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AUGUST 1989 Rs. 10.00

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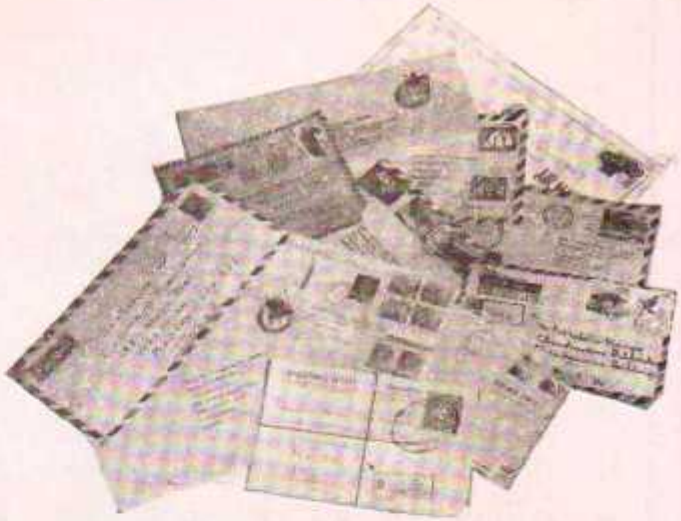
Cover

In this month which brought us freedom, the young India looks forward to a brighter future. Photograph by Rajhen Paul.



"NAMES BY WHICH WE ADORE THE HIMALAYAN PEAKS"

More than 55 years ago, I had read the story of Mt. Everest which gave an account of how, after several years of hard work in the course of which grave risks and untold sufferings were gone through, two ordinary (?) Bengalis discovered that the Mt. Everest was the highest mountain peak in the world. The adventure of these young men involved trekking up along the Brahmaputra through Assam and entering the then out-of-bounds area of Tibet, being arrested and imprisoned for several months on the suspicion of spying and suffering sickness, etc. When somehow after all this ordeal and the wonderful discovery about Mt. Everest, they managed to get back to their office in Calcutta, they were shocked beyond belief to know that they had been given up for dead!

The name of the peak is Chomolungma (which in Tibetan means "the Goddess Mother of the world"). What was the final result of the discovery of those two Indians? It was to name the peak "Mt. Everest" after the name of the Officer-in-Charge, thereby the real heroes, the two Indians were totally forgotten and the beautiful name of the peak was consigned to the remote corners of Tibet! Two grave injustices!

I remember that one of the two brave souls was Madan Lal. I cannot help feeling what a wonderful story it would make if somebody were to find out the details of this adventure and have it published in THE HERITAGE.

Pondicherry **—Vasudev Bhatt**

ON AIDS

I have just seen two issues of THE HERITAGE given to me by a friend. I am writing to tell you how impressed I am with its content. There is one point, however, on which I strongly disagree.

In your editoral on AIDS (April 1989), you lay the blame for the disease on "perversions (we) could very well have done without". What you are alluding to is homosexuality.

The fear of homosexuality that pervades the West seems to pervade your editorial, too. Here, in this Judeo-Christian culture where the Bible has such power over people, homosexuals are constantly blamed for society's ills. Verbal abuse, beatings and murders of homosexuals are not uncommon. AIDS is only the latest in a series of problems blamed on homosexuals.

Let me ask a rhetorical question: if you had lived in the pre-penicillin era, would you have blamed heterosexuals for the existence of syphilis and gonorrhea? AIDS is no different: it is a sexually-transmitted disease. If AIDS were due to homosexuality, thousands of heterosexual Africans would not be afflicted with it, and every reported case of AIDS in India would not be among heterosexuals.

Unlike Western cultures, India has never equated sex with sin and guilt. We have respected and honored sex as a divine gift for recreation and procreation, as one of the many ways to attain *moksha*.

Homosexuality is not an acquired taste, choice or preference. It is rather like gender or skin color — it is inborn, and cannot be changed. Homosexuality does not mean promiscuity. Homosexuals can maintain long-term, stable, loving relationships with one another, provided society is willing to recognize them.

San Jose, USA **—Arvind Kumar**

"THE ADVENTURE OF MUSIC"

I am keen to make a few observations on the feature (June '89) by Romen Palit. He says "But the real apex was reached in Muthuswami Diksitar (1775-1834), Thyagaraja (1767-1847) and Syama Sastri (1762-1827). Of the three, the great Saint Thyagaraja was certainly the most eminent. He combined the classical trend with that of devotion. He has become a household word in South India. ...All

these composers or Vaggeyakars wrote in Telugu or Sanskrit."

The other great composer of South India, Maharaja Swathi Tirunal (1813-1846), in his short life contributed to music almost as much as the three venerable trinity and he has composed in Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, Marathi and Hindustani.

The author says, "In Kerala there flourished Basava, Allamprabhu and Akkamahadevi in the 12th century". Basava and Akkamahadevi were from Karnataka and Allamprabhu too was not from Kerala.

Bangalore **—Marthanda Varma**

"FIVE GOLD BRICKS A DAY"

If I had the facilities I would have a copy of this piece (June '89) sent to every adult Indian.

Delhi **—Mohan Tyagi**

AN ENIGMA

I am surprised that THE HERITAGE is not available everywhere. Is there any other magazine in India with such variety, such thought-provoking articles and such an excellent combination of creative writing (fiction, poetry) and features? The fact that one has to hunt for this magazine and go to some specific news-stands speaks a lot: that smaller news-stands do not keep it because they wish to use their space for such lighter things which "move fast". But I know that THE HERITAGE also moves fast. I do not get my copy if I am late by two or three days after its arrival in the news-stand! So, why don't all the news-stands keep this magazine? This is an enigma for me. How would people know that such a gem is there amidst a number of more glittering glass or plastic wares?

Bombay **—Sobhna Pathak**

THE SECRET SOURCE OF THE GANGES

The book feature (June '89) enthralled me. For a full day I roamed about in the hidden spheres of the Himalayas. I do not know at which plane of material or non-material reality this strange land is situated. But I felt it came very near to me through this mysterious traveller's account.

Darjeeling **—Shantimoy Dasgupta**

"THE PHYSIOLOGY OF AIM"

The article (June '89) made me aware of the hidden potentialities of our life. I wish all your readers to remember: "Human Physiology is the progressive unfoldment of possibilities that lead to its transcendence, into the Godhood inherent in its make."

I take this opportunity to thank you for giving us a series of highly helpful treatises in psychology relevant to readers today.

Belgaum **—Vishnu Pradhan**

WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS TO PLEASE NOTE

* All would-be contributors are expected to have studied the different sections of THE HERITAGE.
* Instead of sending complete articles, please send the themes of your work to the editor.
* Articles submitted must be type-written. Please give your address in the article itself even if a letter accompanies it.
* In view of the large number of submissions received, it is not practical to return articles that cannot be used unless they are accompanied by stamped self-addressed covers.

THE HERITAGE

AUGUST REMINDS US ...

August reminds us that we are enjoying a privilege of which we had once been deprived and which we got back this month years ago.

Why do people desire freedom so passionately? Why have there been people through the ages who would lose their life than their freedom?

The question, though it may sound ordinary, assumes a certain poignancy when we look at our state of freedom. We used our freedom to usher in democracy. Indeed, the two go together. But what have we made of our freedom and our democracy? Mark Twain said. "It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practise either of them." We can slightly modify the statement and say in the Indian context that we practise our freedom of speech much more than necessary, but rarely our freedom of conscience. A false sense of prosperity has made thousands of our businessmen use the freedom to turn themselves into despicable black-marketeers, smugglers and adulterators; intoxication with power or unnecessary anxiety or an illusion that they are indispensable have made thousands of our politicians use the freedom to turn themselves into liars, receivers of black-money and mutual cut-throats; a false sense of security has made us, the common citizens including the bureaucrats, use our freedom to surrender our conscience to a collective ego called unions and trade-unions, caste-oriented associations and so on and so forth.

We have done to freedom what buffaloes would do to a lotus pool, yet the soul of India has not failed us and has kept open for us the opportunity for a relatively wiser use of freedom.

The love of freedom is inherent in the nature of all creatures. We have to observe only a little to see how even the puny animals and birds revolt against a state of non-freedom. Obviously, call it Providence or Nature or Super-Nature or God, the prime force behind Creation and Evolution is intending to achieve something through this element. A look into the history of human progress will establish that whatever worthwhile man has achieved, he has achieved through an exercise of freedom. It is the freedom of imagination and creativity that has inspired and executed the best of literature, philosophy, music, art and architecture. (Occasionally the source of inspiration has been an anguish at the absence of freedom!) It is the freedom of thought and expression that has given us epoch-making or revolutionary ideas. Even Karl Marx, swearing by whose name some countries throttle the freedom of

the individual, thrived only in a climate of freedom that prevailed in his host country.

Like a country, the individual can grow only through freedom. But while an animal uses its freedom guided by mere instincts, man's freedom is expected to be governed by reason at the lowest, conscience at the middle and an awareness of his spiritual destiny at the highest.

But so far we have allowed our freedom to become a plaything of our instincts and impulses.

THE PRICE OF THE HERITAGE: AN EXPLANATION

ON THE TIDES OF TIME

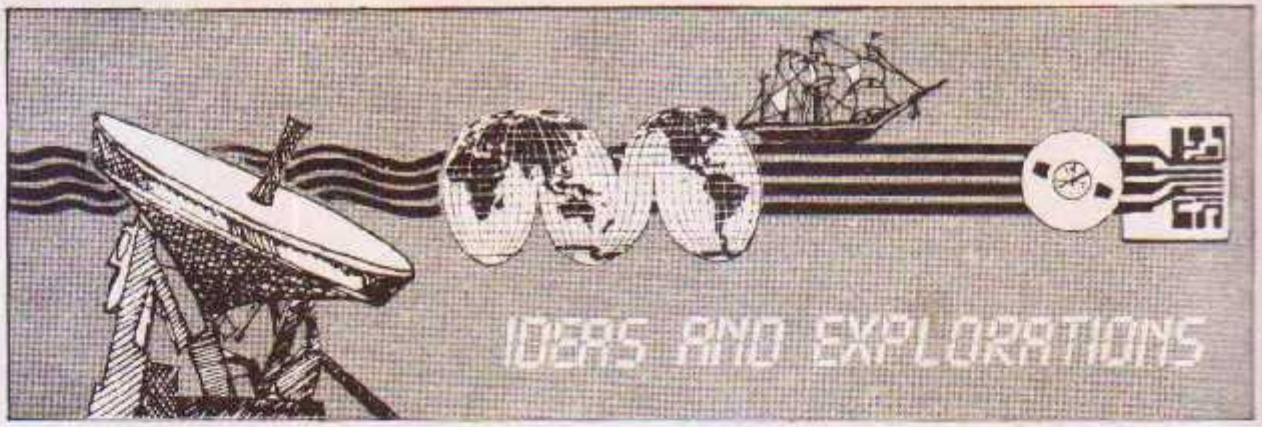
THE HERITAGE was launched to provide a sensible literary and cultural reading fare to those who looked for it in magazines but did not get much. We have a number of intelligently and even imaginatively edited popular magazines in English, some good and some bad, but none at the moment which highlighted creative writing and satisfied the craving of a section of readers for topics outside politics and such daily affairs which are covered by the newspapers. The aim of THE HERITAGE was not to become an alternative to any of the current publications, but to fill up a void.

Since it was more a mission than anything else, THE HERITAGE could not but be discriminative in its advertisement policy. For example, knowing fully well that cigarette-smoking is injurious to health, how could it promote this commerce which is ruinous? Since the magazine fought against certain vulgar values, how could it carry such commercial messages which clearly or cleverly try to exploit man's weakness, arouse instincts of envy and other similar passions? That would defeat the very purpose of the publication.

On one hand we could not ask all and sundry to patronise THE HERITAGE with their advertisements. On the other hand the agencies which issue advertisements go by circulation figures, not by the content and character of a magazine. That any message in the pages of THE HERITAGE will be taken more seriously by the readers is a fact ignored by them. Or, probably, we do not have the necessary tact and organisation to impress this fact upon them.

Hence THE HERITAGE runs on loss. It is heavily subsidised by *Chandamama*, the children's magazine.

Now, our readers know how the price of paper has gone up higher and higher in the recent past, obliging all the newspapers and magazines to increase their prices. *Chandamama*, the largest children's magazine in Asia, published in twelve languages, which used to show a marginal profit, has suddenly tended to show a loss with the latest hike in the paper price. At this juncture it will be unjust on the part of THE HERITAGE to expect even greater amount of subsidy from it. Hence some increase in the price of THE HERITAGE becomes unavoidable despite the stiff reluctance our publisher feels in taking such a step. THE HERITAGE has a faithful readership. I deem it my duty to explain the situation to them so that they share our problem consciously. From this issue THE HERITAGE will be priced at Rs.10.00 per copy. We are sorry, but this is the only way we can check the loss from becoming unmanageable.



THE FUTURE AS SEEN BY THE CHILD

Born under the sign of the mushroom cloud, weaned on acid rain, and sent to school in the wake of Three Mile Island and *Skylab's* fall to Earth, 154 sixth-graders in Minnesota have nevertheless fashioned an image of the future that is guardedly optimistic. It is a world they expect to create within their lifetimes.

"There is a perfect future I have in my mind. One characteristic is peace—not just a world without wars but peace in the home and everywhere you go."

The 154 eleven-and-twelve-year-olds who made the predictions shown here were volunteers in a research project devised by futurist Ruthanne Kurth-Schai, who believes that children's images of the future, like their ideas in general, are a major untapped resource. Kurth-Schai enlisted students from five schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul. She gave them the opportunity to work as futurists—to take part in a long-term group effort to sketch ideal future worlds—and unhesitatingly they jumped at the chance to contribute their ideas.

"We will discover that the universe is something inside something else."

At first, Kurth-Schai recalls, the students shared a passive, pessimistic attitude about the future. It would "happen to them", they felt, no matter what they did, and it would not be good.

"Finally, in the end, there will be a last battle. The missiles will be launched, and there will be nothing."

Asked to write an essay about the future, the children came up with only three ideas apiece. All 154 students mentioned nuclear war and some aspect of high technology. But the third idea differed from one child to the next, and from this diversity the children eventually forged a common group view that was both positive and action oriented.

"People will share what they have to make this a better world." —Dava Sobel in *Omni*.

BEWARE OF BEER

Coffee is not associated with pancreas cancer, but heavy beer drinkers run three times the risk as against non-drinkers, according to a new report just published in London.

The report also confirms the link between smoking and pancreas cancer, with those smoking 20 or more cigarettes a day facing four times the normal one-in-100 risk of the rest of the population.

These findings are among the results of a four-year study of 216 pancreatic cancer patients and 279 controls by Dr. Jack Cuzick and Dr. Abdel Babiker of UK Imperial Cancer Research Fund. They were investigating the relationship between pancreatic cancer, which kills over 6,000 a year in the UK alone, and a number of chronic medical conditions and with the consumption of alcohol, tea and coffee. Smoking is the only well established, cause of pancreas cancer. Evidence linking alcohol with the disease has been inconsistent.

(LPS-VANA)

SORE THROAT: THE UNSUSPECTED VILLAIN

If you suffer from chronic sore throats, you might want to visit the veterinarian—because your dog may be the problem.

So claims Stuart M. Copperman, a Long Island pediatrician who became aware of the link between animal and human streptococcal infection some 20 years ago, while working as an Army physician. A strepthroat epidemic hit his Army post, and patients were treated routinely with antibiotics. In one family, however, the seven children came down with sore throats repeatedly. In desperation, the doctor finally ran a throat culture on the family dog, and the test showed a positive strep infection. After the pet was treated with antibiotics, the family's sore throats promptly cleared up.

"I thought this was probably a fluke," Copperman notes. "But over the years, I began to ask people whose children constantly had sore throats whether they had a pet." Out of 100 cases of recurrent sore throats in a household with a pet, he found the 40 percent of the family pets (including dogs, cats, and even birds) had a strep infection. His findings were reported in the *New York State Journal of Medicine*.

Sherry Baker in *Omni*

SRI AUROBINDO

Born on the 15th of August 1872, Sri Aurobindo "the Prophet of Nationalism", later became the Prophet of Human Destiny, who visualised the next stage of evolution and gave the principles of Integral Yoga that can transform man and pave the way to a Supramental age. Passages reproduced here are from ***The Hour of God.***

The Hour Of God

THERE are moments when the Spirit moves among men and the breath of the Lord is abroad upon the waters of our being; there are others when it retires and men are left to act in the strength or the weakness of their own egoism. The first are periods when even a little effort produces great results and changes destiny; the second are spaces of time when much labour goes to the making of a little result. It is true that the latter may prepare the former, may be the little smoke of sacrifice going up to heaven which calls down the rain of God's bounty.

Unhappy is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment, for them is irreparable loss or a great destruction.

In the hour of God cleanse thy soul of all self-deceit and hypocrisy and vain self-flattering that thou mayst look straight into thy spirit and hear that which summons it. All insincerity of nature, once thy defence against the eye of the Master and the light of the ideal, becomes now a gap in thy armour and invites the blow. Even if thou conquer for the moment, it is the worse for thee, for the blow shall come afterwards and cast thee down in the midst of thy triumph. But being pure cast aside all fear; for the hour is often terrible, a fire and a whirlwind and a tempest, a treading of the winepress of the wrath of God; but he who can stand up in it on the truth of his purpose is he who shall stand; even though he fall, he shall rise again; even though he seem to pass on the wings of the wind, he snall return. Nor let worldly prudence whisper too closely in thy ear; for it is the hour of the unexpected, the incalculable, the immeasurable. Mete not the power of the Breath by thy petty instruments, but trust and go forward.

But most keep thy soul clear, even if for a while, of the clamour of the ego. Then shall a fire march before thee in the night and the storm be thy helper and thy flag shall wave on the highest height of the greatness that was to be conquered.

Man A Transitional Being

MAN is a transitional being; he is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees that climb to a divine supermanhood. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and limited mundane existence.

We mean by man mind imprisoned in a living body. But mind is not the highest possible power of consciousness; for mind is not in possession of Truth, but only its ignorant seeker. Beyond mind is a supramental or gnostic power of consciousness that is in eternal possession of Truth. This supermind is at its source the dynamic consciousness, in its nature at once and inseparably infinite wisdom and infinite will of the divine Knower and Creator. Supermind is superman; a gnostic supermanhood is the next distinct and triumphant evolutionary step to be reached by earthly nature.

The step from man to superman is the next approaching achievement in the earth's evolution. It is inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner Spirit and the logic of Nature's process.

The appearance of a human possibility in a material and animal world was the first glint of some coming divine Light, the first far-off promise of a godhead to be born out of Matter. The appearance of the superman in the human world will be the fulfilment of this divine promise. Out of the material consciousness in which our mind works as a chained slave is emerging the disk of a secret sun of Power and Joy and Knowledge. The supermind will be the formed body of that radiant effulgence.

Supermanhood is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not a superior degree of human greatness, knowledge, power, intelligence, will, character, genius, dynamic force, saintliness, love, purity or perfection. Supermind is something beyond mental man and his limits; it is a greater consciousness than the highest consciousness proper to human nature.

Man is a mental being whose mentality works here involved, obscure and degraded in a physical brain. Even in the highest of his kind it is baulked of its luminous possibilities of supreme force and freedom by this dependence, shut off even from its own divine powers, impotent to change our life beyond certain narrow and precarious limits; it is an imprisoned and checked force, most often nothing but a servitor or caterer of interests or a purveyor of amusement to the life and the body. But divine superman will be a gnostic spirit. Supermind in him will lay hands on the mental and physical instruments and, standing above and yet penetrating our lower already manifested parts, it will transform mind, life and body.

THE SHRINE OF NATHADWARA

AND ITS SCHOOL OF PAINTING

Text and photos by R.P.Gurpur

Focus on an institution dedicated to the Lord on the occasion of Sri Krishna Jayanti

ONE of the most far reaching contributions of the Ranas of Mewar to the artistic, cultural and religious heritage of India was their protection and patronage of the cult and the temple of Srinathji. When the successors of Vallabhacharya were reduced to nomadism in constant fear of assault and of desecration of their deity, one day the chariot of the Lord refused to move from a village called Samvad. It was some 50 kms from Udaipur, in A.D. 1672. The village was renamed Nathadwara, and the Ranas helped build here the temple to Srinathji.

Shri Vallabhacharya (1479-1531) was born to a Telugu Brahmin couple who had settled in Varanasi. Once, fearing an attack on the holy city its inhabitants had to take to the forests of Champa (now in Madhya Pradesh). There Illama gave birth to a premature child. She and her husband Lakshamana, left the baby wrapped in cloth in the bole of a tree, giving it up for dead. The grieving couple had a dream that night: Lord Vishnu told them that the child was his emanation; that it was alive and safe; that Lakshamana Bhatta's predecessors had already done 95 *Soma Yagnas* and that when he completed the 100th the Lord would enter the form of his son, who would then propagate a religious practice easy to be followed by the common people.

The couple rushed back to the tree and found the child alive surrounded by a circle of fire. The news of the attack on Varanasi proved false. The couple returned to the holy city. Lakshamana Bhatta in due course completed the 100th *Soma Yagna.*

Shri Vallabhacharya (Nathadwara, Contemporary)

The young Vallabha received his first lessons from his scholarly father. He showed such brilliance and mastery that he is also looked upon as an emanation of Saraswati

Vallabha took to peregrinating, giving discourses on philosophy and the scriptures, preaching *Shuddhadwaita,* his own interpretation of the indivisible relationship between the human soul and the Divine Soul. He started a movement known as *Pushti Marga* the path of Grace. A great admirer of nature, he always discoursed in the open. There are 84 such 'Baithaks', or holy places in various parts of the country.

Sri Vallabhacharya went on three

Shrinathji in the Gopashtami (Eighth day after Diwali) attire (Nathadwara —Pichhwai painting by Ratanlal Sharma — Contemporary)

extended pilgrimages. During the first, when he visited Gokula, the *Brahma Sambandha Mantra* was revealed to him by the Lord Himself. Vallabha began regular worship of the image of Krishna on the Govardhan mountain. He stayed for about a year in Gokula giving shape to the worship and other arrangements for the temple.

Next, Vallabha camped at Pandharpur where the deity Vithala is said to have advised him to start a family so that his new preachings could be continued by his progeny. His successors were called *gosains* and they have been the *Peethadhipathis* of their temples; later they also came to be called *Tilakayats*, a title given by Emperor Shah Jahan. The present *Tilakayat* of Nathadwara, is the sixteenth in the line.

In his third pilgrimage Vallabha visited Vijayanagara. For his erudition, and spiritual and religious discourses he was awarded the title Acharya by King Krishnadevaraya. He was also honoured with golden coins—*Kanakabhisheka* . Legend has it that from the gold coins poured on him, he kept only the ten later placed on each of the toes of Shrinathji.

Vallabhacharya wrote several religious treatises and commen-

"HOW TO MEET GOD"

Though Vallabhacharya started construction of the shrine at Gokula in 1500 A.D., due to the then prevailing conditions of insecurity, even before the shrine was completed the deity had to be removed three times. Upon Akbar ascending the throne, the looting, pillage and desecration of Hindu temples was banned. The ***Pushti Marga*** *sect was one of the biggest beneficiaries of Akbar's enlightened administration.*

Once Birbal was not able to reply to Akbar's query as to how could one meet God. Birbal's daughter told him that her guru Vithalnathji would be able to reply satisfactorily. But as Vithalnathji insisted upon it, Akbar came to Gokula. When Akbar repeated the question, Vithalnathji replied, "One can meet the Saheb (God) in the same way you have met me today. Had I made a thousand attempts to meet your majesty I might not have succeeded. But when you decided to meet me it became instantly possible. It is the same with the human soul wishing to reach the Almighty. Such a meeting can only become possible if the Divine Grace wills it."

Akbar gifted the villages of Gokula and Gopalpura and appointed Vithalnathji an honorary magistrate of Vraja. The emperor also issued several proclamations honouring Vithalnathji. Several courtiers of Akbar like Birbal, Raja Todarmal and Tansen also paid their respects.

Akbar is said to have visited the shrine at Gokula on ***Sharat Poornima****, the full moon day of autumn. The enormous diamond shining on the chin of Shrinathji is believed to be a gift of the emperor. Mughal ways of attire and grooming too was adopted by Vithalnathji in decorating the deity.*

Jahangir continued his father's tolerant attitude. In fact his Rajput wife Manamati hailing from Amber (Jaipur), mother of the future emperor Shah Jahan, was a great follower of ***Pushti Marga****. Though not as considerate as his father and grand father, Shah Jahan nevertheless was helpful in some ways. It is he who named the hereditary* ***gosains*** *as* ***Tilakayats*** *and made gifts of land, and waived taxes.*

But with Aurangazeb there was not even a pretention of tolerance. On September 18, 1670, concealing the image in a bullock cart, devotees left Gokula. The decision to migrate became urgent when the famous temple of Keshavarayaji at Mathura and then the shrine of Shrinathji on Mt. Govardhana too, were destroyed by Aurangazeb's marauders.

THE FESTIVALS

There are sixty-four major festivals and many more minor ones. The year is distributed into four quarters, one for each of Krishna's four most favoured gopis, starting with ***Radha****, the most beloved of all. Radha's quarter, Shravana, Bhadrapada and Ashwina (Aug to Oct), spans some of the biggest Hindu festivals, the greatest of which is* ***Janmashtami. Maha Raasa*** *(Ashwin Shukla 15th) is another great festival.*

Kartika, Margashish and Pushya (Nov to Jan) is ***Lalita's*** *quarter, during which* ***Diwali, Annakoota*** *and* ***Kartika Ekadashi*** *fall. Diwali in Nathadwara is celebrated with great gusto.* ***Annakoota*** *symbolises Krishna raising Mount Govardhan to protect the inhabitants of Gokula from the wrath of Indra who is angered by the stoppage of annual worshipping of him by the people of Vraja. On this occasion a mountain of rice (about 2.5 tonnes) is laid. Cows are specially decorated and fed. Offerings of a great variety of eatables are prepared. As per tradition, Bhils, an ancient hill tribe, are allowed to plunder the mountain of rice.*

Kartika Ekadashi *is connected with Vishnu and Tulasi. Symbolically a Shaligrama is united with a Tulsi plant.*

Magha, Phalguna and Chaitra (Feb to April) belong to ***Chandravali. Dolotsava****, a day after* ***Holi****, is a festival of colours and gaiety. Dolo (Swing) is a favourite of Shrinathji.*

Yamuna's *months of* ***seva*** *are Vaishakha, Jyeshta and Ashada (May to July), during which* ***Yamuna Dashami*** *(in Jyeshta) and the famous* ***Rath Jathra*** *(Ashada Shukla) signifying Krishna's departure to Mathura to meet Kamsa take place. It is a poignant moment for the cowherds as their darling Krishna is leaving them forever. This period also marks the passing away of Shri Vallabhacharya. On this festive day's offerings to the Lord the most notable is the offering of 1.25 lakh mangoes.*

taries, including an incomplete one on Shrimad Bhagavatha. He ordained a method of worship called *Swarupa*. It comprises eight different *sevas* (worship) a day with different decorations *(Alankara)*, offerings *(Naivedya)* etc.

When Shri Vallabhacharya passed away in 1531, he had laid a firm foundation for the new sect. His end came like his beginning—surrounded by fire — as he dipped in Ganga at the Hanuman Ghat in Varanasi.

The eldest son of Vallabhacharya, Gopinath, died young. Vithalnath, the second son succeeded him. He was close to Akbar and later to Jahangir. This contact he used to obtain many facilities and concessions for his sect. He introduced a great many rituals, decorations, silks, jewellery, perfumes, incense, flowers, sweetmeats, music, dance, paintings, etc. *Shringar* became the central feature of worship. The collection of eight premier poets, *Ashta Chap*, was his most memorable contribution. Of these, four (Kumbhandas, Surdas, Paramanandadas and Krishnadas) were already there during Vallabha's time. The four others (Govindaswami, Chithaswami, Chathurbhujdas and Nandadas) shone with extraordinary brightness during Vithalnath's stewardship. The *Bhakti* poetry of that time is an invaluable addition to Indian literature and music.

Another important contribution of Vithaldas was *Raas Leela* with young Krishna as the central figure. Several groups were started, and *Raas* became an important aspect of the *Pushti Marga*. He also popularised the celebrations of several important events of Krishna's life. Lest there be any internal quarrels, misunderstandings and intrigues, he ordained worshipping the Lord at

THE EIGHT GLIMPSES

From the time Shrinathji 'wakes up' till he is put to bed the ***Seva*** *(service) goes on according to a set programme. The water for his drinking has to come from the river Yamuna in* ***vraja.*** *Vocal and instrumental music, poems in his praise, etc. too are meticulously planned.*

The devotees are allowed only ***Jhankies*** *or glimpses eight times a day, as though in honour of the* ***Asthachap****, the eight poets. Before the first darshan commences, upon waking up lest Shrinathji feels hungry, snacks and then water are offered to him.*

The first darshan is called ***Mangala****, the auspicious beginning of the day.* ***Bala bhava****, the innocence of childhood is the main theme, as sung by Paramanandadas, one of the eight poets. Songs are sung in the morning melodies of Hindustani classical music and that too in Dhrupad style, a tradition of Mathura, Gokula, etc. Swami Haridas, a great musician of Akbar's time was one of the greatest practitioners of this style.*

After an hour of the first darshan, ***Shringara*** *the second darshan begins. Well dressed and wearing flower garlands, he is offered dry fruits like the ones offered by the gopis to Krishna. Flute is then placed in his hands for his play and to call the cowherds, particularly Radha. Poet Nandadas' compositions are sung.*

Govindaswami's poems are recalled for the third darshan known as ***Gwala****, when Krishna used to take the cows out for grazing and played with his friends.*

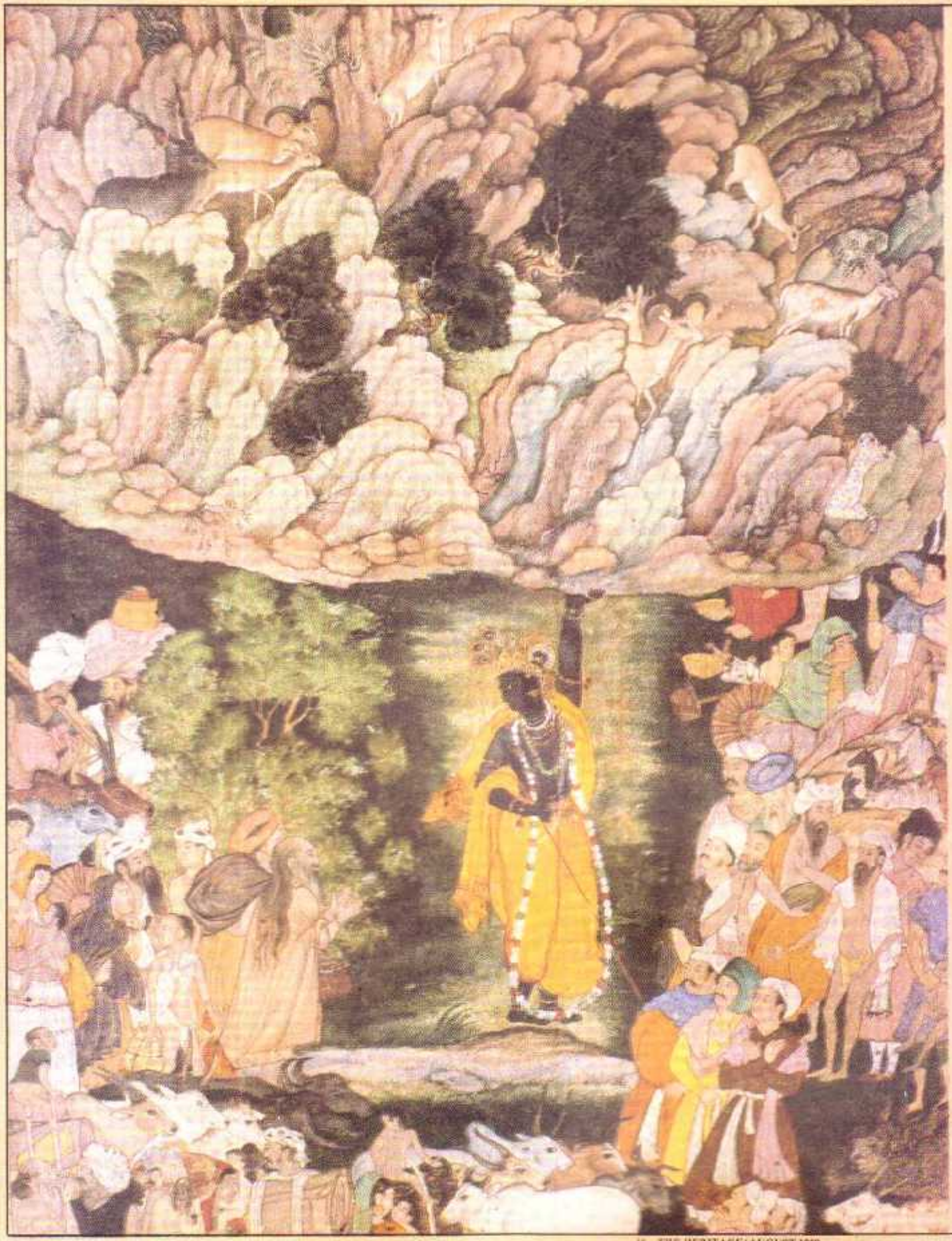
The most important darshan is the fourth called ***Rajabhoga.*** *This attracts the maximum number of devotees. It was started as an elaborate ritual by the famous Vithalnathji. Kumbhandas' poems are the principal songs. Shrinathji is decorated in splendid and valuable attire and jewellery. The best food is offered and thereafter betel leaves. At the end of this darshan Shrinathji retires for his dalliance and siesta and rests in the meadows on the banks of Yamuna with Radha.*

Between 2.30 and 3.30 in the afternoon, Shrinathji is gently woken up for the fifth darshan, ***Utthapana*** *to the blowing of conch, calling the cows to return. Music is played; Surdas' poems are sung.*

During the early evening ***Bhoga****, the sixth darshan is held. Poet Chaturbhujdas gets his turn. Elegant attire, cosmetics, perfumes, etc., are used in plenty. Radha is believed to behold his image to her heart's content and go to perform her chores including milking the cows.*

At dusk it is the seventh darshan, ***Sandhya Arati****, which is to get rid of evil eyes on him which have wandered during the day. Motherly care and love are the predominant theme. In light garments he again takes the flute in his hands to enchant the devotees. Chittaswami is the poet.*

The eighth and final darshan is ***Shayana****. It is time to retire. A variety of eatables are offered, followed by spiced betel. Kishandas is the poet whose songs are sung.*



Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan (Kangra, 18th Century) ▲

different places to his different sons: 1) Shrinathji and Navaneethpriyaji at Nathadwara to the care of his eldest son Giridhar, 2)Mathureshwarji at Kota to Giridhar. 3) Dwarakadheeshji at Kankroli to Balakrishna, 4) Gokulnathji at Gokula to Gokulnath. 5) Gokulchandramaji at Kamban to Raghunath, 6) Balakrishnaji at Surat to Yadunath. 7) Manmohanji at Kamban to Ghansham, and 8) Vithalnathji at Nathadwara to Govindraj.

