে, নীতি সে বেচারাদের সাম্বনা দিক্।” লোভকে সে ম্লহৎ আসন দেয়, বলে “লাভ করবার স্বাভাবিক অধিকার আছে বলেই লোভ করা স্বাভাবিক।”

যাহাদের চাহিবার জোর আছে তাহারা লজ্জা করিবে না, চাহিয়া লইবে, না চাহিয়াও লইবে। প্রকৃতি বিচিত্র সত্তারে আপনাকে সাজাইয়া রাখিয়াছে এইসব দুঃসাহসী লোভীর জন্ত। “তারা নদী সাঁওরে আসবে, পাঁচিল ডিকিয়ে পড়বে, দরজা লাথিয়ে ভাঙবে.....প্রকৃতি আত্মসমর্পণ করবে কিন্তু সে দস্যুর কাছে, কেননা চাওয়ার জোর, নেওয়ার জোর, পাওয়ার জোর সে ভোগ করতৈ ভালবাসে—তাই আধ-মরা তপস্বীর হাড়-বেরকরা গলায় সে আপনার বসন্তকুলের স্বয়ম্বরের মালা পড়বে না।”

ইহা বস্তুতত্ত্বের বাণী। সন্দীপ সগর্বে বলে, “আমি বস্তুতত্ত্ব, উলঙ্গ বাস্তব আর ভাবুকতার জেল ভেঙে বেরিয়েছি, আলোকের মধ্যেযা চাই তা খুব কাছে আসবে, তাকে মোটা করে পাবো, তাকে শক্ত করে ধরবো—তাকে কিছুতে ছাড়বো না, মাঝখানে যা কিছু আছে তা ভেঙে চুরমার হয়ে ধুলোয় লুটবে, হাওয়ার উড়বে, এই আনন্দ, এই ত’ আনন্দ—এই ত’ বাস্তবের তাওব নৃত্য—তারপর মরণ-বাঁচন, ভলোমন্দ—সুখ দুঃখ তুচ্ছ তুচ্ছ—”

তায়াত্মীয় বিচারহীন সন্দীপ-জোর করিয়া চায়, লুকোচুরি করিতে চাহে না, লুকোচুরিকে কাপুরুষতা বলিয়া মনে করে, আবার প্রয়োজন মত লুকোচুরি করিতে না পারিলে আপন অক্ষমতাকে অক্ষমণীয় মনে করে।

এই দুর্দান্ত ইচ্ছাশক্তির মধ্যে প্রাণ আছে, এবং সে প্রাণশক্তি আমাদের আকর্ষণ করে। ইয়ুরোপের ইচ্ছাশক্তিও এইরূপ আকর্ষণ করিয়াছে। ইয়ুরোপ যেদিন জড়বাদের বাণী দিকে দিকে ছড়াইয়া দিল, অতুল ঐশ্বর্য সম্পদ লইয়া অসীম শক্তি লইয়া ঐ বাণী বিশ্বমানবের অন্তরে আপনার আসন প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিল, আমরা ভাবিলাম “ঐ যে ধর্নৈশ্বর্য, ঐ যে বিরাট জনসঙ্ঘ পদভরে মেদিনী কাঁপিয়ে বসেছে, দিগদিগন্তের পারে বিশালকার অর্গবান-বাহিনী সপ্ত সিন্ধুর বৃকে ভাসিয়ে কোন অনন্তের পানে ছুটে চলেছে! ওই যে মৃত্যু ওদের চরম দুর্ঘটনা নয়—কর্ম ওদের বোঝা নয়,—ভোগ ওদের পাপ নয়। জীবনকে যেমন ওরা আলিঙ্গন করছে—মরণকেও তেমনি। একই স্নরে বল্ছে বন্দেমাतरम् ও বন্দেপ্রিয়াম্, এই ত’ মুক্তি—এই ত’ জীবন।” ইয়ুরোপের চিত্রপটের কণক রশ্মিপাতে সেদিন আমাদের দুর্ভল চক্ষু ঝলসিয়া গেল।

আমরা ঐশ্বর্যের অন্তরালে কিছু দেখিলাম না, মত্ততার হুকার গুলিলাম না, বলদর্পিতের বীভৎস অত্যাচারের বেদনা বুঝিলাম না। আমাদের চক্ষুচক্ষুর সম্মুখে যে রাজার বেশে অসীম গর্বভরে আসিয়া দাঁড়াইল তাহাকে সত্য বলিয়া সুন্দর বলিয়া নতশিরে মানিয়া লইলাম। তাই দেখি সন্দীপের ইচ্ছাশক্তি বিমলাকে মুগ্ধ করিয়াছে, বিমলা বলিতেছে—
“আমি সত্য কথা বলবো, এই দুর্দান্ত ইচ্ছার প্রলয়-মূর্তি দিনরাত আমার মনকে টেনেছে, মনে হ’তে লাগলো বড়ো মনোহর নিজেকে একেবারে ছারখার করে দেওয়া। তাতে কতো লজ্জা, কতো ভয়, কিন্তু বড় তীব্র মধুর সে।”

এই রুদ্রবীণা বিমলার ধমনীতে ধমনীতে উষ্ণ রক্তের তরঙ্গ তুলিয়াছে, নিরুপায় বিমলা আপনাকে বুঝাইছে “স্বপ্নের রসাতলে তুমিও মজো, আর তোমার যা কিছু আছে সব মজিয়ে দাও।”

সন্দীপ সমস্ত জানে। নারী ফাঁকা আইডিয়ার বেলুন চড়িয়া মেঘের মধ্যে ঘুরিয়া বেড়ায় না, বীরের নিকট আত্মসমর্পণ করে। তাহার ইচ্ছাশক্তির নিকট নারীগণ আপনাদের বারবার ভাসাইয়া দিয়াছে, বিমলাও দিবে।

নিখিলেশ কোনদিন বীরত্ব প্রয়োগ করে নাই,—বিমলা তাহার পৌরুষের প্রাবল্য কোনদিন লক্ষ্য করে নাই। বাহিরের সন্দীপের মধ্যে সে সেই প্রাবল্য খুঁজিয়া পাইল অমনি তাহার সকল চিত্ত সন্দীপের ইচ্ছাশক্তির পায়ে মাথা নত করিল। সন্দীপ ইহা পূর্বে হইতেই জানিত।

কিন্তু একটা কথা সে জানিত না, সে আপন ইচ্ছাশক্তিকে অমোঘ বিশ্ববিজয়ী মনে করিত, তাহার ক্রটি বা সীমা দেখিতে পায় নাই। তাই বিমলা যেদিন সে ক্রটি লক্ষ্য করিল সেদিন সন্দীপের পরাজয় সুর হইল।

