



LIFE'S SHADOWS

BY

KUMARA GURU



D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & CO.

LIFE'S SHADOWS

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BY

KUMARA GURU

FOREWORD BY

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
*Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion,
Oxford*

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FOREWORD

The writer of this book has asked me to write a brief foreword, which I do with pleasure. These stories of India in transition are a mild protest against the westernization of the soul of India, that is now in process. The author is not unaware of the defects of Hinduism. There are plenty of dead things in it. Their putrefaction spreads pestilence that can poison the well-springs of life. Dead words come out of our lifeless mouths. Loss of faith and spread of vulgarity are consequences of the stiffening within Hinduism. Yet a culture that has gone on without a break for nearly four or five millenniums has something vital about it. Its capacity for assimilation without losing its identity is immense. It is this process that is now at work in the minds of men and women, causing unrest and bewilderment, such as we see in the characters described in this book.

Civilization has been defined in various ways. The writer of these stories will perhaps define it as the influence of good women, who, though illiterate, still sense the soul and

reveal the real. The fulfilments and aberrations of the different characters are largely traceable to the influence of the women on them. We will certainly support the author's desire that our women may retain their spiritual aspiration and aesthetic appeal even when they acquire fuller intellectual freedom and social life.

Oxford,
5th March 1938.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

P R E F A C E

My aim in these pages has been to present, from a psychical standpoint and in various aspects, a realistic picture of the educated Tamil Brahmin of the last generation. The shadows thrown on the life of an idealist in the human relationship of brother, wife, son and friend have perhaps a tragic universality, and the sketches are but an occasion for reflection and suggestion on a philosophy of life. Hence my venture to issue these sketches in a permanent form under the title "Life's Shadows." I trust the reader will find in this, at least, a human document.

My thanks are due to the authorities of the *Calcutta Review* for permission to reprint the first three sketches, which appeared in that journal under the pseudonym "Kumara Guru".

Bombay,
March 1938

C. S.

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A BROTHER'S SHADOW

Note.—The characters are purely imaginary and have no reference to living persons.

I am a practising doctor, striving after literary expression. My profession has brought me into touch with men and women, and I have gained some understanding of their motives and ideals in life. Their confessions and last words before losing consciousness have always set me thinking, and I have often asked myself the question, "Can any love exist and flourish between two brothers born of the same parents?" and the answer has generally been "No." Would not the early competing for the affection of the parents induce a feeling of rivalry amongst the brothers, and would it not be implanted in them, especially if they were born successively? Would not the elder child generally feel the younger, a usurper of the mother's milk? Surely these submerged emotions must make themselves felt in adult life. As the Tamil proverb goes: "A brother is a PANGALI" (or a co-parcener), and consequently no love is lost between brothers. The same feeling Galsworthy has beautifully

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depicted in the chapter on "the death of Aunt Ann," in his *Man of Property* and developed later on in the *Forsyte Saga*.

Despite Valmiki's epic (the *Ramayana*), portraying the brotherly affection of Rama and Lakshmana, and of Bharata and Satrughna, I am fully conscious that no real love subsists between brothers even born of the same parents. If one is generous or kind to one's brother, I should conclude that one would be so, even if the other were not a brother. The chances for rivalry and jealousy, the later prosperity or poverty in which their lot may be thrown in adult life, the jealousies of their wives, the character and fortunes of their children, all go to keep them apart ; and to say "I love one as a brother" seems almost a travesty of truth. Perhaps, where a large difference of age prevails, the elder may feel a genuine sympathy, as he would have petted the younger as his own child, before he had one of his own : the younger would feel so distant from the elder, that the feeling would be reciprocated as mere respectfulness, but it is not love and a mutual understanding and friendship. Brotherly love will flourish only if each of the brothers has sufficient sense of self-respect and charity in the Biblical sense.

Perhaps we have misunderstood Valmiki. Has anyone noted the fact, that Lakshmana is not born of the same mother as Sri Rama, nor Bharata from the same womb as Satrughna ? The two uterine brothers have separated and have cast their affections on a step-brother ! Several years ago, I came across a unique dying declaration of a stalwart man of middle age, looking well below his years—so well built and healthy he seemed—and his last gasping words were : “ This is the unkindest cut of all. I can never forgive Valmiki for not having handed down to posterity any name* to . . . ” Can you guess the name ?

I had known this gentleman from his adolescence, he having been my class-fellow in the college classes. I shall call him Sa. He was a bundle of contradictions in himself ; gentle and sympathetic towards others, but stern unto himself in bodily and mental discipline, bordering on asceticism. How came this youth to be so was a problem to me as a

* (i) For the spiritual significance of a name to a person, see Keyserling : *Problems of Personal Life* Pages 224-225.

(ii) cf. *Ramayana, Balakanda, Canto 18, Verse 23* : Vasishtha gives to the Royal babes their names.

student of mental therapy. Chance brought me to live in the same town, to be a close friend and family physician of his, in later life. Some of his notes and diaries were left in my possession for use as I may list, should any good result by their publication, telling the tale of the "Sorrows of Man."