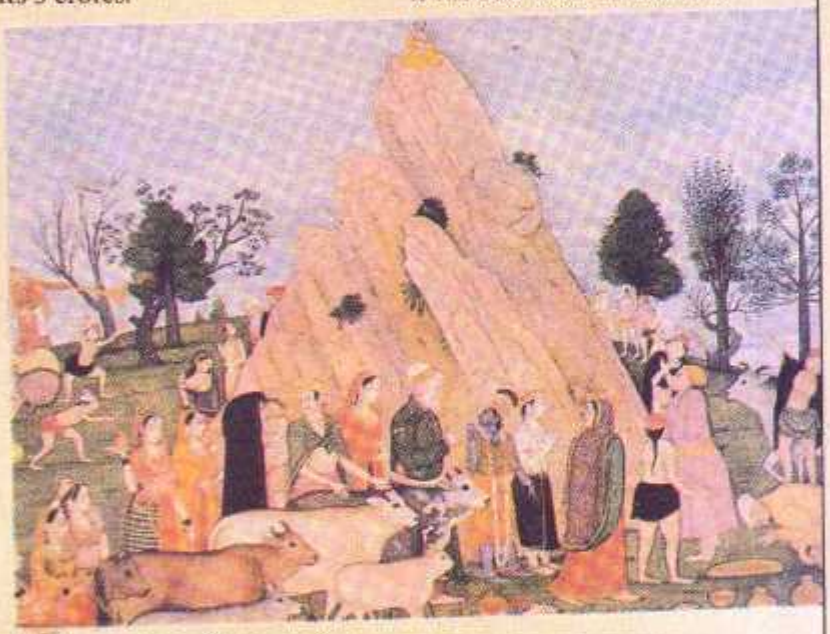
The image of Shrinathji at Nathadwara is considered self-incarnate. It is of Shri Krishna, 7 years of age, holding up the mount Govardhan on his left hand. His pranks with the *gopis* in Nandagokul, his special relationship with Radha, are also themes for worship.

A raised platform separates the devotees from the sanctum sanctorum. The priests use a side entrance. The image is said to be made of red-black granite, akin to the granite found in plenty on the Govardhan mountain near Mathura. Some experts, however, consider it to be a much later sculpture, after the 7th century image in the Mathura Museum.

While Vallabhacharya called the deity Gopaljee, Vithalnath addressed Him as Govardhanjee. It was Gokulnath, the grandson of Vallabhacharya, who gave the name Shrinathji. And so He was consecrated at Nathadwara in 1672. Most of the kings of Rajputana and Gujarat were ardent devotees of Shrinathji. Besides Mewar, the kings of Kota, Bundi, Kishangarh, etc, also made valuable gifts and donations, and thus created respect for the institution among their subjects. In fact the *Gosain's*, word was final in disputes among the followers, even in their social and temporal life. The largest following today is among the business class of Gujarat and to a lesser extent in Rajasthan.

The worship of Shrinathji's *Swarupa* is a grand affair. Flowers and perfumes are used in abundance. Each decoration uses a different *Pichhwai*, a cloth painting, in the background. The shrine itself is called *Haveli* a princely abode and not temple. The food offering, *Naivedya* is perhaps the richest among such temples in India. Ghee, dry fruits, spices, saffron, etc. of the best quality are used in generous quantity. These offerings are divided among the priests who sell it to the devotees. Priests are not paid any salary. The temple administration employs nearly a thousand people for other jobs, the annual expenditure for which comes to about Rs 3 crores.

This traditional painting on cloth was started originally in Gokula. When the deity was shifted to Nathadwara, among those who came were these traditional *Chitrakaras*. The Nathadwara school, a hereditary vocation, is an important aspect of traditional Rajasthani styles. The earliest creations are presumably lost in the wanderings, but what have remained are a great treasure. Some of them have been reproduced in Amit Ambalal's book *Krishna as Shrinathji*. It is the best work on this cult.



Krishna worshipping Mount Govardhan (Mughal, 16th Century)

During the second half of last century its administration was taken over by the British Government. By a legislative act, a new administration came into being in 1959, of which the nominal head is the reigning *Tilakayat*. The day-to-day administration is looked after by an officer from the State Government, who has no control over the *Tilakayat* or the worship and rituals. Besides the countless valuable jewels, *Pichhwai* paintings, buildings, etc. the liquid funds exceed Rs. 12 crores.

With better management and greater discipline on the lines of Tirupati, Nathadwara can become a satisfying and memorable pilgrimage.

Even to the connoisseur, the *Pichhwai* paintings can be a feast.

Faith, they say, is capable of moving mountains. That it sustains life for mankind and that in spite of excesses perpetrated in its name, mostly by overambitious kings and their marauding armies, faith has brought out the best of the artistic and creative urges from the human heart is an unquestionable fact.

Its wealth of poetry, music and paintings, are sufficient contributions to hold the *Pushti Marga* of Shri Vallabhacharya in high esteem. Nathadwara can become a citadel of artistic renaissance, for the delightful young Krishna appreciates all beautiful things in nature and life. His devotees cannot pay a greater tribute to their Lord than supporting this rich artistic tradition.

Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan (Kangra, 18th Century)

THE YOUNG SUITOR AWAITS THE ANSWER

by Vindusar

IT was a summer noon. Prabhakar was returning from his uncle's house, taking to a short-cut through the meadow on the outskirts of his village. Suddenly he heard the cry of a few women, emanating from the large pond.

He ran to see what the matter was. "She is drowning!" cried out a few voices. Prabhakar took off his shirt and plunged into the water. He knew not whom he was saving, but by the time he knew it, he had every reason to be flattered. It was Sukumari, the daughter of the village landlord.

The slim and sweet Sukumari looked at Prabhakar with so much gratitude in her eyes that Prabhakar was hard put to take back his eyes, but he took them back nevertheless, even without giving her a smile. That was his biggest weakness. He was extremely shy. He was ridiculed by all and sundry as effeminate and a nincompoop.

Now he hoped that this reputation of his should be contested by the landlord himself. But nothing like that happened. The landlord seemed to play down his feat; the maidens who were with Sukumari were reluctant to publicise his courage — for they had themselves done nothing to save their drowning friend!

Prabhakar was disheartened, but not quite! There was a ray of hope for him. Sukumari herself smiled at him twice or thrice during the week following the incident.

And one evening, when Prabhakar found Sukumari all alone, he was surprised at his own audacity, for he heard himself saying to her, "Sukumari! I love you!"

Sukumari blushed. Till then it was Prabhakar who specialised in blushing before others. It was a great moment in his life to see someone blush before him.

He made use of the great moment. "I will like to marry you!" he said.

The girl lowered her head and said, "I have no objection, but..."

It was a formidable 'but'! Sukumari's father poohpoohed the idea. Her uncle even threatened to thrash Prabhakar's skin off his body if he repeated the proposal, after addressing him as "you weakling, you poltroon, you nanny-goat!"

Prabhakar ran away to the hermitage of his father's guru, and sobbed out his humiliation before the sage — a true sage.

"My son, I can give you wisdom when you lack it, but I can neither give you physical strength nor

alter your personal appearance. However, you can meet my friend, a Brahma Rakshasa, who lives beyond the river, in the deserted temple. Tell him that I referred you to him!"

Prabhakar met the supernatural being. "Hm!" said the Brahma Rakshasa. "Go and take seven dips in the river, all the while praying to me and return to your village without looking at anybody. Once in the village, begin looking at everybody!"

Prabhakar did as advised. Strange things happened. In the village people kept to one side of the road when he walked. The landlord smiled at him and when he greeted him, the landlord returned the greeting with a greater show of humility. Sukumari's arrogant and brute uncle now addressed him as 'Sir' instead of nanny-goat!

Prabhakar looked into a mirror. No, nothing had changed, but he did not know why, his reflection inspired an awe even in himself. He realised that he carried about an air that was very powerful. Perhaps it was the vital force given to him by the Brahma Rakshasa.

In the evening he visited the landlord's house and wished to see Sukumari. He was most welcome. But Sukumari was in tears. "How can I marry you? I don't know why, but I tremble in your presence! You are just terrible."

"I am not, Sukumari. Believe me, I have not changed at all!" cried out Prabhakar.

But Sukumari wept and ran away.

Prabhakar went back to the sage. "Tell me, Sir, what is this? I am what I was. Sukumari loved me; but now she fears me. Whom did she love? Whom does she fear? I am the same!" he blurted out.

"Now, my son, that exactly is my question. Whom does one love? Whom does one fear?" repeated the sage.

"I am bewildered!"

"People see only the appearance— either the crude physical appearance or the subtle appearance. *You* are not in their vision. Earlier they used to see only your crude physical form. After the Brahma Rakshasa gave you his invisible aura, they saw another appearance enveloping the physical and were awe-struck. Now I invoke the Brahma Rakshasa and withdraw the aura. Go back to your village and see what happens!"

Prabhakar was back in the village. He observed that people were no longer scared of him, but the impression of him they had lately developed continued to be with them. Nobody took him lightly any more, nobody dared to ridicule him. He found out that the landlord would not object to his marrying Sukumari.

He went to report the matter to the sage. "What should I do now?" he asked.

"Marry Sukumari, but be sure, in a month or two the people will forget the impression they have now," said the sage.

"In that case I will not marry Sukumari."

"You may not. But afterwards you may curse yourself for letting this opportunity go!"

"So?"

"I don't know," said the sage.

"Sir, please tell me what I should do."

"Whatever you do, my boy, it will be an action in ignorance. Neither Sukumari knows your true self, nor you know it. You all know only the appearances. Some know only skin-deep appearance, some know a little deeper, that is all."

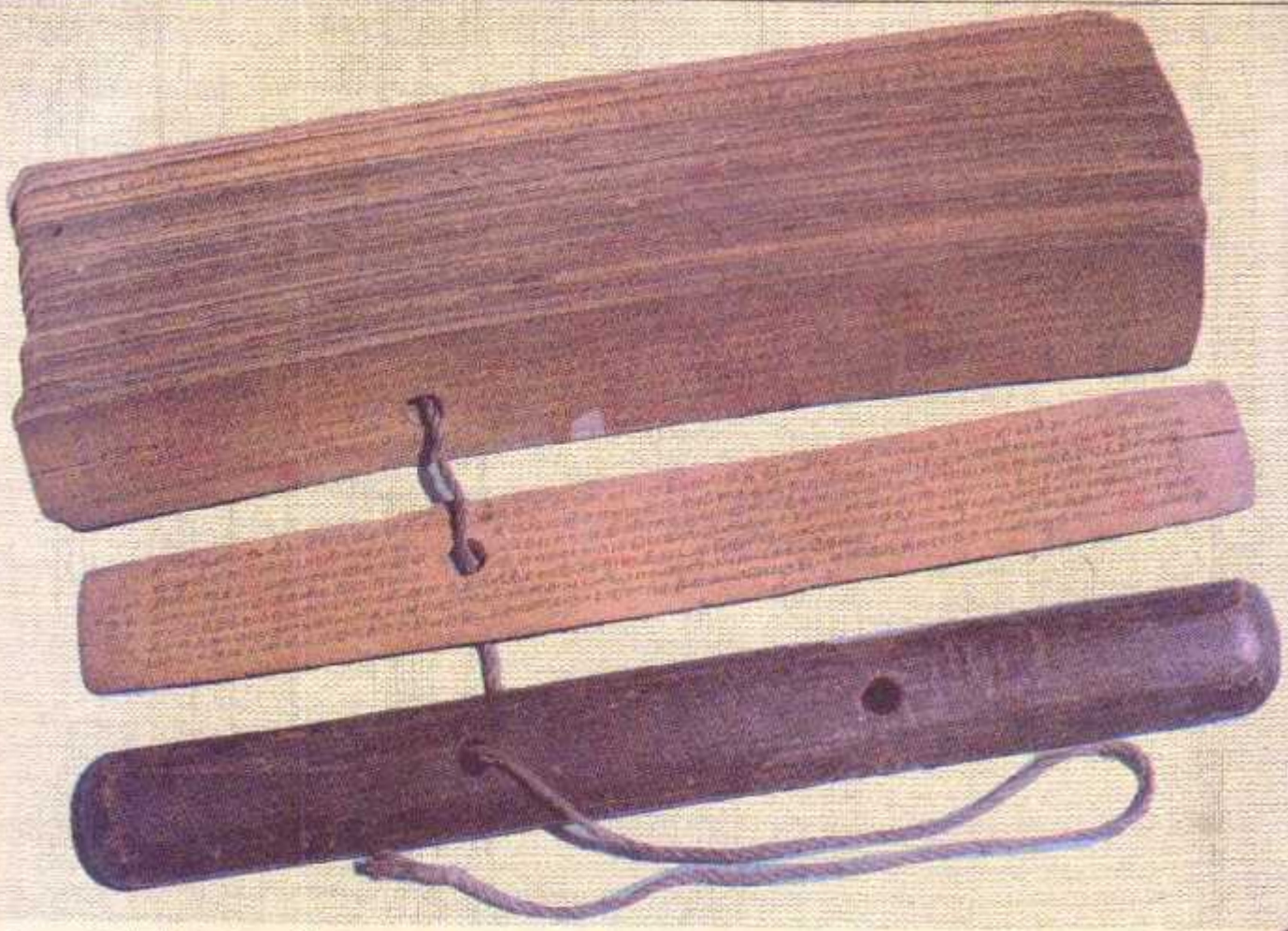
When I wrote the story, Prabhakar was still undecided.

OUT IN THE FIELDS WITH GOD

The little cares that fretted me,
I lost them yesterday,
Among the fields above the sea,
Among the winds at play,
Among the lowering of the herds,
The rustling of the trees,
Among the singing of the birds,
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what might pass
I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass
Among the new-mown hay,
Among the rustling of the corn
Where drowsy poppies nod,
Where ill thoughts die and good are born—
Out in the fields with God!

—Author Unknown



Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Library

THE PALM LEAF AND

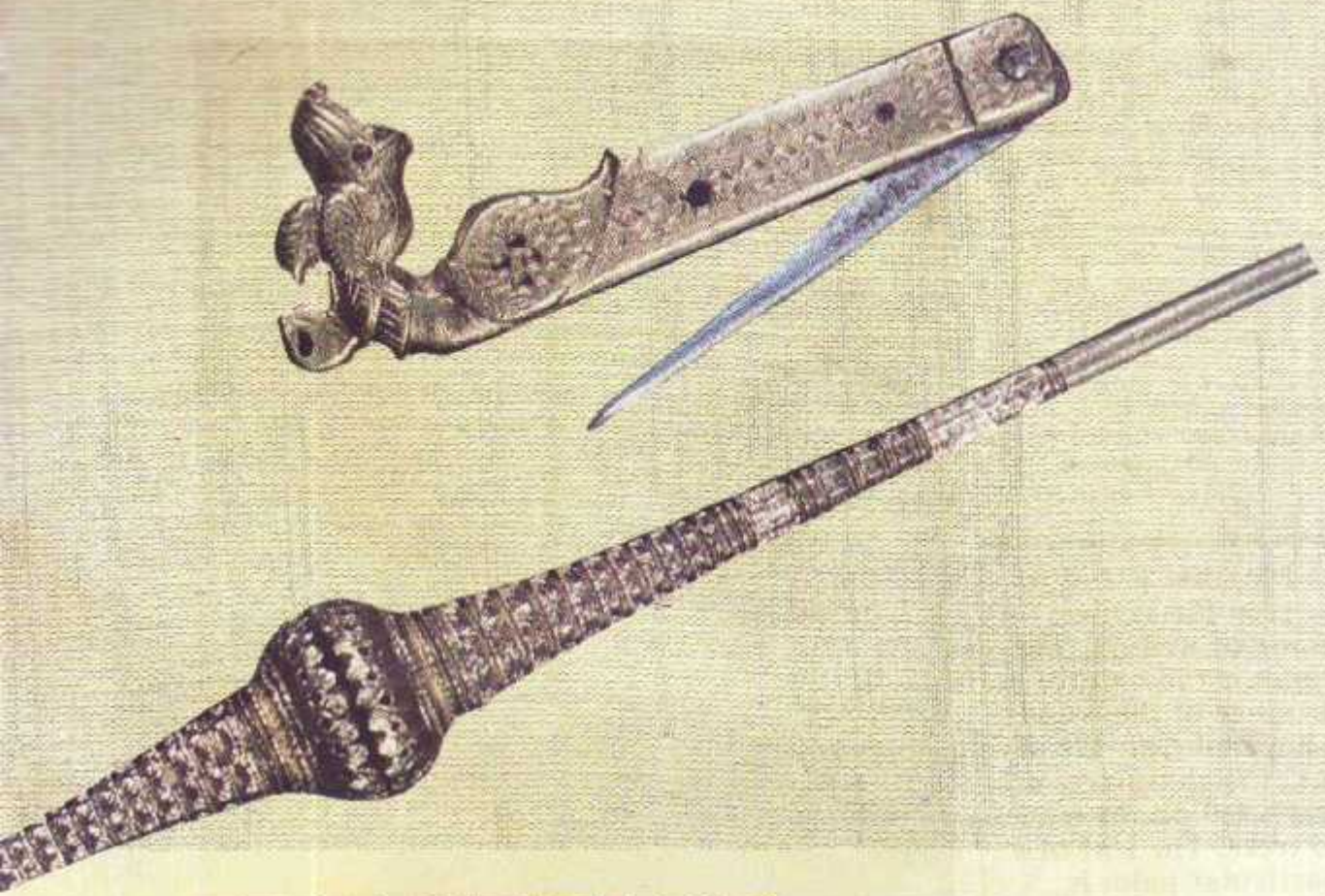
*The palm leaf used in writing is **Tala Patra** in Sanskrit and **Ola** in Tamil. The stylus which transforms the leaf into a valued manuscript is **Lekhani** in Sanskrit and **Ezhuthaani** in Tamil. The author an Englishman who came to India as a teacher, has spent years in collecting specimens of the two things and making a study of them in all their variations.*

THE beginnings of the written word are veiled in darkness and myth. The oldest record is a clay tablet from Sumer. The "letters" were inscribed by pressing a wedge-shaped tool into the soft clay which was then sun-dried or baked in a kiln. It dated to about 3500 B.C.

Around 1700 B.C. the first sound symbols were cut into a rock in the Sinai Peninsula. They are the foundation of what is known as the Phoenecian letters and developed into the Greek and Roman alphabet; they are, in fact, the origin of the letters in which this article is written.

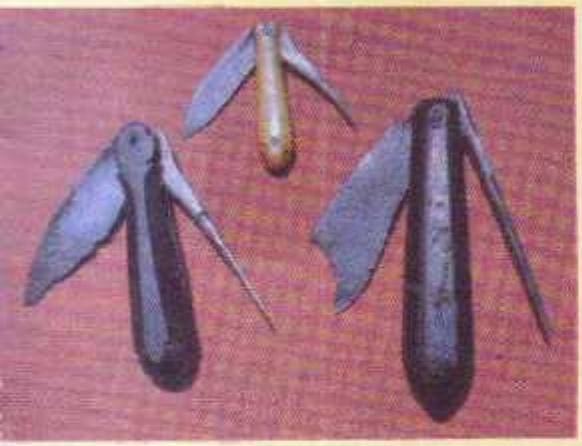
It is this Phoenecian alphabet which spread over the whole of the mediterranean region and went into Mesopotamia (now Iran) because of its great simplicity. It contained only twenty-six sound symbols and could easily be adapted to the needs of other languages. The advantage of sound (phonetic) symbols over picture (pictorial) symbols was obvious and Egyptian hieroglyphic writing died a natural death.

The very earliest writing material consisted of rocks, potsherds (broken pieces of pottery) and Egyptian papyrus. Rock engravings were used for royal edicts, potsherds for ordinary correspondence and papyrus when available. The last was an Egyptian monopoly and hence rather expensive. It was exported to all mediterranean countries but also reached Mesopotamia, then Assyria. Assyrian papyri are known



THE STYLUS

Text and photos by Fred Pinn



from at least the 8th century B.C.—and that brings us to India.

It is about this time that according to one school of scholars the idea of "writing" and "letters" travelled by merchant caravans from Assyria along the ancient trade routes to north India, possibly to Kashmir. Samples of Assyrian writing fell into the hands of some imaginative Indians and the first Indian alphabet, called Brahmi, was born. Several letters are distinctly identical with the same sounds in the Phoenecian alphabet. From Brahmi developed the present-day Indian scripts of which all the North Indian ones are somehow related; and the same goes for the scripts of South India. However, for Indian school children there are so many more sounds in Indian languages than in those farther west that many more sound symbols had to be invented to express not only "b" but also "bh" and "d" and "dh" not to mention the different "d's" and "r's" and compounds.

With the invention of the Brahmi script arose the problem of writing material—what to write on? Royal edicts and memorials faced no difficulty since there were plenty of rocks about.

With the invention of the Brahmi script arose the problem of writing material—what to write on? Royal edicts and memorials faced no difficulty since there were plenty of rocks about. But neither the kind of clay used in Mesopotamia nor the papyrus of Egypt were available in India and so a substitute had to be found. The solution in the north

(Kashmir again) was birch bark which until very recently served as paper. However, this tree (Bhurja) only grows above an altitude of 9000 feet and the "export" of strips of bark to the Indian lowlands does not seem to have taken place. The plains therefore had to find their own solution.

The way human ingenuity works may be demonstrated by this simple example. The other day, a very bright boy, aged 13, learnt at school about hieroglyphics and papyrus. Being a gifted artist, he was intrigued by the pictographs and decided to have a go at ancient Egyptian writing himself. When he searched for suitable writing material, it occurred to him that a banana leaf looked exactly like a piece of papyrus. As the illustration shows the result was most convincing. Later only it became clear that very dry banana leaves tend to split and perish rather quickly.

In Malabar is still to be seen the earliest mode of writing. The paper is the natural produce of the woods. They make no use of ink; the characters are engraved on the leaves of trees. The leaf of a particular palm is selected and dried until it can bear the impression of the styles

And so it is proposed that in a similar manner a clever South Indian by a combination of good observation, intelligent reasoning and a spark of inspiration found the answer for the rest of India from an Assyrian merchant travelling down the Persian Gulf to one of the trading centres along the coast of Gujarat or Malabar. His list of goods and his account books (scrolls) were all of papyrus. The invention and its useful-

MALABAR : 1800

In Malabar is still to be seen the earliest mode of writing. The paper is the natural produce of the woods. They make no use of ink; the characters are engraved on the leaves of trees. The leaf of a particular palm is selected and dried until it can bear the impression of the styles. These leaves strung or tied together are formed into Books. They are enclosed in a wooden cover, sometimes gilded and lackered, so as to make neat and handsome appearance. On these leaves also they write their letters, which they fold up, but the original practice of the country did not require them to be sealed.

Quoted in: ***The Beautiful Tree*** by Dharampal.
(Biblia Impex Private Ltd., New Delhi)

SOUTH INDIA : 1789

Records from the last two hundred years contain some vivid descriptions of the use of palm leaves as writing material:

The education of youth in India is much simpler, and not near so expensive as in Europe. The children assemble half-naked under the shade of a coconut tree; place themselves in rows on the ground, and trace out on the sand, with the forefinger of the right hand, the elements of their alphabet, and then smooth it with the left when they wish to trace out other characters. The writing-master, called ***Agian****, or* ***Eluttacien****, who stations himself opposite to his pupils, examines what they have done; points out their faults, and shews them how to correct them. At first, he attends them standing; but when the young people have acquired some readiness in writing; he places himself cross-legged on a tyger's or deer's skin, or even on a mat made of the leaves of the coconut-tree, or wild ananas, which is called* ***Kaida****, plaited together. This method of teaching writing was introduced into India two hundred years before the birth of Christ, according to the testimony of Magasthenes, and still continues to be practised. No people, perhaps, on earth have adhered so much to their ancient usages and customs as the Indians....*

....When the pupils have made tolerable progress in writing, they are admitted into certain schools, called ***Eutupalli****, where they begin to write on palm leaves* ***(Pana)****, which, when several of them are stitched together, and fastened between two boards, form a* ***Grantha****, that is, an Indian book. If such a book be written upon with an iron style, it is called* ***Granthavari****, or* ***Lakya****, that is, writing, to distinguish it from* ***Alakya****, which is something not written.*

Fra Paolino da Bartolomeo,
Voyages to the East Indies, Rome 1796

ness forcibly struck the Indian trading partner. A close look at the papyrus reminded him of the texture of the leaf of the talipot palm and the palm-leaf book, or *Ola* (in Tamil, *Tala Patra* or *Tali Patra*—in Sanskrit and several other Indian languages) had come into existence. What is more, it lives to this day, for the books are not only treasured as heirlooms but are actually used in ritual performances; and orthodox Hindus in South India will still insist on their sons learning to copy sacred texts on palm leaves.

The two palms used in the production of books are the talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) and the palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). The former has broader and stronger leaves and was chiefly used for books; it has, however, almost entirely disappeared from the South Indian landscape for unknown reasons. The palmyra, being the less valuable, was used for short notes, letters and receipts.

The best palm leaf writing material had to go through a long process of preparation by way of soaking, boiling, careful drying and polishing. The leaves would then be cut into the required length and have one or two holes punched into them according to how long they were. A string would be passed through the holes to keep the leaves in their proper order; at times the leaves are assembled on two long pegs and then tied.

Particularly precious books have bamboo or wooden covers at each end. Floral or geometrical designs embellish the upper or outsides and a religious theme the undersides.

The word "writing" in connection with South Indian *Ola* is a misnomer and conveys a wrong idea for with it we associate pen and ink. These two were indeed used in birch bark books and on palm leaves in North India; but in the South the mode of writing was by scratching (it is a strange coincidence that "writing" originally meant scratching, because

Germanic runes (letters and symbols) were scratched onto sticks of beechwood for oracular purposes). A steel-pointed stylus of varying shapes was used for this performance.

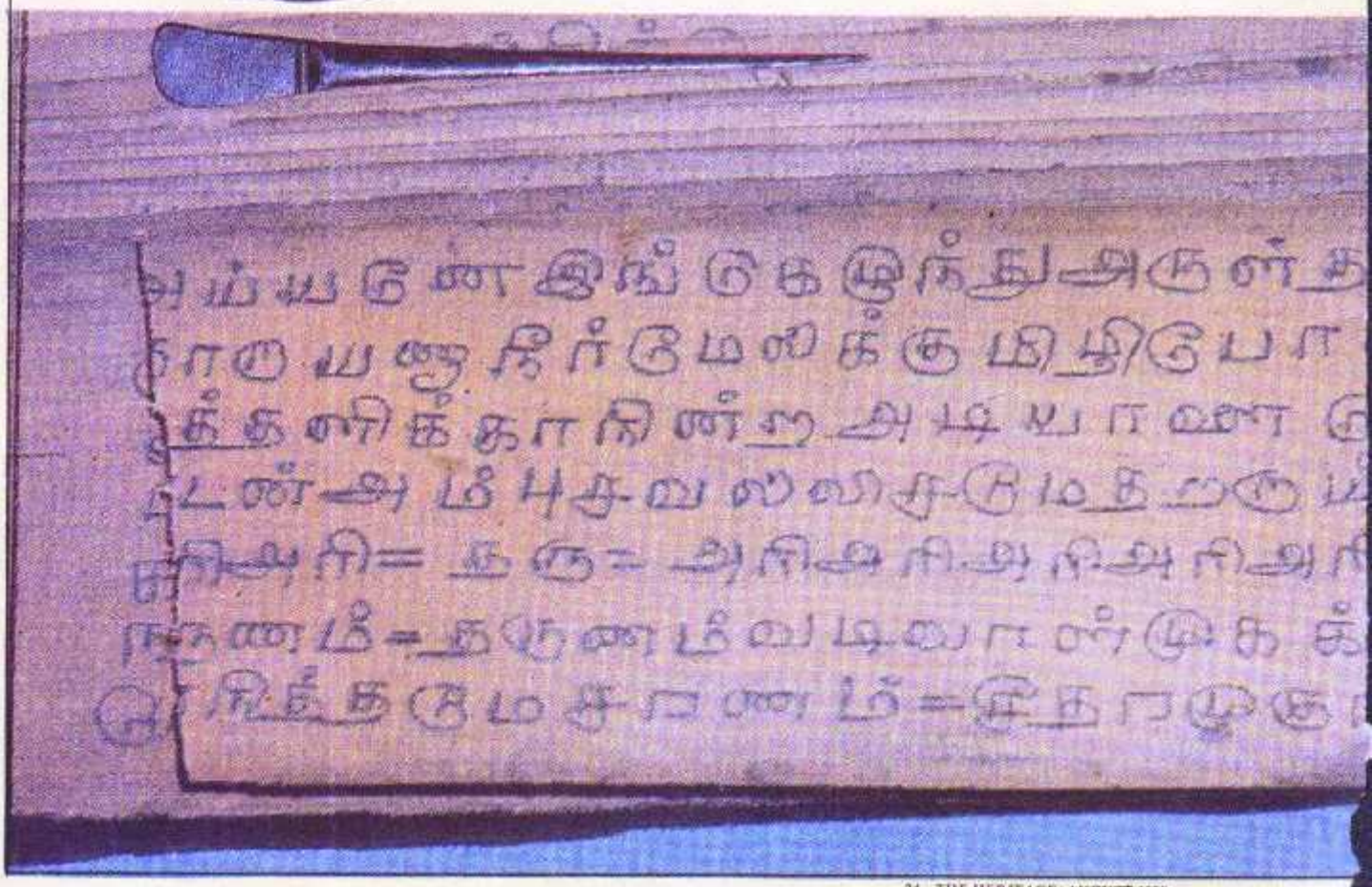
The word *Stylus* (pl. *Styli*) is of Latin origin and describes the writing tool used by the ancient Romans. It was a long "nail" pointed at one end to scratch the letters into a wax tablet but flattened at the other to wipe out any mistake. The Tamil stylus is called an *ezhuthaani* which means "writing nail" (*ani*). This can only be pronounced correctly by people well-versed in Tamil.

These styli can be divided into two groups: those made of one long piece of metal in the shape of a giant "nail" (*ani*) and the clasp-knife form. The former is clearly

NORTH BENGAL : 1835

It has been already mentioned that there are four different stages in a course of Bengali instruction. The ***first*** *period seldom exceeds ten days, which are employed in teaching the young scholars to form the letters of the alphabet on the ground with a small stick or slip of bambu. The sand board is not used in this district, probably to save expense. The* ***second*** *period, extending from two and a half to four years according to the capacity of the scholar, is distinguished by the use of the palm-leaf as the material on which writing is performed. Hitherto the mere form and sound of the letters have been taught without regard to their size and relative proportion; but the master with an iron-style now writes on the palm-leaf letters of a determinate size and in due proportion to each other, and the scholar is required to trace them on the same leaf with a reed-pen and with charcoal-ink which easily rubs out. This process is repeated over and over again on the same leaf until the scholar no longer requires the use of the copy to guide him in the formation of the letters of a fit size and proportion and he is consequently next made to write them on another leaf which has no copy to direct him.*

William Adams, **Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (1836)**



the original and most ancient shape whereas the latter is of recent date (probably not older than a hundred years).

