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THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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Vol. XVIII

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No. 1

NOTICE

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There will ordinarily be three issues a year, in September, December and March.

Students, old Presidency College men and members of the Staff of the College are invited to contribute to the Magazine. Short and interesting articles written on subjects of general interest and letters dealing in a fair spirit with college and University matters will be welcome. The Editor cannot return rejected articles *unless accompanied by stamped and addressed envelope.*

All contributions for publication must be written on one side of the paper and must be accompanied by the full name and address of the writer, *not necessarily for publication but as a guarantee of good faith.*

Contributions should be addressed to the General Secretary, *Presidency College Magazine*, and forwarded to the College Office.

AJIT NATH ROY.



THE LATE MR. H. R. JAMES

FOREWORD

IN accordance with the usual practice, I have been asked by the Editor to write a foreword and I do so gladly.

I recall with great pleasure the four years I spent here as a student and six years as a Professor. I hope to be given the same generous measure of kindness and good will which it has been my good fortune to enjoy in the past.

It has often been asserted that Bengal in general and the Presidency College in particular have fallen from their pride of place in the educational world. The College does not figure as conspicuously in the list of successes as it did in the past. Though success in examinations is not the only standard by which an institution is to be judged, this assertion, if it be a fact, is lamentable. It is up to every one of us to do our utmost to help the College regain its former position.

I have noticed with great pleasure the inauguration of the Presidency College Science Association which ought to have a very useful career.

While pursuit of knowledge is our chief pre-occupation, we must not neglect at the same time our physical culture. The medical examination of our students discloses alarming conditions which demand the serious attention of all of us. It is often assumed that the facilities for sports are intended only for those who are specially good at them. But without meaning any disparagement to the players who represent the College in competitions, I may say without fear of contradiction that though a strong College team is extremely desirable it is not less important that every individual student who is physically fit should have some chance for taking part in sports and feel the pleasure of perfect fitness and physical well-being.

Let us all take our work seriously and our games with enthusiasm.

B. M. S.

THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Vol. XVIII.

SEPTEMBER, 1931.

No. 1.

NOTES AND NEWS

IT was a melancholy atmosphere of sorrow and gloom which pervaded the College on the day it reopened after the Summer Vacation, when it was announced that Mr. James, late Principal of the College, had passed away. He died on the 3rd June at his residence in London. For eight long years he presided over the destinies of this College, and those were the proudest years in our history. Mr. James was a remarkable personality. A deep and erudite scholar, a popular and inspiring teacher, a just and impartial administrator, a strict disciplinarian and yet a kind and sympathetic friend, he was the embodiment of all that was best and noblest in that race of British educationists in India which is now almost extinct. He was a Principal of lofty ideals and concrete achievements, and like the great Sir Asutosh Mookerjee might rightly be regarded as an educational statesman. What the late Sir Asutosh was to the Calcutta University, the late Mr. James was to the Presidency College. The extension of the College compound by the removal of a big insanitary bustee area in the vicinity of the old College, the splendid group of buildings known as the Baker Laboratories, the neat and well-arranged Peake Science Library, the many important additions to the teaching staff, are standing monuments of his unceasing activities for the expansion of this institution, both external and internal. The College Magazine owes its origin to him, and the College Seminars their inception; the idea of the College Register was his; the inauguration of the Founders' Day was due to his initiative; of the scheme for a College Hall he was the first sponsor; the starting of

the College Calendar and the College Information Book shows his care for the minutest details ; while the manifold improvements in the office and the Library bear testimony to his all round administrative-abilities. His premature retirement from service was a great calamity, and the College has not yet been able to get over the shock it received sixteen years ago.

Even after retirement Mr. James never ceased to think and work for the College which he loved so dearly and which loved him so deeply in return. The memorandum that he submitted to the Calcutta University in August 1917 against the proposal for transferring the Post-graduate classes from this College, the appeal that he issued to ex-students through Mr. Stapleton in January 1928 for funds in aid of the College Hall, the kind and thoughtful inquiries that he used to make of us from time to time regarding the changes and activities of the College, the last kind gift that he sent to us from Portugal for our depleted Magazine fund—all go to show what an affectionate interest he used to take in us. Such a man is no more ! When shall we see his like again !

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The death of Professor Bidhu Bhusan Dutt of the department of Chemistry came as a great shock to us and to all those connected with the College. His was literally a death in harness. Presumably not in the best of health, he came to the College on a sultry April morning, attended to his University Examination work, took his class, retired to his ante-room, and an hour later was discovered dead in his chair. A perfect gentleman, quiet and unostentatious, upright and sincere, he was held in high esteem by his pupils and colleagues alike.

With the passing away of Rai Rasamay Mitra Bahadur, retired Head-Master of Hindu School, Bengal loses one of the greatest school-masters that this province could boast of. He was a man of vast erudition and culture, and famous not only as a great educationist but also as an elegant writer and a musician of note. Elsewhere appears a memoir of his life from the pen of an ex-student of ours who had the privilege of sitting at his feet.

The late Mr. K. C. Ray, C. I. E., M. L. A., one of the founders and organisers of the Associated Press of India, who is regarded as the 'Father of the Indian Press', began his life as Assistant Superintendent of the Eden Hindu Hostel attached to our College.

Our heartfelt condolence to the members of the bereaved families.

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It is our melancholy duty to record the death of several of our old alumni. The late Mr. Lalmohan Doss, who died at the ripe old age of 85, had a very distinguished career at the Bar and was also on the Bench of the Calcutta High Court for some years. A Fellow of the Calcutta University, and sometime Dean of the Faculty of Law, the late Mr. Justice Doss will be ever remembered for his great work on Riparian rights which is an enduring contribution to legal lore.

The late Rai Bahadur Dr. Ramaprasad Bagchi, B. A., M. D., was another veteran who, after a distinguished career at the University both in Arts and Medicine, settled at Agra, and was for about half a century recognised as a leader of his profession and of the Bengalee community of the United Provinces.

The late Rai Surendra Nath Majumdar Bahadur was a member of the Provincial Executive Service, who retired a few years back as the Commissioner of Income-Tax, Behar and Orissa. He was one of the greatest singers India has produced in recent times, and it is painful for those who had the privilege of hearing him to realise that his wonderful voice is stilled for ever. He was also a writer of considerable repute in Bengali, widely appreciated, particularly for the delightful and distinctive quality of his humour.

The late Mr. Radhagovinda Bhowani was Professor of Chemistry and Principal of the M. C. College, Sylhet, when it was a private institution, and served with reputation as Senior Professor of Physics after the institution had come under direct Government control.

The late Mr. Hiralal Dasgupta and the late Mr. Jogesh Chandra Sen were prominent members of the Bengal Civil Service, whose premature deaths we deeply mourn.

It is our most painful duty to record the sad death of Shibdas Dutt. The poor boy had just taken his admission into the First Year Class and had hardly joined any of the classes. We offer our sincere condolence to the friends and relations of the deceased.

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By the death of Mr. S. Khuda Baksh the cultural life of India has suffered a severe loss. Mr. Khuda Baksh was a great scholar, a reputed lawyer and above all a thorough gentleman with a wide vision and a large heart. He has earned an undying reputation by his masterly contributions to the literature of Islamic culture.

The late Mr. Kaliprasanna Chattoraj, the popular Vice-Principal and Professor of Mathematics, City College, and the late Mr. Satis Chandra Mitra, the historian of Jessore and Khulna, and Professor of History at Hindu Academy, Daulatpur, were stalwarts in the educational world of Bengal, whose deaths leave voids which are difficult to fill.

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Turning to the Birthday Honours list, we note with great pleasure that two of our distinguished ex-students have received well-deserved distinctions. The conferment of Knighthood on Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, M.A., B.L., Barrister-at-law, Advocate-General of Bengal (who by the way is also the Vice-President of our Governing Body) is a fitting, though long over-due, tribute to one of the ablest lawyers of the country. The bestowal of the title of C. I. E. on Mr. Charu Chandra Biswas, M.A., B.L., Advocate, Calcutta High Court and a figure prominent in the public eye by his work as Councillor of the Calcutta Corporation, as a Senator and Syndic of the Calcutta University, and as a member of the Legislative Assembly, seems to us very appropriate.

Among the new Knights of the year, we are happy to find the name of the great savant Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan was, for several years, the holder of the King George V Chair of Philosophy in our University, and his published works on Indian Philosophy have already earned for him an international fame. He was the first Indian to deliver the Hibbert Lectures in the University of Oxford and for some time he occupied the Chair of Comparative Religion at Manchester College of that University. Only recently he attended the Educational Conference of the League of Nations at Geneva and the British Universities Congress and delivered a number of public lectures in several centres of culture in Europe. Though he is not directly one of us, we still rejoice in his honour and achievements as he is one of our country's best.

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Our respectful congratulations to Mr. Bipin Behari Ghosh, retired Judge of the Calcutta High Court, on his re-appointment as an acting Member of the Bengal Executive Council, and to the Hon'ble Justice Sir Charu Chandra Ghosh on his appointment as acting Chief

Justice of Bengal. Both these illustrious alumni of Presidency College still take much kind interest in the affairs of their *alma mater*, and we feel naturally proud of them.

Our heartiest congratulations to Professor U. N. Ghoshal, M.A., Ph. D., who has been appointed, for the second time, a Reader to the University of Calcutta to deliver a course of lectures on Ancient Indian Historical Literature. Dr. Ghoshal is one of our 'prides'. He has already acquired eminent fame by his scholarly and authoritative treatises on Hindu Political Theories and the Hindu Revenue System. As a historian, Dr. Ghoshal is not only an asset to our College and to our University, but he fills a large space in the intellectual life of Bengal.

Equally sincere are our congratulations to Professor H. C. Sen Gupta of the Hooghly College (lately of our Mathematics department) on his being appointed Vice-Principal, Hooghly College—a recognition of his teaching experience which he deserves only too well.

Mr. Panchanan Chakravarty, M. A., one of our most brilliant students in recent years, has been appointed Professor of Civics and Economics, Loreto House, Calcutta. We offer him our congratulations and wish him a distinguished career in the teaching line.

We are also glad to note that Mr. Nirmalkanti Mazumdar M. A., another ex-student of ours, has been acting as Professor of Economics at Hooghly College.

Mr. Syed Manzur Murshed of the Bengal Civil Service has been appointed Assistant Secretary, Education Department, in succession to Mr. B. B. Sarkar who reverts to his substantive post as Deputy Magistrate. Mr. Murshed is also one of our former students, having obtained his B. A. degree in 1919. Our cordial felicitations to him on his new appointment.

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Sir J. C. Coyajee, our late Principal, has been deputed by the Government of India to the League of Nations Assembly at Geneva, and on the expiry of his deputation, he retires from service. Mr. J. M. Bottomley, the present officiating Director of Public Instruction, has been appointed our permanent Principal, and Mr. B. M. Sen, Principal, Rajshahi College, has returned here as officiating Principal in Mr. Bottomley's place. On the return of Mr.

H. E. Stapleton, the permanent Director of Public Instruction, from leave in April next, Mr. Bottomley, we hear, is likely to go on leave, and we expect Principal Sen to continue as Principal, Presidency College, for a fairly long time to come.

We welcome Principal Sen back in our midst, after an absence of nine months at Rajshahi. Need we tell him that we are exceedingly glad to find him placed at the head of the College of which he himself was a most brilliant student and where he served as Professor of Mathematics for a period of seven years before his transfer to Rajshahi. The second Bengalee and the third Indian who comes to occupy the Principal's chair of this great College, he comes in the hour of her greatest need. His *alma mater* is steadily falling from the high place which she had so long occupied, and it is upto Principal Sen not only to take effective steps against this impending calamity but to revive, as soon as conditions are favourable, the much delayed improvement scheme so ably inaugurated by the late Mr. James and once so enthusiastically taken up by Mr. Stapleton.

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Dr. S. N. Das Gupta, I. E. S., Professor of Philosophy, left us in April last to take up his new duties as the Principal of Sanskrit College, in succession to Dr. A. N. Mukherji, the present Registrar of the Calcutta University. Suave and jovial, witty and warm, interested in all literary activities and energetic as a school boy, he was popular with his students as with his colleagues. His has been a transfer College Street to College Square: and yet it is a far cry.

Dr. Das Gupta has been followed by Professor R. N. Sen, I. E. S., Head of the department of Chemistry, who has left us on being appointed Principal of the Krishnagar College. We heartily congratulate him on his new appointment, but we cannot help regretting the fact that by his transfer we lose not only one of our ablest teachers but one of the most enthusiastic organisers of the social and humanitarian activities of the College.

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Since April 1930, one by one, the very best teachers of the College are being sent out as Principals of other colleges, without proper arrangements being timely made to fill up the vacancies. The systematic transfers of Mr. A. K. Chanda, Mr. K. Zachariah, Mr. B. M. Sen (but thank God, we have got him back in our midst),

Dr. S. N. Das Gupta and Mr. R. N. Sen have so materially weakened the staff that the effects are already manifesting themselves in our Examination results and in other directions. Uninterrupted and efficient teaching, naturally expected in the Premier College, is well-nigh becoming impossible and the authorities ought to realise that the recent practice of transferring veterans and filling up these senior vacancies by makeshift arrangements and temporary appointments has been one of the main causes of our recent deterioration.

Professor A. K. Chanda's place was lying vacant for more than a year. The vacancy caused by the transfer of Professor K. Zachariah was filled up after a lapse of 2 months. Professor R. N. Sen left us in the first week of July; his place is still lying vacant and we understand that there is no possibility of its being filled up before the end of the Puja Vacation. It is needless to emphasize that such delays in filling up important vacancies cause a serious dislocation of work and a good deal of inconvenience to students. We pray that the authorities would kindly take this into consideration and be on the look-out for suitable substitutes as soon as such transfers are under contemplation, so that the students may not have to suffer in the way they have been doing of late.

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Several other changes in the staff have taken place in the meantime. Mr. Kiran Chandra Mitra, Vice-Principal of Krishnagar College, was appointed Demonstrator in Chemistry in the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. B. B. Dutt. But Mr. Mitra after a stay of about six weeks has gone on leave preparatory to retirement, and Mr. Haridas Mukherji, a former student and Professor of Chemistry, Rajshahi College, has come to act in the post. Mr. Umesh Chandra Bhattachariya, M. A., formerly Lecturer in the Dacca University and for a few months Professor of Bethune College, has been appointed to act against the vacancy caused by the transfer of Dr. Das Gupta to Sanskrit College. The vacancy caused by Sir Jehangir's deputation to the League of Nations has been filled up by Mr. U. N. Ghoshal, B. Sc., Econ (London). He is no stranger to us, being an ex-student and having officiated against this vacancy last year also. Mr. Tarapada Mukherji, another ex-student and Lecturer in English, Rajshahi College, has joined the English staff as a Professor against the vacancy that

had been caused by the transfer of Professor A. K. Chanda to Krishnagar as far back as March 1930. Dr. Jyotirmay Ghosh, M.A. (Cal.), Ph.D. (Edin.), has been reappointed to act as Professor of Mathematics vice Rai Saradaprasanna Das Bahadur retired. Professor Nilmoni Chakravarti has gone on three months' leave on medical grounds; Mr. Sadananda Bhaduri acts in his place as Professor of Sanskrit and Pali in the Bengal Educational Service, and Mr. Bhaduri's place is filled up by Mr. Maheswar Das, who obtained a first class first in Sanskrit, from our College, in 1929. Mr. Ramranjan Majumdar, the Steward, left the College early in July on being appointed as the Head Clerk of the Inspector of Schools, Rajshahi Division, at Jalpaiguri. Maulvi Md. Azizuddin, released from Islamia College, succeeds him as our Steward.

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Our University results this year have not only been unsatisfactory but positively discreditable for a College that has hitherto claimed to be the Premier College of India. In the I. A. we have gone down to the fifth place, and that is all that we can boast of in the competition list. In the I. Sc. though we have topped the list, we have to our credit only two more out of the first ten places in the list. In the B.A. the results have been still worse, Presidency College men losing the first place in all subjects excepting English, Persian and Pali. What a sad contrast even with the year 1929 when we had the first place almost in all subjects! Philosophy has not been our strong point for some years past. Sanskrit is usually neglected by our students in these days. History has somehow kept up its prestige, though it has lost the first place after a monopoly of several years. But in Economics our results have been simply disastrous! Not only have we lost the top place in the First Class, but even the top places in the Second Class have gone to other colleges; and how sad it is to recall that for all these twelve or thirteen years almost all the places in the First Class as well as all the top places in the Second Class had been ours! In the B. Sc. Examinations, however, we are glad to find that our College has maintained its tradition, though our percentage of success is not so satisfactory as it ought to have been. It would be pertinent, we believe, to observe that our well-equipped Laboratories are still in existence, and the Science staff of the College had not to suffer

such a series of transfers as the Arts side did in the course of the last two years.

Anyway not only is our monopoly of brilliant records at Senate House gone, we feel ours is no better than an average first grade institution of this city with half the fee rate we have here. Let us however hope that 'out of evil cometh good'. This year's deplorable results should serve as an eye-opener to the authorities, who inspite of repeated prayers have not yet felt it necessary to lower the fee rate and at the same time have been pursuing a systematic policy of draining the College of her best and ablest teachers.

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The new admissions to the College also bear eloquent testimony to the degradation that is fast overtaking us. We understand this year practically all applicants for admission to the College including Second and Third division (and even failed) students from outside were promptly taken in, just to maintain the requisite numerical strength of the classes. And yet there are as many as forty seats still vacant in the I. A. class! If such a state of things continues, the appointment of an Admission Committee would appear to be a mere farce. A more liberal combination of subjects is urgently called for; affiliation in Civics, the most popular subject of the day, is a prime necessity; provision for the taking up of an additional subject for the I. A. ought to be forthwith made; and for all these, a radical revision of the College time-table has become indispensable. We hope our humble suggestions would receive prompt and adequate consideration at the hands of the authorities.

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The affairs of the College Athletic Club should also attract the notice of all well-wishers of the College. For some time past the achievements of Athletic Club have not been very creditable. Last year, however, we won the Elliott Shield, and it led us fondly to hope that this was a presage of the return of those proud days when Presidency College was first in the Maidan as it was in the Senate House. But before long our hopes were all shattered. This session's football in particular has been a miserable performance. The College football team has sustained a series of systematic defeats throughout this session even in the preliminary rounds, and we were further pained to observe that none from our team could

find a place in the University team. It was, therefore, with feelings of considerable surprise that we came to learn that the College team, even after their miserable performances in our own city, were allowed to go on a tour to the historic cities of Delhi, Agra, Allahabad and Benares, not presumably on a historical excursion or for sight-seeing, but for displaying the strength and qualities of our team before the cities of sister provinces. It is to be deplored that the Executive Committee, which controls all the affairs of the Athletic Club, is not at all of a representative character. The members of the Committee are annually elected by a handful of the members of the previous year's team, the general body of students having no voice whatsoever in their selection, and having no power to check their whims and fancies. Moreover, there is not in Presidency College as elsewhere, a Professor in charge of the Athletic Club, vested with full powers of control over the activities of that section. We have here, instead, a Treasurer whose position is not clearly defined, in that, according to the College Information Book, "the management of the Club is largely in the hands of the students", whereas the Treasurer is supposed to guide the policy. It is high time, in our opinion, that a thorough revision of the constitution of the Athletic Club was undertaken, so that the students, who have one and all to pay for the upkeep of the Club, should be allowed to have a voice in its management through their accredited representatives.

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Several of our students have been going abroad, this year, for higher studies. Mr. Debes Chandra Das, B. A., a brilliant student both of our College and of the Calcutta University, has proceeded to England for higher studies in History. He needs no introduction to our readers: his several contributions to the College Magazine have already made him well-known to all. He has been awarded a scholarship by the Trustees of the Tata Educational Scheme. Messrs. Sisir Kumar Sen, B. A. and Benoy Kumar Banerji, B. A. have sailed for England with the intention of joining the London School of Economics and Political Science. Mr. Sen, too, was a prominent figure in the College, especially for his active participation in all its corporate life. Mr. Sanaulah, B. A. has left for London for researches in Arabic and Persian. Mr. Niren Banerji, B. A. has already joined the Civil Engineering Course in London,

while Mr. Sanjib Chatterji, B. Sc., also goes to London where he will study the science of Railway Electrical Engineering. Mr. Sures Chandra Sen, M. Sc., this year's Griffith prizeman and a Tata Scholar, is going to Munich, for further studies in Physics. Our best wishes go with them all! As the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja Nazimuddin told them at the Special Convocation, their object in going to foreign lands should be not merely to improve their knowledge and education but also to assimilate all that is best in the culture and civilisations of other countries. Let them always remember that they have a responsibility to themselves and to their College, and let us hope they will carry the traditions of their *alma mater* far and wide.

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It was a most pleasant function that took place in the Physics Theatre the other day, when a portrait of Mr. R. B. Ramsbotham, sometime Principal of our College, and now Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Muslim University, Aligarh, was unveiled by Mr. P. N. Banerjee, M. A., B. L., P. R. S., Barrister-at-law, at a crowded meeting of the staff and students of the College. This fine portrait, which will now adorn the Library Hall, is the gift of Mr. Debiprasanna Ghosal, our young artist friend of the Fourth Year Class, to whom our sincere thanks and warm congratulations are abundantly due.

Mr. Ramsbotham was our Principal for one session only; but during this short time that he was in our midst he succeeded in thoroughly winning the hearts of the staff and students of the College. The unique farewell gathering of July 1929 on the eve of his transfer to Chittagong and the spontaneous gift of this portrait from an under-graduate student bear eloquent testimony to the great popularity Mr. Ramsbotham enjoyed and still enjoys in this College. The selection of Mr. Banerjee for unveiling the portrait was also a very happy one. The first Editor (and one of the founders) of the Presidency College Magazine, Mr. Banerjee is one of the most distinguished ex-students who have passed out of these walls, and it was quite in the fitness of things that he was invited to unveil the portrait of a Principal who has been a great teacher of History himself.

In this connexion we have great pleasure in reproducing

extracts from a letter from Mr. Ramsbotham which we were privileged to receive on the eve of the function :

"I have always been shown the most cordial good-fellowship by my Bengali pupils, among whom I count some of my closest friends, and I shall always remember gratefully my happy days with my history classes in Dacca, Chinsura, the Presidency College and Chittagong. Your generous action in honouring me by placing my portrait in the College Union of the premier College of Bengal, perhaps of India, makes me realise forcibly how very little I have done to deserve such compliments, but I must confess that I am very happy to think that I have been given this compliment ; nothing is so dear to a teacher as the good will and friendship of his pupils, and in Bengal I have received both in full measure from my Bengali pupils and friends."

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Our sincerest congratulations to Mr. Rabindra Chandra Dutt of the Fourth Year class and his friends, for their selfless services in the cause of suffering humanity. With the help of a representative committee they have succeeded in realising in about a month's time a decent sum of seven hundred rupees as contribution from the staff and students of the College in aid of the flood-stricken and famished people of North and East Bengal, out of which six hundred have been duly handed over to Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray. It is gratifying to note that no amusement in the shape of a variety entertainment or a dramatic performance had to be provided for our fellow-students for the purpose of raising the amount. A letter from Sir P. C. Ray addressed to our Principal in appreciation of our Flood Relief Committee's work may be reproduced here :

"Please convey to the Staff and students my hearty appreciation of the generous contribution of Rs. 600/-. This handsome amount is quite worthy of the premier College with which the best years of my life have been intimately associated."

We welcome the inauguration of the Science Association which removes a long felt want and supplies a much needed impetus to the study of Science. We hope it will prove a valuable institution by carrying on the useful programme with which the Association has been started. The Rabindra-Parishad deserves our grateful thanks for promoting the literary activities of the College by its frequent and well-attended meetings. The Parishad has recently published a volume entitled "Kabi-Parichiti" which contains some fine appreciative contributions on the works of the Poet. The Bankim-Sarat Samity is also doing its work admirably. The other day we had the special good fortune of having the great novelist in our midst in connection with the celebration of his 56th birthday anniversary by the members of the Samity. Our congratulations to the energetic Secretary. Of the other societies some have unfortunately not much to report. Would it be too much to expect that they would shake off their torpor, put on a little steam and emulate the activities of the livelier ones?

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All eyes are focussed on Kingsley Hall, London, where Mahatma Gandhi is staying. Mahatmajji is there as the representative of our "semi-starved millions". We fervently hope he would pilot the affairs of the Round Table Conference, as he steered the S. S. "Rajputana". We pray to God that Mahatamji may come back triumphant, as he had from South Africa, with the laurels of self-government, peace and order for his country.

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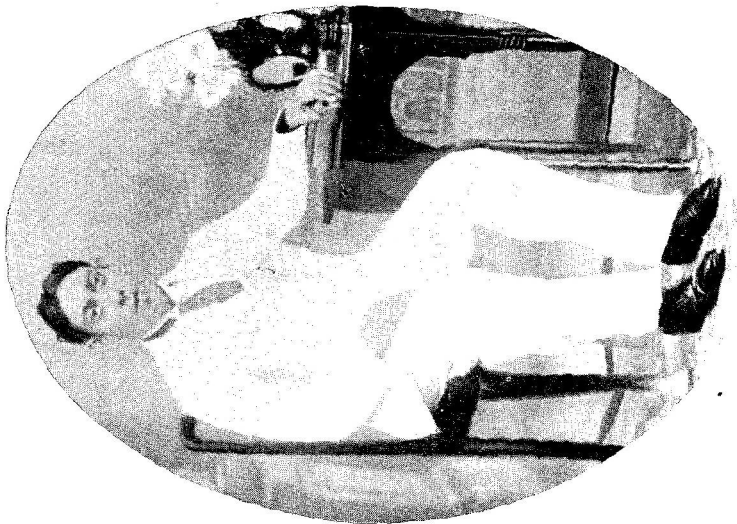
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The Presidency College Magazine enters on the eighteenth year of its existence with the publication of this issue. Through all these years it has steadily grown in glory and eminence. It has had a fairly long life and the uniform standard of excellence it has maintained throughout has been due mainly to the hearty cooperation of the students and the staff. The maintenance of its prestige, it will be admitted, depends not on the Editor alone but on the members of the College without whose cooperation his task cannot be properly performed. The Editor thanks the

contributors to this issue and the Secretary in particular for their good will and kind cooperation. Need it be emphasized that it is a duty for all to see that the mouthpiece of the Premier College does not suffer in merit?



MR. R. N. SEN,
Principal, Krishnagar College.



DR. S. N. DAS GUPTA,
Principal, Sanskrit College.

LEAVES OF GRASS

(WALT WHITMAN)

DEBESH CHANDRA DAS, B. A.

WHEN flowers fade and drop, when trees wither, there remains only the grassy land, unvaried, unenchanted.

In the land of poetry there appears a similar change. Flowers seem to have lost their beauty, and trees their liveliness. Materialism tends to unmake man, science absorbs all his interest, and industrialism cramps his creative impulse. Modern life stares at poetry with a cold glance. Before the piercing light of knowledge the mystery of the universe dwindles away. To-day the day does not come to us as a festival of light, the night appears not as the time for fairy dances, and the stars are only so many planets and nothing more. Modern man cannot share with the poet the feeling of mystery pervading the world and scans the Palace of Art with the eyes of an engineer. To him flowers are meaningless growths, trees mere fuel and the whole prospect in the world of poetry full of stagnant airs, static hills and lifeless deserts.

Poetry will not live unless she be alive. She exists and lives as the artistic record of man's life or his dream. She maintains her niche in the temple of modern life and does, more or less, enlarge and widen, deepen and intensify, or enhance and heighten man's commonplace existence. Poetry renews her youth in every age as the world changes. Our age too, has had its inevitable reflection in poetry. To-day our poets are singing more of ourselves than of nature. Their outlook is changing fast, for life has now so many more competing interests, studies, pleasures, to say nothing of labours. And even more perhaps trivialities, the increase of so many business to attend to. And indeed the spirit of business carries its encroachments beyond its own world and adds nothing to the poet's gloy or the world's delight. Not unnaturally what attract Whitman are not flowers and foliage, but the simple and unassuming "leaves of grass." The student of poetry may not like the change, but then, our generation in its lack of leisure and care for convention tends to forget that a cottage may be as architecturally perfect as a cathedral, a song as musically perfect as a symphony, an epitaph as poetically perfect

as an epic. Similarly one may forget that if the song of 'the Lotos-Eaters' cannot be sung to-day, 'the Song of the open Road' may be as good a substitute, if not a better one.

'Leaves of Grass' opens with the assurance "Who touches this touches a man." The book fulfils the promise adequately. There is hardly any other book in literature that reveals its author so fully and beautifully. An intensely individual and decisively personal creation, the book represents what is most peculiar, best and worthiest in American life. The poems have the singularity of being written in stately, rhymeless and metreless verses. Again, the appearance of the author bespeaks a dominating individuality. A challenger to his fingertips, Whitman had a majestic figure, strikingly masculine, venerable and sympathetic. And his poems come up grandly to the traits indicated by such an appearance. The variety, wonder and magnitude of the world have full representation in them. Like the sea that bares its bosom to the sky the poet receives in his heart all the good influences that go to the making of man.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touched from.

sings he, and addresses himself

Wait, you contain enough, why don't you let it out then ?

He is not a Wordsworth to be too exclusive, or a Shelley to be too ethereal in his sympathy towards mankind. He also lifts his head above the clouds, above the reach of meanness, but not beyond the sight of his own comrades. He asks himself whether he should remain content with the height he has gained ;

And my spirit said, no, we but level that lift to pass and continue beyond.

this is his answer. He finds his comrades among the mean, the vulgar and those who constitute the "dregs of humanity." Without idealising their weakness he imbues them with his own strength. The poet lives not as a spectator of mankind, but as one of the species.

Whitman was accused of bringing "the slop-pail into the parlor." This hostile criticism has been for him no inadequate compliment. His pen provided the necessary stimulant to democratic literature to exert and take a seat in the literary parlour. A book must enable one either to enjoy life or to endure it. 'Leaves of grass' is kept not only in the traveller's knapsack or in the homely cottage of the commoner to enable him to

dream of an escape from his hard lot which is yet all he can know of life. The book is carried by students not to be laid aside when their educational career is at an end, but to be recited continually till it fills them with a maddening thirst to drink life to the lees. The book gets persistent readers across decades of time, for in it the author records the impossible dream and the actual fact of an American's life with equal fidelity and power of conviction. He is not a romanticist to think that the dreamer lives for ever while the toiler dies in a day. He is a romantic realist to hold that there is as much reality in the scent of a rose as in the smell of a sewer. He has a charm of sentiment that just stops short of sentimentality. His lives sparkle with a quick sensitiveness to a humour that caresses, a pathos that brightens, a rainbow humour where he is smiling at the tragedy of poverty, at the sheer attempt to live in spite of it, through his tears. Of life in its common walks the poet sings with a heavy, yet hearty exuberance

Come my tan-faced children
Follow well in order."

But he invites only the healthiest and the purest to 'debauch' upon a newer, mightier world. They are ill-provisioned, and have to live the life of loafers along crowded city streets, along wide country highways. But they are rich in experiences about life, living in the open with the smell of the earth in their nostrils and the sound of careless laughter and heart-rending agonies in their ears. They touch life at a hundred points seeing to the core all its sterling worth. They seek the elemental in life everywhere. Delight in its primal forces with their vague, indefinable, world-old attraction leads them to travel into the primeval forests, to venture upon uncharted seas and unexplored lands. Like the Paleolithic men the poet is stirred to his innermost depths at the possibility of a great treat during the march over the vast, varied world. For him dense forests and open roads have an oriental charm. Tarry he cannot. His call comes up from the unknown. He may have to follow wind and cloud, to follow stars to where the day breaks behind the horizon. During the sea-drift the song that fascinates him is

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking.

The sea surges with hysterical laughter and pale gleam the stars above like so many drops of

most tears from the eyes of a muffled head.

Endless waves sing wonderful ballads to the poet's ears, even like a mother gently rocking her baby's cradle. The undertone of
the savage old mother incessantly crying

To the boy's soul's questions
leads him to think of death. Suddenly he becomes pensive, and as suddenly the thought passes away like a drifting cloud. In this adventure some will have to drop down and die; but then only the fittest get the privilege of dying noble deaths. They are the first among men, "the Pioneers."

Whitman falls short of great poetry. He hardly touches the sublime. He never gives us the deep undertone of the eternal harmonies of life. He is of the earth, in its coarseness and in its sweetness. Subtler aspects of life one fails to find in Whitman. Vigour there is and in abundance, but not the slightest touch of delicacy. In every poem the most remarkable feature is a strong healthy animalism kept alive and driven home to the mark by the animated emotions of the poet.

I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement
sings he, but he seldom sings of the light and shade, the subtlety and intensity that permeate life. The beauty of the sun and the moon, the procession of the seasons, the music of the daybreak and the silence of solemn nights, the rain pattering through the leaves, or the dew creeping over the grass and making it silver,—in short the life of nature viewed apart from that of man often loses its healing power and its power of communicating joy. What appeals to Whitman is not the strange unconsciousness of love but its psychological manifestations. He attaches sanctity to the human body but, curiously enough, never maintains the least reticence about its attraction. Even Byron who paints dazzling pictures of amour in a flippant mood cares to cover them with mysterious veils. But Whitman chuckles with delight while dealing with sex without the faintest reserve. Of course his admirers will point to such redeeming lines as

the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainte,
they will make us listen to the echoes of

Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigur'd.

They will further remind us of the essentially human sympathy felt for the 'Common Prostitute' who has bartered life's good for world's gold and of the poet's assurance to her

Not till the sun excludes you do I exclude you.

Still to some it may appear that the 'Children of Adam' is more bestial than Byronic.

But is it inferior to the outlook of other poets,—of poets who dream of an idyllic love or deliver precious sermons on its high seriousness? Incomplete platonists all, living in an imperfect world that exists in perfection only in their minds. In a manner not yet understood of the world the poet regards sin and suffering as being in themselves beautiful holy things and modes of perfection. The world always loves the saint as being the nearest possible approach to the perfection of God; the poet seems to like the sinner as being the nearest approach to the perfection of man. He does not take any account of mere repentance. To regret one's own doings is to arrest one's own development and self-realisation. To deny one's own experiences is to put a lie into the lips of one's own life. It is no less than a denial of the soul.

It seems a very dangerous idea. It is—and all great ideas are dangerous. This is a truth we are hardly conscious of. Truth appears stranger than fiction. Truth is Life's fiction. She speaks in a manner worthy of herself.

The note of poetry is predominatingly pessimistic. To think has been declared to be full of sorrow. The malady of *Obermann* infects all minds more or less. In such an age it is an agreeable surprise to find Whitman free from the contagion. One does not dislike the note of sadness which sweetens our music, but unrelieved melancholy is not inviting. Here is a happy relief. No whining with the American, no sentimental despondency. Sad he himself never becomes, nor does he allow the shadow of gloom to rest upon his readers. He acquaints them with a world full of hearty, manly exuberance that gives them continuous glimpses into the nature of the poet. Here is a man, a son of toil, who does not merely look out on the wide, wide world from his cottage window, but comes out of his mean dwelling to sing 'A song of Joys,' 'A song of the Open Road,' the song of 'Pioneers.'

To have life henceforth a poem of new joys.

He has that divine unrest, that permanent stinging trouble of humanity that does not allow man to seek some old-world retreat out of the reach of this noisy world. He shakes off the ennui that continually overwhelms him, ignores the sad accidents and cheerless hours of life that perpetually worry him, and courts a wildish unknown destiny. Man has to travel endlessly throughout his life—whither he himself does not know

—and his march has been invested with a glory that he covets all his life-long. His vain struggles, uncertain aspirations and baffled ideals, in the allotted three score years and ten open in and through all that is noble and ennobling. Fallen threads of life he does not search for, he weaves anew. Salut au Monde! The Brooklyn stream flows on for ever;

You furnish your parts towards eternity.

the poet says, and muses on the relation of the individual with the universal. He covers the coffin of President Lincoln with lilac blossoms and murmurs

—And the soul turning to thee, o vast and well-veil'd death
And the body gratefully nestling to thee.

He thinks of the invincible soul, the soul that smiles and laughs in the face of the tragic end of the body. Despite the latter's defeat the former creates the beautiful, the fruitful on earth and dreams the dream of life everlasting.

Life may not be such as we see it in our youthful dreams. Yet never part with your illusions; they form the reality of realities in life. When they are gone you may still exist but you have ceased to live.

To appreciate Whitman one has to be a *Whitmaniac* in spirit himself. "It is among the inarticulates of the primitive, the abysmal, on the borders where time, mystic dimensions and the sphinxes of nowhere ask their riddles, it is in this territory that Whitman gives some people a grand thrill." We do not pretend to rise to such spheres where one gets only headache and confusion. It is only for moments and moments only that Whitman touches the borderland of our narrow, circumscribed region and for those moments we seem to be akin to him. The next moment he eludes our grasp. On the leaf-green cover of 'Leaves' is printed his facsimile in his shirt sleeves and in a slouch hat, and he seems to mutter

I charge you for ever to reject those who would expound me.

THE SERVILE POPULATION IN VEDIC INDIA

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ANCIENT India has at best been described as a land of mystical philosophers pursuing vague aims and worldly absurdities. Few attempts have hitherto been made to form an impartial estimate of her achievements in other fields especially the economical. It may appear very flattering to many to cling to the notion that slavery as an institution was completely unknown to ancient India. But it is the task of a historian, painful though it may sometimes appear, to bring to light the glorious as well as the inglorious pages of the national history. It is for historians to remember that perverted patriotism should have no scope in the field of history and that distorted truths are scarcely any better than lies. The repeated references in contemporary literature to slaves and their manifold activities in the society as early as the age of the RgVeda justify the conclusion that the practice was fairly in vogue from very ancient times. To ignore the literary evidences is to remove the very foundation-stone on which the still unfinished structure of the Indian socio-economic history rests. In totally denying slavery Megasthenes went too far. Nevertheless, when due allowance is made for exaggeration and mal-observation, it remains undoubtedly true that the evils of slavery which affected the Roman and Hellenic world and even later Euro-American civilisation did not make their appearance on Indian soil. Though slavery existed, slaves were not kept in very large numbers and the system never exerted such great influence on Hindu Society as to completely revolutionise their old and easy manners of life. It may be said without any deviation from the truth that "Indian slavery must have looked so very different to Megasthenes that he did not recognise it" (Cambridge History of India p. 416).

At attempt has been made in the present essay to depict the conditions of slavery in Vedic India. The topic is one of inviting interest and requires careful treatment by worthier hands. In making this attempt I may, not without much reason, be classed among those "who always rush in where angels fear to tread."

In the RgVeda the word "Dasa" appears several times and has been used as a synonym of "Dasyu." To Dr. Keith, the two words originally meant nothing more than a foe and in his opinion they gradually came to be restricted in their application to the aboriginal foes with whom the Aryans came into conflict. They were "Mrdhra Vachah (of hostile speech), "Anasah" (noseless), darkskinned and devoted to alien gods. It is possible however that "Dasa" had another meaning quite different from "Dasyu." Unless we take Dasa to mean a servant, we cannot explain the names Divodasa or Sudasa where the term is not applicable in the sense of a foe. It is more plausible to hold that the term Dasa originally meant a servant and in as much as the conquered Dasyus came to take the position of servants in the society of the conquerors, it became a fashion with the latter, to designate the aborigines in general by the term Dasa. It is clear enough however that the Aryans refrained from making any whole-sale extermination of the conquered natives and that the most of those who surrendered were utilised by them as slaves. In the literature of the later Samhitas the term Dasi regularly means a female slave, a fact which reveals that the enslaving of the conquered were more normal in the case of the fair sex. In the RgVeda itself, there are numerous allusions even to male-slaves. References to large number of slaves, though rare, are not totally non-existent. Private wealth, we find, was in part made up of slaves.

The question now presents itself to us as to the extent to which the system of keeping slaves had been developed in the RgVedic age and as to the position, occupied by them in society. As our informations are derived mainly from incidental references, the answer can hardly be any thing but conjectural.

In a Purusa Sukta hymn which undoubtedly belongs to the latest stratum of RgVeda, along with names of castes:—Brahmana, Rajanya Baisya, the name Sudra is first mentioned as springing from a primeval being. The Sudra, it is now admitted on all hands were conquered aborigines allowed by the Aryans to enter their society as a fourth caste. Now, if we take for granted the theory that the caste-system at least in its later form was not existent in the RgVedic age, we should be tempted to inquire into the causes why the conquered people came to be regarded as an important division of the Society by the time when the above hymn was composed. First, the growing number of the surville population must have so increased with the continued extension of Aryan frontier

towards the interior, that the conquerors found it both prudent and economical to allow them into their society. The obvious object was to control them with less difficulty and secure them against the temptation of rejoining their kindreds. The History of Europe in the early middle ages where we find the Frankish Conquerors converting the subdued barbarians with a view to keep them in check by creating a wide gulf between them and their pagan kindreds, affords a similar instance. It is also probable, secondly, that, slave girls being more usually employed than male slaves, unions with slave girls were not infrequent. The increasing birthrate in consequence of these unions and the appearance of not an inconsiderable number of people of mixed blood, presented a problem to the Aryans difficult to solve and emphasised the necessity of enrolling the slaves as a social division. It is needless to add that so long as the mother had no status in the society, their issues hardly could be recognised as Aryans. The important fact that no injunctions are laid against such unions in the Rig Vedic texts, while positive prohibitions are made to the same effect in later Samhitas, has some weight in the above consideration. Further the curious Rig Vedic custom that bride-price was very often a condition of marriage favours our hypotheses. In cases, where Aryan brides were too dear to procure, it is not at all unnatural that people should search for companions elsewhere. Dr. Keith supports this view though he does not offer the reason. It is however difficult to define what the exact social position of these emancipated slaves were and it is more probable that such emancipations took place in the age of the later Samhitas.

Equally meagre is our knowledge as to the extent in which slaves were used. Presumably enough, at this time the slave population must have been utilised in assisting their masters in their various tasks, agricultural industrial and pastoral. But the comparative simplicity of the age renders it impossible that the people depended much upon such labour in any sphere. Even the work of a tanner has clearly a place of honour. No distinction is seen as to inferior or superior labour, facts which also emphasises the comparatively inextensive use of slaves. In the face of these evidences, the view of Baden Powel that the Aryans were not the tillers of the soil cannot be supported.

The conquered people were not the only source which supplied slaves to the society. There is at least one hymn (X. 34) where an unsuccessful dicer recites the fatal fascination for him of the dice and

his consequent ruin and the enslavement for his family. It remains to infer that a debtor might be reduced to slavery as a result of nonpayment of his dues. Whether other types of slaves which made their appearance in the age of Manu and Kautilya (*e. g.* Bhakta-dasa, Kṛta-dasa, Grhaja and so on) were recognised is not clear.

The later Samhitas fix a wergeld of ten cows for the Sudra which tempts us to assume that he had no wergeld in the early Vedic age and can be slain or killed at will.

Coming to the period of the later Samhitas, the Aranyakas and the Upanisads we find the term Sudra used very frequently instead of the word Dasa. The next problem before us is how to find the exact meaning of Sudra. So far is certain that the frequent references to the word point to the unmistakably great influence exerted by him on the society during this period. This view receives additional support from the facts that mixing with the Sudras is severely condemned by the text of the Sutras and the Brahmanas that a wergeld has been fixed for them and also that their rights to follow the profession of merchants have been recognised.

It would be however going too far, if we take the Sudras, on the strength of these arguments, to be the emancipated slaves forming the last rank in the society. The statements of the texts speak against it. This far can be said with a considerable degree of certainty that the term in question was perhaps ambiguous. Sometimes it applied to the slaves proper, while at other times broadly to any and every aborigine whether he was a slave or a little better than that. In a passage of the Etareya Brahmana (Vedic Index. Vol. II. P. 255) the Sudra is expressly described as "the slave of another to be expelled or slain at will." A text of Bodhayana fixes the wergeld of ten cows with a bull over and above for the king, in the case of every Sudra. It might be contended that this provision for compensation is merely for the benefit of the master. Still, it cannot be gainsaid that unquestionably enough the growing complication of the social scheme was abolishing the relation of simple slavery. Proper slaves there were. But where the whole tribes had been reduced to subjugation the tendency must have been to assign the villages and their inhabitants to the king or to the nobles or sometimes to the commoner thereby conferring upon the inhabitants a position akin to serfdom.

It is interesting to notice the position of the slaves in the Aryan society, in the later Vedic age. He is emphatically regarded as impure

not fit to take part in the sacrifices. The mere speaking to a Sudra in some cases is banned after consecration. He is not even allowed to milk the cow for the milk to be offered to the god Agni. The Sutras emphasise the danger of sitting near a Sudra, exclude them from the studies of the Vedas and prohibit the taking of foods touched by them. All these facts are not without significance because each points to the peculiar care taken by the Aryan leaders of society for the sake of retaining purity of blood. The colour-problem thus can be traced back to the earliest dawn of civilisation in India. Contact with aborigines might have alarmed the conquerors against their complete amalgamation with the black-skinned-aliens. To be born of a slave girl was the disgrace with which Kavastha and Vatsa were tainted by their priestly contemporaries. The story of Satyakama Jabala in which special attention has been drawn to the reception of a child born of a slave-girl by a distinguished priest on the ground that the child showed brilliant promises—tells clearly enough that such unions were not regarded with favour. In the Vajaseneya Samhita illicit connexion between the Aryans and the slaves are definitely reprobated though in the Sutras rules are fixed not infrequently which while insisting that marriage should not be made with agnates or cognates, permit the marriage with a lower caste. On the question of intermarrying, restrictions thus were being laid down.

The Sudra seems to be without the capacity of owning property in his own right though in the absence of any evidence to the contrary in the texts, it seems almost certain that they were free to marry among themselves and were entitled to have a right over their wives and children. There is much reason to suppose, on the strength of the fact that in this period many industrial labours were sinking in estimation, that slaves were taking the place of the hired workers in the sphere of industry. We have actual references to land-owners cultivating their estates by means of slaves and merchants carrying on their trades through the same instrument of labour. There is no trace of the development of contract. Hence it is possible that the slaves got customary remunerations from the villagers and not payment for each piece of work. The Sutras recognise that the slaves might be merchants or might follow any other calling.

In the Brahmana period thus the terms Sudra and the term Dasa cannot be clearly differentiated. In many references in the texts, the Sudra almost approaches the status of a slave. But in many cases he has a better social position. Nothing can be known as to whether there

were any other sources of getting slaves except capturing in the field. In the earlier Vedic age however as has already been pointed out debtors could be enslaved as a result of the nonpayment of their dues. whether an Aryan captured in war could be reduced to the status of servility in this age, without prejudicing the laws of the Scripture, is not clear. It can however be discerned that the tendency of the age was that the Sudras were gradually getting a status in society so that when we reach the age of the Law books or Dharma Sastras we find that they have been enrolled as recognised members of the elastic society and have formed a fourth class coordinate with the rest.

An attempt to institute a comparison between the Indian slaves and the Hellenic servile population will not be quite out of place here. The best known example of the latter are the Spartan helots who were for eternity doomed to the wretched position in which we find them in the fifth century with little hopes of gaining back their freedom. Relying on Thucydides it can be said with certainty that disciplinary supervisions severely exercised by the secret Spartan police and their occasional intervention without any form of trial made the life of the serfs an unbearable burden. During the Peloponnesian War we hear of a deliberate cold-blooded murder of 2,000 helots. Traces of such rigour and harshness on the part of the Aryans can hardly be found in the contemporary literature. Moreover while the helots were forced to serve as light armed troops in war, no such obligation was fixed on the Indian serfs. Though the position of the slaves in Athens was in many ways better than that of the helots, yet they can hardly be described as enjoying an equally advantageous position with the Indian servile population. Unlike the latter the slave population in Athens could be purchased or sold at will. Though the examples of manumitted slaves are not rare, such ones scarcely could aspire to a position better than that of the metics. On the contrary we find that the emancipated Dasas formed an important division in the Aryan Society. Whereas there is hardly any evidence to demonstrate that the Athenian slaves could pursue trades in their own interest, arguments can be brought forward to show that the Indian slaves were not so handicapped. Finally against the peculiarly parsimonious granting of citizenship in Athens, we find, very often the liberal admittance of persons born of slave mothers into the rolls of Aryahood provided the father was an Arya himself. There are other points in which the contrast is hardly less obvious. Into the details, the

space forbids us to enter. We may conclude, not without justification, that the social condition of the Vedic Indian presents a far brighter picture than that of the Fifth Century alliance.

SARAT CHANDRA: AN APPRECIATION

PROF. S. K. BANERJEE, M. A., PH. D.

THE celebration of the birth-anniversary of a great man has more than a merely ceremonial importance. It supplies an occasion for taking stock of his achievements and also of speculating about the promise of the future. The fifty-sixth birth-day of our great novelist, Mr. Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, has provided such an opportunity to put our thoughts in order about his work as a whole.

Undiscerning hyperbole is the bane of criticism, and what is worse, it does not tend to advance the cause of its idol. A sober and reasoned estimate of the real points of greatness in an author does much more in fixing his position than a mere indulgence in vague superlatives in which the note of precision is painfully missed. Nowhere is the liability to this kind of misjudgment greater than in the case of a Bengalee man of letters who stands in a somewhat different position from his European brethren. In Europe the very multitude of great figures and towering personalities make precise assessment an imperative necessity, and keep down every author at his own true level by the very insistence of the process of comparison. The very rarity of such great figures in the literary world of Bengal tempts their critics to claim for them an all-round perfection without any misgiving or a sense of encroachment on other people's domain, while the comparative process is not at work to check the tendency towards extravagant estimate. Great men in Bengal have already suffered from this uncritical excess of praise. The great Bankim Chandra, who had at one time been credited with

the mastery of a magician's wand, so immaculate seemed to be the quality of his greatness, so swift and sudden his attainment of perfection, is now discovered to have had flaws and rents in his magic robe; and the modern school of realistic novelists already affect to look down upon him as a back number. The great genius of Rabindranath, so unique in its inspiration, so versatile in its interests, has had also its periodical phases of detraction, provoked partly, at any rate, by the unwise enthusiasm of his uncritical admirers. Rabindranath, the saint and prophet, has provoked a heresy, which would not have dared to raise its head against *Rabindranath the poet*. The same influence is also discernible to be at work in the political field, and a time may come when Deshbandhu Chittaranjan and Mahatma Gandhi may have to stand in need of being saved from their admirers, so that the real elements of greatness in them might be safeguarded against all misapprehensions and shown in their true perspective to the ages that are yet to come.

The revolutionary character of Saratchandra's outlook on life has probably helped to intensify this tendency in his particular case. Never in the field of Bengali literature did the emergence of an original genius create a greater stir. His bold heterodoxy, his scathing criticism of accepted values and current standards, his championship of forbidden aspects of love which lay so long under a social ban—all created an uproar the like of which had never been witnessed in the still and placid atmosphere of Bengali literature. The orthodox were shocked and scandalised to a degree at finding their most cherished ideals and convictions subjected to a cold, relentless scrutiny which left them curiously stripped and bare. On the other hand, the steadily growing band of free-thinkers and sceptics eagerly clutched at this most providential support reached out to them by an original genius and was literally thrown into transports of joy. And between these two extremes, the real value of Sarat Chandra's work, his permanent contribution to fiction, has tended to be a little obscured and discussion on him to centre on points of subsidiary importance. The ethical and social problems raised in his work have arrogated to themselves a degree of undeserved importance and shelved, to a certain extent, the freely artistic appreciation of it.

In trying to focus our attention on the point of view that really matters—the artistic aspect of Saratchandra's writings—the first element that challenges notice is the singular felicity and depth in his treatment of love. Love, in Bengali fiction, has had a singularly unsatisfactory and

unauthentic record. It had been described with a prevailingly idealistic bias, and in certain well-recognised, conventional situations that admitted of no extension beyond the old, rigid limits. So far as the dawn of love is concerned, its flame-like emergence out of the dead level of ordinary social intercourse, the subject had practically passed unrecorded. All courtship is severely eliminated from social life and relegated to the remote background of a historical past, where again the treatment is of the coldest and most conventional kind. It is the raptures and vicissitudes of wedded love that find almost exclusive treatment, and if forbidden love is brought in, it is only with a warning finger held up to point the moral. Bankim Chandra, first Bengali novelist to inaugurate psychological, as contrasted with a merely poetic, treatment of love, seldom oversteps these rigid limits, and his treatment is more suggestive than detailed, thus indicating deep, ineradicable affinities with the method and outlook of poetry. Rabindranath, specially in his *চৈতন্যের বাঁধ* anticipates Saratchandra, in his detailed analysis of the workings of unauthorised love, and must have given hints and inspiration to the latter; but in Rabindranath there are passages of splendid imaginative power that modify and colour the prevailingly realistic impression and lift the treatment above the level of a cold, psychological analysis. But generally speaking, before the advent of Saratchandra, we had scarcely any detailed, authentic account of the genesis of love, its subtle, devious and often contradictory ways, its persistent agonised struggles against a rigid social and ethical order, its bold defiances and its strange and irrepressible self-revelations.