The story of Sa is interesting from the age of sixteen. Before I quote from his diary to illustrate the emotions, which have been agitating him since, I shall relate a few incidents of interest in his family life—concerning his father, mother, brothers and sisters, as gleaned from the notes before me. His father, of an independent frame of mind and strong will, was a teacher in a mofussil college in C— Besides teaching English and Mathematics, the father largely interested himself in the physical culture of his students, boldly impressing on young minds the Grecian ideal of the beauty of human body. He had been a good athlete in his younger days, taking part in feats of strength and pugilistic shows. Besides, he was one of the best swimmers. Though he had kept up for himself heavy-weight-lifting and other strenuous exercises, he advocated for his students exercises with light Indian clubs, which make the arms supple and hardy,

though not rigid and heavy. The family was lower middle class, according to Indian standards, did not observe purdah and could not afford a servant.

The boy idolised his father, who could pose for a Grecian statue, and he had the greatest admiration for him. The boy seems to have inherited all the goodness of his mother. She could barely read her vernacular, and was an ideal wife according to the Hindu *Dharma-sastra*, knowing nothing of value beyond the heroic stories of the epics of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and a few ballad songs of these heroes, besides the culinary art. The boy was just about to leave for higher studies in the Presidency town—to be away from his parents for the first time, when his mind was full of the hopes of the larger world he had wished to see, and of his bright future intellectual career.

But his younger brother, whom I will name Pa, although four years younger, was ahead of him in intellect, age for age, and was only two classes below him. Pa was more precocious but the father was proud of his eldest son for his health and beautiful build of body, but for all qualities of mind was more proud of the younger, who was of a rather wiry mould and spare. Although the elder was very much

above average in abilities (he took a first class in his Intermediate Examination), the precocious talent of his younger brother threw him into the shade. Their sister, aged ten years, was according to the ideas of that epoch, betrothed to a young man, a class-fellow of the elder son, and was brilliant. After an eight-year interval, there was a little girl, now about two years, going about the home like an angel. The expenses for the marriage of Sa's sister swallowed up most of the savings of the father, and even laid an encumbrance on the ancestral inheritance.

Time passed. Sa, who proceeded to the Presidency town for higher studies was flush with all that he saw, and full of buoyancy; perhaps the sea air was responsible for it. During the summer vacation he went back to the parental home. It was the season for hymeneal rites in the days before the Sarda Act, and here I shall quote from the diary of the young man :

“ My father wants me to get married, that is, betrothed ‘ sacramentally ’ to a young girl, for life. He has selected a bride for me. She, I am told, is a daughter of a teacher of a local high school. I have not seen the girl at all. Father called me aside and said : ‘ I propose

to get you married to the daughter of Ni. You know, I have run into debt over the marriage of your sister, but I do not want to enrich myself by selling you to the highest bidder, as is the custom in modern Hindu society. I propose to take for you, Ni's daughter; you know your mother now is an invalid' thereby meaning that the bride-elect will soon be a help to mother. "Mr. Ni has been worried over his daughter aged twelve, as our religion requires that daughters should be betrothed before puberty—I am not sure that this is right, but I doubt whether I can break the existing law in this matter. How far it is legal to *declare* any marriage in Hindu society as a post-puberty one is still a question for the courts to decide, since every marriage has to be viewed in relation to the welfare of society. I desire to set an example to the present generation, and show that I am not one of those, who deem the fathers of girls as judgment-debtors of the parents of boys."

Suffice it to say that Sa was married to the girl of his father's choice. It was a quiet function, in which the sacramental part was duly emphasised. The effect of the marriage on the boy's emotions is best described in his own words:—

“I have not told my father whether I had any views on the subject of marriage, and I was simply led along in implicit obedience to his will, which I dare not oppose. I trusted entirely that whatever girl he had in view for me would be the best for me, considering that he had moulded both my mind and being. I wonder why I am fair complexioned. Is it that some of the West-coast blood with a different strain runs in us, and why have I been wedded to one, who is swarthy, of the East-coast? As our eyes met in the ceremony of garlanding, the woman garlanding first (*i.e.* choosing her partner),—India has still not lost her sense of chivalry, though it is kept up only in form and not in spirit—my face seemed to have lost all colour, when viewing the girl, whom I am wedded to for life. Not that she was not comely, except for a little squint, but her swarthy colour gave me quite a shock. How shall I live my life through, having sworn before the sacred ‘Fire’ that I take this woman unto my wife for the realisation of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, meaning Righteousness, Wealth, Love and Salvation? Even the little incidents of innocent play during and after the ceremonial have all been very painful indeed to me. The proverb ‘that a crow pecks

at a lemon ' seems to have been reversed in my case. The proverb probably means that it is felt right that a swarthy male can carry away an Aryan or fair bride. In my case, it has been as though the adage has been varied—a fair-coloured parrot nibbled at *jambu-phal* (the fruit of jhumblums). I, who glowed warm with the romantic tales of the *Idylls of the King*, do I feel that this maiden would urge me to ' noble deeds ' and raise me from ' half brute to man ' ? All my will-power for work and worldly ambition seems sapped in me by this one event, in which I have been a silent actor. It is enough if I act good and seek knowledge for its own sake."