The examples of "nails" illustrated are made of iron, iron with silver and brass. The iron styli are clearly handmade whereas the handsome brass one is cast. The earliest of these samples is the one with the knife at one end which was used to cut the palm leaves to the required size. The more ornamental styli sacrifice the convenience of an attached knife to the beauty of a perfectly shaped and balanced stylus.

The cost of a jack-knife stylus would of course be determined chiefly by the material the handle is made of. Ivory and brass would top the list followed by bone and wood for the poor man. The price, naturally goes up for any extra element like silver inlay work.

Even a random collection of styli seems to indicate that the

Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Library

writing tool of the Tamils was an object of personal pride and a status symbol. Just as the pen of a certain make preferably in silver or gold, reflects on the vanity and economic well-being of a modern writer, so did the quality of the *ezhuthaani* reveal a great deal about the personality of its owner in the past.

The pure stylus form alone shows the use of three different metals of varying value. In the clasp-knife stylus the cult of individuality went so far as to have the owner's name inlaid in silver on one side of the blade. Further embellishment took place on the broad edge of the blade: incredibly delicate silver inlay work might decorate the whole length of the blade even extending to the stylus. The most

MADRAS PRESIDENCY : 1925

An old lady remembers: "When I lived in South India in the 1920s I used to watch the children going to school in the morning. In one hand they clutched several palm-leaves and in the other they held a pile of long thorns from a tree I didn't know. It was the cheapest writing material provided by Nature for the children's writing lesson."

There are several kinds of trees which have long strong and sharp thorns which could be used for writing purposes.

The author

extravagant specimen of this type of *ezhuthaani* seen by this writer had two gold rosettes and rubies on either side of the handle covering the pin on which the blade swivels! It is difficult to ascertain how long this fashion was in vogue but it is certain that it spread over a wide area; Sri Lanka has produced an even more individualistic style where each stylus appears to be made by special order, for not two pieces are alike.

Those readers who might think that the stylus just described is a clumsy instrument may be surprised to learn that an experienced writer can use this tool with the same speed as others move their best fountain pens. As for beauty of writing or size of letters, the *ezhuthaani* can compete with any micro-pen.

Though most people can read the palm leaf as it is, legibility is increased by taking a swab with lemon grass oil and wiping it over the page. The scratched letters will absorb the oil and stand out as if written in ink. Another way of bringing out the writing is to rub charcoal powder into them. The lemon grass oil fulfils the task of cleaning the surface of all undesirable accumulations and helps with the general preservation of the manuscript.

Firm faith in the everlasting reliability of the *Ola* seems to be expressed in the following story from the *Brahmanda* and *Bahvishya* Puranas.

Once upon a time the earth formed one single continent; a *pralaya* or "overhauling" of the world was to take place after the reign of King Parikshit. When the king came to know that the earth would break up into separate continents he called together a large number of rishis. They gathered and decided to put all their knowledge and wisdom down in writing covering all possible subjects to be saved for later generations.

It was found that palm-leaves could be preserved by means of a special *rasayana*, a liquid prepared from certain plants not known any longer. After immersing the leaves in this preservative they could be written upon with a certain metal pen and were then rendered indestructible. Thus the writings were made and buried in the earth at various places now in different continents. Among them were the 84000 *Nadi shastras* written by 84000 rishis each in his own name ...

Earthquakes came and passed; a new world emerged; millennia passed ...

One day, still in ancient times, there lived a king—King Bhoja—who was very devoted to science and the *shastras*. He wondered why people of his time worshipped the mountains and got the idea that something of great value may be hidden in them. So he started digging and found a great number of the *Nadi shastras*. It is said that about 10000 *Nadi shastras* written by 10000 rishis have so far been discovered all over the world ...

If Brahma created the alphabet, then Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge inspired the invention of the palm-leaf book. (Is she not always depicted with an *Ola* in her left hand?) It must be counted among the greatest inventions of mankind for it —the *Ola* alone —has carried through the ages the entire knowledge and wisdom of ancient India.

THE RUBY BIRD

by Kamalakanto

"O hunter from the great high hills,
What is your fugitive prey?"
"The Ruby Bird from Twilight's rills
Has stolen my heart away.

I chased the dappled shy fawn,
When Night was fast flying;
But soon uprose the golden Dawn,
And the fawn dropt low adying.

My silver-bow shook and fell,
My jade-arrows missed their mark;
Since then, roving through hill and dale,
I am a Hunter — a Nomad stark.

Roaming through world's emerald deep,
And silent Moon's star-strewn domain,
My feet found no rest, nor my eyes sleep,
I raced for the Ruby Bird in vain!

Now the Ruby Bird is in my eyes,
She has nestled in my heart's core;
She has left her home in the skies,
And she will not fly any more."

From **Petals and Sparks,** just published.
Nil Kamal Centre, 13/B, Balaram Ghose Street,
Calcutta —700 004.

THE RIVER

by Indira Mishra

This wide open world
An unknown river
These waves rising and falling
These young ones laughing and hopping.
I stand on the bridge and watch
There is deep water that side
Perhaps there are rocks and snakes.
The children playing and shouting
Send silent storms into me
Like motherhood.
Now my hands are stiff
I concentrate on the unknown river
And the carefree kids
I become just a strong wish,
An armful of prayers
An arduous wait for
Helpless and all-pervasive
Hopes.

SUGANDHI or SARSAPARILLA:

The wonder remedy of bygone days

by Vimla Devi and R.V. Krishna Rao

KNOWN in Sanskrit as *Nagajihva* and *Anantamula*, in Malayalam and Tamil as *Nannari*, in Gujarati as *Druivel*, in Central India as *Kalidudhi* and *Chotidudhi*, in Telugu as *Muttavapulagamu* and in Marathi, Oriya, Bengali and Hindi as *Anantamul*, *Sarsaparilla* or *Sugandhi* is popular throughout India. Its botanical name is *Hemidesmus indicus*. When a Hungarian scientist grew quite curious about a herbal remedy used by Indians as a cure for physical debility, weakness, impotence, etc. and tried to find out what it is, he was led to Sarsaparilla. He made exhaustive tests with this drug and was convinced that this drug was no doubt the wonder remedy of bygone days and also a highly efficacious drug for maintaining sound health. The drug received a fresh wave of publicity.

As in olden days, today also this is the only drug for psoriasis, a dreadful disease of itching resulting in scratching and peeling of skin (desquamation). (There is no absolute cure for skin disease in modern medicine despite extensive research.)

Since times immemorial Sugandhi was prescribed for all such diseases. Some thought that it was only a superstition. But then stubborn cases of psoriasis are reported to have been cured only by this drug on prolonged treatment. It is also known in some Asian countries as *China root*. But the Indian Sarsaparilla has drawn the attention of modern scientists who are studying the plant thoroughly.

Sarsaparilla literally means a small thorny scented vine — as it has a sweet aromatic smell. The plant grows only in damp areas, develops long and slender roots and has trailing vines.

In view of the immense importance of the drug its adulteration with the help of other roots is frequent. Hence, here is a simple test a common man can employ to identify the root. Take a small piece of the root and chew it. Soon an acrid taste is left in the mouth, which confirms its genuineness— and if there is no taste or a different taste, probably it is some other stuff.

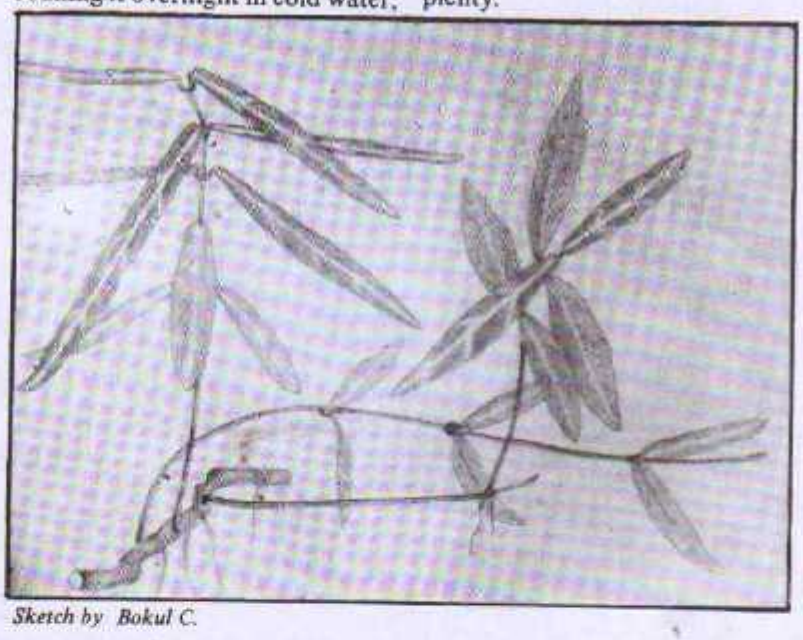
The drug is the slender roots which are powdered and an infusion is made out of the powder by soaking it overnight in cold water, and boiling the next day and filtering. This infusion is used for many chronic diseases like eczema, psoriasis, leucorrhoea, stromatilis, urinary complaints, loss of appetite and fevers.

The other curative effects of the drug are on a certain kind of heart disease. An accidental discovery revealed that it helps hair grow on bald heads, when the paste extract is applied.

When the drug powder is applied on boils as a paste with water the boils burst on their own.

Fine powder of this root mixed with cow-ghee helps slowly subside the viral eruption on the skin.

The powdered root and the leaf powder of *Vasaka (Adusi)* mixed with milk and administered for three months, helps in reducing obesity. An ointment made out of Sarsaparilla extract from the powdered root is helpful in piles. To increase the efficacy of the medicine, buttermilk should be consumed during the treatment in plenty.



Sketch by Bokul C.

When the infusion of the drug is boiled further with ghee and made into a *Lehya*, it is useful as an antidote for rat poisoning.

This drug (powdered) along with psoralea seeds (powdered *Bapchi* seeds) consumed in equal amounts along with honey for six months relieves the patient of psoriasis eczema. The presence of many vital hormones in this drug makes it potentially an important plant for further research in its role as a cure for even a dreaded disease as Aids. ❀

THE AGONY OF THE PUNJABI WRITER

by K.S. Duggal

*A foremost Punjabi writer, a recipient of **Padma Bhushan**, narrates with disarming frankness the predicament in which the writers of his home-state are in the bizarre climate that prevails there.*

IT is said that Bhinderanwale had two goals before him: to discredit the Union Government led by the Congress and to unite the Sikh community. He failed miserably in achieving either despite his fierce struggle as long as he lived; to an extent he achieved both these objectives in his death, at least for a while.

There is no doubt that Operation Blue Star alienated the Sikh community. And to that extent the Sikhs were united as never before whether they were in India or abroad. Bhinderanwale was projected as a "martyr". There were not a few who believed that he still lived and that he would appear on the scene at the appointed hour. There were those who swore having seen him with their own eyes after the storming of the Golden Temple complex. They awaited his reappearance like that of Subhash Chandra Bose. The defilement of the Golden Temple by his killer squad was completely forgiven and forgotten.

That Guru Gobind Singh who devoted his entire life fighting the tyranny of the Moghals had not forgotten the Sikh Panth.came to be believed by thousands of Sikh devotees who congregated at the Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran at Patiala and several other Sikh shrines, not excluding those in Delhi, to have the "sacred" glimpse of the falcon supposedly belonging to Guru Gobind Singh which suddenly started appearing at the holy sites. They believed that it did so during the Guru Ka Bagh morcha and other agitations launched by the community. The enthusiasm of the faithful in these gurdwaras at the hour of the appearance of the "sacred" falcon was to be seen to be believed.

On the other hand, as a media person, I was amazed at the massive propaganda mounted by the government and how it was going waste. The electronic media lost its credibility altogether.

Punjabi writers started giving vent to their pent up emotions at the virtual imposition of army rule after Operation Blue Star, as never before. Some of the most grim and heart-rending poetry was written on the theme. It was a phenomenon which had hardly a parallel in the literary annals. Even the holocaust of the Partition did not agitate and inspire the creative writer the way the storming of the Golden Temple did.

There was indignation and sorrow in Dr. Harbhajan Singh's words when he described the attack on the Akal Takht in his poem entitled "Ki faujan da Maan" (Forces Need Not Be Vain).

Wherefrom have the forces come?
From where they brought the poison
And wherefrom all the tyranny?
Which serpent has emitted a hiss
Blowing the barricades down?
The sacred tank is defiled
And the marble stones are afire.
Distributing fistful of venom.
Wherefrom have the forces come?

(August 1984)

Dr. Harbhajan Singh in another poem:

Are you real or a stepmother?
You've slaughtered and thrown us in the sun.
And you ask for the wounded to apply balm on their hurt.
The only house of God I had
You've brought it down with a blow.
Now where do I prostrate?
Where do I go and pray for you?

(August 1984)

In a tender piece by Hamdard Nasushehrvi, an old mother advises her son gone abroad not to return home to the Punjab of today.

Even the illiterate these days
Must listen to the news before their morning cup
And then there is quiet all around
The tea gets cold.
In this jungle of silence
The words hit like bullets
And the arguments like gunshots.
Don't you come for the present.
I know you miss your home
I know you long to be back
You must not come for the present.

(August 1984)

Gul Chauhan in, *Lo*, a Punjab monthly brought out from Amritsar:

If you must ask
Let me tell you
The story of the Holy City
And the plight of the devout.
Have you ever seen someone
torn from his tradition?
Have you ever heard tanks
rolling over dreams?
Have you ever seen an innocent
child stand before a loaded gun
And then collapse in his own
pool of blood with dignity
On the astro-turf of dead
bodies
on the marble?
If you haven't seen this,
If you haven't heard this,
Then you would never
understand
How agonising and painful the
happening was
And how soiled is the colour of
the smoke
Spiralling out of a helpless
poem.

(August 1984)

In yet another poem entitled "Na marne jogi na jeene jogi (Neither dead nor alive), it is maintained that it is love and amity, brotherhood and good neighbourliness that have been a casualty in Operation Blue Star:

How long will this firing
continue?
I am already battered
Torn to bits.
Some say,
It's the Sikh spirit,
Others believe it's the Punjabi
identity
Shattered and done to death.
I am amity,
Like a burnt out log
I sit beside the sepulchre of
satya and ahimsa.
Neither dead nor alive.

(Duggal, August 1984)

Looking back at this grim scenario of the utter alienation of a people, the calamitous assassination of Indira Gandhi appears to be a sequence of the Greek tragedy, as it were. Most unfortunate, most disastrous, but hardly unthinkable. In fact during the course of her meeting with Dr. Mulk Raj Anand and me in the third week of August, she gave us the impression more than once that she feared a mishap of the sort. "But how can this be forgiven and forgotten?" she remarked in utter agony when we narrated to her what we had witnessed in the Punjab after our visit to the Golden Temple and discussions with the Sikh high priests.

"But how can this be forgiven and forgotten?" Mrs. Indira Gandhi remarked in utter agony when we narrated to her what we had witnessed in the Punjab after our visit to the Golden Temple and discussions with the Sikh high priests.

Indira Gandhi's assassination at the hands of her Sikh security staff led to widespread killing of the Sikhs and destruction of their property in the capital and other parts of the country. It seemed for a moment that the edifice of secular India had miserably crumbled.

While the entire press in the country condemned the holocaust with one voice, unimpeachable inquiry commissions gave their verdict against the government's stand, its inaction to punish the culprits continued to bewilder the writer in the Punjab.

A great deal was written on the disturbances that followed Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. Poems, short stories, plays and reportages were attempted depicting the atrocities and indignities inflicted on a community with a glorious tradition of great sacrifices and unparalleled heroism in the cause of the nation. More than the poets, fiction writers took greater notice of this tragic episode in our recent history.

In a short story entitled "Band Band Kataun Wale" (Those Who Would Have Mincemeat Made of Them) a Sikh young man fearing that he would come to harm at the hands of the rioters had his hair trimmed. But his sweetheart, a Hindu girl, would have none of it. "I gave my heart to a Sikh," says she, "those who would rather die than flinch from their faith." In another short story called "Punjabi Character" a Hindu neighbour originally from the Punjab saves a Sikh family at grave risk to his person and property when surrounded by a murderous mob of rioters.

The new hopes consequent to the Rajiv-Longowal pact was too short-lived to find its echoes in creative writing. It created a stalemate and the resultant frustration that has found expression in ugly militant activity. The unending killing spree of innocent men, women and children day after day, week after week, month after month had made the writer in the Punjab feel small. He is utterly helpless.

The government is waiting for the position of strength before it starts negotiations and the militants, in the meanwhile, are mounting their graph of killings relentlessly. Their victims include students of literature like Dr. Vishwa Nath Tewari, progressive poets like Pash and promising journalists like Sumeet Singh of *Preet Lari*, a leading Punjabi monthly magazine.

Who can condone this indiscriminate slaughter? The creative writers' community in the Punjab is bewildered. The grim spectacle of senseless killings seems to have made them forget that Chandigarh has not been transferred to the Punjab. They seem to be no more bothered about the river water dispute. The maldistribution of the linguistic areas at the time of the carving of the Punjabi Suba is hardly ever mentioned.

They seem to have rearranged their priorities. They must first fight the menace of terrorism. The killing of innocent men, women and children must stop. The Hindu-Sikh amity which is the bedrock of *Punjabiat* must be maintained.

Surjit Patar, a leading poet among the younger generation, reminds his readers that they lost Waris Shah, the Muslim bard who gave us the immortal romance of Heer-Ranjha when the country was partitioned. Are we now going to lose Shiv Kumar Batalvi, the Hindu lyricist who has captured the hearts of the young and old with his enchanting Punjabi love songs?

It was Waris who was lost to us yesterday
Is it Shiv Kumar's turn now?

Similarly Swrajbir, a young intellectual taken to writing purposeful verse, bemoans the lot of Amritsar, the town founded by Guru Ram Das, the fourth Sikh guru as the Mecca of the devout, torn with inner conflicts and withering away amidst communal tensions:

Amritsar, where are your hope-laden morns
That informed the heart of its yearnings?
Amritsar, where are your peace-loving pigeons?
Amritsar, where are your eyes?
I wish to see if tears lurk in them.
Amritsar, which religion professes extremism?
What faith do you subscribe to?
Amritsar, why are you being decimated bit by bit?
Amritsar, how is it that my words
Decline to go into the mould of poetry?
They seem to doubt their own connotation.
The words have left me all alone.
Which jungle are they going to?
Amritsar, do you listen what is being announced?
No one may move out of his house.

Politicians have been rendered irrelevant. Only the militants and the mal-characters have a field day. Helpless the Punjabi writer watches it all in endless agony.

Birds must not sing in their nests.
Every maina must walk with hands lifted up
Skipping is alien to the times.
Deaths must not be mourned but counted.
Eyes must not see.
We must build citadels of suspicion...

(*Amritsar*—an extract)

Says Tara Singh Kamil in his typical lyrical strain:

Kindle not candles on the terrace, my love
Let the blasted winds blow off first.

Ghazal, a poetic form is known specially for love chant, its literal meaning being "dialogues with the sweetheart". Ghazal in Punjabi has changed its complexion today. More often than not it reflects the agony of a sensitive soul. Says Dr.Harbhajan Singh in one of his latest ghazals:

I speak not for those who are dead.
I belong not to those who are gone.
I plead for those who are alive
And live every moment in terror.

The Punjabi journals big or small are replete with verse in this strain. I pick up at random the latest issues of two magazines promoting new writers. *Anu* has a number of poems on the theme. A few extracts:

Call me not a Sikh
It's an abuse.
Call me not a Hindu
It's an abuse.
Call me a man
I am a human being.

(Ram Sarup Ankhi)

The Punjab is like a torn sock in a broken shoe
Awake oh Waris! Arise oh Bulleh Shah!
See what they have done to your land.

(Sadhu Singh Bedil)

Sahil, another little magazine has some remarkable poems on the theme:

You must be wondering
Why have I stopped writing love songs
As was my wont.
These days I keep preoccupied
Writing about strange new thoughts
Clamped on my mind like the nightly curfew
And the news about the daily killings
Move the ground from underneath my feet.
And every other day there is Punjab bandh
With gun-totting, helmeted soldiers at every corner.

(Surjit Sajan)

Hardly after the mid-day here the night descends
And like doves we scoop into our nests.
Gone are the days of get-togethers of friends
Sham Singh and Sham Lal are the two religions
No more the names of neighbours.
The fairs are crowded with soldiers on duty
No more the meeting place of friends.

(Prem Kaunke)

It is believed in all quarters that the Punjab's is a political and not a law and order problem. The custodians of law and order also maintain it. And yet the state legislative assembly remains dissolved. Politicians have been rendered irrelevant. Only the militants and the mal-characters have a field day. Helpless the Punjabi writer watches it all in endless agony.

The author, through numerous examples, has illustrated the different categories of dreams and their significance. In the remaining few (this is the 20th) articles in this series, his focus is no longer on theories or analysis but on specific symbols.

ANIMALS IN DREAMS by Devapriyo

"IN my childhood in the West I had a nurse who would often narrate her experiences to me. She told me how her mother once dreamt a huge bat flitting under the roof of her room and within a week her (the nurse's) father died. She told me that the bats in dreams stood for death. Twenty-five or thirty years later, I realised how true it was. Six months ago I dreamt that I entered a dilapidated house and thereby scared a couple of bats. They flew circling so close to my head that I was afraid that they would dash against me. I woke up. Sometime later, my grandmother died, proving that what I had heard about the bats in dreams was correct," writes Mr. Z.

Often what an object would mean for one depends on what idea one has about the object, including one's superstitions about it. But as we have already said earlier, truly premonitive dreams are rare. I do not think that the aforesaid dream of Mr. Z was premonitive. It is possible that the dilapidated house in the dream represented the old, worn-out body of his grandmother. One day, while looking at her, a thought might have crossed Mr Z's mind — that she was not to last long. Since his childhood association of the bat was with death, his momentary thought, marked by a touch of gloominess, might have resulted in this dream. But it does not necessarily foretell his grandmother's death. Mr Z does not say what was the length of time that elapsed between his dream and his grandmother's death. Had the death occurred the day after he dreamt the dream or even within a week, he would not have said "sometime later". Perhaps a month or two or three passed after the dream. But when the death occurred, his mind linked the occurrence with the dream. The dream does not seem to be anything more than a reverie of his grandmother's condition.

Appearance of birds and beasts in dreams is usual. But much depends on what we associate with them. In general a bull, like a horse, stands for some kind of sexual vigour. But to a Spaniard or someone who has passed his formative years in Spain meeting a bull in his dream may mean his anticipation of a challenging situation or task ahead of him! Needless to say, fighting and vanquishing a bull is synonymous of glory in the atmosphere. The bull represents a challenge.

And now turn to a village in India, its atmosphere influenced by Saivite practices and rituals. A student preparing for examinations dreams of a bull looking at him in a serene manner. In the morning he is full of joy. He is going to perform well in the examination. And he does well indeed! For him the bull is Lord Siva's vehicle. The bull appearing in his dream is an assurance that he has the Lord's Blessings.

While association with animals differ from place to place, there are certain creatures who have more or less a common symbolism in dreams. Take for example the dog. Everywhere in the world it is man's loyal servant and a watch on thieves and burglars. If you dream you are facing a dog (occasionally it may be even your own dog) who is barking at you, calmly try to think if you were planning or thinking of doing something that was untoward according to a subtler part of your own self. The barking dog could be a bit of your own conscience!

Men and women, respectively, at times identify their dogs and cats with their own children. Mrs. S, while drinking suddenly shrieked (in dream) when she discovered that she had crushed her own cat. In fact, it was a fear of unwittingly harming her own baby.

THE WORLD OF DREAMS

In the West a woman is often compared to a cat. A woman dreaming of a cat being chased by a dog might mean her own fear of a male aggression.

To dream of some fond dog smelling you and wagging its tail and showing other signs of affection may mean your experiencing some tender signs of faithfulness from some people around you. In popular superstition in the West, such a dream indicates some happy gain in terms of wealth or friendship. A white dog indicates success in business or love. But, I repeat, these are only popular beliefs.

The significance of cats in dreams can extend to another area, but only in exceptional cases. Cats, from the occult science point of view, are capable of being connected with certain supernatural powers. Hence those who dream of cats while doing certain occult practices, will have to follow a separate code of symbolism for their meaning. A cat in dream may represent the spirit of a dead person.

In most of the books that explain the meaning of animals in dreams, a horse is shown as related to sex. In a boy dreaming of running after a horse or taming it might mean his awareness of his sexuality, a woman dreaming of riding a horse may mean a sexual urge, but the rigid interpretation given to this is unreal. The eagerness to ride a horse or to run after it in dream may very well mean an eagerness to ride a horse! Apart from that, it may mean an awakening of life-energy; it may mean a driving and dynamic vital force in the dreamer.

Thanks to folklore, the association of deceit and cunning is so strong with the fox and jackal that almost everywhere in the civilised world they may mean the same thing —the fear of being deceived by somebody. It is not unlikely that it may even represent a lurking desire within oneself. But to detect that, the dreamer has to be devoid of vanity and the tendency to hide his own faults from himself.

From the mystic point of view, animals and birds have a different set of significance in dreams. Of that later. **— To Continue**

THE HERITAGE

GLIMPSES OF SEPTEMBER '89 NUMBER

HOW TO CONTROL EMOTIONS: We present an exclusive book-feature, written by Swami Rama, the scientist and the mystic, on an issue which concerns all—from the Yogi to the Commissar.

MESSAGE OF THE NUCLEAR BOMB: Does the bomb represent man's uncanny potentiality to release the Frankenstein—or it has a message too? The savant, Nolini Kanta Gupta, examines the situation.

THE CONCEPT OF GANAPATI: On the occasion of the Ganesha Chaturthi, a reflection on this unusual deity

AND OTHER FEATURES AND FICTION OF LASTING INTEREST

The author, a young D.I.G. of Police and a promising writer, recounts his night in a haunted house. He saw no ghost, but...

THE ONE WHO STOOD OUTSIDE

by Bipin Bihari Mishra

"BABU, I have kept the room ready for you!" the old Chowkidar of the bungalow at Machkund informed me affably, after greeting me with a broad smile. Down his waist hung a tattered *gamcha*—a handloom towel—but the upper part of his person was adorned with a coat on a soiled banian. Although quite old and rendered picturesque by patches of a variety of linen, it was of a costly stuff, obviously gifted to him by some kind-hearted guest years ago. The lower halves of his slipppers had melted away with use.

There was nothing formal, nothing artificial in this tribal Chowkidar's conduct. He was familiar with all strata of officials and, in his humble way, affectionate and respectful towards all.

It was a cosy room with bath attached. Adjoining it was the dining room. It was evening when I returned to the bungalow after attending to business, with some other officers, at the Machkund waterfall. We had trudged through the rocks for long and I was tired. As I collapsed into a chair on the verandah, the Chowkidar handed me a cup of piping hot tea. I smiled at him gratefully and he acknowledged it with a nod.

"What would you like to eat?" he asked me. We decided on a simple menu and he went into the kitchen to prepare the items. I had asked him to spread my dinner at eight and he did not delay even by a minute.

He stood behind me as I began eating. The officer-in-charge of the local police station also gave me company. Suddenly my eyes went over to an old bungalow shrouded in darkness.

"Does nobody live there?" I asked the Chowkidar.

"Only a ghost lives there, Babu," he replied in a matter-of-fact manner.

"A ghost?" I was amused.

"That's right, sir," said the officer-in-charge of the local police station. And he told me how many years ago the daughter of a senior engineer committed suicide there and since then her spirit had haunted the house—occasionally visible in the form of a headless body in a white saree.

I kept gazing at the deserted bungalow for a while and then announced my decision to spend the night there.

"No, no. Nobody stays there. There is no reason why you should," said the Chowkidar.

"But I have made up my mind," I said.

"That wouldn't be a right step to take, sir," the officer-in-charge cautioned me. And he reinforced his stand by citing the experience of a certain Superintendent of Police. The latter too had decided to spend the night there despite the advice of his local well-wishers against it. It was evening. He felt like enjoying a stroll in the open and asked his stenographer to fetch the torchlight. The steno entered the room occupied by his boss. Suddenly the doors of the bathroom opened; a headless body in a white saree came towards him. The steno screamed and managed to dash out of the room and throw himself against his boss before swooning away. Of course, he recovered before long to narrate his experience. Needless to say, the S.P. changed over to the new bungalow without any further prompting from anybody.

"Is it true?" I asked the Chowkidar.

"It is," he said.

"It is absolutely true," said the sweeper who was listening to us. "I was present near the scene."

But I did not change my mind. Ghosts in 1980! This was absurd. Years ago I had spent a night in another haunted house, although I had no better proof of any ghost's presence than some sounds in the doors and windows. Surely, a ghost could do something more to proclaim itself!

When the officer-in-charge realised that I was firm in my decision, he wondered about his duty in the peculiar situation. After all, he could not have washed his hands off his responsibility to act as my local protector.

"In that case, sir, I must post two alert constables on the verandah," he said decisively.

"With instructions to arrest the ghost if it appears?" I asked laughing.

"It is to guard you, sir, to be at your command in case of need..."

My luggage was transferred to the old bungalow. The Chowkidar, I observed, looked very unhappy over the matter.

"I asked you not to go there and yet..." he was grumbling again and again.

"Don't you worry," I told him. "Am I not being guarded by two constables? Why should you fear for my safety even after that?"

He kept silent.

My bed was made in the main room of the deserted bungalow. I began reading a novel in the light of a table-lamp. An hour later, as my eyelids grew heavy

with sleep, I switched off the lamp.

I enjoyed sound sleep for the greater part of the night and woke up at some thudding sound only towards the last quarter of the night. I switched on the light. Was it time for the headless apparition to emerge from the bathroom? Nothing like that happened. I got up from my cot and opened the bathroom. Perhaps a large rodent had scampered into the room, in the process dashing against some furniture.

Disappointed, I finally shut the bathroom and came back to bed. Just then there was a soft knock at the front door. But the ghost was not supposed to come in from outside! Yet as I opened the door my hand went to my revolver.

Holding a dim lantern, there stood the old Chowkidar.

"Are you all right?" he asked me.

"Sure! Why did you come?"

"Just to make sure that all was well with you. When I heard the sound of your opening the bathroom, I realised that you were awake."

I scanned the verandah. "What happened to the constables?" I asked.

"Well, they were here for about half an hour. And then there was some noise somewhere in the darkness and they fled. When I saw them gone, I came and stood here," said the Chowkidar. He continued in a murmur—as if now talking to himself, "But that unfortunate ghost is undoubtedly around! How can I leave you unguarded?"

He had passed the whole night, standing or sitting, ever alert to come to my aid in case I was in danger!

In his voice there was neither any pride of having done a duty nor any expectation of praise. He even did not realise how moved I was.

"Babu, you can have yet another hour's rest. She would not come any more, now that dawn is not far," assured the old man as he moved away.

I did not encounter the ghost, but I returned much richer for having met such a noble soul who never cared to be heard or sung.

Has man in the 20th century lost the capacity for experiencing the supernatural? The distinguished author of this article, a 19th century theosophist, on a visit to a lake area in Ireland, suddenly seems to have the vision of a remote past when "England's Isle had not arisen from the sea". What he saw was symbolic. A torch kept alive since times immemorial dies out because of a momentary lack of vigilance on the part of the guardians. It signified man depriving himself of a certain great promise that could have fruitioned to illumine his destiny, but if did not, man himself is to blame. **Editor**

A CURIOUS TALE

by W.Q. JUDGE

SOME years ago I ran down to the Lakes of Killarney, but not for the purpose merely of seeing them as any other traveller. During my boyhood the idea of going there had always been before me, and, in dreams I would often find myself on the water or wandering near-by. After this had occurred many times, I procured photographs of the scenery and was quite surprised to find that the dreams were accurate enough to seem like recollections. But various vicissitudes took me to other parts of the world, so that I had passed my majority without having visited the place, and indeed, the decision to go there at last was not made until one day, while looking into a shop window in Dublin, my eye fell upon a picture of Killarney, and in an instant I was filled with a strong desire to see them. So I went on the first train and was very soon there, quartered with an old man who from the first seemed like an old friend.

The next day or two were devoted to wandering about with no purpose nor with very great satisfaction, for the place as a bit of country did not interest me after all my wanderings in many different climes. But on the third day I went off into a field not far from the shores of one of the sheets of water, and sat down near an old well. It was still early in the afternoon, and unusually pleasant. My mind had no particular object before it, and I noticed an inability, quite unusual, to follow long a definite train of thought. As I sat thus, drowsiness came over my senses, the field and the well grew grey but still remained in sight, yet I seemed to be changing into another man, and as the minutes flew by, I saw the shadowy form or picture of a tall round tower rising, some fifty feet high, just beyond the well. Shaking myself, this disappeared and I thought I had fought off the sleepy feeling, but only for a moment. It returned with new intensity.

The well had disappeared and a building occupied its place, while the tall tower had grown solid; and then all desire to remain myself disappeared. I rose with a mechanical feeling that my duty, somehow or other, called me to the tower, and walked over into the building through which I knew it was necessary to go in order to reach the tower. As I passed inside the wall, there was the old well I had seen upon first coming into the field, but the strange incident did not attract my attention, for I knew the well as an old landmark. Reaching the tower, the steps wound up before me to the top, and as I mounted them a voice quite familiar called my name — a name not the same that I owned to upon sitting down near the well, but that did not attract my attention any more than the old well inside the wall. At last I emerged upon the top of the tower, and there was an old man keeping up a fire. It was the eternal fire never yet known to have gone out, and I out of all the other young disciples alone was permitted to help the old man.