This entirely novel and original treatment of love is, no doubt, the prime feather in Saratchandra's cap. In the novels of the preceding age the current of love had been shown as setting in one direction only: and the difference between chaste and unchaste forms of love rigidly marked off as by stone-walls. Saratchandra unfolds to us the curious mystery of love, in all its complex interactions and subtle undertones, its strange lapses and manifold, unaccountable disguises. We see it growing before our own eye helped and hindered by the every-day opportunities and incidents of life, not seldom unconscious of itself and willing its own annihilation, sheltering under the mask of indifference and even positive cruelty, and yet inevitably urged forward towards self-expression with the mysterious persistence of life itself. We are made to hear its authentic voice, not high-pitched and sentimental, not crudely emphatic and de-

clamatory, but in its soft and delicate undertones, its quiet thrills of passion infusing a subtle witchery into the every-day tones of talk. The devious yet unmistakable workings of love between Satish and Sabitri in his 'চরিত্রহীন' or between Vijaya and Naren in his 'দুর্ভাগা' are evidences of a much defter and more artistic handling of love than any that Bengali fiction before Saratchandra affords.

For such love as is described above, Saratchandra is forced to put his sickle in alien, forbidden fields and to hunt out strange breeding-places. The four corners of the traditional, orthodox ways of life are not wide enough to admit and house such a truant. The great handicap of Indian Society is that it tends to present to us love as a ready-made, accomplished fact, which considerably curtails the opportunities of the novelist. Love in Indian life and literature is almost invariably tied to the matrimonial yoke, and the only opportunity of psychology is to show it as tugging against the strings by which it is held fast. Young men and women in our society have but few chances of being thrown together so as to afford openings for the growth of love in a perfectly healthy and normal way. No doubt in the more progressive families of an ultra-modern outlook on life, the restrictions have been to a certain extent relaxed, so that the growth of love within the limits of ordinary social intercourse has just come within the range of probability, but the background is by no means as favourable as in societies of the west. It follows from this that any Bengali novelist intent upon representing love in its working as a growing, dynamic passion has to fall back upon very questionable expedients in furtherance of his purpose. This desperate strait to which the author is reduced accounts for the amazing frequency with which heroines tend to be found in the ranks of prostitutes, maid-servants and coolie-women—classes of females free from those restrictions that beset their more respectable sisters. And such a choice satisfies more than one passion in the novelist and the reading public—the democratic protest against the confinement of a virtuous passion to the upper ranks, the craving for novelty and sensation which hunts for an effect of strangeness in unlikely quarters and the tender and sentimental condoning of moral lapses in the victims of social tyranny and injustice. And from the standpoint of art also, this new tendency is not without justification, as it makes for a more dynamic and piquant presentation of love than the somewhat quiescent and bloodless feeling that passed for it in more conventional and respectable situations.

But even a new tendency can be over-worked, and a rebellion against convention may end in the creation of a new convention, and in this lies a grave menace to the future of the Bengali novel. Writers without any originality or authentic insight into love find it to their interest to introduce these questionable characters just for ministering to depraved tastes. Careful analysis and truthful record are giving way to an unmeasured glorification of vice and indecency—pictures which are lacking in the last excuse of an artistic semblance. It is a pity, therefore, that the new channel opened up by the genius of Saratchandra is in a fair way of being choked up by noxious weeds, but for this the blame lies elsewhere than on the shoulders of the initiator.

The next noticeable feature in Saratchandra's writings consists in his portraits of women. Women, in Bengali literature as in life, had hitherto played but too much of a passive and quiescent part. They had been the unresisting victims of circumstances; their love had been of the type that meets the demands made upon it rather than formulate its own demands; their personality had taken the shape of the social environment rather than put forth any active traits. In fact, before Rabindranath, the woman's voice had hardly found utterance in literature, and the woman's point of view passed almost unrepresented. The heroines of Bankim Chandra, notwithstanding all their charm and grace, can hardly claim to represent the feminine point of view: they are quite happy in their old, traditional niches and an occasional chafing against minor oppressions is never fanned in them into the flame of revolt. In Rabindranath, for the first time, does the feminine note make itself heard: woman awakens for the first time, to a sense of her own independence, and no longer looks upon herself merely as a satellite. This note of independence is pitched into a still bolder key in the novels of Saratchandra. In his writings woman becomes an active, dynamic force, thinking out her own problems and presenting her own demands in no uncertain or hesitating voice, yet with an ineffable grace and charm of manner that no aggressiveness can destroy. In the family circle, she is easily the most influential factor, speaking with a quiet decisiveness and finality of tone that puts to shame the weak blusterings and high-pitched protests of the other sex. With what consummate ease does Vijaya hold her own against the shrewd diplomacy of Rasbihari on the one hand and the vulgar clamorousness of his son on the other; in her, does feminine strength, in all its quiet delicacy, seem born again after centuries

of eclipse and virtual extinction ! And there are occasions when the revolt of woman is still more radical and reaches down to essentials. With what a disconcerting clarity of vision and a keen, unfaltering sense of justice does she set about to review the relations of the sexes and demolish the false standards of values in the social scale ! Abhoya in her courageous repudiation of the time-honoured sanctities of wedded loyalty—a mere empty shell in which the core of love had never germinated—strikes this note of revolt in its most emphatic and uncompromising form, but there are others who are permeated more or less thoroughly with this revolutionary clear-sightedness. And again, what a fine, inevitable loyalty do they display to that very social system and traditional scale of values against which they breathe such a poignant note of revolt. The prolonged agonised struggles of Satish against the happiness that love would fain bring to her poor, starved life, the grey asceticism that finally succeeds in quenching the hot flush of desire in Rajlakshmi are due to the deep, ineradicable instincts implanted in the very core of their moral nature by that spiritual discipline and culture which evoke their most passionate protests. It is this involuntary, instinctive loyalty to an ancient tradition that invests the problems of their lives with such a baffling complexity and marks them off from their sisters in the west in whom the promptings of passion are not muffled to the same extent by deep-seated inner scruples. It is impossible to predict just now how exactly the new Woman in Bengal would shape herself and what would be the natural accents of her speech. There is a strong force moving in the contrary direction and striving to heal the cleavage with ancient ideals, an effort to send woman back to her old place in the home and society with a quickened realisation of its beauty and dignity—embodied with a singular attractiveness and grace in the works of the orthodox school of women novelists headed by Nirupama Devi and Anurupa Devi. This would undoubtedly be a factor to reckon with, and the modern woman must needs come to terms with what is best and most valuable in her past heritage. But after all these concessions to and reconciliations with the past, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Saratchandra would be the most potent moulding force for her. The New Woman, when she definitely emerges, must absorb, in a very considerable degree, the substance of Saratchandra's thoughts and outlook on life, and must speak in a language, the inner rhythm of which will have been very largely determined by his influence and example.

And, above all, one cannot but be struck with the quality of mind and thought presented by the work of Saratchandra as a whole, quite apart from the merit of his achievements as a novelist. Here is a man who can boast of a much wider and more diversified range of experience, more subtle and penetrating powers of observation than a typical Bengali life severely tied down to the well-worn paths of respectability, could have been expected to afford. He has loitered in the outer fringes of society, its Bohemian haunts and resorts and has gathered strange wisdom and insight from his out-of-the-way, "disreputable" excursions. In the course of such wanderings he comes upon figures extremely lovable and fit to be cherished, figures whose native greatness of soul shines all the more against the tarnished background—truant boys like Indranath, Sannyasis like Vajrananda castaways like Sabitri and Rajlakshmi. What a remarkable extension of horizon and food for meditation for the average narrow-visioned Bengali, whose sense of moral values has been predetermined for him once for all, and who is obstinately of the opinion that 'no good can come out of Nazareth'.—a Philistine of Philistines indeed! His probing criticism of our social organisation tends to lay an unerring finger on its weak-spots; yet it is a criticism tempered by the sympathy and intimate comprehension of a child of the soil. If there is any society in which the need for legislating for the average member has been raised into a principle of inviolable sanctity, it is our Hindu society. Nowhere has there been less cognisance taken of, and less provision made for, the needs of an exceptional situation,—the result being frequent and interminable clashes between our finer sense of justice pleading for relaxation in special cases and the inexorable general law that would follow its wonted course unheeding who are crushed beneath its chariot-wheels. It is the great merit of Sarat chandra that he frequently draws our pointed attention to these lapses and anomalies: he has disturbed our self-complacency much more effectively than any other critic could have done. We are made to reflect on the great wastage, the needless cruelties, the uncharitable narrowness of judgment, the foolish insistence on trifles to the neglect of major issues that result from our mechanical compliance with social regulations. Of course to generate doubts is not to offer a solution. There is synthesis yet to be achieved between the needs of the average, and the claims of the exceptional, man in society. Restraining excesses and offering opportunities for expansion are both imperative social duties; and the most important service of Saratchandra lies in his pointing the way towards such

a synthesis by pleading for a greater charity and tolerance of view, handling of the immediate problems of the hour.

A SONNET

The good, old days, when hearts were young and bold ;
 I long, o long for them, I know not why.
Perhaps the modern lust for pow'r and gold
 Hath bred a deep disgust that cannot die
Unless the time returns ; the golden time
 That saw the Dinosaur in all his pride
And gaint thousands haunt the prim'val slime
 With rude-built caves of ape-man by its side.

O how I long to glide thro' forests dim
 And drink to dregs a mammoth-hunter's life
And fight to death with hairy cave-man grim,
 Perhaps to win a skin-clad dark-ey'd wife.
To live in the past I would it were my lot,
The sick'ning days of weary present forgot.

K. P. D.

LEGISLATIVE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE DOMINIONS

AN EX-STUDENT.

EVER since the last great war the problem of the legislative sovereignty of the Dominions has been one of growing importance and increasing complexity. "From the eventful year of 1914", as Mr. Alfred Zimmern has said, "the third British Empire has begun, and an Empire based on the principle of Trusteeship passed away". Each of the Dominions signed the Peace Treaty along with their mother country. They became the original members of the League. And to-day many of them have their diplomatic representatives accredited to foreign countries. Finally the Imperial Conference of 1926 made them "autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, and in no way subordinate to one another though united by the common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations." So this momentous declaration put the Dominions on the same status with Great Britain.

These unmistakable marks of an independent sovereign state are apt to beguile the superficial observer. He might be easily led to the conclusion that the Dominion legislatures are on the same footing with the legislatures of France or Italy. Our task therefore resolves itself into an attempt to answer the question, "What is the extent of the sovereignty of the Dominion legislature? What can they do and what they cannot".

The parliaments of the Dominions exercise many of the ordinary powers of a sovereign assembly such as the British Parliament. They make and repeal laws, they put ministers into power and dismiss them from the office. They control the general policy of the dominion. In fine, to quote Prof. Dicey, "*within their limits* the dominion legislatures are the copies of the Imperial Parliament".

Now, what are those limits? What are the bounds within which a dominion parliament should keep itself satisfied? That is the crux of the whole problem. To answer that question is to solve the riddle.

We start with Prof. Dicey's fundamental proposition that the dominion legislatures are subordinate law-making bodies. They are the creatures of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, which is the final arbiter of their destinies. It has set limits within which dominion legislation should be confined. To these limitations we now turn.

The first question to be discussed is whether the dominions have the *right to secede*. The Imperial Conference of 1926 has made them autonomous bodies within the the Empire united under common allegiance to the crown and *freely* associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. From this, a deduction has been made by colonial jurists that the Report intends to concede the right of secession. To such an interpretation it may be replied, firstly, the members of union of the United States of America were independent states freely associated into the union, yet the Civil War decided that they had no right to secede. Secondly, under the existing constitutional law of the Empire, no dominion has the power to secede of its own volition, and that an enactment of the dominion to that effect even if assented to by the Crown would be void abinitio. It is an elementary and fundamental principle of English Constitutional law that a Dominion Parliament created for certain definite purpose cannot enact validly any legislation beyond the scope of the powers assigned to it. This purpose is stated clearly in the Preamble of every act of the Imperial Parliament conferring responsible government on the dominion. In the Preamble amongst other declarations there runs a clause, "under the Crown of the United Kingdom etc". Hence a dominion cannot sever its connection with the Crown. In the Irish Free State Constitution, Art. 4 enjoins the members of the Irish Parliament to take the oath of allegiance to the Crown. And De Valera's attempt to change the oath in 1928 ended in failure. Even an extremist like Prof. Smiddy, the first Irish Free State representative to U. S. A. has said, "The only bond linking together the various nations of the British Commonwealth is the British Crown or one might say the person of the King". This then is the first great limitation on the legislative sovereignty of the dominion that they have no right to secede even if assented to by the Crown.

The second limitation on the legislative sovereignty of the dominions is that *the constituent and legislative powers are limited*. The unfettered exercise of such powers belongs only to the Imperial Parliament. The dominion parliaments have power under certain conditions to alter

their constitutions but they must comply exactly with such conditions on the pain of nullity of their acts. This principle rests on the Colonial Laws Acts of 1865. Thus the Canadian Parliament cannot amend the provisions as to Executive Government including the vesting of authority with the Crown and in the Representative of the Crown. It cannot alter any of the provisions affecting the Senate save its quorum. It cannot alter even the quorum of the House of Commons. It can regulate its franchise but subject to the rule that Quebec must have 65 members, and other provinces must have proportionate representation varied with the decennial census. It required an Imperial Act to enable it to appoint a Deputy-Speaker. It will require an Imperial Act to allow women to become Senators. The Irish Free State enjoys wide constituent powers. But as Sir B. Keith points out, "It is limited to changes essentially of an internal and minor character; the main lines of the scheme must not depart too far from those of Canada." In 1929 the Irish Free State submitted to the Imperial Parliament in the matter of compensation to be paid to the retired officers.

The third limitation is the *veto power of the Crown*. Though this power has long been disused, nevertheless, it exists in law. A dominion legislation passed by two houses is no law if disallowed by the Crown. In 1868 the Crown disallowed a Canadian act reducing the Governor-General's salary. In 1827 the Canadian Copyright Act was similarly disallowed by the Crown as it conflicted with the Imperial legislation. Again in 1878 the Canadian Merchant Shipping Act was vetoed.

The last great limitation is that the *effect of their legislation stops at the territorial frontiers* including territorial waters except where it can be shown in any instance that by express enactment or by necessary implication a wider measure of authority has been conferred. The Imperial Conference of 1926 recognised this limitation and referred the matter to a committee to consider whether such limitation should be withdrawn as it involved considerable inconvenience to the dominions. Imperial legislations such as the Army Act of 1881, the Act of 1911 were necessary to mitigate the handicaps.

But with all this, Dominion statesmen have, from time to time claimed that the dominions have the right to extra-territorial legislation. Canada concluded the Halibut Fisheries Treaty with U. S. A. a few years back. Again her amendment to the Customs Act in 1928 dealing with smuggling purports to extend to 12 miles into the sea from her coast.

But the weight of judicial opinion is overwhelmingly against such a claim. As was decided in the case of *Macleod vs. Attorney-General of New South Wales* that a New South Wales statute as to bigamy could not be used to punish a person who committed bigamy outside the territorial limits of such a state. It was conceded that the decision would have been otherwise if the offence was brought under the Imperial Act of 1861, as was decided in *Earl Russell's* case that a peer could be punished for bigamy committed in the U. S. A. Again Canada herself passed resolutions in 1920 and 1924 requesting the Crown to grant them power of extra-territorial legislation, so that she could control her airmen abroad.

These then are the four broad limitations on the sovereignty of the dominion legislatures, no right to secede, the veto of the Crown, limitation on the constituent and the legislative powers, and finally no extra-territorial legislation. These are the limitations as matters stand at present. The present position of the dominions of free and autonomous bodies from mere colonial dependencies is a product of a process of evolution. Even to-day the wheel moves on. Since last year events are moving very fast in the direction of greater freedom and greater autonomy of the dominions. Earlier in 1930 the committee on Dominion Legislation appointed by the Imperial Conference of 1926 issued its report while in the autumn of the year the Imperial Conference sat in London. Both of them made significant recommendations embodying far-reaching changes.

The Committee on the Dominion Legislation made the following important recommendations :—

1. The power of the Crown, on the advice of the ministers of the United Kingdom, to disallow dominion legislation cannot be exercised any longer.

2. The dominions will be fully empowered to make legislation having extra-territorial effect.

3. The Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 shall cease to apply to any law made by a Dominion Parliament.

The Imperial Conference of 1930 considered these proposals and made some important recommendations :—

1. No act of Parliament shall extend to a dominion unless so requested.

2. Dominion Parliaments shall be empowered to enact laws with extra-territorial operation.

3. Repugnance to the laws of England will not be a bar to the validity of the dominion laws.

4. Succession to the throne must receive the assent of Dominion Parliaments.

The Economic Section of the Conference has been adjourned to meet at Ottawa as the dominions would not consent to Great Britain's tariff proposals.

These recommendations are sweeping indeed. They break down the barriers to the full-sovereignty of the dominion legislatures. They tend to make the dominions independent states with a loose link with the Crown. Mr. Alfred Zimmern has very aptly said, "The Empire is, in fact, in rapid disintegration. It is steadily drifting towards a condition in which it is no longer a single state but an entete of states". Mr. McNair strikes the same note, "there can be no question that the dominions have acquired a position in International Law and in Society of States." The much-maligned utterance of the late Mr. Bonar Law on the floor of the House of Commons that "Dominion Home Rule means the right to decide their own destinies"—seems now to be prophecy of a truism.

RAI RASAMAY MITRA BAHADUR, M. A.

PROF. A. K. SINHA.

IN the once prosperous but now deserted village of Chanaḥ in the district of Burdwan was born in the year 1859 a child who was destined to play an important part in the educational history of this city. Rai Rasamay Mitra came of a respectable but poor family, and his early life was one long tale of struggle and hardship. Singularly unfortunate in his infancy, losing his grandfather at two and a half years, and his father at five, with a body crippled by repeated attacks of malaria, he struggled on with a wonderful tenacity and showed to the world how "slow rises worth by poverty depressed".

His father Nabadwipchandra, a very able, astute and honest officer of the Zemindars of Chakdighi was not spared long enough to mould the character of his son and could not leave him anything beyond his dying blessings that he should never be in want and should have "gold pen and inkpot" ("তোমার অন্নবস্ত্রের কষ্ট হইবে না, দেখিবে তোমার সোনার দোঁয়াত কলম হইবে"). It was reserved for his deeply religious mother and his kind uncle to look after the training of the boy, and it must be said that they did their duties admirably well.

Infant Rasamay was a very naughty and mercurial-tempered boy. Not a tree was there in the village that was not climbed, not a sheet of water that was not crossed and recrossed, not a hut that was not honoured by the unexpected intrusions and oppressions of this little tyrant. His escapades were a perennial source of anxiety to the family. He would not go to the village *pathsala* (school), partly terrified by the terrible rod of the *Gurumahasaya* (village school teacher), and partly attracted by the pleasant duties of robbing fruits and flowers elsewhere. Those who knew the calm, serene unruffled headmaster of later years will not easily agree, after this, with Wordsworth that child is the father of man. From the village *pathsala* he was sent to the Primary School under a very able but harsh teacher and was then removed to a newly-founded school at Bairagitāla as a free scholar.

When he was in the first class of the Bairagitāla Primary School he was advised by the Sub-divisional Officer, Mr. Jogeswar Mookherjee,

a relation of the novelist Bankim Chandra, to get himself removed to a better institution ; and it was at his suggestion that the mother and the uncle agreed to send him to Suri to be admitted into a High English School. But the means was not available and it was only when a distant relation kindly consented to bear the expenses of his boarding and lodging there that he was sent to his place. There he thought of appearing at the M. V. Examination and so joined the vernacular school. But when the time for depositing the Examination fees (a huge sum of Rupee One!) came he found himself quite helpless. It was only through an accidental charity that he was able to appear at the examination.

He passed the M. V. Examination standing first in the list of successful candidates and got a scholarship of Rs. 4/- tenable for four years. This placed him above immediate want and he joined his former Suri School in the Third Class. Here it was that he picked up that warm and life-long friendship with Lord Sinha, which neither age, nor inequality of status, nor the different ways of life ever chilled. As late as 1909, Lord Sinha (then Mr. S. P. Sinha) writes :

“ভাই সেদিন যে কবিতাটি পেয়েছি তোমার লেখা বলে তখনি চিনিলাম। পেয়ে সেই বহুদিনের কথা সব মনে এল। পীতাম্বরের মাষ্টারের Grey's Elegyর অনুবাদ, তোমার improved সংস্করণ, কুলতলায় তোমার সঙ্গীত, সময়ে অসময়ে তোমার উপর আমার নানা প্রকারের উপদ্রব এবং তোমার স্নেহপূর্ণ সহিষ্ণুতা, dear old Suri School and dearer Shib Babu, এ সব মনে হয়ে কতই আনন্দ অনুভব করলাম। কাজের অনুরোধে এবং কতকটা বিজাতীয় ভাবভঙ্গীর দোরে তোমার সঙ্গে সাংক্ষাৎ বড়ই কম। কিন্তু বেশ জেন, রসময়, আমার মন সেই পূর্বের মতই আছে।”

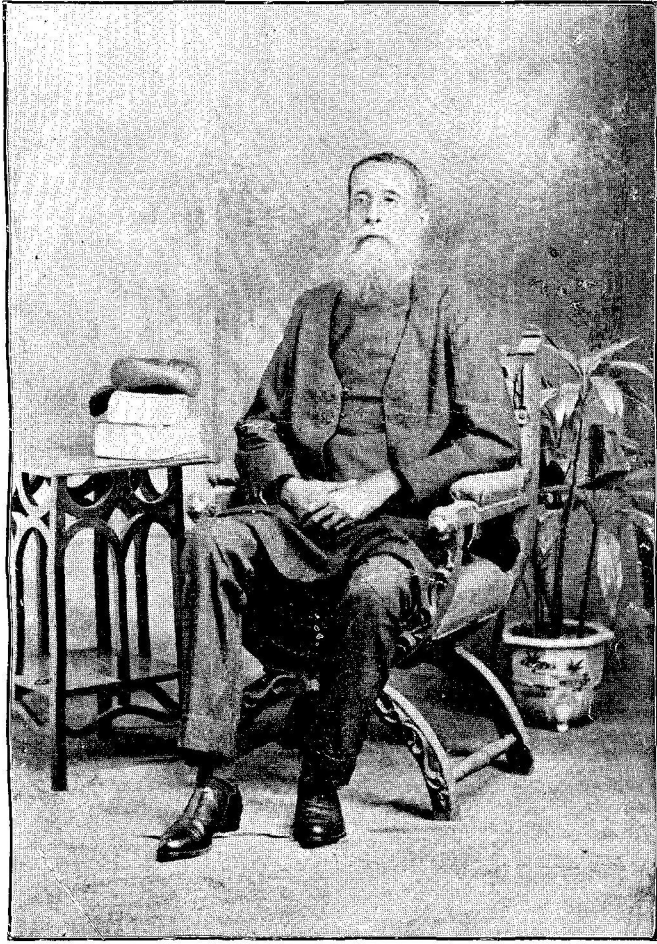
Many are the stories of loving rivalry between these two friends. Rasamay beat the future Governor of Behar in the class examinations, only perhaps to be beaten in the great examination of life. The headmaster Shib Babu was a little partial towards Sinha, but he had to confess at last “This fellow (Rasamay) will carry off all the prizes”. The then Inspector of Schools, Burdwan and Orissa Division, the late Bhudeb Chandra Mukherjee also endorsed that opinion and he wrote in the Inspection Book, “Half a dozen of boys can write English well, of whom Rasamay Mitra can write English most correctly”. And Inspectors in those days were not exactly the same as we find them to-day. To quote Rai Bahadur Rasamay Mitra “The then Inspectors of schools were not police-inspectors.” While going to sit for the Entrance Examination, he

lost his beloved mother, but the news was kept secret from him for some days as he was then in a very delicate state of health on account of repeated attacks of malaria. Yet he passed with credit and secured a scholarship of Rs. 15/- a month, standing first from the Burdwan Division. Great was the agony when he came back home to find that his mother was no more. Life appeared dark and meaningless to him. But time is a great healer, and Rasamay was persuaded to join Hooghly College. W. Griffiths was the Principal of the College. He was a wonderful man. Deeply learned, but amiable as a child, loving his students as his sons, taking a paternal interest in their welfare both inside and outside the college, his memory had been enshrined in the hearts of those who had the privilege of sitting at his feet. The European professors who came those days were real scholars and their genuine scholarship enabled them to rise above race prejudices and to take real interest in their students. It was Mr. Griffiths that gave Rasamay start in life, and whatever he afterwards became was principally due to him.

He passed the B. A. Examination in the First Division, securing the Maharaja Durga Charan Laha Scholarship of Rs. 25/- and got Thwaytes Gold Medal for standing first in Mathematics from Hooghly College. Mr. Griffiths wanted him to take up Mathematics in the M. A. Examination but he preferred English and passed the examination by purchasing books worth Rs. 7/8/-.

His student-life was now over. The wants of the family were growing apace, he had a daughter by this time, and the uncle was involved in litigation. All these prompted him to take up some job and his dream of becoming a lawyer was gone. He went as a Headmaster to Midnapore on a pay of Rs. 100/-, and after a month came back to join the Normal School of Hooghly on Rs. 50/- because his uncle wanted him to be as near him as possible. Then he went to Arrah on grade Rs. 75/-—Rs. 100/-, had a terrible attack of small-pox from which both he and his wife suffered. They recovered but an infant daughter died. Finding Behar uncongenial he tried to come back to Bengal and was transferred to Hooghly Collegiate School under his old headmaster, Shib Babu. In all these places, he was immensely successful and the magnetism of his character, the method of his teaching and the transparent honesty of his purpose at once won for him the love of his colleagues and the respect and admiration of his students.

It was while in Hooghly that series of mishaps took place. His



THE LATE RAI RASAMOY MITRA BAHADUR

eldest daughter became a widow at the age of 9, his uncle's son died, and was followed by the uncle himself. He was horribly shocked and turned to Vaishnava literature for comfort and solace. Chastened in the fire of grief he became a devout Vaishnava and remained so throughout his life. He imbibed the true Vaishnava spirit of “তৃণাদপি স্নানীচেন তরোরপি সহিষ্ণুতা”—humbler than the grass and more forbearing than the trees.

Mr. W. Griffiths was then the Principal of the Presidency College, and it was through his earnest efforts that Rasamay Babu was taken to Calcutta as the Headmaster of the Hare School. The condition of that school was then very precarious, and it was to save this institution that he was brought down to Calcutta. The trust which the authorities had on his capacity and character was amply fulfilled. When he came to the school it was a pandemonium, when he went away from it to become the headmaster of the Hindu School, Hare School had got the reputation of being the best school in Calcutta. In the course of five years the whole character of the school was changed. The government acknowledged the success of his mission and wrote: “the steady progress of the Hare School under the present headmaster is highly satisfactory”.

Then came the dark days for the Hindu School. The authorities were thinking of abolishing it altogether, but a spirited protest came from some of the illustrious alumni of the school, headed by late Maharaja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore. Lord Lansdowne rejected the proposal of abolishing the school with its hoary tradition. But who was to save it? Rasamay was sent to diagnose its disease. He saw there rank indiscipline, carelessness, abuses and immorality. Even a man of his temper was shocked. He set himself to the task of reformation and his zeal and sincerity was crowned with success in no time. Discipline returned, boys understood their mission, teachers worked ungrudgingly, and a healthy and bright atmosphere came back. The Hindu School became the first and the most successful school in Bengal. All these were due to the untiring efforts of one man. Mr. P. C. Lyon wrote “Rai Rasamay Mitra Bahadur who, by devoted service and high character saved the school from what might have been disaster and raised it again to the high place it now holds in the judgment of the people.” The government acknowledged his service by making him “Rai Bahadur,” but title or no title the man remained the same, humble, pious, sincere, unostentatious. The story of his wonderful success is too well known to be repeated at length.

After a meritorious work of over 34 years, in the cause of the education of Bengal, and after brilliantly serving as Head-master in the Hindu School for over 16 years, the Rai Bahadur retired in November, 1916, to devote the rest of his life to the cause nearest to his heart.

He passed the remaining 15 years of his life in deep prayer, meditation and in *kirtan* and died a peaceful death, such as saints might envy, in the early hours of dawn on Sunday, the 19th April, 1931, without any illness. May his soul rest in the feet of Him whom he served through his words, work, and worth during his 72 years of life !

A great educationalist, a man of spotless character, a humble and pious soul, delighting in the service of man and his Creator, Rai Rasamay Mitra's memory will long be cherished in the hearts of the people of Bengal. He knew the rule of love, and of no other rule, and herein lies the secret of his magnetic personality and phenomenal success. He showed to the world what zeal, sincerity and piety can do.

The love which he gave to men, is now offered at the feet of the Lord, and may his soul rest in peace !

INTERNATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

RABINDRACHANDRA DUTT—*Fourth year Economics.*

THE one important service that the Great War has rendered to the cause of humanity is this ; that it has for ever created in the minds of men an aversion to war and a horror of the bloodshed that an international conflict in the modern time means. As has often been remarked, while science has on the one hand advanced human civilisation by rendering man master of nature, it has by that very same means facilitated the destruction of man by turning war into a brutal and inhuman international carnage. To civilised man this international carnage is more than can be tolerated and this growing sense of horror of war has made man realise that if civilisation is to continue and if man is to retain his mastery over nature, war must be abandoned. War, to-day, is no more a war between kings and princes, but between peoples and peoples ; it is no longer a war with bows and arrows involving the death of a few hundreds of men, but it is a war with shots and shells, with aeroplanes and submarines and involves not hundreds of men but thousands and millions. The Great War was indeed a great eye-opener to the power-intoxicated peoples and statesmen of Europe, for it demonstrated to them that war was no longer a play-thing to be incurred for a bit of territory or for the vain glory of an imperialistic policy but that it was a form of national suicide to be avoided almost at any cost and under all circumstances. This realisation that has dawned upon the peoples of the world and especially those of Europe has helped in the emergence of the sentiment of internationalism—an internationalism not yet free from the taints of imperialism, not yet realised in all her glory and splendour but an internationalism that is realised to be a necessity and that heralds an age of peace and progress. The pure and lofty ideal of internationalism is indeed still the treasure of poets and philosophers not yet realised by peoples and statesmen ; but the latter have come to look upon it as an immediate necessity to be conceived not for its own beauty and nobleness but for the continuance of world peace and avoidance of war. Whatever be actual mode of realisation, however, internationalism to-day is not only an ideal in political philosophy but a working hypothesis and a strong factor in international

politics. Justice and democracy, on which internationalism should be based, has not indeed been dealt out to the nations of the world by the victors of the world war ; the noble promises of Wilson have not indeed actually been realised, but even the most imperialistic nation of the world has come to realise that she is no longer to remain in the isolated corner of the world dictating her proud and imperialistic policy to the weaker nations without heed to their piteous cries and murmurs, but that they are also to negotiate on equal terms with each and every state on earth and compromise her policy in the interest of world peace. In a word, international agreement, if not the ideal of internationalism, has been realised to be necessary ; and this former will in due course lead to the realisation of the latter.

The rise of internationalism has marked the beginning of the fall of imperialism. Indeed, imperialism and internationalism are two forces that can never act in the same direction. The realisation of the one implies the death of the other, and the fulfilment of the other involves the annihilation of the first. The two principles are as a matter of fact, based on two different and opposed sets of ideas ; it is only a play of words to say that imperialism can be reconciled with internationalism. Internationalism implies an equality of all nations—equality not absolutely indeed and in all respects but equality so far as justice and freedom are concerned. Every nation is not, indeed supposed to possess intrinsic merit on the same scale and to an equal degree, as every other nation is not expected to contribute as much to the culture and progress of the world as every other, but every nation is certainly supposed to be equal in the sense that it has an equal right to freedom and development as every other and an equal right to do what she likes best subject only to conditions equally imposed on all nations. Internationalism, above all, in its true and unadulterated form presupposes the recognition of freedom of all nations—a recognition not only of a fact but as of a right as well. It supposes, in other words, that not only all the nations that are in fact free should remain and be treated as such but also that every dependent nation has an inherent right to freedom—a right which it is the duty of every other nations to promote. No nation has a right to rule another and no nation, indeed, can rule another without harm both to the conquered nation and to itself—this is the underlying principle of the theory of internationalism. Each nation is to develop on its own lines and according to its own genius and taste, and faithful, as far as desirable,

to its own customs, traditions and the world is to gain by the contribution of these various nations to the common stock of welfare of all nations. The federation of the world and the Parliament of Man will unite the world not in a unity but in a union. The idea of internationalism is not to unite the world in such a manner as to destroy *originality* and *variety* but to combine in a union in such a way as to retain all marks of traditional and cultural difference but with all that to co-operate willingly and voluntarily with a view to establish peace and goodwill on earth. This factor of willingness as opposed to compulsion is another feature in internationalism—a feature whose absence would destroy the main basis of the ideal. Just as nationalism in its constructive side implies democracy and willing co-operation of the individual, so also internationalism in its best form presupposes co-operation of nations not under compulsion but with a real willingness and sympathy for the cause. Thus we see that the idea of internationalism is based on three fundamental principles; namely, (1) equality of nations (2) union of states (3) willing co-operation.

Imperialism on the other hand, as we know, is based on an entirely different set of ideals. It implies domination—in the best form indeed domination for the good of the dominated—of one nation by another. Imperialism presupposes not equality but inequality and implies that one nation being superior to another the former has a right to dominate over the latter—for the good of the subject nations and with a view to the material, moral, economic, in a word all round, development of conquered, in order to bring it to a level with other nations. It also implies a combination of a number of nations with a superiority held by one particular country. In a word, imperialism implies a unity of government and organisation ruling over the whole empire, allowing only such differences and distinctions as peculiarities of different countries and nations suggest. It implies besides unity in foreign policy, unity in commercial transactions and unity in all matters concerning the different countries as a whole. But the most prominent feature of imperialism is that it involves a superior nation which is supposed to be the heart of the Empire, and whose government is supposed to have final voice in matters concerning the Empire.

From this it necessarily follows that imperial government does not always rely on the willing co-operation and good-will of each component part but involves a certain amount of force to keep the recalcitrant but

weak nations bound down to the dictates of the strong. Thus as opposed to internationalism this ideal of imperialism implies (1) inequality (2) compulsory co-operation (3) unity.

Now let us examine these underlying principles one by one and see which of the two opposing ideals is most conducive to world peace and progress. As regards equality, freedom and willing co-operation, it may be said that the theory that one nation is as good as another has been rightly challenged by many a critic, but allowing even that one nation may sometime be regarded as superior to another on grounds of her merit and integrity, can we for a moment deny self-government to a weaker nation and for that matter allow a superior nation to be her trustee? Endless controversy has been raised on this point and various different and conflicting views have been expressed on the subject, but after weighing the pros and cons of the question an impartial observer cannot but come to the conclusion that on the whole better results follow from allowing a weak nation to develop by herself than from forcing a civilisation and progress on to her by a not always disinterested master. In practical politics we cannot afford to go by theories alone, and we must reckon with the natural failings of man as well as of nations. Self-interest is as much the guiding principle of man as it is of nations and we cannot afford to ignore this factor in a general consideration of the merits of imperialism. So far as the prosperity and progress of the subject nation does not affect those of the master, so far and so far alone can justice be expected of the conquerors but there are instances in the national life of a country where the interests of the two nations concerned are at a conflict. Here comes the crucial test of the honesty of purpose of an imperial nation and history of the world has furnished us with few instances where the conquerors have been able to stand this test. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say, that no imperial nation of whom anything has been recorded in history has ever sacrificed its own interest to discharge its duties for the proper government of the conquered country, Leaving aside for a moment the moral question of the improper relation between the conquerors and the conquered that has manifested itself in the relation of all imperial nation towards their subjects, this material shortcoming of imperialism arising out of the psychological truth of man's selfish character, forms one of the greatest drawbacks of the system of imperial government and proves the truth of the statement that equality and freedom involved in internationalism is a far nobler and a safer ideal

from the material point of view, than inequality and subjection which forms the basis of its opposite ideal.

The next point that counts seriously in favour of freedom and independence is contained in the well known dictum "Good government is no substitute for self-government." Granting for an instant the contention that modern imperialism is based on the good of the ruled and, as a matter of fact, exists for that good, we may still point out that national independence is still an asset for which no amount of good government can stand as a substitute. The development of national culture and the true progress of art can never take place in a country where inferiority-complex holds the field and where independent development is hindered by indirect if not actually direct means. Indeed, as a writer has put it "the evidence of the past shows that where a race is deprived of its own political life its work is less valuable, and that when a race wins political independence its arts and science contribute to the general progress of civilisation". It may seriously be contended that there are nations in the world that are unable to manage their affairs and that need the contact of a higher civilisation than its own to progress from the low state and stand in a level with the rest of the world. Barring a few exceptional cases, however, where domination by a nation may be allowed under strictly international superintendence, it may on the whole be asserted that in these days of easy transportation and communication a nation does not need the domination of another to come in contact with and to learn from a higher civilisation. Japan in the east is a glorious instance of transition from a lower to higher civilisation, effected within a marvellously short time but without the domination of a foreign nation—a transition which India will take a much longer time to make even with the help of one of the most prosperous and highly civilised nations of the world. Indeed the shortcomings of domination of one nation by another so much outweigh the gains derived from the system, that a nation may be said to gain most by standing by itself than by being ruled over by a superior nation. Had human as well as national character been ideally transformed and had selfishness no more formed one of the characteristics of human beings, then imperialism might have proved beneficial to humanity, but taking facts as they are we find, and rightly find imperialism self-condemned.

Now coming to the question of unity as opposed to union that is involved in imperialism, it may be said that the latter is the only practi-

able as well as sensible solution of the problems of the world. Diversity of the most striking nature is present among the various races of mankind and if the co-operation of all these peoples be sought it can only be realised through a union of states and not through a unity. Imperialism as an international policy is, as a matter of fact, applicable only to a few countries of the world and is no solution to the general problem of peace and progress. The various nations will not tolerate the loss of either their originality or their freedom, so that apart from the question of desirability, mere expediency ought to prevent such a measure. If permanent peace be the immediate aim of mankind, then diversity and freedom will be reconciled with combination and co-operation and this is exactly what internationalism means. Apart from this, however, a union will by the presence of diversity lead to the development of the component parts of the body and blend the developed cultures of the parts to a harmonious whole, while a unity by destroying originality and diversity will only lead to homogeneity and would involve the destruction of variety and difference.

The hope of world peace may thus be said to lie not in imperialism but on internationalism based on nationalism. Instead of the world united into a number of Empires dominated by a number of proud imperialistic nations, the vision of future points to the fact that salvation of the world lies in a federation of free and equal states. A state may be weak politically, and may not survive the struggle for freedom among nations, but that is no reason why it should be destined to extinction. Just as militant individualism of Spencer has passed into the region of discarded political dogmas, so also survival of the fittest nation is a theory no more respected in the field of international politics. Every nation that has truly attained its nationality has come to realise a feeling of unity among the members of the nation and a feeling of distinction with regard to other nations of the world. This feeling of unity and difference, if it is to be permanent and enduring must be based on solid facts, that is to say, that nation must have some peculiarity—cultural or otherwise—which marks it off from other nations. Now if this state be allowed to develop freely it will cultivate this peculiarity and will make the world all the richer by this special contribution of hers to the civilisation of humanity. The most prominent instance of this stifled nationality and its potential importance to the civilisation of the world, that naturally floats before our mind's eye is that of India. India had a great past and promises to have a great future. She has a civilisation and a culture peculiarly her own, the

development of which will imply an original contribution to civilisation and culture of the world. The development of Indian nationality and her attainment of freedom may impair the unity and strength of the Empire, but the two chief criterions of the merits of the case for independence are fulfilled, namely, that this development will be for the good of the country concerned as that of the world and society as a whole. Thus the development of nationalism in a country where the spirit of nationality exists is a factor which may be opposed by the imperialist concerned but certainly should have the support of those who look impartially at the welfare of human society. The growth of nationalism is thus not a cause of strife among nations, as some may suppose, but is the true base factor of internationalism and world peace...a peace that does not imply the death of variety and originality but one that creates unity amidst diversity and seeks for co-operation and good-will among nations not unmixed with an element of healthy competition.

Fortunately, the trend of modern events is distinctly anti-imperialistic and is, as a matter of fact, inclined towards internationalism. The feeling of nationalism has been roused up to that healthy point where a nation chafes at foreign interference but it has not passed into that romantic penumbra where each nation considers itself the true type of men and desires to impose its civilisation and *Kultur* on the rest of the world. There are nations in the world, however, that in the name of unity desire to create Empires and dominate over them, but the former feeling has been so strong in modern times that not only has the vision of a future Empire been turned into a dream never to be realised but the old Empires are showing signs of breaking up and the nations of the world are trying to array themselves into states with fundamental equality of position and status. Indeed it may be mentioned in this connection that the British Empire to-day, but for the dependencies like India and Ceylon, is no more an empire in the strict sense of the term but has already broken up into a confederation of free and equal nations. What England now understands by imperialism is certainly not as harmful to world peace as the old Athenian and Roman imperialism implied and what even the late Germans understood by it. If Canada and Australia and not India be instances of British Empire no rational critic can condemn it as being opposed to internationalism. Not to speak of internal affairs, Canada and such other countries have to-day the strength and power to differ from England even in international affairs...and when this is reached, when every question

whether internal and external is decided in consultation with and with the consent of the various parts of the Empire, we reach a stage where we can no more call it Empire in the strict sense of the term but only a federation of equal and independent nations. This, indeed, is the ideal of internationalism and instead of a few English speaking countries if all the nations of the world are united on this basis we have what is desired by the ideal. Imperialism is something different and something worse, and in the history of Modern Europe we have only to refer to the instances of Germany and to those of France and England among coloured nations to realise what true imperialism means.

The ambition and greed of imperialistic Germany led to the great war and shattered once for all the dreams of an Empire : and though her chief opponents were not all actuated by the motives of pure and unadulterated nationalism and internationalism yet this much can be said that the opposition to Germany gained ground and received popular support only because the allies based their claims on democracy and nationalism. Indeed as Ramsay Muir puts it "amidst the horror and carnage of the great war unparalleled in the annal of humanity the only consolation open to intelligent men is to keep their eyes open to the magnitudes of the issues over which the conflict rages" ; with the termination of the war, however, internationalism was no more a mere ideal in political philosophy held sincerely by ideals and visionaries but a world scheme drawn and planned by serious philosophers and held though not too sincerely by statesmen and peoples of different countries. It has gradually become a living necessity...a necessity which a nation can only ignore at their cost. Thus after the world war came the establishment of the League of Nations and though imperialistic nations like England and France could not all of a sudden change their hearts and turn internationalists in a day yet they came to realise that an international settlement was imperatively necessary for the establishment of peace in the war-ridden world ; what, however, they failed and even now fail to realise is that international agreement to be enduring must be based on equality of nations and must once for all sound the death knell of imperialism. Thus the subjection of Ireland, India and Egypt by England, that of African colonies by France and such other acts were not considered to be inconsistent with the new tide of internationalism. What was worse, the over-riding of national claims of many states (e. g. the case of South Tyrol with regard to Italy) in the resettlement of the map of Europe was quietly

done along with the enunciation of international and national principles by Wilson. This flowing tide of imperialism among the leading nations of Europe, however, has received a healthy check in the growing intolerance of nation states at foreign interference. Thus Ireland has already achieved her home rule and India is on the high-way to Swaraj, there being hardly a nation on the face of the earth that looks with equanimity at the violation of her national claims. Even Canada to-day is suspicious of imperial powers and questions are raised as to the right of the imperial government to direct the foreign policy of the dominions. These are healthy signs and should not in any sense be construed as pointing towards a separatist tendency in the world and standing as an impediment towards the realisation of internationalism. Indeed the federation of the world is the true vision of the future and the League of Nations which is to-day with all its merits a league of a few states of Europe is to be remodelled as to embrace all the nations of the world, strong or weak, old or new. Imperialism in the sense of the term has been used in history taking the word to mean what was meant by Athenian imperialism and Roman and English imperialism, in the sense of domination of one nation by another ; this sort of internationalism must go. This, indeed, does not mean that nations culturally similar like England, Canada and Australia should not form an organisation of its own to promote its interests and culture but the spirit of superiority and inferiority must go and in its place one of equality and fraternity must succeed. The cry of the French Revolution is to-day as useful in the case of nations as it was in the case of individuals in those days and with these watchwords in mind nations should federate into a world state to realise the benefits of human civilisation and rise to the summits of human culture. If this ideal is one far off, if its realisation takes centuries, at least the first step is well within our grasp and this first step is the obliteration of imperialistic ideals and the attainment of freedom and equality by all the nations of the world.

THE APPLE CART : A POLITICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

GOBINDA PRASAD GHOSE—*Sixth Year History*

CENTURIES ago, a play of great literary merit was written in Sanskrit by Cudraka. It was a romantic drama, one of the highest order, and bore the title of "The Clay Cart". Recently a book, peculiarly suggestive of the foregoing work by its designation, has seen the light, and, the author is George Bernard Shaw. It is a comedy and its characters are fictions, but it bears more than one element of historical truth. If Shaw were well-versed with Sanskrit, he could have borrowed the earlier title with greater advantage. The reader, however, need not despair; one appreciates the work as it is.

As for the purely aesthetic quality of the book, it is not the purpose of this theme to comment upon it. A play from the pen of Shaw generally commands public respect; and if not always original, it never fails to sustain the interest of the reader. The Apple Cart is no exception; it will render a dull evening livelier, even pleasant. The present treatise, however, will confine itself to the political aspect of the play, to the almost cruel exposure of some historical illusions. Even a shavian work can be read seriously at times. The drama begins towards the close of the twentieth century. (G. B. S. is clever enough to take the necessary precaution!) In a Europe of republics stretching from the Urals to the North Sea, stands England in splendid isolation, "this little gem set in a silver sea,"—the home of constitutional monarchy. King Magnus (may he live long!) is the ruling deity. He leads a fairly active life, performing state functions as delivery of speeches on the opening of parliaments, and presiding over charitable shows organized under kingly auspices, reading everything which is not agreeable and signing it because nothing else is to be done, facing a cabinet crisis every week and tiding over it smoothly. Even his love intrigues are carried on in a constitutional way. In short, he has the pleasant lot to execute all but what is worth doing. He is the India-rubber stamp. No wonder the king envies the American President, a strong man who rules. A Punch puppet, he cannot move unless the Prime minister's fingers are in his sleeves. "What is the king? An idol set up by a group of plutocrats so that they can rule the country

with the king as their scapegoat." May he not warn the people when he finds them sitting over a precipice? Yes, but only on the advice of his cabinet. "Yet," says King Magnus, "I am far more subject to public opinion than you because, thanks to the general belief in democracy you can always pretend that what you do is done by the will of the people, who, God knows, never dreamt of it, and would not have understood it, if they had; whereas for what a king does, he and he alone, is held responsible. A demagogue may steal a horse where a king dare not look over a hedge." He cannot enjoy even the solace of religion. For, as he points out, "I have to rule over more religious sects than I can count. To rule them impartially I must not belong to any of them; and they all regard people who do not belong to them as atheists!" An unenviable lot, this. But after all, the king is not an India rubber stamp. He is very much a living soul. What would happen if he takes courage in both his hands and protests once for all declaring. "This India rubber stamp theory won't work any more?" That's the fun Shaw tackles us with. What, if King Magnus threatens to resign and seek a parliamentary election? Who will dare to oppose the most popular prince on earth *Ora e Sempre*? It is his last trump card and it may win him the rubber. This is Shaw's 'projection into the future'. This Apple Cart, however, is a book of comedy, not an exalted discourse on politics. All scheming ends in a pleasant *tete-a-tete*. The king would not forego his solid security, the cabinet would not forego their squabbling ambition, the people would not lose their closely-hugged constitutional fiction. King Magnus is not far from truth when he chimes out "ministries come and ministries go, but I go on for ever." A constitutional monarch never dies; "The king is dead; long live the king."

In the land of constitutionalism, one of the most striking wonders is the responsible ministry or what is known as the cabinet revolving round the magnetic personalty, of the Prime Minister, the celebrated hyphen of Walter Bagehot. Prime Minister is undoubtedly the last word in English high politics, the supreme rung of ladder where the ambitious politician desires to rest. As to his qualifications, well, isn't the question impertinent? But if one insists on it, let him be contented with the knowledge that he is a busybody by profession. "I am Prime Minister," confesses Joseph Protens, "for the same reason that all Prime Ministers have been, because I am fit for nothing else." There is, however, one supreme virtue. "I keep to the point—when it suits me." It is not strange after this

remarkable confession that the humble Laborite tells the same tale with his conservative opponent. Before his accession to power there was some chance of his being useful ; at least he could have worked up to a certain ideal. He is now a thing of the past—a chip of the old block. Lack of initiative sends him poking his nose about other people's affairs. He is cautious ; he is suspicious ; and fearing to trust a soul he settles nine questions out of ten behind his cabinet's back. "That is," says Lysistrata, "what foe always contrives to do, by hook or crook." So far, the hyphen.

What is true of one, is true of all. Each of the Cabinet Ministers mimics "his master's voice." Occasionally, however, there is a discordant note, apparently that of a foolish new comer. Mr. Bill Boanerges of King Magnus's Cabinet is one such. His colleagues laugh at him, so do the readers of his character. But appearances are sometimes deceptive. It might be that England's destinies would be safer in his hands. That is another tale.

The responsible ministry holds out an apology for all this deficiency and it is not absolutely bad reasoning. They are all birds of passage, these ministers. Unless he possesses a very exceptional share of dominating ability and relevant knowledge he is helpless in the hands of his officials. He must sign whatever documents they present to him and repeat whatever words they put into his mouth when answering questions in parliament. It is inevitable. Ministers are in office for spells only, the spells being few and brief and often occurring to men of advanced age with little or no training for supreme responsibility. It is nothing, if not bureaucracy. The Cabinet, in short, is in the words of "my beloved Corinthia" an overcrowded third class carriage. It is perhaps, not impudent to enquire about the necessity of such a costly get-up. The reason is not far to seek. People like Sempronius's father wish to see men "dressed up in fancy costumes and painted and wigged and titled," and England is fortunately or unfortunately full of them. As King Magnus will have it, "I cannot carry on without the support of a body of ministers whose existence gives the sensation of self-government."

Self-government ? Well, England is the land of self-government, of a perfectly balanced constitutional democracy. Has not she been giving a lesson on freedom since the year 1215 A. D. ? And who can doubt that 'the mother of Parliaments' will continue to offer herself as a model to all newly awakened countries till the Doomesday yet.....

But before we sit on judgment, let us have a look at the sturdy nationals constituting this democracy. How do they fare? "We have the people of England", boasts Joseph Protens, "in comfort--in solid middle class comfort." Wherefrom does it originate? "By sending our capital abroad to places where poverty and hardship still exist; in other words where labour is cheap. We live in comfort on the imported profits of that capital. We are ladies and gentlemen now." Will it last? That's another question. Besides, England still remains the workshop of the world. But sometimes the impossible happens. Suppose Birmingham does not continue to hold the monopoly of the 'Christmas Cracker trade' and, 'chocolate creams' of Middlesborough are no longer in demand? (Is G.B.S. prophesying about India and Lancashire?) Suppose it occurs to the countries, on whose tribute England grows fat, to stop payment? (Only the other day there was a proposal from Mr. DeValera for cancelling the Irish annuities. Again, a correct forecast). Suppose Uncle Sam desires to hold back the yearly allowance of "two thousand million dollars?" (The American Robot can't be so cruel although now and then, it loves to dangle the sword of Damocles. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald will bear this statement out). England, however, need not entertain fear on that score. "For," says Mr. Vanhatten, the American ambassador to the court of King Magnus, "we feel at home here." In what sense? pertinently asks the king, "Well, we find here everything we are accustomed to; our industrial products, our books, our plays, our sports, our Christian Science Churches, our osteopaths, our movies and talkies. Put it in a small parcel and say, our goods and our ideas." But what of the great national tradition, the civilised culture which every honest Briton is proud of? "It may not be better than yours," says the justly indignant Queen Jemima, "but it is different." Does it, however, still exist? No, says Mr. Vanhatten. "We found that culture enshrined in British material works of art; in the stately country houses of your nobility, in the cathedrals our common forefathers built as the country houses of God. What did you do with them? You sold them to us. I was brought up in the shade of Ely Cathedral the removal of which from the county of Cambridge to New Jersey was my dear old father's first big professional job." So the Ambassador's bold proposal for a political union with America. "A political union with us will be just the official recognition of an already accomplished fact. A union of hearts, we might call it." (It is a matter of regret that very few of the present generation will live to witness this Utopia of Shaw!)

Thus stands the sturdy national of England in the Apple Cart, a parasite fattening on other countries' dole, bereft of all honour, culture and civilisation. What capital fun would it be if good Queen Bess were to come down to earth once more and witness this merry-go-round of her old England!