সন্দীপের বাক্য ও ব্যবহারের মধ্যে যে জোরের রাগিনী উদ্দাম সুরে বাজিয়াছে সে জোর ভোগের, ত্যাগের নয়, তাহার সহিত স্বার্থ একান্ত ভাবে জড়িত ছিল, সন্দীপ চাহিত নিজের জন্ত, কিন্তু স্বদেশীর ভাণ করিয়া, সে ক্ষমতালোভী তাই স্বদেশিকতার গৈরিক ধারণ করিয়াছে, স্বার্থ ভিন্ন স্বদেশের সহিত তাহার কোন সম্পর্কই নাই।

বিমলার প্রতি দেহগত লালসা ভিন্ন তাহার অন্ত কোন মহত্তর প্রবৃত্তি নাই, আপন স্বার্থসিদ্ধির জন্ত বিমলাকে সে স্বদেশ মন্ত্রে ভুলাইয়াছে। স্বদেশিকতার ভাণ করিয়া বিমলার নিকট টাকা চাহিয়াছে, অমূল্যের ঠায় শত শত নিষ্পাপ যুবককে আপনায় করাল কক্ষপথে টানিয়া লইয়াছে।

বারবার প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায় দেশের প্রতি সন্দীপের পণ কেবল মৌখিক এবং স্থূল অর্থলোলুপতার রূপান্তর।

কিন্তু অবিমিশ্র লোভের একটা সীমা আছে। যে কেবল চায় তাহাকে একটা না একটা জায়গায় প্রত্যাখ্যাত হইতে হইবে। এই সীমাটা সন্দীপের অন্তর্নিহিত সঙ্কোচ, সে যা বলে সমস্ত অন্তর তাহাতে সায় দেয় না, সে বুঝিতে পারিয়াছে—“যতেই অন্য় করি না কেন, আইডিয়ার উড়ুনির মধ্যে ফুটো আছে, ফাঁক আছে, তার ভেতর থেকে একটা জিনিস বেরিয়ে পড়ে সে নেহাৎ কাঁচা, অতি নরম।” সে ফাঁক তাহাকে সংঘত করে। সন্দীপ জীবনে ঠাস-বুনোনি চাহিয়াছিল, কিন্তু সূত্র বতখানি ফাঁক তাহার অপেক্ষা বেশী হইয়া পড়িল। দুই তিনবার এমন মুহূর্ত আসিয়াছে যখন বিমলাকে বুকের উপর টানিয়া আনিলে বিমলা তাহার প্রতিবাদু করিত না কিংবা করিতে পারিত না, তথাপি সে সব মুহূর্ত বহিয়া গিয়াছে, তাহার প্রকৃতির মধ্যস্থ বাধা মাথা তুলিয়া বড় হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। সন্দীপের “কিন্তু” সঙ্গে সন্দীপের “আইডিয়ার” সংঘর্ষ ভারী mysterious, আর ভারী ট্রাজিক। সন্দীপ বলিতেছে—“জীবনের ট্রাজেডি এইখানে। সে ছোটো হয়ে হৃদয়ের একতলায় লুকিয়ে থাকে, তারপর বড়োকে একমুহূর্তে কাৎ করে দেয়। মানুষ আপনাকে যা বলে মানুষ তা নয়।”

সন্দীপের আদর্শ রাবণও সীতাকে অন্তঃপুরে আনিয়া রাখিতে পারেন নাই, তাঁহারও মনে বিস্তর সঙ্কোচ ছিল, তাই সীতাকে রাখিয়াছিলেন অশোক বনে।

সন্দীপ সঙ্কোচের নিকট পরাজিত হইয়া আপনার উপর লজ্জিত। বিমলার হাত চাপিয়া ধরার বেশী কিছু করিতে পারে নাই বলিয়া আপনাকে প্রশ্ন করিয়াছে— দেহবীণার সুর অস্থায়ীতে কেন খামিয়া গেল, অন্তরা পর্যন্ত কেন পৌছিল না। এই অক্ষমতার লজ্জায় তাহার প্রকৃতিগত বৈশিষ্ট্য ফুটিয়া উঠিয়াছে।

সন্দীপের দ্বিতীয় পরাজয় তাহার দর্শনবাদে। বস্তুর উপাসক সে, কিন্তু বস্তুকে সে ঠিক চেনে না, মনে করে তাহার ক্ষমতা বিশ্ববিজয়ী, জীবনের একমাত্র বাধা উপস্থিত হইবে ঐ “কিন্তু” হইতে। সে জানে না তাহার লুকোচুরির ক্ষমতা কত সসীম, ক্ষণিকের জ্ঞান তাহা মুগ্ধ করে, পরক্ষণেই মিলাইয়া যায়। বিমলা যখন তাহার দুর্বলতা ধরিয়া ফেলিবে, তাহার অন্তরের কুশ্রীতা দেখিয়া লইবে তখনই যে তার পূর্ণ পরাজয়। শেষে পরাজয়ই হইল, অমূল্য তাহার অর্থক্ৰুচ্ছ তার লজ্জাকর কাহিনী প্রকাশ করিয়া দিল। বিমলা তাহার স্বরূপ চিনিতে পারিল। যে মহত্ত্বের আবরণে স্বদেশ প্রীতির আবরণে সন্দীপকে সে বাড়াইয়া দেখিয়াছিল সে আবরণ খসিয়া পড়িল। বাহির হইল এক কুশ্রী, ঈর্ষাপরাণ স্বার্থপরাণ অতিসাধারণ মানুষ।

সন্দীপ বিমলার ভুল-ভাঙা প্রত্যাশা করে নাই। বিমলা যে ফিরিয়া আঘাত করিতে পারে ভাবে নাই, সে ভাবিয়াছিল, বিমলা চিরকাল তাহার ক্রীড়াপুতলী হইয়া

মন্ত্রমুগ্ধার মত নাচিবে, ফাঁকি বুঝিবে না। তাই যখন তাহার সকল সম্বল ধূলায় নুটিতেছিল সে তখন ফাঁকা জোলের সাহায্যে কেবলি চাহিতেছিল।

সন্দীপ তথা পাশ্চাত্য জড়বুদ্ধির প্রত্যাঘাতের হস্ত হইতে রক্ষা পাইবার উপায় নাই। যেখানে যত নিষ্ঠুর আঘাত যত বেদনা সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে সে সকল বেদনা একদিন জমা হইয়া ফিরিয়া আঘাত করিবেই। সে বিচারের গতি যত মুহূ, মন্থর হউক না কেন তাহা অতি সুক্ষ্ম এবং অব্যর্থ।

সন্দীপ চরিত্র সন্মালোচনান্তে ডাঃ সুবোধচন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত বলিতেছেন—“চন্দ্রনাথবাবু সন্দীপকে বাহির হইতে দেখিয়াছিলেন, তাই তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন যে, সন্দীপ অমাবস্তার পূর্ণচন্দ্র। সন্দীপ নিজে এই প্রশংসা বাক্যে খুসী হইত। অমূল্য ও বিমলা সন্দীপের সঙ্গে অন্তরতর সংযোগে আসিয়াছিল; তাহারাই জানে সন্দীপ শুধু গ্রহণের রাহু, তাহার একমাত্র শক্তি নষ্ট করিবার, তাও ক্ষণিকের জন্ত।”