As my head rose above the level of the low rim of the tower, I saw a calm and beautiful mountain not far away, and other towers nearer to it than mine.

"You are late," said the old man. I made no reply, as there was none to make; but I approached and showed by my attitude that I was ready to go on watching in his place. As I did this it flashed across me that the sun was nearing the horizon, and for an instant the memory of the old man with whom I had lodged came before me, as well as the express train to be reached by cart, but that faded out as the old watcher looked into my brain with his piercing eyes.

"I fear to leave you in charge," was his first remark. "There is a shadow, dark and silent, near you."

"Do not fear, father," said I; "I will not leave the fire nor permit it to go out."

"If you do, then our doom is sealed and the destiny of Innisfallen delayed."

With those words he turned and left me, and soon I heard his footfall no more on the winding stairs that led below.

The fire seemed bewitched. It would hardly burn, and once or twice it almost paralysed me with fear, so nearly did it expire. When the old man left me, it was burning brightly. At last it seemed that my efforts and prayers were successful; the blaze sprang up and all looked well. Just then a noise on.

the stairs caused me to turn round, and to my surprise a complete stranger came upon the platform where none but the guardians were allowed.

"Look," said he, "those fires beyond are dying out."

I looked and was filled with fear to see that the smoke from the towers near the mountain had died out, and in my sudden amazement rushed to the parapet to get a nearer view. Satisfied that what the stranger said was true, I turned to resume my watch, and there, O horror! my own fire was just expiring. No lights or tinder were permitted there; the watcher had to renew the fire by means of the fire. In a frenzy of fear I leaped to new fuel and put it on the fire, fanned it, laid my face to it and strove with maddened gasps to blow the flame up, but all my efforts were vain, —it was dead.

A sickening dread seized me, succeeded by a paralysis of every nerve except those that aid the hearing. I heard the stranger move toward me, and then I recognised his voice as he spoke. No other noises were about, all was dead and cold, and I seemed to know that the ancient guardian of the fire would return no more, that no one would return, that some calamity had fallen.

"It is the past," the stranger began. "You have just reached a point where you failed to feed the fire ages ago. It is done. Do you want to hear of these things? The old man has gone long ago, and can trouble you no more. Very soon you will be again in the whirl of the nineteenth century."

Speech then returned to me and I said, "Yes, tell me what this is or has been."

"This is an old tower used by the immediate descendants of the white Magicians who settled on Ireland when England's Isle had not arisen from the sea. When the great Masters had to go away, strict injunctions were left that no fires on these towers were to go out and the warning was also given that if the duties of life were neglected, if charity, duty, and virtue were forgotten, the power to keep these fires alive would gradually disappear. The decadence of the virtues would coincide with the failure of the fires, and this, the last tower, guarded by an old and young man, would be the last to fall, and that even it could save the rest if its watchers were faithful.

"Many years elapsed, and the brilliant gem placed upon the mount of Innisfallen blazed both by day and night until at last it seemed to fade a little. The curious sounding-stones, now found in Ireland, were not so easily blown; only when a pure and faithful servant came down from the White Tower did the long, strange, and moving sounds float over the mountains from the stone placed near the mount on which was the gem. Those stones had been used by the great magicians, and when the largest of them all, lying near the great White Tower, was sounded, the fairies of the lakes appeared; when the stone of the mount was blown together with that at the White Tower, the spirits of the air and the water ranged themselves obediently around.

"But all this altered and unbelief crept in while the fires were kept up as a form.

"You were relied on with the old man. But vain dreams detained you *one* hour beyond your appointed time on this fatal day, now in the past but shown you by my special favour. You came, but late. The old man was compelled to wait, but still feared to leave you, for he saw with prescient eye the dark finger of fate. He descended the stairs, and at its foot fell down and died. Your curiosity then drew you at the exact fatal moment to look at yonder tower, although you knew the prophecy and believed it. That moment decided all —and, poor boy, you could not hold back the iron hand of destiny.

"The fire has gone out. You returned to the floors below; at the foot of the stairs you saw them carrying off the old man and ... "

At this point I saw the shadowy, waving shape of the tower, the building had disappeared, the well was beside me, and I was in the field again. Oh!

THE FIRE THAT LIGHTED THE SOUTHERN SKY

MARCH TO FREEDOM IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY (1916-1947): by Dr. Saroja Sundararajan. Lalitha Publications, 'Balaji', 23, Sarada Nagar, Madras 600 092. Rs.350.00

"The first shot at British suzerainty over India was attempted in the distant unpretentious town of Panchalankurichi in the Tinnevelly district of the Madras Presidency. From this first and firm step of defiance against imperial aggrandizement taken by Kattabomman at the cost of his own life to the day when the Provincial Congress entered the national arena to join the mainstream of the spectacular march to freedom, the Presidency had played a commendable role. The rhythm of its march was no doubt uneven: sometimes it was vigorous; sometimes halting; but never at an *impasse*. In other words, the torch of freedom was always kept burning by the marchers," asserts the author in the epilogue of her thesis of about 650 pages and the bulk of the work is a compilation of facts and documents to prove this statement. But it is not merely a compilation, but a work of high academic excellence, both for its exhaustive treatment of the subject as well as its plan and style. The study covers, along with numerous little-known events, subjects like — the origin of the non-Brahman movement, Annie Besant and the Home Rule Movement, Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, Rowlatt Satyagraha, the Vaikkom Satyagraha, Diarchy and of course non co-operation and civil disobedience in Madras Presidency.

An example from the author's several pointed observations: The British "came to trade but stumbled on an Empire. Unlike their Muslim predecessors, the British insulated themselves from the Indian population with an imperial arrogance. Though they scrupulously followed an official policy of secularism they might have also tacitly connived at the proselytisation efforts of evangelical missionaries. Thus there was no reciprocal assimilation between the Indians and the British either at the cultural or at the ethnic level. The Muslims came, saw, conquered and died in India. The British came, saw, conquered and departed to Britain. Nevertheless, the British influence on India is more distinct and enduring. Whereas the Indian response to the Mughal challenge was never unified into a national, that is, pan-Indian movement, the British advent made for a political and national unification."

Visvavasu

A Spirit Indomitable

"A LION AMONG MEN"

A SPIRIT INDOMITABLE, edited by Mona Sarkar. Sudhir Kumar Sarkar Birth Centenary Committee, Pondicherry 605 002. Price Rs. 50.00

Sudhir Kumar Sarkar whose birth centenary this book celebrates belonged to the first batch of revolutionaries that the turn of the century produced. With the Partition of Bengal in 1905 Sri Aurobindo, then the supreme leader of the Nationalist revolutionaries had sounded the clarion call to denounce everything for the sake of the service of Mother India. Sudhir Kumar, "one of the bravest and most fearless son of the Motherland", as Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta put it, was tried in the celebrated Alipore Bomb Case and sentenced to the most dreaded punishment of those days — rigorous imprisonment in the Andamans. The present anthology gives glimpses of the life of the great fighter in his political days as well as in the later part of his life when he settled down in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and lived there to the age of eighty-five.

Many are the anecdotes given about this rare and uncommon person, who never cared to do anything for his own self and whose only aim in life was to give and serve, at first his Motherland and then the Mother, his Guru. After Independence it was announced that the Government had decided to dedicate the Cellular Jail in the Andamans to the memory of the freedom fighters who had been interned there. Manoj Das interviewed Sudhir Kumar on behalf of a Delhi newsmagazine to know his reaction. Was he elated? Had he any suggestion to make? For such questions of a columnist the expected answer was, "Well, it was overdue" ... etc. etc. But, Manoj Das recollects, "Sudhir Kumar's face hardly recorded any reaction. I read in it the composed and detached mind that set no store on outward recognition of the sacrifices; and he went on explaining in a serene tone the philosophy of the revolutionaries of the bygone generation. Mother India, he said, deserved true sacrifice, no pretentions, she deserved the act of sacrifice by the best of her children, not the 'acting' of sacrifice by clever ones who calculated strategies to limit the risks and safeguard their dear life."

Such is the nature of the content of this anthology on this remarkable man, "a lion among men" as Jayprakash Narayan observed. It stands to the credit of the compiler that he has chosen to bring to light the personality of this little known son of Mother India. The committee is to be congratulated for publishing this very readable book, at once absorbing and elevating.

A.D. Savardekar

GLIMPSES OF INDIAN MATHEMATICS

by H.S. Ursekar

ANCIENT India is regarded by a section of Western scholars like Maxmuller as a nation of philosophers. The materialistic West talks always of its counterpart as the mystic East. The dichotomy of mind and matter is reflected according to them in the terms East and West and probably this was one of the misunderstandings which inspired Kipling's remark that has become almost a notorious epigram that East is East and West is West and never shall the twain meet.

India's spiritual heritage has overshadowed her material achievements. It is overlooked that India was equally a country of the tailor, the tinker and the candle-stick maker! Their purview of the Vedas included even the Ayurveda and the Dhanurveda. They were equally at home with music as with metaphysics. Ethics and economics were grist alike to their mill.

Like the seer-poets Atri, Vasistha, Vishwamitra of the Rigveda, India produced mathematicians and astronomers like Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Brahmagupta, Mahavira and Bhaskaracharya.

Aryabhata was one of the oldest writers on Mathematics. According to Prof. David Eugene Smith, author of *History of Mathematics*, Aryabhata was the first of the great writers whose name has come down to us. He was born at Kusumapura and lived in the 5th century A.D. His work *Aryabhatiyam*, is an original treatise on Mathematics. Astronomy was one of the six essential auxiliaries of the Vedas, its earliest exponent being Lagadha. But Aryabhata was the first writer to include a mathematical section in Astronomy. Out of the five *Siddhantas* viz. *Surya, Paitamaha, Vasishtha, Romaka* and *Pulisha*, Aryabhata is recognised as the inventor (*Upadnya*) of the *Pulisha Siddhanta*. Though he hails from Bihar, yet the earliest extant manuscript of the *Aryabhatiyam* as discovered by Dr. Cairns is in Malayalam.

Aryabhata was followed by Varahamihira (6th century A.D.) the doyen of astronomers in ancient India. He is supposed to be one of the nine jewels in the Court of King Vikrama of Ujjain. His *Pancha Siddhantika* is a well-known work. He was such an enlightened scholar that he frankly conceded that the Yawanas (Greeks) have developed the science of Astronomy and, therefore, they are adored like the sages. (Chapter II, V. 15, Varahamihira.) Alberuni has specially cited this remark of Varahamihira.

Varahamihira was followed by Brahmagupta (7th century A.D.) He lived and worked at Ujjain like Varahamihira. He wrote the *Brahma Siddhanta*. Thereafter, Mahavira, a follower of Jina, is believed to have written *Ganita-Sāra-Sangraha*. He probably lived at the court of one of the old *Rāshtrakuta* monarchs who ruled over Mysore. Mahavira flourished in the 9th century A.D. The last of the great mathematicians of ancient India was Bhaskaracharya who also lived in Ujjain though he was born in Khandesha, Maharashtra in A.D. 12th century.

According to some scholars considerable pioneering work in various branches of Mathematics like the Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry was done by the Indian scholars. It is believed that the Arabs carried this knowledge to the West round about the 12th century and they can be considered as the cultural liaisons between the East and the West.

Arithmetic: Mathematical Notations

Man has an eternal fascination for numbers. In the field of Arithmetic it is now more or less accepted without serious challenge that the numerals 1 to 9 were invented in India. Professor Gamow points out that the Hottentots in Africa do not still have numbers beyond, 1, 2 and 3. Every count beyond 3 is denoted by the omnibus term many. On the other hand, in the Rigveda one comes across the words denoting numbers one to ten. We have also *Sahashra* (1000) and *Ayuta* (10000). In *Taitteriya Samhita* numbers up to the 18th order — (parardha) are mentioned. The earliest documentary proof of the use of numericals is found in the *Naneghat* inscription found near Poona. This inscription is believed to have been installed a century after the edicts of Ashoka, in the 2nd century B.C. Similarly numbers are found carved in another inscription in the caves near Nasik in the Deccan (A.D. 1st or 2nd century). These numbers may be deemed to be Adam and Eve of the modern Arabic numericals. These numbers of Indian origin were relayed to Europe by the Arab scholars and hence they came to be known as Arabic numerals. This inference is fortified by the name Hindasi by which the numerals are called in Arabic even today. (Such nomenclatures are

significant. There is a variety of cattle known as the Brahmin cattle in America as the ancestors of that breed had been imported from India.)

Zero

As with the numbers 1 to 9, so with zero too, now it is almost well established that the cipher is one of the most significant contributions of India to world Mathematics. The science of Numerology could not have progressed but for the invention of the cipher. It is a naught fraught with aught. It is the apex of creative imagination of man in the field of numbers. It is difficult to say accurately as to who was the inventor of the cipher, but that he was an Indian is now certain. It is equally difficult to assert as to how or when the zero was evolved. It might have flowed from the circle. I may venture a suggestion. In ancient Indian Mathematics a negative number used to be denoted by a circle placed on its top, e.g. $5^{\circ} = -5$ Possibly due to some fortunate slip of the pen this circle might have slipped from the top of the number to its side as a result of the carelessness of the scribe. In that heaven-sent moment some genius like Arnold's Scholar Gypsy might have seen and seized the infinite potentialities in that accident. What a world of change by a single slip! That is why when I think of the Zero I recall Marlowe's line "infinite riches in a little room". Metaphorically speaking the number is like the husband, while zero may be compared to the wife. If a wife dominates the husband, the latter is reduced to a negative entity, but on the other hand, if she cooperates with him on equal footing, she does enhance his contribution ten-fold.

The earliest inscribed proof of the use of cipher is discovered in the Gwalior inscription of A.D. 9th century. Where the cipher is used to denote 50 and 270. It is safe to assume that the place value was also given to the zero by Indians in the past.

It may be asked whether before the cipher was rubbed into other centuries were there no numbers involving the tens, hundreds and thousands? To say so would be presumptuous. These numbers used to be expressed then by letters or picturesque signs. For example, the number ten used to be written by different people with a symbol as follows:

Babylonians: L; Chinese:+; Egyptians:∩; Greeks: K; Romans: X; We still use the Roman letter such as X for 10, L for 50, C for 100, and so on. The Arabs on the other hand denote the number 5 by Δ notation akin to zero and write a dot for the cipher.

Additions, Subtractions, and Fractions

The process of Additions, Subtractions, were known to Indians as can be seen from *Lilavati* of Bhaskaracharya. The way of setting a prosaic sum was quite charming.

'Oh dear talented Lilavati, if you are adept at sums, add the following ... ...'

In one of the commentaries on *Lilavati* the units tens and hundreds are written in separate horizontal lines and are then added. The remarkable thing is that even in those times the modern system of writing the figures of sums to be added one below the other was prevalent.

According to some scholars one of the significant contributions of the Indians to Mathematics is the fractional number.

Negative and Plus Signs

The idea of the negative number is considered to be a progressive landmark in the march of mathematics. The negative sums are found in the *Brahma-siddhantika* of Brahmagupta. It was indicated, as stated earlier, by a circle on the top of a number (6) or sometimes the negative number used to be written in a circle. In the Bakshāali manuscript (A.D. 8th or 10th century) found near Peshawar the negative number is shown by putting a cross after the number, eg. 7+. Thus paradoxically here we find the plus sign used to denote the negative of course with a change of position. It seems that there was no uniform practice of writing a negative number in ancient India.

It appears the plus sign was not known in a remote past. A number having no sign either preceding, succeeding or atop was regarded as an unqualified positive number. The present plus sign, is claimed to have been evolved from, the Latin word *et*.

The method of deriving the square root of a sum is found in *Lilavati*.

According to Paul Tannery, another important contribution of Indians is the method of tallying the correctness of the number of the results of sums, multiplications, etc., with the help of the number 9.

Rule of three ..

The rule of three, the rule of five and the rule of the polynumbers, *Bahurashik*, are remarkable Indian methods. Brahmagupta uses the terms *Pramān, Phal* and *Ichchā* to indicate the ingredients of the rule of three. Mahavira has given the rule of three as follows: *Phal* multiplied by *Ichchā* and divided by *Pramān* yields the desired results.

On these lines examples of simple interest are set by Mahavira and Bhaskara.

The dust abacus is of definite Indian origin. Arithmetical sums could be easily done with its aid. In the introduction to *Lilavati*, Taylor has observed that the dust abacus was in use in India till the end of the last century.

Algebra

As in Arithmetic, the Indians were quite well-versed in Algebra. They are credited with a considerable amount of pioneering work in Algebra. Arithmetic studies the numbers of known values, while Algebra studies the numbers of unknown values. In Algebra man unlocked the unknown with the key of the known. That is why Ahms (1650 B.C.) described Algebra as the Science of unravelling the mysteries of numbers in the world.

The term Algebra originated in Arabia. It gained currency from

BHASKARACHARYA AND LILAVATI

According to tradition Bhaskaracharya was probably an astrologer, and had a daughter ***Lilāvati*** *from whose horoscope, which he had prepared, he discovered that she would become a widow shortly after her marriage. By calculation he also found out how, if he could arrange to have her wedding at a specific time, that calamity could be averted. He therefore, procured a sand-glass, the use of which was known in India centuries earlier, for the particular object he had in view. His little daughter out of curiosity looked into and while doing so, a little pearl from one of her ornaments without any one being aware of it, fell into it. On the next day, when the exact hour for the marriage was fixed, to their surprise, the sand would not drop down at all and the auspicious moment passed and then they discovered that the pearl had done the mischief. Thus the inevitable disaster could not be averted. To distract her attention from her great personal loss, her father wrote his famous book* ***Lilāvati.*** *As this legend is without any basis, this tale has little historical value.*

This work ***Lilāvati*** *deals chiefly with arithmetic and includes sections on zero* ***(sunya)****, geometry, mensuration,* ***kuttaka*** *(inderminate equations of the first magnitude) and algebra* ***(bija-ganita)****. This work is noted for the interesting and entertaining manner in which the subject matter of mathematics has been treated. In presenting this type of abstruse subject, Bhaskaracharya had profited from the examples furnished by his preceding mathematicians like Sridhara, Sripati, Mahavira and Brahma Gupta. He has been hailed as the world's first mathematician who invented the problem of the differential calculus and furnished the first specimen of a differential co-efficient.*

Bhaskaracharya was also the author of another work known as the ***Karana Kutūhala****, which is not so well-known as his earlier work. Under Akbar's instructions (A.D. 1556-1605) his talented minister, Abu'l Fazl, translated into Persian the* ***Lilāvati*** *and another of his works,* ***Bijaganita*** *was translated into the same language by Utta Ulla Rusidi. Both were published in A.D. 1587 during Akbar's reign and during the reign of Shah Jahan (A.D. 1628-1666) in A.D. 1643, respectively.*

Bhaskaracharya's magnum opus the ***Siddhānta Siromani*** *consists of four sections, namely,* ***Lilāvati Bijaganita, Goladhyaya*** *and* ***Grhaganita****. The first deals with arithmetic, the second with algebra, the third with the celestial universe and the last with planetary mathematics. Bhaskara frankly admits in this work his indebtedness to previous mathematicians like Brahma Gupta, Sridhara and Padmanabha, whose work he had utilised and summarised. His gratitude to another mathematician Mahavira has also been traced. In spite of all these sources on which Bhaskara seems to have relied and from whom he secured information of some kind or other, his work is not a mere summary of the work of his predecessors. His own work is distinguished by a systematic presentation, fresh problems, better forms of procedure, clarity of expression and simplicity of language. His commentary,* ***Vāsana Bhāsya*** *contains several examples which assist in the interpretations of the problems furnished in the text. His work* ***Lilāvati*** *continued to be popular for a long time.*

R.N. Saletore, **Encyclopaedia of Indian Culture.**
(Sterling, New Delhi)

the title of the book *Al-jabra Va Al-Mukabla* by *Al-Khowarijmi* who flourished in Arabia in the A.D. 9th century. The essence of Algebra lies in the transposition of a negative entity to the other side of the question so as to give positive value to the negative entity.

The Greeks treated Algebra as part of Arithmetic and so did ancient Indians. Brahmagupta calls it *Kuttaka*, while Bhaskaracharya describes it as *Avyakta Ganita* or *Bija Ganita*. The name *Avyakta* also emphasises the unknown aspect dealt by Algebra. Aryabhata calls Arithmetic as *Vyakta Ganita* or *Pati Ganita* or *Anka-Ganita*.

Aryabhata, according to Colebrooke, is nearly as ancient as the Greek Algebrist Diophantus (c. 275). *Aryabhatiyam* includes problems in series, permutations and linear and quadratic equations. That is why Colebrooke observes,

"Assuming Hindu and Alexanderine authors to be equally ancient, Aryabhata, it must be conceded, was more advanced in the science." *(Miscellaneous Essays*, Vol. II.)

Brahma-siddhanta of Brahmagupta contains a satisfactory rule for solving the quadratic equation. A term was called *Pada*. Co-efficient was called *Ansha* or *Prakruti* by him. The unknown quantity was denoted by *Yā (Yāvat Tāwat)*, by Brahmagupta. Thus *Yā* stood for the first unknown quantity corresponding to X in modern Algebra. The terms of unknown quantities after *Yā* were coined by taking the initial letter of colours by Brahmagupta.

K (Kalak) (Black) for 2nd unknown quantity.
Ni (Nilak) (Blue) for 3rd unknown quantity.
Pi (Pitak) (Yellow) for 4th unknown quantity.
Pa (Pandu) (White) for 5th unknown quantity.
Lo (Lohit) (Red) for 6th unknown quantity.

Mahavira's *Ganitā-Sara-Sangraha* contains a large number of problems involving series,

radicals and equations. From the works of pre-Arabic mathematicians like Aryabhata, Brahmagupta and Mahavira, it will be seen that the Indians were far advanced in Algebra. Colebrooke remarks —

"The age when Brahmagupta flourished, seems then... as antecedent to the earliest dawn of the culture of the sciences among the Arabs, and consequently establishes the fact that the Hindus were in possession of Algebra before it was known to Arabians."

In another place, Colebrooke has given an unqualified assessment of Indian achievement thus —

"This science (Algebra) in a more advanced state subsisted among Hindus prior to the earlier disclosures of it by the Arabians to Modern Europe."

He has also stated that Arabs were 'avowed borrowers'.

Bhaskaracharya's *Bija Ganita* (1150) contains nine chapters and extends the work up to quadratic equations. He uses the expression, *Samya Karanartham* to denote the words to equate. He has given examples of quadratic and cubic equations. The following example of Geometric series is very illuminating—

"A gave 2 *couries* to a mendicant, next day he gave double the number to him, the day after that double of that number and so on. Find out how many *couries* A donates per month."

According to Colebrooke and Keith, Indians were far in advance of the other nations in the field of Algebra.

Geometry

Like numbers, the various figures in nature has an attraction for man from earliest times. In Arithmetic and Algebra man studied the known and unknown numbers, while in Geometry he learnt the properties of figures.

It is said that Science and Religion are at loggerheads in modern times. However, Dr. Keith has observed that "In India Science arises in close connection with Religion."

In the Vedic times, for performing sacrifices, knowledge of Calendar and Mensuration was a necessity. According to Keith, the science of Geometry arose in India out of the functions of measuring and constructing the sacrificial altars. In the famous *Shulvasutras* (5 cent. B.C.) of Apastamba, we come across the elements of this science. From this, it can be reasonably deduced that the use of Geometry was known to the Indian engineers of yore.

Geometry used to be applied first for measuring distances. The properties of various figures like the triangles, square, circle, pyramid *(Shanku)* were known to the ancient Aryans.

The three challenging problems before the ancient Greek mathematicians were (1) trisection of angle (2) calculation of the height of a cube with double the volume of a given cube (3) squaring a circle. (Smith's *History of Mathematics. Vol. II.)* The last problem was considered to be a prestige problem. The obvious method to solve it was to calculate the length of the circumference of a circle. Now, this process was obvious but by no means simple.

The Indians were also aware of this problem. In the 5th century, Aryabhata gave the value of π as 3.1416, with rules to derive it. Brahmagupta has cited that an astronomer called Pulish had calculated the value of π up to five decimal places, viz. 3,14153. According to him, the square root of 10, yields, the value of π. Bhaskaracharya has given the well-known value of π viz. $\frac{22}{7}$. Let us turn from the value of π to the theorem of Pythagoras. This theorem crystallises the properties of a right-angled triangle. Thus, in a right-angled triangle, the square described on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares described on the other two sides. This formula was known to Indians at a very early stage of human civilization. In the *Shulvasutras*, we find the length of sides of triangles to construct right-angled triangles of various sizes given as follows. (1) 3, 4, 5; (2) 5, 12, 13, etc.

Aryabhata has given the formula to calculate the volume of a cube as follows: Base of a cube multiplied by height and the result divided by two. It may be pointed out that in Indian Geometry we do not find definition of terms, nor there are mention of parallels.

Trigonometry

If Geometry originated in measuring of distances on the earth, trigonometry evolved out of man's effort to measure the distances in the sky. The ancient Egyptians used to measure time by erecting a stick called Gnomon.

Time was measured by referring to the shadow of the Gnomon. They observed the angle made by

NUMBERS IN THE VEDIC AGE

Even in the ancient period the mathematical knowledge in India was of a high order. ***Gaṇita*** *occupied the pride of place among the different sciences. Numbers seemed to have had a special appeal to the Indians of the Vedic and post-Vedic periods. The* ***Yajurveda Saṃhitā*** *has names of numbers up to even (10^{12}) and the* ***Pañcaviṃsa Brahmaṇa*** *gives an account of numbers in ascending decimal scale:* ***eka, dasa*** *(10^1),* ***sata*** *(10^2)* ***sahasra*** *(10^3),* ***ayuta*** *(10^4),* ***niyuta*** *(10^5),* ***prayuta*** *(10^6),* ***arbuda*** *(10^7),* ***nyarbuda*** *(10^8),* ***samudra*** *(10^9),* ***madhya*** *(10^{10}),* ***anta*** *(10^{11}), and* ***parardha*** *(10^{12}). In this respect it is interesting to note that the highest terminology of the Greeks (which probably came into use by about the fourth century B.C.) was* ***myriad*** *(10^4) and of the Romans was* ***mille*** *which denoted a thousand (10^3) only. In the Classical Period the Indians had developed terminology to express numbers as large as (10^{24}) and (10^{53}).*

—B.V. Subbarayappa: "India's Contribution to the History of Science," **India's Contribution to World Thought and Culture.** (Vivekananda Rock Memorial Publication, Madras.)

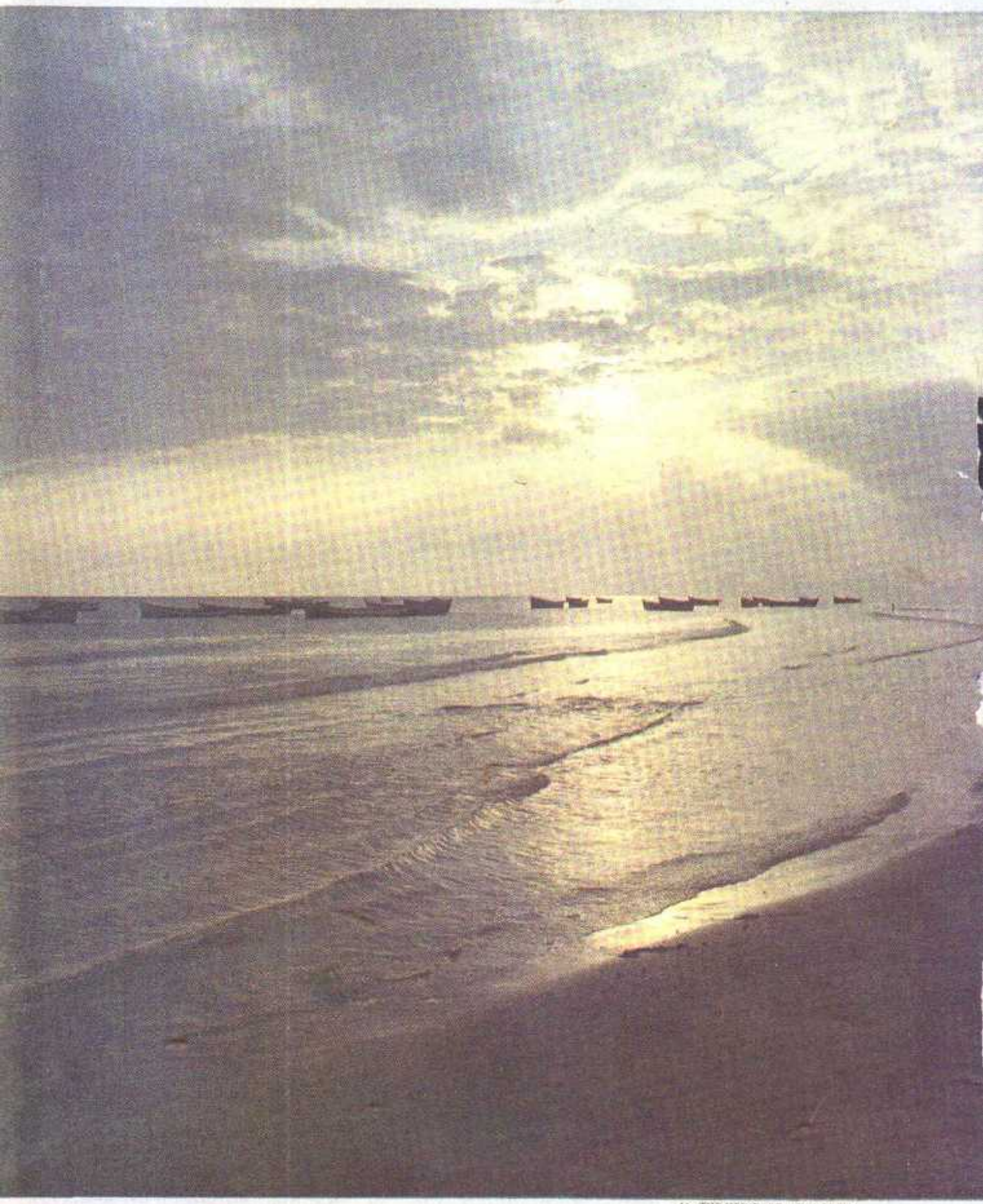
the stick with the ground and in studying its functions, came to know the properties of angles. Out of these efforts developed the idea of sines, etc. Aryabhata uses the term *Jya* to denote sine. First he called it *Ardhajya* (half-chord) but subsequently he used the term, *Jya* (chord). He has divided the circle into 360 like Ptolemy. Sine is called *Kramajya* by Brahmagupta. It is believed that the Arabic word *Karajya* for sine may be a distortion of the Sanskrit term *Kramajya*. Such decadent uses of Sanskrit words in Arabic are not few. Alberuni has pointed out that it is difficult for a foreigner to learn Sanskrit. According to Keith in the *Pulish Siddhanta* Aryabhata has made important contributions to trigonometry. Aryabhata has also given the sine and versed sine tables familiar to the students of Mathematics. Varahamihira has also cited the sine tables in the *Surya Siddhanta*.

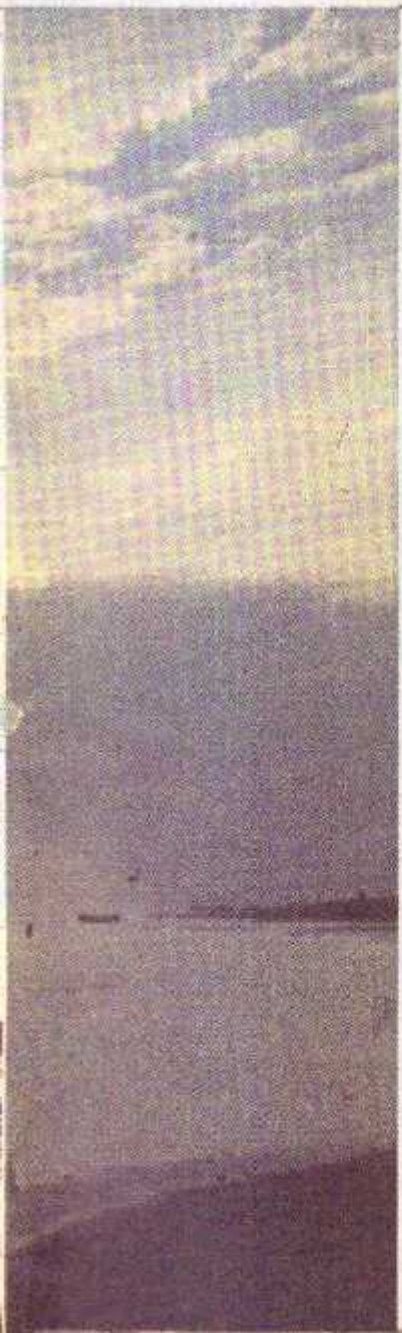
From the above discussion it will be clear that the ancient Indian mathematicians did make a significant contribution to the development of Mathematics. Dr. Kane, in his *History of Dharma Shastra*, has pointed out that the knowledge of Aryans of Algebra was of a superior order; they invented the decimal place value system for numbers and propagated it and the sign of Zero to Europe through the Arabs in the 12th century A.D.