To proceed with the story. Sa took his Degree Examination and even his Master of Arts degree in the college of the Presidency town. Though he could have easily been the first in the specialised courses, he always endeavoured to be the second in his examination. His ambition for achievement had no spur and the winning of intellectual laurels seems to have been checkmated purposely, as he always imagined, " On what fair brows shall I bestow these laurels of mine if I should win them ? " He sought to forget this event of his life, and stayed away from his father's home

for these four years, so as not to meet the partner assigned to him for life till he decided what he should make of this affair. I have said that the sister's husband was a class-fellow of his.

During the vacations, Sa found it convenient to go and stay in the house of his brother-in-law, for whom he had developed a deep affection. It was this young man, whom he had allowed to go over him in his class and university examinations, for he felt that though he could easily excel others, it was not worth his while to compete for appreciation and the world's regard for his mental powers. The indifference to the so-called competitions seems to have come first on him in a hundred yards race in his college. Another class-fellow, who was his second generally in sports, was sad one day, and Sa overheard the latter's soliloquy: "Why am I pitted against this youth and can never win the first prize?" Sa's pity was aroused, and he thenceforth saw, once for all, the futility of worldly success, and this way of self-surrender became second nature in his intellectual career also. So he withdrew before time from his last examination paper, just to avoid getting the first place.

Meanwhile, the younger brother Pa, who resided with his elder brother in his rooms in

the Presidency town during the last two years of his stay, had come out with academical honours, as a medallist in Economics, and was preparing himself for a course of study in Law.

After the lapse of four years, since the event of his marriage, Sa's father was thinking of the consummation of his son's marriage, as usual in Hindu families, as the bride was approaching sixteen years. When the topic was mooted at home, Sa could only say: "Mother, I propose to live the life of a bachelor in effect." Sir Galahad and the vision of Sir Launfal rose up in his mind's eye, as he uttered these words. When the father got to know of this, he understood that the son was repressing his natural desire, and asked forgiveness of the son for having failed to consult him before marriage. He was sorry for having been carried away by his desire to befriend the companion of his youth, with whom he had formed the alliance. But the die had been cast and it was too late to undo the act.

The brothers talked about the subject. Pa, who was proud of being a medallist in the Degree Examination, and impetuous at the age of sixteen with his ideas of Malthus's *Essay on Population*, in the course of a discussion said: "You have no business to marry in the real

sense of the term, till you can maintain a family." When the elder brother suggested that it was his father's wish that his marriage should be consummated—not that he did not understand his responsibilities on the subject of bringing forth children—the younger brother's sarcastic reply was: "Your wife, dark as she is, is she a celestial Rambha (a courtesan) to captivate others? Why should you be concerned about her purity and accede to your father-in-law's wish that a grown-up girl should stay only in her husband's house." The conversation, it need hardly be said, hurt the elder; a strong youth that he was, he felt he could throttle the younger delicate youth of sixteen for the insult—but his anger passed off, and gripping the younger's arms, he said "You little know the meaning of your words."

Shortly after this episode, and before the sacrament of consummation, their father in trying to save a schoolboy's life in the Monsoon torrents of the river near-by was carried away in the stream. The need to earn a livelihood stared Sa in the face. The problem of hunger had to be solved: what grieved him most was that he had had no chance to speak to his father, after the memorable day when the understanding father sought forgiveness. He

felt all the more bitter towards life. The only bright spot, which dispelled the gloom, was the circumstance that the sister's husband had obtained a fairly lucrative appointment in the neighbouring Indian State, and the elder of the sisters left them. Some time later, Pa also was off the hands of his elder brother. On a recommendation of the professors of the college, a High Court Judge in the Presidency (I shall call him Da) decided to give in marriage his daughter of twelve years to Pa, who was gaining reputation as a brilliant and versatile young scholar.

The two brothers also seem to have discussed the problem of Pa's marriage. The elder, who was worldly-wise, and who had lived longer in the Presidency town, knew of certain love affairs of the wife of Da, and advised the younger in terms of the Indian proverb: "Marry a wife after looking at the conduct of the mother." The younger brother, however, felt that the advice was very stupid, since the offer of the Judge's daughter had fired his ambition to start life well, and to continue his career in Law, and he asked with some asperity: "Is it that you do not want me to rise in life and to enjoy the good things of this world, or is it a question of 'sour grapes' with

you, because your wife is dark as pitch, and I shall be getting a bride, both fair and rich ? ” The elder brother, finding himself thus misunderstood, left him alone. The mother, the natural guardian, was, however, taken in by the worldly advantages offered to her son, and gave her consent to the marriage. The elder only fondly hoped that all would go well with the younger brother in his later life ; the two brothers parted for years to come.

Sa then decided to cut himself off from all his early surroundings, and to go to a province far north, to start life there afresh, where nobody would know him, and his wife. He was soon faced with the duty of looking after his mother and his younger sister. He decided to take up an appointment in the far north as a teacher, which would enable him to cherish his love of innocence, as he would be in touch with children every day. He dreamed that, as a teacher, he would press on each youth the sense of right and wrong in human society, and mould his character for good. Concerning his wife, he was unable to make up his mind for long, and he was discussing within himself the rights and wrongs of whether he should take his wife with him to the distant land, or not. The father's death and the ceremonials con-

nected with it, had brought the wife into his house, but they had not lived as husband and wife. For to live so, he felt, was degrading to his moral nature, unless he could find something in her to love. The social duty of *affording her a roof* had been agitating him, and as his mother also was an invalid and required personal help, he finally resolved to take his wife with him and provide for her, as he would need the assistance of somebody to look after the household. Besides his school work, the household work kept him engaged, and he began to educate his little younger sister, whom he loved as a child. The intellectual education, which he expected in his own wife, he began to undertake for the sister, and devoted personal attention to it. The little girl was a spokesman as it were, between the husband and wife in connection with the little needs of the family household.