But to return to democracy. Democracy has been very poetically described by Abraham Lincoln as government of the people, for the people, and by the people. How far does this proposition apply to English self-government? The first element is evidently necessary. A human community can no more exist without a government than a human being can last without co-ordinated control of his breathing and blood-circulation. The second is most important. Categorically put, it stands as equal consideration for all. It is an admirable platitude, but how can it be translated into action when there are many people with a hundred a year and a few with a hundred thousand? (G.B.S. himself is one of those who pay the supertax!) As for the last article it is apparently paradoxical. Every citizen can not be a ruler any more than every boy can be an engine-driver or a pirate king. So "our solution of the political problem is vote for everybody and every authority elected by vote. Or in other words, democracy can not be government by the people; it can only be government by the consent of the governed. Now how is this consent exercised? By popular elections based on universal suffrage. It is nothing but an exhibition of bad manners. "To-day", says King Magnus, "there is not a single aristocrat left in politics, not a single member of the professions, not a single leading personage in big business or finance. Not one of them will touch this drudgery of government, this public work that never ends because we cannot finish one job without creating few fresh ones. Our work is no longer respected. What great actor would exchange his stage? What great barrister his court? What great preacher his pulpit? For the squalor of the political arena in which we have to struggle with foolish factions in parliament and with ignorant voters in the constituencies? The scientists will have nothing to do with us; for the atmosphere of politics is not the atmosphere of science." No wonder it is the all triumphant Civil Service that rules in democratic England. A civil servant at least gets some training; the popular humbug who represents the country has none. This is the Demos who rules an empire. Signor Mussolini calls democracy a putrefying corpse; he would better call it so far as England is concerned, a quinquennial balloon.

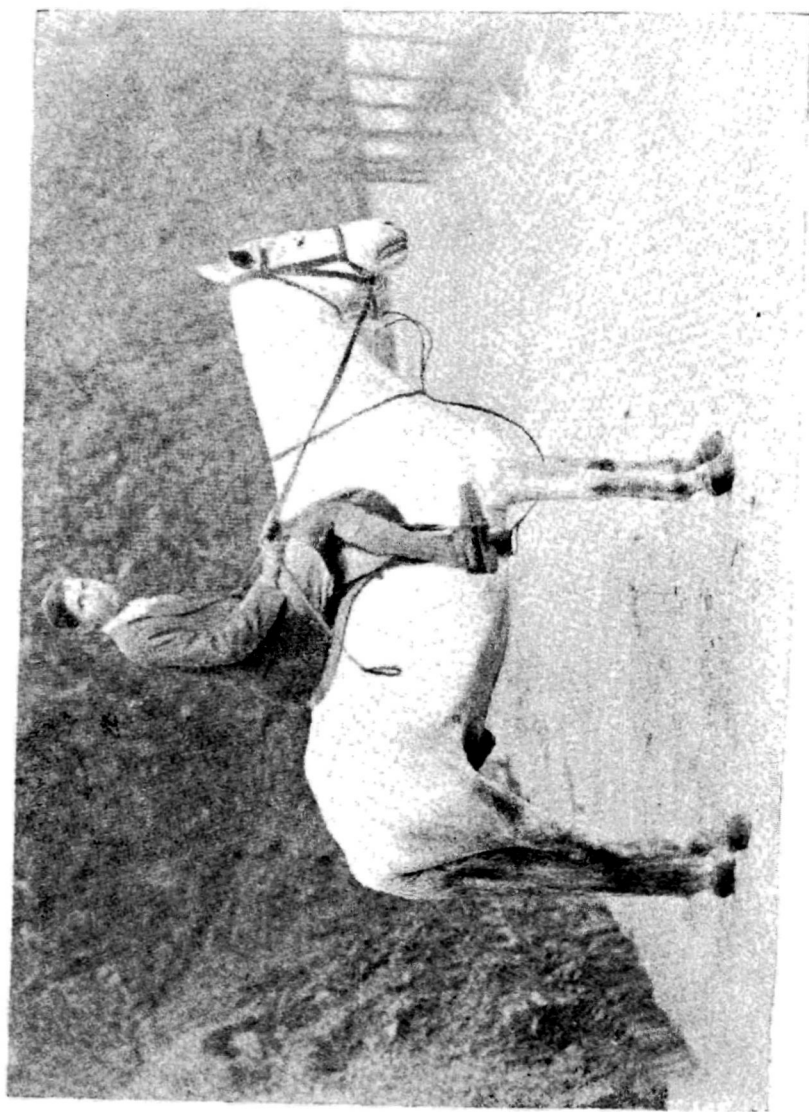
So the solution ends in a riddle. Who then pulls the strings from behind the screen? Vote for everybody and every authority elected by vote, an expedient originally devised to prevent rulers from tyrannizing by the very effectual method of preventing them from doing anything, leaves everything to irresponsible private enterprise. The real masters of the situation are the "Breakages Limited," the inevitable patrons of all Balbuses and Crassuses. The conflict is not between royalty and democracy. It is between both and plutocracy, which having destroyed the royal power under democratic prettexts, has bought and swallowed democracy. "Money talks; money prints; money broadcasts; money reigns: and king and labour leaders alike have to register its decrees, and even by a staggering paradox, to finance its enterprises and guarantee its profits. Democracy is no longer bought: it is bilked. Ministers who are socialists to the backbone are as helpless in the grip of Breakages Limited as its acknowledged henchmen." "Every new invention", cries Lysistrata in agony, "is bought up and suppressed by Breakages Limited. Every accident, every breakdown, every smash and crash is a joy to them."

How long is this state of affairs going to last? King Magnus predicts revolution. Revolution in England! "Put that out of your head Sir. Not if you were to tear up Magna Carta in Trafalgar Square and light the fires of Smithfield to burn every member of the House of Commons." The Apple Cart will not be turned down, it stands on firmer ground.

But Shaw has all along been an optimist. His Lysistrata [By the way, ladies in Shaw's play appear in a more dignified role than men. Hasn't he constituted himself an Intelligent Woman's guide to socialism] closes the tale with a typical Fabian platitude. "Never fear, Sir. It is not the most ignorant national that will come out on top but the best power station; for you can't do without power stations and you can't rule them on patriotic songs and hatred of the foreigner and guff and bugaboo, though you can run nationalism on nothing else." Science for superstition! It is, indeed, the yearning of a fighting soul from the heights of Pisgah for the Promised Land.

Thus ends the Apple Cart. Merry England remembers the 'oid meddling fool' of Aristophanes, pats the aged buffoon on the back and buys his book with a good humoured shrug of shoulders; a drama of

G. B. S. has always been a best seller. But we, students of history are grateful for this rather fine exposure of constitutional humbugism. Although he may not believe half of what he has said, we thank him for his truthfulness. It is delightful entertainment.



SIRDAS DUTT.

OURSELVES

STUDENTS' AID FUND

1930-31.

The Students' Aid Fund was started in 1923 by Rai Khagendra Nath Mitter Bahadur who was for a long time a Professor of this College, and it completes the eighth year of its existence with this session. The present system of management by a Committee of 5 elected members from amongst the subscribers dates back to August, 1928. In August, 1930 the present Committee was formed with Principal J. R. Barrow as President, and Profs. Hem Chandra Das Gupta, Dr. Upendra Nath Ghosal, Durgagati Chatteraj and Nalini K. Brahma as the other members, the last named being re-elected the Secretary.

During the year under report (September, 1930 to August, 1931) the total receipts from subscriptions from members amounted to Rs. 377-0-0. There was an opening balance of Rs. 255-9-11. The interest on money deposited in the Presidency College Co-operative Society and the Post Office Savings Bank amounted to Rs. 9-10-0. The surplus of the Barrow Farewell Fund amounting to Rs. 5-2-0 was kindly handed over to us by Mr. H. K. Banerjee, the Treasurer of the Fund. The total income of the Fund has thus been Rs. 747-5-11.

On the expenditure side, monthly stipends of Rs. 6/- each were granted to six students. Four of these students received stipends for 12 months, one for 11 months and the other for 5 months. An amount of Rs. 384/- was thus spent. A lump sum of Rs. 20/- was paid to one student for the purchase of books. A sum of Rs. 95/- was granted to five examinees for meeting their examination fees. An expenditure of annas three was incurred for writing a letter to Mr. T. S. Sterling in acknowledgment of the sum he sent to us. The total expenditure thus amounted to Rs. 499-3-0. The balance of the Fund to-day is Rs. 248-11-0, of which the sum of Rs. 100/- is deposited with the College Co-operative Society, and the remaining sum of Rs. 148-2-11 is deposited in the Colootola Post Office Savings Bank.

We express our grateful thanks to Mr. T. S. Sterling who has not yet forgotten this small institution of his old College and is still paying his subscriptions to the Fund regularly. He sent us a cheque for Rs. 20/- in January last.

H. C. DAS GUPTA,
Chairman.

N. K. BRAHMA,
Hony. Secretary.

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR

The first meeting of the Seminar was held on Saturday, the 18th July, 1931 with Prof. A. K. Sarkar in the chair. Mr. Rabindra Chandra Dutt of the IVyr. Economics class read a paper on "Imperialism and Internationalism" in which he pointed out one discrepancy of the two ideas and opined that the world-peace and progress could not be realised without the attainment of internationalist aims. A discussion followed in which Messrs. Amar Biswas and Bijoy Acharya took part. The President concluded the debate with a suitable speech in which he expressed his general agreement with the opinions of the reader of the paper.

The second meeting took place on Saturday, the 18th August, 1931 under the presidency of Prof. A. K. Sarkar. Mr. Sisir Dutt of the 4th yr. Economics class read a paper on "Federation as the future Indian constitution". He began by pointing out the difficulties that lay in the way of federating India but concluded his paper saying all these difficulties must be overcome for no other constitution was possible in India. A very lively and prolonged discussion followed, in which the speakers expressed different opinions on the difficulties of which Mr. Dutt had spoken but the general trend of discussion was in the favour of federation. The President brought the debate to a close with a thoughtful speech on the subject. He was strongly in favour of federation in India.

The third and last meeting of the Seminar was held on Saturday, the 22nd August, 1931 with Prof. A. K. Sarkar again in the chair. Mr. Bijoy Krishna Acharya of the 4th year Economics class read a paper on "Individualistic and socialistic Ideals". He was of opinion that individualism and socialism were compromise theories derived from anarchism and communism respectively and added that the two ideas almost merged themselves into one when looked upon from a broad point of view. In the discussion that followed Mr. Nazibuddin Ahmed criticised some of Mr. Acharya's ideas and Mr. Rabindra Chandra Dutt opposed some other opinions expressed in the essay. The President summed up the debate with a suitable concluding speech.

Before concluding the Secretary desires to express his extreme gratefulness to Prof. A. K. Sarkar who has rendered invaluable services to the Seminar whenever requested to do so. He further wishes to thank the members of the Seminar but for whose warm co-operation, the activity, that the Seminar has been able to show from the beginning of the session would not have been possible. Indeed, the members may well be proud of the fact that from the middle of July the Seminar has held its sittings on all the days allotted for it except one. The enthusiasm of the members, it is hoped, will be kept up till the end of the session.

RABINDRA CHANDRA DUTT,
Secretary.

THE ECONOMICS SEMINAR

The inaugural meeting of the Economics Seminar was held on Saturday, the 25th July, 1931 at 2 p.m. Prof. A. K. Sarkar presided. Mr. Amar Biswas read a paper on "The Prospects of Industrial Combination", written rather in an optimistic vein. The optimism of the writer was not however shared by those who joined in the discussion that followed. The President summed up the whole discussion with his usual precision, hinting at the vague suggestions of the problem, and pointed out emphatically that combination has generally meant no good to consumers.

The second meeting of the Economics Seminar was held on Saturday, the 15th August, 1931 at 2 p.m. Prof. U. N. Ghosal was in the chair. Mr. Amar Roy Choudhury read a paper on "Rationalisation of Industry" in which he dwelt mostly on the relation between Rationalisation and Distribution.

The peculiar feature of the meeting was the presence of Messrs. Sanat Kumar Mukherjee, Bhabatosh Dutt and Jnanadhir Sarma Sarkar of the Post-Graduate Classes, and a few students of the Third Year Economics Class also.

Mr. Sanat Kumar Mukherjee spoke at length on Rationalisation of Industry, bringing out a connexion between Unemployment and Rationalisation. No other student took part in the discussion. The President, then, briefly pointed out that the ponderous word "Rationalisation" was German in its origin and also emphasised the aspect of Rationalisation which implies the right organisation of industry considered as a type of government.

The third meeting of the Economics Seminar came off on Saturday, the 29th August, 1931 with Prof. A. K. Sarkar in the chair. Shibdas Ghosal read a paper on 'Indian Poverty—its causes and some suggestions for remedies'. In the paper the writer studied the causes of poverty in India and offered some valuable suggestions as remedies. Messrs. Robindra Chandra Datta, Sisir Kumar Datta and Asoke Sen took part in the discussion. There was a brisk exchange of views regarding the degree of emphasis to be laid upon the various causes, most of them being mentioned by the writer and pointed out by the speakers. The President then, made a somewhat lengthy speech quite in conformity with the gravity of the problem. In the speech he said that the idea of poverty is only relative, and that the present state of affairs in India can be remedied by wise policies adopted with regard to more economy in consumption, greater efficiency of production and better distribution.

DILIP CHAND MUKHERJEE,
Secretary,
Economics Seminar.

THE HINDI LITERARY SOCIETY.

A trip to Kolaghat by the side of River Rupnarain was made by the members of the society on Sunday the 7th December, 1930 under the guidance of Profs. H. K. Banerji and S. N. Lala. Prof. Banerji took a keen interest in the affairs. Our thanks are due to him.

The first meeting of this session was held on the 10th August 1931 with Prof. S. N. Lala in the chair. All the members expressed their desire for the establishment of a Hindi Seminar in the College.

The second meeting took place on August 13, under the presidency of Prof. S. N. Lala. Messrs. G. S. Daruka and M. C. Gupta were elected Secretary and Assistant Secretary respectively.

The third meeting was held on the 20th August. Prof. Lala presided. Mr. G. S. Daruka of the third year Arts class read an interesting paper on "The Future of Hindi." The writer traced the history of Hindi Literature in short and dealt especially with the progress recently made by Hindi, the *lingua franca* of India, and the important part played by the Indian National Congress for its improvement. The writer hoped also that the literature of Hindi will become one of the richest literatures of the world in near future. A lively discussion followed in which the president, Messrs. R. Lakhotia and J. N. Kabra took part.

It was decided that the society should raise a subscription from amongst its members for the Flood Relief Fund, and consequently a sum of Rs. 51 (Rupees fifty-one) was contributed towards the fund by the members of the society on the 31st August, 1931.

GAURI SHANKAR DARUKA,
Secretary.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Report

The idea of forming a Science Association in the College had been nurtured by some students of the Third Year B. Sc. Class (1930-31) for a pretty long time, and accordingly a representation was sent by the Science students to the then Principal Sir J. C. Coyajee, Kt., in April last. At a meeting held by the Principal of the Heads of the Departments of science subjects, the students' representation was accepted and the professors warmly appreciated the idea. Rules etc. were also framed by them in the light of the suggestions given by the students.

The organisation is an all-College one, and any student of the College can be its member. The primary objects are arranging (1) popular lectures on scientific subjects, (2) excursions to places of scientific interest, and (3) scientific demonstrations.

The actual work of the Association was undertaken in the beginning of the session. Dr. P. Neogi, M. A., Ph. D., P. R. S., I. E. S. Senior professor of Chemistry, was appointed first Vice-President and Messrs. Ajit Kumar Majumdar and Karuna Ketan Sen were appointed provisional secretaries in the third week of July.

A good number of members was enrolled within a very brief time and the Inaugural Meeting was held on the 3rd August under the presidency of Sir J. C. Coyajee, Kt. Professor P. Neogi, Ph. D., delivered an address on "The two aspects of the study of Science." The president in opening the meeting paid a glowing tribute to the advancement of Science and he also complemented the students for taking the initiative in forming the Association, which was so valuable for the College. Dr. Neogi's lecture was fitting to the occasion and it was made all more interesting by his reference to how the study of Science had progressed in India and how the two fundamental aims—the enhancement of human knowledge and application in raising the standard of human comfort—were being realised in our country.

The Committee of management as required by the rules was formed by the middle of August and the provisional secretaries ceased to work as such.

We have the pleasure of announcing that we have a heavy programme before we break up for the pujas and we have been able to enlist the support of some of the renowned scientists of the city.

I beg the privilege of conveying my grateful thanks to Professors P. Neogi, C. C. Bhattacharya, K. N. Chakrabarty, H. C. Das Gupta, N. C. Bhattacharyya and other members of the staff all of whom have helped me ungrudgingly in my work. To Principal Sir J. C. Coyajee, I am indebted for the kindness he has shown and to Principal B. M. Sen, I owe the deepest gratitude for the many troubles he has taken in helping us in our work.

My best thanks are due to my friend Mr. Karuna Ketan Sen as also to other fellow-students of mine for their kind co-operation.

AJIT KUMAR MAJUMDAR,
Secretary.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE FLOOD-RELIEF COMMITTEE

At the news of the devastating floods that have swept away numerous villages in North and East Bengal, the students of the College formed a Flood-relief Committee, with Principal B. M. Sen as president, Prof. H. K. Banerji as Vice-president, and Prof. S. C. Majumdar as the treasurer, with a view to collect voluntary subscriptions from the staff, ex-students and the students of the College. S. J. Rabindra Ch. Dutt of the IV Year B A. Class was appointed Secretary and collectors were nominated from the different classes.

The Committee commenced its work from the 17th August 1931 and has already collected a sum of Rs. 653/5/0 only.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of contributions from the following sources as detailed below :—

				Rs.	As.	P.
(1)	Members of the staff...	...	...	138	0	0
(2)	Ex-students	...	...	51	0	0
(Ex-students who have contributed are—						

				Rs.	As.	P.
	Mr. K. C. Dasgupta, I. C. S.	...	...	20	0	0
	Mr. B. M. Mitra, I. C. S.	...	...	20	0	0
	Mr. S. K. Haldar, I. C. S.	...	...	10	0	0
	Mr. S. Basu, I. C. S.	...	...	10	0	0
	Mr. K. K. Hazra, I. C. S.	...	...	10	0	0
	Mr. R. K. Mitra, I. C. S.	...	...	5	0	0
	Mr. J. C. Dutta	...	...	5	0	0
	Mr. Purnendu Guha	...	...	1	0	0
(3)	Students of the College	...	...	434	5	0

The following is the list of classes, arranged according to the amount contributed to the fund :—

(a)	4th Year Arts, through Mr. Alamgir Kabir	...	134	9	0
(b)	1st Year Science, through Mr. Diptendra L. Mitra	...	50	0	0
(c)	2nd Year Arts, through Mr. Dilcep Sen	...	49	4	0
(d)	2nd Year Science, through Mr. Akbar Kabir	...	44	0	0
(e)	3rd Year Arts, through { Mr. Chintamani Chatterjee	...	21	8	0
	{ Mr. Nirmal Bhattacharjee	...	17	8	0
(f)	1st Year Arts, through { Mr. Kalyan Gupta	...	32	0	0
	{ Mr. Benoy Roy	...	6	0	0
(g)	4th Year Science, through Mr. Karuna Sen	...	30	0	0
(h)	6th Year Arts, through Mr. Govinda Ghosh	...	29	0	0
(i)	3rd Year Science, through Mr. Amal Rai Chaudhuri	...	20	8	0

The whole amount has been handed over to Sir P. C. Ray—an Emeritus Professor of our College.

We are glad to learn that a sum of Rs. 51 was sent to Sir P. C. Ray by the Hindi Literary Society of our College. We highly appreciate their generosity.

but it would have been much better if they had co-operated with us without sending the sum separately. We stand for the College as a whole, and regret that such separatist tendency should exist among us.

In conclusion, on behalf of the students of the College, I desire to express my gratefulness to Principal B. M. Sen and Prof. H. K. Banerji, whose keen interest in our task lightened our work immensely. My sincere thanks besides are due to Prof. S. C. Majumdar, but for whose untiring efforts and timely advices, our endeavour would not have been a success at all. Lastly I thank the staff, the ex-students, and our fellow-students who have contributed to our fund for their, spontaneous and generous response, and the members of the Committee for the co-operation I have received from them.

In this connection I congratulate the students of the 4th Year B. A. Class who by their contribution, through their energetic representative Mr. Alamgir Kabir, have secured the first place for their class in the list. I shall however be failing in my duty, if I do not acknowledge with thanks the help, I have received from my friends—outside the Committee—namely Messrs. Pranab Sen, and Sib Das Ghoshal and specially Messrs. Bijoy Acharya and Ajit Guha, whose genuine enthusiasm for our cause was of great help to us.

RABINDRA CHANDRA DUTT,
Secretary.

BASKETBALL NOTES

This session the College Basketball Club steps into the fourth year of its existence and within this period it has been able to be a centre of attraction of the playing students of the College and more particularly of freshers. We have sent up two teams this year for the Intermediate League conducted by the Bengal Basketball Association. It is yet too early to forecast the extent of our coming success; but we have reasons to believe that our team is not lacking in that amount of strength that can rank it at least as one of the best teams of the city.

The ground together with the rings has been recently improved and ours is at present one of the finest fields in the heart of the town. Nothing is too much to thank Mr. S. C. Sen, M. A., B. L., Physical Instructor, who has helped us in every way and has never limited his guidance to advices of game-technique only.

To Prof. M. M. Hug., Treasurer of the Athletic Club, the Secretary is specially indebted for the extreme kindness and cordiality with which he has been treated. He further conveys his thanks to all his fellow sportsmen for their liberal co-operation and assistance.

AJIT KUMAR MAJUMDAR,
Secretary.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following of our contemporaries :—

1. "The Gryphon", University of Leeds
 2. Allahabad University Magazine
 3. The University Law College Magazine
 4. Benares Hindu University Magazine
 5. Jagannath Intermediate College Magazine
 6. St. Xavier's College Magazine
 7. American College Magazine, Madura,
 8. "The Ravi", Government College, Lahore (3 issues)
 9. The Scottish Church College Magazine
 10. The Maharaja's College Magazine, Erankulam, Cochin
 11. The Cotton College Magazine, Gannati
 12. Ravenshaw College Magazine *Cuttack*
 13. St. Paul's College Magazine
 14. Murray College Magazine, Sialkot, (3 issues)
 15. D. A. V. College Union Magazine, Lahore, (5 issues)
 16. The Student's Chronicle, Serampore
 17. The College Chronicle, Comilla
 18. Wealth and Welfare (1 copy)
 19. "The Durbar", Khalsa College, Amritsar, (3 issues)
 20. The Lyallpur Government College Magazine
 21. Rajsahi College Magazine
 22. Burdwan Raj College Magazine
 23. "The Dayalbagh Herald", Radhasoami Educational Institute,
Dayalbagh, Agra.
 24. Bangabasi College Magazine
 25. "Basantika"
 26. Hare School Magazine
 27. "Health and Happiness" 1 copy
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THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

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NOTICE

	Rs.	A.	P.
Annual subscription in India including postage	2	8	0
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There will ordinarily be three issues a year, in September, December, and March.

Students, old Presidency College men and members of the Staff of the College are invited to contribute to the Magazine. Short and interesting articles written on subjects of general interest and letters dealing in a fair spirit with College and University matters will be welcome. The Editor cannot return rejected articles *unless accompanied by stamped and addressed envelope*.

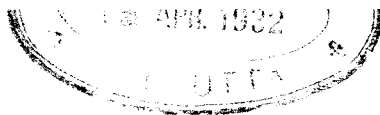
All contributions for publication must be written on one side of the paper and must be accompanied by the full name and address of the writer, *not necessarily for publication but as a guarantee of good faith*.

Contributions should be addressed to the Editor and all business communications should be addressed to the General Secretary, *Presidency College Magazine*, and forwarded to the College Office.

AJIT NATH ROY,
Editor.



THE LATE DR. P. K. RAY



THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE

Vol. XVIII

APRIL, 1932.

No. 2.

EDITORIAL

IF we had occasion in the last issue of the Magazine to mourn the death of a distinguished Ex-Principal of the College, namely Mr. H. R. James, it is our lot in the present number to record the deaths of two more, namely Dr. P. K. Ray and Mr. H. M. Percival.

Dr. P. K. Ray was the first Indian to get a doctorate from the University of London, the first Indian Principal of the Presidency College, the first Indian Registrar of the Calcutta University, the first Inspector of Colleges appointed by the University under the New Regulations in 1907, and the first Indian educationist chosen in 1910 to go to England to look after the education of Indian students there. One of the brightest products of English education in this country, the late Dr. Ray's career in life has spread the reputation of our *alma mater* far and wide. In him there was a harmonious blending of the cultures of the East and the West. He was the ideal teacher, the guide, philosopher and friend of his students who held him in the highest reverence and deepest affection. The vastness and solidity of his learning, the strength and independence of his principles, the innate modesty of his nature, and the nobility of his character reminded men of the *rishis* of old and he commanded the genuine respect of all who came in contact with him in whatever sphere he worked. He has died full of years and full of honours ; but Bengal is distinctly the poorer by his death.

Mr. H. M. Percival was connected with the College for a period of about 35 years as student, as Professor, and lastly as Officiating Principal. He was one of the most brilliant and most popular professors that the Presidency College has seen. In him we had one of the most renowned Shakespearean scholars of his time, and it was an inspiration to listen to

his lectures in the Class Room or to come in contact with him outside College hours. Though primarily a teacher of English, he was also a fascinating teacher in History and Political Economy in the B.A. and M.A. classes. A true lover of learning, a *man of wide culture and vast erudition*, a strong and dominant personality, a saintly character, Mr. Percival created a tradition in this College and will be *gratefully* remembered by three generations of students who had the privilege of sitting at his feet.

On the 25th January last, a fine portrait of the late Professor was unveiled by the Hon'ble Justice Sir Charu Chandra Ghose, and it is being contemplated to place the oil painting in the room where Mr. Percival used to lecture to his students. It is fitting that his portrait should do honour to the room where his life work was done. A committee has been formed to perpetuate the memory of this great professor, but his most lasting memorial will be found not in marble or bronze but in the hearts of those for whom he lived and died.

* * * * *

By the death of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Haraprasad Sastri, C.I.E., and Raja Gopendra Krishna Deb, the College has lost two of her oldest and most distinguished ex-students. Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad, who died at the age of 79, graduated from this College in the year 1876 and held high positions in the Educational Service as the Senior Professor of Sanskrit, Presidency College, as Principal of the Government Sanskrit College, and as *Head of the Department of Sanskrit and Bengali in the Dacca University*. He was one of the foremost of Indian orientalists who had won for himself a distinct place in the literary world. He had a wide range of literary activities and there is hardly any branch of Indology to which he has not made some important contribution. For several years he was the President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat, and in both the capacities worked unceasingly for the advancement of learning and promotion of research. The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain showed its high appreciation of his valuable contributions by counting him as one of its thirty Honorary Members selected from the world of Orientalists belonging to different countries, and the Government honoured him by conferring on him the titles of Mahamahopadhyaya and C.I.E. The loss sustained by the country by the death of such a son is irreparable.

Raja Gopendra Krishna Deb graduated from Presidency College just sixty years ago, in 1872, and was one of the earliest members of the Statutory Civil Service in Bengal. He rendered long and meritorious

service to the Government in various capacities—as Magistrate and Collector, as Inspector General of Registration and as District and Sessions Judge—and retired in 1905. The title of Raja was conferred on him as a personal distinction in 1906. He used to take a keen interest in all the affairs of his old College, in the foundation of which his forefathers had played so prominent a part, and that interest continued unabated till the last day of his life. He was a familiar figure in our Founders' Day celebrations, and even last year he was with us on the 20th January in spite of old age and growing infirmities. His death at the ripe old age of 82 removes a stalwart from the social and cultural life of the city.

* * * * *

The late Mr. Narendranath Raye, Principal of the Ripon College, who got a First Class in English at the M.A. Examination from our College in 1894, was a veteran educationist and served for more than thirty years as a Professor of English in various colleges with conspicuous success. The late Mr. Jadu Nath Majumdar got a First Class First in Mathematics at the M.A. in the year 1897, and after a short tenure as a Professor in the Duff College, joined the Bar, and later entered the Bengal Civil Service and retired as a District and Sessions Judge in July, 1931. It is a matter for regret that he could not enjoy his wellearned rest for more than a year! The late Mr. Sasisekhar Bose got his B.A. degree in 1893 and was an Advocate of the High Court practising ordinarily at Alipore. He was also for some years a Municipal Commissioner of Calcutta, Chairman of the District Board, 24 Parganas, and a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council.

* * * * *

It is with the profoundest feelings of sorrow that we have to record the death of Master Kalyan Chandra Gupta of the First Year Arts Class who passed away after prolonged illness on the 12th January last. Kalyan was admitted to our College only in July last, but within the short period of six months that he was destined to be with us, he had endeared himself to all—students and teachers alike—by his charming manners and power of organisation. Kalyan has been taken away while yet in his teens with a career full of promise and we do not find adequate words of consolation for the disconsolate parents of our departed friend. If it is true that those whom the gods love die young, and if sorrow shared is sorrow relieved, let us have some consolation in the thought that he was the beloved of the gods and has therefore been so prematurely taken away, and let the parents and relations of the deceased know that his friends are taking steps to perpetuate his memory in the College in a suitable manner. Elsewhere

is published a short sketch of his life with a photograph. He is not lost, but gone before. May his soul rest in peace!

* * * * *

To look beyond the four walls of the College, we find that a great Internationalist has passed away in the figure of Monsieur Briand. Eleven times Prime Minister and twenty-five times Minister, he set up a record: he had a shift for every danger and emergency and had frequently been the 'Man of the Hour.' A tireless worker in the cause of peace, to whom peace was a passion, this illustrious 'Warrior of Peace' was awarded the Nobel Prize after his signing the Locarno Pact in 1925. The greatest French orator, the greatest diplomatic figure of the Post-War period, the proposer of the 'United States of Europe,' the 'Apostle of Peace,' M. Briand died after a long and crowded political career, and his loss will be Europe's not of France alone.

* * * * *

At least three of our Old Boys figure prominently in the New Year's Honours list which has given us great pleasure indeed! Sir Brojendralal Mitter, Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, has been made a K.C.S.I. The conferment of a Knighthood on Mr. Bipin Behari Ghosh, retired Judge of the High Court and acting Member of the Governor's Executive Council, comes as a fitting, though belated, recognition of his public services. Mr. Bijay Kumar Basu, sometime Mayor of Calcutta, and now a Member of the Council of State, has been the recipient of the title of C.I.E. Our respectful congratulations to each of them.

* * * * *

Professor Nalini Kanta Brahma has been admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the Calcutta University, for his thesis on the "Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana." Dr. Brahma had a uniformly brilliant career in the University, having stood First in the First Class both in the B.A. and the M.A. Examinations, and having been awarded a Premchand Roychand Scholarship in 1923. A quiet and unassuming gentleman, Dr. Brahma commands the unstinted love and admiration of his colleagues and pupils. We rejoice in his honour, and offer him our warmest congratulations.

We congratulate Mr. Nabagopal Das, B.A., one of our most brilliant former students on his success at the I.C.S. open competition held in London in August last. It is interesting to note that he was the only student from the Calcutta University who came out successful in the I.C.S. Examination last year. We have special reason to be gratified by his

success: he was one of the most regular contributors to our Magazine in recent years.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Tarak Nath Sen, M.A., a former Editor of this Magazine, who stood first in the First Class at the M.A. Examination last year, has been appointed a Lecturer in English at the Hooghly College. Mr. Sen had an exceptionally brilliant academic career all along, having stood first in all the University Examinations from the Matriculation upwards. We wish him equally brilliant success as a teacher.

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We extend a hearty welcome to Dr. M. Qudrat-i-Khuda who has been appointed to act as a Professor of Chemistry in the vacancy caused by the transfer of Prof. R. N. Sen to Krishnagar. Dr. Q. Khuda is an ex-student of this College; he passed the B.Sc. Examination with Honours in Chemistry and was First Class first in Chemistry at the M.Sc. Examination in 1924. He subsequently obtained the D.Sc. degree of the University of London and was working as a research scholar in our Chemical Laboratory when he was selected for the post. The University of Calcutta has recently awarded him a Premchand Roychand Scholarship and he has also been nominated by His Excellency the Chancellor as a Fellow of the University. Our sincere congratulations to Dr. Qudrat-i-Khuda on his advancement.

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There has been another important change in the Chemistry staff. Mr. Ahmed Hossein, a former student, has been appointed a Demonstrator in Chemistry in place of Mr. Sailendralal Mitra who has been transferred to Krishnagar. While congratulating Mr. Hossein on his appointment, we cannot help feeling that Mr. Mitra's transfer would be a serious loss to the College in general and the Chemistry department in particular. A most successful teacher in his subject, popular with his colleagues and pupils, Mr. Mitra had been connected with the College for more than twenty years.

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Turning to the Arts side, we understand Mr. Santosh Kumar Chatterjee, the Senior Professor of History, is going to retire from service on the 14th June next. One of the most brilliant students in History that the Calcutta University has produced, Professor Chatterjee has the reputation of being one of the finest teachers of History in the province. He had been with us for only 20 months, but even in this short period he won the goodwill and esteem of all members of the College. We bid him farewell with a heavy heart, and wish him long life, peace and happiness in his retirement.

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It is a matter for gratification to learn that the affairs of the College Athletic Club have after all attracted the notice of the authorities. We are happy to learn that the Treasurer is submitting a note to the Principal explaining the various abuses and suggesting a change in the constitution on proper lines. In these days of democracy, it is most undesirable that an oligarchic committee of 10 or 12, neither nominated nor elected on a popular basis, should administer funds to the extent of Rs. 4,500/- a year contributed by the students and the Government, without being really responsible to either. Expenditure of public money in such a way ought to be stopped once for all, and the Treasurer will earn the gratitude of all well-wishers of the College if he succeeds in his much-needed though difficult task of reformation.

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The College has applied for extension of affiliation in Civics, and we have every reason to believe that the affiliation sought for will be granted. This, in the words of the Principal, is expected to effect a substantial increase in the admissions to the I.A. Classes. We sincerely hope this expectation will be fulfilled, but we must confess that we are still afraid the admissions in general will continue to be as unsatisfactory in future as in past years unless a substantial reduction is made in the scale of fees charged here. We have for the last three years, at least, been repeatedly pointing out to the authorities the baneful effects of the enhanced fee rate that came into existence since 1926, and we need not dwell on them again. We merely draw the attention of the authorities to the financial condition of the guardians of our students at the present day. The landholding classes have been hard hit by the economic crisis, the mercantile communities have been sustaining severe losses, while the Government servants have had to submit to a 10 and 15 p.c. cut in their salaries. The condition of the average householder is deplorable. Under the circumstances it is idle to expect that the middle class gentlemen would have the same eagerness to have their sons educated at Presidency College as before, especially in view of the fact that the fees charged in this College are exactly double those charged in other first grade colleges in the city. A college for the well-to-do classes merely is not expected to hold its own in these days of keen competition, and we feel Presidency College by practically shutting its doors to the middle class students, will be heading for disaster. The Principal, we know, has been straining every nerve to stay the process of this steady decline; he has been trying his best to strengthen the staff and to make the tutorial system effective; he has already made the College tests a real preliminary to the University examinations by penalising failures and discouraging absence on medical certificates. But unfortunately

these do not go to the root of the matter. We feel the true remedy lies in immediately cutting down the fee-rate, say by 12½ p.c., by an Executive order before the commencement of the next session, and then after a year to go back to the pre-1926 days. Not till this is done is there any hope for the future of the College.

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The present arrangements in the Library leave much to be desired. We find from the College Information Book that "the Library rules are framed with a view to giving the utmost facility practicable for reading in the Library." But the closing of the Library at 4-30 p.m. on weekdays and at 2 p.m. on Saturdays does not provide this utmost facility. It is perhaps not altogether impracticable to keep the Library open up to 5-30 p.m. at least on all weekdays. This need is most pressing alike with the undergraduate students who really want to utilise the Library facilities to their utmost, as with the Post-graduate students whose main attraction for the College has hitherto been its Library. The Post-graduate classes are held generally from 12 to 4 p.m. and it is practically impossible for them to utilise the Library at Presidency College and attend the classes in the University Buildings at one and the same time. So this extension of time in keeping the Library open will remove a most keenly-felt want and we hope the authorities will realise that it will be undoubtedly a change for the better.

There is another defect in the Library system of our College which ought to engage the attention of the authorities. There is no Register in the Library in which readers may enter the names of books they desire to have added to the Library. Students have, as a matter of fact, no share in the purchase of books, though it is beyond dispute that books are bought more or less for their benefit. No doubt, all the books suggested by the students cannot be purchased for them, and there must be some selection by those in charge of buying books, out of this list; still, it would go a great way towards facilitating the requirements of the students. We hope we shall see such a Register lying on the Library table at no distant date.

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It is really a matter of regret that our Common Room does not supply us with any newspapers. The leading newspapers of the country as well as other highly useful foreign papers such as "The Observer," "The Morning Post," "The Manchester Guardian," "The Daily Herald," "The New Statesman and Nation" etc., may be kept on the Common Room tables to the great benefit of students. The absence of such newspapers from the Common Room of the Premier College cannot, we feel, be justified in any way; on the other hand, it may be emphatically asserted

that the introduction of such newspapers in the Common Room will greatly add to its dignity and utility as an institution in the College.

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It will appear from a report published elsewhere that the Afternoon Party in connexion with our Founder's Day this year was as much a success as in previous years; while the reunion meeting of past and present students in the Physics Theatre was a particularly useful item in the programme, as it gave an additional opportunity to our Old Boys to know all about our work during the past year and our pressing needs during the present year. The presence of the Hon'ble Minister of Education was also much appreciated by the students.

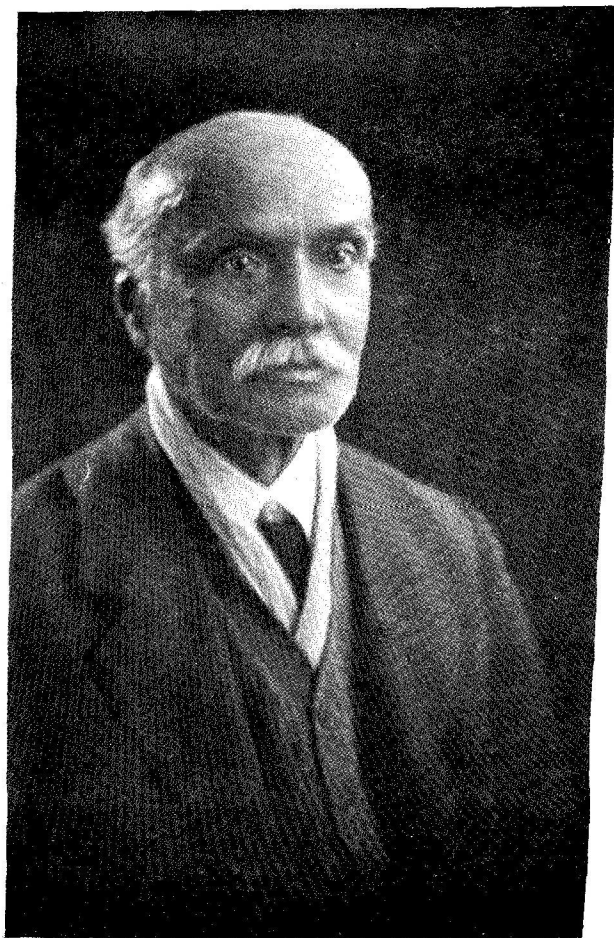
In this connexion a complaint has reached us that we do not invite *all* the old students to this anniversary function. We fully appreciate the complaint, but we may be permitted to point out that we are left in a helpless position in this matter by the fact that there is no Government contribution in aid of the expenses which are being met *entirely* by subscriptions raised from among students and the staff including the Principal. This enables us to provide for about 300 guests and 700 students. If it is remembered that there are at least 1500 Old Boys of Presidency College residing in Calcutta, it will be apparent that some discrimination has to be made in the matter of invitation. If the Old Boys' Association, inaugurated in January, 1925, had really come into existence as a living organisation, it would have been possible, with the assistance of that influential body, to remove this shortcoming in our present celebrations and make our Founders' Day a complete success. We hope our old students will realise how handicapped we are for want of funds.

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The Hon'ble Mr. Khawja Nazimuddin, C.I.E., Minister of Education, was in our midst on the Founders' Day, as the President of the meeting held at the Physics Theatre. He has asked us to possess our souls in patience and 'mark time till better days.' We have been marking time for the last five years. How long more we shall have to wait we do not know. Yet let Hope be our rallying point. Let Hope be our watchword; for in the words of the Hebrew prophet, "Brightness and beauty shall appear at the end, and shall not lie: if it make delay, wait for it, for it shall surely come, and shall not be slack."

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We think we shall be failing in our duty if we do not mention the great assistance that Mrs. Sen has been rendering to our Principal in giving new tone to the development of corporate life in this College. There has hardly been a College function that has not been graced by her presence. Her deep



THE LATE MR. H. M. PERCIVAL

sympathy with the students and her active participation in all their social activities are noteworthy features of the new regime. Our sincere thanks to Mrs. Sen for taking such a kind interest in our affairs.

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With the publication of this April number of the College Magazine, the present Editor's term of office expires. It has not been his good fortune to publish three issues this year owing to financial stringency and he has had to be content with two in accordance with the decision of the Governing Body. Never had the finances of the Magazine been so precarious as during the current session, and the selection of a decent Press with moderate charges was a problem that confronted the Editor ever since the beginning of the session. We have, however, succeeded in so arranging matters with the Proprietor of the Modern Art Press that we shall be able to publish three numbers from the next session.

The present Editor is one of those, the connexion of whose family with the College extends over three generations, and if he has sometimes expressed himself rather frankly, it is because he felt strongly, and wanted to acquaint the authorities with the facts and circumstances relating to the College from the students' point of view.

We do not use the language of conventional courtesy when we thank Principal B. M. Sen and Professor D. G. Chattoraj for allowing us unfettered discretion in the discharge of our duties. We are also beholden to Professors S. C. Majumdar and S. N. Maitra for help and guidance whenever sought. The Editor, finally, will remember with gratitude the help and sympathy he has all along received from his fellow students.

A NEW FRENCH HISTORY OF INDIA*

PROFESSOR U. N. GHOSHAL, M.A., PH.D.

IT is not too much to say that the important series of works on Oriental history, religion, literature and art which M. René Grousset, Conservator of the well-known Musée Guimet in Paris, has recently been giving out to the world, mark a new stage in the growing appreciation of Eastern civilization in Western lands. The author first made his mark as an unusually keen and gifted investigator of his subject in 1929 when he brought out his first notable undertaking *Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient* ("History of the Far East") in two volumes. In this work he dealt in a spirit of intelligent understanding and critical insight with the political history as well as the political and religious thought and the artistic achievement of three considerable lands of the Orient, viz., India, China and Indo-China. This has been closely followed by the publication in 1930 of the first two volumes of a remarkably comprehensive work called *Les Civilisations de l'Orient* ("The Civilisations of the East") relating to the civilizations of the Near and the Middle East (Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, Persia and Arabia) and those of India as well as further India. In the two remaining volumes the author proposes to review in turn the civilizations of China and Central Asia as well as those of Japan and Tibet. The whole work, when completed, will form not only what the author modestly claims for himself in the Preface to his second volume, an introduction to the arts of Asia, but also an Oriental *vade mecum* of artistic evolution treated with due relation to its political, cultural and literary backgrounds. As if this huge project was not enough for his powers, the author has very recently (1931) produced a substantial treatise called *Les philosophies indiennes* ("The Indian Philosophies") in two volumes, besides a popular work dealing with the spacious times of the T'ang dynasty in China and the Gupta emperors of Northern India ("In the footsteps of the Buddha," London 1931).

In the present paper I propose to consider the second volume above-mentioned of *Les Civilisations de l'Orient*, which is concerned with the civilization of India and its cultural offshoots. The key-note of the work is sounded by the author in the Introduction where he writes, "In reality India with its cultural dependencies is a world apart, one of the three or four hearths of thoughtful humanity. There have existed an Indian aesthetic and an Indian humanism equal in universal value to the Mediterranean æsthetics and humanism as well as the Chinese æsthetics and

**Les Civilisations de l'Orient*. Par M. René Grousset, Tome II—L'Inde. (Paris, 1930).

humanism." The remarkable breadth of outlook and range of human sympathies betrayed in these lines have enabled the author to appreciate (as few Western writers have appreciated) the best points of a civilization so alien to the Western standards. Nothing indeed shows the author's complete freedom from the classical bias than his whole-hearted and repeated testimony to the fundamentally indigenous character of most of the Indian schools of art in spite of undoubted borrowings from Western sources. Indeed it may be said of him that his training in the principles and canons of Western art has been attended with the singularly happy result of making him frequently draw instructive parallels and contrasts between the art productions of the East and of the West. The author's scrupulous desire to let the records tell their own tale is shown by his numerous and splendid illustrations, (their number in the present volume reaching the high figure of 246), many of which are borrowed from practically inaccessible sources. The same solicitude is displayed by his frequent quotations from the Buddhist and Brahminical sacred texts which breathe the ideas to which the artists sought to give expression. The author has been singularly successful in making his work interesting to the general reader as well as instructive to the specialist. While the former is drawn to him by the irresistible charm of his style, the latter finds ample food for reflection in his masterly analysis of the component elements of the different schools and exposition of their historical evolution.

A few extracts in translation will serve best to give the reader an idea of the spirit and contents of the original work. In connection with the legends of Buddha's life derived from the great storehouse of the 'Jatakas' the author writes (p. 74), "But these are only a few examples from thousands of this Asiatic Golden Legend, the most poetic, the most tender, the most moving that could be imagined. Nowhere is better marked the purely Indian sentiment of universal fraternity, of this fervour of humanity stretching to the animal and the plant. We are not surprised to find that such a literature inspired the tender naturalism of Sanchi and Ajanta." Regarding the development of the cult of Bodhisattvas the author observes (pp. 77-78), "It furnished to the Oriental genius the adorable themes, the motifs of love and consolation, a whole world of dreams of unsuspected aesthetic value, of new sources of the inner life, a mystic element for the loftiest souls. An immense hope traversed the Far East: no more the nearly Socratic wisdom of Buddha Sakyamuni but the certainty of a luminous hereafter,—'the Paradise of the Occident,' or the Earth of purity where after death all pure spirits will be born in the mystic lotus." Of the art of Asoka he writes (p. 84), "The Assyrio-Persian vigour and dignity are here combined with properly indigenous elements. The poetry of the 'Jatakas,' the Buddhistic

tenderness towards our brothers the animals have transformed the importations of antecedent Asia. The dour realism of Ashur has become a free naturalism of marvellous suppleness. And the art of India itself is found created. Compare the elephant on the capital of Sarnath, the easy gait of its enormous mass, the life which circulates in its quivering trunk: all the art of Ellora and of Mahabalipuram is already contained in this short relief."

As regards the art of Sanchi the author writes at the end of a long and appreciative criticism (p. 92), "But, as is natural, what constitutes the principal charm of Sanchi are the Jatakas, the 'previous lives' with their forest and animal themes so well adapted for the Indian genius..... What love of nature, what knowledge is here of floral and animal forms. As our cathedrals are encyclopaedias of stone, the gateways of Sanchi 'unfold before our eyes the marvellous poem of Indian nature, the veritable Book of the Jungle The Assyrian bas-reliefs appear to be very conventional, the bas-reliefs of the Greeks themselves run the risk of appearing lifeless before these scenes of delicate and tender naturalism Under the inspiration of the Jatakas the jungle has become a terrestrial paradise. In fine, the Buddhistic art translates less the ideal of renunciation and extinction which is the ideal of theoretical Buddhism than the most fresh, naïve and pagan love of life. Never even in classical Greece was expressed with so much success the innocent and spontaneous joy of life."

The author's illuminating remarks on the world-famed paintings of Ajanta are too long to be quoted. Only one small extract will suffice, (p. 142): "Finally when it is a question of materialising the ideal vision of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas Ajanta equals Mathura and Sarnath. The Indian idyll and the flowery jungle are there only to throw into better relief the figures of Bodhisattvas. Now these supernatural apparitions at Ajanta rank among the most moving images that have ever crossed man's dreams. Let us recall only the marvel of marvels, the great image of Bodhisattva in Cave I clothed in a transparent gauze, coiffeured with a mitre where the flowers of lotus and jasmine open in embossed gold, and holding in the right hand in a precious *mudra* a blue lotus: a figure which must be placed in the category of universal art by the side of the highest incarnations of the Sixtine, by the side of the most highly spiritual drawings of Leonardo da Vinci—I think designedly of Jesus Christ of the *Lord's Supper*."

It is, above all, in his appreciation of the unfamiliar Brahminical religious conceptions and artistic productions that the author's powers of artistic penetration are displayed to the highest advantage. With regard to the conception of Siva Nataraja which he characterises as one of the most philosophical ideas which Indian wisdom has transmitted to posterity he

writes (p. 108), "Perhaps in emerging from the Buddhistic poetry and morals so pure and so sweet that the heart attaches itself to them at the very first, one is a little disconcerted by the Hindu polytheism with its innumerable, luxuriant and contradictory forms. But here with philosophical Saivism the apparent fantasies are reduced to order and assume a metaphysical sense in its manner as noble, as elevated and perhaps more rich than that of Buddhism itself. Grand and profound doctrine which will recall to us some aspects of Nietzschean theories since it is likewise above good and evil, being superior to the one as to the other, and at once transcending optimism and pessimism, a pessimism heroic in certain respects because its deity dances in the charnel-house upon corpses, optimism also, optimism pitiless, inhuman or superhuman as we would like, because from so much destruction is born and perpetuated a formidable joy, the joy of matter eternally renewed."

Let me conclude this paper with the burning words which the author utters at the end of his estimate of Sivaite art (p. 231): "Thus India which before has presented us in its Buddhistic art with the sweetest demonstrations of tenderness, of Franciscanism, now presents us in its Saiva art with the most exalted lessons of strength, of serenity and of superhuman asceticism. Blessed forever be the sacred land to which humanity owes such enrichments."

ART AND MORALITY

MANMATHA NATH SIKDAR—*Fifth Year English.*

A STORM of controversy has raged and is still raging round the question whether Art has any relation to Morality.

In the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century many creeds and dogmas which had formerly been accepted and fondly believed in, were exploded by the spirit of rationalistic enquiry which GODWIN and his circle had awakened in England. The old theory that Art and Morality are indissolubly interwoven with one another received a rude shock when Oscar Wilde propounded the new doctrine—"The Sphere of Art and the Sphere of Ethics are absolutely distinct and separate."

Since then literateurs of countries like France and Russia have been labouring hard to divorce (by Art we mean Literature here) Literature from morality. Literature, they tell themselves, may well get on without

Morality; poetry has no need of moral ideas. According to them, to think that *Literature should consort with moral ideas is to think in a fashion patently academic.*

This notion of the complete severance of Art from Morality has been steadily gaining ground until to-day we are faced with a type of literature which has not only given the go-by to morality once for all but which also delights in discussing questions of sex in a manner far from artistic. In the name of realism such literature goes into the details of the lives of the outcasts, explains and analyses the secret vices of men, advocates almost as a sacred duty free love and universal polygamy. The authors of this type of literature are not at all ashamed to introduce into the circles of good wives and pure-minded girls, a heroine who boldly seeks out a man—any man—in order that she may have a child by him without the degradation of marrying him. Such indeed is the craze of these ultra-moderns for the so-called realism of Zola, that they do not at all hesitate to portray even the objectionable features of womankind for the delectation of their readers.

Especially has this virus of "sex" assailed our modern Bengali Literature. In monthly magazines and periodicals we see our Realists contributing articles and short stories in which both men and women are at equal liberty to love when they will and where they may. Polygamous purity is the new creed. Such love, in fact, so we are taught, constitutes the only true union.

These Realists, in thus depicting life as it is, forget one important fact that true realism is not a mere photography of actual life—which is not literature at all. The best realistic literature is that which unites the greatest quantity of Reality "with its completest transcendence."

The crux of the matter seems to lie in the false æsthetic notion that Art should always be for Art's sake. In other words Art should exist without reference to the Artist and the reader. This notion would have us believe that Art, properly speaking, should exist from sensation to sensation. It should be loved for its own sake and not for any positive benefit which it confers upon humanity. Such a theory evidently underestimates the noble function which Art has to perform in human life. If it is not the business of a great writer to teach virtue, do we not find it difficult to dismiss as mere illusion, the sense which so many of us have when we read poetry that it is good for us, that we are the better for it? Although it is not the avowed purpose of literature to preach Morality, yet after reading it do we not find ourselves wiser, better and happier beings than we were before.