Dr. Keith has also fairly conceded: "The mathematical achievements of India lay in field of Algebra and in the invention of a valuable system of notation." *(History of Sanskrit Literature.)*

However, it is difficult to close this paper without mentioning the appreciation of Indian Mathematicians as given by Severus Sebokht who lived in the A.D. 7th century in Mesopotamia:

"Their subtle discoveries in the Science of Astronomy, discoveries that are more ingenious than those of the Greeks and Babylonians, their valuable methods of calculating and their computing that surpasses description." (Smith's *History of Mathematics*, Vol. II.)





Evening on Kodikkarai beach

"Visiting Kodikkarai on an impulse we were lucky enough to get there on the very day that the annual arrival of the flamingos was announced."

KODIKKARAI:

WATER AND WILDERNESS

Text and photos by Shraddhavan

WE stood at the edge of the jetty, just after sunset, enjoying the cool sea-breeze and the colourful scene on the beach: the day's catch from twenty-odd brightly-painted fishing boats was being sorted, and the darkening sky filled with the rush of wings as hordes of sea-eagles swooped and dived around the women emptying the nets.

Suddenly, just below our feet, a large fin broke the water's surface for a moment. "Shark?" I wondered; it would have made sense, I supposed, for those marine scavengers to follow the fleet in to the shore, in quest of easy pickings. But then another form emerged from the water for a few seconds, and I saw the distinctive bottle-shaped snout of a dolphin. There were three of them, moving around in the water, sliding out with a hissing grunt, and curving back under in a playful arc. "Oh," I said, "I hope these fishermen don't catch dolphins!" I was reassured to see that other people around us noticed the dolphins and pointed them out to one another, smiling, but none made any move to activate the fishermen, who were now loading their tackle ready to sail again on the night tide. Until it was too dark to distinguish anything any more, we stood watching the curving sliding forms, listening to the peculiar grunt and hiss each time they surfaced, feeling a deep surge of affection for these trustful, charming creatures glimpsed so unexpectedly.

We were visiting the tiny village of Kodikkarai, near the lighthouse on Point Calimere at the entrance to Palk Bay—barely 60 km from the tip of Sri Lanka. This remote area of lagoons, salt-marshes and scrub-jungle has seen troubled times in recent years as refugees poured in from the south in little boats. But by the time of our visit, in December 1988, most of these must have returned home or moved on: the many keet huts lining the beach and the road inland, which we guessed must have been erected to house them, were closed down or lay unused. Kodikkarai seemed to have returned to its usual peaceful state and trade-fishing.

The extensive backwaters west of the village have been divided by bunds for salt-production. The network of shallow ponds and connecting earth-ridges stretches for miles. Known as 'the Great Swamp', this area is a haven for migrating water-birds, who arrive at the beginning of December each year to enjoy the abundant supply of shellfish in these shallow protected waters for a couple of months, before setting off northwards again on their long return journey. Visiting Kodikkarai on an impulse last year, we were lucky enough to get there on the very day that the annual arrival of the flamingos was announced by the Wildlife Officer.

Shells on the beach

Flamingos are the most spectacular of the winter visitors, moving as they do in large flocks, with their distinctive pinkish plumage. But there are many other bird-species to be seen there as well.

Our first visit to the Great Swamp was in the late afternoon. We walked out past the salt-works, where several bright fishing-boats were moored, their sails furled, the painted eyes on their prows still vigilant, and saw a flotilla of pelicans cruising in quite close to the bund we were following. One does not need to be an ornithologist to recognise those bulky bodies and pouched beaks. Several

pairs sat on the water like miniature galleons.

Beyond them a group of long-legged, dark-winged birds were feeding steadily, heads down to the water; rather round-shouldered, almost studious-looking as they fed, they startled us by taking to the air in uniquely graceful flight, one behind the other, each bird a thrillingly slender profile against the clouds: cranes! Seeing them in flight like that, we could immediately understand why the Japanese artists and poets have made such a cult of these birds.

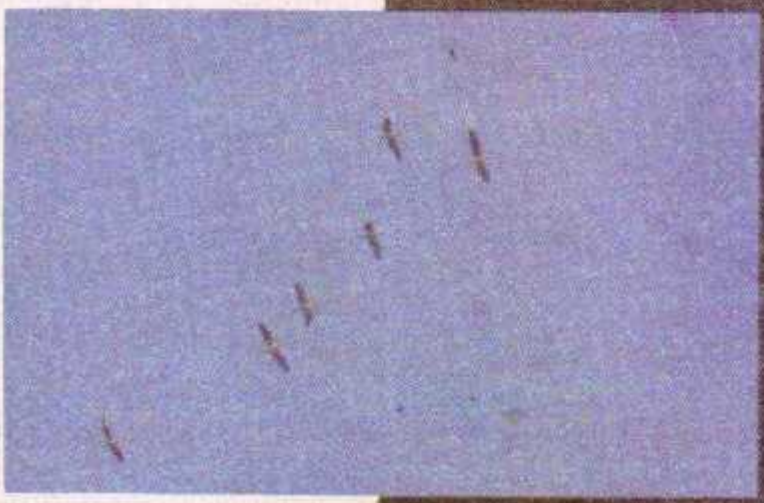
Familiar white paddy-birds were there too, and similar-shaped but smaller herons, wide-winged graceful terns, and many sea-eagles; swallows surprised us by darting almost up to our ears before swerving away; and when we turned back towards the shore, we saw tiny sand-coloured birds running along at the water's edge like crabs. At the Forest rest-house where we were staying, the staff assured us that if we would get up early next morning and reach the Swamp by day-break, we would see huge flocks of flamingos feeding.

But the following day we decided instead to explore the Wildlife Sanctuary, which lies on the other side of the road, bordered on south and east by the sea. In the rest-house was a map of the Sanctuary showing the Nature-Trails leading through it, and a list of all the animals sighted within it: Black Buck and Spotted Deer, Wild-boar and ponies, and many smaller, shyer, nocturnal creatures we would be less likely to spot in broad daylight.

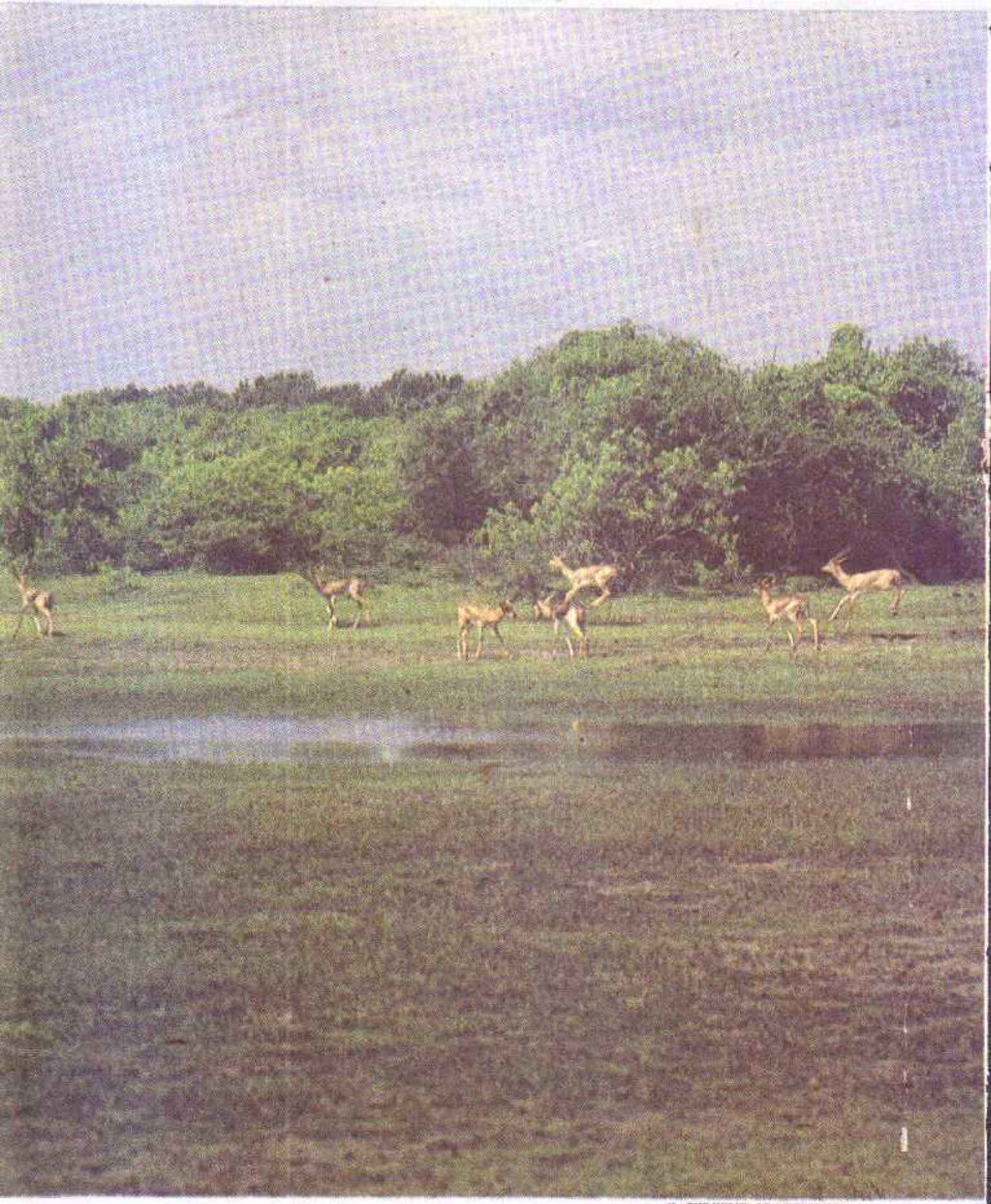
We soon left the village behind and, wading through a shallow inlet, came into an area of sand-dunes and thorn bushes. These soon gave way to a paradisal landscape of green meadows bordered by thick bushes and few taller trees, and a labyrinth of blue pools, accented here and there by the brilliant plumage of a white wading bird.

We felt an immediate sense of recognition: "Of course! This is how it was!"—in the Garden of Eden, in just such lush green water-meadows, beneath such blue skies, sheltered by such thickets, in such stillness and beauty. Man must have first stood upright and looked around him, and felt himself separate from the rest of Nature; subconsciously he has been yearning for that lost oneness ever since, and trying to recapture it—when he had the means—in parks and gardens, or on wilderness-treks. When in the distance we glimpsed an almost naked brown human figure wading swiftly through the shallows from one thicket to another, it seemed to complete the picture: Adam walking in his garden.

Again and again during our few days' stay in Kodikkarai we were drawn back to that idyllic landscape. At first we felt anxious that we might get lost in the maze of pools and flooded meadows; but we soon found it was easy to wade through the warm, slightly salty water, and grew more confident in our wanderings. And we did see many wild creatures. Boar, yes; in fact we surprised an enormous sow with a litter of tiny piglets, and for a moment felt worried that she might charge at us; but she led her little ones off into the dense undergrowth. And we saw several young males, squealing and scampering, splashing through pools, as if for fun. To us they looked very like the black pigs who roam the rubbish-heaps in the town where we live; so we are inclined to agree with M. Krishnan (See THE HERITAGE, Dec. 88) that they are domestic pigs run wild, not the genuine wild boar of the northern forests, who is a much tougher, hairier, browner fellow. And the ponies who lend such charm to those green meadows are undoubtedly a domestic breed that has reverted to a wild state. In the remoter areas along the sea-shore we saw several quite large herds of spotted deer, guarded by stags with long, straight, spiral-twisted horns; and a few Black Buck, isolated, in ones or twos, obviously far less numerous. But we became increasingly troubled by the large numbers of domestic cattle grazing in the park; they far outnumbered the deer and ponies. A young naturalist we spoke to, told us that all domestic cattle are supposed to be registered with the Forest Officer, but that while hardly 150 are noted in his books, thousands roam the park daily. Naturally this limits the amount of food available to the deer, and may bring their small population to a crisis-point during periods of drought. We realised that we were seeing the forest at a period of relative



The uniquely graceful flight of the cranes



Spotted deer in the Nature Reserve

plenty—in April and May there is surely very little grass in those lovely meadows!

Next morning we were up before five, and went out to the Swamp in the hope of sighting flamingos. As we were walking out beyond the salt-works along the bund again, three low forms flashed past us: two village dogs chasing a fox. The fox was strong and almost as big as the dogs, and he knew where he was heading. One of his pursuers gave up the chase before they were out of our sight; the second trotted back, tongue lolling, from a clump of thorn bushes a little later—he didn't seem to have caught his fox!

We were enjoying watching cranes, many kinds of duck and smaller birds, but wondering where, in all that vast expanse of salt-flats, to look for flamingos, when we spotted a flock of them feeding about half a kilometre to the north of us. Moving towards them, we noticed another larger group, with much rosier plumage, further along the bund we were following. Thick mud prevented us from getting much closer to them, but we watched them for fifteen minutes or so, until they suddenly all lifted into the air together and moved a short distance—a breathtaking sight. Soon afterwards, the whiter flock took off and flew away inland, circling over the temple gopuram we could see on our horizon. They wheeled back over the water and we had a wonderful view of them in flight before they returned inland again. We didn't see them reappear, and imagined them alighting on one of the larger lakes within the Sanctuary.

Behind us lay an island-like clump of thorn bushes at the junction of two bunds. Circling it, we came across thousands of wild-duck clustered in one of the shallow salt-pans.

As we walked slowly back in the direction of the salt-works, we saw five or six of the buff-and-black-and-white cranes, apparently having a little nap after their breakfast. With them was a lighter-coloured bird, its head tucked underneath its wing. Could it be a flamingo, alone like that? Looking to our left, we saw a single flamingo less than 50 metres from us, its distinctive curved neck and beak unmistakable as it dipped towards the water and raised its head again—though it was not noticeably pink. Then another one joined it.

We were about to leave, satisfied with our bird-watching, when a whole flight of cranes loomed up from the south; we had a wonderful view of the unique grace of their flight; as one by one all nine of them passed slowly right above us. Pelicans were floating out beyond the gay fishing boats moored beside the salt-works; and as we walked back along the shore the sun emerged from behind a low cloud and caught them—sudden spectacular white against vivid blue.

On our last morning we returned to the beach. Leaving behind the congregation of fishing-boats and the bustling crowd around the small lorries that were loading up the fish—packed in big baskets with lots of ice—we moved eastwards in the direction of the lighthouse. I have never seen a beach with so many shells, many of them very large and decorative. We decided to collect some as gifts for friends and mementos for ourselves.

There were three distinct lines of shells, mingled with other flotsam: one just beyond the ridge of the beach; one right along the water's edge; and one in-between. It was impossible to examine all three closely, and still go forward—one had to rely upon 'happening' on the right shells. I had some specific requirements in mind, and was concentrating mainly on the middle line. But 'something' made me look towards the water's edge—and so I found two very fine specimens of an unusual type of shell that I had been looking for. And then, since I was looking in that direction, I saw the dolphin's curved dorsal fin...hardly three metres from where I stood. The water was clouded with sand churned up by a storm the day before, so we saw him only when he curved above the surface. As we moved slowly up the beach, he moved alongside us, apparently chasing a shoal of small fish—again and again we saw the glint of silver as one leapt from the water in front of his nose; four or five terns, attracted by the same shoal, were hovering just above the water, darting down and streaking up again.

We walked on in the dolphin's company for about 20 minutes, until we reached the place where nets had been stretched on poles through the water; then he turned away seawards, and we turned inland, our faces northwards, towards home.

The Great Swamp

PEARL—

THE QUEEN OF GEMS

Text and photos by Binoy Gupta

IS the pearl a gem? The traditional definition of a 'gem' is "any mineral, cut and polished for ornamental purposes". By this definition the pearl cannot be a gem.

"Pearl should be added to the list of most valued gems, but it is not properly classified as a... (gem)", says The Encyclopaedia Britannica. Almost all books on gems have a chapter on pearls.

Gems reflect to a great degree the skill of the hands that have cut, shaped and polished them, whereas the pearl is taken out from a living oyster and can be straightaway strung on a necklace, attached to a clasp, or imbedded in a ring.

Pearls were in use in India some 3500 years ago. They were even used in ancient Rome, but only persons of high rank and those belonging to the aristocracy could wear them.

In those olden times the best pearls were obtained from the pearl oysters dwelling in the shallow waters of the Persian Gulf. And for centuries, the port town of Basra remained the international trade centre for pearls. Till this day, regardless of their origin, the best natural pearls are termed as 'Basra Pearls'.

Though pearls are being used for over 3500 years, not much was known about their formation. According to an ancient Indian myth, if a rain-drop enters the pearl oyster when the star *Swati* dominates, it gets transformed into a pearl.

Sometime during the 12th/13th century, the Chinese found out that if a bit of mud, wood or wax was pasted inside a fresh water oyster, and the oyster was left in its watery home, in about three years the stuff acquired a pearl-like coating. With this knowledge they made pearl-coated miniature images, particularly the famous Pearl Buddhas. But these were all blister pearls, flat on one side. The Chinese did not know how to form round pearls.

Divers continued to find oysters with pearls causing death to millions of oysters in the process.

But it was only towards the latter part of the last century that researchers finally shed some light on the mystery of the birth of the pearl. Mikimoto Kokichi, the son of a noodle vendor found that the age-old Chinese method of injecting an irritant into the fresh water oyster worked equally well with sea oysters. At about the same time, at least two other Japanese, Tatsuhei Mise, a teenage carpenter and Tokichi Nishikawa, a

marine biologist made similar discoveries.

But it was Mikimoto who perfected the technique and patented it in 1908. It was the first ever patent involving the produce from a living creature. He participated in world-wide exhibitions and is rightly regarded as the father of the cultured pearl trade.

Scientists now know that when a small speck of external irritant—a grain of sand, a speck of dust or a tiny piece of shell—accidentally enters the space between the mantle (or flesh) of the oyster and its outer shell, it causes irritation making the oyster secrete nacre—the fluid which constitutes the mother of pearl—

in concentric layers all around the irritant. But this happens so rarely that the chances of having a good pearl is only one in a million.

The Japanese have perfected the technique of implanting a suitable irritant and nurturing it into a pearl. But they have kept their know-how a well-guarded secret. Hence, with more than 3000 pearl farms, the Japanese enjoy a monopoloy over the cultured pearl trade.

Mature pearl oysters (about 3½ years old) are collected from the sea. They are induced to release their ova and sperms in large tanks. In most of the oysters, the sexes are separate, although in a few species, the sexes change periodically. The sperms and ova are allowed to meet in large tanks. Within 45 minutes, fertilization takes place; and within 21 hours, the fertilized cells develop into tiny free floating larvae.

This is the crucial stage. A single pair of mature oysters can produce 1 to 3 million larvae. But because of their microscopic mouths food intake becomes extremely difficult. But scientists have been successful in culturing the specific zoo-planktons they need. Fed with these, the larvae grow rapidly.

In about 21 days, the larvae are transformed into tiny spats—pinhead-size replicas of their parents—like caterpillars changing into butterflies. At this stage, their shells are very soft. By means of thread like appendages, they attach themselves to solid surfaces

and their shells gradually harden. For another five weeks, they are allowed to remain in the tanks. They are then transferred to suitable containers—nets, cages, trays, crates, etc. and hung in shallow sea water on floating rafts. Here they remain suspended for over 3 years. Once or twice a year, they are taken out for inspection and cleaning.

After 3½ years they are mature enough and the healthy specimens are selected for pearl culturing.

Each oyster is mildly anaesthised—with a few grains of menthol sprinkled on the surface of water in a glass tray. Under anaesthesia, the oyster opens its shells. A small incision is made in the mantle. A tiny snippet from the mantle of another living mussel together with a round nucleus is inserted into the incision and the oyster is hung back on its old raft.

The size of the pearl depends upon two factors—the diameter of the nucleus itself and the thickness of the nacre.

The colouration of pearls

remains an unsolved mystery. Their colour ranges from a silvery white to black, with intermediate shades of pink, green, blue, etc. in between. A certain species of South Sea oysters are quite large and several pearls are found in a single specimen. Pearls of different colours can also be obtained from the same oyster.

But the technique and chemicals used differ from company to company. However, undrilled pearls cannot be coloured. It is possible to colour a pearl only after it has been drilled.

Indigenous systems of medicine of most eastern countries use pearls in their formulations. For example, in India, Pearl *Bhasma* is supposed to cure coughs, colds, bronchitis, asthma and is considered to be a rejuvenating tonic. Mikimoto, who died in 1954 at the age of 96 swallowed two pearls every day and he attributed his longevity to this practice.

Pearls from sea oysters continue to be called Oriental Pearls to distinguish them from fresh water pearls. Identification of pearls is an expert's job. But X-rays of cultured pearls clearly show the nucleus. If a pearl has been drilled, examination with a magnifying lens will most often indicate whether it is natural, cultured or simply artificial.

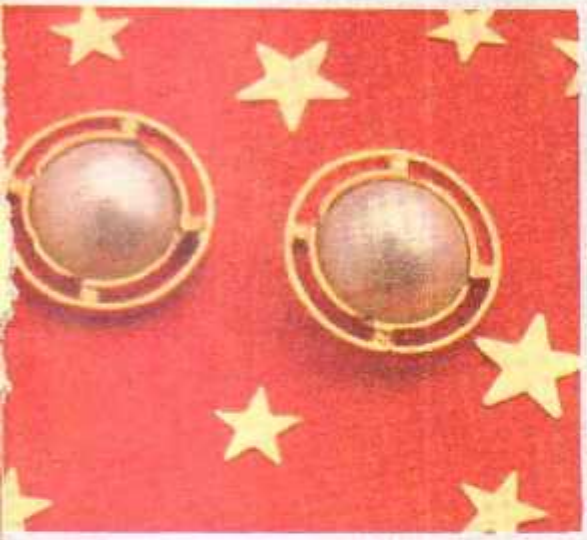
The pearl is the softest of all gems. Its hardness being only 3½ to 4 on the mhos scale. Pearls are so soft that they should never be stored in contact with other ornaments lest they could be scratched. They are delicate and can be affected even by such weak acids as contained in tamarind, citrus fruits, lemon juice and perspiration. The simplest way of cleaning them is to soak them in mild soap and warm water for half an hour, rinse in fresh water and pat dry with soft cloth.

There was a frenzied excitement in Calcutta last year when fresh water pearl oysters were accidentally discovered in a pond in South Calcutta. But fresh water pearls are fairly common and found in various places like the Mississippi River (USA), Scottish rivers, Convay River of Wales, streams of Bavaria and China.

Scientists at Tuticorin have succeeded in culturing pearls. They believe this is commercially viable in the coastal waters of Tuticorin and Gujarat.

The demand for pearls is good and the returns considerable. And so long as women wear jewellery, pearls will remain prized acquisitions. For if diamond is the king of gems, the pearl is undisputably the queen.

Photos courtesy: Lalitha Jewellery Mart Pvt Ltd, Madras.



THE MOST EXPENSIVE DRINK IN HISTORY

One day Cleopatra is said to have claimed before Marc Antony that she could drink the most expensive cup of wine. Dissolving one of her pearl earrings in a goblet of wine, she drank it. The other one she offered to Marc Antony. According to Pliny, the pearls were worth 60 million sesterces, or 1,875,000 ounces of fine silver.

THE QUESTION OF THE CULTURED PEARL

To woo the world to his cultured pearls, Kokichi Mikimoto designed creations such as the replica of the Liberty Bell, studded with 12,250 pearls and 366 diamonds, for the 1939 New York World's Fair. He received a patent for the round cultured pearl in 1908, though two other experimenters had earlier successes. First widely sold in the 1920s, cultured pearls stirred debate among jewellers and scientists: Were they really pearls? Winning court cases and public opinion, Mikimoto ultimately triumphed.

Fred Ward in ***National Geographic***, August 1985.

A memorable chapter in the history of India's First War of Independence

THE SIEGE OF LUCKNOW RESIDENCY

Text and photos by C.N.S.K. MURTHY

THAT was the year of India's First War of Independence, 1857. The date: June 29. The place: Chinhat, a village eight miles from the city of Lucknow on the Faizabad road. About 500 Indian soldiers converged there.

Henry Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner for the province of Avadh in Lucknow had already received news that some ten regiments with many guns were collecting 18 miles away with the intention of assaulting the city. Only a day earlier had come the news that on June 27, the garrison at Kanpur had surrendered to the rebelling Indian soldiers.

Lawrence wanted to take the bull by the horns. When he faced the Indian forces at Chinhat with 500 infantrymen, 800 cavalrymen, 12 guns and an army of 700 strong, it was a disaster: for he lost more than 800 —killed or missing. He retreated to Residency and brought peril to his doorstep. For, the Indian forces surrounded the Lucknow Residency on June 30. And that was the start of an 87-day long siege that shook the British Empire.

"Here among the shaded lawns of the Residency compound was played out one of the most compelling dramas in the history of the British Empire. The defence of Lucknow became the British Thermopylae, an epic, heroic struggle against overwhelming odds. Lord Canning's words, later inscribed in stone, bear witness to the extraordinary hold which the siege had on the Victorian collective mind: 'There does not stand recorded in the annals of war an achievement more truly heroic than the defence of the Residency of Lucknow.' For a nation that prided itself on understatement, that is a measure of the awe in which the whole episode came to be viewed," wrote Philip Davies in his book *The Splendours of the Raj*.

The presence of the British Resident in Lucknow had its origin in the treaty signed by the Nawab of Avadh, Shuja-ud-daulah on July 10, 1763 committing himself to hosting a perman-

ent Resident at his court. At that time, Avadh (also pronounced Oudh) had its capital at Faizabad, at the outskirts of today's Ayodhya. Later in 1775, during the reign of Nawab Asaf-ud-daulah, the capital was shifted to Lucknow.

Asaf-ud-daulah was well disposed towards the British. He ordered erection of an official building for the British Resident. This was in keeping in line with the fame earned by the Nawabs of Avadh for their vast architectural programmes lavishing crores of rupees in buildings and palaces. Hence, it was no surprise that William Howard Russell, correspondent for *The Times* found Lucknow as "a fairy-tale city, more vast and brilliant than Paris; a vision of palaces, domes azure and golden, cupolas, colonnades,

Clockwise:

Grounds of the Residency —hallowed by the heroes of the 1857 Revolt.

A view of the Resident's main house with walls showing bullet holes and heavy shelling marks. This house has ***tykhanas.***

The main gateway to the Residency Complex. This archway with a guard-house was built and named after Major John Baillie, Resident 1811-1815.

long facades of fair perspective in pillar and column, terraced roofs —all rising up amid a calm still ocean of the brightest verdure... Spires of gold glitter in the sun. Turrets and gilded spheres shine like constellations."

That was due to the fabulous wealth of the Nawabs who were renowned for their sybaritic court. They have created a "city unequalled in opulence and grandeur in the East, an Oriental vision of magnificence recalling Kublai Khan's fabled Xanadu". (Philip Davies)

In this vast dream-like vision, the Residency occupied a privileged position. It was built on a raised plateau close to the river Gomti commanding views of the city. Fully financed by the Nawabs of Avadh, the construction of Residency started in 1780 but the building was not complete until 20 years later under the Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan.

A special feature that later became significantly important for the survivors of the siege was the 'tykhana' or underground chambers beneath the main hall. These subterranean rooms stayed cool during the summer; they are reached through a spiral staircase; their walls are very thick and niches have been built into them for cupboards. These *tykhanas* are there to see even today.

The entire complex of Residency comprised the Resident's main house, a Banqueting Hall with an underground swimming pool, treasury, a church, stables, outoffices —these stand scattered all over the plateau and surrounded by simple defences. These buildings are entered through a guardhouse and a large arched gateway, built and named after Major John Baillie, the Resident from 1811-15. The Nawabs had provided the Resident along with the building complex, a group of 146 native servants, gardeners, blacksmiths and stable-keepers. They were all paid by the Nawab.

Though used continuously by the Residents, the Residency complex remained the property of the Nawabs of Avadh, who on several occasions regretted its loss. The 7th Nawab, Gahi-ud-din tried in vain to retrieve the buildings and the grounds of Residency from the then Resident in 1822. The 8th Nawab also conducted parleys with the then Resident Col. Love in 1832 for the repossession of the Residency but could not reach a decision on the alternative site. And thus, Lucknow Residency remained destined to be the scene of bitterest fighting in the days to come.

Annexation of Avadh state in 1856 by the British created widespread resentment. The last king

A young boy looks closely at the gun that roared in the past.

Banqueting Hall in the Residency Complex — used as hospital during the siege.

A shield with words "One And All" adorning a War Memorial column.

Wajid Ali Shah was deposed and jailed in Calcutta. The absence of the Nawab's court "reduced half the city to beggary, for not only did the actual court functionaries, servants, musicians and entertainers rely on it for their livelihood but also the craftsmen and tradespeople."

It was a display of the power game by the British who at the outset kept a Resident in Nawab's court for the ostensible purpose to advise and where possible to exert influence over the foreign policy of the Avadh state but finally manoeuvred to depose the very Nawab and usurp his state.

Following annexation of Avadh, the British Resident redesignated as the Chief Commissioner for Avadh, administering on behalf of the Governor-General.

By 1857, Avadh was seething with discontent and anti-British feelings. The resentment against annexation of Avadh was not confined to the province alone but was widespread among the thousands of former subjects of the deposed Nawab who were sepoys in the Bengal Army. Henry Lawrence sensed that Avadh was a powder-keg. While putting on a brave face, he prepared for the defence. He surrounded the hitherto quite unprotected Residency compound with entrenchments; he quietly laid in ample supplies of ammunition, food and grain converting the swimming pool beneath the Banqueting Hall into a storehouse.

The Revolt of 1857, described as 'First War of Independence' by

the Indian scholars and dubbed as 'Sepoy Mutiny' by the British historians, began in February and March 1857 in the Bengal stations. The Barrackpore sepoys refused to handle the cartridges of the new Enfield rifle having a greased paper cover whose end had to be bitten off before use. The grease was composed of beef and pig fat. The sepoys were angered at this affront to their religious feelings. It was also rumoured that "powdered human bones had been added to the native troops *atta* or flour". The sepoys were ready to rebel and their revolt was to provide other sections of the Indian society like the peasantry and the artisans the occasion for an uprise.

On March 29, in Barrackpore regiment, Mangal Pandey raised the banner of revolt. In a blind fury against the British, he single-handedly killed two English officers. He was soon captured by the British soldiers and was hanged on April 8.

Mangal Pandey's martyrdom swept a wave of indignation through the native soldiers in all the regiments of the country.

By April last week, the revolt spread to Meerut and Avadh. On May 2, the Lucknow Regiment of Oudh Irregular Infantry and the 48th Native Infantry refused to use their newly issued musket ammunition. Henry Lawrence marched them to barracks and disarmed them. Mutiny broke out in Meerut on May 10. Lawrence also got the news of seizure of Delhi by the revolting troops on May 14. Lawrence had only one European Infantry battalion comprising some 600 men in Lucknow. This he had divided into two groups to guard Residency and the north Cantonments. The outbreak at Meerut and the collapse of Delhi largely undermined the British authority in the whole region. On 30th May, the native regiments in Lucknow Cantonment burst into a frenzy of looting and killing of the British.

Visibly shaken with the open insurrection, Lawrence ordered large scale strengthening of the defensive position around the Residency complex "into a continuous chain of buildings, walls, trenches, palisades and ramparts. Pits were dug and filled with sharpened stakes and batteries were sited to provide overlapping fields of fire." (Philip Davies). An army of coolies and prisoners in irons worked overtime to complete the massive defences.

As the revolt reached Kanpur where the sepoys of the garrison killed one of their 4 European officers, Lawrence summoned all the European women and children into the Residency. The royal quietness of the Residency was shattered by the noise of children and women who had crowded into every room. As the situation worsened, the native servants began to desert leaving the women to "sweep and cook and draw their own water in what was the hottest month of the year".

As the mutineers from Lucknow and the western stations mostly went to Delhi, the regular troops, peasantry and artisans took common council and resolved to attack Lucknow. On June 29, the Chinhat encounter took place driving Lawrence back into the Residency. He got the nearby buildings evacuated and fully concentrated on the Residency complex. When Lawrence shut himself in the Residency, there were about 5000 people, half of them being women and children, within the cramped premises. On June 30th, the Indian forces surrounded and sieged the Residency from all sides and kept up a ceaseless cannonade and fired muskets at the main Residency building. Two days after the siege started, Lawrence was mortally wounded. He died on July 4. The Commissioner of Lucknow John

Martyrs' Memorial, on the banks of Gomati — a high conical structure made of marble in memory of the Martyrs of India's Struggle for Freedom.

Sherbrooke Banks took charge but he was also killed in another 15 days. Soon it was obvious that the buildings afforded little protection in the face of the fierce fire from the native forces.

"The women and children were crowded into the subterranean *tykhanas* of the main house, and the men inhabited the floor above. The upper storeys were untenable, though as the ground floor began to fill with sick and wounded, the overflow from the hospital in the Banqueting Hall, officers moved upstairs, braving the shot and shell which came plunging through their rooms....On August 11, part of the house fell in; four men were buried alive beneath the rubble. The main structure withstood another six weeks of shelling, just as the defenders —or rather, those who survived — were able to endure six more weeks of heat, flies, sickness, privation and enemy fire."