Some time elapsed. In the strife and conflict of his emotions and of the ethics of good sense and good conduct, which had been instilled by his upbringing, he began to question himself: "Shall I simply burn for the taste and knowledge of woman, or should I live the life of a householder with the originally unwanted wife?" Am I to take the world as

it is, and take this woman unto wife, which the social institutions, in which I have been born have brought me, or should I simply wreck myself and lead a dissolute life? This woman has left her father's home, is unprotected, and apparently society expects that I should discharge my trust. Or should I, as I knew in the houses adjacent to my rooms while at college, mix with fallen women, who were earning their livelihood by selling their bodies to satisfy their hunger, and so completely wreck my physical health, handed to me pure and strong, and for which the risks are great? I acted as an ideal son in obeying the mandate of my father at the time of marriage, the ideal presented to me by the hero of the *Ramayana*. Shall I, or shall I not act the ideal husband towards this woman, who has implicitly followed me? Valmiki represents the monogamic ideal of marriage in Sri Rama, and what mental difficulty there was for him to live so when he had met the best of women. This poor woman is innocent of all the tumult in my brain, and she has nothing but winning smiles on her face since treading my threshold, though I have not, since the sacramental betrothal, seen her for at least four years. Wherein does lie

this difference in attitude towards happiness? Once only had I seen her in tears when she had to be persuaded to wear glasses to set right her squint. Does my mere presence and living under my roof suffice to make her happy? Does she adore me like a God, who will pour forth his grace in due time ? ”

It is not necessary for me to dilate on the later events, of how Sa idolised this woman and found happiness in his wife. Some understanding was created in him by the constant companionship in the earlier period of looking after his mother. Since the decease of the father, she had been gradually pining away with the austerities she had imposed on herself as a widow, and with the sorrow of the sudden loss of her lifelong companion. The little sister, too, whose education was taken up so seriously by him and in which the wife also took part, so far as the vernacular part of it was concerned, brought about some common understanding between them.

It is sad to relate the final parting from his mother, who at her last moments finding the son leading an ascetic life, though wedded, bereft of any marital joys, called them together, placed again her hand in his, and said to the son—“ You little know

and understand the perfect good nature of the wife that you have married. Let me say that our religion commands us to bring forth at least a son in our earthly life, that he may offer prayers to the preceding generation for their welfare during journeys beyond death before rebirth into this world, and it behoves you not to lead this rigorous life."

It is also sad to relate that the poor little sister too on whom both of them had bestowed attention, soon after passed away in an epidemic, so that Sa found himself alone and starved of the love of a human soul. The death of the young sister brought them together in sorrow, and at last he began to find his joy in the companionship of his wife. The natural health, his wife had, was attractive and alluring enough to let him find connubial bliss. It is also unnecessary for me perhaps to state how intellectually they soon found themselves as comrades in the study of the great literatures in Sanskrit and English, which he sought to teach her.

In good time two children were born to them—the first a daughter—a replica of the father and fair in features, and the second a boy, two years younger, who resembled the mother. Years passed by and yet they

continued to be in the same place, finding delight in their growing children. Not that he had forgotten his brother or his living sister, but the poverty, which he had chosen for himself in the earlier years, and the distance, at which he chose to live from them, seemed to have cut him off from his kith and kin.

Pa's career is also briefly told. After he had completed his Law course in India, he was financed by his father-in-law to go to England and to appear for a competitive examination for higher Government service. He had come back unsuccessful to India. He was admitted to the Bar in England. His expensive European ways, and the habits which he had contracted of smoking and drinking liquor, seemed to the elder brother a sacrilege, and they did not seem to want each other's company. The younger brother flourished in his practice at the Bar when he came back, and he became one of the leading barristers in the Presidency town. As luck would have it, he found himself at the age of thirty-eight the youngest High Court Judge. Mrs. Pa's health had been shattered by her irregular habits, and at last the surgeon's knife had to be applied to save her life. But the marital happiness of Pa was doomed for ever. His family life was,

however, not very happy, because of the wayward and wanton ways of his wife. They had a son, who was subject to fits, and finally became a ne'er-do-well.

It was at this time during a vacation, the younger brother cherished the idea of spending his holiday in the seaport town, where his elder brother lived, and found him in a small three-roomed cottage off the town, and leading the simplest life, which one could imagine. The elder brother's children had grown up to be healthy and good-looking, as also cultured like their parents, for the parents did nothing else but look after their education. His daughter was then seventeen, had been going to college in the place, and had perhaps one of the best musical voices in the town.