Didactic poetry is really our abhorrence, yet not because it teaches but because it signally fails to teach; there is nothing to be learnt from it and

what we resent is its incompetence to teach. We hate poetry which has a design upon us, above all, when it has a moral design. We like literature to hit the mark but we do not like it to aim. Not that we are not teachers all of us more or less, but some of us teach better than others. The poet does it better than any one else, because he uses instruments of Art which are more subtle and effective than any others. The teaching of ordinary men or didactic writers is singularly wanting in that of which poetry or for the matter of that all works of Art are "all compact" namely, Imagination. Unless morality is irradiated by imagination, the inspiration that the bare facts of life furnish, renders literature dull and unlovely.

Another consideration also leads us to associate Art with Morality. What is the function of Art? Surely it is to serve human needs. It has deliberately elected to say things and having once made that choice it must say the thing that most matter. Can it therefore overlook Truth and Virtue—things that most matter to human beings?

Granting however for arguments' sake that Art must disclaim all taint of Morality, it cannot be gainsaid that by the very law of self-preservation Art must have to be interesting not to imaginary human abstractions but to men and women of flesh and blood with impulses and prepossessions. And of all human prepossessions the moral is the strongest and most absorbing. Our position will be clear from two homely examples. When we pronounce judgment upon two poems we usually say "I like the poem or I do not like the poem." What exactly we mean by the first judgment is this that the experience which the first poem gives me is one which I prize greatly and without which my life would be poorer. In other words, while I read the first poem I spend my time in a way which I like most. The second judgment means exactly the reverse of what the first does. To be sure, in judgments concerning the values inherent in an experience these values may be æsthetic, not moral; but the conclusion seems inescapable that such a judgment has a moral aspect inasmuch as it is a decision concerning the best living of life.

Thus far it is evident that Art has an intimate connection with Morality. We can without hesitation endorse Carlyle's view—"In an Artist worthy of that name the powers of the intellect are indissolubly interwoven with the moral feelings; and the exercise of his Art depends not more on the perfection of the one than of the other. The poet who does not feel nobly and justly will never permanently succeed in making others feel."

Art therefore can never be incompatible with Morality. As Gœthe says, "The beautiful is the good! the beautiful includes in it the good."

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE TARIFF

THE PROTECTIONISM OF OUR TIMES.

OF the thousand and one legacies left by the War, one which deserves a careful attention of the economist is the problem of the tariff. The postwar period raised prices, raised productivity, and it also raised the tariff in most European countries. In fact, one of the most significant phenomena in the world of commerce had been, during the last two decades, the steady growth of the protectionist sentiment among all peoples. Countries which had maintained liberal traditions in trade, forsook their time-worn path and came to cling to the apron-strings of protection ; countries which were protectionists even before the War, 'became more rigidly so, after it.

This movement towards tariff upheaval was born in the war-spirit. Even after the Versailles papers were signed, the feeling that each country should look after its own interests, and to nothing else, was not dead. This feeling, existing in some shape or other ever since the birth of history, had degenerated into the philosophy of selfishness in the battle-fields of France and Germany. After the War had ceased, no country could go back to the old way of things. They had learnt to distrust their neighbours and to think that their own interests clash with those of every other State. To this spirit—the spirit of selfish exclusiveness, the spirit of distrust—the post-war protectionism owes its origin more than to anything else.

But other factors there were that contributed to this significant growth of protectionism and tariff structure in Europe. The economic fabrics of all the countries had suffered revolutionary changes during the war. The normal industrial conditions were changed ; with the growth of demand for ammunitions and other war requirements, the industries had in some cases to be taken over, in others to be controlled. The normal course of production was kept in abeyance for five long years, and in the meantime each of the nations had tried to develop to the highest points the war industries. So, when, after the war, it became necessary to go back to the old conditions, the transformation was found to be by no means an easy process, and the authorities had to find ways and means to facilitate as much as possible the process. The tariff came again to the help and the nations took its advantage to the highest point possible.

There were other causes too, each of which partly accounted for the remarkable tariff upheaval. The high wages of the war period had to be maintained, and so industry had to be protected ; the capitalists must

retain intact the high profits they earned during the war, and so they demanded protection ; new commercial treaties were necessary, and so there must be a tariff as a basis from which to carry on negotiations ; the political resurrection of Germany must be crippled, and so there must be prohibitive rates on German goods. These are facts which give one a clear insight into the modes of thinking of the European people in our times.

To these must be added those cases of protection in which the primary consideration was the balancing of the budget. The War left the finances of most countries in a helpless condition. Any new source of revenue that could be thought of was tried, and the customs tariff was bound to play an important part in such a state of affairs. How far the tariff is effective in providing an economic benefit, when all other nations have raised tariff walls, is however a doubtful point. Nevertheless, the fact remains that whatever might have been the cause, Europe after the War was a Europe hedged by tariffs. Protection had become a necessary national policy on the continent, and one by one every nation made protection a hand-maiden of the economic system. And, in fact, free-trade soon was a lost theory in continental Europe.

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THE TALE OF A GENERATION.

The last of the free-trading countries has surrendered her colours. The history of this transformation is the history of a generation of agitation and slow progress. Ever since the repeal of the Corn-Laws, the growing free-trade tradition in England had not suffered a single break for more than half a century. Free trade and England's prosperity went hand in hand, and England stood before the world as the ideal of trade-liberation. This chapter of her commercial history is too glorious to need any recounting here, and we may carry ourselves straight to the beginning of the present century, when for the first time in many years, the English people found a protectionist propaganda going on in their land of liberalism.

The first breeze against the free-trade policy was perceptible towards the close of the last century. The realisation on the part of some observers that England's imports were increasing at a threateningly rapid rate, the depression of British agriculture during the years 1880—1900, said to have been, due to the tremendous pressure of foreign competition, the apparently obvious decline in industrial and commercial profits—all these factors turned the attention of some to the need for protection. Farrer Ecroyd launched a programme of ' fair trade ' ; and other mushroom agitations were also discernible in the midst of a deification of free trade.

But it was not until Joseph Chamberlin left Parliament on the tariff issue that the thinking element in Great Britain had found occasion to turn their eyes to the other side of free trade. The Tariff Reformers urged the immediate necessity of improving Britain's trade-balance—a balance which was on the wrong side for Britain for a long series of years. They attracted attention to the depressed state of England's agriculture and emphasized the urgency of giving an effective fillip to the cultivators. To them, England's decline was due to the 'disastrous policy' of free trade, and they ascribed the growth of other countries to their adoption of the protective system. The Tariff Reform League, avowedly declaring for protection, flooded the country with pamphlets and books in which they tried to convince the English people of the soundness of their arguments. The free traders, however, were not silent, and the newly established Free Trade Union and the Cobden Club did their best to counteract the influence of the Tariff Reform League.

Nothing substantial and tangible came out of the Reform propaganda. The mental inertia of the English people was too rigid to be disturbed by an agitation of a year or two. On the other hand, the Liberals, recovering from a long period of insignificance as a political power found their opportunity, and took upon themselves the honourable role of defending England's "sacred principles of free trade" and "pressed with telling effect to the working classes in behalf of cheap bread." The Liberals continued in power till the outbreak of the War, and the Tariff Reformers had lost their first innings. But if Chamberlain could not immediately impress upon the English people the need for a policy of protection-cum-preference, he succeeded in leaving behind a legacy of ideas which his sons, and ultimately the Conservative party, made their creed, for which they were determined to fight to success. Protection became the accepted principle of the Conservatives, and the Knight-errants of the Liberal party stood forth as the champion of liberation in trade.

The War however changed matters for both sides. Customs duties had to be levied on many articles—on some for purposes of revenue, on others to control the supply and production of munitions. But the protective element in the War duties cannot be mistaken. Indeed, Great Britain's protective policy as a conscious national programme had its origin in the War. Early in 1915, a Sub-Committee of the Board of Trade and Commercial Intelligence reported that almost all representatives of industrial concerns were asking for protection. This Sub-Committee was the first to recommend the imposition of "some widely spread import duties," and to suggest the introduction of an anti-dumping tariff. Much more important was the report of the Balfour Committee published in December, 1917,

and the importance becomes all the greater as the majority of the members of the Committee were free traders. They concluded that action should be taken on the lines of Canadian legislation to prevent dumping of foreign goods into England, that 'Key' industries should be protected at any cost, and that protection by customs duties or by any other form of state assistance should be given to those industries which were found "unable to maintain or develop themselves by reason of undue foreign competition, immediate adoption of measures for protecting the "Key" industries and provision for protection shows how far English thought during the War was obsessed by protectionist ideas; Chamberlain's creed of protection had become a creed for the people. The recommendations of the Balfour Committee did not go to any extreme point in protectionism; but it helped the cause of the growth of protectionist sentiment in England and marked another new departure in the attitude of the English public opinion.

In 1919, Sir Auckland Geddes, Minister of National Service and Resurrection, made an official declaration of the Government policy as regards Customs duties, and the proposals he put forward were meant to protect British industries against aggressive foreign competition. Two years later, the Committee of Ways and Means passed two resolutions urging the immediate adoption of measures for protecting the "Key" industries and for preventing dumping. These two resolutions formed the ground work for the bill introduced by Mr. Baldwin in the House of Commons in May, 1921, to provide for 'Safeguarding of industries.' The Safeguarding of Industries Act, as passed by Parliament, was divided into two parts. The first part provided for a duty of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. on the imports competing with the products of the 'Key' industries and the second part arranged for an imposition of an equal amount of duty on all goods in the case of which the Board of Trade would be satisfied that they are being sold in England at prices below cost of production.

The Safeguarding Act brought in a new stage in the tariff history of England. So long the Customs duties actually levied were, in paper and ink at least, meant to secure England against the exigencies of war condition. The present Act, on the contrary, was distinctly protective, and it signalled the triumph of the cause for which the protectionist element was fighting so long. The import duties imposed under this measure were not of a great substantive importance when they are seen in the background of the entire volume of British trade. But perhaps more important than the actual duties imposed is the policy which leads to the imposition. The wide powers given to the Board of Trade transformed it into some sort of a Tariff Commission, and from that time forward, British politics became fully saturated with the protective ideal.

The anti-dumping part of the Safeguarding Act did not find extensive application. During the three years that followed the passage of the Act, the second part was called into action only seven times. In fact, no country after the War was prosperous enough to be in a position to practise dumping on a large scale for a long period. It was because of this that in 1926, this part of the Act was abrogated and the first part was re-enacted as the Key Industries Act, to continue for a further period of ten years.*

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THE FAMILY TRIUMPH.

Things had stood at this level until recently: The Key Industries Act was still performing the function of safeguarding the 'Key' industries. The importance of these industries was small in the total volume of England's trade and industry, and no very particular effect was perceptible even in the protected industries themselves. The tariffists for sometime gave politics a rest and the acquisition of power by the Labour party in recent years accounted for the silence, at least on the official side regarding tariff schemes or proposals.

The present emergency however opened new field of action. England again became conscious of a recurrence of dumping. The Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act was hurried through Parliament. As a revenue measure, the horticultural imports were also subjected to an imposition of tariff duties. And to crown all, came last month the new tariff, passed by Parliament amidst " roars of cheers " confirming a protectionist policy with a 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty for the present.

Though the recent years have seen silence on the part of Government as regards fiscal change, academic discussions as to the propriety or impropriety of levying a protective duty, have not been absent. Many writers including Keynes, Robbins and Gregory have lent their views on the subject, and while Mr. Keynes suggested that a protective tariff may cure unemployment by creating an export surplus, the other two named have taken pains to show that a protective tariff would be an unwelcome policy for England. But, fortunately for Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Dr. Gregory does not represent the average Englishman of to-day. The English public now, as compared with 1903 or still later with 1923, are distinctly in favour of a protective tariff. Perhaps a real belief that

*The decision of the electorate at the polls in 1923, where the Conservatives stood for protection, shows that, in 1923, the whole of England was not prepared to adopt protection. But yet, the Conservatives were the most numerous single element in the new Parliament, and this clearly shows that a very great part of the British electorate were protectionist in ideals.

protection would do England good, perhaps a sympathy with the government in its troubles, perhaps a conviction that a tariff would reduce unemployment, or perhaps a jealousy at the prospering protectionism of France and the United States, explains why the Englishmen are so much in favour of Mr. Neville Chamberlain's proposals while their fathers had not even given the deserving attention to the proposals put forward by the illustrious father of to-day's hero of the Exchequer. The Englishmen to-day have learnt to think of the tariff as a necessity, of which they should not keep themselves deprived for long.

It is this that explains the "hushed silence" during Mr. Chamberlain's speech before the House of Commons, and its conclusion amidst "roars of cheers." It is this remarkable change in the average Englishman's mentality—neither the galleries nor the benches in the House of Commons represent more than that—that explains why the house was "crowded and animated" and why Mr. Chamberlain was greeted with a "storm of cheers" when from the same back-bench seat which his father had occupied thirty years ago, he looked about the house with the justifiable pride of a man who had won a family cause after years of tough fight. It was the same change of mentality which caused almost all newspapers to welcome the new tariff in a chorus of admirable leader-articles. Mr. Chamberlain has won his cause; he has won a nation too.

* * * * *

THE EXCHEQUER, THE POUND, OR THE PARTY?

Recently, an opinion has been expressed in many quarters that the tariff scheme of Mr. Chamberlain does not mark a protectionist departure—its main purpose is to provide revenue and to save the pound. It would be interesting to examine this contention in detail.

The present 'national' government took over charge, conscious of three great tasks they would be expected to perform as the nation's accredited trustees: these tasks were, to balance the budget, to bring back stability to the pound, and to correct the "unfavourable" trend in the balance of England's international payments. The first of these was fairly satisfactorily accomplished even before the tariff plans were made. England, this time, is going to have a budget which is the smallest since the War, and that budget is balanced. The passionate and fervent appeal for payment of income-tax instalments as early as possible bore fruit beyond expectation and her tax collections, on the whole, have been satisfactory. From the standpoint of the Exchequer there exists little justification for the imposition of a tariff; if at all a revenue was necessary, the purpose would have been better

accomplished by attacking such well-tried sources as cocoa, coffee, tea or sugar.

The other two items in the programme are connected with each other to some extent. The internal purchasing power of the pound is, as Mr. Chamberlain himself asserted, still twenty shillings. But it is the external purchasing power that matters. Conservative economic theory would urge that the very fact of depreciation of the sterling would, by stimulating exports and discouraging imports, adjust the balance of payments and bring the sterling back to its own level. But if it is found difficult to lay so much implicit trust on pure theory, attention may be drawn to the fact that even before the tariff was proposed, the pound remained fairly steady when the Bank of England could gather up sufficient resources to pay off nearly £30 millions of foreign debt. The pound was gradually recovering, largely on account of the actions of the Bank of England, and when the tariff proposals came, it may be asserted that the object of saving the pound was not present.

The only other objective which Mr. Chamberlain could have had is that of protection. And he does not want to hide his intention. Throughout his speech he had kept the aspect of trade and industry at the forefront. He referred to the fall in Britain's export trade, to the "enormous growth of trade restrictions all over the world, which had imposed tariff barriers on British trade." He distinctly and straightly asserted that the government "proposed, by a system of moderate protection, scientifically adjusted to industry and agriculture, to transfer to Britain's own factories and fields, works which were now done elsewhere." After this clear avowal of a protective policy, there should be no ground for contending that the new tariff has not a protective element in it. The *News Chronicle* described the policy as a "plunge into protection"; the *Daily Telegraph* found in the tariff "the foundations of a permanent policy"; the *Economist* discovered an attempt at "an exploitation of emergency, to perpetuate a party policy." Mr. Chamberlain has, we doubt not, played true to the nation, to the best of his belief, in an emergency; but this he has done only as subsidiary to his playing true to the creed of his father and his party.

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FROM HIGH TO HIGHER.

The scheme for protection as put forward by Mr. Chamberlain can be briefly described as follows:—From March 1, 1932, there will be levied on all goods imported into England a 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty, excluding, however, goods already dutiable and goods specially exempted, namely, wheat, meat, bacon, British-caught fish, raw wool and raw cotton. Provision is made for the establishment of a committee for giving "advice and

assistance " to the Treasury, with powers to recommend any additional duties, permanent or temporary, on any imported goods, which may appear to them " to be either articles of luxury, or articles of a kind which are being produced, or are likely within a reasonable time to be produced, in the United Kingdom." The Treasury may, upon receiving such recommendations, make a direct order—subject to Parliament's approval within four weeks—for additional duties to be enforced. Lastly, the Board of Trade is given power to impose retaliatory duties against countries discriminating against England.

The most significant part of the scheme is the power given to the Treasury to impose additional duties. Naturally, the duties would tend to go higher and higher up. It is idle to expect that to-day. When England's position of the sole champion of manufacture is definitely undermined, English industries would be able to flourish again to the same extent as they did before the War. The urge for protection, and the need for it will not cease to exist in near future, and so far as can now be predicted, the protective policy in England will continue to exist for some time to come. The tariff history of every protectionist country in the world shows that a protective policy once begun cannot readily be given up. The general tendency is always to go on raising the tariff wall. The history of the United States since the Civil War, and the history of Germany since the eighties of the last century amply prove that once protection is adopted, it is usually clung to with a religious zeal. There is no reason why it should be otherwise in England. Once the English people take up an idea, they generally stick to it unless a very severe crisis comes. They stuck to Free Trade for a century; they will, it is certain, stick to protection for quite a good long time to come.

But, will the tariff give England all she wants?

As a remedy against unemployment, the tariff can only help, as Mr. Robbins has recently pointed out, when it is raised every time there is a depression; and there must be a limit to such a process. The fact that the tariff *is in existence* is no more safeguard against unemployment than the existence of permanent state activities of other kinds. It is only its *coming into existence* that makes any difference. He further shows that a tariff in England would have a pernicious effect by increasing the cost of production of the export industries. It was on similar lines that Dr. Gregory in an addendum to the Report of the Macmillan Committee argued against the adoption of a tariff to correct monetary disequilibrium. While admitting that a tariff of ten per cent. *ad valorem* would mean a devaluation of about ten per cent. of the currency—permitting the "luxury of local inflation without incurring the disadvantages thereof," as Mr. Hawtrey would

and subsequent increase in imports without any accompanying increase in indebtedness. But such improvement can only be realised when the demand of the protectionist country for foreign articles is elastic and the demand of other countries for the exports from the protectionist country is inelastic. But things are by no means so in England. The greater part of her imports consists of agricultural produce, like foodstuff and raw materials, for which her demand is inelastic and her total imports cannot fall much in response to a rise in import prices. On the other hand, most of her exports have to face much competition from other industrial countries in the foreign markets, and there is practically no country which can be forced to go on buying English goods at any scale larger than the normal one. The talk about a gain to England in her barter terms of trade is apparently illusory, and we may conclude that so long as England's industry and production continue in the old line there is not much that the tariff can do towards improving the export trade.

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FAREWELL TO FREE TRADE.

The Free Trade doctrine in England was a doctrine of convenience. By the end of the third quarter of the last century England had become a full Free Trader and from that time onwards, the doctrines of trade liberation had the uppermost in England. The triumph of Free Trade was manifest in the enormous growth of her industries and commerce, in the rapid increase in her wealth and prosperity, in her ascent to the secure position of the most important trading nation in the world. No doubt her rapid growth was helped in by her advantages of location, by her excellent fleet of mercantile ships, by the existence of large markets for her products in the colonies and the dependencies, and by her early development of the factory system of production. But it has to be admitted that much also was due to her free imports of foodstuff and raw materials, and it was only because these could be imported free from any restraint, that her industries had a steady growth. The economic conditions, as they were at that time, could not but lead to the adoption of a free trade policy. The policy suited England and she worshipped the policy and achieved the desired end. Free Trade gave England prosperity; England in her turn gave to the Free Trade doctrine a permanent impress of supremacy as an ideal and as a realisable end.

And to-day, scarcely half a century later, England has turned protectionist. Her people, faced with immediate crisis, think that to-day it will be convenient for them to give up the "sacred principles of Free Trade" and take to the unholy path which the United States and Germany and

France had adopted long since, and upon which she had so long looked so detestingly. To-day, she thinks, Free Trade is no good to her, and she is going to the length of forsaking the manifold glories of the principle and policy which had been hers for so many years. Need has changed with time, and so has principle.*

B. D.

THE SKY-CHILD

(English translation of Satyendranath Dutt's Bengali poem "বর্ষা")

KALIPADA DAS GUPTA, B.A.

BEHOLD, the mad girl of the skies has awoke again to-day. Her rough, ash-dusted locks have covered the face of the Sky. She has, in a giddy mood, touched everything with her dirty hands, thus soiling all that was clean before.

She was standing on the north-eastern corner of the field, in a forest of big-branched 'Sal' trees, hidden under the mass of their foliage, when all on a sudden she smiled, and running towards yonder flight of homing pigeons playfully made their feathers drip with water.

She claps her hands in a peal of thunder and then looks back with a smile. She sends our blood all surging and dancing through the heart. One moment she scares us and the next the whole sky glitters with her smiles of joy.

The peacock cries, 'who is she? her beauty makes me frantic with desire.' The frogs announce 'there is nothing to fear' and the world lapses into silence. But the mad girl smiles and weeps, all to herself, while her tear-drops rain like kisses, on the sleeping limbs of the Earth.

The mantle of what enchantress has she blown here to-day? She had it whirled by the East wind and then struck me a soft blow with it. I started and found my face and eyes concealed under a heap of the sleep-inducing pollen-grains of 'Keya' blossoms and the sweet fragrance of the 'Kadam' flower.

To-day the stormy winds have made our little lunatic wild with a spirit of revelry. She has spread her torn and tattered carpet before the august assembly of the Sun and the Moon. Singing to herself and recking of nothing, she has charmed the world, silenced the Day and lulled the Night asleep.

*A discussion of the retaliatory and preferential aspects of the new tariff would have been appropriate; so also would have been a somewhat fuller treatment of that unwelcome 'monstrous baby of dumping,' whose depredations have irritated even Mr. Lloyd George. But it is feared that neither space, nor patience would permit such digressions.

FOREIGN PILGRIMS IN ANCIENT INDIA

SAURINDRA NATH ROY—*Fifth Year History.*

IN the following pages an attempt has been made to give in brief a sketch of eventful lives of some of the foreign travellers who came to ancient India actuated by the motives of highest idealism. Their accounts are interesting to us not only because they help us to visualise the picture of contemporary Hindu society through the gathering mists of the centuries, not only because the very fact of their coming presupposes India's cultural superiority over her neighbours but also because they reveal to us how in those days people, in pursuance of their ideals, could be reckless of dangers and unmindful of political revolutions. They testify to the high imaginative propensities and glowing romantic susceptibilities of the people of the East. The people would not die for the king but they could die for their ideal. The accounts, moreover, acquaint our mind with "the mighty tide of thought and action which was ever rolling on its wondrous course in gloom and in brightness, far away from the scenes of battlefields, of Senate halls and of kings' ante-chambers"—the great religious and cultural movements, which from its place of birth had all on a sudden spread over the whole of the Orient like conflagration—and created a new world—a world that cared very little for things that were of earth. But an additional romantic colour has been lent to the tales by the fact that the journeys to and from India whether by sea or by land in the days, when means of communication were not highly developed, were necessarily beset with unsurpassable difficulties. The tales are therefore not lacking in episodes of thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes upon which it will not be possible for us to dwell. We are here mainly concerned with the life and doing of these pilgrims and their bequests to civilisation.

The introduction of Buddhism in China was a momentous event in the history of Asia. From that date pilgrims began to come to India in large numbers, and carry Indian culture and civilisation beyond its frontiers. The date has been ordinarily fixed at about 67 A.D., the date of the arrival of the first Indian Sramanas Kâsyapa Mâtanga and Bârana who had been invited by the Chinese Emperor Ming-ti. But if we rely on traditions, it may be shown that even before that date cultural connections had existed between India and other Asiatic countries. By the end of the 1st Century A.D., the University of Lo-yang had become a centre of Indian culture and learning in China and under its auspices many scholars undertook visits to India with a view to learn the Bodhi-dharma in the original. The first of the Chinese pilgrims who deserves

our notice, is Dharma-raksa. During his short stay in India he learnt no less than 30 languages and translated no less than 211 Sanskrit works. It was he who introduced the cult of Kuyan-tshe-yun or Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva into China. Towards the beginning of the 4th Century A.D., Fo-tu-chao or Buddha Dan, a famous Tantric Hindu native of Kucha in Central Asia, came to Kashmir to study Indian canonical literature.

Of Fa-hien, the author of Fo-ku-ki, we need only say that he was the first foreigner to undertake a travel into the heart of India and to leave a detailed account of his experiences. In his introduction to the *Travels of Fa-hien*, Giles observes: "It is simply bewildering to conceive how deeply the Buddhistic influence touched the mind of the Chinese. We cannot too well measure the eagerness which they showed for getting a first-hand knowledge of the canonical works." This ambition was realised at length in the successful attempt of Fa-hien to travel India. The publication of his travels was an event of supreme importance to the Chinese history. It stirred the imagination of the youthful monks and inspired them to visit the birthplace of the Teacher, tiding over the insurmountable difficulties that confronted them on the way. The work has other interests for us: it supplies us with a vivid description of the extent of Indian influence in Central Asia, among the Vigurs, in the provinces surrounding the Kasyapa lake and in Afghanistan.

About 404 A.D., a batch of 14 youths led by Tse-chi-mong started for the Holy land. The awe-inspiring sight of the snow-clad Himalayas was enough to persuade 9 of this group to leave their project. But the rest, after a persistent journey, reached Pataliputra where they collected a large number of manuscripts of Nivvâna Sutta and other works. About the same time Tsi-hui, a native of Lian-chu in China, led another batch of pilgrims to the Holy land. In Khotan they found the Fifth Anniversary in progress—the same ceremony which had been noticed in Kashghar by Fa-hien. On this memorable occasion the monks of the neighbourhood assembled together and recited and explained religious texts to the audience. Tsi-hui and his friends, who were well-versed in Sanskrit, translated the original texts as they heard them from the monks and when the work was published in China it was accorded a very hearty welcome. They were followed by a Central Asiatic Sramana, Dharma Ksepa by name, who was well-versed both in Mahayâna and in Hinayâna doctrines. Then followed the travels of Sun-yun and Hurei-Seng (A.D. 518). Their narrative is very short, and, though interesting in many respects, is not of much historical importance.

The 7th Century form a glowing epoch both in Indian and in Chinese history. It was the period when Harshavardhana, the last of the three

great Buddhist monarchs built up a new empire in India. In China—the accession of the Tang dynasty ushered in the Augustan age of Chinese Buddhist Literature. The age was marked by renascent activities both in the domain of culture and of religion and a fresh enthusiasm was awakened among the Chinese for the renewal of their connection with the Holy land. We have first the famous Yuan-chwung, the author of “Si-yu-ki,” an indispensable text-book for students of Indian history. Soon after his death came It-sing who landed at Tamralipti about 673 A.D. He studied in Nālandā, collected some 400 Sanskrit texts amounting to 500,000 slokas. On his way home he stayed for some time in Sri-bhoga in Sumātra where he further continued his studies and translations of scriptures. About 695 A.D., he was in company with 9 Indian scholars (Sikṣānanda, Isvara and others) engaged in the interpretation of Buddhistic works. The result of his lifelong activities and researches was 56 translations in 230 volumes and 5 original works.

It-sing, in one of his works titled “The Lives of Saints who visited the Western Land,” recorded the accounts of no less than 60 Buddhist monks most of whom started for India towards the end of 7th Century A.D. But for this valuable work it would have been impossible for us to form a true idea of the religious condition of the Orient about this time. It is not desirable to dwell on the life and doings of each of these pilgrims in detail. Therefore we shall confine our narrative only to a few of the more important names.

A very striking fact regarding these pilgrims is that nearly all of them, with a very few exceptions, have got a Sanskritic designation in addition to their native names. This cannot be explained except by a pre-supposition of the existence of a very intimate relation between the Indians and the foreigners.

First of all comes in importance the monk Yuen-Tchao who got the Sanskritic name Prakāsa-mati. Born in the province of Tai in China, he separated himself from all worldly concerns when a mere boy and took up the vow of monasticism. In order to acquaint himself with the wealth of the original texts of the Holy literature, he made a profound study of Sanskrit. While studying the Divine Lore, he frequently saw before his mind the charming picture of the Jetavana Bihāra in Srāvastī.* At last

*This famous garden was given to Buddha by Anātha Pindika, a wealthy Sreshtin of Srāvastī. Buddha passed his time there for many a year surrounded by his disciples and many of his religious teachings were first preached there. This explains why Jetavana was held so sacred by the monks. The ruins of both Srāvastī and Jetavana have recently been discovered by the Archæological Department and provisions have been made for their preservation.

one day he bade farewell to his motherland and set out for India with a 'khakh-khur' (a staff used by monks—the Chinese equivalent for Danda) as his only companion. He crossed an endless desert and unsurpassable mountain ranges and fell into the hands of robbers that infested the way more than once, though each time a means of escape was supplied to him by Providence. Before reaching Tibet he had thus to pass through a series of thrilling adventures which, though interesting, are for obvious reasons omitted here. About this time a Chinese princess was reigning in Tibet, a woman of great importance both in the Chinese and Tibetan history. The princess whose name was Wenat-cheng was approached by Strong San-gampo, the Tibetan Charlemagne with an offer of marriage. The Chinese Emperor having declined, a war between the two potentates became inevitable. Though the Emperor came out victorious yet about 641 A.D. he granted the wishes of the Tibetan king. The marriage between the Buddhist princess and the barbarian chief was productive of remarkable results and still the name of the princess enshrined in the memory of the Tibetans as the founder of the Buddhist religion in Tibet. It was the peculiar fortune of Yuen-Tchao to be graced with the hospitality of this illustrious lady with whose help it was possible for him to arrive safely at Jalandhar. During his stay of four years here, he availed himself of every opportunity to study Sanskrit Buddhist literature and was accorded hearty welcomes everywhere he went. Next he proceeded to Gayâ Mahâbodhi Bihâra where also he resided for four years. The Bihâra contained a beautiful image of Maitreya Bodhisattva, a figure executed with rare artistic excellence which appeared almost life-like to the pilgrim. Afterwards he learnt Yoga-sâstra, Madhyamaka-sâstra and Sata-sâstra from Jinaprabha and Ratna Simha during his three years' sojourn at Nâlandâbihâra. He then crossed the Ganges and was received by King Cham-pu. He resided for 3 years at the monastery of Tsin-che.* Meanwhile Wang-hiuen-tse, the Chinese Ambassador, who, according to Vincent Smith, visited India just after Harshavardhana's death, had on his return communicated to the Emperor the wonderful personality, character and scholarship of Prakâsamati. The Emperor showed eagerness to bring the monk back to China and sent Wang-hiuen-tse himself for this task. Prakâsamati accordingly reached the Chinese Capital Lo-yang after a prolonged journey through Nepal and Tibet. At the University of Lo-yang he set about explaining the real purport of the Buddhist doctrines to the local monks who had requested him to translate the Sarvâstivâda

*We are still in the dark about the location of Tsin-che as well as of the principality ruled by King Champu. Of course, the life of Prajñavarman places it in Ngan Mu-lu-po, but where this Ngan Mu-lu-po is, we equally do not know.

Vinaya. The Emperor after receiving him cordially sent him back again to Kashmir to invite Ayusman Lokâyata or Lokâditya, an Utkala Brahmin to the Chinese Court. This Brahmin possessed, according to a tradition, the power to impart immortality. On the way Prakâsamati met Lokâyata who had already started for the Imperial Court in company with a Chinese ambassador. Having learnt the request of the Emperor from Prakâsamati Lokâyata with the rest of the party went to Luo-cha where the king of Ladaka* received them with hospitality. Lokâyata reached the Chinese Court about 668 A.D. where he was honoured with high titles from the Emperor, but Prakâsamati stayed at the royal palace of Ladaka for four years more after which he went to the Deccan in search of some efficacious medicines. On his return he visited Bajrâsana and Nâlandâ. But it was not his destiny to return to his native country. His several attempts to leave India either through Kapisha or through Nepal was frustrated by the Arabs and the Tibetans respectively. He awaited for a long period of time and died a broken-hearted man. The greatest ambition of his life, namely, the propagation of Dharma among his own countrymen was not fulfilled.

The second pilgrim who draws our attention is Sri-deva (Tao-hi) who like Prakâsamati entered India by the land-route and visited Mahâbodhi Nâlandâ, Kushinâra and other places associated with the names of the Buddhas. The king of Ngan, Meu-lan-po received him cordially. He was a man of high literary accomplishments, and studied Mahâyâna literature in Nâlanda and Vinayapata in Subhavana-bihara near Kushinâra and also became well-versed in Sabda-vidya.

Chang-min, the third pilgrim to draw our attention, had no Sanskrit names. Unlike two of his predecessors he started for India by the sea-route with a view to copy the whole of the Prajnâ Sastra. He first reached Ho-ling (the western part of Java) and thence came to Mo-louo-yu or Palembang in a boat. There he boarded on a merchant-man bound for India. Just before the Indian coast came in view the ship fell a victim to a violent storm. The passengers, young and old, actuated by the instinct of self-preservation rushed into a boat that had been launched on the water. But the Bhiksu and his disciples chose to sacrifice their own lives in order to save others' and remained seated on the deck, with their face turned towards the west, in the direction of the Holy land, buried in deep meditation till the ship was swallowed up by the sea-waves. Though the monk could not see the Holy land, yet his glorious name found a place

*This should be located between Kapisa and Gandhâra, *i.e.*, a little north-west of modern Peshawar.

among the list of saints prepared by It-sing for the noble deed he had done.

Tang-cheng was known to the world by his Sanskrit name Mahâ Yâna Pradipa. He reached Dvaravati* in company with his parents when a mere boy. On his return to China he acquainted himself with the Scripture and after a short period he came to the island of Tâmbapanni† by sea, whence he proceeded to Tâmrâlipti through the Deccan. At the mouth of a Deccan river his boat was attacked by a gang of robbers. It was with great difficulty that he made good his escape and arrived at Tâmrâlipti. He made a profound study of Sanskrit here during his sojourn of 12 years in the Po-luo-ho monastery. The famous pilgrim It-sing made his acquaintance with him here. He visited Nâlandâ, Bodh Gayâ Vaisali, Kushinâra and died in Kushinâra Pari-nirvâna Mandir.

Samgha Varman was a monk of Samarkhand. The curious fact that he had no other name except the Sanskritic one makes the case strong for the theory that Sanskritic culture had left its mark all over Central Asia and had made an intellectual conquest even of far off Samarkhand.‡ Samghavarman went to China in his boyhood and came to India (656-60 A.D.) with the Chinese Ambassador. At Bodh Gaya he made a splendid arrangement for a great feast near Bajrasana to entertain the monks of the Buddhist school. A large religious council sat for 7 days and 7 nights and the place became illuminated with an array of light. The whole expense was borne by Samghavarman himself. He erected stone statues of the Buddha and Avalokitesvara at the foot of a large Asoka tree in a garden adjacent to Mahabodhi-Mandira. On his return to China he was sent to Kiao-che (Hamoy) by the Emperor. A famine having broken out in Kiao-che at this time Samgha Varman dedicated his life to the cause of relieving the starving millions. During the period of his sojourn he had so impressed the people with the largeness of his heart that they conferred on him the glorious title of Bodhisattva. He died here at the age of 60.

Hui-Luen or Prajnavarman, the Korean monk, resided for a period of 10 years in the Tsin-che monastery in the country of Ngan Mu-lu-po. At the time It-sing wrote about him he was residing in the monastery of Kien-

*Dvâravati should not be confused with the Dvâraka of the Puranas. It has been identified with Prome by Mr. Takakasu. But according to some scholar it should be properly located in Siam.

†Tâmbapanni is the Pâli equivalent for Tamraparni and is the same as the Taprobane of the classical writers. It is another name of the Island of Simhala.

‡The doubts that once had existed as to the spread of Indian culture in Central Asia has been now fairly removed by the recent researches of Sir Aurel Stein.

tu-lu-chung-cha or Gandhara-Chanda. Itsing describes this monastery in the following way:—"This temple was built as a residence house for the native Bhiksus by the Turushka people a long time ago. It came to stand at the top of all the Indian monasteries owing to its possession of vast wealth and its superiority in the matter of organisation. The monks who came to India from the land of Turushka live in this temple and are regarded as Bihara Svamist."*

In connection with the description of the Turushka temple It-sing dwells on a detailed account of the monasteries conducted by foreign religious societies. Every Foreign Society had its own monastery in India where every pilgrim coming from the country concerned found a ready asylum. He mentions the name of Guna Charita built by the Kapisian people, the Kiu-lukia† monastery founded by the king of Kulutia, Bajrasana Mahabodhi Mandira constructed by the king of Ceylon and others. The Chinese monastery established by king Sri-Gupta was, at the time of It-sing, in ruins. These accounts are of much historical importance as they have indicated a link between the Indian and Foreign Monastic Societies as late as Seventh Century A.D.

The next pilgrim who deserves our notice is Tan-ko-ang who entered India by the sea-route. He visited Ho-li-ki-lou, a country which, according to It-sing, formed the easternmost boundary of Eastern India, and consequently identical with East Bengal. But if the Chinese maps are to be believed, it should be located somewhere between Tamralipti and Utkala.

The history of another Chinese pilgrim was communicated to It-sing by a monk of Ho-li-ki-lou. He was over fifty years of age, was highly respected by the local king and was made by him the supreme priest of a Bihara. He had a very rich collection of religious works and images of gods. He died in India of illness and was cremated there.

The pilgrim Tsen-chi entered Samatata by sea. The local king Ho-lu-Po-cha (Harshabhatta) was a great devotee and worshipper of the Holy Triratna. Everyday he built a hundred thousand images with his own hands, read a hundred thousand slokas from the Prajna Paramita Sutra and gave away a hundred thousand flowers. His daily gifts heaped up at one place could approach the height of a full-grown man. Often he undertook processions along the city-streets. On such occasions the chariot of Avalokitesvara

*The Bihara Svamins are the terms by which the authorities of Indian monasteries were known. They had the fullest power over the treasury, the property and the constitution of the monastery whereas the ordinary monks had no voice in the working of the system.

†Kiu-lu-kia has been located by It-sing in the Far South. Perhaps it is identical with Kal-kai, the Pandya capital, situated at the mouth of the Tambapanni river.

was placed in the front next the image of Buddha, the monks, the bond of Sravakas and last of all the king himself. The fame of the king's generosity had spread all over India. The monk was much impressed by his devotion to religion.

Tsen-chi was followed by Prajnâdeva who, after a long sea-voyage, reached Harikela. During his voyage he had stopped for a short while at Sumatra, Malay Nagapatam and Ceylon. Spending a year at Harikela he went to Nâlanda accompanied by another Chinese monk. On their arrival at Mahâbodhi they were received by the local king who bestowed them the honourable office of Bihârasvâmins. The importance of the office, says It-sing, is to be judged from the smallness of the number of such officials in India, and from the fact that it was very difficult to procure it. During his sojourn in India Yu-hing (i.e., Pranjâdeva) made himself proficient not only in the canonical lore but also in Yoga-sastra, Kosa-sastra and Hetu-vidya.

These are the names and there are many such recorded by It-sing and other Chinese scholars. As late as the Eleventh Century we hear of pilgrims coming to India. But by that time their number had dwindled. Was there a lull in their enthusiasm? The answer is in the negative. With the advent of aggressive Islam, which swept away everything before it all over Asia by force of arms, travels to foreign countries were rendered practically impossible. All the world was panic-stricken,—a dark cloud had gathered in the horizon and no one knew whether the sun was ever to smile.

But the saints and the scholars had done their work. For centuries together they had carried the message of peace and love all over the world. If the world did not listen to their voice it was not their fault. True, they lived in a world of make-believe and tried to rise above the ordinary level of humanity, but that they were concerned with improving the lot of those who lived in the outside world is an incontrovertible fact of history. But history has not done full justice to them, because historians in their disproportionate fondness for the dramatic and the intricate seldom see the simple or even the obvious things because they are too simple and obvious. It is time that historians should turn their eyes to the world "that was blossoming and fading" far away from the scenes of conflagration of the battlefield and the excitements of platform, in the thousand vales of the mighty river of "Thought and Action."

"It is the reproach of historians" wrote John Richard Green, "that they have too often turned history into a mere record of the butchery of men by their fellowmen." But even Green found himself compelled to give up too many of his pages to stories of slaughters and *coup de etats*. When, however, one comes to study India's Past his attention is not so much

directed towards the scenes in battlefields and king's ante-chambers, as "the mighty tide of thought and action which was ever rolling on its wondrous course in gloom and in brightness,—in the thousand remote valleys of which a whole world of existence was blossoming and fading, whether the famous victory was won or lost." Wars of the kings were no concern of the populace, and if Megasthenes is to be believed, "the people never took part in war; at the very time when a battle was going on, the neighbouring cultivators might be seen quietly pursuing their work unmolested." When we consider this fact, we may form a just estimate of the great and mysterious forces which had such a hold upon the mind of the people and which drew men from all directions,—from lands far off and near, within India, the birth-place of the great cultural and spiritual movements. The study of the lives of the saints and scholars, who came to India, actuated by the motives of highest idealism, is then the only way by which we can have a true idea of the greatness of India's Past. With this object in view, we attempt here a brief narrative of the doings of some of those other worldly-minded pilgrims who have so long been neglected by history. It will not perhaps be out of place to note that their stories are not without other interests, India was not easily accessible to foreigners, and every attempt to approach it was necessarily attended with dangers and difficulties—a fact which has lent a colour of romance to the accounts of the travellers.

AFTER SCHOOLS

The vacuity and the emptiness,
 The lack of confidence,
 The frozen fields of fantasy
 Oppressing the deadened sense,

 The sky one drab grey of clouds,
 Unhurrying, unceasing rain,
 No core of living consciousness,
 Quickening the heavy brain,

 A torpor of body and of heart,
 A palsy of the soul,
 Under an ocean's continuous dumb
 Monotonous roll.

HUMAYUN KABIR.

THE PROBLEM OF WORLD-PEACE

SIVAPRASAD MITRA—*Fifth Year Economics.*

THOSE who live by the sword perish by the sword" is a wise maxim, the truth of which Europe discovered to her cost in 1914-18. Before the War, the supremacy of the world lay in Europe; the Great Powers of Europe together ruled the world. Then the War came; for a greater or less share of this world-supremacy, the Powers fought with one another. The War is now over and Europe sees with surprise that the mastery of the world, which was the grand prize before the contestants, is slowly slipping away from European grasp. In the words of H. G. Wells, "Europe falls more and more under the financial domination of America and loses her grip on Asia and North Africa. The days of European world predominance seem to be drawing to their close."

All this has led to serious thought not only in Europe but also outside Europe. If war has ceased to be a source of gain and has become a positive loss then why go to war? This is the question which politically minded men, all over the world, are asking themselves.

War has always meant a definite loss to a country—a loss in man-power together with a loss in economic power and in modern warfare this loss has been increased a thousandfold. The loss in man-power cannot be truly measured by taking into account merely the total numbers of the dead and the wounded. We must also consider the fact that those who figure in this list constitute the very flower of the country's youth and manhood—only efficient and able-bodied men go to war and of these it is the ablest and the bravest who take the greatest risk and have the greatest chance to fall first. This is a great evil for the present as it is the better part of a country's population which perishes; but it is probably a greater evil for the future. Because the next generation springs from those who are left behind and the country's best blood which is sacrificed leaves no proportionate issue after—a result which is diametrically opposed to the fundamental teachings of Eugenics for it is from the worse bloods from which posterity flows. That this biological backsliding is no myth is proved by actual experience—statistics show that the 25 years of Revolutionary War left the height of the Frenchman shortened by about 2 inches.

With this loss in man-power there goes a loss in economic power. War requires money—to prosecute a war a state has got to take away from the people a large part of their wealth through taxes and loans. A part of this wealth comes from potential expenditure but generally the larger part comes

from potential capital—and all this wealth is wasted in what is economically, at least, a completely unproductive undertaking. The Great War wasted so much capital that at present industries are suffering from a scarcity of long-term loans and investments necessary to re-organise and put them on their feet again—and according to Prof. Keynes this is one of the principal causes of the post-war depression. Further a war tends to divert the economic activities in definite directions in order to suit military needs, so that when the war is over, the whole economic structure of the country is found to be out of equilibrium. During the Great War, there was all over the world a disproportionate development of the heavy industries to supply the munitions of war. But with the cessation of the war, the demand fell off and as a result we see heavy industries all over the world struggling under a wave of long-continued depression.

This double loss in man-power and economic power has been the price of war in all ages. But now-a-days this loss is almost approaching the dimensions of national suicide. For a modern army is not, as in the past, a small band of more or less professional soldiers; it now consists of the whole able-bodied manhood of the country—for we are in the days of nationalism and conscription. And, moreover, science is placing within man's grasp increasingly potent means of destruction. A modern war is not fought with bows and arrows or swords and lances but with bombs and shells of high explosive, poison and disease germs thrown by long-range artillery or by aeroplanes. And lastly in a modern war the civil population becomes a special target of attack. To some extent the aim is to terrorise the enemy but there are more solid reasons behind. In a modern war the military activities in the trenches must be supported by non-military activities behind the trenches—the activities of the nurses, of the doctors, and above all, the well-ordered activity of a whole economic community which alone can supply the state with the money, the materials and munitions wherewith to carry on the war. A modern state requires a solid economic foundation to support the military superstructure—it is commonly said that in war it is the longest purse which wins; hence if the economic foundation can be shattered the whole military superstructure will automatically collapse. Episodes in the last war like the aerial bombardment of London show the attempts made in this direction. But in the last war the attack on the civil population did not reach any great dimensions, partly because of the lack of means wherewith to attack, partly because of the lack of a clear recognition of the necessity of the attack. But in the next Great War, as Tosh has repeatedly pointed out, the first objective will be a fierce mass attack upon the lives, the morale, the property and the nerve centres of organisation of the peoples as distinct from the armies. And the efficiency and the striking range of

aeroplanes have already increased so much and are increasing so swiftly—recent tests in England, France and America showed that nothing could ward off a thorough air-attack—that it would be nothing surprising, if in a future war, the principal centres of a country are laid in ruins in a few hours or at best a few days of concentrated air-attack.

All this helps to bring home to the mind the almost suicidal nature of modern warfare. Between equals, war has forever ceased to be a source of national gain; and a modern war can rarely be a war between unequals, because of the principle of balance of power and of the political alliances between groups of states. A strong power cannot fight a weak power without, as a rule, directly involving other powers in war—the Great War which later embraced half the world began with Austria's attempt to coerce Serbia.

But the loss that results from war cannot be truly measured if we consider only the loss in men and money that is undergone during a period of actual warfare; we have also to include the loss that is undergone in a period of our so-called peace. This armed peace with us is only a cessation of hostilities—it is a period which is free from actual war but fully devoted to preparations for the next war. It is employed in piling up armaments. The loss thus suffered in a time of peace is quite heavy. The amount of economic loss can be gauged by a reference to the expenditures of the principal countries on armaments. They form such a heavy proportion of the total expenditures of these countries, and the proportion has increased since the war and is still increasing, that a successful termination of the present Disarmament conference would mean a tremendous relief to most, probably to all governments. There is certainly in times of peace no loss in man-power corresponding to the loss sustained in a period of war, but there is a loss in the sense that the men who are trained as soldiers receive a training which tends to make killing machines at the expense of their better nature.

This terribly destructive nature of modern warfare, together with the fact that it will become more and more so in future with the progress of science, is the steadiest and the most powerful force that is making for the end of war and the establishment of peace. In fact, the position has grown to be so acute that it has been epigrammatically said that either mankind must end war or war must end mankind. Man's scientific and technical efficiency has been increasing at a terribly rapid pace—he is acquiring increasingly greater powers of destruction. But his moral and religious efficiency has failed to develop proportionately, even if it has not actually declined. But there is nothing so dangerous as power without the capacity to use it properly. And unless man's moral nature develops proportionately there is every reason to fear that he will perish under the weight of his own discoveries and inventions.

describe it—he pointed out that such a policy would be unable to remove the fundamental defect which is complained of, unless it was constantly adjusted to meet the changes in the situation. Moreover, the spurious equilibrium resulting from a tariff may open the door for a series of new disequilibria. Dr. Gregory is also doubtful of the so-called “spirit of enterprise,” which, it is urged, a protective duty will stimulate; all it can do is to bring about a temporary boom in British industry. Further, the indirect effects have to be considered: “foreign goods excluded from the British market do not simply disappear; they reappear in the guise of increased foreign competition in neutral markets where the English carry on trade.”

This last one is a question of importance. By far the most important cause of England's industrial decline in recent years is due to the loss of her foreign market. The ever-increasing competition of highly industrialised Central Europe, the surrender of the Eastern trade to Japan, and the repercussions of the boycott movement in India have conspired to bring about a marked and distinct depression in England's export trade. It was the export trade on which the industries of England lived, and so long as the present alignment of her industries continue, she must aim at improving her markets abroad.

But, as Dr. Gregory has pointed out, the effect of the tariff will be to intensify competition in the foreign markets, since those goods which are excluded by the duties are sure to find way to the market where they can be sold at a greater advantage. Thus the loss which England has sustained as regards her export trade will be all the more magnified; it will falsify her expectations of making good her lost export account.

And while this is likely to be the pernicious effect on the recovery of her export trade, there may be another injurious effect in the form of a change in the demand schedule of foreigners for English goods. The articles which would be prevented by the English tariff from entering into England will go to other foreign markets. The increased supply in those foreign centres would mean a cheapening of price, which would lead the consumers there to buy more of those goods. This cannot but have an indirect harmful effect on their demand for British goods, as they would have less left to buy them for. This is sure to mean a fresh set-back to the improvement of England's export trade.*

Nor can England hope to gain much from a favourable movement in her barter terms of trade. It cannot be denied that protective duties often help to improve the barter terms of trade of a country, by causing specie-flow

*It should be noted that this fear has, to a considerable extent, been belied by the depreciation of the pound—an event which has made British products cheap in foreign markets.

But though this suicidal nature of modern war is the greatest force making for its end, it is not the only one. Under the forces released by the Industrial Revolution, the world is fast becoming a unity—a single economic whole whose very nature is violated by war, or anything approaching it, between its component parts. And the greater the industrialisation of world in scope and intensity, the stronger would grow the economic bonds that bind the various countries together and so the steadier the resistance offered to war between them.

The Industrial Revolution has put an end to the agricultural economy of old in which the village or a small group of neighbouring villages formed the self-sufficing economic unit. To-day, no country, not to speak of village, forms a self-sufficing economic unit; there is only one such unit to-day—the whole world, of which the various countries form only mutually inter-dependent parts. The economic welfare of a modern industrialised country is bound intimately with other countries for they offer mutual markets to one another for the buying and selling of commodities—agricultural and manufactured—and for the borrowing and lending of capital. As a result of this economic inter-dependence, it is to the interest of a country to maintain friendly relations with another country which offers markets to it or to which it offers markets, as well as to see that peace is maintained between any such country with which it has economic relations and a third country. In other words, it has not only to maintain peace itself but to see that peace is maintained by others amongst themselves. If this is not done, the markets would be closed temporarily or permanently, and the result would be a great disturbance in the economic structure and equilibrium of the country, if the closing of markets is temporary, and a fall in wealth and prosperity *i.e.*, in the standard of living if the closing is permanent. A glance at current events supplies us with illustrations—a partial closing of the Indian market has meant heavy unemployment in England, a partial closing of the Chinese market has, before December last, brought on a loss of about 10 millions sterling to the Japanese Business community. As Mr. Thomas said, one cannot force one's goods on unwilling customers at the point of the bayonet—if you have to buy or to sell under competitive world-conditions you must have not only peace but also friendly relations with other countries. And it is those nations which are industrially the most developed, which have the greatest need of foreign markets—Afganisthan can live isolated from the world but not England. Further, it is those nations which are industrially the most developed and so have to depend most on foreign goodwill, are the nations which are the greatest and most powerful from the military standpoint. Paradoxically, therefore, we may say, that the greater a

nation's power for war, the greater its need for peace. In fact, even a possibility of war goes against modern economic forces. For the fullest play to these forces would mean the most complete and thorough-going development of territorial division of labour, of specialisation between country and country, of international trade and finance. But this complete economic interdependence would go against military sufficiency. For in case of a war, there is a great risk that not only foreign markets to sell in, shall be closed but also foreign markets to buy from, shall be stopped. And if the country had been accustomed to satisfy any of its essential needs from foreign sources, the stopping of these sources would spell disaster. We have only to turn to England to appreciate the truth of this remark. If the German submarine blockade had succeeded in 1917, history would have been written differently. And the Allied blockade of Germany was a potent cause of Germany's ultimate collapse. To take *another example, before the War Germany had a practical monopoly in the dye-industry*—it was quite in harmony with the fundamental principles of International Trade for her productive efficiency in this industry was greater than that of her competitors. But when the War came the Allies found themselves at a great disadvantage for the dye-industry is intimately connected with the manufacture of explosives. Hence a country has got to order its economic structure in time of peace with a special eye to its military needs and the last War has given a great impetus to this kind of "protection for military purposes" all over the world. The result of such protection, as a knowledge of the basic principles of International Trade will bring home to anyone, is that the total productivity of the world as a whole, as well, of the constituent countries, is lessened.