When the siege of Lucknow began, Brigadier General Henry Havelock was already organising an army from Bengal to Allahabad. His mission was to relieve the garrisons in Kanpur and Lucknow. His force was 1200 assorted men. Havelock entered Kanpur on 17th July but was too late to save General Wheeler there.

Along with his troops, Havelock tried repeatedly to cross the river Ganges and enter Lucknow but was forced back by the native rebels. After making 5 futile attempts on 6th, 12th, 13th, 16th and 19th August, Havelock decided to sit in Kanpur waiting for reinforcements. They arrived in Kanpur on 17th September in the form of 1400 Europeans along with Major General Outram, who was now appointed the Chief Commissioner of Avadh after the death of Henry Lawrence.

The combined relief forces numbering about 3000 men managed to cross the Ganges between 19 and 21st September. The first main encounter took place on 21st at Bashiratganj. The natives were pushed back and on 23rd September, the British forces reached Alambagh, about one and half miles from Lucknow. Though they were successful in forcing their way through, they had suffered major casualties. A field hospital was set up at Alambagh to treat their wounded men. After stationing soldiers to guard Alambagh and the field hospital, Havelock and Outram advanced into Lucknow with the remaining 2000 soldiers. On September 25th they were engaged in the fiercest warfare around the Residency complex. When at last Havelock and Outram broke through the beleaguered Residency that day, their forces had bled white and "the embarrassing truth was that having fought their way into the Residency, Outram and Havelock could not get out." They had to stay put in the Residency under siege for a further period of 53 days before they were finally evacuated by the Commander – in – Chief Colin Campbell on November 25.

Colin Campbell arrived in Kanpur on November 9. He left detachments for the security of Kanpur and Alambagh and then had still 4700 armed men with him. On 12th November, he marched into Lucknow and captured Dilkusha chateau after two hours of bitter fighting. On November 16, he crossed the canal and reached his main obstacle in Sikandarbagh. Here he had brutally bayonetted or burnt alive about 2000 rebels. On the same night he captured the Sahjahnaf palace. The next day, on the 17th, he captured Kurshid Manzil and Moti Mahal and thus extended his position along the river front. In the final lap of his mission, Campbell reached the Residency and after another round of intensive fighting with the rebels, opened up the garrison. After the siege finally ended on 25th November —after an ordeal of 140 days from June 30, the three Generals Outram, Havelock and Campbell shook hands on the open ruins of the Residency.

The siege that shook the British Empire had no parallel in history. It took a steady toll of casualties throughout. Average six funerals were taking place every night in the Residency complex. When the siege began the combatant forces inside were some 1600 men of whom 750 were said to be native Indians. The number was reduced to half by September 25. Of the 1400 noncombatant people inside, about 500 were women and children. Thanks to the strong subterranean *tykhanas*, their casualties were much less and only 66 died during the siege—of them 51 being children.

How was the Residency like after the siege ended? "Most of the verandahs of the main house had been shot away and windows blown out. The walls gaped and were pitted with bullet holes; the stucco facing had fallen off in many places revealing the solid brick core. As the buildings are now, it is very difficult to make any distinction between the inside and the outside as they have been shot to pieces, destroyed, turned into ruins."

Though the Britishers could have repaired the Residency buildings and put them to use, they had decided to let it remain as ruins. They had preserved the ruins with religious care and the grounds where about 2000 lives lay buried had become something of a shrine to the English who had hoisted their Union Jack over the ruined Residency in March 1858 that flew continuously day and night for about 90 years. The English poet Tennyson put it emotionally:

"Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain has thou

Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle cry

Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee on high,

Flying at the top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Lucknow,

Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised thee anew,

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew."

The Residency continues to be a protected monument in independent India evoking memories of the thousands of Indians who laid down their lives fighting for the cause of their motherland. The well-manicured lawns and the colourful gardens that surround the romantic Residency ruins today cannot erase images of agony and suffering put by the Indians during the great Revolt. As you enter the cool and semi-dark *tykhana* rooms, you feel a curious melancholy of the past. Here, about 20 feet underground, the year 1857 seems very close.

A Moment In Eighteen

This excerpt from the author's forthcoming historical novel, ***Madeira at Sundown,*** *portrays an event in the city of Calcutta —a sample of numerous such events. Most of the characters here are drawn from history.*

DUSK was falling on the dreaded twenty third of June, the centenary of the Battle of Plassey and it was predicted that the British Raj would only endure for a century. The bazars were empty the whole day, shops and schools closed; the Second City of the Empire lay gutted and silent. Calcutta was drained of its native inhabitants; no Indian, Hindu or Muslim, rich or poor, dare venture out on the streets. It was positively unsafe for a native, whatever be his rank, to stir out in the dusk. Carriages were stopped, persons searched, with an insulting epithet and smarting thwack added, to prove that the British still ruled India.

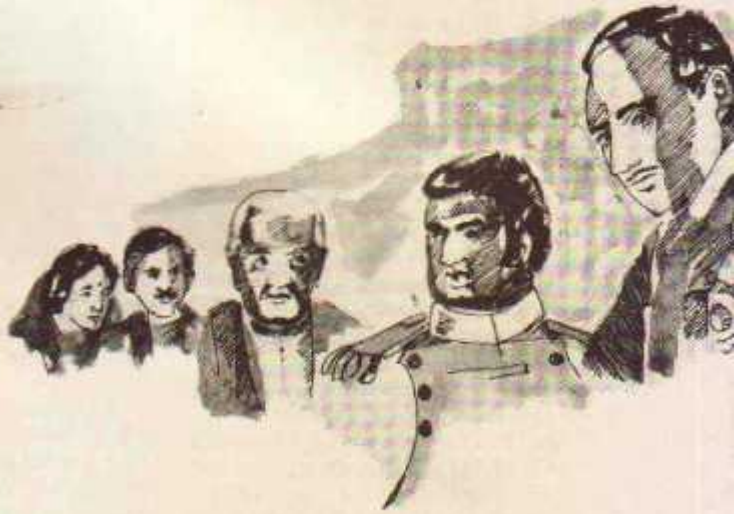
A body of private men had volunteered to keep the law by arrogating to themselves power above the law. The Volunteers now roamed the empty streets regretting that there was no one to bayonet. They felt deprived of their game and their rancour was unabated. This unbesought militia, raised for the European residents alone, was a more formidable body of men than the London shopkeepers formed when Napoleon threatened invasion. For in a community composed of different races, if one race is allowed to carry arms with certain privileges to the exclusion of the other, then abuse of power must follow.

The actuality of power, the power of the organised Volunteers, lay in rude hands. Irresponsible power was now wielded in the city, not by aristocrats, and it must be acknowledged that the British Empire was still governed by the upper classes, but by Volunteers composed of grievance-mongers, confirmed grumblers who carried all the prejudice of their countrymen. To this motley band of civilians, brooding over the murder of their men, women and children, revenge was sweet and was just. This body of ruffians were fed on rumours of a sinister kind, their ears were poisoned with tales calculated to incite, and their hearts were carried by an ungovernable passion for revenge. Rapine and plunder were within their powers and considered justified.

The facilities for obtaining liquor in the city were very great. Tavern after tavern on the principle streets were entered that afternoon and beer was soon discarded for brandy. As the dusk gathered, the loud voice of hilarity was to be heard, sinister and satanic in the deserted city. Fearful of the licentious revellers, the Indians kept within closed doors.

"A man wished to speak to you," said the tavern-keeper to Robson. "He is behind that back door, beyond that room."

Robson was sprawled on a chair, his head on his chest, his mouth loose and open. He had been drinking heavily and was now watching unmindfully, with half closed eyes, the devilish dancing of a band of sailors who had joined his group of Volunteers. He resented the disturbance; but it might be the police. In Calcutta, an addition of sixty men were made to the European Police and one of them might have come with an important



Fifty-Seven

by Eric Prabhakar

message to be delivered in secret. But he was mistaken. The Police had locked themselves up for they said that they had to guard their stations with its ammunition and remain in readiness to provide local support to the military at a call. It was not the Police who desired to see him, but a well-known badmashe, one of many who infest every large town.

The Volunteers had at their disposal certain native informers and felons who were associated with all the loot, arson and raping committed on the unprotected citizens. They thrived on plunder. These informers were everywhere and each reported to a white master. A facial expression would attract their attention; a flushed look could be enough to arouse their suspicion.

The particular scum of society now at the rear door was one of them and had attached himself to Robson since the formation of the Volunteers. He dared to beckon his master from his revelry for he knew he would be delighted to get the information and there would be a reward for him. He could lead the sahibs he said, to a very large quantity of arms stocked by Rajkrishna Bose. A veritable arsenal, he added with grovelling deference.

Reports were in circulation that large numbers of men were converging on Calcutta, both in boats and by land. In consequence, all boats were searched for arms and road blocks erected. The native gunsmiths were made to surrender their stocks to the Commissioner of Police. It was however believed that, to circumvent these measures, large purchases of arms had been made by certain leading citizens and that these arms were concealed in the city. The Government was hesitant to pass a bill in the Legislative Council authorising a universal search of houses. It would be too delicate a task for parties of Christians to inspect Hindu puja rooms and Muslim zenanas. But the Volunteers laboured under no such delicacy and had assigned to themselves the special target of unearthing these stocks of hidden weapons and so they struck many homes with the force of lightning.

Robson gathered his men and rushed with swift but vacillating steps, muttering audibly to himself, down the gaslit streets. The alcohol burnt like fire in his veins, for its effects were made still more potent with the excitement of the hunt. The scoundrel led them to a large house and with a pistol borrowed from Robson, jumped over the compound wall and unbolted the iron gate. The entrance door was of solid teak, heavily ornamented with brass. This man who was particularly notorious for jumping over walls in the back enclosures where women take their bath, now led them to the rear and scaling the walls, opened the door easily from the inside to let Robson and his men enter.

Rajkrishna Bose was the elderly owner and editor of THE FIELD. Robson's befuddled mind had not quite registered the name at the tavern; but one look was enough for him to recognize the native who had the arrogance to refuse to discontinue the tirade on the indigo planters in the journal. The voice had risen week after week in solemn protest against the injustice of the indigo system. There were some strong writings and the journal continued to inflame strong passions. Robson had felt the lash long enough. Now it was his turn; he would settle the score. At his beck and call were a bunch of armed drunks who were swayed with a blind prejudice and an unreasoning hatred of a brown skin. They were ripe and ready to wreak his vengeance for him.

To emancipate his country from her political bondage, to render the path of political justice accessible to his countrymen, was the great aim of Bose's life. He had devoted his fortune, he had consecrated all his energies in pursuit of this passion. His house was ever open to his friends, a

large circle of friends, who would gather in the evening with their animated views on men and matters. On this fatal evening, not one had come, for no one had dared to risk the dangers that lurked in the dimly lit streets. But a sadder commentary which Bose would not flinch from making was that none of these friends who had solicited his company all these years would dare to be seen in his home by the marauding Europeans on this fatal day. So he was alone at home, a widower with his only son and young daughter-in-law when Robson and his band so brutishly burst into the room.

"Ah, we meet again. And this time, you will not deny, me," gloated Robson dropping into a chair. "Where have you hidden the illegal arms you have stockpiled?"

"Even if I have any arms, I will not tell you where they are kept. Where is the warrant for you to enter and search my house?" Bose knew that the Government was considering a bill for the registration of arms but it was not yet passed into law. "Get out of my house! You are trespassing!"

With studied deliberateness, Robson pulled out his pistol and placed it beside him on the peg table. He lifted his bloated eyes and laughed hoarsely, derisively, a short and abrupt sound, mirthless and menacing. "Get us out! Come, nigger, come and get us out!" he mocked.

Bose stared in astonishment, then rose to his feet and took an unsteady step leaning against the wall, and then another step feebly. His son and daughter-in-law ran immediately to his aid and the old man leaned heavily on them. Then pulling himself upright, he clapped his hands for his servants. Only one came in, the loyal Khansamah. The others had fled the condemned house. The old man lowered himself slowly into a chair, a sigh full of pain and sorrow escaped his dry lips.

Robson looked at the small group of Indians and then at the pistol at his side. His hand moved menacingly near the weapon. His face wore a mean expression. He had nurtured the ugly worm of hate too long inside him. It had grown too enormous to be contained any longer. He must let the serpent out on to its victims to stupefy, petrify and strike them.

Resting his hand on the pistol, he ordered his men to search the house from top to bottom and not to be too dainty about it. Five armed men stayed back with him in the living room and the other ten went on a rampage in the other rooms. They broke the furniture and utensils, tore up sarees and dhoties to pieces, piled up all the rice, dal and provisions and urinated on them. But no armaments were unearthed.

It was the scoundrel of an informer who guided them to the well in the compound. The family well is where the family secrets are hid, he insinuated. For his trouble, he was ordered to descend its dark depths. There he found a large catchment of arms expertly wrapped in oil-cloth and lowered beneath the surface of the water. The men carried it triumphantly and laid it before Robson. It was a sizable stock of the old muzzle-loading Brown Bess muskets with powder and bayonets. These muskets were popular with the rebelling sepoys for, unlike the new Enfield Rifles, they did not require the sepoys to bite the cartridges greased with animal fat.

Robson looked at the arms and smacked his lips, the catch was incriminating. He now had sufficient evidence of treason. The state of affairs they were in justified the use of strong arm methods. He could now commence his heinous business. There was work to do.

The sadistic torture began with the head of the house. The old man was stripped naked and hung upside down, his old withered body dangling like a strip of dry fish. Only his eyes were alive, staring fiercely at his tormentors. The son, desperate and struggling, was firmly held down by two men and his wife who was only sixteen years old, fell to the floor covering her face in shame.

The khansamah who was lurking in the shadows, stealthily slipped out of the room and got over the wall to the neighbours. But they would not stir; they had no thought of involvement. Then seeing the fear-stricken servant standing there, looking at them, entreating them frantically, they relented. They said the Feringhees will not listen to them and will only kill them. But they will listen to a whiteman. Then swearing him to the strictest secrecy and never to mention their names, they whispered to him as if they might be overheard, to go to the large building on the next road, on the right. It was on Park Street and he would recognize the building for it would be the only one with the gates left wide open. There he would find Mowbray Sahib, they said. And they hurriedly explained that he was a close friend of his master, and that he will surely come and get the whitemen to go away.

* * *

It was almost seven in the evening and the brave chowkidar had kept his word and had come back. He was now helping David to close up the deserted building. The Calcutta Cultural Society had the society throughout the day of just one member visiting it, the elegant, Munshi Ahmed Ali. And it was almost two hours since he had left for his home.

As he closed for the day. David had a sense of fulfilment. He did not know why he felt so satisfied. Perhaps because he had done his duty even on this inauspicious day. Duty! Was it not an absurd word in this country of contrasting cultures? In its name do we not undertake to do the stupidest things and the most foolhardy tasks? Only within limits is virtue not vice. But David felt clean in his mind and in his heart, cleansed of internecine bitterness, suspicion and hate. He would now go back home, another day's duty done; go back to Sudha and to happiness.

He remembered how just the other day he had

surprised her as she stood tending the flower pots hanging outside the window. She had felt his warm breath on her neck and stepped back in surprise and was in his arms, her back still towards him. She had turned her head and had looked up into his blue eyes. The next moment his lips were on her lips, like two petals of a flower caressing each other. With Sudha there was never any conflict; all was happiness.

The windows had all been bolted and they were now closing the great front doors when a man came stumbling through the open gates and fell panting at David's feet. The chowkidar immediately sprang to the prostrated figure and held the man down with his lathi. David gently moved him away and raised the man to his feet. He heard with growing horror what the man was saying between deep sobs; he shuddered when told of the cruel punishment inflicted on his elderly friend. Instructing the chowkidar to rush to the police thana and report the matter, he immediately left on a run for Bose's house with the khansamah trailing behind.

The scene that met his eyes horrified him. The venerable Bose was hanging by his ankles and was probably dead; the young girl was lying in a pool of blood and was certainly dead; and the young man, also naked, was tied to a pillar and was whipped with the metal end of a broad leather belt, and he was howling like an animal. David realised in a flash, more by instinct than by reason, that the girl had committed suicide rather than surrender her honour, but the lives of Bose and his son could still be saved. Only then did David see Robson. For a moment he stood still as though paralysed. Then, without conscious intent, but just by reflex, he leapt on Robson like a tiger on a buffalo and hit him on his soft, open mouth with a savagery that he never thought he possessed. There was a spurt of blood and Robson slumped in his chair. As he sputtered and spewed blood, three teeth dropped out.

They pounced on David and dragged him apart. One of them, struck with a bayonet. The blade missed his ribs by a fraction and cut through a lung and penetrated the aorta.

* * *

They had carried David home. Terror filled Sudha. She tried to lift him but could not and only succeeded to get him on to her lap. He was now safe in her embrace, his head cradled against her breast. He will soon get up. Sudha fainted.

She felt a wet cloth on her forehead. Her mouth was opened and she choked and swallowed down some water. She began to tremble all over. She looked up and saw a lot of faces. They were unfamiliar faces, all except one. She recognised Pamela. And there were tears flowing down her compassionate face. She then knew and a tremor passed through her body. She withdrew into herself and entered within the inner region where she felt an anguish, a tremendous, unimaginable anguish. The walls and everything else in the room were whirling around, vanishing into nothingness. The whole universe was lost in a void. All thoughts came to a standstill. She was no more aware of the passage of time. They carried her into her room and laid her on her lonely bed.

Sudha did not come out of her room for ten days. There were a string of visitors—Hindus, Muslims and Europeans—a testimony in its composition and numbers to David's life-long endeavour to foster racial understanding and harmony. But she could not see them. There was a wreath from the Governor-General and a personal letter from Lady Charlotte. Prince Dwarakanath Tagore was the only one outside the family who entered her room. He was old and did not have many years to live. But he had insisted on visiting and had just sat by Sudha's bed, holding her hand. No words passed between them and there was need for none; just a communion of the spirit which conveyed all that they wished to say to each other.

Sudha had been listless and had hardly moved out of her bed or eaten anything. She had no appetite and now looked pale and wan. She came out on the tenth day and went to place flowers on the grave in South Park Street. She left the next day for Varanasi to be with her parents.

The awareness of the body which brought her happiness with David was now over, she realised. Then must she hereafter become aware of herself only when she has pain somewhere, she wondered? Would David want that to be her fate? He surely had loved her too much and too unselfishly to cause her pain now. She must search for another answer. There must be another answer. And it would be in the scope of awareness. Yes, there was now a need for the other awareness. The other awareness was not one of the body. It was an awareness of the soul. It was a perception of the soul as the nature of love. This love that flowed out of the soul was not directed only to God in heaven but also to God in every person on earth, God in all. Call it bhakti.

Love was the essence of life. Sudha's love in the past was demanding and needed to be recognised. But bhakti was not demanding; it was giving of oneself. This love, freshly flooding her consciousness, had also put an end to the tyranny of death in human destiny. The soul merely changed its vesture in the process of death and adorned new raiments for the journey into a larger life. This visit to Varanasi enlightened her understanding of the visible and invisible forces of life. It brought a dignity of untold charm.

In order to serve, Sudha decided to enter the world more fully, rather than forsake it. She would now reach out to altogether wider horizons, for a fuller life. Her world was the world of music and dance. And the repertoire of Indian performing arts—singers, musicians and dancers acting in concert—was boundless.

*From **Madeira at Sundown**, a Raj trilogy, to be shortly published by Chanakya Publications, F-10/14, Model Town, New Delhi 110 009.*

VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE

by Amarjeet Bawa

ANIL woke up as usual at around eight in the morning. His office began at half past nine. One and a half hour was enough for him to get ready and reach it by scooter, the vehicle his wife, Kiran, had brought as part of her dowry. Before their marriage Kiran too had a job. But now she was just a housewife, a house-drudge, she liked to call herself. Anil's parents had made it clear that she would have to leave her job once she was married. House and husband would be her world. And in-laws, she added to herself. Her parents had accepted the condition readily and she against her will.

But she scanned the appointment columns in the newspaper every day and sent applications behind the family's back, just to make sure she had not grown absolutely redundant in the job-market. She had even received a couple of offers but they were lying locked in her closet.

"Why do you keep it locked?" Anil had asked her one day, pointing at the closet.

"It's my little private world," she had replied with a smile. But Anil could feel the firmness under it and hadn't pressed her for any matter-of-fact explanation.

The sight that usually met Anil's eyes in the morning was his wife, in a maxi, filling the pots and pans with water to store for the day, or, with her hair in slight disarray, preparing breakfast or cooking the lunch he must carry along in a pack to his office, or serving his finicky old mother the several cups of tea she drank in the morning. The mother, along with the father, was currently away on a pilgrimage. The couple wouldn't be back before a month.

As he brushed his teeth, Anil saw in the mirror a girl in jeans and an elegant T-shirt come out of the drawing room, her hair braided in two plaits. It took him at least half a minute to realise that she was Kiran. She looked smart. But this wasn't the dress married women wore in his family. Thank God, his parents weren't at home or they would have caused an earthquake in the house.

"Hey," he said turning back, "am I dreaming or is it really my wife before my eyes?"

"It's your wife all right," said Kiran, "only in different clothes today, for a change."

"And may I know the need for the change?"

"A friend of school days is here. We have decided to spend the day out together."

"Where is she?"

"In the drawing room."

"There is a visitor in the house and I am not even aware of it!"

"You were still asleep when she came. But don't worry," she added with a smile, "sound sleep is a healthy sign."

"Let me see her," he said starting towards the drawing room, toothbrush in hand. But Kiran motioned him to stop.

"You will see her. There will be a time for that," she said, "But first make yourself presentable. I won't have my friends comment on your appearance."

"Oh sure," he said with a smile and raised the toothbrush in the style of a salute.

He had tea with Kiran and her friend Anjali. He could now see why Kiran had chosen to wear jeans and T-shirt. Anjali was in similar clothes. She looked a young girl, as if still in college. It would be hard for anyone to tell she and Kiran were classmates. She was a working girl. It was a special holiday in her office today. No, she wasn't married yet.

"Nor do I have any plans for marriage in the near future," she declared.

"If you were Kiran's classmate," said Anil, "you must be, if you would permit me to say, around twenty-five. That's a good age for a girl to get married."

"I don't know. May be, may be not. For the present I am concentrating on my job. I want to secure a good position first and then think of marriage, if at all."

"And suppose your husband doesn't agree to your going to a job? What use would it be then?"

"I won't have such a husband in the first place," she said with simple candour.

Kiran hadn't told Anjali that she had left her job as a pre-condition to marriage. She had said she left it of her own will and even bragged that she had no need of it because her husband earned enough and besides there was supplementary income from the family's ancestral property, which was true. Nevertheless she had wanted to keep her job all the same.

Anjali noticed a look of slight disconcert pass over Anil's face. Kiran looked away from him.

"May be my ideas will change," said Anjali trying to relieve the touch of tension she felt in the air. "Marriage may become my top priority tomorrow and I may not mind throwing away my job if that would get me a good match!"

Anil saw Kiran and her friend off at the door. "I'll be back in the evening, around the time you return from office," she said. "Your lunch-box is on the table. Just in case you don't notice."

He closed the door after them. The silence of the house engulfed him. He was already late for office. He felt tired. The morning freshness was missing. "My wife is having a day out," he said, "I am going to have a day in. I'll report sick at office."

He dialled the number. Mrs. Verma picked up the receiver. "It's Anil this side," he said. "Would you kindly tell the boss I won't be coming today? I am not feeling well."

"Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Nothing serious. To be frank with you, I just want to utilise my leave account."

He put down the receiver and wondered about his next action. He picked up the newspaper and leafed through it leisurely for about an hour. The room was in slight disarray. He decided to spruce it up. He arranged the old magazines and newspapers in neat stacks, put the current ones on the table rack. Then he dusted the window sills and shelves, cleaned the fan-blades, turned the furniture around to give the room a new look. If in the evening Kiran wanted to move it back to its old position he would put his foot down. It looked fine this way.

At around eleven the cleaning boy turned up. He got busy supervising him. The boy looked dubiously at the new arrangement of furniture. "Memsaheb is

not at home?" he asked. And when his suspicion was confirmed, he nodded as if that explained it! After the boy left he took his bath. Oh, the luxury of a leisurely noon bath! He soaped and scrubbed himself like he hadn't in a long time. A tub would have made it perfect. He remembered Kiran asking him to have one installed. Oh yes. He would get one.

After the bath he made himself a cup of tea. He looked out of the window as he rinsed the cup in the sink and remembered a phrase he had read somewhere: Window above the sink. It was a whole world, even if a framed world. The street below on left moved casually with people. Right across on a small knoll stood an old mausoleum. Sparrows circled around its dome as if in a crazy ritual. A cool breeze blew in. Branches of the guava tree reaching up to the first floor window moved gently. A parakeet hung upside down from one of the branches nibbling at the fruit, so close he could just reach his hand out and take it by surprise.

He remembered his office, files and papers, calls, queries, visitors, sprints up and down the stair to and from his boss's room, a state of general din, touch of madness in everything. Oh, it was fine here. He could spend his whole life just staring out of the window.

But by late afternoon he became restless. The loneliness got on his nerves. He played the stereo but got bored soon and switched it off. He returned to the kitchen to make yet another cup of tea. It was, may be, his fourth or fifth. At this rate his stomach didn't stand much chance. Now the window didn't hold any interest for him. He again saw a parakeet sitting on the guava tree. Maybe it was the same one he had seen earlier. Doesn't the creature have anything better to do than nibble at the guava all day long? He almost threw a dish at him.

He walked back into the room and now wanted to take it out on the TV. Why can't they play some silly soap operas here during the day just to keep the mind from going crazy?

He saw a fruit vendor passing and called him upstairs. He haggled with him over the price of bananas for a good fifteen minutes and then bought just two to spite him. But he didn't feel good about it and called him back and this time bought a dozen more. The vendor smiled and looked at him curiously.

In the evening he bathed again, shampooed his hair, and then dressed up and kept sitting. When the bell rang he rose with a jump and rushed to open the door. It was Kiran all right. He had feared it may be the milkman. She was carrying a couple of bags. She had obviously taken the opportunity to go on a mini shopping spree.

She showed him the things she had bought, a sari for herself, a pair of bedcovers and some other household items. He appreciated them but didn't ask the price. "Would you like to have something — hot or cold?" he asked her instead.

Kiran looked at him with raised brows. "Just a plain glass of water, if you could fetch me that please."

"Oh sure. And then wash yourself and I'll make you a nice cup of tea."

"Oh really! Why not."

They were having tea. "I got bored sitting at home all day," said Anil.

"You didn't go to office today?"

"No. I decided to have an off. Let's go out."

"Oh, no. I am all drained."

"Come on. Be a sport. We will go to some nice candlelight place and have our dinner. It will be a nice evening outing. Maybe we could even go to movies later."

"Not with my legs aching and head throbbing."

"Oh, it'll be all right. You just make up your mind for it."

"No, I can't. All I want is some rest."

This was turning out to be uncanny. The exchange was similar to the one they had almost every evening. Only today their roles were reversed. It struck them both together and they smiled.

"Now we can appreciate each other's point of view better," she said.

"Yes, I suppose so."

They lapsed into a brief silence. Then Anil said, "You still want to take up a job?"

"Yes. Kind of. Why?"

"I have been giving it a bit of thought. It seems a far better way to spend the day than sitting at home doing nothing."

"Really! I can't believe my ears. As a matter of fact I have a very good offer lying in the closet. That's what I keep locked there."

"I had an inkling," he said. "Go ahead and send your acceptance."

"But what about your parents?"

"Don't worry. I'll make them see reason."

She looked at him for a full minute and then rose swiftly. "We are going out," she said, "to celebrate."

A little girl's reverie—the silent echoes of the cries in many a heart!

CRY FOR LIGHT

by Shrawan Kumar

SHVETA, in her sweet sixteen. Time for her to caper, to prance around, to look sprightly. But she is always serious, always grave. Pores over the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and others. What light must have entered their beings, she often wonders. What changes must have taken place in them, she is curious. She also wants to know the way the *Kundalini* unfolds itself and rises upwards, like a serpent, releasing myriad powers within the human frame. Doesn't a cosmos also exist inside us as it does outside and around. She remembers Lord Krishna opening his mouth to let Arjuna have a glimpse of the great events shaping up inside him. Arjuna could also see the sun, the moon, the stellar complex, the satellites, all moving in their orbits. It must have been a very vivifying scene. But it filled Arjuna with awe. Why was Arjuna filled with awe?—she wonders and wishes she were beside Lord Krishna instead of Arjuna to know the secrets of life.

Yes, this life holds many secrets despite the tremendous strides taken by science. Will ever science be able to uncover the last of these secrets? There will always be something inexplicable. The human destiny, for example. The human behaviour. Doesn't it take many twists and turns, all of a sudden? Despite all the conditionings? Why has man been so cruel to man over all these ages? His greed! His envy! His invidiousness! O God! Imagine a man pouring some distillate into the eyes of another man to make him blind! This couldn't be a simple scene of a man putting some eye-drops into the eyes of one affected with conjunctivitis. This must be something horrible, the man tied hand and foot and held down by boulders. Children being abducted and then maimed to be unleashed as beggars and criminals! Tongues being pulled out and cut! Eye being jabbed with a prod to make it coagulate! Stop it, stop it, Shveta, quakes and shudders. Perhaps this is peculiar to India, our beloved India, where millions still wallow in poverty and slide down from one pit of misery to a deeper pit whereas a few others go up and up, as if anxious to hit the stars!

A Swami said the other day we live in *Rajas Yuga*, the age of aspirations. He said we lived in *Tamas Yuga*, the age of darkness, before we moved into *Rajas Yuga*. What could have *Tamas Yuga* been like, Shveta wonders again. Were there a lot of reptiles and carnivores around? Was it all cannibalism? Was it all goriness? Were there many Chengez Khans with their hordes, marauding and trampling over whatever came their way? Shveta looks around. No change, no change over all these millennia. The same *Tamas Yuga*. What hasn't police done to people these days? An iron rod doing its trick at the belly. The body being levelled down with rollers. The guy hung upside down from a ceiling fan and the fan continuing to whirl! Any number of instances! Don't you read newspapers? Didn't you read about the severed heads lying strewn all over in a village? There were men, women and children among them. Some papers also carried their pictures. Bodies charred. Bodies mutilated. Bodies violated. God, it couldn't be worse! Caste wars! Class wars! Ethnic wars! Religious wars! Bodies heaped upon bodies! Dead heaped upon the alive! Alive stacked away among the dead! Mortuaries carrying a stink of the alive and the dead! There are tears in Shveta's eyes. Shveta cannot stem them. They came out in dribbles and then hurtled down her cheeks.

No, Shveta is a brave girl. She should not weep. Tears are not for brave girls like Shveta. Shveta has been brave all through. She was brave when she hit a guy hard on his tummy as he tried to be funny with her in a crowded city-bus. She was brave when she once told her father that 'black' was not the way of life and that he should shun it with impunity. What a brazen-faced girl, her father had told her. But she stood her ground and pleaded on behalf of the workers in his factory. No, Daddy no, how could you have the heart to consign such a heap of currency notes to the incinerator when your men cried for fair wages? The confrontation had created a big tension in the house which subsided only when Shveta's father saw his daughter's point and relented. And then, wasn't it brave of her to have faced the furious mob of rioters out to desecrate and plunder a place of worship? She had caught hold of a megaphone from somewhere and spoken in a

most serene voice chilling the mob into inaction. What a marvel, everybody had wondered, to have such a voice! Couldn't Shveta, then, transmit her feelings to the leaders of the country telling them not to go berserk over their fanciful programmes and first attend to the prime necessities of life? Tribals facing the unbearable droughts and the concomitant problems. Poor trekking miles and miles for a pail of potable water. Backwards dying of hunger and starvation. The scenario always remains the same. It is a dreary scenario of want and deprivation. Who conspired to create this scenario? A big question before Shveta. Perhaps it is the handiwork of all the negative forces one could think of—forces of thuggery, forces of spoliation, forces of devilry. And was it true that all this thrived on the succulence of politics? Mafia heads decimating opposition with the frenzy of religious bigots, bootleggers stifling sanity to come out victorious at the hustings, upstarts sneering at the basic values in a bid to usher in an era of calumny. It could go on endlessly.

Shveta's mother bears a grudge against the so-called downtrodden. Give them a chance, she says, and there they are upon you, ready to scrounge your vitals. She does not mind flaunting her riches, but she does mind a menial opening his mouth a bit wider. Wait for another twenty years and you would see what it is like asking them to come up. You would dare not call a spade a spade. The menials would be there all over, manning all the important terminals. All the computers would take commands from them only. You would be only buffoons grimacing at their nimble fingers. This is *Kali Yuga*, Swamiji, *Kali Yuga*. It cannot be *Rajas Yuga*. Or maybe *Rajas Yuga* has turned into *Kali Yuga!* As things go upside down in abracadabra.