সর্বশেষে সন্দীপের মধ্যে গলদ অনেক কিন্তু সত্যও একটা রহিয়াছে। ইয়ুরোপের মধ্যেও একটা সত্য আছে। কি এ সত্য? সন্দীপের—ইয়ুরোপের সহস্র সহস্র অসুন্দরতার ভিতর দিয়া আমরা দেখিতে পাই মানুষের জীবন,—মানুষের দুর্বীর কৰ্ম-প্রেরণা, তাহার জীবনের অসীম ভোগসামর্থ্যের আভাস, তাহার উৎসাহ, জলন্ত উত্তম,—তবে এই কৰ্মভোগকে মন্থন করিয়া অমৃত উঠিল না। বিষ উঠিল কেন? তাহার কারণ এই ভোগ শূন্য বিশ্বের আশীর্বাদ বহন করিয়া কল্যাণময় হইয়া উঠে নাই, বিশ্ব মানবের প্রেম লইয়া শুদ্ধ হয় নাই, নিখিলেশের জ্ঞান ও হৃদয়-দিয়া নিয়ন্ত্রিত হয় নাই।

বিমলা সাধারণ নারী। যতদিন সে অন্তঃপুরে ছিল বাহিরের সঙ্গে অপরিচিত ছিল ততদিন তাহার মনে কোন বিকার আসে নাই। বাহিরে আসিয়া প্রথমে চোখে পড়িল সন্দীপ। সন্দীপের প্রবল ইচ্ছাশক্তি তাহাকে আকর্ষণ করিল। সন্দীপ তাহার কৰ্মে স্বাদেশিকতাল্প মধুর মন্ত্র দিল, আপনাকে মহৎ বলিয়া প্রতিপন্ন করিল আর বিমলার মনে এই ধারণা জন্মাইয়া দিল যে বিমলার মত নারীর মধ্যে অনেক ঐশ্বর্য নিহিত রহিয়াছে, সে অবলা নহে, দুর্বলা নহে, সে শক্তির প্রতীক, স্বাধীনতা-অভিযানের অগ্রদূত। এই মন্ত্রে বিমলা ভুলিয়া গেল, আপনাকে উচ্চতর বেদীতে স্থাপন করিয়া জগৎকে নবীন চক্ষে দেখিতে লাগিল। সন্দীপ তাহাকে স্মোচাকের মক্ষিরাণী বলে, তাহার পরামর্শ না লইয়া কোন কার্য করে না। তাহার অন্তরের অগ্নিশিখার গৌরব স্তবগান করে। বিমলা বুঝে না সন্দীপ স্বার্থের জন্ত স্তবিত্বাদ করিতেছে, সে বিশ্বাস করে—“সেদিন সমস্ত দেশে যা কিছু কাজ চলছিলো তার মূলে ছিলেন সন্দীপবাবু, আর তার চেয়েও মূলে ছিলো একজন সামান্ত স্ত্রীলোকের সহজ বুদ্ধি।” দায়িত্বের গৌরবে, অসামান্ততার স্পর্ধায়

লক্ষ্য করে না স্বামী দূরে চলিয়া যাইতেছে, লুক্ক সন্দীপ ক্ষুধার্ত পদক্ষেপনে অগ্রসর হইতেছে, মেজোরাণী ব্যঙ্গ বিক্রপ ও কদর্য ইঙ্গিতের বাণে তাহাকে অহরহ বিদ্ধ করিতেছে।

সন্দীপের ব্যবহারের সুস্পষ্ট অর্থ সে বুঝিতে চায় না। তাহার প্রকৃতি পুরুষের নিকট জোর আশা করে, অনেক সময় বল প্রয়োগও কামনা করে। তাই সন্দীপের প্রবল সুর তাহাকে মাতাল করিয়া পতঙ্গবৎ বহিমুখ বিবস্ম করে। সঙ্কোচের বাঁধন টিকে না।

বিমলা মাঝে মাঝে বুঝিতে পারে সে ভুল করিতেছে, গর্হিতকর্ম করিতেছে। তবু সে ভুল করে। এইখানে তাহার অন্তর্দ্বন্দ্ব। বিমলা বলিতেছে—“মানুষের বোধহয় দুটো বুদ্ধি আছে। আমার একটা বুদ্ধি বুঝতে পারে সন্দীপ আমাকে ভোলাচ্ছে, কিন্তু আমার আর একটা বুদ্ধি ভোলে।” এ ভ্রান্তি ক্ষণিকের। অমূল্য যখন সন্দীপের বুলি আওড়াইতে থাকে, ডাকাতি ও নরহত্যা করিতে পশ্চাৎপদ হয় না, তখন তাহার মতেজ সরল জীবনকে নষ্ট হইতে দেখিয়া বিমলার মাতৃহৃদয়ে ভীষণ আঘাত লাগে। আবার একদিন সে জানিতে পারে সন্দীপ নারীদেহলোলুপ, জানিতে পারে সে অর্থগৃহু, তাহার স্বাদেশিকতা স্ববস্তুতি স্বার্থসিদ্ধির পঙ্কমাত্র। গতজীবনের ভ্রান্তির প্রতি চাহিয়া বিমলা বলে “কিন্তু আমার মধ্যে পাঁচ হাজার টাকার বেশী ছিল না কি? ছিলো বৈকি। সেই খবর সন্দীপের কাছেই শুনেছিলুম—আর সেই শুনেই তো আমি সংসারের সকল তুচ্ছ করতে পেরেছিলুম। আমি আলো দেবো, আমি জীবন দেবো, আমি শক্তি দেবো, আমি অমৃত দেবো, সেই বিশ্বাস সেই আনন্দ ছইকূল ছাপিয়ে আমি বাহির হ'য়ে পড়েছিলুম,—আজ এরা বলতে চায় এ সমস্তই মিথ্যা কথা। আমার মধ্যে যে দেবী আছে ভক্তকে বরাভয় দেবার শক্তি তার নেই, আমি যে শুভগান শুনেছিলাম, যে গান শুনে স্বর্গ থেকে ধূলোয় নেমে এসেছিলুম সে কি এই ধূলোকে স্বর্গ করবার জঁজু নয়, সে কি স্বর্গকেই মাটি করার জঁজু?” চরম ব্যর্থতার মাঝখানে স্ত্রীর বেদনাময় এ জাগরণ।