The boy, who was younger, was also inclined to be a great original thinker on "Numbers." The conversation of the two brothers at their first meeting after years of separation may be here dwelt upon. Sa presented his children to their uncle. Pa enquired whether they were the children of the wife, whom Sa had first married, and when it was confirmed, Pa was all astonishment. When Pa asked why Sa's wife had not come to greet him, Sa replied suddenly she was a PARDANASHIN. He then

became conscious of the fact that though he loved his wife, aye worshipped the very ground she trod upon, he had not the courage, as of yore, to acknowledge her as his wife before the world.

Pa, observing the talents of his niece and his nephew, offered monetary help to enable a suitable marriage for the girl, and higher education of the boy in Europe. The elder brother wanted not the help, and desired to be left alone. The girl was singing a song in her room, and Pa praised her voice, when Sa, recollecting the long-forgotten insult said : " Do you want to help me as you consider her a celestial Rambha ?" Pa went away abashed. The offer of help savoured, as if Pa wanted to rob his brother of the credit, if any in the world's eyes, for all the infinite pains and labour of love, which Sa and his wife had put in for the sake of their naturally-talented children, to enable them to shine in the world. The offer breathed to Sa a spirit of condescension, hurting his self-respect.

As luck would have it, the girl came to be known and heard of by a young man, who had won a high place in a competitive examination and was entering a coveted Government post, and he sought her hand in marriage. The

father was satisfied that, after all, he had not thrust his girl away from him as an "unwanted wife."

A couple of years later, his son Ga, whose intellectual merits were recognised by the University, was sent abroad with a scholarship to do original work. Sa now feared his good luck. He was afraid the gods would be jealous of his happiness. And so it was. His wife suddenly passed away. The last words of his wife to him were "You have been so good to me." Her parting look, however, assured him of her consciousness of his unselfish love for her—body, mind and soul. He was left alone in the world with nothing to do, or look forward to. His solitude seemed to affect him, and he was just thinking perhaps of going to live with his daughter, when news reached him of a great distinction bestowed by a foreign University on his son. But mingled with the joy was a lasting regret, when the following bit of news appeared in the newspapers :—

From a correspondent.—Mr. Ga, who was recently sent by the University abroad with a scholarship has been awarded a foreign intellectual distinction, a very coveted one, which India should be proud of. It may be added that the young man is a nephew of Mr. Pa, our talented High Court Judge. The readers may

be aware Mrs. Pa was also recently awarded a medal for social work by the Government."

The elder brother *believed* the note to have been written under the instigation of his brother Pa, who seemed envious of his son's renown, and did not care to mention even whose son he was—as if Pa were responsible for the care, the nurture and the fruition of that talent. This set the elder in a brain fever. He asked himself, "Why is this younger brother of mine interested in my son, and how is his ego satisfied in publishing that my son is his nephew? How does the success, which surely is not his, add to his "self."

The fever never left him, and I, the doctor attending on him, realised accidentally that something was working in his brain, which would not allow the fever to subside.

"Is this all that I have gained in my life that I should be nameless, a nobody, to be born the brother of a well-known person, whose painting may adorn, even during life, the walls of the High Court of Judicature, and to be the father of another world-renowned man? Valmiki is quite unjust in not giving a name in his epic to *Agastya's* brother though he mentions the brother in the same breath as *Agastya* (a well-known saint).* I do not mind

*See *Ramayana*, Balakanda, Canto I, Sloka 42.

if I am not known as the father of a great man, nor is there any need of it, since truly enough the Vedas say: "Wish thy son to be greater than thyself." How is Mrs. Pa a greater woman than my wife? Why is it that Jesus said, "Thou shalt forgive thy brother who has offended thee, not seven times only, but seventy times seven." Is it that Jesus believed that it is really hard for two uterine brothers to love each other? Mere forgiveness is not synonymous with love. I hope the spirit of my father and mother would rest in peace for the little I have done for the next generation." These were his last words, which he scribbled in his diary, and he lay unconscious. I wired to the younger brother to arrive, so as to seek the elder's forgiveness that the fever might subside, but the telegram was unheeded.

I performed the last obsequies of this dear friend of mine, and I became a wiser and a sadder man, remembering the ideas of Browning, whose works my friend would constantly read:—

"What the world weighed not *in this man*,
weighed with God."

Bombay,
February 1935.

KUMARA GURU.

A WIFE'S SHADOW

I have often felt that in the clash of eastern and western ideals of life in modern India, and in the rapid decay of the older institutions and forms of convention, which tended to the well-being of society, and in the slower creation of newer forms, the problem of marriage brings its own tragedy to men and women, who are ahead of the times in their ideals of Right and Wrong in social action. Especially in modern Hindu India, where men and women of the middle class move about in watertight compartments even in the matter of education in schools and colleges, without influencing each other for the mutual benefit and enrichment of their lives, and where young children are left adrift without the home influence of a mother or sister in this machine age of town life, is the tragedy keener, as man in his manliness needs the softer nature of woman to control him, for the upkeep of civilisation and the progress of the human race. One such case came within my knowledge, which is well worth writing down.

One day I was called just after dawn to the house of Mr. A.—District Magistrate of Noopur to attend to a maternity case. His daughter had come home about the expected time of confinement, according to the local custom, when women go over to their mothers' places, and generally it is so for the first accouchement. This case seemed to me not a normal one, and I was summoned in spite of her protest. It was rather unusual in Hindu households for a man obstetrician to attend to a case, but the safety of the life of the mother demanded it.