Shveta finds herself caught in a funny cleft from which she finds it hard to pull herself out. Strange, her parents always worshipped mammon and held money above all values, but Shveta always looked askance at it and gave it only a secondary place. Why make money the primary goal, she said. Why not pursue an excellence? An excellence of mind, an excellence of heart, as Swami Vivekananda did. Or an excellence of skill, an excellence of technology, as in the West. What a single-minded devotion! No half-hearted attempt. No shirking away. You put your whole in your work. It is like being a *Karma yogi!* Yes, Westerners are *Karma yogis*, whereas we, the enunciators of values are ending up in nonchalance and jiggery pokery. How? Why? Does your milkman give you a full measure? Can you come out on the road without fear of getting crushed by a mindlessly running truck? Can you tell a worker not to go by

SHORT STORY

procrastination? Can you tell the bosses not to put premium on chicanery? Shveta is reminded of an incident when a big-wig tried to barter away his people for a petty gain. She can still see the marble structure of his mansion glistening in the moonlight amidst rows of shanties all round. He had a humble beginning, this man, but rose like a colossus, taking big strides over his adversaries. It's all fair in politics. You can nail down your adversary if you like. You can rear mafia of your own if you prefer. Your people need not ask for food. You can feed them on slogans. Slogans rich and juicy. Slogans, the life-giving elixir. But, the man died. He left a vast largesse behind. They say it could be crores of rupees. Gosh! When you remember that he was no better than a street dog at one time! Why, there must be many such big-wigs in the country! In industry! In religion! In what-have you!

Shveta's father, too, had a humble beginning. Shveta remembers her mother telling her how things had been going against them one after the other. They had reached a point of destitution. No place to live. No food, and then Shveta in her mother's tummy. Then they raised a wooden structure on a nullah. The sullage flowed into the structure when it rained. Shveta's mother worked as a maid servant in a nearby house. It was there that they filled their water. It was there in an aclove under the stairs that they took shelter when it rained. Then Shveta was born and things started changing. It was nothing short of a miracle. Shveta's father had been singing praises to Mother Goddess. Now he sang louder. He, in fact, adored his daughter as Mother incarnate. No harsh words for Shveta. No upbraiding. And he went up and up. From strength to strength. Like a monolith. Do such miracles occur in other countries also, Shveta wonders. No, Shveta has no self-pride. She does not take credit for this change of things. She only wants that such miracles should happen to other people as well—people spread far and wide in the country. People toiling and not getting a morsel of food. People sinking in this quagmire of poverty. People prostituting their bodies and minds for a mere existence.

Shveta raises her eyes to the sky. Only if God were there to see all this invidiousness for Himself! Or that He sits far behind the sky. Or maybe, His vision is too clouded! Surely, He would not have liked toddlers being molested. Surely, He would not have liked lunatics being violated. Surely, He would not have liked 'homes' turning into brothels.

No, Shveta cannot compromise. No, Shveta will not compromise. It has to be a fight to the finish. As Pandavas fought against the Kauravas! A total fight! Fight against the negative forces!

Shveta's mind does not go beyond this point. It is jammed. Shveta shakes herself up. She cries for light. She cries for more light. ❀

PHENOMENA AROUND THE WORLD

THE IMAGINATIVE

Meeting of state ministers of culture and tourism exhorts their staffs to be more imaginative in their treatment of tourists—*news*.

"Sir, the tea not being sufficiently hot only means that the leaves are genuine and fresh from the high Darjeeling hills too steeped in snow to be heated beyond a point!"

THE LOGIC IS SIMPLE

The Chinese government have banned all foreign publications.

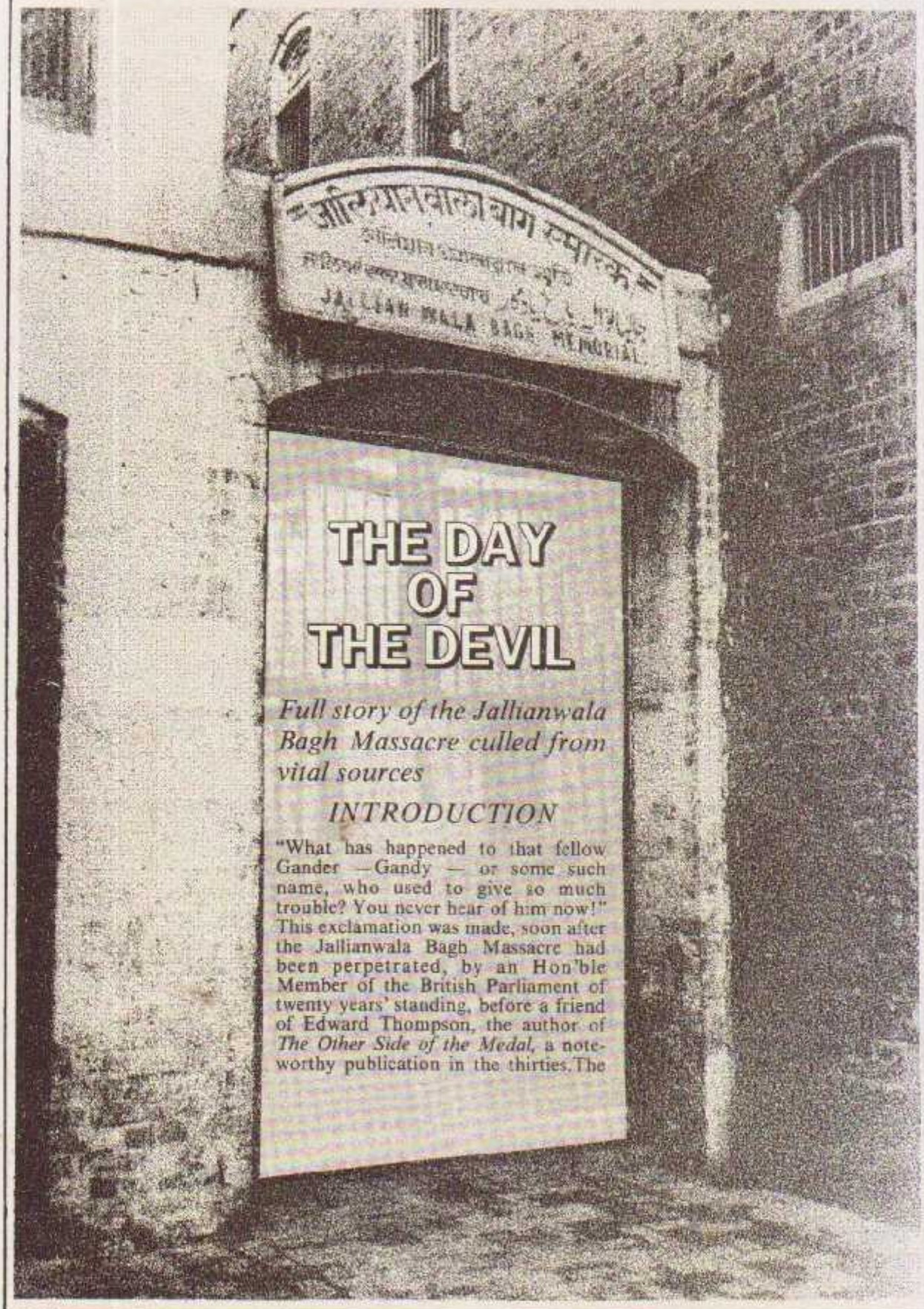
"We are only following the historical example set by the burners of the library at Alexandria: if all these publications do not say what we say, they have no right to be there; if they say what we say, they have no need to be there."

NEW EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH

Congressmen come to blows at their meeting at Gandhinagar.

"No, no, there is nothing non-Gandhian about it. In fact, they are fighting strictly on the issue of which group is more Gandhian than the other!

The narrow passage through which Dyer entered the Bagh.



THE DAY OF THE DEVIL

Full story of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre culled from vital sources

INTRODUCTION

"What has happened to that fellow Gander —Gandy — or some such name, who used to give so much trouble? You never hear of him now!" This exclamation was made, soon after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre had been perpetrated, by an Hon'ble Member of the British Parliament of twenty years' standing, before a friend of Edward Thompson, the author of *The Other Side of the Medal*, a noteworthy publication in the thirties. The

Hon'ble Member's question only confirmed, as Thompson observed, that it was possible to be a Privy Councillor and yet be ignorant of the fact that Mr. Gandhi had been put behind the bars.

This is the specimen of an average British politician of the time. No wonder that a lesser person, a lady, should write to the editor of *The Statesman*, urging all sensible people to enrich with their generous contributions what was known as the Dyer Fund: "Have Indians forgotten how they were plundered and persecuted by self-seeking robbers and tyrants, in the evil days before the British bull-dog pinned them to the dust? Those were dire days indeed!"

And the dire days were replaced by the Dyer days.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre was a sharp turning point in British-India relationship, "more decisive even than the Mutiny". Indeed, "the last years of British India were ushered in to the sound of General Dyer's guns", as Michael Edwardes observes.

The background of the black event was the introduction of the Rowlatt Act or *the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919*, which came to perpetuate the spirit of *the Defence of India Act*, since the latter, an emergency measure, was due to be withdrawn at the end of the World War. The Rowlatt Act which was designed to reduce further the meagre range of freedom the Indians enjoyed, came, ironically, on the wake of the liberal promises of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

It is not easy to imagine today the times that prevailed on the eve of the Massacre, the magnitude of the Massacre and its aftermath. While the Massacre was the handiwork of General Dyer, he enjoyed the support and encouragement of Michael O'Dwyer, the then Governor of Punjab.

C.F.Andrews compared the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre to the Glenco Massacre. B.G. Horniman, the illustrious Bombay editor, said, "The Jallianwala Bagh has created for Dyer a special niche in the gallery of frightfulness."

And the observation of Tagore had a philosophical range: "What happened at the Jallianwala Bagh was a monstrous progeny of a monstrous war." In other words, he diagnosed the Amritsar case to be a manifestation of the malady that was inherent in the total world atmosphere. If we recollect the tragedy and its aftermath today, it is certainly not to accuse a generation of alien rulers who have disappeared from the scene, but rather to remember and feel amazed at the fact that all this had happened only seventy years ago, and to ask ourselves, how far the world condition has been free from the virus which was behind the phenomenon that was Dyer's mind. Equally awful as the mind of Dyer, if not more, are the minds of those who had pledged their support to this wretched man and those who continued to encourage him to believe that he was an angel. Michael O'Dwyer lived till 1940, to be killed in London by Udham Singh who as a boy of sixteen had witnessed the massacre and had patiently awaited his chance to avenge it. But Dyer who could live only till 1926 was never permitted by his zealous admirers to settle down to a life of repentance. He died with — and most probably due to — a conflict, between his guilty conscience on one hand and on the other hand, the effect of the gleeful support which the ghost of his old self continued to receive from the humanity's scum in form of big sums of money and tributes. A short while before he died, he had received a letter from "3,500 British in India" which read: "We are thankful that an occasion of great danger and responsibility found a man prepared to act without regard to personal consequences and we therefore wish to express our gratitude for your share in suppressing the rebellion in the Punjab and we consider that your courage and resolution saved India from a great catastrophe."

Nevertheless, his spirit was failing him. On his death-bed his daughter-in-law tried to console him. But he said, his last words — "Thank you, but I don't want to get better. So many people who knew the conditions in Amritsar say I did right... but so many others say I did wrong. I only want to die and know from my Maker whether I did right or wrong." (*Six Minutes to Sunset: The Story of General Dyer and the Amritsar Affair* by Arthur Swinson; London: Peter Davies, 1964)

We present here extracts from and summary of observations made by a great friend of India, an Englishman B.G. Horniman, in a remarkable book *Amritsar and our Duty to India* (London 1920), some abridged observations by Annie Besant in *The Future of Indian Politics* (Adyar 1922). Also reproduced are carefully selected extracts from several other sources, including the *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre* by Raja Ram (Panjab University, 1969.) Together, they will give the readers a comprehensive picture of the incident and its significance. The compilation, abridgement and concluding remarks are made by Sanjay Bhatt.

The title *The Day of the Devil* and the sub-titles are given by us.

—Editor.

PART: 1

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MASSACRE

Abridged from B.G. Horniman's
Amritsar and our Duty to India

No country suffered economically more severely from the War than India, the vast mass of whose population are permanently in debt and their average income may be placed generously at £ 2 per annum. The Government did nothing to lighten the burden. They aggravated it in many ways. The expression, used by Lord Hardinge, that India was *bled white* in the early part of the war, applies to her condition throughout the four and half years that it lasted. Every sort of commodity and raw material that could be used for military purposes was, of course, *controlled* in the interests of the Government and countless scandals were connected with the exercise of that control.

And if enthusiasm is not exactly the word to describe their sentiments, then Indians never ceased to believe that the war was being waged for the freedom of all, for so the reiterated declarations of one British statesman after another and the expressed ideals of President Wilson encouraged them to do. **Enormous sums were raised and a million and half men went to shed their blood on the battlefields of Europe, Africa and Asia. One loan after another was raised, while in addition a free gift of a hundred million sterling was made by the poorest to the richest country in the world!**

The effort might have been greater if the policy and methods pursued by the Government had been less harsh, provocative, and stupid. Educated Indians were refused access to the commissioned ranks and recruitment was by the methods of old English press gangs. Nor were the methods employed to raise war loans less obnoxious.

The Government of India and the Provincial Governments, began to use the Press Act with frequency and severity. The Viceroy, finally agreed to receive a deputation of the Indian Press Association only to hector them like schoolboys. Journal after Journal succumbed under the Press Act and the Defence of India Act. In Bengal the internment of suspects proceeded on a wholesale scale till the number ran into thousands.

A young professor of the Calcutta University, who became mad in gaol (he was never charged or tried), was actually removed to a criminal lunatic asylum, and the Government of Bengal replied to his mother's pathetic appeal for his release on the ground that his power to harm the Government was gone, that she could, if she wanted to be near her son, take up her residence in the asylum on condition that she submitted herself to the ordinary rules and regulations of the institution! The careless fashion in which the terrible powers of the Executive, under the Defence of India Act, were being used was illustrated by a case in which two innocent Bengali ladies were arrested, made to walk several miles under the hot sun, then carried a long distance by bullock cart, and finally imprisoned in a common gaol for a considerable period, before it was admitted that their arrest was due to a mistake resulting from gross carelessness, and their agony prolonged by a series of blunders in red-tape routine. The final touch of horror was added when two High Court Judges, appointed to report on the operation of the Act in Bengal in regard to internments, declared that, while torture to extort evidence was to be deprecated, it was not desirable to ignore evidence so obtained in the case of revolutionary crime for the internment of suspects!

The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme produced a profound sense of disappointment. All Indian demands for modifications, extensions, alterations were rejected. The Congress had laid a special stress on a *Declaration of Rights* guaranteeing Indians freedom of person, speech and association, and equality of rights with all subjects of the Empire. The reply of the Government was the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills which proposed permanently further to limit in extraordinary degree the rights of Indians.

Sir Reginald Craddock, Home member of the Viceroy's Executive Council was chiefly responsible for the Defence of India Act of 1915 where very wide powers for internment of persons without trial and the restriction of individual liberty in writing, speech, and movement were given to the Executive. Thus tribunals, composed of commissioners below the status of High Court judges could take direct cognisance of offences abolishing all preliminary proceedings and sit without juries. There was no appeal from any sentence passed by them including death sentences. The Act was patriotically accepted by the Indian non-official members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (to their lasting regret) as a War Emergency measure. But the tribunals employed these powers most arbitrarily and indiscriminately against people and papers of all sorts and in cases not even remotely connected with the War in Europe.

The Rowlatt Act

Gazetted early in 1919 and introduced in the Imperial Legislature, the two Bills amazed the public, who, accustomed to the harsh and repressive attitude of Lord Chelmsford's Government, had hardly believed that the triumph of the Allies so largely due to Indian sacrifices and the announcement of August 1917 — that responsible government was the goal of British policy — would be followed by legislation depriving them of the most elementary human rights and unparalleled in the laws of any modern civilised state.

It is often the boast of the Government that the Rowlatt Committee was presided over by an English Judge, Sir Sidney Rowlatt, and included among its members two Indian Judges. A distinguished law lord has said in the House of Commons that even a committee of angels could not be expected to give an impartial decision if they heard only one side of the case. The Committee conducted their deliberations *in camera;* their material consisted for the most part of secret police records while the men whom they associated with responsibility for revolutionary propaganda or the promotion of movements which led to crime, as alleged, were not given any opportunity of appearing before them to be heard in their own defence.

It is impossible to conceive a more deliberate or culpable provocation of the people who had just made ungrudging sacrifices to win Victory for the freedom of the western world than to propose to take away the right of trial, and to expose them to all the terrors of arrest without warrant, imprisonment without trial and drastic restrictions of all kinds.

The Rowlatt Act left it to the arbitrary decision of the Executive to define who is an anarchist and what constitutes a revolutionary movement. "Na dalil, na vakil, na appeal" was a popular idiom which described but inadequately the dangerous features of the new law

with such tribunals, with such procedures: without juries, without preliminary proceedings for committal and without any sort of appeal from their decisions, almost anyone could be sent to the gallows or to the Andamans. The other parts were even more alarming: solitary cells without trials, automatic continuance of confinements and restrictions of those already sentenced under the D.I.A. even after it formally lapsed... nothing that could possibly help to make punishments thoroughly water-tight was forgotten.

And yet what was remarkable about the agitation against the Rowlatt Act, and equally undeniable was its absolutely peaceful character.

The whole country participated in the *hartal* of April 6 resulting in a great sense of unity and communal harmony. Tribute to its peaceful and orderly character has been paid in official reports. It was only in Delhi where owing to some misunderstanding the *hartal* took place one week earlier that there was an outbreak of disorder and quite unnecessary bloodshed, for an Indian mob on such occasions is far less dangerous than an English one. The reckless and culpable haste the authorities displayed in opening fire at the least prospect of disturbance played its part in causing disturbances elsewhere. It was largely due to the efforts of the popular leaders that the public were quieted though the *hartal* was prolonged. And also thanks to the wiser course adopted by the authorities in avoiding the declaration of Martial Law. Had the Punjab officials followed the same course, there would have been no story to tell of the killing of Europeans and the infliction of six weeks of agony on that unhappy province.

Amritsar

The fundamental cause of the outbreak of violent disturbances in the Punjab is the practice of arming the Executive with powers which are invariably liable to be used by those in whose hands they are placed, for the purpose of vindicating what they conceive to be the offended prestige of their own authority. The India office has recently [Feb-March 1920] published a series of Reports prepared by the district officials in Punjab as a justification of the drastic and brutal methods that were adopted to suppress a "rebellion", the evidence of which is entirely lacking. In fact they show how popular disturbances were aggressively and gratuitously provoked by these authorities who had either fallen into a totally inexcusable state of panic, or had deliberately set themselves to crush the awakened spirit of the people in wholly legitimate demonstrations.

A small crowd proceeded to the Bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner Miles Irving to plead for the release of their leaders, passing, notes the Report, "several Europeans on the way but did not molest them." But they were stopped at the Hall Gate Bridge by a military picket, or as the Report curiously puts it, the crowd "was angrily opposing" the picket. Mounted troops were then requisitioned, but were, so the Report says — a very different version from the popular one — pressed back, which seems a very remarkable achievement on the part of an unarmed crowd. The mounted troops, it is also alleged, were heavily stoned, and the "first class magistrate, who had written instructions to deal with any crowd attempting to pass this point as an unlawful assembly" — why and by right of what law? — " called on the troops to fire." Several were killed and wounded.

Thereafter five Europeans were killed and several buildings, including the telephone exchange, two banks, the Town Hall and the Indian Christian Church attacked and fired. Three of those killed were officers of the Banks. A lady missionary, Alice Sherwood was assaulted with sticks and fists, but later taken in by some Indians who cared for her and restored her to her friends. Then the crowd returned to the Hall Gate Bridge and were again fired upon with 20 to 30 casualties. So telegraph wires were cut and two railway stations outside Amritsar attacked. In the afternoon the Commissioner of the Division, who had then arrived, handed over charge to General Dyer with instructions to "take whatever steps he considered necessary to re-establish civil control." Reinforcements arrived and by night order was restored.

The sequence clearly shows that all acts of violence followed on the occurrence at the Hall Gate Bridge, while the whole case of the Government for a "rebellion" rests on the assertion — for there has been no proof — that all violence emanated from a premeditated intention to rebel and were the designed outcome of a conspiracy to subvert the Government.

The Massacre

For two days after this outbreak on 10th April there was a sullen, shocked peace in the city though the Report claims that a "threatened disturbance" was averted by a display of military force. It alleges that "the attitude of the people," when the military marched round the city, was one of hostility, "many spitting on the ground and raising insulting cries." It is not necessary to attach importance to that. It is an obsession with a certain type of Britisher in India that when an Indian spits he is doing it to insult somebody's august presence and mere ebullitions of patriotism seem to become "insulting cries". In continuing to prepare the ground for the incident of April 13, the Report says that "villagers were now pouring into the city," and "there is little doubt that these peasants, who are not of a type which will keep the law unless its guardians show themselves able to enforce it, were not so far persuaded that order had been re-established in Amritsar." "And this fact," it adds, "gives particular importance to the incident which occurred on the afternoon of the 13th." So General Dyer was going to merely persuade them!

Now for countless generations these villagers had flocked every year to the Baisaki fair held in Amritsar on these very days. Besides for the two days people had obeyed the injunction not to demonstrate at the burials of the victims of the 10th and as the Report admits, the city was at peace.

The official summary of the massacre, as given in the *Chronological Statement* published with the *Reports on the Punjab Disturbances* says:

"In the forenoon the Officer Commanding Troops, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner, marched through the city at head of some troops, announcing by beat of drum, at every important street, that no meetings would be allowed. Notwithstanding this warning, just after the troops had returned (about 4 p.m.), large crowd *only dispersed on being fired on by troops*, the casualties being considerable."

It would be hard to conceive a more misleading and dishonest summary of what actually occurred.

General Dyer opened fire without warning, shooting down in *cold blood* 2,000 of them, and leaving the dead and wounded lying on the ground unattended throughout the night.

Martial Law had not been declared but Dyer held, as he said in his evidence before the Hunter Committee, that it existed *ipso facto*. There were times, he said, when one

had to act without rules and regulations, as he had banned all meetings when he marched round the city. The Report states he made his announcement "at every important point". Before the Hunter Committee, General Dyer, had to admit, with a map of the city in front of him, that this statement was not true; important localities were omitted and large numbers of people even if his proclamation could be taken as a preliminary justification of what he did, could not have known of it. Nor did he, on his own admission, take any steps to communicate with the organisers of the meeting and warn them, though he knew for several hours beforehand that it was going to take place.

He just let things go, then marched up, opened fire and himself directed the fire to where the crowd was the thickest. Yet he had no evidence at all to justify his assumption that this was a seditious assembly. The thousands there assembled, many pilgrims to the fair, were just sitting or standing, listening to an address on what should be done to preserve the peace and mourn the victims of the 10th.

The Martial Law

General Dyer said he fired, and fired well, because he did not want anyone to have to shoot again in the Punjab. But what followed on the Amritsar *battue*—and it is not unreasonable to argue that it was a result—was wholesale shooting and bombing of unarmed people in other parts of Punjab for six agonising weeks. Even the official Report admits that "the outbreaks at Lahore, Gujranwalla and Kasur were directly due to the previous occurrence of such outbreaks at Amritsar."

So far as Lahore is concerned this official statement is grossly misleading—there was no mob violence. At Gujranwalla and Kasur there was serious violence and

Hall Gate through which General Dyer marched towards the Bagh.

minor outbreaks elsewhere. But official accounts of all this are in many respects in dispute since only official evidence was heard by the Hunter Committee. An independent committee was appointed by the Indian National Congress and collected a mass of evidence, but it was not heard by the Hunter Committee and its report is yet [June 1920] to be published.

In fact to bring in the speeches made by the arrested leaders (whom the Report states the Martial Law Commissions to have proved to be prime movers in a 'conspiracy having as its object the dissemination of sedition'), the Government made the application of Martial Law retrospective! A remarkable proceeding, which has been held by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to be within the Ordinance-making power of the Government of India. And yet the official witnesses before the Hunter Committee have been unable to produce any evidence of rebellion or conspiracy against the State at all.

Mr. Barron, Chief Commissioner of Delhi, in his evidence before the Hunter Committee said there was no evidence of any organised conspiracy. Mr. Orde, the Superintendent of Police, said he found no trace of Bolshevist influence, behind the disturbances. Mr. Cocks, a high official in the C.I.D. Punjab admitted that he had no evidence of a rebellion or conspiracy. There were others who gave similar evidence.

The Times, in a leading article recently, commenting on the letter addressed to it by Sir Michael O'Dwyer defending his action in approving General Dyer's massacre, said there had not been for many years in India, including last year, a riotous assembly that could not have been dispersed by a dozen armed policemen, armed with smooth-bore rifles. And those who know the facts, and have no motive for misrepresentation, know this to be true. Every one of the riotous assembly in Punjab could have been so dispersed. There have been equally dangerous disturbances in England, without a shot being fired.

But the Amritsar police were not merely apathetic. A report now comes from India that searches carried out in connection with the arrest of a number of policemen at Amritsar, implicated in thefts, have led to the discovery of property belonging to the National Bank, which was looted during the April 1919 disturbances!

"Dyerarchy" in Amritsar

General Dyer's own relation of the performance of what he described as his "horrible duty" impresses the imagination and is ineffaceable. He did not pretend that what he did was necessary, even for the dispersal of a meeting, the improper character of which was a pure assumption on his part. He had no authority for what he did. He had no authority to make his proclamation prohibiting meetings. Martial Law had not been proclaimed. Authority to re-establish civil control had been confided to him by a civil official who had no legal authority to delegate his duty to anyone. "He understood roughly that civil law was at an end and military law would have to take its place."

At 12.40 he heard the meeting was to take place. He let them assemble. Then marched on it with his force of rifles, and machine guns. He would have used the machine guns, he declared, if he could have got them into the enclosure. He "felt his orders had not been obeyed. Martial Law"—which did not then exist—"had been flouted, and he considered it his duty to disperse the crowd by rapid fire." He did so for ten minutes until his ammunition was exhausted for any less would not be sufficient. "I think," he told the Committee, "it was a merciful thing...I could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but they would have come back again and laughed, and I would have made what I consider to be a fool of myself." He admitted that 400 to 500 might have been killed and about three times so many wounded. Even if we accept this figure, no less than 2,000 including babes in arms, defenceless children and women and armed men were shot without warning and left where they fell.

He assumed full powers to do anything he liked the moment an unauthorised civilian requested him to re-establish civil power—which was ineffective through the fault of its own incompetence and ineptitude. And on the very evening Dyer left the Bagh he issued a Curfew Order: anyone outdoors after 8 p.m. will be shot on sight. When asked by the Hunter Committee if he had taken any steps to attend to the wounded after the firing, he had answered: "Certainly not. It was not my job. Hospitals were open and they could have gone to them." So, that hot April night the wounded lay in agony and the dead putrefying, torn by vultures and jackals while anxious relatives stayed indoors—terrified. Military pickets roamed the streets, the Curfew Order was administered with utmost vigour, not just that night but for weeks after.

Among General Dyer's inspirations was the cutting off of the water and electric supplies to the city. But his spirit stood most luridly displayed in the public floggings and what is known as the "crawling order". For days together all passing through the street in which Miss Sherwood was assaulted were ordered to crawl with belly to the ground. There were respectable and respected citizens living on that street. It was not only the street where this lady was assaulted but also the one from which kind-hearted Indians had come to take her in and tend her. How many underwent the humiliation we do not know. But it was made a jest by the Official Members in the Imperial Legislative Council, great merriment excited by Quartermaster-General Hudson's account of a wretch who, for martyrdom of from imbecility, crawled up and down the street till he was stopped. Such are the men who represent the humanity and decency of a noble hearted people in the Council of the Viceroy. Such is the representative of the King Emperor, who sat in the Viceroy's throne in the Council Chamber while this was going on!

Flogging on trivial or trumped up offences was a common feature of Martial Law all over Punjab, but the men alleged to have been concerned with the assault on Miss Sherwood were first publicly flogged on that street and tried afterwards!

The issue of third class railway tickets was prohibited. The Report noted that this was "essential to prevent communication between agitators" though admitting that it was "somewhat too extensive" a measure. More than two persons could not walk abreast. Bicycles, "other than those owned by Europeans", were commandeered. Shopkeepers were forced to open up under severe penalties. Prices of all commodities were fixed by the military. All carts were commandeered. A public platform for whippings was erected near the fort and a number of triangles for floggings in various parts of the city.

The Martial Law Commissions at Amritsar: Of 298 charged with major offences 218 were convicted. 51 sentenced to death, 46 to transportation for life, 2 to imprisonment for ten years, 79 for seven years, 10 for five years, 13 for three years and 11 for lesser periods. Of course there were no ordinary rules of procedures or laws

of evidence. Among the sixty summarily dealt by military officers 50 were convicted. Another 105 convicted under Martial Law by Civil Magistrates. The official Report naturally does not tell of the travesty of justice which these tribunals constituted, the absurdity of the charges and the inadequacy of the evidence.

THE REIGN OF TERROR

In Lahore more than two persons abreast were not allowed on the sidewalks. Students of colleges were ordered to report themselves four times a day to the military authorities at varying places of assembly. *Langars*, or public food kitchens, which had been opened by philanthropic persons for the feeding of those who could not purchase food, were ordered to be closed; motor-cars, motor-bicycles, and ordinary bicycles belonging to Indians were ordered to be delivered up to the military authorities, and were handed over to officials for their use. Electric punkahs and other electric fittings belonging to Indians were commandeered and stripped from the houses for the use of British soldiers. Public conveyances were ordered to report themselves daily at places a considerable distance from the city. There were a number of other orders devised for the purpose of making the people realise the intensity and might of Martial Law.

The manner in which they were applied, and the deliberate cruelty of the whole administration can be illustrated by a few facts, mostly admitted in evidence before the Hunter Committee, and otherwise verified. Punishments by flogging were numerous, and took place for several days in public. They were mostly for petty breaches of Martial Law regulations. There was one case of an elderly man who was caught tending his cow outside his shop door in a side lane after 8 p.m. He was seized and flogged for this breach of the Curfew Order!

Drivers of *tongas* (hackney carriages) had participated in the *hartal*. To teach them a lesson, 300 *tongas* were commandeered ; of those who were permitted to ply for hire, orders to report themselves at certain times at places distant from the busy parts of the city, and their detention at the pleasure of the military officials concerned, effectually destroyed their chances of a day's earnings. Thus were these humble men and their families, who live from hand to mouth, punished for their participation in a peaceful and legitimate demonstration against an unpopular Government measure.

Colonel Johnson admitted that many of his orders were directed against the educated and professional classes—lawyers, etc. He considered they were the classes from which the political agitators were drawn. He had many pleasant little ways of making the "might" felt.

Students, boys of 16 to 20, were the objects of special attention. The students of several colleges in Lahore, which is a large University town, were ordered to report themselves four times daily at a place, in one case, four miles distant from their college. In the burning sun of Lahore in April, the hottest time of the year, when the temperature is often over 100° in the shade, these youths had to walk 16 miles daily. Some of them fainted by the wayside. Colonel Johnson thought it did them good; it kept them out of mischief! A Martial Law notice was torn from one of the walls of one college. The whole professional staff, including the Principal, were arrested, and marched under military escort to the fort, where they were kept in military custody for three days. They were given "a corner in the fort" for their accommodation, and allowed to sleep on the roof.

Colonel Johnson's evidence regarding the floggings was nauseating. He declared that these were not public but *quasi*-public floggings, whatever that may mean. They were only inflicted on people of low social status. He was not a doctor, and could not say whether whipping might affect the health of the victim. But he thought it was an essential punishment. People liked going to gaol, and flogging was a better deterrent. An instance of the spirit in which the flogging punishments were administered is provided by the case of a whole wedding party, including the priest, being flogged for being in the street after hours (weddings in India take place after sunset); but it is due to Colonel Johnson to say that he admitted that this was "the one regrettable incident." It serves, however, graphically to indicate the sort of terror under which the people of Lahore lived for six weeks.

It is due, however, to Colonel Johnson to record that he regarded himself, and, according to his own account, was so regarded by a large number of the people on whom he inflicted his administration, as a kindly and benevolent autocrat, who castigated the people for their own good. It was as a benefactor of the poor that he was entertained at a banquet by his fellow countrymen in Lahore. But the tributes then paid to him cannot be said to equal that he paid to himself in giving evidence before the Hunter Committee. Many people, he declared, called on him to thank him for his administration of Martial Law, and to tell him how much they enjoyed it. It reminded them, they said, of the rule which their ancestors enjoyed in olden times! This was his solemn assurance to the Committee.

It is a common but mistaken tradition among Anglo-Indians in India that the Indians have no sense of humour!

When the news of disturbances at Gujranwala reached Lahore, it was no less a person than the Lieutenant-Governor himself who conceived the brilliant idea of despatching aeroplanes to the scene. Let us take first the account in the Official Report. It tells us:

> Two bombs were first dropped, being aimed at a large party of people at a village (Dhulla) outside Gujranwala, *the officer no doubt believing them to be rioters* going or coming from the city. One bomb fell through the roof of a house and failed to explode; one fell among the party, killing one woman and one boy and slightly wounding two men. Fifty rounds from the machine-gun were also fired into the party. Shortly after, another bomb was dropped at about a mile south of this place, another crowd being observed. The bomb dropped into a dry pond and did not explode; twenty-five rounds were fired from the machine-gun, but, *as far as is known* (months afterwards!), without damage. At *3.35* the officer attacked a crowd of some size near the Khalsa High School and Boarding House on the outskirts of the town; one bomb was dropped and thirty rounds fired from the machine-gun. *As far as is known*, on this occasion one man was hit by a bullet, one student by a splinter, and one small boy stunned. At *3.40* p.m. two bombs were dropped near a mosque (Mohammedan church) in the town; these failed to explode. The aeroplane was now directly over the scene of the worst of the disorder. A hundred and fifty rounds were fired from the machine-gun at crowds in the street; one bomb was dropped on the crowd near the burning goods shed, killing four men and wounding five men; one bomb was dropped on the crowd in front of the station, killing two and wounding six. This makes a total of eight in all. The rumour that a large number

more were dropped is probably due to confusion between the dropping of bombs and the firing of the machine-gun.... *As far as has been ascertained up to the present* (months afterwards!) the total number of persons killed by the police was three, and by the aeroplanes nine; twenty-seven in all were wounded by police and aeroplanes.