বিমলা কল্পনার স্বর্গ হইতে চ্যুত হইয়াছে, আবার কাল্পনিক মহিমার জন্ত যে স্বামীকে ছুঃখ দিয়াছিল সে স্বামীও দূরে। তাহার হৃদয়ের সবই এলোমেলো, সন্দীপের মায়া সে কাটাইয়াছে বটে কিন্তু নিখিলেশ যে বহু দূরে। বিমলা কাঁদিয়া বলে, “হে আমার প্রভু, আর একদিন তুমি আমার ভোর বেলাকার রাঙা আকাশের ধারে দাঁড়িয়ে যে বাঁশী বাজিয়েছিলে সেই বাঁশীটি বাজাও, সব সমস্তা সহজ হ'য়ে যাক,—তোমার সেই বাঁশীর সুরটি ছাড়া ভাঙাকে কেউ জুড়তে পারে না, অপবিত্রকে কেউ শুভ করতে পারে না।”

বিমলার চরিত্র সন্দীপাপেক্ষা কম পরিণত। সন্দীপের অন্তর্দ্বন্দ্ব আটের দিক হইতে উচ্চাসন পাইবে, তাহার চরিত্রও ভারী প্রাণবন্ত, বিমলা যেন জ্ঞানিয়া শুনিয়াই সব

করিতেছে, তাহার কার্যের মধ্যে কোন রহস্য নাই, গোপন কিছু নাই, সবই স্পষ্টীকৃত, তাহার কথা তাহার মুখ দিয়া না বলাইলে সে আরও প্রাণবন্ত হইতে পারিত। কেবল শেষের দিকে সে জীবন্ত হইয়াছে, যখন অমূৰ্য্যের প্রতি তাহার ক্ষুধিত অতৃপ্ত মাতৃ-নেহের বাণ ডাকিয়াছে, সেখানে বিমলা ভারী মধুর।

নিখিলেশের মধ্যেও দেখিতে পাই উভয় আর্মির দ্বন্দ্ব। সন্দীপের এক আমি চাহিত, আর এক আমি সঙ্কেচ বোধ করিত, বিমলার এক আমি ভুল করিত, আর এক আমি বুরিত সে ভুল করিতেছে। নিখিলেশের এক আমি প্রাচীন ঋষি, সত্য শিব ও সূন্দরের উপাসক সে আমি কেবলি ত্যাগ করিত, আর এক আমি সর্বহারার বিরহী, প্রিয়-বিচ্ছেদের গোপন ব্যথায় সে চোখের জল ফেলিত।

নিখিলেশ-চরিত্রের প্রথম দ্বন্দ্ব আমাদের আকর্ষণ করে না। সেখানে সে অল্পবিস্তর গোরার পরেশবাবুর মত, ভালো ভালো কথা বলিবার গ্রামোফোন, সন্দীপ এখানে সজীবতর। তাহার দ্বিতীয় আমি আমাদের অন্তরকে ব্যথিত করিয়া গেলে, সেখানে সে আমাদেরই মত সাধারণ মানুষ, ছুঃখে তাহার হৃদয় আমাদেরই মত কাঁদে।

নিখিলেশ কবি ও প্রেমিক। বিমলার প্রতি তাহার অন্তহীন ভালবাসা। বিমলাকে ভালবাসে বলিয়াই সে তাহাকে স্বল্পপরিসর গৃহের মধ্যে বন্ধ করিতে পারিল না, রাখিরে আনিল। “স্মৃতি সংহিতার পুঁথির কাগজ কাটা ফুলে আমি ঘর সাজতে চাইনে, বিশ্বের মধ্যে জ্ঞানে, শক্তিতে, প্রেমে পূর্ণ বিকশিত বিমলাকে দেখবার বড় ইচ্ছা ছিলো।”

নিখিল একটা ভুল করিয়াছিল। সে বিমলার মাহুদী রূপকে ভালবাসে নাই। আইডিয়েল দিয়া সাজান বিমলার মানসী প্রতিমাকে পূজা করিয়াছে, তাই ভাবিয়াছিল পরিবর্তন কিছুই হইবে না। কিন্তু মাহুদীকে তাহার পূর্ণ মুক্তরূপে সত্যরূপে দেখিতে চাহিলে, তাহার উপর নিশ্চিত দাবী ছাড়িতে হয়। আপন ভালবাসার প্রতি অগাধ বিশ্বাস থাকার জন্ত নিখিল সে আশা ছাড়ে নাই। আঘাত সেইজন্ত অত্যন্ত গভীর হইয়া বাজিল। বিমলার সত্যরূপের সহিত তাহার আইডিয়েল রূপের গরমিল ধরা পড়িল।

বিমলা সন্দীপের মায়ায় দূরে চলিল, সত্যের পূজারী নিখিলেশ তাহাকে বাধা দিল না, মুক্তি যখন সে দিয়াছে তখন তাহার ভাল মন্দ ফল যে তাহাকেই ভোগ করিতে হইবে। নিখিলেশ বাধা দিল না, কাঁদিতে বসিল। আপনার শূন্য জীবনের প্রতি চাহিয়া রুদ্ধ বেদনায় কাঁদিল

হায়রে এ ভরা ভাদর, মাহ ভাদর

শূন্য মন্দির মোর।

আমরা কবি নিখিলেশের সাফাৎ পাই এখানে, প্রেমিক-কবি-ভাবিতেছে প্রতি বৎসরকার ভাদ্রমাসের কথা, “শুরুপক্ষে, শামলদহর ছলছল করা বিলের উপরে, যেখানে বায়ু বহে পুরবিয়া, যেখানে শ্রামল পৃথিবী মাথায় ছায়ার ঘোমটা টেনে নিস্তরু জ্যোৎস্নার কূলে কূলে কান পেতে সারা রাত আড়ি পাতছে” সেখানে তাহার কত দিন রাত্রি যাপন করিয়াছে, প্রতি ভাদ্রমাসের চাঁদ তাহাদের সেই জলের বাসর ঘরে বিকশিত কুমুদবনের ধারে তাহার নীরব শুভশঙ্খ বাজাইয়াছে। কিন্তু আজ! আজও আসিয়াছে ভাদ্র মাস, কূলে কূলে পূর্ণ শামলদহের বিল আজও বহিতেছে, আজও পাণ্ডুর মেঘের কোলে শশাঙ্কলেখা দেখা দিয়াছে, কিন্তু কোথায় প্রিয়া—শূন্য মন্দির মোর শূন্য মন্দির মোর—Othello’র মত সে বলিয়াছে—My wife! My wife! What wife! I have no wife; কিন্তু বলে নাই, O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart and makest me call what I intend to do, a murder which I thought a sacrifice. এখানে তাহার অপূর্ব সংঘমের পরিচয় পাই।