Besides these economic forces some cultural forces are also making for peace. There is growing in the public mind all over the civilized world an increasing aversion to war as such—the average man is feeling more and more disgusted and morally guilty at the murder and bloodshed which is another name for war. This change is largely due to freely disseminated education which has brought home to the common man, and not merely to an Asoka or a Titus, the cultural influences of literature and art, of science and philosophy and, above all, of religion. Further, the superstition of "the chosen people destined to inherit the earth" which made ancient races regard foreigners as "barbarians," "Philistines," "Mlechhas" or "Kafers" to kill whom was not only not a sin but a positive act of virtue, has grown weak to-day. Not that it is completely dead—one has only to look to the pre-war cults of the superior "Teuton" or the superior "Anglo-Saxon" fostered with so much assiduity and falsification of history in Germany and Great Britain, to realise that the "chosen people"

complex is still there. But it is much less strong than before and becoming more and more weak. This change also is to be largely ascribed to education. To some extent it has been due to the increasing contact between nationals of different countries through developing trade, widespread travelling, international sports and so on. It is said that the Great War made the British and French peoples know each other so intimately as to lessen the chances of a future war between them quite materially. To some extent also this is due to something like a developing world culture like a developing world-economy. In the realm of science, theoretical and applied, it is the world and not the nation which is the cultural unit. And in respect of other branches of human culture a similar tendency is there. Already we speak of a common Western culture—of Western literature, of Western philosophy, of Western painting. And in time we should be able to substitute "world" for "Western" and speak of a world culture. All these forces are making war more and more repulsive—as Wells has remarked "the officers and soldiers, during the last War, felt scared at the strangeness of their own proceedings." Add to this the fact that modern warfare makes a tremendous demand on a man's nerves—in fact a modern soldier requires not so much physical muscle and heavy body as strong nerves and iron endurance—and we can understand the tragic and almost appalling mental reaction to war in the mind of the modern soldier that has been portrayed so pitilessly in modern war books like "Journey's End" or "All Quiet on the Western Front."

Such are, broadly speaking, the forces that are working to replace a world of war by a world of peace. They rise partly from the heavy demands that modern warfare makes both in men and money, partly from modern economic forces which are thwarted by war, partly from the greater culture and refinement of the human mind that is violated by war. But war is not a freak of Nature; it is as old as man. Obviously an institution, so permanent and so deep-seated must have its roots deep down in the very nature of man, in the very foundations of society. Now what are these forces that lie behind war?

(To be continued.)

THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM OF INDIA

SACHINDRA NATH DAS GUPTA—*Fifth Year Economics.*

THE problem of what linguistic order should prevail in India has recently assumed something more than a mere theoretical interest owing to the active advocacy of the Congress for making Hindi the " Rāstra-Bhāsa " of India. What exact degree of pre-eminence is hereby proposed to be given to Hindi is not known. Opinions indeed vary from making Hindi even the medium of all education, excepting the very elementary, to making it only the language in which the Central Government should conduct its business. We will first examine the arguments that are generally advanced in favour of the choice of Hindi for this extraordinary honour and will then see whether such extraordinary elevation of any one language is at all necessary.

Hindi is generally believed to have unchallengeable support from the argument of comparative numerical strengths; and the principle of numbers being the bed-rock of democracy the claims of Hindi are apparently uncontestable. The supposed numerical superiority of Hindi is however a mere illusion. It will no doubt be pointed out at once that the census of 1921 returns 97 millions as speaking Hindi (or W. Hindi as it is called in the Census), which means about 30 p.c. of the Indian population, whereas Bengali, the language next to it in numerical strength, counts only 49 millions or 15 p.c. But the same census returns the number of persons speaking ' Bihari ' as 7,331 only! One wonders how the census had the cheek seriously to put forth such numbers. The Linguistic Survey of India revising the returns scientifically gives about 34 millions to Bihari. Similarly the Census figure for " Eastern Hindi " is about a million and a half (1,399,528), whereas the revised figure of the Linguistic Survey is more than 22 millions. Making corrections for these and some other minor errors, the Survey arrives at 41 millions and some thousand as the true number of persons speaking Hindi. This is much less than the number of persons speaking Bengali.

Perhaps it will be answered that the real mistake of the Census was not in returning so few persons as speaking Bihari and Eastern Hindi, but in regarding these as separate languages at all. But, however, much it may wound feelings in certain quarters, the scientific student of language must say in clear unequivocal terms that the languages which are used in the homes of Bihar and of the eastern districts of the U. P. as also of the north-eastern part of the C. P., far from being the same as the language used in the markets of Delhi, are not even sisters but only distant

cousins of the same. We will make a rather long quotation from the Linguistic Survey of India: "While the Bihari and Hindi groups of dialects are widely distinct languages, each has its congeners of similar origin: that is to say, Bengali is much more nearly related to, and much more like, the Bihari dialects than they are to the Hindi dialects; and, *vice versa*, Panjabi is much more nearly related to and like the Hindi dialects than they are to Bihari. It, therefore, follows as a necessary logical sequence that if Bengali and Panjabi are to be considered as languages independent of the Bihari and Hindi groups of dialects respectively, much more must these Bihari and Hindi groups of dialects be considered as languages independent among themselves and of each other." It may be remembered also in this connection that the Maithil script used in North Behar is essentially the same as the Bengali script. So much for Bihari. As regards Eastern Hindi, the name may suggest that it is a dialect of Hindi; but in reality it is intermediate in nature between the Eastern Group (including Bengali, Bihari, Assamese and Oriya) and the Central Group (comprising Hindi, Panjabi, Rajasthani, Gujrati etc.) of modern Indo-Aryan vernaculars.

The arguments that are made in favour of "Hindusthani" generally ignore the difference between Hindi and Urdu. It is all right to contend that the difference consists mainly in the script employed and the literary vocabulary and style, and that there is hardly any parallel difference in the everyday language of the common people. But the records of the Government will require some script indispensably and the functions of Government must be carried on through one chaste language or the other. It will, therefore, be merely shutting our eyes to pitfalls ahead, if for any reason we hush up the issue of Hindi *vs.* Urdu by saying that these are but two different names of the same language and that the one language of which these are two names is to be enthroned as the state language of India.

One argument that has been made in favour of Hindi is that it can be learnt with the smallest effort by the generality of Indians. Responsible men in high positions have made this assertion. This is an absolutely baseless notion. We may take for granted that a man can learn a language that is not his own with a relative ease in proportion to the affinity which it has with his own mother-tongue. We do not know if it has been demonstrated in any quarters that Hindi has got such an affinity with the generality of Indian vernaculars as none other of our Indian vernaculars has got. So far as we know the contrary is more true: for the Eastern Group of Indo-Aryan languages, comprising Bengali, Bihari, Oriya and Assamese counts more than 95 millions, while the Central Group, comprising

Hindí, Urdu, Panjabí, Gujrati, Bhili, Kandeshi, and Rajasthani counts not even 82 millions. As for the other groups the North-Western, comprising Láhndá or Western Panjabí and Sindhi and the Southern comprising Máhráttí are more akin to Bengali than to Hindí being of the same sub-branch, namely the outer, as Bengali. These two groups together count 28 millions, while the Páhárí Group which belongs to the same sub-branch as Hindí and its fellows of the Central Group, namely the Inner, counts only about 2 millions.

We thus see that the arguments that are generally made in favour of making Hindusthaní the "Rástra-Bhása" of India really go against it and in favour of Bengali. But we do not for a moment suggest that Bengali should for this reason be invested with the same pre-eminence as is proposed by some people to Hindí. The reason is that in view of the close similarity of our Indian languages in origin, structure, vocabulary and literary tradition, specially the last two, we fear that if any one of our vernaculars—Hindí or Bengali—be extraordinarily elevated over the others, it will not from its position of pre-eminence find it very difficult to assimilate or at least to squeeze out from any literary or cultural existence all or at least some of the other vernaculars. It may be argued that such a result would only be too welcome in a land so hopelessly torn between thousands of conflicting interests—Híndu vs. Muhammadan, Sikh vs. Muhammadan, Depressed Class vs. Bhadrálok, Native Princes vs. British India and so forth. The impatient nationalist may well cry out for absolute levelling down all differences, religious, social, political and linguistic. But the real and the only desirable remedy of the situation is not the substitution of a dull uniformity in place of the existing wealth of diversity, but the removal from differences of all sorts of the element of exploitation or of obstruction of the legitimate freedom of action of individuals, and the promotion of a spirit of mutual respect, goodwill and toleration. It will be seen that there is no place in such a scheme for the extraordinary elevation of one particular language and the relegation of the others to a position of third-rate importance. In considering, therefore, the linguistic order that we should establish in India, the object should constantly be before our eyes of maintaining as much equality of the languages as possible.

What, then, is the exact arrangement that we advocate? We shall first deal with the Provincial Governments, then with the Central Government, then with imperial and foreign relations, and last of all with education.

The administration of India is now sought to be federalised and, parallel to that, a new system of provinces is being sought to be

introduced, which will be based on the language principle, qualified of course by financial, economic and geographical limitations. In such provinces, nothing can be more fitting or more desirable than that the administration of any particular province be carried out in its own particular language.

One apparent difficulty to the above scheme is presented by the possible existence in some or all provinces of linguistic minorities of sufficient numerical strength to claim attention. This will be the case in a province which has in the population of its frontier districts a considerable admixture of the neighbouring people. The proportion of such a minority may be great in the particular district in which it occurs, but is bound to be small when the population of the whole province is considered. Hence while primary education, and possibly also, when the minority is large enough, secondary education, may be provided for it in its own language and administrative business concerning only the particular villages in which it lives may be allowed to be done in its own language, no provision can be made for its recognition when the general administration of the whole province is concerned. The case will be different where a people speaking a particular language are not numerous enough to be able to bear the burdens of the status of a separate province and have consequently to be tagged on to an area speaking a different language. This will, for example, be the case with the Assamese of Assam, who are and must remain a linguistic minority in a province predominantly Bengali-speaking. Similarly the Malayalam-speaking people may have to remain tagged on to the Tamils and the Gujratis may find it profitable not to press for separation from Mahārāstra. Linguistic minorities of this latter type deserve special attention when the particular language concerned has any claims to a literary or cultural existence. For while a people having to itself a separate provincial government around which it can rally may without any serious risk to its language and culture allow outlying portions of it which cannot for some reason be incorporated with its province to remain under linguistic handicaps, a people which has no province to itself and must share one province with a stronger neighbour cannot, if it has any love for its continued existence as a separate people, allow its language to be neglected by the provincial government concerned. For this reason, to fix our attention to a particular case, we would rather like that the business of the Government of Assam were done in Assamese *only* than that it were done in Bengali *only*. But we like still more that it be done in neither language *exclusively* but that part of the administrative business which applies exclusively to the Assamese or to the Bengali zone be done in the Assamese or the Bengali language, and that that part of the governmental

business which, like the work of the Legislative Council, applies to no one area exclusively, be done in both language. Speeches for example, in the Council should be allowed to be delivered in either language. Similar remarks apply to languages similarly situated. Languages, of course, which like Tulu or Khasi count but very few speakers, have no literary or cultural existence and are of interest only to the philologist, cannot make an argument from the treatment extended to Assamese or Guzerati. This is a rational limit to the rational principle of equal status for all languages.

Now to come to the Central Government. Absolute equality of all languages is here evidently an absurdity; for, that would repeat the history of Babel. Although in the administrative sphere some degree of equality may be realisable, in the main we must here moderate our principle of equality with the principle of practicability. This does not, however, mean that in the centre one language must reign. That would invest the favoured language with too much power. If we cannot secure equality for all languages, we must at least secure them safety. This can be done only by maintaining at the centre a fight for predominance between two languages. This will prevent either of them from rising to a menacing pre-eminence, and so the other languages will be safe.

Two types of objection may be made to this scheme. The first is that such an arrangement will be unworkable. No one will deny that other things remaining the same a unilingual assembly is better than a bilingual one. But the fact is that, as we have pointed out, other things do not remain the same. As to the practicability of the scheme *nothing* can enlighten us better than the experience of other countries similarly situated. Let us, therefore, turn our eyes to Canada, South Africa and Switzerland. The act of Parliament uniting Upper and Lower Canada, 1840 provided:—

“XLI. And be it enacted, that from and after the said reunion of the said two provinces (all business and records) of the said Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, shall be in the *English language only*.”

But the blunder that was here committed in unifying enthusiasm was very soon remedied. The British North America Act, 1867 reads:—

“133. *Either the English or the French language* may be used by any person in the debates of the Houses of the Parliament of Canada and of the Houses of the Legislature of Quebec; and both these languages shall be used in the respective records and journals of those Houses; and either of those languages may be used by any person or in any pleading or process in or issuing from any court of Canada established under this act, and in or from all or any of the courts of Quebec.

The acts of the Parliament of Canada and of the Legislature of Quebec shall be printed and published in both those languages." The tackling of the language situation in South Africa is similar. The Act of Parliament establishing the Constitution of the Union of South Africa, 1909, provides:—

"137. *Both the English and Dutch languages* shall be official languages of the Union and shall be treated on a footing of equality and possess and enjoy equal freedom rights and privileges; and all records, journals and proceedings of Parliament shall be kept in both languages, and all bills, acts and notices of general public importance or interest issued by the Government of the Union shall be in both languages."

The Swiss Constitution also provides for absolute equality between French, German and Italian. These multiplied instances prove to the hilt that a unilingual assembly is not the only possibility in practical politics.

The second objection is that if a bilingual Assembly is practicable, why not a trilingual one (and the case of Switzerland strengthens this argument); and if three languages are practicable why not four, and so on *ad infinitum*, until we have at the centre the Babel that we sought to avoid? The reply to such an objection is obvious. As we add to the list of languages prevailing at the centre, there is some advantage gained (but a more and more diminishing quantity) owing to the augmented safety of the generality of our vernaculars, and some increased disadvantage (a more and more increasing quantity) owing to increased mutual unintelligibility. It is a question more or less of opinion (though, like other questions of opinion, not altogether severed from questions of fact and reasoning) at what point exactly the increased advantage and disadvantage counterbalance. Personally, we are of opinion that three languages, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu, are not much worse or much better than two languages Bengali and Hindi or Urdu. But we are definitely opposed to any further increase of the list, specially in view of the fact that while these three languages are more or less on a parity in numerical strength, the language that comes fourth on this test, counts barely half as many, and the others not even so much. If we decide on a bilingual Assembly, we have the rather difficult and delicate task of choosing between Hindi and Urdu. Urdu literature has undoubtedly made much more progress than Hindi. But the Urdu script does not demand the same praise. In the end, perhaps, one will decide in favour of Urdu, hoping and praying at the same time that our Urdu-speaking brethren may see their way to accept some script which the generality of Indians will find it easy to master.

In the conduct of Imperial and Foreign relations, we will of course find it best to use the English language. This will be a fitting recognition of

the status of English in the Empire and in the world at large. This aspect of the language-problem is quite uncontroversial and does not require any lengthy discussion.

Last of all we will discuss the question of the organisation of Indian education. From the spirit in which we have tackled the language problem so far, our answer to this question will be evident. As far as possible, every distinct linguistic group ought to have its own University which will teach in its own language. Knowledge of some language other than the particular provincial one may be made essential for Matriculation. This will promote mutual understanding and will break down linguistic barriers to cultural communication without endangering the continued existence of any language. Knowledge of English may be made essential for the M. A. degree and optional for the B. A., all encouragement being given to students to learn it. This will keep us in communication with world-culture and world-thought. Our vernaculars will, of course, have to be considerably enriched by translations from English and other foreign languages as also by original works, before they can be media of higher education. But the Nizam's Government have shown us that such an ideal is not incapable of realisation; say in fifty years. There will, of course, have to be a transition-period which will see a steady improvement of our vernaculars and, side by side with this, a steady improvement in their status in University education. There will of course be some linguistic groups which, owing to the deficiency of their numerical strength, cannot afford to have University education in their own language. They will have to choose some other language for such education, having in their own language only primary and secondary education.

The objection may be made that the arrangement we have proposed will lead to the cultural dismemberment of our Indian people and to the isolation of India from world-thought and world-culture. But to our mind, and most people will agree with us in this, the provisions we have made against such dangers are quite sufficient, specially in view of the important part which translation plays in modern world-communication.

We think we have dealt with most aspects of the language-problem that concern public policy. We submit our conclusions to the consideration of our readers basing our claim on the right of every individual to be heard, even though he may differ from great men.

THE UNITED STATES OF INDIA *

THE constitutional reforms of India are being threshed out through commissions, committees and conferences. The future structure—as a completed whole—is still in the darkness and will remain so until it emerges out as an act of Parliament; but, some important fragments of the structure, are being talked over, during the last few years, from different angles of view—both in and outside India. But, the pity of it is that we have not yet been able to find out some workable unanimity on any of these important topics. We have discussed and discussed but all our discussions inevitably end in a fiasco and we disperse with a resolution to continue the discussions at a later period.

Probably, there was no other subject on which unanimity seemed more practicable than on the question of “Federation.” In the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference, 1930, the Princes, in a body, declared their willingness to join the Federation, in the immediate future. It seemed as if federation of British India with Indian India, was shortly going to be an accomplished fact. The British Indian delegates pledged themselves for federation and the British Government admitted an “All India Federation” as the basis of the future constitution of India. The basis is still there but no sufficient advancement has been made in the direction of making it a reality. The enthusiasm of the Princes, seems to have got a set-back ; some of them have definitely announced themselves to be practically hostile to the idea of an “All India Federation.” The Second Session of the Round Table Conference marked a gradually declining interest, amongst the Princes, in the idea of a Federation even in spite of Mahatma Gandhi’s full concurrence with the idea. We also find some traces of revolt against the idea, even amongst some of the prominent British Indian delegates. The obstruction of some of the Princes seems to be formidable but it is understood that an attempt is being made to find an agreed solution amongst the Princes in the forthcoming Session of the Chamber of Princes.

All this is, no doubt, good ; it would have been better if we could have found out an agreed solution by this time. The difficulties are no doubt formidable ; but the will to overcome them ought to have been no less formidable. United India is, no doubt, more desired than British India and Indian India as at present ; but, the union of the Native States means various complicated problems, the solution of which might well tax the

*This expression was used by the Maharaja of Alwar in the speech delivered by him in the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference, 1930.

ingenuous brains of the constitutionalists. But, we must be determined to face the obstacles in a way which will make the path to an agreed solution, free from the conflicting interests and prejudices of the parties concerned.

The Princes would enter the "Federation" on two distinct conditions, viz., (a) the scrupulous observance of their "Treaty right" and (b) non-interference in their internal sovereignty. Now, Section 33 of the Government of India Act vests the function of the agent of the Paramount Power in its relations with the Princes in the Governor-General in Council. This presents an obstacle in the path of an approach towards a federal solution; for, as the Simon Commission put it, "it would be extremely difficult to conceive of a federal association between units over some of which a responsible federal government claims to exercise rights of paramountcy." Hence, it was that the Butler Committee recommended that the Viceroy and not the Governor-General in Council should, in future, be the agent of the Paramount Power in its relations with the Princes. This fact was emphasised by H. H. the Maharaja of Bikanere in the Federal Structure Committee with moderation but vehemence. To quote him, "The Princes could not agree to their becoming or even to their subjects becoming British subjects by anything arising or resulting from federation": "The Prince's relations are with the Crown": "The Viceroy and not the Governor-General should, in future, deal with certain personal and dynastic matters."

But, what are to be the component elements of the "Federation"? On the one side, we have British India—the Governor's Provinces with responsible government and on the other, we have the Indian States—some big but many small and unimportant, all with autocratic government. The problem is to reconcile these conflicting areas and interests into a harmonious federal government. Two solutions present themselves: (a) union between British India as a whole, i.e., as at present and Indian India as a whole or (b) the union of all the Provinces and the States—each individually—the smaller States being represented through some system of grouping. The second alternative seems to be more desired as the Princes have announced themselves not to federate with "a British India as it is at present as a solid unit with a unitary government" but only to federate with "a federated British India;"* and, the path towards that goal lies through Provincial autonomy or as the Simon Commission put it "Each Province should be, as far as possible, mistress in her own house." The units of federation should then be—(1) a series of Provinces

*Nawab of Bhopal—Federal Structure Committee.

each with its legislature and its ministry responsible to the legislature and (2) a series of Indian states or groups of states—autonomously governed so far as their internal affairs are concerned. And over the whole, would be the representative of the British Crown, as Viceroy in relation to the Indian States and Governor-General in relation to British India.

The plea of non-interference in their internal affairs means that the Princes cannot be asked "to change their traditional forms of government for one which British India might consider to be good."* The States would come in, as they are, whatever their individual forms of government; and their individual forms of government are mostly personal, but the Provinces of British India will have responsible government. Hence arises a formidable obstacle in the way to a federal union as we have units with widely varying methods of internal government. But, as the Simon Commission put it, "Variety in this respect is sometimes overstated. The constituent members of the old German Federation were not all internally governed in the same way; indeed, they presented between them, almost every variety of constitutional structure. The analogy of the League of Nations itself, imperfect as the analogy is, is sufficient to show that States will—widely differing forms of government may none the less—unite for common purposes and evolve a central organisation for matters of common concern."

The discussions in the Federal Structure Committee have revealed the fact that apart from subjects which are purely federal in character, there are some subjects which are central but not federal, i.e., these affect the whole of British India but not the states. This division led Diwan Bahadur Mudaliyar to advocate a federal administration for the British Provinces with respect to these subjects. "I agree," he says, "that the goal should be the disappearance of this class of central subjects, but as a transitional measure, there is bound to be this Provincial federation or British India federation inside the All-India federation." Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayer says, "I take the view that in civil and criminal law and company and commercial law, it would not be wise to forget the need of a co-ordinating authority at the centre so far as British India is concerned, just as there is at the present moment," but "the central subjects will disappear and they all might become federal subjects." But, the Legal Sub-Committee of the Federal Structure Committee say, "The provincial legislature should have a wide power of legislation as regards civil and criminal law for provincial purposes. The problem is to reconcile uniformity with diversity: and the solution seems to be to admit these central subjects as

*Federal India—By Haksar and Panikar.

federal subjects but also to give the Provincial legislatures a concurrent power of legislation except as regards those matters which are necessarily the concern of the central authority, i.e., laws relating to international obligations ; but, in the case of a conflict between the central and the provincial legislatures, the former would prevail. " It would be necessary to include a provision that any Provincial Act relating to these subjects, which is repugnant to a Federal Act, is, to the extent of the repugnancy, to be void."* This mechanism will, I think, do away with the necessity of an inner federation within the All-India federation.

The method of distribution of powers between the Central and Federal Government on the one hand and the State and Provincial Governments on the other, is of twofold character: the constitution of America vests some specific subjects in the federal government and the " residuary " in the State Government ; but the constitution of Canada vests some specific subjects in the State Governments and the ' residuary ' in the Central Government. India will have to adopt that system which is most suitable to her peculiar circumstances. " The ideal to be aimed at," said the Late Sir M. Shafi, " is that while all matters of common concern to the whole of India, should be under the control of the federal government, all the rest should vest in the constituent units—the autonomous states of British India and the Indian States of Indian India." Had it been a federation of British India only Canadian system would have been better ; for, " in British India, there is a long tradition of an ordinary central authority with wide powers over the provincial governments."† But, the admission of the states into the federation alters the whole atmosphere. The Princes must safeguard their internal sovereignty and one of the best safeguards that they have been able to make out, is to vest the ' residuary ' powers in the constituent units and not in the federal government ; as Sir Ramaswami Ayer says, " We must see that their internal sovereignty is unaffected except to the extent to which such sovereignty is voluntarily surrendered by them for the common benefit and for common purposes to the federation." Lord Sankey enunciated a sound principle in the Federal Structure Committee—" The more you make provision for provincialised subjects the less trouble you will have with the federal body "—provided, of course, that care is taken to leave out no matter of common concern. This rigid division of powers heightens the importance of a supreme court with powers to decide conflicts between the ' federal ' government and the ' state ' governments, to indicate the jurisdiction of the respective governments so as to avoid over-lapping legislation

*Report of the Federal Structure Committee.

†Simon Commission Report.

and administration and to declare Acts of the respective legislatures unconstitutional when such Acts violate the provision of the "constitution."

Should the federal Legislature consist of one chamber or of two chambers? The Federal Structure Committee have decided that there ought to be two chambers ; for, the federal constitutions, throughout the world, make provision for two chambers—the Lower House representing the people as a whole and the Upper House with equal representation from the respective units ; for, we have, in a federal state, the union of areas different in size and often, in interest, which seek in their union some special protection against the danger of being over-weighted by more populous neighbours. But Prof. Laski dissents from such view and says, " Once, in fact, a federal state comes into being there grows up a sense of nationalism which, facilitated by the growth of communications, tends to make largely obsolete, the original units of representation." But India is possibly not yet ripe for an experiment with a single chamber and we must adopt the two chamber system. Both the chambers should contain representatives from British India as well as from the native states. But a serious obstacle comes in. How are the representatives to be elected? With respect to British India, so far as the Lower House is concerned, we must have direct election and not indirect election as advocated by the Simon Commission, and the Upper House should be composed of members indirectly elected by the members of the Provincial legislatures. The election of the representatives from the native states presents difficulties because of the autocratic rule prevalent there. Some of the British Indian politicians say that " we have nothing to do with the manner in which the Indian states send up their representatives to the Lower or the Upper House." But, this attitude from British India should be deprecated. We must ask the Princes to allow their subjects to elect their representatives to the Lower House in the same way as the people from British India will elect theirs. The governments of the respective native states should elect their representatives to the Upper House in any way they like and the form of their internal government should be left beyond the scope of any outside interference. This will seem anomalous ; for the internal government might be autocratic but the representatives to the federal Lower House are democratically elected. But, the peculiar circumstances in India may require some innovation and experiment in the art of government; specially as we find that democratic institutions are gradually growing up in the native states as in Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. This system of direct popular election to the Lower House, will do away with the complications that are inherent in an attempt to group the smaller states for representation. Under this system, we will have to group the smaller

states into a combination so as to make it an unit for representation in the Upper House and this can easily be effected.

The conception of a federal executive furnishes a crop of problems of its own. The executive should consist of members from British India and also of members from Indian India ; but, any statutory provision for a fixed percentage from British India and another fixed percentage from Indian India, will bring complications in the executive machinery. We must leave the composition of the executive to the free play of the parties that will be in existence in the legislature. But, to whom will the executive be responsible? To the Lower House or to both Houses in a Joint Session? Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru advocates the latter method in the Federal Structure Committee. But such procedure gives rise to complications hard to be got rid of and such responsibility will not function well as it will be inadequate. The executive must be made responsible to the Lower House but some means should be devised whereby, in the interest of stability, an adverse vote should not on every occasion necessarily involve the resignation of the ministry. A simple institutional safeguard will be of much assistance. The ministry must not resign unless it is defeated by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority in the Lower House. The executive must have collective responsibility and not individual or departmentalised responsibility. The federal executive must have the power to execute federal laws by its own instrumentalities, in all state territories involving direct relations between the federal government and the subjects of the states.

A bare outline has been attempted here ; the space at my disposal, does not allow me to go into even the broad details. As the outlines seem so difficult of common solution, there cannot be any doubt about the fact that the details are much more difficult of unanimous solution. Commissions and committees are working hard to find out the best formula under the peculiar circumstances of India, any satisfactory solution must require the best brains as well as the willing co-operation of all.

R. N. D.



THE LATE MASTER KALYAN CHANDRA GUPTA

THE LATE MASTER KALYAN CHANDRA GUPTA

KALYAN Chandra Gupta, a young student of the First Year Arts Class, died on the 12th January, 1932. He had been suffering from rheumatism to which he succumbed after a patient suffering borne with great fortitude for nearly a month.

Our college is closely associated with the memories of many great men, both living and dead. Although Kalyan was connected with this college for a short period, yet he left a mark of love on the hearts of the teachers and the students alike.

When one feels that his colleague and friend is taken away from him for ever, it is very difficult to express the feeling of separation in mere words. My friends who have been closely in touch with Kalyan can to-day sympathise with me. My association with Kalyan was so intimate that the time when we first met, has completely passed out of my memory.

Kalyan Gupta was the son of our eminent Barrister Mr. J. C. Gupta. He got his training in the Hare School and passed his Matriculation in 1931 when he got his admission into the Presidency College. He was of an exceptionally amiable disposition, bright temperament, and active habits. In short 'to know him was to love him.' The outstanding characteristic in him was the power of organisation; this he displayed in full when required to start clubs for outdoor games, etc. His love of sport was so great that notwithstanding his physical disability he was always to the forefront, thus giving impetus to the shy and the slow. He captained the Hare School cricket team in the year 1929. The Park Circus Football and Tennis Clubs owe their origin to him. Another instance of his zeal for sports was that he accompanied the Presidency College team when it went on a tour to Delhi.

Even though young in years he imbibed a great love for his country. He was always eager to find relief for the distressed. His purse was always open to the needy, and when it was a case of charity he never cared what amount passed through his hands. The success of the Flood Relief Fund of this college was due to a great extent to his benevolence and his indefatigable energy. It was the love for his country that prompted him to be enrolled as a trooper in the cavalry section of the volunteer organisation of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1928. Although those in charge were opposed to his enlistment on account of his tender age, his was not a spirit to be damped. Through persistent pleading and representations he succeeded at last by securing the sympathy

of S. Subhas Chandra Bose. Young as he was, nay, the youngest of them all, yet he gave a creditable account of himself.

In social life Kalyan was an affable and genial soul. He was like a powerful magnet attracting all who came near him and was always ready to share their sorrows and enjoyments.

To-day as I write this I can hardly believe that he is no more. What can one possibly offer in the way of sympathy to the parents except these very true lines "Nor gone from memory, or from love but gone to Father's home above." No human hand can heal their wound. May the Heavenly Father give solace to the grief stricken parents.

DIPTENDRALAL MITRA,
First Year Science.



OUR PRINCIPAL
MR. B. M. SEN

OURSELVES

FOUNDERS' DAY.

The 115th Anniversary of the foundation of the College was celebrated with due enthusiasm by the staff and students on Wednesday, the 20th January last. There was, as in previous years, an Afternoon Party attended by about 350 distinguished guests and former students, including the members of the Education Department, Government of Bengal, and a fair number of ladies. They were cordially received by Principal B. M. Sen and Mrs. Sen assisted by a committee of members of the staff, the Student-Secretaries and the volunteers. The Imperial Restaurant catered for nearly 300 guests in European style; while refreshments in orthodox style were provided for 50 of them in the Science Library. About 700 students were also served with light refreshments in the Physical and Geological laboratories.

After the party was over, there was a reunion meeting of the past and present students in the Physics Theatre. The function came as a piquant commentary, if any were at all needed, in the lack of a suitable College Hall where such meetings could be conveniently held. On the motion of Principal B. M. Sen seconded by Mr. Alamgir Kabir of the Fourth Year Arts Class, the Hon'ble Mr. Khawja Nazimuddin, C.I.E., took the chair. The Principal then read a report reviewing the work of the college during the last session and dwelling on some of our urgent needs and requirements. Mr. C. C. Biswas, M.A., B.L., C.I.E., Advocate, High Court, and Mr. P. N. Banerjee, M.A., B.L., P.R.S., Barrister-at-Law spoke on behalf of the Old Boys. The President then delivered the address reproduced below. With a vote of thanks to the chair and the guests proposed by Dr. P. Neogi and seconded by Mr. Sachindra Nath Das Gupta of the Fifth Year Economics Class, the meeting came to a close late in the evening.

Mr. Sen, Members of the Staff, Students of the Presidency College, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity of associating myself with the celebrations of the Founders' Day of the premier and the oldest College in Bengal. The history of the development of the Presidency College to its present status is really the history of the progress of English education in this country. Whatever may be said about the results of English rule in India, it can never be denied and it has never been denied that it is English education which has put us in touch with the currents of world thought and has given us, what we call, our national consciousness. To the pioneers of the movement, therefore, whose efforts succeeded in establishing this College, we owe a deep debt of gratitude and on this sacred occasion it behoves us to pay our tribute to their memory with feelings of reverence. Founders' Day Celebration is a sort of Hero Worship and apart from the illustrious souls who were connected with the foundation of the Institution, the sight of the old boys who have gathered together on this occasion carries one's mind back to the intellectual giants of the past who after completing their education in this college played so important and conspicuous parts in the various spheres of activities in our country and at least some of them have acquired world-wide fame. Unfortunately however there is a considerable section of people at present who would look

dubiously at the present generation and is reluctant to believe that this generation is of the same fineness and capacity as its forerunners. But we are sure that there is no cause for pessimism and that each generation produces its great men although they are not infrequently unrecognised as such by their contemporaries. Presidency College is already a venerable institution, for it is in its second century of its existence, having a list of old boys of whom any institution in the world will be proud and there is no reason why its future should not be as bright as its past.

The Principal's report shows a steady progress of the College during the last year. The report mentions the losses the College has sustained by the retirement and transfers of some members of the staff. My attention was also drawn to a passage appearing in a recent number of the College Magazine where fears were expressed that too frequent changes in the staff were reacting unfavourably on the work of the College. But I hope that you will all recognise the fact that so long as the Presidency College is a part of the educational system of Bengal and its premier College, its staff must expect to be transferred to the administrative posts of importance outside Calcutta when necessity arises. I am sorry that in the past few years Presidency College has suffered heavily on this score. I am at one with you in deploring the loss suffered by the College by the retirement of Mr. Barrow and Sir Jehangir Coyajee both of whom were eminently fitted for their work and popular among the students. Messrs. Zakariah, B. M. Sen, R. N. Sen, A. K. Chanda, Dr. S. N. Das Gupta all went to take charge of College, but the process is to a certain extent reversible and Mr. B. M. Sen is back again in the College as its Principal to whom, on behalf of all of you here, I offer a most hearty welcome.

I am glad to note that the research work of the members of the staff has been on the whole good and I hope with their work, the Presidency College will be able to retain its position intact in this sphere of activity. I am constrained to think that the results of the University examinations have not been quite up to the standard of the College and I hope members of the staff will exert themselves to achieve better results next year. The report contains an account of the activities of the social and literary clubs which help to develop the corporate life in the College. I hope, you will concentrate your attention a little more on this aspect of the College life. It is my personal belief that the teachers can exercise much greater influence over a student if only they will take a little more interest in them. The personal contact and the personal touch is what is most needed at the present time. I fully realise the difficulties of the staff of a College where the majority of students do not reside in College hostels or halls. But even allowing for this handicap, I feel that there is great room for improvement if only the teachers will realise that their responsibilities do not end in the class room but to a certain extent they are responsible for the conduct of their students even out of College hours. There is no reason why it should not be possible to divide the students into groups and to place each group in charge of one or two teachers who will be something like the tutors in English residential Universities. The teachers will get to know intimately the students in their group and will take an interest in the activities of the students after college hours and whenever they find that a particular student is being misguided or led astray they will use their personal influence and if necessary the influence

of the guardians to keep his defects straight. I hope this suggestion of mine will be seriously considered by the authorities of the College.

I congratulate the students of the College most heartily on their efforts towards flood relief. Sympathy for the fellowmen in distress is one of the greatest achievements of education and I am glad that they have given a good account of themselves in this respect. The results of the medical examination of students are really painful and startling. A nation can never achieve any success, unless its members are mentally as well as physically fit. Success of the students of the Presidency College in the examinations dwindles almost into nothing if the students achieve their success, however, desirable it may be, at the cost of their health. A healthy mind must have a healthy body, the result otherwise will be an anomaly—failure in spite of success. The College cannot of course be held responsible for the previous health history of boys coming to it but I am glad to note that serious attempts are being made by the College authorities to improve this appalling condition and I hope that a medical examination of these same students after a year's interval will reveal decided improvement.

As regards the needs of the college which the Principal has referred to in his report, I can assure you, gentlemen that neither the Government nor the Department are unmindful of the necessities for further improvements. I would only ask you to realise fully the seriousness of the financial difficulty through which the Government is passing and like all others Presidency College must be content with what they have and mark time till better days.

A successful union of the Present and Old Boys is one of the truest signs of a healthy College life and on behalf of the Presidency College I thank those old boys who have come here to attend this function perhaps as a considerable personal inconvenience. I again thank you, Mr. Principal, for asking me to preside on this occasion and I accord my best wishes to the students and the staff of the Presidency College for the coming year.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The first meeting of this session was held on Saturday, the 8th August, 1931 with Dr. U. N. Ghoshal in the chair. Mr. Phanindra Nath Banerjee read a paper on 'Hellenism in Ancient India.' His conclusion was that Hellenistic influence on Indian culture was superficial and nowhere complete ; it had a local character almost everywhere and did not last long. A debate followed in which Messrs. Nirmal Chandra Sinha, Santosh Kumar Chatterjee and the writer himself took part. The President in a neat little speech agreed with the main conclusion of Mr. Banerjee. He further emphasized the fact that this subject, apart from its purely historical interest, has a great practical interest namely, how East and West can be united.

The second meeting was held on Tuesday, the 1st September, 1931, with Dr. U. N. Ghoshal in the chair. Mr. Nirmal Chandra Sinha read a paper entitled "Monarchical Tradition in Ancient India, and Europe." His main conclusion was that limited monarchy has not been the monopoly of the West, nor absolutism that of India. A heated debate followed in which Messrs. Phanindra Nath Banerjee, Pranballabh Sen, Nikhil Chakravarty, Santosh Kumar Chatterjee, Pranab Sen and the writer himself took part. The President

stressed the fact that a student of Hindu Polity ought not to depend solely on purely literary evidences. Though he did not agree with all the conclusions of Mr. Sinha he admitted that the view that absolutism is the only feature with which a student of Hindu Monarchy is concerned is unwarranted. He also admitted the efficacy of various local bodies and occupational guilds.

The third meeting was held on Tuesday, the 15th September, 1931, with Prof. S. K. Chatterjee in the chair. Mr. Santosh Kumar Chatterjee read a paper entitled "Peloponnesian war—*a* Periclean legacy?" The attendance was very small that day. Nevertheless the meeting was a great success due to the excellent quality of the paper and the fine winding up of the debate by Prof. Chatterjee. The wind was blowing in such a way that it was not possible for Pericles to stem it—was the conclusion of the writer. The charges of comedy-writers were dismissed by him, as *vulgar calumnies arising out of the jealous effrontery of anti-periclean school*. He further pointed out that Pericles had to abide by the decision of the sovereign assembly—the Ecclesia. Pericles, as a prudent statesman, could not but accept the gauntlet thrown by Sparta and Corinth was his contention. A debate followed in which Messrs. Nirmal Chandra Sinha and Anadi Charan Banerjee took part. The President asserted that the policy of Athens was defensive on the three occasions: *Corcyraean affairs*, *Revolt of Potidaea* Megarian decree. He was also of the opinion that Pericles was not responsible for the war.

The fourth meeting was held on Tuesday, the 29th September, 1931, under the presidency of Prof. S. C. Majumdar. Mr. Birinchi Kumar Barua (4th year Pali) read a paper on "Women in Buddhism." His contention was that seclusion of women was never known in Buddhist Society; in fact, women enjoyed equality in rank and status with men in this society. They prized much rigid chastity. The names of Isidasi and Sanghamitta were mentioned as typical Buddhist women.

The fifth meeting was held on Tuesday, the 6th October, 1931. Dr. U. N. Ghoshal took the chair and Mr. Saurindra Nath Roy (5th year History) read a paper entitled "Indian Culture in Java." Political as well as cultural history of Java was extensively surveyed in it. The gathering was much delighted to learn these among others: (1) that towards the end of the 13th century A. C. a lady most imperiously ruled in Kediri Kingdom of Java; and (2) that the imperial organisation of the Maiyapahitas bore some resemblances to Maurya imperial structure. Dr. Ghoshal in course of his speech emphasized the importance of studying the history of cultural expansion of India. He endorsed the view of Mr. Roy that Javanese culture was mainly Indian and best indigenous. Among those who took part in the proceedings of the meeting were Messrs. Shiva Prasad Mitra and Ajit Nath Roy of the Fifth Year Class.

On Saturday, the 10th October, 1931, a trip was made to Indian Museum under the auspices of this society. Dr. Ghoshal very kindly guided the students there.

Thus after a year of practical non-existence the work of the society this year is promising, if not brilliant. We do not know whether such a record would have been possible without the fostering care of Dr. U. N. Ghoshal.

NIRMAL CHANDRA SINHA,

Hony. Secretary.

THE PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR.

The first meeting of the Seminar was held on the 29th September, 1931, at 2 P.M. with Dr. P. D. Shastri in the chair. Mr. Monoj Mohan Mukherjee read a paper on "The Attributes of God," in which he dealt with the problem whether God should be thought of as possessed of attributes or as attributeless. The writer showed that man always thinks of God as possessed of attributes. The pious soul worships God Who is not bereft of all attributes but Who is All-powerful as well as All-perfect. The writer further discussed the problem regarding the subjective and the objective character of the attributes of God. A discussion followed in which Messrs. Jyotish Chandra Sen, Asoke Kumar Bannerjee, Sailendra Nath Gupta and Kartic Chandra Mallick took part. The President then brought the debate to a close with a thoughtful speech on the subject.

The second meeting of the Seminar came off on the 3rd October, 1931, at 1 P.M. In this meeting Dr. P. D. Shastri delivered an interesting and thoughtful speech on 'the Problem and Scope of Philosophy' with reference to the origin and development of Philosophy both in the East as well as in the West.

The third meeting of the Seminar took place on the 22nd January, 1932, at 1 P.M. under the presidency of Dr. P. D. Shastri. Mr. Kartic Chandra Mallick read a paper on "The Behaviouristic School of Modern Psychology," in which he showed that in spite of its accurate scientific and experimental method Behaviourism would not be able to usurp the place of the existing Introspective Psychology. The writer pointed out the failure of the Behaviourists to deal with certain mental phenomena, especially the abnormal mental phenomena. He further showed how this modern school of Psychology would exert evil influence on the social and spiritual life. A discussion followed, in which Messrs. Monoj Mohan Mukherjee, Jyotish Chandra Sen and Probodhhari Chatterjee took part. The President then gave a speech on the subject and expressed his agreement with the views of the reader of the paper.

The fourth meeting of the Seminar was held on the 26th February, 1932, at 2 P.M. with Dr. P. D. Shastri in the chair. Mr. Probodhhari Chatterjee read a paper on "Descartes' Method," in which he gave a critical exposition of the subject. Mr. Kartic Chandra Mallick criticised the paper. The President pointed out the merits and demerits of the paper.

KARTIC CHANDRA MALICK,
Secretary,

THE HINDI LITERARY SOCIETY.

The fourth meeting of the present session was held on the 10th September, 1931, under the presidency of Prof. S. N. Lala. Mr. D. P. Khatri of the 4th year Arts class read a beautiful essay on 'Bharatendu Harishchandra.' A lively discussion followed in which the president, Messrs. J. N. Kabra and M. C. Gupta took part.

Members of the society went to the Mohan Kanan at Dum-Dum on a picnic on the 13th September with Dr. P. D. Shastri and Prof. H. K. Banerji. It proved a pleasant excursion. We entertained our revered *gurus* with the provisions prepared by ourselves.

The fifth meeting was held on the 1st October with Prof. S. N. Lala in the chair. Mr. S. N. Roy of the 1st year Arts class read a paper on "Lord Krishna and Hindi Literature."

The anniversary meeting of the society was held on the 4th October, 1931, at 4 P.M. in the Science Library Hall under the presidentship of Dr. Kalidas Nag, M.A., D. Litt. Amongst those present were seen Mr. S. Satyamurti (the Madras leader), Principals B. M. Sen and S. N. Das Gupta, Dr. P. D. Shastri, Prof. P. R. Sen, Rai Bahadur Badridas Goenka, Pandit Ambika Prasad Bajpeyi and Mr. G. L. Mehta. The proceedings opened with the 'Bandematram' song. The Secretary, in his report, traced out the activities of the society and appealed to the Principal for the establishment of a Hindi Seminar in the College. Messages from Sir P. C. Roy, Sir Radhakrishnan, Seth Jammalal Bajaj and Prof. N. C. Banerji were read, all of whom expressed regret for their absence and wished every success to the society. Sir P. C. Ray wrote "Hindi ought to be the *lingua franca* for the whole of India as suggested by Mahatma Gandhi." Almost all of those prominent persons who were present spoke. Principal Dr. S. N. Das Gupta said, "I have studied Soor, Kabir and Tulsi and come to the conclusion that there is hardly any literature so rich in its mystic philosophy as that of Hindi." The distinguished president spoke in Bengali. In a very learned and equally eloquent address he traced the influence of Hindi upon the greatest writers of Bengal and appealed to our fellow Bengali brothers not to neglect Hindi. After a vote of thanks and a song the meeting terminated. Our thanks are due specially to Principal Sen and Dr. Shastri who helped us a great deal.

In the sixth ordinary meeting held on the 3rd December, Mr. R. Lakhotia presided. The Secretary was asked to contradict in the next issue of the College Magazine that there exists any "separatist tendency" among us as has been alleged by Mr. R. C. Dutt in the last issue of the Magazine.

GAURI SHANKAR DARUKA.

Secretary.

THE GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

The twenty-sixth annual general meeting of the Institute was held on the 5th September, 1931, with Prof. H. C. Das Gupta in the chair.

The following office-bearers for the session, 1931-32, were elected.

President—Dr. S. Krishnan, M.A., A.R.C.S., D.I.C., Ph.D.

Vice-President—Prof. B. Maitra, M.Sc., B.L.

Treasurer—Mr. P. C. Dutta, M.Sc., B.L.

The Secretary, Asstt. Secretary and ten class representatives were also elected.

The first meeting was held on the 8th October, 1931. Prof. K. K. Sen Gupta, M.A., B.Sc. (Cal.), B.Sc. (Min.), M.Sc. (B'ham), presided. Previous rules and regulations of the Institute were altered and some new rules were framed.

The second meeting took place on Wednesday, the 16th December, 1931, with Prof. B. Maitra, M.Sc., B.L., in the chair. Mr. B. N. Raghunath Rao, B.Sc., read a paper on "The age of Shillong Series." Mr. Rao in his paper wanted to ascribe to the Shillong series, an age younger than it is generally accepted to be.

In the discussion that followed Mr. Sailesh Chandra Das Gupta, B.Sc. with Mr. K. Mohiuddin, B.Sc. opposed Mr. Rao's views. In conclusion Prof. H. C. Das Gupta expressed his opinion that the age of the Shillong series is Precambrian and nothing could be stated beyond that.

The second paper was an interesting paper on "Volcanoes" by Mr. T. Roy, B.Sc. The paper was illustrated by lantern slides.

The third meeting came off on Wednesday, the 29th February, 1932, at 4-30 P.M. Prof. B. Maitra was in the chair. A paper on "Ice Age" was read by Mr. N. P. Kataki, B.Sc. In it he touched on the past and present glacial periods in different parts of the world and their causes. A special reference was made regarding the Permo-Carboniferous and the Pleistocene glaciations. In the discussion that followed Mr. Sailesh Chandra Das Gupta stated that the abnormal Permo-Carboniferous and the Pleistocene glaciation could probably be best explained by the wandering of the poles as marshalled by Wegner.

Prof. S. L. Biswas stated that the proper explanation of the reasons for prolonged abnormal cold waves which are experienced now-a-days, would lead to a correct solution of the causes of past glaciations. Prof. H. C. Das Gupta spoke about the Permo-Carboniferous glaciation in India. In conclusion Prof. B. Maitra touched on the astronomical aspect of it.

NARENDRA SINGH,
Secretary.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE CHEMICAL SOCIETY.

The first meeting of the Presidency College Chemical Society was held on the 26th September, 1931, Dr. P. Neogi, M.A., PH.D., P.R.S. presiding. A paper was read by Mr. Dukhaharan Chakravarty, M.Sc., on "The Synthesis of Coumestins." The paper was on a very brilliant piece of research carried on by Mr. Chakravarty in our College and was very much appreciated. The meeting became very lively owing to the learned discussions that were carried on by several distinguished professors. Dr. Neogi in a brief neat speech summarised the importance of this piece of research after which the meeting was brought to a close.

We may note here with pride that the paper by Mr. Chakravarty threw some new light on that subject which was supported by chemists of eminence like Robinson and others.

The subject for the next meeting was "The Vitamins." Mr. Ashutosh Mukherjee, M.Sc., read an interesting discourse on this subject. The discussions were very illuminating as they were accompanied by some demonstrations of the vitamins upon animal life. Several members took keen interest in the discussions bringing out new and absorbing issues.

The Society carried on excursions to different places which were of interest to the chemist. In arranging such excursion-parties the Society had in view the idea to supplement the academic side with practical demonstrations. Uptill now the Society visited the following places:—

(1) THE TITAGHUR PAPER MILLS, LTD.—About forty students accompanied by Dr. P. Neogi, Dr. A. Sarkar, and Mr. N. G. Chakravarty, M.Sc., visited the paper mills on the 17th February, 1932. The party had an excellent trip and were able to gather new things from the visit.

(2) THE CALCUTTA POTTERY WORKS.—On the 27th February, 1932, accompanied by Messrs. H. D. Mukherjee, M.A. and N. G. Chakravarty, M.Sc., some twenty-five students visited the pottery works.

(3) THE TATA IRON & STEEL WORKS, LTD., JAMSHEDPUR.—A party of 25 students accompanied by Dr. A. Sarkar left for the Tatas on the 4th March, 1932. The visit was a long-coveted one and the enthusiasm of the party knew no bounds. The party was immensely benefited by the visit for the Iron Works gave an idea how industrial plants are carried on so huge a scale and further how chemistry is enabling the present-day civilisation to take such long strides in the path of progress.

We may here gratefully mention the name of Dr. Neogi, the president of the Society, who has shown untiring zeal for the well-being of the Society and guided us with his very valuable counsels.

ROHINI KANTA BARUA,
Secretary.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

The second meeting was held on the 5th September, 1931, under the presidency of Principal B. M. Sen, the present President of the Association. Sir C. V. Raman, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., Nobel Laureate, delivered a popular lecture (accompanied with several experiments and lantern slides) on "The Study of Crystals." Owing to the obvious difficulties of carrying several crystallising dishes (in which crystals were in different states of formation), other apparatus, and huge natural crystals, the lecture had to be held in the Indian Association for the cultivation of Science, 210, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.

On the 12th September a visit was arranged for about 60 members to the workshops of the Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works, Ltd. This was arranged by Professor P. Neogi, and Mr. N. G. Chakravarty, M.Sc. of the Department of Chemistry was in charge of the party. The party was divided into groups of ten each under a guide supplied from among the staff of the workshops. The visit lasted for nearly over 2 hours. The party was entertained with sweetmeats and cold drinks by the workshop authorities. The Secretary sent a letter to the Manager, Mr. Rajshekhar Bose, conveying his thanks.

The next lecture was delivered on the 13th September, at 2 p.m., in the Physics Theatre before a record gathering of audience (including some 25 members of the staff) by Principal B. M. Sen. Prof. P. Neogi was in the chair. Principal Sen was warmly greeted by the packed hall as he rose to deliver his lecture on "Introduction to Relativity." The standard of technical knowledge assumed on the part of the audience was that of Physics and Chemistry up to the Intermediate Standard.

The fourth popular lecture (accompanied by several experiments) was delivered at 2 p.m., in the Physiological Lecture Theatre. Principal B. M. Sen was in the chair. Professor N. C. Bhattacharyya, M.A., B.Sc., head of the Department of Physiology, gave a lecture on "The frog as a martyr to Science." All the members of the Physiological staff and specially Dr. S. M. Banerjee, M.Sc., M.B., owe our thanks for the excellent manner in which the series of experiments were demonstrated.

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The work was resumed after the Puja Holidays with the Edison Memorial lecture on the 14th December, under the presidency of Principal B. M. Sen, Dr. P. N. Ghosh, M.A., Ph.D., Sc.D., F.Inst. P. Ghosh Professor of Applied Physics, gave a most vivid description of Edison's inventions. The lecture was illustrated with lantern slides.

At the next meeting held on the 21st December, at 6 p.m., under the chairmanship of the Principal; Prof. C. C. Bhattacharyya, M.A., of the Department of Physics, delivered a lecture in Bengali on, “কালোহয়ং নিরবধিঃ” [The Illimitable Futurity.] The lecture gave a most popular exposition of the several methods for the determination of the age of the universe in general and the earth in particular, the present day theories on the structure of matter and its indestructibility. The difficulty of delivering a lecture on scientific subject in Bengali, and even that in a popular fashion, is tremendous; but it was really good fortune that we had it from one whose capacity for scientific writings in Bengali has a reputation of its own.