The public are asked to believe that this promiscuous dropping of bombs and the firing of altogether 255 rounds of a machine-gun, apparently at close quarters, into crowds of people, resulted in the killing of nine and wounding of only about sixteen people! Can anyone, who remembers the work of the German aeroplanes in England during the war, doubt that the popular assertion of many more casualties is well founded? The Report is transparently dishonest. The effect of the firing of fifty rounds into the first crowd is not mentioned; and thrice we have the saving phrase, "as far as is known," or "as far as can be ascertained," while stress is laid on the bombs that did not explode. A party of peasants far from the scene of disorder is fired on because, "no doubt," the officer *believed* them to be "rioters going or coming from the city." If there had been no casualties, the motive and intention of the whole thing remains horrible, but it is asserted, and it is hard not to believe it, that there were far heavier casualties than are mentioned in this Report.

Colonel O'Brien, in his evidence before the Committee, said the crowd was fired on "wherever found." This was referring to the aeroplanes. Once it was found, by an aeroplane in charge of Lieutenant Dodkins R.A.F., in the form of twenty peasants in a field. Lieutenant Dodkins said he machine-gunned them till they fled. He denied that they were engaged in harvesting operations, which is alleged to be the fact. "They were standing in a group and talking." He saw another party in front of a house being addressed by a man, so he dropped a bomb on them because he "had no doubt in his mind that they were not a marriage or funeral party."

Major Carberry, R.A.F., was the gentleman who bombed a party of people, because he thought they were rioters going or coming from the city. These wretched people fled after the bombs were dropped, and he then pursued them to a village with a machine-gun. "He could not say if any casualties were caused by the machine-gun firing."

* * *

Colonel O'Brien was responsible for an order that when Indians met British officers they must salute, alight from their carriages, or dismount if they were riding or driving, and lower their umbrellas if they were carrying any. This order, Colonel O'Brien told the Committee, "was good by way of bringing home to the people that they had new masters." People were whipped, fined, and otherwise punished for disobedience of this monstrous order. He was responsible for the arrest of numbers of people, who were kept in gaol for as long as six weeks without being brought to trial. In one case a number of leading citizens were summarily arrested, put in a goods truck, where they were huddled together after being marched several miles in the burning sun, some of them half clad, and sent by train to Lahore. They were refused permission to answer the calls of nature, and were kept in the truck in these conditions for about twenty-four hours. Their horrible plight hardly needs description. As they were marched through the streets, an ever-growing crowd of prisoners—for Colonel O'Brien went on making arrests indiscriminately as he proceeded—they were handcuffed and chained together. Hindus and Mohammedans were chained together. This was regarded by the populace as a jibe at Hindu-Moslem unity. Colonel O'Brien said it was accidental.

Captain Doveton was in a sort of independent command in the Kasur subdivision, the headquarters of which is the fairly large town of Kasur. At this place a public gallows was erected for hangings, though apparently it was never used, and was taken down by order of the superior authorities. It was there, however, for some days to the terror of the inhabitants. A large public cage was also erected near the railway station, designed to accommodate 150 persons, and here suspects were incarcerated before the public gaze. The whole male population of the town was paraded for identification.

Floggings took place in public, and photographic records of these disgusting incidents are in existence, showing that the victims were stripped naked to the knees, and tied to telegraph poles or triangles. Publicity was not casual, or accidental, but designed. A sort of levee of the "bad characters" of the town was held for the purpose by Captain Doveton's order, and on at least one occasion prostitutes were brought to witness the floggings. Just as Colonel Johnson had his "one regrettable incident," when a wedding party was flogged, this flogging in the presence of prostitutes was the one thing which seemed to excite Captain Doveton's shame when he was taxed with it, while giving evidence before the Hunter Committee. His explanation was that he had ordered the sub-inspector of police to round up the bad characters, and bring them to witness the floggings, but was "horrified" when he saw these women there. But he could not send them away, because he was *unable to find an escort* for them. So they remained to witness the floggings. We can leave the explanation to the reader for what it is worth!

Captain Doveton was a prolific inventor of "minor punishments." His sole object in inventing minor punishments, he told the Committee, was to make things "as mild as circumstances would permit." Circumstances were not very merciful in this respect. Offenders against Martial Law were set to work at loading and unloading goods waggons in the station yard. He instituted a system of making people touch the ground with their foreheads—a sort of variation of Colonel Dyer's crawling order. It is alleged that some persons were whitewashed by his orders, and it cannot be said that his denial of the incident, in view of the evidence, is altogether acceptable. He was also accused of having made a man dance before him with a fool's cap on his head. He denied this, but admitted another form of "minor punishment," which consisted in ordering an offender to compose a poem in his honour!

Captain Doveton was quite assured in his own mind that he was a popular personage in Kasur.

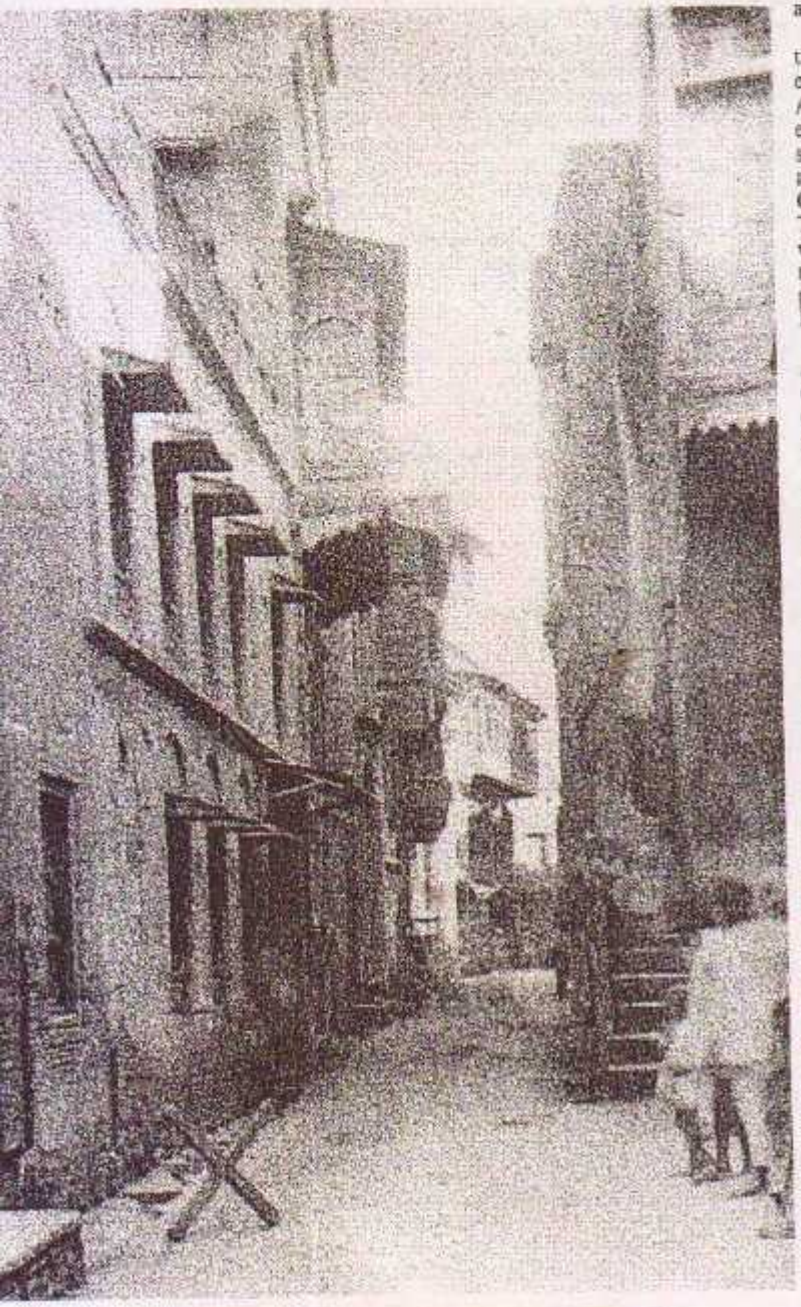
Wherever he went, he assured the Committee, he got a cheery greeting, and he was also thanked for his firm administration of Martial Law. He had to admit, however, that some of the unappreciative inhabitants fled from the town to escape his attentions. Their ingratitude was punished by the confiscation and destruction of their property!

* * *

An armoured train was let loose on the villages of Sheikupara. It was in command, of course, of a military officer, and accompanied by a civil officer, Lala Sriram, who gave the Hunter Committee a lurid account of how it

would descend on a village and turn its machine-gun indiscriminately on the villagers in the street or in their fields, not because they were doing anything at the time, but because somebody had done something and it was necessary to strike terror into the population. There are no details of casualties, but the affair of this armoured train appears to have been as terrible in its way as the massacre at Amritsar, the people being fired on relentlessly and indiscriminately, without inquiry and without warning.

A narrow lane leading to Jallianwala Bagh, which became known as 'Crawling Lane' for people were forced to crawl while passing through this lane when Martial Law was imposed in Amritsar in April 1919.



PART: 2

BIRTH OF A MOVEMENT

(Selections from Annie Besant's *The Future of Indian Politics*, Adyar, 1922)

In 1914 Annie Besant declared in England that "the price of India's loyalty is India's Freedom." Jinnah and Lajpat Rai supported her. The next four years Indians and English, alike, were fighting in the trenches, against autocracy.

As a matter of fact, there was no equality of sacrifice in the Colonies and India, for India had long, at a huge and ever-increasing cost, maintained *on a War Footing* an Army far beyond her own needs, and it was this which enabled the Viceroy Lord Hardinge to fling across the seas into France an Army ready to take the field, right athwart the path to Paris between the advancing hosts of Germany and the 'contemptible little Army' of Britain. The frantic enthusiasm with which the British Parliament welcomed the arrival of the Indians, at that critical moment, showed its sense of the imminence of Britain's peril, and of the greatness of the service rendered to her Empire.

General Sir James Willcocks in his book *With the Indians in France* (published in 1920) wrote, "The Army of India was little understood in Great Britain.... To the ordinary observer like myself, at Darbars and public gatherings, it was plain that they never received their proper share of *Izzat* (honour).... The Indian officer was not treated with the respect which was his due, and which he has earned through arduous service on many fields of war.... India has reason to be proud of her sons, and their children may well tell with pride of the deeds their fathers."

The words of English statesmen, spoken to enhearten their own countrymen, rang across the seas to India. Asquith spoke of what England would feel if Germans filled her highest offices, controlled her policy, levied her taxes, made her laws; it would be inconceivable, he cried, and intolerable. India listened, and murmured to herself: "But that is exactly my condition here, these same Englishmen think it the only conceivable and the only tolerable life for me." She had accepted English rule by habit; now she was shocked into realising the position which she filled in the eyes of the West.

Then the pride of the Aryan Motherland awoke. Had she not a civilization dating back by millennia, beside which the white races, sprung from her womb, were but of yesterday? Had she not been rich, strong, and self-ruled, while these wandered naked in their forests? *But now she was a Dependency of a little far-off Island!* The souls of her dead in France, in Belgium, in Gallipoli, in Palestine, in Syria, in Mesopotamia, in East Africa, cried to her to claim the Freedom for which their bodies lay scattered far from home and kind.

Two Home Rule Leagues were formed in 1916. At the Lucknow Congress that year Tilak's party rejoined the Congress. Common programmes were adopted by all three and the Muslim League and in 1917 every village was aflame. On November 26, 1917 the Congress, the Muslim League and the two Home Rule Leagues presented memorials to Mr. Montagu who was on a visit to India.

As the War went on, India slowly realised that the hatred of autocracy was confined to autocracy in the West, and that the degradation was only regarded as intolerable for men of the white races; that freedom was lavishly promised to all except to India; that powers were to be given to the Dominions, but not to India... and at last there was plain talk of the White Empire and India was doomed.

The Defence of India Act of 1915 was aimed at the revolutionaries in Bengal and Punjab consequent upon the Komagatu episode. But the harsh and oppressive rule of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, his press-gang methods of recruitment, his forced War loans, and his cruel persecutions of all political leaders through indiscriminate use of the Press Act and the Defence of India Act kept the resentment alive. Into this turmoil was thrown, early in 1919, the Rowlatt Bill.

Brigadier-General R.E.H Dyer, perpetrator of the massacre.

Mr. Gandhi devised and proclaimed a *hartal* for April 6 that resulted in bloodshed at Delhi. Then on April 11, two popular leaders were arrested and carried away; a crowd, unarmed and peaceful, with the usual signs of mourning, went towards the Civil Lines to ask whither they had gone; they were stopped by soldiers, and sat down on the ground, mourning. In a foolish panic, they were fired on, and several were slain. It was the signal for an outburst of mad rage. The crowd picked up sticks and bars, rushed back into the town and attacked British banks and Government buildings, the railway station; some five Englishmen were killed, an Englishwoman was assailed and beaten, but rescued by some Indians. By the evening, all was quiet again. On the next day, many arrests were made, and there was no resistance; all was peace; the sudden rage provoked by the foolish firing had died down, and there need have been no more trouble. But troops had been sent for, and General Dyer and his men arrived on the evening of the 12th. On the next day, Sunday, April 13, he went through a few streets, and forbade any meetings. A meeting had been arranged for that day in a large open space, Jallianwala Bagh, and people came, a holiday crowd, from all the surrounding country. General Dyer was told a crowd was gathering, and he did nothing. Jallianwala Bagh was a walled-in space, with some five narrow outlets. When 20,000 people had gathered in it, he marched down with machine-guns, but even the widest of the passages was too narrow for their entry. He had 40 men, with a supply of ammunition, and the ground sloped down slightly from his station. He gave the order to fire into the crowd, and himself directed the fire so as to close the small outlets with dead and dying, as the amazed and panic-stricken crowd fled before the hail of bullets, men, women, little children — tiny shoes of children in arms were found scattered about afterwards. When his ammunition was exhausted, he and his soliders marched away, leaving the ground strewn with dead and wounded. As he said afterwards, that was not his "job"; he meant to give a lesson. None might be out after dark, on pain of death; there were no doctors; the wounded lay through the terrible heat of the night, a few brave persons creeping in with water — a mere drop in the ocean of thirst. Then came worse. An iron ring was kept round the shambles, within which every educated man was baited and ill-used, and the outside world knew naught; Sir Michael O'Dwyer at last had his way.

When the facts leaked out, India went mad with pity, grief and horror. And yet, for all the boiling wrath, Indians were just. They did not take revenge, but they asked for justice, and that justice, was denied. Out of the passions roused by that new wrong grew the movement of Non-Co-Operation, started definitely on April 9, 1920.

PART: THREE

THE REACTION

(Extracts from R.R.Sethi's Foreword to *The Jallianwala Massacre* by Raja Ram)

The natural reaction of the massacre amongst the British bureaucrats was obviously that of jubilation and triumph. General Dyer had not acted on his own, but had just played the part assigned to him by the British bureaucracy which had plotted the design. On receiving the first report on the 14th April of what Dyer had done in Amritsar, his military superior, General Beynon, immediately got into touch with Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, on telephone, and soon after sent a congratulatory message to Dyer by aeroplane: "Your action correct and Lt.-Governor approves". Obviously Michael O'Dwyer and General Beynon were expecting the "good news".

For more than a year, the Government of India, the Army Headquarters in India and the Secretary of State for India supported Dyer's action. In fact, they strained every nerve to justify Dyer's action in the great debate of September 1919 session of the Imperial Council at Simla.

The Punjab Government, fully supported by the superior authorities in Delhi, pleaded in a similar vein before the Disorders Inquiry Committee, popularly known as the "Hunter Committee", and produced before it voluminous evidence to that effect. Needless to say that all this evidence was fabricated, but marshalled in a very clever manner.

The British Government, however, changed its official stand after some time due to the great outcry against "the cold and calculated massacre" and also due to the publication of the Report of the Enquiry Committee set up by the Indian National Congress even while the Hunter Committee was sifting evidence given before it. In May 1920, the Government published the Hunter Committee Report and very discretely accepted its judgement that General Dyer was guilty of "misconception of duty". That became the official stand for the future. General Dyer was made the scape-goat by the British Government which he had sought to serve on 13th April, 1919, and he had to fight a lone battle before the Army Council in England. The latter further stigmatised him for committing an "error of judgement".

The Hunter Committee Report and the decision of the Army Council sent the Jallianwala debate off a tangent. The nature and the extent of General Dyer's responsibility in causing the tragedy became the central issue for future writings on the subject. Michael O'Dwyer's *India As I Knew It*, Ian Colvin's *The Life of General Dyer*, George Barrow's *Life of General C.C. Monro* debated furiously on the subject in the twenties and the thirties, and Rupert Furneaux's *Massacre at Amritsar* and Arthur Swinson's *Six Minutes to Sunset*, with comparatively greater objectivity, very recently in 1963 and 1964 respectively.

* * *

Selections from *The Struggle For Freedom* by R.C. Majumdar (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan)

Dyer was very frank in his evidence before the Hunter Committee. He admitted that his act was deliberate and he had fully made up his mind while marching his men to Jallianwala, and would not have flinched from still greater slaughter if the narrowness of the approaches had not compelled him to leave his machine-guns behind. His purpose, he declared, was "to strike terror into the whole of the Punjab." He also admitted that he could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but that would have been derogatory to his dignity as a defender of law and order. And so, remarks *Pandit Motilal Nehru*, "in order to maintain his self-respect, he thought it his duty to fire and fire well till his ammunition was exhausted and 1,000 persons lay dead on the ground. There ended his duty. It was none of his business, he said, to look after the dead and the wounded. It was no one's business. The defenders of law and order had won a great victory, they had crushed the great rebellion. What more was, needed?"

But Dyer does not stand alone. The Government of India and a section of the British people—men and women, women more than men—both in India and in Britain, endorsed his action and rewarded him for it.

The cold-blooded massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the annals of any civilized Government, took place before Martial Law was declared and the administration was still, at least nominally, in the hands of the civil authority. Martial Law was proclaimed at Amritsar on the 15th April, 1919, and in five districts of the Punjab between 15th and 24th April. It was withdrawn on 11 June except on railway lands.

The facts elicited by the Hunter Committee from the officials concerned leave no doubt that there was hardly any justification for the introduction of Martial Law to control the situation.

* * *

Lala Lajpat Rai, in his Presidential Address at the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, held on 4th September, 1920, has given a gruesome account of "the outrages that were actually committed in the name of law and order." A few instances are quoted below:

"Raliyaram and Abdulla have said that they were forced not only to crawl on their bellies, but, while crawling, were kicked by the soldiers with their boots and struck with the butt-ends of their rifles. L. Kahan Chand, a blind man, told how even he was made to crawl and was kicked. Six boys were flogged in public; one of them, Sunder Singh, became senseless after the fourth stripe, but after some water was poured into his mouth by soldiers, he regained consciousness, flogging was then resumed. He lost his consciousness for the second time, but the flogging never ceased till he was given 20 stripes."

"The invalid wife of Manohar Lal, Bar-at-Law, who was for some time Minto Professor at the University of Calcutta, and their children were dragged from their rooms, and forced to take shelter in the servants' quarters and the kitchen. He was kept under arrest for 28 days and then let off without a charge and without trial."

Udham Singh, a patriot from Punjab who was hanged in Pentonville Prison, London, in 1940 for killing Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then Governor of Punjab.

"Lala Beli Ram Kapur of Hafizabad was arrested and locked up with 23 others in a room measuring 12 by 25, the same room having to be used by all of them for natural purposes also. They were kept as under-trial prisoners up to the 6th June."

"Mr. Bosworth Smith went towards the women. He removed their veils and used abusive language. He called them 'flies, bitches, she-asses' and worse things. He said to them: 'Your skirts will be examined by the Police Constables. When you were sleeping with your husbands why did you allow them to get up and go'? He spat on them." The treatment accorded to an aged widow, Gurdevi, narrated by Lajpat Rai, is even more damaging. An order was passed at Lyallpur and Gujranwalla that whenever the inhabitants met any Gazetted military or civil officer, those riding an animal or wheeled conveyance would alight, and those who had a raised umbrella should lower it. Colonel O'Brien who was responsible for the above order at Kasur was guilty of most inhuman treatment to persons of all categories.

The Punjab was treated by the military as even worse than an enemy territory. The Lieutenant-Governor himself conceived the idea of sending aeroplanes to throw bombs upon the rioters even when a section of responsible Englishmen believed that the danger from the mob was at an end.

* * *

For eight months the Government of India tried to draw a veil over the horrible atrocities perpetrated in the Punjab. But the news of the terrible events slowly percolated to other parts of India, and a wave of horror and indignation swept the country from one end to the other. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore relinquished his Knighthood as a measure of protest and wrote a strong but dignified letter to the Viceroy, "giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen surprised into a dumb anguish of terror." He felt that as "the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers, — possibly congratulating themselves for imparting, what they imagine as salutary lessons, the time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation." He therefore begged the Viceroy to relieve him of the title of Knight.

The reaction of Gandhi to the grim tragedy brought about by his *Satyāgraha* campaign appears to be somewhat mysterious. As mentioned above, he had suspended the *Satyāgraha* movement on April 18, in view of the mob violence. On 21 July, 1919, he issued a statement in which he said that on account of indications of goodwill on the part of the Government and advice from many of his friends, he would not resume civil disobedience, as it was not his purpose to embarrass the Government. He called on the *Satyā grahis* to work for the constructive programme, viz., use of indigenous goods and unity between Hindus and Muslims.

On the other hand, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya patiently collected the details of the tragic incidents as far as possible and sought to place them before the public in the shape of 92 leading questions in the Central Legislative Council alleging specific instances of brutality. These questions were disallowed by the Viceroy and the Government immediately introduced a Bill of Indemnity for protecting the civil and military officials in the Punjab from consequences of their action. The questions asked by Pandit Malaviya, however, sent such a thrill of horror over the whole country, that the Viceroy announced the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry in his opening speech. The non-official members suggested the postponement of the Indemnity Bill in view of the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry — for it would be nothing short of a parody to absolve from punishment, in advance, those very persons whose conduct was the subject of inquiry. But the amendment was negatived and the Bill was passed.

The Indian public opinion and the political leaders, however, shared the sentiments of Tagore and Malaviya, rather than those of Gandhi. On 7 June, 1919, the All-India Congress Committee appointed a sub-committee of nine members for the conduct of an inquiry into the recent occurrences in the Punjab and other places.

* * *

A NEFARIOUS PLAN

Concluding Chapter of *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre* by Raja Ram.

The plan of 'shooting well' the people of Amritsar on the Baisakhi day was hatched at a meeting of top officials held in Government House, Lahore, on the 9th of April, 1919. On 13th April, Baisakhi was to be celebrated at Amritsar. Officials knew that a large congregation would gather there on that day, which could be made an easy target on any pretext. Towards that end in view, deportation orders of Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal were issued on the 9th of April to create a hostile atmosphere on the eve of Baisakhi.

So far, it has generally been believed that only after the outbreak of disorders on the 10th of April at Amritsar the authorities were actuated to take extreme measures on the 13th of April, but it was not so. The local government had decided quite in advance (on the 9th of April), with the active connivance of military authorities, to carry out the massacre on the 13th. On the 9th they could not have foreseen that some Europeans would be killed on the 10th. The selection of the day was of great significance. On that day (Baisakhi) people from all over the Punjab visit Amritsar. The Government felt that shooting of the congregation there would make a wide impact on the whole of the Punjab, since people would narrate the harrowing tale after returning to their villages or towns.

It was in the evening of the 9th of April, that at Government House, Lahore, General Beynon was verbally informed by the Punjab Government that trouble was expected (i.e. to be created) on the 13th in Amritsar for which necessary military arrangements should be made. Adjutant-General Hudson himself explained the position later (while defending the military on the question of "lapse of duty" with regard to the disorders of the 10th April, in which 5 Europeans were murdered at Amritsar) that actually Army Headquarters were expecting trouble only on the 13th of April for which troops were being despatched to Amritsar according to the wishes of the civil authorities, and nothing serious had ever been expected to occur on the 10th April. He wrote his note:

"No previous warning was received at Army Headquarters from either civil or local military authorities that trouble was to be expected at Amritsar (on the 10th April), and, as far as is known, the only information which the G. O. C. 16th Division, received was *verbal information at Government House, Lahore, on the evening of the 9th that it was possible that trouble might occur on the 13th in Amritsar.*"

What actually transpired among the few top civil and military officers of the Government in the evening of the 9th of April, no body can now know. But why the authorities expected trouble on the 13th is quite ascertainable. The above passage clearly shows that it was in the evening of the 9th that a plan for massacre on the 13th was prepared and given final shape. Looking at the language of the passage, some people may argue that trouble could be expected on account of Satyagraha campaign, particularly when thousands of people were expected to visit Amritsar on the 13th April. However, in this connection, it is important to note that the Satyagraha Movement had, throughout, remained non-violent, orderly and peaceful — a fact which Government officials themselves admitted up to the 9th April. There was no programme of holding any demonstration or observing hartal on the 13th, on the part of Satyagrahis.

It is thus obvious that the Government of O'Dwyer had decided on the 9th April to fire on a large crowd on the 13th at Amritsar, and both civil and military authorities had begun to co-ordinate their activities in that direction with effect from the evening of that date. Happenings of the 10th occurred unexpectedly.

The curious way of recording subsequent events promptly in War Diaries by G. O. C., 16th Divison at Lahore shows that he was quite in league with the local government, but not without the connivance of Army Headquarters. This practice of maintaining War Diaries by military authorities was not followed in Delhi and Ahmedabad, although incidents that took place at these places were as bad as Amritsar. This leads us to the only possible conclusion that with effect from the 9th of April, the government had begun to deal with the situation in the Punjab on the basis of there being a state of war.

The 10th of April disorders further enraged the authorities and now the Lt.-Governor was of the view that besides a large scale shooting at Amritsar, something more drastic should be done. He, therefore, proposed that Martial Law be declared in some districts of Punjab.

After 10th April O'Dwyer openly began to propound the theory of "rebellion". Magnifying every stray incident in the Province, he cried woolf! woolf!! On the evening of the 12th he communicated the state of affairs at Amritsar and elsewhere to the Government of India at Simla by telephone, and he was given the green signal that "if troops had to fire, they should make an example". Quite satisfied at making the Government of India a party in his nefarious design, he warned the people that night at a dinner party that "there might be difficulty in restraining British troops from taking reprisals for the brutal murder of their comrades and countrymen at Kasur and Amritsar".

The words are self-explanatory. It is obvious that after the 10th, O'Dwyer was thinking in terms of taking vengeance on an unprecedented scale. His words were full of meaning. They constituted a clear incitement to all Britishers in the Punjab that they should take as many pounds of flesh as they could.

On the 11th of April, it was an open talk in the official circles at Amritsar that General Dyer would be coming to the city which would be razed to the ground in no time by bombardment from the air. However, the idea of bombardment had to be abandoned in favour of the original plan of shooting people by machine guns and rifles on the 13th. Before leaving for Amritsar on that very day General Dyer had remarked to his son that Hindus and Muslims had united. "There is a very big show coming," he said. It means he had been directed before-hand by his seniors as to what precisely he was to do at Amritsar on the 13th. On his part, General Dyer did not open fire till the specified day, although he had ample opportunities to do so on the 12th April, first while marching through the city, and again, in the evening, when a large number of people (five thousand) had gathered at Hindu Sabha High School. He continued to wait for the fixed date.

The ground on which the massacre took place

EPILOGUE

Seventy years have passed since the great massacre. Jallianwala Bagh has become a place of pilgrimage and an imaginatively designed monument built on the spot once turned red with the blood of the martyrs reminds us of the sacrifice made by men and women who aspired for freedom.

The episode has never ceased to attract the attention of historians and researchers, perhaps the latest significant publication on it being Stanley Wolpert's *Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh* (Penguin). However, an interesting book on the subject, though not so widely read in India, is Arthur Swinson's *Six Minutes to Sunset* (Peter Davies, London) published in 1964. The book subtitled "The Story of General Dyer and the Amritsar Affair" speaks for itself. It is not so much an account of the horror, but of the man who perpetrated the horror. It is interesting because it is a sample of the British attitude to the colony that does not die even though the colony is irrevocably gone. The truth about Amritsar "has become buried beneath a rising mound of prejudice, suspicion and hatred," he says. "No one has attempted to separate the various issues and assess the Amritsar affair on a realistic basis," he complains and sets out to "place it in a comprehensive historical background".

He does not fail in his pious mission entirely. If he has failed in being objective, he has succeeded in revealing the "British point of view as it then appeared". It was beyond O'Dwyer and Dyer why their beloved peasants and loyal sepoys need ever dream of freedom. And they in turn 'like, O'Dwyer himself, found political abstractions beyond them', knowing that justice could only come from the Englishman. That is why out of the 400,000 Punjabis who went to war barely one fortieth comprised students and educated professionals. It was a well-known fact that barring a handful of loyal elite the educated and the semi educated were the least likeable of Indians especially to work with. O'Dwyer has written how they nourished themselves on 'the exotic fruits of self-determination' and for the most part were 'hypnotized by the catchwords of democracy' which they 'neither understood nor desired'. Once again, an utter distortion of a great truth. *Para dharmo bhayavaha:* disastrous it becomes to put on another's nature. Like the donkey in a lion's skin.

It was not Dyer's fault that he was brought up on Lord Roberts' gospel that however educated or refined a native may become, nothing could ever "cause him to be considered" as the whiteman's equal. And whatever may have blinded Nehru from fully appreciating what Dyer's fifty rifles had done for India, says Swinson, he cannot but have realised this *terrible truth* about Indians when, as the first Prime Minister, he witnessed the holocaust of 1947. Didn't he then realise that generations of dedicated Dyer's and enlightened O'Dwyers had, sword in one hand and 'patient, though firm British rule' in the other, prevented precisely this 'explosion' and held the country together by a just 'balance between rival interests, religions, and races'? Yes indeed. If Indian politicians had not been so self-deluded would there have been any Partition, or the proliferation of communal and political violence? Even such leaders as K.M. Munshi admitted that.

Indeed, perhaps a future will establish that the Indian leadership of the time was rather confused, despite the steady emergence of Gandhiji. Mankind had not, as it has not until now, qualified itself with its psychic splendour to become non-violent in the true sense of the term. But while the colonial rulers took recourse to violence with the plain motive of keeping the natives subdued with fear, the natives were taught the idea of non-violence at a very superficial level, social or moral, which could not have touched even the tip of their inner consciousness. Since violence was there in the consciousness of man, it had to come out occasionally through minor incidents. But the rulers had been assured that the natives will be non-violent — and the rulers expected this of the natives! Hence a little bit of violence by the natives — as was evident a few days before the 13th July 1919 — drove Dyer mad with fury. He must teach the natives what it means to prove the might of the colonial rulers. All said and done, this was the simple motive that guided him and this emerges from everything written either against him or in his favour.

Perhaps some day some scholars would wonder on the point, shouldn't India have rather gone violent for as just a cause as a revolution to overthrow a foreign rule? An expression of the natural instinct, well-channellised perhaps would not have obliged them to keep it bottled up for its random release on wrong causes after Independence!

THE END

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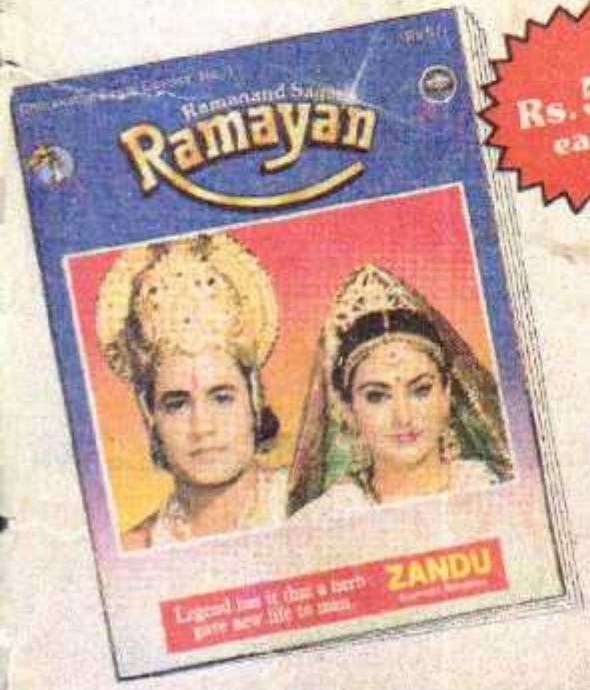

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