ইহার পর নিখিলেশের যে পরিচয় পাই তাহা সজীব নহে। তাহা শুধু তর্কজাল। সে বলিয়াছে ধর্ম স্বাদেশিকতার প্রবন্ধক দৈত্য অপেক্ষা অনেক বড়, দেশপ্রেম আত্মস্বাভী, আত্মদ্রোহী, দেশের লোকের হৃদশা না দূর করিয়া তাহা দেশকে আঘাত করিতেছে, বিশ্বের সহিত আপনাকে যুক্ত করিয়া দেখে বলিয়া সে একা চলিতে চায় না, সকলের সহিত চলিতে চায়। সত্যের উপাসক সে, সন্দীপের প্রবন্ধনা, হরিশকুণ্ডুর প্রবন্ধনাকে সে ঘৃণার চক্ষে দেখিয়াছে। (অথচ যখন এই হরিশকুণ্ডুর বাড়ী উন্নত মুসলমান জনতা আক্রমণ করিল তখন সেই সর্বপ্রথম ছুটিয়াছে অন্তঃপুরের শুচিতা রক্ষা করিতে।) সে মনে করে না সন্দীপের দেশপ্রেম দেশকে মুক্তির পথে অগ্রসর করিবে। তাহার তর্ক রবীন্দ্রনাথেরই তর্ক। স্বদেশ, বিবিধ প্রবন্ধ প্রভৃতি প্রবন্ধ-পুস্তক ও “শতাব্দীর স্বর্ঘ্য আজি রক্ত মেঘ মাঝে অস্ত গেল” প্রভৃতি কবিতায় তিনি উল্লিখিত ভাবগুলি প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন। তাহার অতিআধুনিক প্রাস্তিকের কয়েকটি কবিতায়ও এই সুর। পৃথিবীর সহিত আপনাকে এক করিয়া তিনি দেখেন, তিনি দেশের প্রেমিক নন, বিশ্বের প্রেমিক, দেশের সহিত দেশের যে স্বার্থ-সংঘাত বাধিয়াছে তাহার অশুভ অকল্যাণকর ফল ভাবিয়া তিনি শিহরিয়া উঠেন।

এই উপস্থাসের অনেকস্থলে স্বদেশ ও স্বাদেশিকতা সম্বন্ধে অনেক তর্ক আছে, সন্দীপ-নিখিলেশের বহু কথা কাটাকাটি আছে, কিন্তু তাহা কোথাও গভীর নহে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের মূল উদ্দেশ্য সৃষ্টি, সমালোচনা নহে। তর্কের ভিতর দিয়া তিনি চরিত্রগুলি

গড়িয়া তুলিয়াছেন-। তর্কবিহীন সন্দীপকে আমরা কল্পনা করিতে পারি না, তাহার আপন চরিত্র কথায় ফুটিয়াছে, যেমন ফুটিয়াছে নিখিলেশের চরিত্র তাহার শাস্ত সমাহিত ভাবে, তাহার উন্মাদনাবাহীন স্বদেশ-প্রেমে।

আর কয়েকটি কথা বলিয়া প্রবন্ধ শেষ করিব। নিখিলেশের একটা অত্যাচার ছিল। বিমলার সঙ্গে আপন সম্বন্ধকে একটা স্বকঠিন ভালোর ছাঁচে ঢালাই করিবার মধ্যে জ্বরদস্তি ছিল, এই জ্বলুমের জন্ত তাহারা পৃথক গিয়াছিল, ভালবাসার সে অত্যাচার নিখিলেশ আপন হস্তে ধুর করিয়া দিল। নিখিলেশ বলিল—“আমার পথের সঙ্গিনীকে এবার কোন আইডিয়ায় শিকল দিয়ে বাঁধতে চাইবো না—কেবল আমার ভালবাসার বাঁশি বাজিয়ে বলবো, তুমি আমাকে ভালোবাসো—সেই ভালোবাসার আলোতে তুমি যা ত্বরই পূর্ণ বিকাশ হোক, আমার ফরমাস্ একেবারে চাপা পড়ুক।” বিমলার উপর বাহিরের যে ছাপ পড়িয়াছিল তাহারও প্রয়োজন, সেটুকু না হইলে সে পূর্ণ হইত না, আঙনে পুড়িয়া খাঁটা হইত না।

পূর্ণ সত্য, পূর্ণ মঙ্গল ও পূর্ণ স্নানরের মধ্যে বিমলাকে একদিন ফিরিতে হইবে। মুক্তির মধ্য দিয়া তাহাদের বন্ধন আরও দৃঢ় হইবে এই ইঙ্গিত করিয়া বইটির সমাপ্তি

সন্দীপ ইয়ুরোপের প্রতীক, কর্ম ও ভোগের আদর্শ, নিখিলেশ শান্তি ও সত্যের আদর্শ। আজ কর্ম ও ভোগ আপনার সীমারেখা অতিক্রম করিয়াছে, তাহার বৃত্তমা নিশ্চয়, নিষ্ঠুর হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। কোটি কোটি লোকের মুখের গ্রাস কাড়িয়া লইয়া সে আপনার উদরপূর্তি করিতেছে। বিশ্বমৈত্রীর সহিত তাহার ঐক্যসূত্র নাই, তাই দিকে দিকে সমরানল। হিংসায় এর অভিধান, এই কর্মভোগের অসংযমকে বরাহত করিতে হইবে। তাহাকে বিশ্বমানবের হিতার্থে নিয়োজিত করিতে হইবে, না হইলে আপনার অন্তঃস্থ গ্লানি তাহাকে ধবংস করিবে। তাই স্বরেশচন্দ্র চক্রবর্তী তাঁহার ঘরে বাইরে সমালোচনার উপসংহারে বলিতেছেন,—

“কর্ম ও ভোগকে নিজের হাত থেকে নিজেকে বাঁচাবার জন্ত তার প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে হবে নিখিলের সত্য জ্ঞানের উপর। বিমলার যে সন্দীপের প্রতি টান, সে টানের পিছনেও একটা সত্য আছে। এই সন্দীপ আর নিখিলেশ যখন মিলিত হবে—নিখিলেশের অন্তর-দেবতার উপরে যখন সন্দীপের ইন্দ্রিয়গ্রাম প্রতিষ্ঠিত হবে, তখনই বিমলার পূর্ণ শক্তি বিকশিত হইবে—তখনই বিশ্বমানবের পূর্ণ সত্য প্রকট হবে।

আমরা প্রাচীন ভারতের আধ্যাত্মিকতার উপরে নবীন ইয়ুরোপের কর্ম ও ভোগকে প্রতিষ্ঠা করে বর্তমান ভারত গড়ে তুলব। তখনই তা সত্য হবে—চির আনন্দে, নিত্য হবে—চির মঙ্গলে, মুক্ত হবে—চির স্নানরে।”