As I was crossing the threshold, Mrs. Magistrate cleanly dressed in a multicoloured *saree* in the fashion of the last century dashed forth to give her *bhiksha* (alms) of rice in a small bowl to a mendicant, murmuring to herself: "The mendicant has come to receive alms. All will soon be well with my daughter." I turned round and saw a stalwart young man, about thirty-two years of age, with handsome features and of fine muscular development but swarthy of colour. A small brass vessel, to hold a measure of rice or so, was dangling from the left shoulder by a clean white strap; in his right hand was held a *tambur*. He was twanging the strings and, singing sweetly with deep feeling, one of Thiagaraja's Telugu songs,

“Whatever may befall me, let me not lose Thy grace and companionship, O God.”

The Magistrate was forced to reside for his wife's sake in the heart of the town in a street, with rows of houses on both sides. She, as the reader may have surmised, was an orthodox woman, and desired to live near the temples, and would not go far off to reside in a villa or a garden house, and away from kith and kin. He had risen from the ranks to his present position and in spite of his wife, had given his daughter a school education, and travelled recently abroad to Europe to get into direct touch with western civilisation with a view to setting himself the task of reforming his countrymen (*sic*), soon after he should be called upon to retire from Government employ.

Generally a late riser, he had been awake owing to the condition of his daughter, and was anxiously expecting me. He seemed rather overwrought by the agonised cry of his daughter, but had watched his wife giving alms, as I was entering, was probably ashamed of her conduct, became quite wroth, but simply gave way to muttering, ‘O! these women harbouring and feeding stalwart vagabonds.’

As I was an old friend, I grandiosely

observed, "You seem nevertheless to be moved by the sweet voice of the mendicant, and he is not levying fees high enough for the service so rendered to you by him. He could have gone into the cinema or talkie, if he had found a patron, and made tons of money if he had so chosen." This silenced the Magistrate.

The mendicant, I noticed, had already had his cold dip in the clear stream running not far from the town, and wore a perfectly white dhoti. He was clean-shaven, but had a caste mark on his forehead, and walked with care-free gait. The cloth was fairly thick, wound round his waist and barely came up to the knees. One would have said in the west, he was merely taking a sun-bath.

I had finished attending to the patient, handed her and the child to a nurse, and promised to call in the evening. We sat to tea, a habit my friend had cultivated since his return from Europe. He would have gone in even for stronger drinks if it had not touched his purse. The talk naturally drifted towards the incident of the morning, as I referred to the Magistrate's loss of temper with his wife, as she was meek. This prompted him to narrate a few things about the mendicant to excite my curiosity. He was an old inhabitant of the town, the son of

the Sanskrit Pandit of the local college, and ran away from home about sixteen years ago, soon after he had left school. His old class fellows averred that he was a good Sanskrit student, and endowed with a sweet voice, even as a child of five. The Magistrate seemed to have ferreted out this information through his minions, and was naturally interested in divining the past of the vagabond's activities, his saintly deportment, and suspected past career.

My talk stimulated his desire for the inquiry, as Mrs. Magistrate was all adoration for the saintliness of the mendicant who, I observed, had certain peculiarities even in the matter of begging alms. He would just stop half a minute in the street, in front of a house singing, and moved on, if nobody turned up to give him alms. He would not, like other folk, ascend the steps, cross the verandah and step into the usual passage and shout, "Bhavati, Bhikshām Dēhi," meaning "O, Lady of the house, please give alms." The Magistrate remarked the mendicant was a proud fellow, who thought himself a superman. I disagreed and commented that he looked like a man, who had suffered recently some intense grief, and was mortifying himself to challenge God, as it were, for his suffering, when he did not deserve the

mental pain and the affliction, and that the singing was just to drown his grief.

Time passed, and the Magistrate's efforts in tracing the past of the mendicant, whom I shall name Dev, proved futile.

An old gentleman of the town, who believed in the efficacy of the reading of the Ramayana in original Sanskrit in the home, to ward off evil and the memory of certain unhappy events in his life, requisitioned the services of Dev as his reader, when his scholarship in Sanskrit became known. After early supper Dev used to sit in the open front *pial* (raised verandah), and read sonorously the Sanskrit verses. He explained them in the vernacular, occasionally lapsing into the Telugu songs of Thiagaraja, relating to every incident in Sri Rama's life, which drew a huge motley crowd of women and children on the road (mats were provided for them by another charitable gentleman). The Magistrate in my friend felt Dev a nuisance in the town, blocking vehicular traffic. The tale of the Ramayana would delight the hearts of the old and the young, and so the traffic naturally diverted itself to side roads, and disturbed not the enthralled audience. The charity box, in aid of this scholar, was left on the steps of the

house, and the small daily collection kept the wolf from the door, and he had no longer to go round for his morning alms. All the same, after a bathe in the river in the early hours of the morning, he would go down the streets singing sweetly.