The next meeting was arranged on 27th February, 1932, at 2 p.m. in the Physics Theatre under the presidency of Prof. P. Neogi. Dr. S. K. Mitra, Docteur-es-Science (Paris), Khaira Professor of Physics, delivered an impressive lecture on “Wireless Echoes.” The lecture, which started with the history of the very origination of wireless and ended with the latest researches carried on to explain the phenomenon of long interval echoes, was all along illustrated with lantern slides; a few experiments were also shown. After the lecture, Prof. Mitra replied for over half an hour to the various questions put to him both by members of the staff and students.

At the time this interim report is sent to the press, two lectures are already arranged,—one on the 12th March, by Mr. W. D. West, M.A. (Cantab.), Superintendent, Geological Survey of India, and the other early in April by Professor H. C. Das Gupta, M.A., F.G.S.

I convey my grateful thanks to all those members of the staff who have helped me in several ways and records my deep gratitude to Principal B. M. Sen, Professors P. Neogi, P. C. Mahalanabis, and C. C. Bhattacharyya for the extreme kindness which they have always shown to me. My thanks are also due to my friends Messrs. Karuna Kanta Sen and Bijan Dutt. Detailed reports of lectures, etc., have been kept in the Association office and it is contemplated to publish a pamphlet containing a review of the year's work (including lectures, accounts, committee of management, etc., etc.).

AJIT KUMAR MAJUMDAR,
Secretary.

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE FLOOD-RELIEF COMMITTEE.

AFTER the publication of our report in the last issue of the Magazine, we had the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of a sum of Rs. 10/- from Mr. S. Sen, I.C.S., District Judge, Hooghly. This together with the amount acknowledged in our last report brought our total to Rs. 663-5 only. The only expense incurred in connection with the work of the Committee was that of a sum of Rs. 6/- only for printing receipt books. The net amount raised by voluntary subscriptions from among ourselves which we were able to contribute to Sir. P. C. Roy's fund thus amounted to Rs. 657-5.

Besides the sum mentioned above, we are glad to announce that we were able to contribute a further sum of Rs. 450/- only to Rabindranath's Viswa-Bharati Flood-Relief Fund. This amount was raised by staging Rabindranath's "CHIRAKUMAR SABHA" as a charity performance.

In this connection it is my melancholy duty to record the death of my friend and colleague Mr. Kalyan Chandra Gupta, who served so ably on the Committee as a representative of the First Year Arts Class. It was mainly by his enthusiasm and zeal that we succeeded in collecting a sum of Rs. 32/- from his rather thin class. There are not many in our college like him—so enthusiastic and so zealous for a good cause—and the least that we can say is that we shall miss him immensely in the social life of the College.

RABINDRA CHANDRA DUTT,
Secretary.

THE AUTUMN SOCIAL

RABINDRANATH'S '*Chirakumar Sabha*,' was staged on the 9th October last, at the Calcutta University Institute Hall, under the Presidency of Principal B. M. Sen, as a charity performance in aid of the Flood-Relief Funds.

The play was quite a success and in keeping with the reputation of the Presidency College Dramatic Society in the past. Messrs. Robi Moitra, Sailesh Das Gupta, Upen Mullick, Lakshmi Das, Prasanto Tagore, Souren Bhowse, and Murali Nag played in the roles of Rasik, Akshoy, Purno, Saila, Nirabala, Nirmala and Chandra Babu, and each one of these actors played his part creditably.

Our hearty thanks go to Principal B. M. Sen and Professor Charu Chandra Bhattacharjya for their kind encouragement of actors and to Professor S. C. Majumdar for his active help in the general management.

JOGESH BOSE,
AJIT DAS,
Joint-Secretaries.

KALYAN MEMORIAL COMMITTEE.

At a meeting of the students of the First Year Class held in February, a Committee consisting of the following students, with power to add to their number, was elected to raise funds to perpetuate the memory of their deceased friend, in a suitable manner, in this College—Birendra Madhab Gupta, Ajay K. Bhowse, Benoy Kumar Roy, Nayanabhiram Barua, Prafulla Kumar Roy, Anandilal Poddar, Hassan Imam, Rathindra Chandra Deb, and Sarat Chandra Roy, *Secretary and Treasurer.*

The Committee has been approved by the Principal at whose suggestion, Professor S. C. Majumdar, the Treasurer of the College Union, has kindly consented to act as the President. The Committee expect to be able to get the co-operation of all friends and admirers of the late Kalyan Chandra Gupta.

SARAT CHANDRA ROY,
Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE

To

THE EDITOR,

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE.

DEAR SIR,

Of the numerous advantages of reading in the Presidency College, we are told, not the least is that of having access to one of the best libraries of Bengal. But the advantage derived by the students is often of a questionable character. Generally two books are lent to a student which must be returned within 15 days, failing which, a fine of one anna per day, is charged. All this is good and meant for the interest of the students concerned. But it will, at the same time be admitted that during the working months of the session no substantial progress in reading library books can be made. It is the long vacations that provide the best opportunity for reading books from the library. And of all vacations, the summer vacation is the longest, and as such may be best utilised in reading books from the library. This is as it should be; and almost all the colleges of the city follow the practice of lending books to the students during the summer vacation. But our College in this as in many other respects is characterised by a non-conformity which is peculiar to herself. Under no circumstances, are books issued to students during the summer vacation. We are aware that the summer vacation is the time for stock-taking. But when arrangements may be made for the professors to borrow books we do not see why the same leniency is not extended to their less fortunate pupils. Would it be too much to expect that the authorities will take the matter in their serious consideration and see that the "noble zeal" of the students for learning may not be repressed for "official reasons."

Yours etc.,

MANMATHA NATH SIKDAR.

To

THE EDITOR,

PRESIDENCY COLLEGE MAGAZINE.

DEAR SIR,

The Secretary of the P. C. Flood Relief Committee (formed at the time of the last floods in Bengal) writes in the last issue of the College Magazine that there exists "separatist tendency" among us because the members of the Hindi Literary Society (numbering only 20) sent a sum of Rs. 51/- separately to Sir P. C. Ray. I was struck dumb to read it. I think it was a plain misunderstanding on the part of my friend Mr. R. C. Dutt. We should look to the work done whoever does it instead of looking to the name. Moreover, after the money was collected, I saw the Principal and sought his advice as to what could be the proper way of contributing the amount; on

which he gave me a letter addressed to Sir P. C. Ray and advised me to see Acharyya Ray personally and give him the money. I did accordingly. Not to say of "Separatist tendency" existing among us, the society never dreams of it. I think this will remove the misconception lingering in the mind of Mr. Dutt and those minds which might have been infected by Mr. Dutt's statement.

Yours etc.,
GAURI SHANKAR DARUKA.

A REVIEW

"SHORT STUDIES IN INDIAN ECONOMICS" by Sen and Chatterjee (Price Re. 1/4) has been lying with us for sometime past. The book deals clearly with all necessary topics in a short compass and may be regarded as a useful production in the midst of many similar works on the subject. It has received a well-merited testimonial from Sir J. C. Coyajee and should be appreciated by all students of Economics and especially the Examinees.

D. G. C.

As we go to Press, we are shocked to hear of the tragic death of Mr. Lakshmi Prasad Banerji, M.A. Mr. Banerji was a student here for four years, and was First Class first in Ancient Indian History and Culture in the last M. A. Examination. He was a contributor to our magazine and to other Bengali magazines and had made a name as a writer of short humorous stories. A gentleman to his fingertips, a man of amiable character, Mr. Banerji was dearly loved by all his fellow students and friends. Our sincere condolence to the bereaved family. May his soul rest in peace!

বিজ্ঞানের মর্যাদা

শ্রীমাখনলাল মুখোপাধ্যায়—ষষ্ঠ বার্ষিক, শ্রেণী, কলা বিভাগ

বাঙালী বিজ্ঞানের যথার্থ মর্যাদা দিতে পারে নাই বলিয়া, প্রতীচ্যের বিজ্ঞানলক্ষীকে ঘরে তুলিবার ঘটা করে নাই বলিয়া, বাঙালী জাতিটা একেবারে উৎসন্ন যাইতে বসিয়াছে, এই রকম একটা আক্ষেপ বিজ্ঞাবিজ্ঞ সকলের মুখেই শুনিতে পাই। এসম্বন্ধে নানা যুক্তি বাহা অনেকেই দেখাইয়া থাকেন তাদের সারবত্তা মানিয়া লইতে দ্বিধা হয় না। কিন্তু গোড়াতেই বুঝিয়া লইতে ইচ্ছা হয়—বিজ্ঞানের যথার্থ মর্যাদা কি?

প্রথমেই মনে আসে, বিজ্ঞান প্রত্যক্ষবাদী। চক্ষুরাদি ইন্দ্রিয়ের গোচর যাহা নয় বিজ্ঞান তাহার অস্তিত্ব মানে না; তাই তাহার মনোবিজ্ঞানে আত্মার স্থান নাই, চিকিৎসাশাস্ত্রে জীবনের শক্তির মধ্যে কোন অজ্ঞানার রহস্য নাই, তাহার সৌন্দর্য্যভঙ্গে কার্য্যকারণের পারস্পর্য্য ছাড়া কোন প্রেরণার ইঙ্গিত নাই, তাহার সমাজনীতিতে বিবেক বলিয়া পদার্থের বাল্যই নাই। প্রত্যক্ষ ছাড়া আর কিছুতেই মর্যাদা বা বিশ্বাস রাখা বিজ্ঞানের ছাত্র হইয়া চলে না। কিন্তু অন্তঃসন্ধানের পথে আর একটু অগ্রসর হইলেই দেখিতে পাই বিজ্ঞান একদিক দিয়া যাহাকে প্রত্যক্ষ বলিয়া মনের কাছে জানাইয়া দেয় তাহাকেই মনোবিজ্ঞান ঠিক প্রত্যক্ষ বলিতে দেয় না। সে বুঝাইয়া দেয় যে, যে কোনও আকৃতি বিশিষ্ট বস্তুর বর্ণ সম্বন্ধে যাহা প্রত্যক্ষ তাহা চোখের পরদায় আহত কতকগুলি স্নায়ুপ্রবাহের কম্পনমাত্র, যাহা মস্তিষ্কে পৌছিতে কিছু (যদিও এক সেকেন্ডের অতি ক্ষুদ্র ভগ্নাংশ) সময় লাগে। কাজেই বেশ বুঝা যায়, বর্ণ বা আকৃতি আমাদের প্রত্যক্ষ অনুভূতির বিষয় নয়; অতি অল্প বয়স হইতেই বুদ্ধিরূতির নানা কার্য্যপ্রণালীর ভিতর দিয়া আমাদের এই জ্ঞান লব্ধ হইয়াছে। কিন্তু এইরূপে যদি আমরা জীবনের সময়সূত্র ধরিয়া পিছু হঠিতে থাকি, তাহা হইলে এমন একসময়ে উপস্থিত হই, যখন আমাদের চোখে নানা বর্ণের স্পন্দনগুলি লাগিয়া স্নায়ুসূত্রগুলিকে এককালে উত্তেজিত, ব্যতিব্যস্ত করিয়া তুলিয়াছিল। সেই সময়কার কথা ভাবিতে গেলেই দেখি—বহিরালোকের এই যে প্রতিঘাত ইহা যে আমারই চোখে হইতেছে, এই জ্ঞান ত' অনুভূতিলব্ধ হইতে পারে না। অথচ শিশুমনের যত গোড়াকার কথাই ভাবিয়া দেখি না কেন, এই আমিত্বটুকু যেন সর্বদাই লাগিয়া আছে দেখিতে পাই। বৈজ্ঞানিকও এই 'আমিত্ব'কে অস্বীকার করিতে পারেন না, যদিও কেহ কেহ ইহাকে কতকগুলি অতীত ও সম্ভাবিত অনুভূতির সমষ্টি বলিয়া উড়াইয়া দিতে পারেন। অধিকন্তু বৈজ্ঞানিকেরা বলেন, আমরা বাহিরের সঙ্গে ভিতরের ঘাত প্রতিঘাতে যখন বাহিরকে আলাদা করিয়া দেখিতে শিখি, তখন

হইতেই আমিষ; অর্থাৎ আমিষ শিশুজীবনের ঠিক গোড়া থেকেই ছিল না, তাহা জগতের পরিচয়ের সঙ্গে গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে। কিন্তু শিশুর জগতে অধিষ্ঠানের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তাহার ক্রন্দন ও মাতৃস্তনের অন্বেষণ যে আমিষবোধবিমুক্ত তাহা স্বীকার করা যায় না, কারণ আমিষবোধই, তা' যত ক্ষীণই হোক না, তাহার সেই প্রযত্নের হেতু। আবার ইহাকে instinct বা সহজশক্তি বলিয়া উড়াইয়া দিতে পারি না। কারণ, যাহাকে সহজশক্তি বলা যায়, বৈজ্ঞানিক পরীক্ষণে দেখা গিয়াছে, তাহার অনুশীলনজনিত উৎকর্ষ আছে—যাহাকে Loyad Morgan বলিয়াছেন, 'persistency with varied effort' কিন্তু এই শুদ্ধ আমিষের এইরূপ কোন উৎকর্ষ দেখা যায় না; এই 'আমিষ' সেই বস্তু যাহা শৈশব, যৌবন, বার্দ্ধক্যের নানা অবস্থান্তরের মাঝেও অক্ষুণ্ণ রহিয়াছে, যাহা নিদ্রার সময়েও জাগরিত থাকিয়া প্রাণশক্তি ও জ্ঞানশক্তিকে অব্যাহত রাখিয়াছে। যখন হইতে বিচার বুদ্ধির সমগ্র বিকাশ মানব লাভ করিল, তখন হইতে মানব-চিত্তের স্বাতন্ত্র্য বিজ্ঞানই গড়িয়া তুলিয়াছে। কিন্তু উন্মাদ, মোহ প্রভৃতি অবস্থার মানবের বিচার বুদ্ধির প্রায় লোপ হইলে, শুদ্ধ 'আমিষ'টুকুই আমাদের মনের সম্মুখে দেখা দেয়। এই অশরীরাত্মীয় বস্তুকেই যদি আত্মা বলা হয় এবং 'স্বখানুশরী রাগ', 'দুঃখানুশরী দ্বেষ' প্রভৃতিকে যদি এই আত্মার সংস্কার বিশেষ বলা হয়, তাহাতে বৈজ্ঞানিকতার কি বিরোধ হয় তাহা বুঝা যায় না। আর এই সংস্কার স্বীকার করিলেই যদি পুনর্জন্ম স্বীকার করিতে হয়, তাহাতে বিবর্তনবাদী বিজ্ঞানের কোন দোষ ধরা উচিত হয় না। কারণ জন্মান্তরবাদ ও বিবর্তনবাদ উভয়ই কল্পনা-প্রসূত; এবং উভয়েরই সার্থকতা বিশৃঙ্খল কতকগুলি বিষয়ের সামঞ্জস্যবিধানে। জগতের জড় ও চেতনের এই যে বিভাগ-বৈসাদৃশ্য ইহার আপাততঃ সন্তোষজনক সমাধান যেমন বিবর্তনবাদে পাওয়া যায়, তেমনি জীবগণের মধ্যে এই যে অবস্থাগত, বুদ্ধিগত বৈষম্য ইহার কথঞ্চিৎ উত্তর মিলে জন্মান্তরবাদে। বরং জন্মান্তরবাদের সহিত বিবর্তনবাদটী মিলাইয়া দেখিলে (যেমন হীরেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত মহাশয়ের 'কর্মবাদ ও জন্মান্তর' নামক অতি গবেষণা পূর্ণ একখানি পুস্তকে দেখাইয়াছেন), বিবর্তনবাদটীর অর্থ ও তাৎপর্য কতদূর ব্যাপক ও গভীর তাহা বুঝিতে পারি।

এইরূপভাবে বিজ্ঞানের স্বীকৃত অল্প প্রত্যক্ষ ও অনুমানের সাহায্যে মানবসম্বন্ধে যে ধারণায় আমরা উপনীত হই, তাহা বিজ্ঞানের সাধারণ প্রচলিত ধারণা হইতে এত পৃথক যে, ইহাকে বিজ্ঞানের মর্যাদা দিতে অনেক সময়েই আমরা কুণ্ঠিত হই। হয় বলি অনুমানের চুলচেরা শুদ্ধ কচ্‌কচি, না হয় দার্শনিকের অর্থহীন স্বপ্নের কুয়াসা। কিন্তু ইহাতে আশ্চর্যের কিছুই নাই। জীবতত্ত্বের প্রতিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বিজ্ঞানের চেষ্টা হইয়াছে, মানবের ব্যক্তিত্বকে যতদূর সম্ভব কমাইয়া মানবজাতির সহিত মিলাইয়া দেখা। এই মানবজাতি উন্নতির রাজপথে অগ্রাগ্রহণ চলিয়াছে; বিজ্ঞান সেই মানবজাতির সহিতই চিরদিনের কারবার পাতিয়াছে; কিন্তু মানবস্ব যাহা, তাহা চিরদিনই সমান একভাবেই ব্যক্তিত্বকে অবগদন করিয়া স্থির, অবিচলিতভাবে বিরাজ করিতেছে;

তাই তাহার রহস্যের শেষ নাই, রহস্যের দৃষ্টা কবিরও অন্ত নাই, সকল রহস্যের পারে বাইবার জ্ঞান তিলমাত্র ব্যগ্রতা নাই।

এতক্ষণ মানবের বুদ্ধিবৃত্তির দিক লইয়া আলোচনা হইল। কিন্তু এই বুদ্ধিবৃত্তির দিক ছাড়াও মানবের feelings বা রাগদ্বেষের অনুভূতির একটা দিক আছে। এই দিক দিয়া দেখিতে গেলে সে অতিশয় ভাবপ্রবণ এবং অনেক জিনিষ' সে একান্ত বিশ্বাসের সহিত গ্রহণ করে। এই বিশ্বাস করিবার ইচ্ছাকেও মানবের একটা সংস্কার বলা বাইতে পারে। কারণ, শিশু অবস্থায় 'এটা কি', 'ওটা কি' ইহার উত্তরে সে বাহা শুনে তাহাই সত্য বলিয়া মানিয়া লয় এবং এই মানিয়া লইবার হেতু তাহার এই সহজ বিশ্বাসপ্রবণতা। এই বিশ্বাসপ্রবণতা পরে মানবকে দুইটা পৃথক পৃথক পথের পথিক করিয়া দেয়। এই রকম বিশ্বাসপ্রবণ মন লইয়া সে অনুকরণ প্রবৃত্তির দাস হইয়া পড়ে এবং মতামত, চিন্তা প্রভৃতি বিষয়ে গড্ডলিকা প্রবাহের অনুসরণ করিয়াই নিশ্চিত হয়। কিন্তু কাহারও কাহারও দেখা যায় এই বিশ্বাস কোন একটা বিশেষ বস্তুকে আঁকড়াইয়া থাকে; শত আঘাতে, অবিশ্বাসের শত তুচ্ছতায় আপনার মর্যাদায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত থাকার যে একটা পরিপূর্ণ সার্থকতার আনন্দ ও শাস্তি আছে তাহাই হান্তরেখায় সর্দদা তাহার ওষ্ঠপ্রান্তে ফুটিয়া উঠে। ধর্মমত সম্পর্কে ইতিহাস ইহাতে ইহার বহুশত দৃষ্টান্ত দেখান যায়। এই দিক দিয়া আমরা personality বা ব্যক্তিত্বের প্রভাব বেশ লক্ষ্য করি। একজনেকের কথার ভাব-ভঙ্গিতে, ওজস্বিতার প্রাণ যেন নাচিয়া উঠে; একটা শাস্তির বাণীতে জীবনের যত অবসাদ ধুইয়া মুছিয়া যায়। বিজ্ঞান কিন্তু এই সকল ক্ষেত্রে বিশ্বাসপ্রবণতাকে দুর্বলতারই নামান্তর মনে করিয়া সকল বিষয়ে সন্দেহ প্রকাশ করাই বেশী যুক্তিযুক্ত মনে করে। কিন্তু ইহাতে এমন একটি মতিগতির (mentality) সৃষ্টি হয়, যেন বিলাসহীনতাটাই মস্ত বিজ্ঞতার পরিচায়ক। কিন্তু ইহা যে আত্মঘাতী পন্থা তাহা একটু ভাবিলেই বুঝা যায়। কারণ, বিজ্ঞান ও তাহার সত্যগুলির উপর একান্ত বিশ্বাসের দাবী করে, এবং দার্শনিকেরা, যাহারা সেগুলিকে চরম সত্য বলিয়া মানিয়া লইতে নারাজ, ভোজের সময় বিজ্ঞান তাহাদের অপাংক্ত্যক্য করিতে দ্বিধা করে না। তাই বিজ্ঞানের মূলে যাহা তাহা ঠিক বিশ্বাসহীনতা নয়; যাহাকে দেকার্তে (Descartes) বলিয়াছেন methodical doubt অর্থাৎ যুক্তিবৃত্ত সংশয় ইহা তাহাই। সুতরাং শাস্ত্রকে না মানাটাই বিজ্ঞানের বিজ্ঞতার মাপকাঠি নয়; শাস্ত্রীয় সমস্ত বিষয়ের বখাবথ অনুধাবনা করিবার জ্ঞান বতটুকু সংশয়ান্বিত হওয়া উচিত, সেই ভাবে সংশয় পোষণ করাই বিজ্ঞানসম্মত পদ্ধতি। বস্তুত: আমরা যদি শাস্ত্রকে জীবন হইতে বিচ্ছিন্ন করিয়া না দেখিয়া, জীবনের সঙ্গে মিলাইয়া, জীবনের রসে দীক্ষিত করিয়া দেখিতে অগ্রসর হই, তাহ'লে 'মনুসংহিতা' বা রঘুনন্দনের 'অষ্টাবিংশতি তত্ত্ব' আমাদের কাছে কতকগুলো অনুস্মর্য বস্তুবিশেষের আড়ম্বরমাখা শব্দ সমষ্টি মাত্রই থাকিবে না। আমাদের শ্রোত, গৃহ বা স্থতিশাস্ত্রের বহু বিষয় সম্পর্কে সেকালের জীবনের

বা সমাজের চিত্রখানিকে ধরিতে পারিলে বেন শুদ্ধ না অস্থিপঞ্জরের সঙ্গে মেদযজ্ঞা মাংস ঢাকা রক্ত-প্রবাহবান জীবন্ত অতীতকে সাক্ষাৎ দেখা যায়—ইহার দৃষ্টান্ত শ্রীযুত নরেশ্বর সেনগুপ্তের মনোজ্ঞ ‘ঋষির মেয়ে’ নাটকখানি।

তাই বিজ্ঞানের প্রকৃত মর্যাদা বিজ্ঞান আমাদের শাস্ত্র থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করে বলিয়া নয়; বিজ্ঞান যদি শাস্ত্রকে বখার্বরূপে চিনাইয়া দেয়, তবেই বিজ্ঞানের সঙ্গে তাহার প্রকৃত সম্বন্ধ স্থাপিত হইবে এবং শাস্ত্র বিজ্ঞানকে অনার্যাসেই মানিয়া লইবে। বিজ্ঞানের মর্যাদা তাহার নিজস্ব সত্য ছাড়া অল্প কোনও সত্যের অস্তিত্ব অস্বীকার করিয়া নয়, বরং যতদিন না সেই সত্যের বিরোধী কিছুই দেখা যায়, ততদিন সেই সকল সত্যকেও স্বীকার করাতেই বিজ্ঞানের প্রকৃত মর্যাদা, কারণ সমগ্র, অথও মানবজীবনের প্রকৃত মর্যাদা তাহাতেই নিহিত। তাই বৈজ্ঞানিক যেমন নিরলসভাবে সত্যের অন্বেষণ করেন, তেমনই প্রসন্ন ওদার্যের সঙ্গে জগতের বিখ্যাত কবি, দার্শনিকের চিন্তা ও ভাবের স্রোতে যে দিন নিজেই ছাড়িয়া দিবেন, সেই দিনই তিনি বিজ্ঞানের প্রকৃত মর্যাদা বুঝিতে পারিবেন। নহিলে ‘সেক্সপীয়ার (Shakespeare) কে, তিনি হাক্সলীর (Huxley) সময়ের নাকি’, বা প্লেটো (Plato), কই কোনদিন ত’ তার নাম শুনি’—এই রকম মনের সন্ধীর্গতা যতদিন বৈজ্ঞানিকের থাকিবে, ততদিন বিজ্ঞানের সত্য সম্বন্ধে তিনি জাগ্রত থাকিলেও মানবত্বের সত্যসম্বন্ধে তিনি একরূপ অজ্ঞই থাকিয়া গেলেন।

তাই বাঙালী রামেন্দ্রচন্দ্র, প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র, জগদীশচন্দ্রকে আচার্য্য বলিয়া যেরূপ ভক্তি ও শ্রদ্ধায় আনত হইয়া পড়ে, অল্প কাহারও নামে ত সেরূপ দেখি না। তাহার একমাত্র কারণ, ইহাদের কাহাকেও একদেশদর্শিতার বা কুপমণ্ডুকতার দোষ স্পর্শ করেনি। বাঙালীর বিজ্ঞান-শিক্ষার গোড়াতেই গলদ রহিয়া গিয়াছে, সে শিক্ষা বাঙালীর ভাবপ্রবণতাকে, কল্পনাশক্তিকে স্বীকার করেনি। কাজেই আপাতচক্ষে মনে হয় যেন বাঙালী বিজ্ঞানশিক্ষার অবহেলা করিয়াছে; কিন্তু জ্ঞানের ঐক্য অপেক্ষা বিভেদকেই প্রশ্রয় দিয়াছে বলিয়া—বিজ্ঞান বাঙালীর প্রিয় হয় নি। আচার্য্য জগদীশচন্দ্র প্রভৃতি যে ভাবে স্বীয় সাধনা দ্বারা বিজ্ঞানের পথ নির্দেশ করিয়াছেন, বিজ্ঞানের দৃষ্টিতে খণ্ডের সহিত পূর্ণের সমন্বয় করিয়া দিয়াছেন, তাহাতে আশা হয় বাঙালী শীঘ্রই সেই পথের অন্বেষণ করিয়া আপনার ভাবুকতা ও অন্তর্দৃষ্টির গভীর স্পর্শে বিজ্ঞানলক্ষীর কঠোরতার বন্ধন খুচাইয়া রহস্তের অবগুণ্ঠনশ্রী আনিয়া দিবে।

পূর্ণিমা

শ্রীদেবেশ চন্দ্র দাস ।

এই কি তোমার আলো, পূর্ণিমায় কহ কাণে কাণে
হে অন্তর চারি,
গভীর আঁধার মাঝে নিশীথের স্বপ্ন-অবসানে
আকাশে বিহারি'
যে দূতীটী দেখা দিত প্রতিদিন প্রভাতে চলিয়া
হাসিয়া নিমেষে
সে কি আজ দেখা দিল অভিমান-ব্যথারে দলিয়া
পূর্ণিমার বেশে ?

চিরতৃপ্তি বিহীনের অন্তরালে রহিয়া অদূরে
আর্ন্ত ব্যবধান
রচেছিলে সংগোপনে আপনি যে ছলিয়া মধুরে ;
প্রাণে প্রাণে টান
থসাল কি তারে আজ তোমারি এ আত্মনিবেদনে,
তাজি নির্বাসন
তাই কি আসিলে কাছে পূর্ণতার অসহ বেদনে
অনন্তের ধন ?

স্তব্ধমৌন রজনীর শান্তিময় স্রষ্টির পারে
তোমার সম্মুখে
জাগে যে লহরী লীলা হৃদয়ের কিনারে কিনারে
আলোকের ভাষে,
তোমার হাসির ছায়া কোমুদীরে সাজায়ে অশেষে
রহিল না দূরে,
ধরা দেছ আপনার মুক্তরাব্রে অসীমের দেশে
মানসমুকুরে ।

বহুদিন প্রতীক্ষার অবসানে একরাত্রি দেখা
 সোণার মন্দিরে,
 নিশান্তের অপরূপ তোমার এ রূপজ্যোতিলেখা ;
 হৃদয়ে বন্দীরে
 তবু যে ত্যজিতে হবে শিশিরাংশ মৃদিয়া গোপনে.
 ফণিকের খেলা,—
 এত কি মিছার ছুঁখ রুধি' যারে প্রভাত-স্বপনে
 একান্ত একেলা !

এ পূর্ণিমা যাবে চলে, লুপ্ত হবে মধুর উচ্ছ্বাস
 অমলিন প্রীতি,
 কোথাকার দীপ্তিময়ী কোথা যার ফেলিয়া নিঃশ্বাস
 শুধু জাগে স্মৃতি ;
 কেহ জানিবে না কিছু মিলায় যে উৎসবের বাঁশী
 শ্রান্ত উদাসীন,
 চরণরেখারে মুছে লুকাইবে অতৃপ্তিতে হাসি
 পরিচয়হীন।

শুধু কতটুকু স্মৃতি আশঙ্কায় উৎকণ্ঠ বাকুল
 কতক্ষণ তরে !
 প্রতিটী নিঃশ্বাস সাথে কাঁপি মরে মরমুকুল
 পলক ভিতরে ;
 কেমনে ভুলিয়া যাপি' কোন প্রাণে সায়াহু-আধার
 ক্লান্ত অবসরে,
 বিধুর বাতাস বহি' আনে ঘন স্মৃতির সম্ভার
 জীবন দোসরে।

সেও ভাল। শক্তি নাই, লুকাইয়া অনির্বচনীরে
 চাহি যে ঢাকিতে,
 জীবনে আনন্দবিহীন অনন্ত সে নিমেষের প্রিয়ে
 পারি না রাখিতে ;

কাব্য ও বাস্তব অনুভূতি

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একটা অমৃতস্পর্শ হৃদয়ের কুসুমাকোরকে
বহিরা সন্নিহিত
চলিছে অমরপানে ভুলাইয়া ছুঃখ ক্রান্তিশোক
গন্ধসম ধীরে ।

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কাব্য ও বাস্তব অনুভূতি

শ্রীমৌরীন্দ্রনাথ রায়—পঞ্চম বার্ষিক শ্রেণী, কলাবিভাগ ।

ন্যাথু-আর্গল্ড কহিয়া গিয়াছেন “কাব্য জীবনেরই মস্তোদধাটন” । সুতরাং তাঁহার মতে যে প্রেরণা সৃষ্টির অশাস্ত লীলার অন্তরালে জীবন ও জগতের প্রকৃত স্বরূপকে উপলব্ধি করিতে সাহায্য করে তাহাই প্রকৃত কাব্য-প্রেরণা । কাব্য নিছক মৌল্যবানুভূতি বা বস্তুহীন ভাব-বিলাসে পর্যাবসিত নহে । বাস্তব-চেতনাই কাব্যের প্রাণ-স্বরূপ এবং জীবনের সহিত গভীরতম যোগসঙ্গ কাব্যের পক্ষে একান্ত প্রয়োজন । বলা বাহুল্য এই মতের বিরুদ্ধে কাব্যকে জীবন হইতে বিচ্ছিন্ন করিয়া দেখিবার প্রবৃত্তি সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে প্রবল হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে । এই মত অনুযায়ী কাব্য ভাবনায়, আটাই ইহার প্রাণ-স্বরূপ কাজেই ইহা প্রধানতঃ রূপাত্মক, “রূপনিরপেক্ষ উপলব্ধির গভীরতা দিয়া কাব্যের মূল্য যাচাই করা বিড়ম্বনা মাত্র” । শুধু সৃষ্টির আনন্দেই কবি রচনা করিয়া চলেন, তাঁহার রচনা জীবনের মূল সূত্রে সমূহের সহিত সামঞ্জস্য রক্ষা করিয়া চলিল কিনা একথা বিচারে তাঁহার প্রয়োজন নাই । এই ছই পরস্পর বিরোধী মতবাদের সংঘর্ষের মধ্য দিয়া আধুনিক সাহিত্যের কাব্যজিজ্ঞাসা অগ্রসর হইয়া চলিয়াছে । তাই মনে হয় এতদিনে কাব্যসৃষ্টির একটা মূল নীতি অনুসন্ধানের সময় আসিয়াছে । বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে নিরপেক্ষ জিজ্ঞাসু হিসাবেই এই প্রশ্নের যৎকিঞ্চিৎ আলোচনা করিবার চেষ্টা করিব, এই কঠিন প্রশ্নের সমাধানের স্পষ্টা যে রাখিনা সে কথা বলাই বাহুল্য ।

আমাদের মনে হয়, কাব্যসৃষ্টির কোনও স্থির বা নিত্যকাল স্থায়ী আদর্শ নির্দেশ করা যাইতে পারে না । কাব্যের আদর্শ ও পদ্ধতি যুগে যুগে পরিবর্তনশীল । যে লক্ষ্যকে সম্মুখে রাখিয়া বৈদিক স্তব ও গাথা রচিত হইয়াছিল, কালিদাস বা ভবভূতির রচনা যেসেই লক্ষ্যকে অনুসরণ

করিয়া চলে নাই একথা বলা সম্পূর্ণ নিস্প্রয়োজন, যে তীব্র স্বাধীনতাপিপাসা ফরাসী বিপ্লবের সাহিত্যকে অল্পপ্রেরিত করিয়াছিল বৈষম্যবগীতিকবিতা গুলির উদ্ভব তদনুরূপ অল্পভূতি হইতে হয় নাই। পোপের ও বায়রনের কবিতায় মূলনীতি যেমন এক নহে, Francois Villon ও Walt Whitman এর রচনায় তেমনই আকাশ পাতাল প্রভেদ। ইহার কারণ অল্পসন্ধান করিতে গেলে অতি সহজেই উত্তর পাওয়া যাইবে। মানুষের মানসিকবৃত্তি যুগে যুগে নব নব রূপ ধারণ করিয়াছে এবং নব নব ভাবেই আত্মপ্রকাশের চেষ্টা করিয়াছে। প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগের নন্দনবনবাসী মানবশিশু ও বিংশ শতাব্দীর জ্ঞানবৃক্ষ ফলাস্বাদী সভ্যতাদৃষ্ট মানুষ এক ব্যক্তি নহে। তাই সেই বিস্তৃত যুগের গুহাবাসী পূর্বপুরুষের কল্পনার যে সকল খেয়াল গিরিগাত্র অলঙ্কৃত করিয়া রহিয়াছে তাহা আমাদের কোঁতুলকের আহাধ্য যোগাইতে পারিলেই আমাদের রসপিপাসা নিবৃত্তি করিতে পারে না। শুধু ভিন্ন যুগের কথা নহে আধুনিক যুগেও বিভিন্ন রচনার রসগ্রহণের শক্তি ভিন্ন ভিন্ন রুচি ও শিক্ষাদীক্ষার 'পরে' নির্ভর করে। একুপ মনোবৃত্তিসম্পন্ন লোকের অভাব নাই— যাহারা বার্গাড'শ বা ভিক্টর হুগোর রসগ্রহণের শক্তি হইতে বঞ্চিত ও এবং পরম আগ্রহের সহিত সুলভ রোমাঞ্চকর রেলওয়ে উপন্যাস পাঠে আনন্দলাভ করেন একুপ লোকের সংখ্যাও মুষ্টিমেয় নহে। তাহা হইলে ব্যক্তিবিশেষেও কাব্যাদর্শ বিশিষ্ট হইয়া পড়িতেছে।

আদর্শ যাহাই হউক, প্রভাবের দিক দিয়া লক্ষ্য করিতে গেলে সকল যুগের সাহিত্য এবং সকল ব্যক্তির রচনার মধ্যে খুব বেশী অনৈক্য দেখা যায় না। বটতলার শুকসারী উপন্যাস কোন অর্দ্ধশিক্ষিত পল্লীবাসীর নিকট যে আনন্দ ভাণ্ডার মুক্ত করিয়া দেয় এবং শেলীর কাব্যমালা হইতে কলারসিকেরা যে রস গ্রহণ করিয়া থাকেন তাহাদের প্রকৃতিভেদ থাকিলেও পরিমাণ ভেদ নাই। কিন্তু সাহিত্যিক নামস্পর্শী যে কোন ব্যক্তিই পূর্বোক্ত গ্রন্থকে সাহিত্যশ্রেণীতে স্থান দিতে অসম্মত হইবেন। তাহা হইলে বুঝা যাইতেছে নিছক আনন্দদানই সাহিত্যের শ্রেষ্ঠ মাপ কাঠি নহে, অন্ততঃ সর্বত্র এ নীতি খাটে না।

যুগে যুগে ও মানুষে মানুষে কাব্য সৃষ্টির নীতিগত পার্থক্য থাকা সত্ত্বেও সকল শ্রেষ্ঠ কাব্যতেই জীবন অল্পভূতির ছায়া লক্ষ্য করা যায়। আধুনিক কালের ইয়ুরোপীয় সাহিত্যে এই অল্পভূতি গভীরতর হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। কারণ ইউরোপে প্রকৃতির নিষ্ঠুর পীড়ন বশতঃ দেহচেতনা কখনও নিদ্রিত হইবার সুযোগ লাভ করে নাই, প্রাণধর্ম জ্ঞানে ও বীৰ্য্যে তাহার মধ্যে পূর্ণ-বিকশিত হইয়াছে। মধ্যযুগের সাহিত্যে যে বাস্তবচেতনা এইরূপ প্রগাঢ় রূপে দেখা গিয়াছিল একথা বলা চলে না বরং বলিতে হয় অনেকস্থলে ইহা পারলৌকিকতা ও বৈরাগ্যের অন্ধকারে রুদ্ধখাস হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল। কিন্তু জীবনকে তাই বলিয়া সম্পূর্ণরূপে উপেক্ষা করিতে পারে নাই। চসারের রচনা একটী রঙ্গিন যবনিকা বেষ্টিত ভাবজগৎ মধ্যে আবদ্ধ রহিলেও বাহিরের বস্তু জগতের আলোক রশ্মিও তাহার মধ্যে খেলা করিয়া গিয়াছে।

একথা বোঝ হয় কেহ অস্বীকার করিতে পারিবেন না যে যখনই জাতির প্রাণশক্তি নিতান্ত ক্ষীণ হইয়া আসে তখন তাহার সাহিত্যসৃষ্টিও আন্তরিকতা ও গাষ্ঠীঘ্যবর্জিত দরিদ্ররূপ ধারণ করে। ঠিক এই কারণেই মুসলমান বিজয়ের কিছু পূর্বে হইতেই ভারতীয় সাহিত্যের ঘোর দুর্দিন উপস্থিত হয়। তখন হইতে ভারতের ইতিহাসের যে অধ্যায় আরম্ভ হইয়াছে তাহা আজিও সমাপ্ত হয় নাই। ভারতীয় সাহিত্যের এ দৈত্যের প্রধান হেতুই এই যে ইহাতে জীবন সমগ্র অপেক্ষা মৃত্যু সমগ্রাই বড় হইয়া উঠিয়াছে, বাস্তব-প্রত্যক্ষ অপেক্ষা অবাস্তব অপ্রত্যক্ষের সহিত হিসাব নিকাশ অধিকতর প্রয়োজনীয় হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে। কালদাসের কাব্যে ভারতের যে ইতিহাস উদ্ঘাটন করিয়া দেখিয়াছে তাহা প্রকৃতই গৌরবের বস্তু। কিন্তু পরবর্তীকালের দায়ে বা ভারবির অলঙ্কারবহুল রচনা-নিচয় আমাদের চিত্তে সে অনুভূতি জাগাইয়া তুলে না। তাহা হইলে দেখা যাইতেছে কোনও বিশিষ্ট যুগের কাব্যের শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব নির্ভর করে, জীবনের রক্ষা-রেখা তাহার উপর কত উজ্জল ভাবে পড়িয়াছে এই বিষয়ের পরে।

এখানে বস্তু চেতনা বা জীবনানুভূতি বলিতে কি বুঝিতে চাই বলা আবশ্যক মনে করিতেছি। জীবনের গভীরতম সত্যকে চেতনা দ্বারা গ্রহণই জীবনের শ্রেষ্ঠ উপলব্ধি (Perfection of experience)। বাস্তবের প্রকৃত রসময় স্বরূপ তখনই কবিকল্পনায় প্রকাশিত হইয়া থাকে। শেলীর কথায় বলিতে গেলে “A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth.” জীবনসম্বন্ধে এই সত্যদৃষ্টির পরিচয় সকল উৎকৃষ্ট কাব্যেই পাওয়া যায়।

তাহা হইলে বুঝা যাইতেছে জীবনকে নগ্নভাবে গ্রহণ ও জীবনে শ্রেষ্ঠ উপলব্ধি এক বস্তু নহে। আলোকচিত্র ও শ্রেষ্ঠশিল্পীর সৃষ্টিতে এইখানেই প্রভেদ। যেমন কেবল অবাস্তব স্বপ্ন বিলাস বা নিছক অলঙ্কার পারিপাট্য ও ললিত শব্দযোজনা দ্বারা কাব্য গঠিত হইতে পারে না তেমনি ব্যবহারিক জীবনের যথাযথ চিত্রণই কাব্য আখ্যালাভ করিতে পারে না। কয়লা খনির বর্ণনা বা বস্ত্রগ্রন্থ হতভাগ্যদের চিত্র অঙ্কণ করিলেই সাহিত্য রচনা করা হয় না যদি না সেই সকল বর্ণনা ভাব ও রূপ সম্পদে হৃদয়গ্রাহী হইয়া উঠে। বস্তু ও ভাবের মধ্যে অপূর্ণ সমন্বয় সাধনেই প্রকৃত কবিত্ব শক্তি নিহিত রহিয়াছে। একজন শ্রেষ্ঠ সাহিত্যিকের রচনা এইজগতই প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীর বিবৃতি (Report) অপেক্ষা অধিকতর আদর পাইয়া আসিয়াছে।

আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যের আলোচনা করিলে এই বস্তুচেতনাহীনতার দৈর্ঘ্যই অতি নির্মমভাবে মনকে আহত করে। জড়ের সহিত সংঘর্ষে আত্মার যে সজীবতা, হৃদয়কে অব্যবহৃত ও প্রসারিত করিয়া ইন্দ্রিয়দ্বারে বাহিরকে সম্পূর্ণরূপে অন্তরে গ্রহণ করিয়া যে আত্মোপলব্ধি তাহা হইতে আমরা বহুদিন বঞ্চিত আছি। বস্তুকে উপহাস করিয়া যে ভাবলোক গড়িয়া তুলিয়া হইয়াছে তাহা গভীর অসত্যের পরে প্রতিষ্ঠিত। সাহিত্যে ভাব ও কল্পনার স্থান আছে।

কিন্তু যে কল্পনা সকল প্রকার জীবনসূত্র রসাতলে বিসর্জন দিয়া কেবল কুহেলিকা জগৎই সৃষ্টি করিয়া যায় সে কল্পনাকে ব্যাভিচারী আখ্যা দিতে হয়। কয়েকটি উদাহরণ লওয়া বাউক—
 একজন অতি তরুণ কবি লিখিতেছেন “তোমার আধভাঙ্গা গাল দুটা ও আঙ্গুরের মত আঙ্গুল চুমার সোহাগে রান্ধা হয় নাই”, কেহ লিখিতেছেন “তোমার ময়ূর পঙ্খীতনু ময়ূরেরই মতন পেখম মেলিয়া আমাকে উতলা করিতেছে” কেহবা লিখিতেছেন “তোমার গলার স্বর ছেঁড়াছাঁড়া কথার টুকরো ও একটু জিভের লাল আভা ইহাই আমাকে মুগ্ধ করিয়াছে, জানো, কাল আমার চোখে সাহারার জর নামিয়াছিল, একবার ঘোলা জলে গা ভিজিয়াছিল, হঠাৎ সে জল নিভিয়া গেল”। আরেকজন তরুণধর্মী অভিজাত সাহিত্যিক কি বলিতেছেন শুনুন, “তোমায় কতনা আদর করিয়াছি কিন্তু তোমার নয়নকুরঙ্গ চঞ্চল হয় নাই, বুকের চাদর সরাইয়া কখনও তোমার সোণার মত কঠিন হৃদয়নারঙ্গ খুলিয়া দেখাও নাই।” উদ্ধৃত স্থানগুলিতে “আঙুরের মত আঙুল” “ময়ূরপঙ্খীতনু” “জল নিবিয়া গেল” “নয়নকুরঙ্গ” ও “হৃদয়নারঙ্গ” প্রভৃতি শব্দগুলি কবিতা আকারে সজ্জিত হইলেও, সামঞ্জস্য ও সঙ্গতির অভাব বশতঃ সাহিত্যের কোঠায় স্থান লাভের যোগ্য নহে। সুসমাহীন ভাব এইজন্ত বাহিরের লোকের নিকট আবোল তাবোল বা বিকৃত মস্তিষ্কের সৃষ্টি বলিয়া মনে হয়।

পাশাপাশি দুইটা কবিতা লইয়া আলোচনা করা বাউক। ইহার কোন খানি কাব্য হিসাবে কতখানি সার্থক তাহার বিচার পাঠক করিবেন।

নদীপারের মেয়ে

আমার ব্যথার মালশে ফুল ফোটে তোমায় চেয়ে
 তোমার মদির স্বাসে কি মোর গুলের সুবাস মেশে
 * * * * নদীপারের মেয়ে

আমার কমল অভিমানের কাটায় আছে ছেয়ে
 ফুলের বুকে দোলে কাঁটার অভিমানের মালা
 আমার কাটার ঘায়ে বুঝ আমার বুকের জালা।

এবং

I wonder do you feel to-day
 As I have felt since hand in hand
 We sat down on the grass to stray.....?
 I would that you were all to me
 You that are just so much and no more
 See with your eyes and set my heart
 Peating by yours and drink my fill
 At your soul's spring.....

No I yearn upward and touch you close
And then stand away. I kiss your cheeks
Catch your soul's warmth—I pluck the rose
And love it more that tongue can speak.

এই দুইটির কাব্যবিবরের মিল থাকিলেও এবং দুইটাই এক ভাবকে আশ্রয় করিয়া রহিলেও একথা কেহ অস্বীকার করিতে পারিবেন না যে Browningএর কবিতাটিতে ভাবাবেগ প্রগাঢ়তর রূপে প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। তথাপি সেই ভাবনার মূলে একটা দিব্যানুভূতি ভাষার সুরে ও ছন্দে দীপ্ত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে কিন্তু বাঙালী কবির কাব্য সম্প্রতিহীন অতি বচন মাত্রে পর্যাবসিত হইয়াছে। নদীপারের কোন মেরেকে দেখিয়া যদি কবির মনে সত্য সত্যই এইরূপ ভাবাবেগ উপস্থিত হইয়া থাকে তবে তাহাকে স্বাভাবিক মস্তিষ্কতা দোষে কেহ দোষী করিতে পারিবে না।

বাস্তব অনুভূতি বলিতে আমরা সেই অনুভূতিকেই বুঝিতেছি যাহা কবির কাব্যে প্রতিকলিত হইয়া পাঠকের হৃদয়েও প্রতিধ্বনি জাগাইয়া তুলে। জীবনের সহিত কঠিন প্রত্যক্ষ পরিচয়ের যে বেদনা ইহাই সুরময় হইয়া কাব্যসৃষ্টি করে এবং এই সুরই মানুষের চিত্তকে আনন্দ-জগতে প্রবেশ করিতে সাহায্য করে। এইজন্ত কাব্য হিসাবে রবীন্দ্রনাথের “বধু,” “পুরুষের উক্তি ও নারীরউক্তি,” “বাক্তপ্রেম ও গুপ্তপ্রেম,” “দ্রুত আশা” “যেতে নাহি দিব” “মৃত্যুর পরে” নৈবেদ্যের ও শিশুর প্রায় সবগুলি কবিতা এবং এমন কি শিবাজী, ইহাদের স্থান অতি উচ্চে। যে সকল দুঃখ ও বেদনার প্রবাহ এই কবিতাগুলিতে সঞ্চিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে তাহা আমাদের দৈনন্দিন জীবনেরই ছবি ভিন্ন অন্য কিছু নহে। যেখানে বাঁশের খোটায় ডিঙি নৌকা সারি সারি বাধা রহিয়াছে সেই নদীর পারে ছুটিয়া যাইবার সে ব্যগ্র ইচ্ছা মাত্র মাগের সম্প্রতির অপেক্ষা রাখিতেছে বাংলার কোনো পল্লী-শিশুর নিকট তাহা অপরিচিত বলিয়া মনে হইবে না এবং ভাবসংযোগের সাহায্যে ইহা অনেক প্রবীণেরও নিকট তাহাদের বহুবিস্মৃত রুদ্ধ মনোগৃহ উন্মুক্ত করিয়া দিবে। যে শিশু মূর্খ অভিধান লাভে ছঃখিত নহে এবং যাহার পণ্ডিতমহাশয় হইবার ইচ্ছা আছে সে শিশুকে কে স্বচক্ষে দেখে নাই! রবীন্দ্রনাথের বধুটিকে দেখিয়া বাঙ্গালী গৃহের অবরোধরুদ্ধা দীঘির কালোজলে মরণলাভেচ্ছ একটি স্নানমুখীর ছবি মনে পড়ে। শিবাজী কাব্যে জাতীয় জীবনের যে উৎসাহ ও আকাঙ্ক্ষা বর্ষার নিৰ্ব্বারের মত শৈলবিদারী আবেগে উদ্বেল হইয়া উঠিয়াছে তাহার তুলনা আর কোন কবিতায় সম্ভবেনা। কিন্তু ইহাই হৃৎকের বিষয় রবীন্দ্রনাথও প্রধানতঃ ভাববিলাসী। বহুকাল ধরিয়া তাঁহার সঙ্গীতে যে রাগিণী বাজিয়াছে তাহা শুধু একটা বস্তু সম্পর্কহীন ভাবসর্গ রচনা করিতে পারিয়াছে। অধিকাংশ-স্থলেই তাহার সহিত জগৎসাক্ষাৎকার ও প্রত্যক্ষ জীবন চেতনার পরিচয় নাই। যে সঙ্গীতে প্রাণের উদ্বোধন করে না যাহা শুধু “বাজিবার জন্তই বাজে বুঝিবার জন্ত বাজে না,”

তাহাকে আপনার সঙ্গীর্ণ গণ্ডির মধ্যে আবদ্ধ করিয়া রাখাই শ্রেয়ঃ। সে গান শুধু বৈকুণ্ঠের তরেই এবং বহির্দ্বারস্থিত উৎসুক নরনারীর তাহা শুনিবার প্রয়োজন নাই। ঋষি ও কবির কার্যক্ষেত্র এক নহে, ঋষির সৃষ্টি ইন্দ্রিয়াতীত ও অপ্রত্যক্ষ কবির উপলব্ধি ইন্দ্রিয়গত এবং প্রত্যক্ষ। ঋষির সৃষ্টিতে দেহ অপেক্ষা আত্মাকে বড় আসন দিয়াছে, এবং মনের অদ্বৈত মহিমার বিজয়গীতি ঘোষণা করিয়াছে কিন্তু কবির চিন্তায় মনও বুদ্ধি ভাবনা ও চেতনা কল্পনা ও অনুভূতি একত্র সমন্বিত হইয়া পাঠকের মনে পূর্ণতর অনুভূতির উদ্রেক করে। এই জন্য ভারতের প্রাচীন ঋষিদের রচনা সাধারণের নিকট দুর্ভেদ্য প্রহেলিকার মত রহিয়া গিয়াছে। তাহা নরনারীকে আকুল করিতে পারে নাই কারণ তাহাতে যে মন্ত্র প্রচারিত হইয়াছে তাহা জীবনের মন্ত্র নহে, মৃত্যু হইতে অমৃতলোকের প্রস্থানের মন্ত্র। এই মন্ত্র গুহাবাসী ধ্যানবিলাসীর পক্ষেই শোভা পায় জীবনসংগ্রাম ক্ষেত্রে ইহার প্রয়োজন নাই।

বস্ত্রায় যখন লক্ষ লক্ষ দেশবাসী ডুবিয়া মরিতেছে, মাথার উপরে ইন্দ্রের বজ্র উদ্যত হইয়াছে, ব্যথাহত ক্রন্দনের ধ্বনি আকাশ বাতাস পরিপূর্ণ করিয়া ফেলিয়াছে, কবি কি তখন ও কল্পনার ধ্যানলোকে বসিয়া বর্ষামঙ্গলকাব্য রচনা করিয়া বাইবেন? আবার যখন তুর্ভিক্ষ পীড়িত নরনারীর মুখে অন্ন দাঁও অন্ন দাঁও বলিয়া চীৎকার উঠিতেছে তখনও কি কবির কুঞ্জে বসন্তেরই কোকিল ডাকিয়া বেড়াইবে? তুর্দর্শ শত্রু আসিয়া যখন গৃহদ্বারে হানা দিয়াছে, আতঙ্কক্ণল নরনারী ভয়ান্তচিত্তে ছুটিয়া বেড়াইতেছে, প্রাণোন্মাদী রণভেরী দেশের যৌবনশক্তিকে সংহত হইতে বলিতেছে তখনও কি কবির ভাবনাহীন কল্পমর্গে প্রণয়লীলা রিরহ ও অভিমান চলিবে? যদি তাহাই হয় তবে কবিরদমকে পাষণ্ড অপেক্ষা কঠিন বলিতে হয় এবং আরও স্বীকার করিতে হয় কবির চিত্ত অনুভূতি ও চেতনার শক্তি হারাইয়া ফেলিয়াছে, তাহার নিজের নিষ্ঠুর ও স্বার্থপর খেলা লইয়াই মত্ত। স্বীকার করি, কবিতা ও দেশাত্মবোধ একবস্ত্র নহে, কিন্তু ইহাও স্বীকার করিতে হইবে যে দেশাত্মবোধ ও কাব্য বিরুদ্ধ বস্ত্র নহে এবং কবিতায় অলীক ও অসম্ভব কল্পনার স্থান নাই। রবীন্দ্রনাথের একখানি উপন্যাস পাঠ করিয়াও ভারতবর্ষের যথার্থ চিত্র কোন বিদেশী উপলব্ধি করিতে পারিবেন না। ইহাদের প্রত্যেক নায়কনায়িকা অভিজাতবংশীয় এবং তাহাদের সৌখীন ভ্রুংখ ও বেদনাকে ঘেরিয়াই কবির কল্পলোক সৃষ্ট হইয়াছে। গল্পগুচ্ছের প্রত্যেকটা কাহিনী রূপকথা মাত্র, তাহাতে জীবনের সত্য সমস্তা সমূহ অল্প ছায়াই ফেলিতে পারিয়াছে। প্রত্যেক নরনারী ভাবলোকবাসী, তাহাদের শিক্ষাদীক্ষা রুচি বিচার আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষা মরজগতের অনেক উর্দ্ধে বিচরণ করিতেছে। ইহাদের প্রত্যেককে দেখিলে নগরীর কোনও বিশেষ পল্লীকে মনে পড়ে এমন কি অনেক সময়ে ইউরোপের কথাও মনে আসে কিন্তু হতাগিনী বঙ্গজননী “শীর্ণশাস্ত্র” রোগপীড়াক্রিষ্ট সন্তানদের চিন্তা কখনও মনে উদ্ভিত হয় না।

জানি সাহিত্যের আভিজাত্য বলিয়া এক নূতন প্রবৃত্তি সাহিত্যিক মহলে প্রবল হইয়াছে কিন্তু তাহা সাহিত্যবোধেরই লক্ষণ। জীবনের সকল সমস্যাই নাকি কবির ভাবনার

বস্তু নহে। কবির রচনা নাকি কেবল ভাবনার আনন্দেই নির্গত হইবে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ একবার সজিনাফুলকে সাহিত্যের জাতে তুলিতে নাসিকা সঙ্কুচিত করিতে ছিলেন। কিন্তু ওয়ার্ডসওয়ার্থ Lesser Celandine সম্বন্ধে যে কবিতা লিখিয়াছেন তাহা অপরূপ কাব্য স্বেমামণ্ডিত। এবং লুইটম্যানের লেখনীতে যান্ত্রিকসভার বাহন কলকারখানা ষ্টিম ইঞ্জিনও প্রাণময় সৌন্দর্যে মহিমান্বিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। 'পৃথিবীর অনুকণাটী পর্যন্ত পবিত্র হইতে পবিত্রতর প্রতীয়মান হইয়াছে। সাহিত্যের আভিজাত্য কথাটী সম্পূর্ণ নিরর্থক।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের শক্তি ভাবসম্পদ ও প্রতিভার প্রতি কেহ অশ্রদ্ধা করিতেছে না। তিনি কাব্যলক্ষীর যে রঙ্গীন রসরূপটি ফুটাইয়া তুলিতে চাহিয়াছেন তাহার চিরচঞ্চল প্রতিচ্ছায়া আকাশের বহুবর্ণী নীলিমার মত গানের মুকুরে স্পষ্ট ও জাগ্রতরূপে প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছে কিন্তু আমরা শুধু এইকথাই বলিতে চাহিতেছি যে তাহার প্রতিভার সৃষ্টিসমূহকে বহির্জগতের সুখদুঃখ হর্ষ বেদনার উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে চেষ্টা করেন নাই। করিলে কি হইত এ প্রশ্ন সম্পূর্ণ নিশ্চর্যোজন।

একথা মনে করিলে ভুল হইবে যে আধুনিক বাংলার অল্প সাহিত্যিকের রচনায় এই জীবনের ছায়া প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছে। যুগপ্রবর্তনস্পর্কী অতি আধুনিক লেখকের সৃষ্টি যে অবাস্তব ভাবাতিরেকের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত একথা অনেকের কানে নূতন শুনাইতে পারে কিন্তু ইহা অসত্য নহে। দুর্নিবার ইন্দ্রিয় পিপাসাকে ইহারা জীবনের একমাত্র সূত্র বলিয়া বিবেচনা করিয়াছেন। এবং উপন্যাসে কবিতায় ও চিত্রে তাহারই জয়গান সুর করিয়াছেন। বাস্তবধর্মগবর্ষী বুদ্ধদেবের একটা রচনাতে জীবনের সহিত স্নসজ্জতির পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় না। নারীচরিত্রের দুর্বলতা অঙ্কনই যেন সাহিত্যের প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য বলিয়া ধরিয়া লইয়াছেন। পরাধীনতা যে জাতিকে পঙ্কু করিয়া রাখিয়াছে, সহস্র রোগব্যাদি যাহাদিগকে কঙ্কালসার করিয়া ফেলিয়াছে তাহাদের হৃদয়ে “ভুখা ভগবানের” (?) এরূপ তাণ্ডব নৃত্য আসিবার অবসর কোথায়? এ বিষয়ের বিস্তৃত আলোচনা করিবার স্থান এ নয়—শুধু এইটুকু বলিলেই যথেষ্ট হইবে আধুনিক বাংলা সাহিত্যে গভীর প্রত্যক্ষ অনুভূতির পরিচয় অতি অল্পই পাওয়া যায়।

“বিস্মরণীয়” কবি এই ভাবতাত্ত্বিকতাকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া যে কয়েকটা কথা কহিয়াছেন তাহা উল্লেখযোগ্য—

উর্দ্ধমুখে ধেরাইয়া রজোহীন রজনীর মল্লিকা মাধবী
নেহারিয়া নিহারিকা ছবি.....
বুড়ুক্ষু মানব লাগি রচি' ইন্দ্রজাল
আপনা বঞ্চিত করি চির ইহকাল
কতদিন ভুলাইবে মর্ত্তজনে'..... ?