সূচিপত্র, ১৯১৪—১৯৩৯

[এই সূচিপত্র প্রস্তুত করিবার জন্ত আমরা শ্রীযুক্ত অলকচন্দ্র গুপ্ত (পঞ্চমবর্ষ, ইংরাজি সাহিত্য)কে বিশেষভাবে ধন্যবাদ দিতেছি। প্রথমে খণ্ড, মধ্যে সংখ্যা ও শেষে পৃষ্ঠার উল্লেখ করা হইয়াছে; যথা, প্রথম প্রবন্ধটী সপ্তদশ খণ্ডে (১৯২৬-২৭)র তৃতীয় সংখ্যার ৫৬ পাতায় মুদ্রিত।—সম্পাদক]

| | খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা | | খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| শ্রী— | | শ্রীঅমরেশ রায় | |
| অনুবাদ সাহিত্য (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৭ ৩ ৫৬ | অব্যক্ত (কবিতা) | ১৫ ১ ১ |
| শ্রী— | | অভিযোগ | ” ১৫ ২ ১৬ |
| ‘এ্যাটলা’র স্বপ্ন (কবিতা) | ২২ ৩ ১১০ | জন্মান্তর | ” ১৫ ২ ১৭ |
| শ্রী— | | তপোভঙ্গ | ” ১৫ ৩ ২৮ |
| ক্ষণিকের দেখা (কবিতা) | ১৭ ৩ ৫১ | বৈজয়ন্তী | ” ১৪ ২ ২২ |
| শ্রী— | | শ্রীঅমল মুখোপাধ্যায় | |
| পরিচয় | ২০ ১ ১৭ | ধরণীর প্রেম (কবিতা) | ২০ ১ ১ |
| শ্রী— | | শ্রীঅমলেশ ত্রিপাঠী | |
| বধু (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৭ ১ ৩ | বাংলা সাহিত্যে ছোট গল্প | |
| শ্রী— | | (প্রবন্ধ) | ২৫ ১ ২ |
| বনের ফুল (কবিতা) | ২২ ১ ১ | ঘরে বাইরে | ” ২৫ ২ ১০৫ |
| শ্রী— | | শ্রীঅ, মি— | |
| বৈরাগী (কবিতা) | ১৯ ১ ২৯ | দৃশ্যপট (কবিতা) | ২৩ ৩ ১২৮ |
| শ্রীঅনিলচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় | | শ্রীঅমূল্যধন মুখোপাধ্যায় | |
| ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাস (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৫ ৩ ৩৭ | গত পঁচিশ বছরের বাংলা | |
| শ্রীঅনিলচন্দ্র রায় | | কাব্যের ধারা | ২৫ ২ ৬৪ |
| জাতীয় শিক্ষা ও জীবিকা- উপার্জন (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৩ ২ ১৬ | শ্রীঅশোকনাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য | |
| | | অবেস্তা (প্রবন্ধ) | ১১ ১ ৮৭ |
| | | অহর মজ্দ ও তাঁহার | |
| | | বৃহ | ” ১৬ ৩ ৫১ |

| খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা | খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| শ্রীঅশোকনাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য | শ্রীকামাক্ষীপ্রসাদ চট্টোপাধ্যায় |
| আচার্য্য জরথুষ্ট্র " ১৬ ২ ২৫ | রবীন্দ্রকবিতা "মরণ" (প্রবন্ধ) ২৩ ১ ৫২ |
| প্রাচীন ভারতে কয়েকটি খেলা " ২২ ২ ৪৯ | শেষ হোক (কবিতা) ২৫ ১ ১ |
| প্রাচীন ভারতে বলিতকলা " ২৪ ১ ১ | শ্রীকামাক্ষ্যকুমার চক্রবর্তী |
| বহিষি রজতং ন দেয়ম্ " ২৫ ২ ৮৩ | পরাজয় (কবিতা) ১৯ ১ ১ |
| বাংলা প্রাচীন নাটক ও রঙ্গমঞ্চের সংক্ষিপ্ত ইতিহাস (প্রবন্ধ) ১১ ২ ১৯৬ | যদি " ১৯ ৩ ২০ |
| রূপদক্ষ না কলাবিৎ " ১২ ২ ১৯৬ | শশাঙ্ক ও চিত্রা (কবিতা) ১৮ ২ ২৩ |
| শোণিত-পারণা (নাটিকা) ২৩ ১ ১ | কাজি দীন মোহাম্মদ |
| সপ্তসিন্ধু (প্রবন্ধ) ১৩ ৩ ২৯২ | সংস্কারের সংসাহস ১৬ ১ ২০ |
| আখতার উজ্জামান | শ্রীকালিদাস ঘোষ |
| শিশু (প্রবন্ধ) ২২ ২ ৬৬ | প্রকাশের বেঙ্কনা (কবিতা) ২১ ৩ ৫৫ |
| শ্রীআর্য্যকুমার মিত্র | শ্রীকালিদাস লাহিড়ী |
| অজানার সন্ধানে (কবিতা) ১৯ ২ ১৬ | যাযাবর (কবিতা) ২০ ২ ৪৯ |
| এফ, আর, ফারুকী | শ্রীখগেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র |
| পথিক চলে (কথিকা) ১৯ ২ ১৭ | শিচি বহুরে সাহিত্য (আলোচনা) ২৫ ২ ৫৩ |
| এম, এ, আলি | শ্রীখগেন্দ্রনাথ সেন |
| নদীকূলে (কবিতা) ১৬ ১ ১৮ | নারী সমগ্রা (প্রবন্ধ) ১০ ৩ ২৭৭ |
| শ্রীকরণাকর গুপ্ত | শ্রীগিরীন্দ্রনাথ চক্রবর্তী |
| বিজ্ঞানদর্শনের গতিধারা (প্রবন্ধ) ২৩ ২ ১০৯ | মাক্স-অর্থনীতি (প্রবন্ধ) ২০ ১ ২০ |
| যুদ্ধ ও শান্তি " ২৩ ৩ ১৩৬ | " " ২০ ২ ৫২ |
| শ্রীকামাক্ষীপ্রসাদ চট্টোপাধ্যায় | " " ২০ ৩ ৮৯ |
| আখ্যাস (কবিতা) ২৩ ৩ ১২৭ | মাক্সবাদ " ১৯ ২ ৪ |
| উৎসর্গ " ২৩ ২ ৮৭ | শ্রীগোবিন্দপ্রসাদ ঘোষ |
| | রঘুবংশ (কবিতা) ১৬ ২ ২৯ |
| | শ্রীচন্দ্রশেখর আঢ় |
| | অন্নুরাগী (কবিতা) ১৩ ১ ৮ |