The Magistrate seemed to have lost all interest in Dev, when suddenly the Postmaster, about a year after the arrival of Dev in the town, brought the information, that Dev had received a good sum of money from a Railway authority in the north of India, which he immediately placed in the Postal Savings Bank to prevent its being stolen. This became the topic of discussion, for, an exciting piece of news about any person was an event for the crowd. The news was even sent me by the Magistrate, as my surmise of the self-mortification of the mendicant proved almost correct. A confidential enquiry from the Railway authorities elicited that he was employed on a decent pay when he left them, having started life originally as a labourer (workman) and risen to the position of a foreman in the Workshops, all by sheer talent, and that he recently called for his dues to be remitted to him. The question remained unsolved to the Magistrate and myself, as to the cause of self-mortification,

and why he wanted to lower his self-respect in the eyes of himself and of others.

Dev had meanwhile shifted to a small cottage on the bank of the river, which he had built for himself. The fields in front were the open-air theatre for his Ramayana discourses in the Vernacular and the songs, which were very popular. The men-folk of the town, proud of their English education, rarely attended the meetings since they expected to hear nothing interesting from him so poorly educated, and it was the women-folk and their children, boys and girls from eight to twelve years of age, who were charmed by his speech and music. Occasionally, it was reported he delivered orations on diverse subjects; the Magistrate was one day informed of this by his daughter, who had come on a holiday and went with Mrs. Magistrate for several days to hear his discourses.

She epitomised one of the lectures thus, when I was present: "After speaking of the heroism of Rama in his obedience to his father, and of Sita, who underwent the fatigue of travel in the wild forests, he exhorted the audience thus: "O ye women of India, where has your heroism fled? The ancient books addressed a dying noble woman thus, 'Your

father is a hero, your brother is a hero, your husband is a hero, and your son is a hero. What more do you need on this earth of ours, and are you not happy now?' The heroism is not merely in the battlefield, but in every walk of life. The women of India in the past had been able to achieve this, but now woman no more feels the heroic spirit to move her father, brother, husband or son. There is only one way to achieve and to recreate the glory of the past, namely the appreciation of Beauty and, to start with, the cult of the beauty of the human form, both in man and in woman. Of the three ultimate values in life, Truth, Goodness and Beauty, the concept of beauty was least developed in Indian culture (excepting for a few Ajanta paintings in a monastery and a few pieces of granite sculpture in temples), which led to its downfall in the scale of nations. The body cannot be beautiful unless it is brought into being healthy, is fully nourished with proper food from childhood and is properly exercised in the joy of action, and the exercise of talent. What do you young women see in your husbands? Decrepit men, potbellies with stooping chests and shoulders, or sickly, worn-out creatures. Begin your (*yogic*) exercises, for instance, which can beautify the

body. Do lead a strenuous life, and not a soft, easy and indolent one. You must have both the zest for life and the restraint in its enjoyment. Be an Epicurean, as well be a Stoic. Barring the few male agricultural labourers in the corn-fields, if they have enough to eat, and if their bodies have not been spoiled by the craze for distilled liquor, we can see no beautiful bodies in either men, women, or the children of the land. Look at yourselves with protruding cheeks and large frontal teeth, or your flabby skin and muscles ; all speak of ill-nourishment and overspent lives." And he wound up with a quotation from Kalidasa's *Malavika-Agnimitra*.* When Dev said this, I felt that he exemplified in his own beautiful form his ideals and convictions, and I desired to consort with him and leave my husband for his sake."

The Magistrate was horrified that Dev's power of oration and sweet persuasion had been affecting the moral ideals of his own daughter, and was determined that this mendicant's activities should be brought to an end.

*With a face like the autumnal moon, her arms well shaped, her breasts compact, her sides chiselled down to the slim waist, and rounded hips.—K. G.
—Act II, Verse, 3.

He imagined that Dev had been enticing women, and feared that in the remoteness of the cottage and the fields, Dev could treat the women as he chose, because of his mental gifts. He was convinced that the Ramayana lectures might not lead to good.

The Magistrate and myself some time later decided to go on a Friday evening, the day dedicated to "Venus" in Hindu households, when his subject, I expected, would be "Love," to see for ourselves, how his discourses were so quietly influencing women and the younger generation in their outlook on life. Dev talked of the love of Rama for Sita and of Sita's love for Rama, quoted and explained a verse from Bhavabhuti's Uttararama Charita* and said it was all good. Further, "Thiagaraja sings, 'O Rama, you became great only after you took Sita's hand in yours in the marriage ritual.' Of course, the Ramayana is only Sita's episode, but there is a deeper meaning in the song. Man as I am, let me say that man is polygamous by nature. Sri Rama's

* Speaking in love-laden whispers, their cheeks touching, and their arms locked, they knew not the fleeting hours and the lapse of the night.—K. G.

memories of the love of that princely woman were so sweet that he felt that to take another woman unto wife after her death, would be a sacrilege. Such were our women of old."

But he went on, "The Indian imagination has taken deep roots in finding satisfaction in this simile of man and woman to the tree and the creeper, and in the picture of the male colonising unknown lands with the female and the babe in her arms following him, wherever he went. For, does not the Ramayana, which I read to you, merely describe the early Aryan colonist going from the north to the south of India, followed by his family? But to-day, man in India in his overweening masculinity, has misused this tradition to bring about the abject and willing subjection of woman. O women, rise, and protest, ask for knowledge and freedom, that you may lead a fuller and a nobler life."