“জীবনের সুখদুঃখ বারবার ভুঞ্জিতে বাসনা

অমৃতে করেনা লুপ্ত মরণেরে বাসি আমি ভালো।”

বেদনার প্রেরণা কবিকে বহির্জগতের দিকে উদ্বুদ্ধ ও উন্মুখ করিয়া দেয় অনুভূতি তীর বলিয়াই কবির বহির্দৃষ্টি অত্যন্ত তীক্ষ্ণ।

আমল কথা এই “Art for Art’s sake,” “সাহিত্যের আভিজাত্য,” “রসসাহিত্য রচনা রসবোধের পরই নির্ভর করে ইত্যাদি বুলি একঘেয়ে রাণো ও নিরর্থক হইয়াছে। কবিতার প্রেরণা অত বিচার করিয়া চলেনা জগতের সকল প্রকার সৌন্দর্য্য ও সুখমাই তাহার লক্ষ্য। কবির বক্তৃতার মধ্যে নীতির বাণীই আত্ম প্রকাশ করুক কিম্বা শুধু সৌন্দর্য্যে লোকের ছবি গুণ্ঠন উন্মোচন করুক, তাহাতে বিশেষ কিছু যায় আসে না। দেখিতে হইবে রচনার মধ্যে সত্য অনুভূতি কতটুকু। অমর কবি গেটের কয়েকটি উক্তি এই প্রসঙ্গে উল্লেখ করা অসঙ্গত হইবে না।

“যে চেষ্টা অন্তর্গত প্রেরণা হইতে উদ্ধৃত নহে তাহা সম্পূর্ণ নিরর্থক। ভাষা যদি হৃদয়ের গুহা হইতে আপনার শক্তিতে বাহির না হয় এবং শ্রোতার মনের উপর প্রভাব বিস্তার না করিতে পারে তাহা হইলে যতই কল্পনা, উপমা, ও শব্দযোজনায় আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করা হউক না কেন সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি করা অসম্ভব।”

আজ বাংলা সাহিত্যকে তাই সোনার ফাউন্টেন পেন ও চায়ের পেয়ালার প্রভাব হইতে রক্ষা করা একান্ত প্রয়োজন হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে। একথা শুনিলে সকলে হয়ত বিস্মিত হইবেন শরৎচন্দ্রও এই প্রভাব কাটাঁইয়া উঠিতে পারেন নাই। তবে একটা গভীর সত্য তিনি প্রচার করিয়াছেন যে দেশের দুর্দিনে যে সাহিত্য রচিত হইবে তাহাকে বেদনার অশ্রুজলে অভিসিক্ত হইয়া বাহির হইতে হইবেই। কালিদাসের কাব্যে রঘুর দিগ্বিজয়, কুশের জীর্ণ নগরী সংস্কার, পুণ্ড্রমিত্রের অশ্বমেধ যজ্ঞ প্রভৃতির ঘটনার মধ্যে যে জাতীয় আশা ও আকাঙ্ক্ষার সঙ্গীত বাজিয়া উঠিয়াছে, বর্তমান বাংলা সাহিত্যে কদাচিৎ তাহার পরিচয় পাইয়া থাকি। কঠোর ও নিষ্ঠুরতম বাস্তবের সহিত একান্ত পরিচয়ের ফলে মানুষ আত্মাকে না হারাইয়া ফেলিয়া বরং তাহাকে লাভই করে। এবং জীবনযুদ্ধের মধ্য দিয়া আত্মার যে উদ্বোধন হয় তাহাই কবিতাকে গভীরতা ও বৈচিত্র্য দান করে। একজন অপরিচিত নামা কবির অনুসরণ করিয়া এ প্রশ্ন বাংলার কবিমাত্রকেই জিজ্ঞাসা করিবার অধিকার সকলের আছে যে,—

“কবি সেকি শুধু কথা কবে ?

সেকি শুধু এ সংসারে উৎসবের উপচারে

দুর্দিনের হাহাকারে নহে ?

বহিদাহে গৃহজন যবে করে প্রাণপণ
 সে তখনো শুধু কথা কহে
 তরণী ডুবিছে ঝড়ে যাত্রীদল সমন্বরে
 জুড়িয়াছে গভীর ক্রন্দন
 তীরে সমাহিত চিতে দেহাহ-দেহলীতে
 তখনো সে দিবে আলিম্পন ?
 ধরণীর মর্ম্মতলে যেথা চলে রৌদ্রজলে
 মানুষের অভিষেক স্থান
 বন্ধুর বাস্তবলোক চারিদিকে ছুঃখ শোক
 সেথা কি কবির নাহি স্থান ?
 অংঘাত লাঞ্ছনা ব্যথা মানুষে শিখায় যথা
 মহত্ত্বের উত্তরাধিকার
 সেথা নাহি পশে সেকি ? শুধু দূর হ'তে দেখি
 নিজ মনে স্বপ্ন রচে তা'র ?”

“কবি-পরিচিতির” পরিচয়

অধ্যাপক শ্রীশিবপ্রসাদ ভট্টাচার্য্য এম, এ,

“কবি-পরিচিতি” রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদ সম্পাদিত সপ্ততিতম রবীন্দ্র-জন্মতিথিতে প্রকাশিত রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্যের একখানি মনোজ্ঞ আলোচনা গ্রন্থ। আমাদের বিশ্বাস এই গ্রন্থখানি কবির কাব্য বুঝিবার জন্য যাহারা প্রভূত প্রয়াসী তাহাদের উপকারে আসিবে। “রবীন্দ্রনাথ সর্ব-কালের লিরিক কবিদের মধ্যে সর্বতোভাবে বরণ্য ও শ্রেষ্ঠ” ভূমিকায় অধ্যক্ষ ডাঃ শ্রীযুক্ত সুরেন্দ্র নাথ দাসগুপ্ত মহাশয়ের এই সিদ্ধান্ত “ভূতার্থব্যাহতিঃ”. “স্তুতিমাত্রম্” নহে। সেই কারণে বপার্শ্ব বোদ্ধা ও বিচক্ষণ বিচারকের পরিপক্ববুদ্ধি প্রসূত আলোচনার ফল এই সাহিত্যের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা সম্পন্ন শিক্ষার্থী ও সাধারণ পাঠকের যতই সহজলভ্য হয় ততই মঙ্গল, একথা কিছুকাল পূর্বে

আমরা অল্প প্রসঙ্গে জানাইয়াছি।† রবীন্দ্রপরিবদ্ এই কার্য্য আন্তরিকতার সহিত আরম্ভ করিয়াছেন বলিয়া তাঁহার সাহিত্যানুরাগী বাক্তিমাধুর্য্যের কৃতজ্ঞতা অর্জন করিলেন।

কবির, পরিষৎ তথা এ গ্রন্থ সম্বন্ধে, আগ্রহ ও আস্থা তাঁহার স্বকৃত নামকরণ, তাঁহার কাব্য জীবনের ভূমিকাস্বরূপ কবিতা, ও তাঁহার দুইটি সুন্দর প্রবন্ধ হইতে পরিস্ফুট। জীবনের “যাত্রা-পথে কুড়ানো” তাঁহার এই “বিচিত্রের ধর্ম্মবাঁশি থানি”র সুর, যে বাঁশি তিনি প্রাণের নিঃশ্বাসে ভরিয়াছেন, যাহা হৃন্দের অন্তরালে, কবির অন্তরের আনন্দ বেদনা জ্ঞাপন করিয়াছে ও করিতেছে, যাহা মানবজাতির স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত ভক্তিরসবিস্ময়তার অপূর্ব অবদান, আমাদের ভারতের আলাকারিক-চুড়ামণি সার্থকনামা আনন্দবর্দ্ধনের এক অপূর্ব আনন্দনিষ্ঠদের কথাই স্মরণ করাইয়া দেয়।‡ বাংলার অতি আধুনিক সাহিত্য—যাহা তরুণের জয় ঘোষণায় আত্মনিয়োগ করিয়াছে ও বাঁশিকার মাংগুলি সাহিত্য-সমালোচনা-পদ্ধতি—যাহা একেবারে অশাস্ত্রীয় ও যাহা বাঁপসা মনোবৃত্তির নিদর্শন—কবির দুইটি প্রবন্ধ হইতে ইহার শিক্ষা, সাহায্য ও সতর্কতা লাভ করিবে এমন আশা হয়ত ভ্রাশা নহে। “উপাদান নিয়ে সাহিত্য নয়, রসময় ভাষারূপ নিয়েই সাহিত্য,” “সৃষ্টি আপনাকে আপনি প্রমাণ করে, উপাদান বিশ্লেষণ দ্বারা নয়, নিজের সমগ্র সম্পূর্ণরূপটি প্রকাশ করে ‘অনুকরণই চুরি, স্বীকরণ চুরি নয়’—এগুলি যেমন অনাদিকালের কবিপরম্পরার উপলব্ধি সত্য, তেমন তাহারা রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যে পরীক্ষাসিদ্ধ (demonstrated) বস্তু। কবির পরম আত্মীয় বাঙ্গালার অনন্ততন্ত্র রূপায় রচনায় স্বয়ংসিদ্ধ কৃতী লেখক শ্রীপ্রমথ চৌধুরী মহাশয়, ‘চিত্রাঙ্গদা কাব্যের রসময় ভাষার রূপের পরিষ্কার পরিচয় দিয়াছেন। সত্যসত্যই “চিত্রাঙ্গদার কবি যার মুখ দিয়ে যা বলেছেন তার সবই গীত হয়েছে”। প্রসঙ্গক্রমে তিনি চিত্রাঙ্গদা কাব্যের রুচি ও নীতি নিয়ে পুরাতন তর্কের অবতারণা করেছেন কতকটা পাজী টমসন্ সাহেবের দেশ ও কালোচিত নূতনতর রীতি ও নীতির উপর চাবুক চালাইতে। এ বিষয়ে আসল সিদ্ধান্তের অভাব তাঁহার যে কথাতে স্পষ্ট (“erotic কাব্য বলে কোন বস্তু নেই, কেননা যে মুহুর্তে কবির কল্পনা কাব্য-আকার ধারণ করে সেই মুহুর্তেই তা eroticism অতিক্রম করে”) তাহা সর্বকালে ও সর্বদেশের বিচারকদের অনুমোদিত সিদ্ধান্ত। অধ্যক্ষ ডাক্তার সুরেন্দ্রনাথ দাসগুপ্ত মহাশয় ‘বর্ষাকাব্যের ক্রমবিকাশ’ শীর্ষক দীর্ঘ প্রবন্ধে (পরিক্রমায়) আদি কবি বাঙ্গালীক হইতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পর্য্যন্ত কয়েকজন কবির কাব্যে বর্ষা প্রকৃতির বিশ্লেষণ নিপুণ ভাবে দেখাইয়াছেন। সুধী লেখক তাঁহার স্বভাবসিদ্ধ ভঙ্গীতে

† Foreword in Rabindranath—His mind and Art and other Essays by Kumudnath Das (Book Company Calcutta 1921)

‡ যা বাপারবতী রমান, রসয়িতুং কাচিং কবীনাং নবা

দৃষ্টবঁা পরিনিষ্ঠিতার্থ বিষয়োন্মেষা চ বৈপশ্চিন্তী।

তে দ্বে অপ্যবলম্বা বিশ্বমখিলং নিবর্গয়ন্তো বয়ং

শ্রাস্তা নৈবচ লক্ষ্মক্লেশন! তন্তুস্তি তুলাং স্বপ্নম্।

ভারতীয় বর্ষাকালো realism হইতে idealismএর উত্তিবার ক্রমপদ্ধতি বিবৃত করিয়াছেন। বর্ষার প্রকৃত প্রকৃতি, বাহা পূর্ব যুগের কবিদের রচনায় কবি সময়ের আড়ম্বরে কতকটা আব্বগোপন করিয়াছে—বাহা মধ্যযুগের বাঙ্গালা সাহিত্যে বারমাস্য প্রভৃতির মধ্যে অবাতর বহিরঙ্গ বলিয়া সরাসরি রূপে দেখা দিয়াছে তাহা রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যে যে রূপরস পরিগ্রহ করিয়াছে তাহার বিশ্ব সাহিত্যে তুলনা নাই বলিলেও অত্যাক্তি হয় না। সুপণ্ডিত পাঠক এখানে ওখানে পুরাতন ভাবধারার স্বত্রে আনন্দ ও চমক পাইতে পারেন—কিন্তু তাঁহার কাব্যে কবির দ্বয়ের নিছক নিজস্ব অনুভূতির গৌরবে শতদলের বিকাশের মত ঋতুর রঙ্গ ও ঋতুনিঙ্গের অপূর্ণ সময় দৃষ্টির আনন্দলীলা সম্ভব অধিকারী পাঠকেরই উপভোগ্য। অধ্যাপক ডাক্তার শ্রীশ্রীকুমার বন্দোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় বিশ্লেষণমূলক পদ্ধতিতে ও পরিপাটি রচনারীতিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছোট গল্প সম্বন্ধে সুন্দর এক প্রবন্ধ লিখিয়াছেন। তাঁহার কৃত গল্পগুলি বিভাগের প্রশালী ও প্রধানতম গল্পগুলির বক্তব্যের নির্ঘাস হইতে উত্তর কালে বাঁহারা এ বিষয় নইয়া আলোচনা করিবেন তাঁহারা প্রভূত ভাবে উপকৃত হইবেন বলিয়াই আগরা মনে করি।

অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত সোমনাথ মৈত্র মহাশয়ের ‘ছিন্নপত্র’ শীর্ষক ক্ষুদ্রকাব্য প্রবন্ধ আমাদের বড়ই ভাল লাগিয়াছে। অনবচ্চ গল্পে উৎকৃষ্ট উদাহরণ সমাবেশে কেবল কাজের কথা গুছাইয়া বলিবার সরল শিল্পকমার এ প্রবন্ধটি কবির “ছিন্নপত্রের” এক অতুলনীয় গুণজ্ঞানের আলোচনা (appreciation)।

শ্রীযুক্ত রাধারামা দত্ত মহোদয় ‘ঘরেবাইরে’ উপন্যাসস্থানির চরিত্রসৃষ্টির মর্ম্ম উদ্ঘাটিত করিয়াছেন ও কাব্যগানি সম্বন্ধে প্রকৃত ঘরের কথা (অন্তরঙ্গ কথা বাহিরের কথা নহে) নির্দেশ করিয়াছেন। নিখিলেশ ও সন্দীপের চরিত্রের প্রবল বৈলক্ষণ্য লেখিকা নিপুণ ভাবে দেখাইয়াছেন। তাঁহার মেজরাণীর চরিত্র বিশ্লেষণ বড় সুন্দর হইয়াছে। সমাজের বন্ধ মুসংহত জীবনের দীকৃত সম্বন্ধ কেমন সহজ, সত্য ও কল্যাণপ্রসূ হইতে পারে, মায়া ও মমতার আধার হইয়াও অবন্য পুরুষকার ও দৃঢ়তায় নারীহৃদয় কেমন তুর্জর শক্তিসম্পদে সমৃদ্ধ হইতে পারে লেখিকার চিত্রে তাহা বেশ প্রকট হইয়াছে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ গীতিকবিতার কবি বলিয়াই বরণ্য। এক অথও রসানুভূতি তাঁহার সমগ্র কাব্যরচনাকে উজ্জীবিত করিয়াছে। শ্রীযুক্ত নীহাররঞ্জন রায় ও শ্রীযুক্ত গিরিজা মুখোপাধ্যায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের গীতিকবিতা রচনার ব্যবহারিক ভাবে স্তর বিভাগ ও প্রত্যেক যুগের ধর্ম্ম নির্দেশ করিয়া দুইটি সুখপাঠ্য প্রবন্ধ লিখিয়াছেন। “রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও বিশ্বজীবন” প্রবন্ধের প্রতিপাদ, রবীন্দ্রনাথে সৃষ্টি প্রেরণা “বাহিরের বিশ্বজীবনের বিচিত্র প্রকাশ দ্বারা উদ্ভূত হইয়াছে,” “এই বিশ্বজীবনের অনুভূতি তাঁহার জীবনদেবতার অনুভূতি”। কবির দৈনন্দিন

জীবন ভক্ত বৈষ্ণবের জীবনের মত এক লীলার অবিচ্ছিন্ন ধারা। তাঁহার “প্রভাসদ্বীপ” হইতে “চৈতন্য” পর্য্যন্ত কবিতায় এই অবস্থার প্রকাশ। ইহার ক্রমপরিণতির অবস্থা “নৈবেদ্য” প্রভৃতি কাব্যে দক্ষ্য করা যায়, বাহার পরিণতি রূপে উত্তরকালে কবি ‘বলাকা’ প্রভৃতি কাব্যে প্রেম, যৌবন ও মৌন্দর্ঘ্যের জয়গানে কাব্য ও দর্শনের সঙ্গীর্ণ লীলাভূমিতে আপনার অমুভূতির আনন্দের মধ্য দিয়া বিশ্বজীবনের অভিনন্দন সমাপন করিয়াছেন। ‘বলাকার’ যুগে উপলব্ধির গাভীরা, প্রাচুর্য্য ও তদ্ভাষ্যেণ কবির চিন্তাকে দার্শনিক মতবাদের চাপে কাব্য হিসাবে কিছু প্রতিহত করিয়াছে, ইহাই হইল শ্রীযুক্ত গিরিজা মুখোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ের বক্তব্য। তিনি প্রমাণ প্রয়োগও এদিক্কে কিছু করিয়াছেন। Matthew Arnold-এর মতন সাহিত্যমুদ্রাগাগণের মধ্যে অনেকেই বলিবেন “Poetry is reality, philosophy illusion,” যে কাব্যে কবি দার্শনিকতার স্রোতো নিভেকে ঢাকিয়াছেন তাহা উচ্চ শ্রেণীর কাব্য নহে। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যে দর্শন ও কাব্যের কোমল কমনীয় কলেবরে ও নমনীয় পেলব প্রকৃতিতে আমাদের মুগ্ধ করিয়া ফেলে।

কবির কাব্য সমুদ্রের মত অপার, অতল, দুর্বিবগাহ। তাঁহার সাহিত্য লইয়া অনেক কিছু আশোচনা করিবার জিনিস রহিয়া যায়। পরিণতপ্রজ্ঞ কবি-প্রজাপতি দীর্ঘজীবন লাভ করিয়া তাঁহার কাব্যরসাস্বাদলোভু ভক্ত বৃন্দকে আপ্যায়িত করুন, আর রবীন্দ্র পরিষদ স্রোতা সভাপতি ডাঃ সুরেন্দ্রনাথ দাসগুপ্ত মহাশয়ের নেতৃত্বে উৎসাহী, রসিক, সহৃদয়, কাব্যমুগ্ধাঙ্গী তরুণ প্রার্থকে এই প্রারক কার্যের সাক্ষ্যতার জন্ত উদ্বুদ্ধ করিতে থাকুন ইহাই আমাদের অন্তরের আকাঙ্ক্ষা।

একটি কথা। পরিষদের ছাত্র সভ্যবৃন্দ এই গুরু কর্তব্য পালনের জন্ত যোগাত্ম অর্জন করিতেছেন ইহার প্রমাণ কি আমরা অদূর ভবিষ্যতে পাইব না?

রবীন্দ্র পরিষদ

চতুর্থ বর্ষ

গত ২৮শে ফাল্গুন বৃহস্পতিবার পরিষদের পঞ্চম অধিবেশনে শ্রীযুক্ত সুশীলচন্দ্র মিত্র 'খেয়া' সম্বন্ধে একটী চমৎকার প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন। শ্রীযুক্ত সুরেন্দ্রনাথ দাশগুপ্ত সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন।

লেখক বলেন, “আর কোন বইএর নামকরণ এতদূর সার্থক হয় নি। নৈবেদ্যের মধ্যে কবির আধ্যাত্মিকতার সূচনা, গীতাঞ্জলিতে পরিণতি মাঝখানে 'খেয়া'। খেয়ার মধ্যে যে মনের পরিচয় পাই তা খালি পাড়িই বিচ্ছেদ অশ্রো, অজানা পথে। যে জগতের পানে কবি খেয়ার তরী ভাসিয়েছেন, এখানে সেখানে পৌছান নি শুধু দূর হতে তার আভাস মাত্র পেয়েছেন। এই অকূল পাড়ির তরী যখন তীরে এসে ভিড়ল তখন কবির বীণায় অত্র সুর বেজে উঠলো। কবির মনের পরিণতিটুকু পাওয়া গেল গীতাঞ্জলিতে।”

শ্রীযুক্ত অতুল গুপ্ত ও প্রমথ চৌধুরী আলোচনার যোগদান করিয়াছিলেন। প্রবন্ধটি 'বিচিত্রায়' প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে।

১২ চৈত্র বৃহস্পতিবার রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'বিচিত্রা' গৃহে পরিষদের এক বিশেষ অধিবেশন হয়। সাহিত্য ও কলার আদর্শ সম্বন্ধে কবি বলেন,—“পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যে সব চেয়ে বড়ো ব্যাধি সমাজকে ভাঙার চেষ্টা, মানুষের সমস্ত সম্বন্ধকেই বিচ্ছিন্ন করবার, ভুজ্ঞ করবার ইচ্ছা। সেটা সেখানকার অবস্থারই স্বাভাবিক পরিণতি। কিন্তু আমাদের মুষ্টিল এই যে, আমরা তাদের ব্যাধির নকল করছি। সেখানকার চির পরিবর্তনশীল চিন্তার ধারা, রুচির গতিকে আমরা থামিয়ে দিছি, চলন্ত রথের একটা অবস্থাকেই চিরন্তন মনে করি। অনুকরণে যে দুর্বলতা সেটা আমরা বুঝতে পারি। আমাদের কি নিত্য আদর্শ নেই কলা ও সাহিত্যে?”

উপনিষদে ব্রহ্মকে গোপন, গভীর, গুহাহিত ও নিত্য বলে বর্ণনা করেছেন। মানুষের বত কিছু অধ্যবসায় এই গুহাহিতকেই দেখবার জন্তে। শুধু কলায় নয় বিজ্ঞানেরও তাই সাধনা। উপরের চঞ্চলতাকে সরিয়ে ভেদ করে ভিতরের নিত্যতাকে আবিষ্কার করে বিজ্ঞান। তত্ত্বজ্ঞানেরও সেই কাজ, আটেরও কাজ তাই। মানুষ কি রসের এই চিরন্তন-সদ্ব উপলব্ধি করতে চাইবে না অনন্তের মধ্য দিয়ে?

এই নিত্য রসের মধ্যে একটা গভীর প্রশান্তি আছে। সৌন্দর্য্যের সঙ্গে মহিমা (sublimity) এই হ'ল আটের স্বরূপ। Expression বস্তুতে অতি মাত্রার জ্বরদস্তির সঙ্গে

অনুপ্রকাশ নয়, Realityর সঙ্গে Eternal এর যোগে যে Harmony দেখা দেয় সেইটাই আর্টের বড় ধর্ম। ভারতীয় আর্টের মধ্যে একটা গভীর প্রশান্তি ও অন্তর্মুখীনতা আছে। এখানকার বর্তমান আর্টের ও সাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে যে Passionate উদ্ভাদনা দেখা যায়, সেটা পাশ্চাত্য থেকে পাওয়া।”

শ্রীযুক্ত সুরেন্দ্রনাথ দাশগুপ্ত, শ্রীযুক্ত চারুচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য্য প্রভৃতি আলোচনায় যোগদান করেন। খ্যাতনামা সাহিত্যসেবী প্রায় সকলেই এই সভায় উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

১৯শে শ্রাবণ, মঙ্গলবার পরিষদের সপ্তম অধিবেশনে সভাপতি শ্রীযুক্ত সুরেন্দ্রনাথ দাশগুপ্ত, প্রবন্ধ প্রতিযোগিতার পুরস্কার বিতরণ করেন। শ্রীযুক্ত অরুণকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়ের প্রবন্ধ সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বিবেচিত হওয়ায় তাঁহাকে প্রথম পুরস্কার, সুবর্ণ পদক ও দ্বিতীয় পুরস্কার কতকগুলি বই প্রদান করা হয়।

তারপর সভাপতি রবীন্দ্রনাথের দুইটি অপ্রকাশিত পত্র পাঠ করেন। গৌন্দর্য্য-সৃষ্টির সঙ্গে মঙ্গলের সম্পর্ক সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে তিনি বলেন, “মঙ্গলকে বাদ দিয়া কোন কাজ হয় না। রসের বৃত্তি ও মঙ্গলের বৃত্তি আলাদা নয়। কোন প্রয়োজনকে উদ্দেশ্য করে’ সৃষ্টি চলবে একথা রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেন নি, একথাও বলেন নি যে সৃজনের প্রেরণা আর কোন কিছুই সম্পর্ক রাখিবে না। এর মাঝামাঝি একটা ভাব তিনি নিয়েছেন।”

শ্রীযুক্ত প্রমথ চৌধুরী ও সরসীলাল সরকার আলোচনার যোগদান করিয়াছিলেন। শ্রীযুক্ত বিজয় আচার্য্য ও শিশির দত্ত গান করেন।

৮ই ভাদ্র, মঙ্গলবার পরিষদের অষ্টম অধিবেশনে শ্রীযুক্ত অরুণকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় “রবীন্দ্রকাব্য জিজ্ঞাসা” শীর্ষক প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন। শ্রীযুক্ত সুবোধচন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন। লেখক বলেন যে যুরোপীয় এবং ভারতীয় কাব্যভগ্নংএ বতপ্রকার কাব্যরীতি প্রচলিত হইয়াছে তাহার সকল কিছুই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁহার কাব্যে একত্র সংহত করিয়াছেন। তারপর লেখক এই সকল বিভিন্ন রীতির বিশ্লেষণ করিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যের সহিত তুলনামূলক সমালোচনা দ্বারা তাঁহার কাব্যের মূল বিশিষ্ট স্বত্বগুলি নির্ধারণ করিতে প্রয়াস পাইয়াছিলেন। লেখক বিশেষ করিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের রোমান্টিক কাব্যের আদর্শ বিচার করেন এবং বলেন যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের রোমান্টিসিজ্‌ম্ মিষ্টিসিজ্‌ম্‌য়ের আলোকে অনুব্রজিত।

শ্রীযুক্ত সুনীল মিত্র বলেন যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের রোমান্টিসিজ্‌ম্‌য়ের যেদিকটা আমাদের বেশী নাড়া দেয়, তা হল একটা গভীর আধ্যাত্মিক উপনদ্বি।

সভাপতি বলেন যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্যের গোড়ার কথা হচ্ছে একান্ত সহোষ। তাঁহার কাব্যে দেখা যায় জীবনটা অতি চমৎকার, একটা পরিপূর্ণ অনুভূতি, তাই তাঁহার ব্যথার কবিতার মধ্যে তীব্রতার অভাব। এই হিসেবে তাঁর কাব্য Unique.

গত ২৫শে বৈশাখ রবীন্দ্রজন্মতিথিতে পরিষদ হইতে “কবি পরিচিতি” নামক বই বাহির হইয়াছে। বাংলা আলোচনা সাহিত্যে ইহা একটা অতুলনীয় দান। মাসিক, সাপ্তাহিক এবং দৈনিক, ইংরেজী ও বাংলা প্রায় সব কাগজেই ইহার চমৎকার Review হইয়াছে। সাহিত্য-রসিক ছাত্র বন্ধুদের মধ্যে এই বইএর বহুল প্রচার বাঞ্ছনীয়।

শ্রীশিশির কুমার দত্ত

আশমগীর কবির

সম্পাদক।

বন্ধিম-শরৎ সমিতি

পঞ্চম বর্ষ

৭ই আগষ্ট

সমিতির প্রথম অধিবেশনে শ্রীযুক্ত সুবোধ চন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত “শেষপ্রশ্ন” সম্বন্ধে একটা স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ স্থাপিত এবং মনোজ্ঞ প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন। লেখক বলেন যে সমাজ সংস্কারের সহিত এবং সকল প্রকার প্রতিষ্ঠানের সহিত মানুষের অন্তরের সকল সহজ বেদনা এবং কামনার যে বিগুল সংঘাত তাহাই যুগ যুগ ধরিয়া মানুষের নিকট এক বিরাট সমস্যা, এক বিরাট প্রহেলিকার সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে ; ইহা মানবীয় সভ্যতার শেষ প্রশ্ন।

পরিশেষে সভাপতি ডাঃ শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় শেষপ্রশ্নের শিল্প হিসাবে সাহিত্য-জগতের স্থান কোথায় সে সম্বন্ধে এক মনোমুগ্ধকর বক্তৃতা প্রদান করেন। তিনি অতিশয় সুনিপুণ ভাবে শেষপ্রশ্নের ঘটন-বিত্তাস এবং বিভিন্ন চরিত্রের স্বল্প বিশ্লেষণ করিয়া দেখাইয়া দেন কি করিয়া শেষপ্রশ্ন শিল্পরীতির দিক দিয়া সঠিক সৃষ্টি হইয়া উঠিতে পারে নাই।

১৫ই সেপ্টেম্বর

দ্বিতীয় অধিবেশনে অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত সোম নাথ মৈত্র বিশ্বকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথের “শরৎচন্দ্র” শীর্ষক প্রবন্ধটি পাঠ করেন। তৎপর সভাপতি ডাঃ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় সুবিস্তৃত ভাবে বাংলার সমগ্র সাহিত্য প্রগতির একটি ধারাবাহিক ক্রম চর্চার সূত্র দেখাইয়া বাংলা সাহিত্যে শরৎচন্দ্রের স্থান নির্দেশ করিয়া ছিলেন।

১৭ই সেপ্টেম্বর

সমিতির বিশেষ অধিবেশনে শ্রদ্ধেয় শ্রীযুক্ত শরৎচন্দ্রের ৫৬তম জন্মতিথি উপলক্ষ্যে শুভজন্মোৎসবের আয়োজন হয়। ঐ উপলক্ষ্যে সভাগৃহ প্রাচ্যরীতিতে সজ্জিত করা হইয়াছিল

এবং সমিতির পক্ষ হইতে একটি রৌপ্যাধারে সম্মিষ্ট রৌপ্যপুথির আকারে অভিনন্দনপত্র প্রদান করা হইয়াছিল।

শরৎচন্দ্র অভিনন্দনের যথাযোগ্য উত্তর প্রদানের পর আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে বদেন— তাঁদের (আধুনিক সাহিত্যিকদের) মনো রাখা প্রয়োজন, সাহিত্য রচনায় আর বাই কেননা হোক শ্রীলতার শোভনতার কচি ও মার্জিতমনের রসোপলব্ধিকে অকারণ দাতিকতায় বারংবার আঘাত করতে থাকলে বাঙ্গালা সাহিত্যের যত ক্ষতিই হোক তাদের নিজেদের ক্ষতি হবে তার চেয়ে ও অনেক বেশী। সে আত্মহত্যারই নামান্তর।

সভায় বহু বিশিষ্ট সাহিত্যিক এবং বহু সুপণ্ডিত অধ্যাপক আসিয়াছিলেন। সার সি, তি রমন একটি সুরসিকতাপূর্ণ চমৎকার বক্তৃতা দ্বারা সকলের আনন্দ বর্দ্ধন করেন। বাংলার নটরাজ শিশির কুমার ভাট্টা মহাশয় একটি আবৃত্তি করিয়া ছিলেন এবং বাঙ্গালা দেশের বহু বিখ্যাত সঙ্গীতজ্ঞ গান গাহিয়াছিলেন।

৬ই অক্টোবর

তৃতীয় অধিবেশনে পথের পাঁচালীর সুবিখ্যাত লেখক শ্রীযুক্ত বিভূতি ভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় “শরৎ সাহিত্যে শিল্প কৌশল” নামে একটি চমৎকার প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন।

সভাশেষে সভাপতি মহাশয় শরৎচন্দ্রের সাহিত্যের মনস্তত্ত্ব সম্বন্ধে একটি সুন্দর বক্তৃতা করেন।

শ্রীযুক্ত অবনী রায় ও শ্রীযুক্ত অরুণ কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় আলোচনার যোগ দান করিয়া ছিলেন।

শ্রীঅমলেন্দু ভট্টাচার্য্য

সম্পাদক।

বঙ্কিম-শরৎ সমিতি

প্রবন্ধ প্রতিযোগিতা

বঙ্কিম-শরৎ সমিতি হইতে একটা প্রবন্ধ প্রতিযোগিতা ব্যবস্থা করা হইয়াছে। প্রবন্ধের বিষয়—“বঙ্কিম ও শরৎ সাহিত্যে নারী চরিত্র।” বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক, ছাত্র, রিসার্চ ষ্টুডেন্ট বা কোনও সাহিত্যিক প্রতিযোগিতায় যোগদান করিতে পারেন।

১লা জানুয়ারী ১৯৩২র পূর্বে প্রবন্ধ বঙ্কিম-শরৎ সমিতির সম্পাদকের নিকট বা অধ্যাপক শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ের নিকট পাঠাইতে হইবে।

প্রথম পুরস্কার—স্বর্ণপদক। দ্বিতীয় পুরস্কার—রৌপ্যপদক।

শ্রীঅমলেন্দু ভট্টাচার্য্য

সম্পাদক।





শশাঙ্ক ও চিত্রা

শ্রীকামাখ্যাকুমার চক্রবর্তী—পঞ্চম বর্ষ (সাহিত্য)

আগে, বহু আগে—অনেক পশ্চাতে
ফেলিয়া এসেছে তাকে কাল দূরে, বহুদূরে ।
এ বারতা মনে নাহি বাজে, শুধু যবে মধ্যরাত্রে
পদ্মা হাসে অকুটি-কুটিল একাকী-নীরব, শুধু সেই ক্ষণে
চন্দ্রিমায় ধৌত মেঘে জাগে এই কথা,
এ কাহিনী বহু পুরাতন ।

প্রাচীন প্রাসাদ কিন্তু পরম সুন্দর ।
সমুদ্র গুপ্তের বিশ্বজয়ী বাহু তার করেছে রচনা ;
গুপ্তবংশীয়েরা পারেনি রক্ষিতে তার যোগ্য সমাদর,
ধ্বংসোন্মুখ শতাব্দী সপ্তমে । তবু গৃহ রম্য শোভায় ।
পদতলে প্রবাহিতা কল্লোলা জাহ্নবী
তেজদর্পে ফেনিলা গর্বিণী, মত্ত কোলাহলে কভু,
কভু শান্ত, যেন লীলা-ক্লান্ত পড়ে ঘুমাইয়া ।

নদীবক্ষে জ্যোৎস্নারাত্রে কি যে কান্তি পড়ে উথলিয়া,
কি যে শান্তি কি স্বর্গ-সুখমা, সে জেনেছে
যে দেখেছে শুধু ; দিগন্ত-বিস্তৃত নভো নীলিমার তাল
প্রশান্ত স্রবর্ণ-রেখা গতিহীন বেগে
আপনার উচ্ছ্বসিত জীবনের গোপন কাহিনী কহিয়া আপনি,
রহে স্থির চিত্রপটে অঙ্কিত যেমন ;
নিস্তব্ধ পবন শুধু তীরে বন্ধ কোমল-পল্লব
আভূমি-লম্বিত শাখে রহিয়া রহিয়া
দেখে চাহি ঢেউগুলি ভেঙ্গে পড়ে নিঃশব্দ-লীলায়
তরুপাদমূলে ; উপরে নিশীথ-নাথ রহি রহি উঠে যে হাসিয়া,—
হাসিয়া নিদ্রিতা নদী অবনীৰ কোলে পড়ে ঢলি ।

আজি তাই মনে জাগে অতীতের অন্ধকার ভেদি
সেই চিত্র চারু অন্তর্যম ।—

প্রাসাদ শিখর পরে একাকী সেদিন
বসিয়া কুমারী চিত্রা স্থির নেত্র বিষণ্ণ-বদন,
অসংবদ্ধ কেশরাশি আজানু-লম্বিত, ধীর পবনে দোলিত ।
সেদিনো পূর্ণিমা নিশি জলস্থল জ্যোৎস্নায় প্লাবিত ;—
সেদিন বিবাহ নিশি চিত্রা-মাধবের ।

মৃত মহাসামন্তের কন্তকা কুমারী চিত্রা
বালাবধি রাজাশ্রিতা । কুমার মাধব
রাজাসনে নব সমাসীন,—জ্যেষ্ঠ ভ্রাতা শশাঙ্কেশ
বঙ্গযুদ্ধে ব্রহ্মপুত্রগর্ভে নিমজ্জিত, নিরুদ্দিষ্ট, মৃত ।

চাহি আকাশের পানে

একাকী বসিয়া চিত্রা প্রাসাদ শিখরে, সজ্জিতা তরুণী
যেন পথপাশে বাতায়নে বসি দয়িত উদ্দেশে ;—
তবু হায় হৃদয়ের কোণে কি এক অব্যাক্ত ব্যথা
করিছে ক্রন্দন । আজি বুঝি মনে হয়—মনে হয়
সে অনেক কথা—মনে হয় জীবনের প্রাতে
কে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছিল বালিকার ক্ষুদ্র হিয়া ভরি,
বালিকা সে দিয়েছিল সযতনে তুলি তার পায়
অর্দ্ধ-বিকশিত স্বপ্ন কুহুম-কলিকা ; প্রাণের মন্দিরে
প্রভাতের প্রথম কিরণে দেবতার হো'ল অভিষেক,
পূজারী পূজিল তারে, অর্ঘ্যসম শোভিল সুন্দর
শৈশবের গ্লানিহীন প্রেম ।

কিন্তু একদিন ঘুম গেল ভেঙ্গে । শরতের প্রারম্ভ তখন,
বর্ষার বর্ষণ শেষে জলহারা মেঘ
পথভোলা পথিকের মত ফিরে দিশাহীন,
ধরণী তাহার জলসিক্ত শ্রামল-অঞ্চল
পবন-চঞ্চল দীর্ঘ প্রান্তর বাহিয়া দেখ বিছাইয়া সূর্য্য-করোজ্জল ;—
সহসা যখন জরা-ছিন্ন সিংহাসন হ'তে এল আবাহন—
'যুদ্ধে যেতে হ'বে, বৃদ্ধের অঙ্গন মাঝে
বিদ্রোহের ক্রুদ্ধসর্প ওই উঠিছে গর্জিয়া,
মহা-অস্ত্রে মৃত্যু-মন্ত্রে শাস্ত ক'রো তারে,
যুদ্ধে যেতে হ'বে ।'

সথারে যাবার আগে কহিল বালিকা
 ‘সত্য কর, পুনঃ ফিরে আসিবে হেথায়’
 হাসিয়া কুমার, জাহ্নবীরে সাক্ষ্য রাখি, কহিলেন,
 ‘যদি বেঁচে থাকি, স্থির আসিব আবার।’
 চারি চক্ষু অশ্রুভারে আসিল নামিয়া।
 নগরে বিজয় বাঁচু উঠিল বাজিয়া।
 কিন্তু সে তো ফিরে আসিল না।
 বঙ্গের বিদ্রোহ-বহ্নি একে একে আসিল নিভিয়া,
 মগধের হতশ্রী-গৌরব রাজপাদমূলে
 বাঙ্গালার সামন্ত সকলে দিল উপহার
 রাজ-প্রাপ্য সৈন্ত-অর্থ যত।
 কিন্তু একদিন, বঙ্গের পূর্ব হ’তে জলোচ্ছ্বাস মত
 নেমে এল সমতল ভূমে কামরূপ রাজার তনয়।
 ব্রহ্মপুত্র নদী বক্ষে মগধের সনে
 অশ্রুযুগে তার পরিচয়। সমস্ত দিবস-ব্যাপী ঘোর যুদ্ধ
 গুপ্তরাজ জিনিলা সমর; কিন্তু হায় কঠিন আঘাতে
 কুমার শশাঙ্ক গুপ্ত জল মধ্যে লভিল শয়ন,
 বাটিকা থামিল যবে মিলিল না তাহার উদ্দেশ।
 এদিকে কুমারী চিত্রা মগধের রক্ষিত্রী দেবতা
 জননী শ্রামার পায়ে কহিল কাঁদিয়া,
 ‘কুমারে রাখগো মাগো আশ্রয়ে তোমার;
 যদি মা সে ফিরে আসে অক্ষত শরীরে,
 তোমার চরণ-পদ্মে দিব উপহার
 আমার বৃকের রক্তে পূজা-উপচার।’
 কিন্তু সে তো ফিরে আসিল না।
 কত দিন, কত মাস, কত বর্ষ গেল,
 তবু তার দেখা নাই আর। একে একে চলেছে বৎসর।
 পুরুশোকে বৃদ্ধ রাজা পড়িলেন ঢলি কাল-কোড়ে।
 পাটলীপুত্রের স্বর্ণ-সিংহাসন পরে মাধবের হো’ল অভিষেক।
 পট্ট-মহারানী দেবী মাধবের মাতা
 চিত্রারে বাসিয়া ভালো মেয়ের মতন,
 আপন পুত্রের সনে বিবাহ তাহার করিলেন সদা যে কামনা।

প্রথমে বাণেতে বিদ্ধ কুরঙ্গীর মত
 দেবীর এ অযাচিত দান চিত্রা করে প্রত্যাখ্যান ।
 কিন্তু হায় যবে গেল দ্বাদশ বৎসর শুধু বৃথা প্রতীক্ষায়,
 সযত্নে রক্ষিত যদি তবু ছবি হ'য়ে এলো ক্ষীণ,
 মাধবের সনির্বন্ধ অহুমোখে চিত্রা দিল সম্মতি তাহার,—
 সহসা আপনা ভুলি আপনারে করি প্রবঞ্চনা ।
 তবু হায় ভোলা নাহি যায় । ফুল যাবে ঝরে,—
 বর্ষার বজ্রের বাণী যবে যাবে ঘোষে,
 অপরাহ্নে মত্তবায় বাধাহীন লক্ষ্যহীন বেগে যবে তুলিবে উচ্ছ্বাস,
 দলিত বৃত্তের নীচে শ্রাম-শপ্পে ফুল যাবে ঝরে,—
 কণিকার সিল্কবারি যত ; তবু তার সুরভি-আভাস
 বাতাসে বাতাসে মরে ঘুরে ।
 প্রিয় যে সে সে যে চলে যায়, তবু তার স্মৃতি রহে জাগি,—
 মেঘ-মেঘুরিত চিত্র আকাশের তলে
 অর্দ্ধশুট রক্তহীন নীপ-বীথি বনে
 বাসন্ত-মিলন-স্বপ্ন-মধুরিমা মত
 অনন্ত আষাঢ় বুকে স্মৃতি রহে জাগি ।
 গঙ্গার সিকতাশায়ী গুপ্তরাজ প্রাসাদ-শিখরে
 একাকী বসিয়া চিত্রা আজি এই জ্যোৎস্না রজনীতে,
 স্বপ্ন-পশরার মাঝে পথ-শ্রান্ত বণিকের মত
 আজি এই বিবাহ-নিশীথে, বসি আজিকার মলয়-হিল্লোলে ।
 সহসা পশ্চাতে মূঢ় কার পদধ্বনি
 ধ্যানমগ্ন কুমারীর পশিল শ্রবণে,
 সহসা অস্পষ্ট কার দীর্ঘ ছায়া আসি,
 অশুট ছবির মত উঠিল ফুটিয়া
 ভ্রূক্ষেতে স্বচ্ছ চারু অলিন্দের মাঝে ।
 মুখ ফিরাইয়া চিত্রা দেখিলা সে দৃশ্য অভিনব ।—
 মূর্তি-মোহন এক নবীন পুরুষ স্থির নেত্রে দাঁড়াইয়া দূরে ।
 গভীর বিশ্বয়ে ভয়ে উঠিলা কুমারী,
 অসহ রোষের কণ্ঠে জিজ্ঞাসিলা, 'কে ও হেথা, কোন প্রয়োজন ?'
 ধীরে দৃঢ় পদক্ষেপে অনাহত অতিথি সে
 চিত্রার সম্মুখে আসি আপনারে করিলা স্থাপন,

নেত্রে নেত্র রাখি ধীরে শুধাইলা, ‘চিনিতে কি পারিলেনা তবে ?’
 প্রশান্ত চন্দের রেখা আসিয়া পড়িল তার মুখে,
 কুঞ্চিত পিঙ্গল কেশ স্বর্ণের মত উঠিল জলিয়া,
 অনিন্দ্য স্নন্দর বপুঃ অন্তঃগূঢ় ভাবের আবেগে
 রহি রহি উঠিল কাঁপিয়া ।

চিনিবেনা ? একি ভোলা যায় ।
 তোমার পিঙ্গল কেশে আধ্যাবর্ত চিনিবে তোমায় । চিত্রা ভুলিয়াছে ।
 মূচ্ছিতার মত সে যে নিম্পন্দ রহিল ক্ষণকাল,
 আকাশের সমস্ত তড়িৎ যেন গাত্রে তার এসেছে নামিয়া,
 যেন ধরণীর চুঃখ স্নুখ তার এত দিন ছিল যাহা
 তপস্রার সঞ্চয়ের মত ধরিত্রীর আপনার বৃকে—
 মাটির মানবী এই তরুণীর বৃকে
 অকস্মাৎ আজি তারা পেয়েছে আশ্রয় ।
 তার পরে ধীরে—
 ক্ষণপ্রভা বিজলীর ক্ষণিকের উদয়ের পর
 অমাবস্তা রজনীর অন্ধকার বিষয় যেমন—
 সেইরূপ আর্তমুখে চিত্রা উচ্ছে উঠিল কহিয়া,—
 ‘কুমার ফিরিয়া আজি, আজি হায়, এতকাল পরে ।’

হুজনে দাঁড়ায়ে চাহি হুজনের পানে ।
 নগরের কোলাহল নৈশ সনীরণে
 ভেসে আসে ভ্রমরের গুঞ্জনের মত ।
 নিশাচর পাখীদের আলাপের ধ্বনি
 মাঝে মাঝে জেগে ওঠে, আবার মিলায় ।
 স্তনীল গগনে একথণ্ড শুভ্র মেঘ শুধু ঘুরে ফিরে,
 বাক্যহীন নিস্তব্ধ জগৎ ।
 জ্যোৎস্না-পুলকিত দিশি বসন্ত রজনা,
 হুজনে দাঁড়ায়ে চাহি হুজনের পানে ।

কতক্ষণ গেছে এই ভাবে কেহ নাহি জানে,
 কেহ নাহি জানে এতক্ষণ কি অব্যক্ত কথা
 দুইটি তরুণ বৃকে উঠিয়াছে ভাসি কণ্ঠ করি রোধ,
 ক্রমে যেন স্বপ্ন হ’তে আপনাকে সত্যে শত বাথায় আনিয়া

মলিন হাঁসিয়া ধীরে শশাঙ্ক কহিলা,
 'সমরে আঘাত পেয়ে স্মৃতি মোর ছিল অপসার
 এতদিন, আরাকানে ধীবরের গৃহে অল্প এক কষ্টিন আঘাতে
 দ্বাদশ বৎসর পরে আবার সে এসেছে ফিরিয়া। তাই মনে হো'ল।
 পাটলীপুত্রের দ্বারে আস্তি শুনিলাম বিবাহ তোমার ;
 ভাবিলাম ফিরে যাই, নূতন জীবন যে আঁধার হ'তে উঠেছিল,
 সে আঁধারে ফিরে যাই। তবু সত্য ছিল, দেখা হ'বে দিতে।
 আজি তার হয়েছে পালন। মুক্ত আমি, চলেছি আবার।'
 'চলিবে কোথায় ?' বিশ্বয়-মুরতি চিত্রা উঠিল জিজ্ঞাসি,
 'তোমার সাম্রাজ্য ফেলি কোথা তুমি চলেছ ফিরিয়া ?'
 স্থির কণ্ঠে উত্তরিলা শশাঙ্ক তখন, 'সাম্রাজ্য আমার
 সাম্রাজ্য-লক্ষীর সনে মাধবেরে দিয়েছি বিলায়ে,
 ফিরে নাহি চাই।'

আবার হারায় কথা দাঁড়ায়ে দুজন।
 মরণ-আহত মুখে চিত্রা শেষে উঠিলা কহিয়া,
 'জীবনের শেষ দেখা এই, রাখো কথা, ডাকো মোরে,
 গঙ্গার সৈকতে বসি প্রশান্ত সন্ধ্যায় ডাকিতে যেমন করে,
 ডাকো আরবার, দ্বাদশ বৎসর পরে শেষ দেখা এই,
 এই শেষ।'

নিমেষ-বিহীন স্থির প্রতিনার পানে
 চাহিয়া কুমার ধীরে কহিলেন শুধু
 আবেগ-কম্পিত কণ্ঠে—শশাঙ্কের কণ্ঠ গেল কাঁপি—
 'চিত্রিতা গো চিত্রা দেবী চিতি চিত্রাঙ্কিতা
 শৈশবে সঙ্গিনী ওগো যৌবনে কাজিক্তা
 বিচিত্র-রূপিনী চিত্রা
 কেন আর মায়া বল হায়, স্থখে থাকো,
 করি আশীর্বাদ ; চিত্রা তবে রহিল বিদায়।'

চলিলেন শশাঙ্ক তখন—চরণ চলিতে নাহি চায়।
 হেন কালে লতিকার কণ্ঠস্বর নিম্ন হ'তে আসিল ভাসিয়া,
 'মহাদেবী, এস নেমে, বাসরের সময় অতীত।'
 বাতাস কহিয়া গেল কানে, 'তোল মুখ, বাধ কেশ, সখি,

কাঁদিবার অবসর পাবে পথে পথে,
জীবনে এমন দিন পাবেনা ফিরিয়া ।’

‘বিদায় কুমার তবে’—কণ্ঠস্বরে চমকিয়া চাহিলেন ফিরে
কুমার শশাঙ্ক শুণ্ড, দেখিলেন চিত্রার আননে
জয়ের তরল জ্যোতিঃ নামিয়াছে ব্যথারে ঘেরিয়া ।
সহসা তখন,—এক থণ্ড কৃষ্ণ মেঘ আবরিগ প্রশান্ত গগন,
‘চিত্রা, চিত্রা’ ডাকি উঠে ছুটিলেন কুমার তখন,
পড়িলেন গঙ্গাবক্ষে পশ্চাতে তাহার ।
গঙ্গা পুনঃ উঠিল হাসিয়া ।

* * * * *

ইতিহাস লিখিয়াছে বহুব্রাহ্মে ফিরেছেন শশাঙ্ক একাকী
সিন্ধু তল্ল সর্কহার শর্করার শেষ ঘাম ধরি’
অবসন্ন জীবনের গুরুভার বহিয়া একাকী
লভেছেন শেষ শয্যা দিবসের অন্তিম শিখায়
পেয়েছেন নদীতটে নদীজলে যে গেছে হারিয়ে,—
এখনো সেখানে গঙ্গা ঘুরে মরে হাসিয়া কাঁদিয়া ।

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মেঘনাদের জন্ম কাহিনী।

(কয়েকটা দেশী ও কয়েকটা বিদেশী লেখকের রচনার কায়া অবলম্বনে এই আখ্যায়িকা রচিত হইয়াছে)

শ্রীশৌরীন্দ্র নাথ রায়—পঞ্চম বার্ষিক শ্রেণী (কলাবিভাগ)

মেঘনাদের নাম তোমরা কখনও শুন নাই কি ! শুনিয়াছ ? তা', এমন কিছু আশ্চর্য নয়, সকলেই ওই কথাই বলে। তাহার চেহারা ? আবলুশ কাঠের মত কালো দীর্ঘদেহের ছই পাশে সাল প্রাংশুতুল্য বিশাল বাহুগুণ, শুনিয়াছি যখন তাহা মুষ্টিবদ্ধ হইত তখন অতি বড় সাহসী পুরুষেরও রোমাঞ্চেদগম না হইয়া পারিত না। বিরক্তি ও চিন্তায় তাহার জু ছুটী সব সময়েই ঝুঁচকিয়া থাকিত, এবং ক্রমপক্ষের অন্ধকার রাতে তাহার প্রদীপ্ত চোখ জোড়া তীক্ষ্ণ শানানো ছুরির মত জলিয়া উঠিত। মোটা লোহার থামের চূড়ায় একদল ক্রমসর্পকে কুণ্ডলী পাঁকাইয়া বসিয়া থাকিতে কখনও দেখিয়াছ ? তাহার এলোমেলো চুলের রাশ দেখিতে অনেকটা সেই রকম ছিল, স্নানজ্যোতি বৈশাখী সন্ধ্যায় পাগল বাতাসের সাথে সেগুলি সাপেরই মত কুটিল ফণা বিস্তার করিয়া গর্জন ও নৃত্য করিতে থাকিত। চেহারাটা কোথাও দেখিয়াছ বলিয়া মনে হইতেছে ?—অত্যন্ত স্বাভাবিক,—গ্রামের চৌকিদার হইতে বাড়ীর ঝি-টা পর্যন্ত সকলেই তাহাকে কোথাও না কোথাও দেখিয়াছে, নির্জন পথে ঘাটে, রাস্তার তেমাথায়, বেতের ঝোপের পাশে অথবা ভান্ডা মন্দিরটার কোলে ;—গ্রাম পার হইয়া বহুদূরে আকাশ যেখানে দিকচক্রবালের কোলে আপনাকে হারাইয়া ফেলিয়াছে, শীর্ণতোয়া নদীটির পরপারে যেখানে গাছপালা চিত্রার্পিতের মত শুষ্ক হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়া, এবং স্নান জ্যোৎস্না ঘন শাখাপল্লবের মধ্যে বন্দী হইয়া নিষ্কৃতির পথ পাইতেছে না ;—জনমানবশূন্য নিস্তরঙ্গ নিস্তরঙ্গ নিশ্চল জলাভূমি যেখানে পাংশুবর্ণ চন্দ্রালোক, দীর্ঘ তালকুঞ্জের কম্পিত ক্রমহায়া আর রাত্রির পক্ষীর অমাহুযিক কণ্ঠস্বর মিলিত হইয়া পথিকের চোখে মৃত্যুপুরীর একটু ভয়াবহ আভাষ আনিয়া দেয় কোথাও তাহার সহিত হঠাৎ অপ্রীতিকর দেখা হওয়া অসম্ভব ছিল না।

—আমি তাহাকে দেখিয়াছি কিনা ?