| শ্রীঅলকচন্দ্র গুপ্ত | | শ্রীঅলকচন্দ্র গুপ্ত | |
|--|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| খণ্ড সংখ্যা | পৃষ্ঠা | খণ্ড সংখ্যা | পৃষ্ঠা |
| শ্রীচন্দ্রশেখর আচার্য | | শ্রীজ্যোৎস্নাশঙ্কর ভাট্টা | |
| আগমনী (কবিতা) | ২১ ১ ১ | অত্র (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৬ ৩ ৭১ |
| নারী | ২১ ২ ৫০ | পৃথিবীর বয়স | ১৪ ১ ১ |
| প্রবীণা প্রিয়া | ২১ ১ ২৪ | শ্রীডালিকুমার গুহ | |
| বসন্ত জাগ্রত ঘরে | ১৬ ৩ ৭১ | আধুনিক বাংলা ছোট গল্পের | |
| রবীন্দ্রনাথ | ১৬ ১ ১১ | গতি ও প্রকৃতি (প্রবন্ধ) | ২৩ ২ ১১৫ |
| শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ শতবার্ষিকী | ২৩ ২ ৮৮ | শেষের কবিতায় অমিত ও | |
| শ্রীচারুচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য | | লাবণ্য (প্রবন্ধ) | ২৪ ১ ১৩ |
| পুনরাগমন (প্রবন্ধ) | ১০ ২ ১২৪ | শ্রীতারাপদ মুখোপাধ্যায় | |
| সাহিত্যিক জগদীশচন্দ্র | ২৪ ২ ৪৯ | ‘শেষসপ্তক’ (প্রবন্ধ) | ২২ ৩ ৮১ |
| আচার্য জগদীশচন্দ্র বসু | ২৫ ২ ৭৭ | শ্রীদীননাথ সান্যাল | |
| শ্রীজয়গোপাল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় | | সেলাম | ১৬ ২ ৪৯ |
| রক্তকরবী (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৫ ১ ৩ | শ্রীতুর্গাপদ চক্রবর্তী | |
| শ্রীজয়ন্তী ভট্টাচার্য | | আবোল তাবোল (গল্প) | ১৯ ২ ১২ |
| সময় (প্রবন্ধ) | ২৪ ২ ৬৬ | শ্রীদেবীপ্রসাদ চট্টোপাধ্যায় | |
| শ্রীজ্যোতির্শ্রয় ঘোষ | | বার্গস (প্রবন্ধ) | ২৫ ১ ২২ |
| বিশাক্ষ (প্রবন্ধ) | ২৩ ২ ৯০ | শ্রীদেবেশচন্দ্র দাস | |
| শ্রীজ্যোতির্শ্রয় বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় | | আলোর বিদায় (কবিতা) | ১৬ ২ ৪৭ |
| আলোক-পহী রবীন্দ্রনাথ | | উইপিং উইলো | ১৬ ১ ১ |
| (প্রবন্ধ) | ২১ ১ ২৫ | নটরাজ (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৬ ১ ১২ |
| আধুনিক বাংলা কবিতা | | নবজন্ম (কবিতা) | ১৭ ১ ১ |
| ২১ ৩ ৫৮ | | পূর্ণিমা | ১৮ ১ ৫ |
| শ্রীজ্যোতির্শ্রয় সেন | | বঙ্কিমসাহিত্যে আদর্শবাদ | |
| ‘ঘরে বাইরে’তে চরিত্র | | (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৬ ৩ ৭৮ |
| সমাবেশ (প্রবন্ধ) | ২১ ৩ ৭২ | বিদায় কৈশোর (কবিতা) | ১৬ ৩ ৫৭ |
| শ্রীজ্যোৎস্নানাথ চন্দ | | মাগরী | ১৮ ২ ৪০ |
| উৎসব রাত্রির অঙ্গনে (কবিতা) | ১৩ ৩ ৩০ | | |
| রক্তকরবী (প্রবন্ধ) | ১৪ ২ ১৩ | | |

| খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা | খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা |
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| শ্রীধরগীধর সেন জীবাশ্ম (fossil) (প্রবন্ধ) ১৭ ৩ ৫২ | শ্রীপ্রমোদকুমার ঘোষাল জ্ঞানের সীমানা (প্রবন্ধ) ১৩ ১ ১ |
| শ্রীধী, রায় বাংলা সাহিত্যে মসীযুদ্ধ (প্রবন্ধ) ২১ ১ ১৮ | " " ১৩ ২ ৯ মানবের ভবিষ্যৎ (প্রবন্ধ) ১৩ ৩ ৩১ |
| শ্রীধীরেন্দ্রনাথ রায় বাংলা সাহিত্যের বর্তমান অবস্থা (প্রবন্ধ) ২২ ১ ৩৮ | শ্রীপ্রীতিতোষ রায় একটি চিঠি (কবিতা) ২৩ ৩ ১২৭ কবিতা " ২৩ ১ ৩৮ প্রত্যাখ্যান " ২৩ ২ ৮৫ |
| শ্রীননীগোপাল মুখোপাধ্যায় অনুবাদ ও সৃষ্টিরহস্য (প্রবন্ধ) ১০ ৩ ২৮৯ বিশ্বব্রহ্মাণ্ডে মানবের স্থান " ১১ ২ ১৯০ | শ্রীবঙ্কিমচন্দ্র মিত্র মাতৃমন্দিরে " ১ ৩ ২৭২ |
| শ্রীনির্মলকান্তি মজুমদার জেমসেদপুরে একমাস (ভ্রমণ) ১০ ২ ১৪৫ | শ্রীবসন্ত ঘোষাল আকাশ গ্রাসিবে ওরা (কবিতা) ২৩ ১ ৩৫ |
| শ্রীনির্মলচন্দ্র গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় আমন্ত্রণ (কবিতা) ২৩ ১ ৩৬ স্বপ্নকামনা " ২২ ১ ৪৬ | শ্রীবিকাশচাঁদ রায় আঁধার-আলো (কবিতা) ২০ ১ ১৬ কথিকা ১৯ ১ ১৪ |
| শ্রীনির্মলেন্দু রায় চৌধুরী রূপকুমারী (কথিকা) ১৯ ২ ১৯ | শ্রীবিজয়লাল নাহিড়ী গান ১৩ ৩ ৩৪ |
| শ্রীপ্রভাতকুমার মজুমদার যাত্রী (কবিতা) ২২ ২ ৩৪ | শ্রীবিভূতিভূষণ মুখোপাধ্যায় খোঁকার ভয় (কবিতা) ১৪ ২ ২১ রূপ রূপ রূপ বাদল সুর " ১৪ ৩ ৩৮ ফুলের ব্যথা " ১৪ ১ ৯ |
| শ্রীপ্রভাতকুমার শর্মা গল্পের মোহানা (গল্প) ১৫ ২ ১৩ সরোজিনী নাইডুর স্বর্ণতোরণ (প্রবন্ধ) ১৪ ৩ ২৭ | শ্রীবিভূপদ কীর্তি ভাঙ্গা বেড়ার ফাঁকে (কবিতা) ১৩ ২ ১৩ |
| শ্রীপ্রমথ চৌধুরী পঁচিশ বছরে সাহিত্য (আলোচনা) ২৫ ২ ৫০ | শ্রীবিমলচন্দ্র গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় রায় বাহাদুর বিপিনবিহারী গুপ্ত (জীবনী) ২২ ২ ৭৬ |

| খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা | খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা |
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| শ্রীবিমলচন্দ্র সিংহ অর্থসঙ্কট ও স্বর্ণমান (প্রবন্ধ) ২৪ ২ ৭৩ | শ্রীরবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর কবিতা ২৪ ১ ১ |
| শ্রীবৈদ্যনাথ ভট্টাচার্য্য আহ্বান (গান) ১০ ২ ১২৭ | ছন্দ (কবিতা) ২৫ ২ ৪৯ |
| শ্রীভবতোষ চক্রবর্তী পল্লীস্থিতি (কবিতা) ১৭ ২ ২৯ | জগদীশ-প্রশস্তি (কবিতা) ২৪ ২ ৪৫ |
| মহবুবর রহমান শ্রদ্ধাতর্পণ (কবিতা) ২০ ২ ৬০ | প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজ বঙ্গ সাহিত্য সভায় অভিভাষণ ৪ ২ ১২৩ |
| শ্রীমহিমারঞ্জন ভট্টাচার্য্য ভুল (গল্প) ২০ ১ ২৮ | বিধভারতী (অভিভাষণ) ২ ১ ৯৭ |
| শ্রীমাখনলাল মুখোপাধ্যায় বিজ্ঞানের মর্যাদা (প্রবন্ধ) ১৮ ১ ১ | শ্রীলক্ষ্মীপ্রসাদ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় নন্দদার পত্র (গল্প) ১৬ ১ ৩ |
| মুজাফফার হোসেন ব্যথা-ফুল (কবিতা) ১৫ ৩ ৪৬ | ” ” ১৬ ২ ৩৮ |
| শ্রীমোহিনীমোহন মুখোপাধ্যায় বৈষ্ণব কবিতা (প্রবন্ধ) ৪ ৩ ১৭২ | ” ” ১৬ ৩ ৬০ |
| শ্রীমৃগেন্দ্রনাথ ঘোষ আমাদের বোটারিকাল এক্স কারসন্ (ভ্রমণ) ১৬ ৩ ৮৭ | শ্রীশরৎচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় বাঙ্গালা সাহিত্য সভার বার্ষিক অধিবেশন উপলক্ষে অভিভাষণ ১০ ১ ৮১ |
| শ্রীযোগেন্দ্রনাথ রায় সন্ধ্যা-স্বপ্ন (কবিতা) ১৩ ৩ ২৯ | শ্রীশশাঙ্কশেখর বাগচী পঁচিশ বছরে সাহিত্য (আলোচনা) ২৫ ২ ৬০ |
| শ্রীরণেন্দ্রকুমার আচার্য্য চৌধুরী জাঁধারে (কবিতা) ২২ ৩ ১২৮ | বাঙলা গণের অতীত ও ভবিষ্যৎ (প্রবন্ধ) ২২ ৩ ১১৩ |
| শ্রীরবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর অধ্যাপক মনোমোহন স্থিতি- সভায় সভাপতির অভিভাষণ ১০ ৩ ৩০৫ | বাঙলা গণের ভবিষ্যৎ ” ২৩ ১ ৪৯ |
| | সাহিত্য-প্রসঙ্গ ” ২০ ৩ ৮৫ |
| | শ্রীশাক্যপ্রসন্ন চক্রবর্তী অমিতাভ (কবিতা) ১৯ ২ ১ |
| | পূর্ণিমায় ” ২০ ১ ৪৩ |
| | শ্রীশান্তিকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় প্রিয় ও পৃথিবী (কবিতা) ২১ ৩ ৭০ |
| | রবীন্দ্র কাব্যে বাংলার পল্লীচিত্র (প্রবন্ধ) ২১ ২ ৩৯ |

| খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা | খণ্ড সংখ্যা পৃষ্ঠা |
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| শ্রীশান্তিসুধা ঘোষ | শ্রীশ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় |
| ঈশ্বরবাদ (প্রবন্ধ) ১৫ ৩ ৪৭ | শরৎচন্দ্রের উপল্লাস (প্রবন্ধ) ১৯ ১ ৫ |
| শ্রীশিবপ্রসাদ ভট্টাচার্য্য | " " " ১৯ ৩ ১ |
| কবি-পরিচিতির পরিচয় | " " " ২০ ১ ৩ |
| (প্রবন্ধ) ১৮ ১ ১৫ | শ্রীসত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত |
| রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যে পল্লীপ্রকৃতি ,, ২৩ ১ ৬৭ | জগদীশ-প্রশস্তি (কবিতা) ২৪ ২ ৪৭ |
| " " ২৩ ২ ৯৩ | শ্রীসরোজকুমার বাগচী |
| " " ২৩ ৩ ১৪৫ | জিজ্ঞাসা (কবিতা) ২২ ১ ২১ |
| " " ২৪ ১ ৩৫ | শ্রীসুকুমার সেন |
| রূপদক্ষ না কলাবিৎ | রূপদক্ষ না কলাবিৎ |
| (মন্তব্য, প্রবন্ধ) ১২ ৩ ৩০৪ | (প্রতিবাদ, প্রবন্ধ) ১২ ৩ ২২৯ |
| হেমচন্দ্রের শতবার্ষিকী (প্রবন্ধ) ২৪ ৩ ৯৪ | শ্রীসুধাময় ভট্টাচার্য্য |
| সাহিত্যে মৌলিকতা ,, ১৫ ৩ ২৩ | বঙ্কিম সাহিত্যের একটা দিক |
| শ্রীশুভেন্দু বকসী | (প্রবন্ধ) ২৫ ১ ২৭ |
| রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'রক্তকরবী' | শ্রীসুধাংশুকুমার হালদার |
| (প্রবন্ধ) ২২ ২ ৫৫ | ভূমিকম্পের কারণ (গল্প) ২৫ ২ ৯১ |
| শ্রীশৈলজানন্দ ভট্টাচার্য্য | শ্রীসুধীরকুমার চক্রবর্তী |
| মিষ্টিক রবীন্দ্রনাথ (প্রবন্ধ) ২২ ১ ২২ | ভূমিকম্প (উচ্ছ্বাস) ২০ ১ ৩৮ |
| শ্রীশৌরীন্দ্রনাথ রায় | শ্রীসুনীতকুমার ইন্দ্র |
| কালিদাস (কবিতা) ১৪ ২ ২৩ | সন্ধ্যা (প্রবন্ধ) ১৪ ১ ৬ |
| মেঘনাদের জন্মকাহিনী (গল্প) ১৮ ২ ৩০ | শ্রীসুনীলকান্তি রায় |
| শ্রীশ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় | অন্ধজনে দেহ আলো (প্রবন্ধ) ১২ ১ ৯১ |
| অতিআধুনিক উপল্লাস | রাত্রি (উচ্ছ্বাস) ১২ ২ ১৯৪ |
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