—না, দেখি নাই, তবু তাহার চেহারাখানি এখনো ছবির মত চোখের সামনে রহিয়াছে, এবং এখনো যেন দূরে তাহার কণ্ঠস্বর শুনিতে পাইতেছি।

—হেঁয়ালি বলিয়া মনে হইতেছে ? কিন্তু কিছুক্ষণ ধৈর্য ধরিয়া আমার কাহিনী শুনিলে হেঁয়ালি মনে হইবে না। তাহার একটীমাত্র চেহারা ছিল না, তাহার ভয়াবহ সম্পর্শে যাহারা আসিয়াছে তাহাদের বিবরণ বিশ্বাস করিতে হইলে সে মুহূর্তে মুহূর্তে নূতন নূতন

আকার ধরিতে পারিত, অর্থাৎ একজনের বিবরণের সহিত অস্ত্রের বিবরণকে খাপ খাওয়াইতে যাওয়া বৃথা চেষ্টা মাত্র। কাহারও মতে সে রোগা, কাহারও মতে স্থূলকায়, কাহারও মতে চোখদুটী কোটরগত আবার কেহ কেহ বলেন চোখজোড়া ভাসা ভাসা, কেহ কেহ তাহাকে অত্যন্ত কুৎসিত ও বীভৎস বস্ত্রিয়া বর্ণনা করিবেন কিন্তু কেহ কেহ আবার তাহার মধ্য দিয়া একটা ভয়াবহ লাংগোর আভাস খুঁজিয়া পাইতেন। কিন্তু কতকগুলি বিষয়ে যে মতদ্বৈধ ছিল না তাহার কিঞ্চিৎ পরিচয় পূর্বেই দিয়াছি। আর তার চাহনি অত্যন্ত হিংস্র, শরীরে অসাধারণ বল এবং বিশ্বে তাহার মত নিষ্করুণা ও ভবঘুরে কেহ ছিল না।

—না কাহারও প্রেতমূর্তির কথা বলিতেছি না, মৃত্যুর পরপারবর্তী রহস্য লোক সম্বন্ধে আমার কোনই ধারণা নাই। আমার কাহিনীর নায়ক রক্তমাংশেরই মানুষ—আমার বিশ্বাস, সে এখনো বাঁচিয়া আছে, আশা করি চিরকাল বাঁচিয়া থাকিবে। যেদিন সে জন্মিয়াছিল, কর্ণের মত কবচ কুণ্ডল লইয়া এবং এক লক্ষ কৈশোর ও বাল্যের ছুত্তর পারাবার পার হইয়া গিয়াছিল। তাহার প্রথম আবির্ভাব আমারই গৃহ সংলগ্ন উদ্যানে, তরু-শিশুদের তত্ত্বাবধায়কের ভূমিকা লইয়া। কিন্তু তাহার হাতের স্পর্শে এমন কোন ঝড় ছিল না যে আমার হতশ্রী উদ্যানে শোভা ও সুবাসা ফিরাইয়া আনিবে। অবতরবর্জিত জঞ্জাল ও আগাছা-গুলির দিকে লক্ষ্য করিলেই তত্ত্বাবধায়কের আলস্য ভবঘুরে স্বভাব ও লক্ষ্মীহীনতা সম্বন্ধে কাহারও সন্দেহ থাকিত না। তাহার সেই অকস্মাৎ আবির্ভাব সম্বন্ধে যেদিন সচেতন হই সেদিন তাহার বহু সরল ও সম্ভাবাবর্জিত চেহারাকে বেঁটন করিয়া কোনও রহস্য গড়িয়া উঠে নাই, কিন্তু পরমুহূর্তেই তাহার কর্মক্ষেত্র উদ্যান প্রাচীরের সীমানা পার হইয়া বহির্ভাগে ব্যাপ্ত হইয়া পড়ে এবং অনতিবিলম্বেই আমাদের ও পার্শ্ববর্তী গ্রামের সহজ ও অনাড়ম্বর জীবন যাত্রার মধ্যে বিপ্লব আসিয়া উপস্থিত হয়। তাহাকে কেন্দ্র করিয়া আমাদের গ্রামের ইতিহাস ধারা ঘটনাকীর্ণ চমকজটিল পথে প্রবাহিত হইতে থাকে।

গ্রামের নাম তালদিঘী, পশ্চিমে মধুমতী, পরপারে অন্তহীন বালুচর ও নদীর জলে নুইয়া-পড়া আমবনের সারি। আত্মীয়বন্ধুদের মেহ বেঁটন হইতে বহুদূরে যিনি একাধারে আমার গৃহিণী ও প্রিয় সখীস্থানীয়া তাঁহার সমভিব্যাহারে দিন মন্দ কাটিতেছিল না। কিন্তু আত্মীয়তার অত্যাচার হইতে রক্ষা পাওয়া দুর্ঘট হইয়া উঠিল। অর্দ্ধ মাইল দূরবর্তী সোনাপুর গ্রামবাসিনী কাদম্বিনী দেবী নায়ী জনৈকা অবসরপ্রাপ্তদারোগাগৃহিণীর গৃহ হইতে আমার গৃহিণীর সহিত বহুদূর সম্পর্কের কোন এক সূত্র ধরিয়া ঘন ঘন নিমন্ত্রণ আসিতে লাগিল। অতএব বর্ষার কোন বর্ষণহারা সন্ধ্যায় সদরদুয়ারে কাদম্বিনী দেবীর গলার আওয়াজ শুনিবার কিঞ্চিৎ পূর্বে হইতে আমার এবং আমার গৃহিণীর নিম্নলিখিত প্রকার কথোপকথন চলিতেছিল—

“সে গেল কোথায়?”

“এইত এইমাত্র কাজ করিতেছিল।”

(কাদম্বিনী দেবীর প্রবেশ)

“না, উহাকে ফেলিয়া ছুইদণ্ড চক্ষুর আড়াল হইবার জো নাই, আজ বোধহয় বাহিরে যাওয়া ঘটিয়া উঠিবে না।”

“ব্যাটা ভারি পাজি এবং মিটমিটে শয়তান।”

“হয়ত লাঠি খেলিতে ভাগিয়াছে।”

“কিধা গাছে চড়িয়াছে।”

“কিধা জলে বাঁপাবাঁপি করিতেছে।”

“কিন্ধা”.....

কাদম্বিনী দেবী—তোমরা ত কিধা কিধা করিয়া অস্থির করিয়া তুলিলে। কাহার কথা বলিতেছ ?

গৃহিণী—“.....বা...গানের মালী.....”

কাদম্বিনী—ও, আমি যাহাকে দিনকয়েকের জন্ত রাখিয়াছিলাম সে-ব্যাটাও ঠিক এমনি ছিল...ওর নাম কি ?

আমি—নাম...ওর নাম...

গৃহিণী—ওর নাম মেঘ-নাদ, বলিব কি দিদিমা উহাকে দিয়া কাজ করানো অসম্ভব হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছে, রোজ ত কাজে আসেই না.....তারপর এমনি ফাঁকি, দিদিমা আপনি নিজের চোখে.....ত ?

কাদম্বিনী—হ্যাঁ, সেত দেখিতেছিই, তা বাছা অমন নিষ্কর্মালোককে লইয়া একটু সাবধান—ওর নামটাও যেন কোথাও শুনিয়াছি—

সেদিন কাদম্বিনী দেবী বর্ষার কর্দ্ধমপিচ্ছিল পথ পদ-চিহ্ন লাঞ্চিত করিয়া তাঁহার গৃহে পদধূলি বা পাত্ৰকা-ধূলি দিবার জন্ত পীড়াপীড়ি করিলেন না।

এই ঘটনার দিনকয়েক পরে সকালে নিষ্কর্মার মত বাগানে বসিয়া আছি হঠাৎ কাদম্বিনী দেবী আসিয়া বলিলেন, “তোমাদের মেঘনাদকে বাপু দিনকয়েকের জন্ত ছাড়িয়া দিতে হইবে, আমার বাড়ীতে বিশেষ কাজের ঝঙ্কাট পড়িয়াছে, কয়েকজন দিন-মজুর না হইলে চলে না।” আমি বলিলাম, “কিন্তু ওতো আমাদের এখানে আর আসে না।” “কাজ ছাড়িয়া দিয়াছে ?” “হ্যাঁ, হিসাবপত্র চুকাইয়া লইয়া চলিয়া গিয়াছে।” “উহার বাড়ীতে খবর দেওয়া যায় না ?” “উহার কোনও বাড়ী আছে কিনা সেই তো জানি না” (অবশ্য জানিতে পারিলে খবর দিবার কোনও ক্রটি করিতাম না—দিদিমা কিঞ্চিৎ ক্ষুণ্ণ হইলেন, কিন্তু কি করিব ও অলস ও কাজে ফাঁকি দিত ইহা ছাড়া অন্য খবর রাখিবার কোনও দরকার বলিয়া ত মনে করি নাই)। “ওর সাথে কখনও দেখা হইতে পারে না ?” গৃহিণী কহিলেন, “না দিদিমা, ও-বড় বদখেয়ালী, কখন কোথায় চলিয়া যায় কেহ বলিতে পারে না।” ইহার অতিরিক্ত কিছু বলা সম্ভবপর

ছিল না, দিদিমা হয়ত আমাদের কথা পুরাপুরি বিশ্বাস করিলেন না। যাইবার পূর্বে আশাদিগকে উহার জন্ত বিশেষ চেষ্টা করিতে প্রতিশ্রুত করিয়া গেলেন।

চেষ্টায় বিশেষ কোন ফল হইল না, সে যেমন হঠাৎ আসিয়াছিল তেমনই হঠাৎ কোথায় উধাও হইয়া গেল। দিদিমার সহিত পুনরায় দেখা হইলে দুই চক্ষু কপালে তুলিয়া বলিলেন, “ওমা তোমাদের বাড়ীও থাকে না অথচ কোথাও কাজ করিবে না, এমন খামখেয়ালী লোকের কথা ত কখনো বাপু শুনি নাই, ওর চলে কি করিয়া!” “কিন্তু দিদিমা আমরা তো চেষ্টার ক্রটি করি নাই হতভাগা যে কোন চুলোয় পালালো!” দিদিমা আশ্বাস দিয়া গেলেন যেমন করিয়াই হউক উহাকে খুঁজিয়া বাহির করিবেন। আমরা ঘনিষ্ঠতার আতিশয্যে প্রায় তুলিয়া গিয়াছিলাম, দিদিমা অবসরপ্রাপ্ত দারোগার গৃহিণী। আমাদের মনে কিঞ্চিৎ ভরসা হইয়াছিল, কিন্তু দারোগা দাদামহাশয় ব্রজভূলভবাবুর সহিত দেখা হওয়ার জানিতে পারিলাম তাহাদের সকল চেষ্টাই নিষ্ফল হইয়াছে। অবশ্য তাহাদের নিকট সন্ধান লওয়া হইয়াছিল, তাহাদের মধ্যে প্রায় সকলেই মেঘনাদের নাম শুনিয়াছে এবং অনেকেই তাহাকে কোথাও না কোথাও দেখিয়াছে। যদিও দারোগাবাবুর নিজের চাকরও তাহার চেহারার বর্ণনা দিতে পারিল না, তথাপি সে হলফ করিয়া বলিতে পারিল যে, হাজার লোকের মধ্যে হইতে মেঘনাদকে চিনিয়া বাহির করা তাহার পক্ষে দুঃসাধ্য নয়। লোকটা যে নিতান্ত ভবঘুরে, আলসে এবং অত্যন্ত হতভাগা এ বিষয়ে দ্বিতীয় মত রহিল না। ভাবিলাম, হউক ভবঘুরে কিম্বা লক্ষ্মীছাড়া সে ত কাহারও কিছু ক্ষতি করিতেছে না। কিন্তু ব্রজভূলভবাবুর (এবং ব্রজভূলভেরও) মতে এমন নিষ্কণ্টক লোককে যথেষ্ট ছাড়িয়া দেওয়া প্রাজ্ঞজনোচিত নহে।

একদিন মধ্যাহ্নে ব্রজভূলভবাবু ঝড়ের মত ঘরে ঢুকিয়াই বিনা গোরচন্দ্রিকায় বলিয়া ফেলিলেন, “ভায়া হে, তাহাকে পাইয়াছি।” রোদ্রে ঘুরিয়া তাহার ললাট ঘন্মাক্ত হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল এবং তিনি হাঁফাইতে ছিলেন। “তোমাদের মেঘনাদ কেগো... নিশ্চয়ই, ইহাতে ভুল হইতে পারে না, বয়স চল্লিশের ওপর, ছিপছিপে চেহারা, সামনের দিকে ঝুকিয়া চলা অভ্যাস, গায়ে ময়লা কালো কোট, কিন্তু চোখ দুটি? সে-কি চাহনি! যেন বিড়ালের মত, কাণ দুটি খম্খমসে...” —“তাহাও আপনার দৃষ্টি এড়ায় নাই?” —“তাহা না হইলে কি আর দেখিলাম?” —দারোগাবাবুর তীক্ষ্ণ কঠোর দৃষ্টির সম্মুখে স্বীকার না করিয়া পারিলাম না মেঘনাদের চেহারা হুবহু ঐরূপই বটে। অতঃপর ব্রজভূলভবাবু সম্মুখস্থিত চেয়ারের পর ধপ করিয়া বসিয়া পড়িয়া আত্মপ্রাণপূর্ণ প্রকল্পিত মুখখানি ভরিয়া তুলিয়া একে একে তাহার অনুসন্ধান বৃত্তান্তরহস্য আমার নিকট বলিয়া যাইতে লাগিলেন। কেমন করিয়া তিনি খালের ওপার হইতে তাহাকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া তাহার পিছু লইয়াছিলেন, কেমন করিয়া গোয়েন্দাঙ্গুলভ সতর্কতার সহিত পা টিপিয়া টিপিয়া তাহার অতি নিকটে আসিয়া পৌছিয়াছিলেন, অপূর্ব চাতুর্যসহকারে হঠাৎ কেমন করিয়া তাহার নাম ধরিয়া ডাকিয়া তাহাকে চমকাইয়া দিয়াছিলেন,

কেমন করিয়া দ্রুতপদে তিনি তাহার অনুসরণ করিতেছিলেন এবং কেমন করিয়াই বা অকস্মাৎ সে উধাও হইয়া গিয়াছিল সমস্ত ঘটনা পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ তোমাদের নিকট বলিবার প্রয়োজন দেখি না। অবশেষে তিনি আমার লোকচরিত্রানভিজ্ঞতার সবিশেষ নিন্দা করিয়া কহিলেন, “ভায়া হে,এতদিন যদি এই কৰ্ম্ম করিয়া চুল পাকাইয়া থাকি তাহা হইলে ও বেটা খুনে ও চোর না হইয়াই যায় না। তোমরা কিছুই বোঝ না, কোথায় কে তাহার ঠিকানা নাই, দিব্য নিশ্চিন্ত মনে বাড়ীর মধ্যে ঢুকাইয়া বসিলে।” কথাটী সেদিন বড় ভালো লাগে নাই, নিরীহ নিরপরাধ ব্যক্তিত্বের পর এরূপ অত্যাচারের কোনও কারণ খুঁজিয়াই পাইলাম না।

শীঘ্রই ভুল ভাঙিল। একদিন শুনিলাম কাদম্বিনী দেবীর গৃহে চুরি হইয়াছে। অপহৃত সামগ্রী এমন বহুমূল্য পদার্থ নহে, তিনটী চাম্চে, কিন্তু কাদম্বিনী দেবীর বড় সাধের জিনিষ বিশেষ খরচ করিয়া বহুদূর হইতে আনানো। ঘরের ভিতরকার অল্প কোনও বস্তুর কিছুই হয় নাই শুধু চাম্চে তিনটীই অদৃশ্য। ভিজা মাটির পর কাহারও পায়ের রেখাটী পর্য্যন্ত পড়ে নাই। কিন্তু কে এই ওস্তাদ চোর? অবশেষে ব্রজচুল ভগ্নহিণী এবং ব্রজচুল ভবাবু নিজেরাই এই ব্যাপারের নীমাংসা করিয়া ফেলিলেন,—ইহা মেঘনাদেরই কীৰ্ত্তি, নতুবা এত সাহস ও ধৃষ্টতা অল্প কাহারও পক্ষে সম্ভব নয়।

ইহার পর হইতে মেঘনাদের নাম লোকের মুখে মুখে ফিরিতে লাগিল। ঘন ঘন তাহার সহিত লোকের দেখা মিলিত কিন্তু কি করিয়া সে যে এতগুলো সতর্ক লোকের চক্ষে ধূলি নিক্ষেপ করিয়া উধাও হইয়া যাইত তাহা আজিও সমস্তা হইয়া রহিয়াছে। “সোনাপুর-হিতৈষী” নামক পত্রিকায় তাহার অসম সাহসপূর্ণ কীৰ্ত্তি-কলাপের কথা পড়িয়া রোমাঞ্চিত হইয়া উঠিতে লাগিলাম। তাহার চেহারারও এক বর্ণনা পাওয়া গেল, “তাহার কপাল উঁচু, চোখ দুটা ড্যাবডেবে, গাল দুটা ফ্যাকাসে, সে অস্বাভাবিক চ্যাঙা, দেখিতে শীর্ণ কিন্তু শরীরে অশ্রুত হস্তীর বল। উপসংহারে সম্পাদক গভীর যুক্তি প্রদর্শন করিয়া বলিয়াছেন, “নিকটে ও দূরে যে সকল ছঃসাহসিক ডাকাতি হইয়া আসিতেছে তাহার সহিত মেঘনাদ যে ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে সংশ্লিষ্ট এরূপ সন্দেহ করিবার আমাদের যুক্তিসঙ্গত কারণ রহিয়াছে।” কিছুকাল পরে সংবাদ পাওয়া গেল, পুলিশের সুদক্ষ অনুসন্ধানের ফলে মেঘনাদ ধরা পড়িয়াছে। গ্রামান্তবর্তী অশথ গাছতলায় সন্ধ্যার আধ-আলো আধ-ছায়ায় মূর্ত্তিমান ভয়ের মত গুটিগুটি মারিয়া সে বসিয়াছিল, কিন্তু পুলিশের জমাদারের নিকট তাহার কোন চালাকী খাটিল না। তাহা না খাটুক, গ্রামের লোকের নিকট এই ব্যাপারে তাহার গৌরব কিঞ্চিৎ স্নান হইয়া গেল।

কিন্তু পরবর্তী সংবাদ আরও বিস্ময়কর। “আমরা জানাইতে বাধ্য হইতেছি, দস্যু-চুড়ামণি মেঘনাদের গ্রেপ্তার সংবাদ সম্পূর্ণ অমূলক। ধৃত ব্যক্তি নিরীহ একজন ফিরিওয়াল। কিন্তু অশথগাছের ছায়ায় যে ব্যক্তি বসিয়াছিল সে যে মেঘনাদ এ বিষয়ে পুলিশের লোকেরা

শপথ করিতে প্রস্তুত আছে। কি করিয়া এ পরিবর্তন সম্ভব হইল সে রহস্য মানুষের দ্বারা ভূভেদ্য।

মেঘনাদ তাহার পূর্ব গৌরব ফিরিয়া পাইল এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কাদম্বিনী দেবী স্বহস্তে গেলস তিনটা তুলিয়া রাখিয়াছিলেন।...বিনিদ্রনেত্রে ব্রজভুল ভাববুর রাত্রি কাটিতে লাগিল।

এবার শুধু কাদম্বিনী দেবীর গৃহে নহে, সোনাপুর ও পার্শ্ববর্তী গ্রামবাসীরাও মেঘনাদের উপদ্রবে অস্থির হইয়া উঠিতে লাগিল। সে দেখা দিত কিন্তু ধরা দিত না। এবং যেখানে যে মুহূর্ত্তে ও যে আবেষ্টনের মধ্যে তাহার আবির্ভাব হইত সেখানে সে মুহূর্ত্তে ও সে আবেষ্টনে তাহার সহিত সম্ভাষণ মোটেই প্রীতিকর হইত না। গভীর নিস্তরঙ্গ রজনীতে গ্রাম যখন স্তম্ভস্থিতে অচেতন তখন নদীতীরের নির্জন অন্তহীন বালুচরের উপর দিয়া তাহাকে বিরাট লাঠি ঘুরাইয়া পাগলের মত পায়চারী করিয়া বেড়াইতে পথিকেরা দেখিয়াছে।—গ্রামের প্রান্তবর্তী জলাভূমি, আবদ্ধ জলরাশি যেখানে বালুতণের ও নাঝে বন্দী হইয়া মৃত্যুর মত নিশ্চল হইয়া পড়িয়া রহিয়াছে ত্রু একটা জলবিহারী পাখী ক্ষীণকণ্ঠে বৃথাই ডাকাডাকি করিয়া মরিতেছে, সেইখানে গভীর চিন্তারেখা কৃষ্ণিত ললাটে করতলে মাথা রাখিয়া তাহাকে বসিয়া থাকিতে দেখা গিয়াছে। মুর্ছিত-রোদ্র মধ্যাহ্নে শ্রামলত্বে ঢাকা আইলের পর দিয়া দীর্ঘ পদক্ষেপে তাহাকে আসিতে দেখিয়া চাষারা ভয়ে লাঙল ফেলিয়া উর্দ্ধশ্বাসে ছুটিয়া পলাইয়াছে। দিগন্ত উদ্ভাসী রোদ্রেও তাহার ছায়া পড়ে নাই, কেহ কেহ বলে তাহার ছায়া উঠা দিকে পড়িত। আম্রবন যেখানে আসিয়া পরমআগ্রহে নৃত্যপরা মধুমতীর জল চুষন করিয়াছে এবং এখানেও কোতুলী পথিক উর্দ্ধদিকে চাহিলেই দেখিতে পাইত কম্পিত তরুশাখার উপরে বসিয়া কে পা ঝুলাইয়া দিয়া দোল খাইতেছে, তাহার শীর্ণ নয়নে হতাশার দৃষ্টি। বৈশাখী অপরাহ্নে হঠাৎ দিকচক্রবালের কোণ হইতে লম্বপুচ্ছ ক্লম্বর্ণ অশ্ব পৃষ্ঠে চড়িয়া তাহাকে আবির্ভূত হইতে অনেকেই দেখিয়াছে,—তাহার অশ্বের খুরধ্বনি ক্রমশঃ ক্ষীণ হইতে ক্ষীণতর হইয়া অসীম স্রুদ্রে মিলাইয়া যাইত। সন্ধ্যাবেলায় যখন মুক্ত বাতায়নপথে পূবে হাওয়া ঘরে ঢুকিয়া প্রদীপ নিভাইয়া দিত এবং বাহির হইতে রাজ্যের অন্ধকার ঘরের ভিতর ছ ছ করিয়া প্রবেশ করিত, তখন ঘুমন্ত শিশুকে বক্ষে টানিয়া লইয়া জননীরা জড়সড় হইয়া কোনমতে অসাড় নিম্পন্দ্রের মত পড়িয়া থাকিত। অনেকের কাছে শুনিয়াছি, তাহাদের বকের রক্ত হিম করিয়া দিয়া কে যেন অর্দ্ধরাগে শয়নকক্ষের দ্বারে আসিয়া ঠক ঠক ঝম ঝম শব্দে শিকল নাড়িয়া দিয়া যাইত।

আজকাল যাহাকে “মেঘনাদের মাঠ” বলে, উহার সহিত একটা আতঙ্কক কাহিনী বিজড়িত আছে। হেমন্তের কোনও চন্দ্রালোকিত রাত্রিশেষে স্থানীয় নায়েব মহাশয় অশ্বপুড়ে ঐ পথ দিয়া কাছারীতে ফিরিতেছিলেন, পরদিন সকালে চাষীগণ কোন বেতের ষোড়ের পাশে তাহার কণ্টক লাক্ষিত অর্দ্ধমুর্ছিত দেহখানি নিতান্ত অসম্মনস্কটক অবস্থায় কুড়াইয়া

পায়। তাহার নিকটে বিবরণ পাওয়া গেল, পথে আসিতে আসিতে হঠাৎ কোনও কারণে মুখ ফিরাইয়া দেখিতে পান ছইটী শীর্ণ ক্ষুধা-কাতর চক্ষু তাহার অনুসরণ করিতেছে। পাংশু আলোকে তাহার সম্পূর্ণ দেহখানির অবস্থিতি স্পষ্ট বুঝা যাইতেছিল না। অন্ধের গতি সংহত হইল, অকস্মাৎ চক্ষুজোড়া জলিয়া উঠিল এবং যেন তাহারই আলোকে মূর্তের স্থায় বিবর্ণ একখানি মুখ ভাসিয়া উঠিল, এবং সে মুখটী যেন... তাহার বহুকালমূত পুত্রের..... তাহার পরে কি ঘটিল বলিবার আবশ্যক করে না। কিন্তু আস্থা স্থাপন করিতে চাহিলেন না জমাদার সাহেব, গ্রামের বৃদ্ধ পিয়ন এবং এমন কি কাদম্বিনী দেবী। তাহারা তিনজনে ঐ রাত্রেই মেঘনাদকে সম্পূর্ণ বিভিন্ন স্থানে দেখিতে পান এবং স্মৃতিসংকলন করিয়া দেখা গিয়াছে—সাক্ষাৎ তা ঠিক যুগপৎ ঘটিয়াছিল। কিন্তু এখনো মেঘনাদের মাঠের পাশ দিয়া দিনের বেলায় যাইতেও গা ছমছম করিয়া উঠে।

এমনি করিয়া জীবন্ত একটা বিভীষিকার মত, একটা রোমাঞ্চকর নিষ্ঠুর আতঙ্কের মত মেঘনাদ গ্রামবাসীদের মনে দৃঢ়রূপে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইল। লুণ্ঠন পর তাতার দস্যুর মত সে গ্রাম্য জীবনের অনেকখানি যেন জোর করিয়া অধিকার করিয়া বসিল। তাহার রহস্যময় জীবনের একটা বৈচিত্র্যময় বৎসর মাত্র আমাদের জ্ঞাত ছিল, কিন্তু একটা মাত্র বৎসরই যুগ্মমান জটিল ঘটনা প্রবাহের গতি ও চাক্ষুষ শতাব্দীর ইতিহাসের সহিতও প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করিতে পারে।

কিন্তু শিশুমনের ওপর তাহার প্রভাব হইয়াছিল সম্পূর্ণ বিপরীত। ভয়াবহ হইলেও সে তাহাদের নিকট অনন্ত কৌতুক ও রহস্যের উৎস হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছিল, তাহার হিংস্রতা ও নিষ্ঠুরতা, আকস্মিক আবির্ভাব ও অন্তর্ধান, কৌতুকময় লুকোচুরীর কাহিনী শুনিয়া মনে হইত তাহারা এমন মজার কথা যেন কখনো শুনে নাই, তাহারা তাহাকে বড় রকমের একটা অবাধ্য ছুরন্ত শিশুর মত বলিয়া মনে করিত, দিবসে তাহারা মেঘনাদের রহস্যবহ কাহিনীর অভিনয় করিয়া আনন্দ পাইত। রাত্রে হয়ত আধো ভয়ে ও আধো কৌতুহলে তাহারা তাহার পদধ্বনি শুনিলে জন্তু কাণ পাতিয়া থাকিত, হয়ত তাহাদের মনে হইত মশারির পাশে কালো ছায়ায় গা মিলাইয়া সে ফিস্‌ফিস্‌ করিয়া কথা কহিতেছে, ছাতে বিড়ালের সহিত ঝগড়া করিতেছে, রাস্তায় মাতালের দলে গান গাহিয়া ফিরিতেছে। প্রবীণ স্থানীয় ব্যক্তিদের মধ্যে একমাত্র আমিই শিশুদের সহিত এ বিষয়ে একাত্মা বোধ করিতাম, তাহাদের রহস্য ও উল্লাসে উৎসাহের সহিত যোগ দিতাম,—এবং কেমন করিয়া মেঘনাদ আমার ঘরের ভিতর আসিয়া উৎপাত করিত, কেমন করিয়া চশমার খাপ টেবিল হইতে উধাও হইত, কেমন করিয়া উত্তানে ঘাসের মধ্যে তাহার সন্ধান মিলিত, কেমন করিয়া আমার গৃহিণীর মুক্ত কেশরাশি চেয়ারের হাতায় স্নকৌশলে আটকাইয়া পড়িত, কেমন করিয়াই বা বাঁধন সহসা খুলিয়া যাইত এবং তিনি ছমছম খাইয়া মাটিতে পড়িয়া যাইবার উত্তোষ করিতেন,

আমার দোয়াতগুলিতে কেমন করিয়া কালির বদলে জল আসিয়া জুটত এবং কেমন করিয়াই বা গৃহিণীর পানের মসলা কোন কোন দিন দেয়াল খসা চুণে পরিবর্তিত হইত, ইত্যাদি রহস্যময় ঘটনার বিশদ বর্ণনা তাহাদের নিকট দিতে আনন্দ বোধ করিতাম। অবশ্য উল্লিখিত উপদ্রবের জন্ত আমি এবং আমার গৃহিণী, ঈর্ষ্যা ও বিদ্বেষ বশতঃ সচরাচর পরস্পরকেই দোষী সাব্যস্ত করিতাম কিন্তু মেঘনাদের অস্তিত্ব ও দৌরাণ্ড্য সম্বন্ধে সচেতন হওয়ার অবধি এরূপ পুরাতন ও মামুলি ব্যাখ্যায় আমার বা আমার গৃহিণীর কাহারই মন সান্ত্বনা পাইত না।

প্লট জমিয়া উঠিতেছে বোধ হয়—কিন্তু ইহাতে যতখানি রোমান্সের আশা করিতেছ তাহার অর্ধেকও খুঁজিয়া পাইবে কিনা সন্দেহ।

তোমরা এতক্ষণে মেঘনাদকে অলৌকিক বা অসাধারণ কিছু ভাবিয়া যদি থাক তবে নিতান্ত ভুল করিয়াছ, তাহার ভিতরে সাধারণ মানুষের বৃত্তিগুলিও যে সঞ্জীবিত ছিল তাহার হৃদয়খানি যে একেবারে শুষ্ক কাষ্ঠ ছিল না, বিশেষ বিশেষ সময়ে যে তাহাতে তরঙ্গও উঠিত তাহা নিম্নলিখিত ঘটনা হইতে বুঝিতে পারিবে। গ্রাম্যজীবনে এরূপ ঘটনা দুইবার ঘটে নাই।

কাদম্বিনী দেবীর আশ্রয়ে বহুদিন হইতে একটা পরিজন-পরিত্যক্তা রমণী বাস করিয়া আসিতেছিল, পাচিকারুত্তির দৃঢ় ভিত্তির উপর তাহার যে আসন প্রতিষ্ঠিত ছিল তাহা হইতে তাহাকে বিচ্যুত করা সহজ সাধ্য ছিল না। হাঁ তরুণীই বটে, কারণ তাহা না হইলে তোমাদের দরদ আকর্ষণ করার চেষ্টা বৃথা। শুনিয়াছি, কৈশোর তাহার ঐ গৃহের চতুঃসীমানার ভিতরে কাটিয়া গিয়াছিল এবং যৌবনও উহারি মধ্যে চির আবদ্ধ হইয়া থাকিবার আয়োজন করিয়াছিল—তাকে বাহিরে খুব কমই দেখা গিয়াছে, কখনও তাহাকে কেহ উচ্চকণ্ঠে কথা কহিতে শুনে নাই। বৈকালে আঁকা বাঁকা পথে সজল চরণ-চিহ্ন আঁকিয়া দিয়া কলসী কক্ষে বখন সে গৃহ মুখে ফিরিত তখন কচিং বাতাসে উড়াইয়া লওয়া অবগুষ্ঠনের ফাঁকে তাহার ছুটা ঘন দীর্ঘ আয়তপন্ন চোখের ব্যাথাভারাকুল আনত শান্ত দৃষ্টি চোখে পড়িয়াছে। কে ভাবিতে পারিয়াছিল তাহার হৃদয়ের মধ্যে বিদ্রোহের বহ্নি গোপনে লুকাইয়াছিল এবং তাহাই একদিন লেলিহান ধূম শিখায় বিস্তার করিয়া ক্ষিপ্ত হইয়া দারোগা পরিবারের নিয়মিত শৃঙ্খলাসম্পন্ন সংসার যাত্রার মধ্যে বিপর্যয় বাধাইয়া তুলিবে। অবশেষে একদিন—বাহা ঘটতে পারে না, তাহাই ঘটিল। মেয়েটা পলাতক হইল এবং কাদম্বিনী দেবীর সংসারতরী কর্ণধারহীন অবস্থায় তরঙ্গ ভাঙিত হইয়া ঘুরিতে লাগিল। ইহাও যে মেঘনাদের কীর্তি বা অপকীর্তি তাহা অস্বীকার করিবার উপায় রহিল না। বিশেষতঃ প্রকাশ পাইল পূর্ব অপরাধে ঝাউশ্রেণীর আড়ালে সিন্ত বসনে কলসী কক্ষে দাঁড়াইয়া কোন অপরিচিত ব্যক্তির সহিত নিম্নস্বরে কথা কহিতে দেখা গিয়াছে। অপরিচিত ব্যক্তিটা একটা আনত বৃক্ষশাখার উপর ভর রাখিয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছিল, তাহার চেহারা লক্ষ্য করিয়া দেখিবার সুযোগ কাহারও

হয় নাই কিন্তু তাহার শীর্ণ চক্ষে বহিঃজালা ছিল, একথা সকলেই বলিল। একরূপ প্রমাণের বিরুদ্ধে হতভাগিনীর হস্ত লিখিত নিরাজ্ঞ কয়েক ছত্র—সে বহুকাল পরে তাহার নিরুদ্দিষ্ট স্বামীর দেখা পাইয়া স্বেচ্ছায় তাহারই সহিত গোপনে গৃহত্যাগ করিয়া বাইতেছে, সাহসে ভর করিয়া দাঁড়াইতেই পারিল না। কাদম্বিনী দেবী ভবিষ্যৎ বাণী করিলেন হতভাগিনী মেঘনাদকর্তৃক একদিন ছেঁড়া চটির মতই পরিত্যক্ত হইবে এবং অকৃতজ্ঞাকে অনতিবিলম্বেই ভ্রষ্ট আশ্রয়ে ফিরিয়া আসিতে হইবে। কিন্তু ইহা সফল হইবার কোন সম্ভাবনা দেখা যায় নাই। কেমন করিয়া ব্রজহর্লভবাবুর দুর্গের মত দুর্ভেদ্য অন্তঃপুরের ভিতর দক্ষিণা বাতাস প্রবেশ করিতে পাইল, কোন্ অসতর্ক মুহূর্তে তাহারই স্পর্শ পাইয়া হতভাগিনীর হৃদয়যমুনার বসন্তের বাণ ডাকিয়া উঠিল, শাস্ত চন্দ্রালোকেও কখন অগ্ন্যুৎপাত আরম্ভ হইল, মেঘনাদের শীর্ণবাগ্র দৃষ্টির মধ্যে কি এমন মোহিনী ছিল যাহা অকস্মাৎ এমন করিয়া গৃহকর্তৃত্বের ব্রহ্মচারিণীর সংঘের বাঁধ ভাঙিয়া ফেলিয়া লক্ষ্যহীন নিরুদ্দেশ পথে তাকে ভাসাইয়া লইয়া গেল—এ সকল ব্যাপার আজিও সমস্তার মত রহিয়া গেছে।

সংবাদপত্রে “নরপিশাচ মেঘনাদ” নামক একটি প্রবন্ধে পড়িলাম। “তুর্দান্ত অসমসাহসী প্রতিভাবান দস্যুর যে রমণী হৃদয় জয় করিবার অপূর্ব শক্তি আছে তাহা এতদিন কে জানিত। সম্প্রতি নরপিশাচ সোনাপুরের একটি স্বামীপূজবতী মহিলাকে ভুলাইয়া লইয়া নিরুদ্দেশ হইয়াছে। আমরা বিশেষ সংবাদদাতার নিকট হইতে জানিলাম এ পর্য্যন্ত সে অনেক অবলারই সর্বনাশ করিয়াছে এবং বহু সংসার ছারখারে দিয়াছে। উহার চোখ জোড়াতে নাকি সর্পের মত বাহুকরীশক্তি আছে এবং উহার দৃষ্টি বিবাক্ত ছুরিরই মত কোমল মর্মস্থানে গিয়া না বিধিয়া পারে না। হতভাগা মানুষ নহে নরদেহধারী রাক্ষস।

কিন্তু কুৎসিত বীভৎস শর্যতানরূপে তাকে ভাবিতে মনে বড় বাথা পাইত। তাহাকে কেন্দ্র করিয়া যে কল্পনা জগৎ গড়িয়া তুলিয়াছিলাম তাহার অকস্মাৎ গুড়া গুড়া ভাঙিয়া বাইবার কোনও যুক্তি ছিল। আমরা গোলাপ কুঞ্জতলে আষাঢ়ের ক্ষান্তবর্ষণ এক অপরাহ্নে, যখন পূবে হাওয়া শান্ত বেগু শাখার সহিত ছুটামি শুরু করিয়াছে এবং আকাশে ছিন্নত্ন মেঘের আড়ালে সূর্য্য কিরণেরা মায়াদীপ সাজাইয়া রাখিয়াছে তখন আমার গৃহিণীর কল্পনা হইতে তাহার উদ্ভব হয়। জন্মের পরে তাকে আমাদের উত্তান প্রাণীর বেড়া দিয়া তাকে আটকাইয়া রাখিতে পারি নাই সত্য—বস্ত্রের জল যেমন তটভূমি চূর্ণবিচূর্ণ করিয়া গ্রাসে ও লোকালয়ে বিস্তৃত হইয়া পড়ে মেঘনাদও ঠিক তেমনি করিয়া আমার প্রাণীর বাঁধা অতিক্রম করিয়া বিশাল জগতে ব্যপ্ত হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল, তবু তাহার জন্মরহস্য আমরাই একা জানিতাম, কিন্তু অশ্রু কাহারও তাহার চরিত্রে কলঙ্কলেপনের অধিকার ছিল না।

আবার হেঁয়ালি আনিতেছি, হে মেধা-অভিমানী স্থূলবুদ্ধি পাঠক, তোমার নিকট বিশদ ব্যাখ্যা ছাড়া অশ্রু কিছু চলিবে না। কিন্তু আমি ত মল্লিনাথ নই। তবু শুন। এ কাহিনীর সূচনায় আমার এবং আমার পত্নীর মধ্যে যে দাম্পত্য আলাপ চলিতেছিল তাহা যে পরস্পর

বিশ্রান্ত চিত্তবিনোদনের জন্তু নহে এ কথা নিশ্চয়ই বুঝিতে পারিয়াছ, আরও স্পষ্ট করিয়া বলিতেছি তাহা সেদিনকার বিশেষ প্রয়োজন সম্বৃত অভিনয় মাত্র। কাদম্বিনী দেবীর নিমন্ত্রণ এড়াইতে হইলে তুমিও দ্বিতীয় পন্থা কিছু ভাবিয়া ঠিক করিতে পারিতে না। এমন কতকটা খেলার ও কতকটা প্রয়োজনের মধ্যে মেঘনাদের নামকরণ হয় স্মরণ্য তাহার অস্তিত্বও সৃষ্টি হয়। এতদিন মিথ্যা কহিয়া এতগুলি লোককে ঠকাইয়াছি, কে বলিল,— আমাদের অভিনয় এমন কিছু নির্ভুল হয় নাই, সহজেই তাহার মধ্য হইতে খুঁৎ বাহির করা যাইতে পারিত তারপর ঘটনার স্রোত এমনি বিদ্যাবেগে প্রবাহিত হইয়া যাইতেছিল যে তাহাকে প্রতিহত করা আমার বা আমার গৃহিণীর সাধ্য ছিল না। চরিত্র কাল্পনিক বলিয়াই কি মিথ্যা হইয়া গেল—Shakespeare এর Puck ও Ariel এ কি কল্পনার সৃষ্টি নহে। এবিষয়ে আমার গৃহিণী অপেক্ষা Shakespeare অধিক অপরাধী। তা ছাড়া কল্পনারও যে সত্য অস্তিত্ব থাকে একথা তোমরা বিশ্বাস কর না কেন? আচ্ছা আর একটা ঘটনা শুন,—

ছয়মাস পূর্বে একদিন অপরাহ্নে আমার ভৃত্য আসিয়া খবর দিল একটা লোক দেখা করিতে চায়।

“কি রকমের লোক?”

“মজুর বলিয়া মনে হয়”।

“নাম বলিয়াছে?”

“আজ্ঞে হাঁ”।

“কি?”

“মেঘনাদ?”

“সে নিজে বলিয়াছে তাহার নাম মেঘনাদ?”

“হাঁ”।

“কোথায়?”

“রান্নাঘরের পিছনে দাঁড়াইয়া”।

“তুমি তাহাকে দেখিয়াছ?”

“নিশ্চয়ই”।

এক এক লাফে তিন ধাপ করিয়া সিঁড়ি পার হইয়া রান্নাঘরের নিকট আসিয়া পৌঁছিলাম। কিন্তু তাহার পূর্বেই সে হাওয়ার সহিত মিলাইয়া গিয়াছে। আমার ভৃত্যের সহিত মেঘনাদের এই মুখোমুখি সাক্ষাৎ কাহিনী আজিও রহস্যবৃত। কিন্তু সেই দিন হইতে আমার গৃহিণীর ও বিশ্বাস হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়াছে তাহার বাস্তব অস্তিত্ব থাকিলেও থাকিতে পারে।

সাংগরী

শ্রীদেবেশচন্দ্র দাশ

আজো কি পড়ে না মনে ?

বসন্ত-সমীরণে

খেলিলাম কত খেলা বালুকাবেলায়,

ফেনার মালায়

সাজিলাম কত রূপে তোমার উপবে,

কত সাধ ভরে

রচিলাম ইন্দ্রধনু দিগন্তে তোমার ;

কত যাচে নিশি পূর্ণিমার

তোমার অতল স্পর্শ প্লাবনে ভাটিয়,

অসীমের বক্ষফাটা আকুলতা কত সে লুটায় ;

সাংগরী সে কল্লোলেতে মাতিছে আপনে

তাই কি পড়ে না মোরে মনে ?

যুগযুগান্তের কথা প্রতি রাত্রি উৎসবের শেষে

তিলে তিলে জমিছে নিমেষে,

উয়ার উদয়াচলে স্বর্ণ আভাশি

ইঙ্গিত করিছে মৃদুহাসি,

নিশান্তস্বপনসুখশেষে

সমাপ্তি সে আসিয়াছে বিষণ্ণার বেশে ;—

এ পাথার পারে আজি সকলি উন্মনা,

তাদের অশান্ত ক্ষোভ শুরু যে হ'ল না ;

ভাষা স্রবিপুল

প্লাবিয়া ভাঙ্গিয়া মম কূল

মিলাল যে তরঙ্গের কম্পনের সনে ?

তাই কি পড়ে না মোরে মনে ?

উদাসে প্রদোষ-অন্ধকারে
 বারে বারে
 সম্মুখে ছলিয়া খেলে চঞ্চলার মীল-যবনিকা, —
 ব্যর্থকাম কল্পনার মালার মণিকা
 নিজ গলে পরে
 উৎসর্জিছে আপনার অতল সাগরে ।
 আমাদের মরণরূপে লভিয়াছ আপনার মনে
 তাই কি পড়ে না মোরে মনে ?

বঙ্কিম-শরৎ-সমিতি

২০শে ডিসেম্বর মঙ্গলবার শ্রীযুক্ত বুদ্ধদেব বসু সমিতির এক অধিবেশনে “শরৎচন্দ্র” শীর্ষক প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করেন। লেখক অল্প কয়েকটা মাত্র কথায় শরৎ-সাহিত্যের বিশ্লেষণ করিয়া নূতন একটি দিকের সন্ধান দিতে চেষ্টা করেন।

সমিতির সভাপতি অধ্যাপক ডাঃ শ্রীযুক্ত শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় উপস্থিত না থাকায় অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত সুবোধচন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত সভাপতির আসন গ্রহণ করেন। সভাপতি মহাশয়ও শরৎ-সাহিত্য সম্বন্ধে মনোজ্ঞ ভাষায় আলোচনা করেন। ডাঃ সরসীলাল সরকার, শ্রীযুক্ত অবনী রায়, শ্রীঅরুণ মুখোপাধ্যায় প্রভৃতিরও আলোচনায় যোগ দিয়াছিলেন।

বিশ্ব-কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্মোৎসব উপলক্ষে সেনেট হলের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীর জয়ন্তী-উৎসবে কবিকে সমিতির পক্ষ হইতে রৌপ্যানির্মিত অভিনন্দন পত্র প্রদান করা হয়।

সমিতি বাঙলার শ্রেষ্ঠ সাহিত্যিকগণের লিখিত শরৎ-সাহিত্য সম্বন্ধে কতকগুলি প্রবন্ধ লইয়া “শরৎচন্দ্র মরীচি” নামে একটি পুস্তক প্রকাশিত করিতেছে। অধ্যাপক, সমিতির সভ্য ও মঙ্গলাকাজক্ষীগণের সাহায্য প্রার্থনা করিতেছি।

শ্রীঅমলেন্দু ভট্টাচার্য
 সম্পাদক