Spies appointed by the Magistrate were all around him, watching his actions. One day it was noticed that he went to the post office to remit a small sum from his collections. The addressee was a small orphanage in the west coast. This gave a clue to the inquisitors, which was pursued. There was a girl child of two years, or thereabouts, under the pro-

tection of the matron in charge. The registers of the Institution showed that the child's father was Dev and her mother Ri, a famous cinema actress in the city of B—but the girl child, it was reported, had not the smallest resemblance to the alleged father. Was he the real father? The Magistrate concluded, however, that as his own daughter felt drawn to Dev, he had perhaps a clandestine affair with Ri, and the child was disowned by the mother. It was ascertained that Ri was employed by the premier film company of B—but she had left the studio four or five months before the birth of the child. Where Ri settled down, what had become of her, and why the child was entrusted to Dev were still a mystery.

About a year later, when the child was not so absolutely helpless, it was brought down to Dev's cottage. Its beautiful features awakened the pity of the listeners, and it became a pet child. One day a young woman (who was no other than the daughter of the Magistrate, whom prudence only had checked in her desire to run away with Dev) came down to the cottage, and begged she might be allowed to adopt the child, as she had lost her own. She told Dev that after all, when the child grew up to adolescence, a father could not convey to her

the knowledge, which a mother alone could. Dev, knowing that the woman was highly connected, and after a searching look at her, handed over the child. The woman believed that the child was his, and hoped to get into intimate terms with Dev, since she had no other tie in this world, her husband and child having both died. Her parents had no more thought for her happiness in her widowed condition, as relations of widows remarrying fell in social status. But the Magistrate would not allow a bastard child (as he thought) to be brought up by his daughter, since he feared he would become the talk of the town; and I was consulted.

The surrender of the child took me off my feet as to the motives of the conduct of Dev. The Magistrate suggested that Dev had perhaps done away with his wife, as she was unchaste to him, and wanted to be rid of the child too. "If so," I asked, "why had he left the child in proper protection and provided sufficient means for her being looked after, so that he could bring her near him and earn a competence for her sake?" This seemed an enigma.

As suspicion grew, we later confronted Dev with the accusation of the slow murder of his

wife. Our meeting was very abrupt, and he seemed prepared for it. He denied our authority to pry into his past. The Magistrate threatened to use his powers to arrest him, till he could give satisfactory proof of his past conduct. Dev was not to be terrorised. He said, "I am not afraid of the jail and your lock-up. I, who could handle huge ladles of hot molten iron, and who worked in an iron foundry and in the smelting shops, care not for such threats, as I know full well hardship and severe labour." I advised the Magistrate to return, and not to arrest Dev on mere suspicion. I now surmised the child was not his. But that some strong sense of duty should have prevailed on him to look after her.

We got into touch with the manager of the film company to get at facts, concerning Ri and her affairs with the actors, if any. The manager was very reticent, as he wanted to wipe out the memory of the past, and he did not like the name of his company to get into bad odour, as it was to his interest that good family women and educated women should come forth as actors in this nascent industry. After a good deal of persuasion, he gave out that Ri was married to Dev long ago, but the husband and wife separated, soon after her entry into the

film studio. He told us that she had perhaps developed an affection for one of the actors, with whom she had to appear as husband and wife, or as lover and beloved, and that Dev left her, when he found that it was no use protesting against her conduct. Whether she came back to him just before the delivery of the child was to us still an unknown factor in Dev's life. Perhaps the lover had thrown her overboard, having trifled with her emotions.

The Magistrate still believed that Dev must have murdered the woman, and wanted to confirm his suspicion of Dev's conduct. One day his daughter, in whom the love for Dev was growing, unbosomed her secret to her mother. "I once lay bare before a man, other than my late husband, the doctor who attended to my delivery, and I now propose to go over unabashed to the man I love."

The Magistrate therefore sent his unsuspecting daughter, who was stubborn enough not to hand back the child to Dev, to glean facts about the child. Poor Dev succumbed to the honeyed speech, and owned that he had married Ri about twelve years before, that she came back to him at the time of delivery and died in child birth. The Magistrate was not sure this was not a lie.

Since nobody could be cremated in the city of B—without a doctor's certificate showing the cause of death, he wanted to verify the fact.

Dev was sorry that in a soft moment a strange woman's speech had taken him unawares, and that he had divulged the secret of his unhappy past, and feared still that he might be persecuted. So at dead of night he came to me, as he thought, I was the only friend in town and had spoken a kind word in his favour. He announced that he was going away for good, to the wild hills and snow-tops, where people would not be inquisitive about his past and its vast misery.

He then told me his story, which I shall repeat in his own words :

“ You have already known that I belong to this town. I was born late in my father's life. He was aged nearly sixty, when I was barely sixteen. I had just started reading in the Local College. I ran away from home at that age as he wanted me to be betrothed to a girl of eight years. I then said to my father, ‘ Why are we all acting contrary to our ancient ideals of Asrama Dharma? Do not the laws of Manu say one should live the life of a Brahmachari (celibate) up to the age of twenty-four

(Brahmin-born as I am), and only marry thereafter a girl of sixteen or thereabouts, as the medical works of Susruta dictate ?' I was quoting scripture like the devil to my father. He lost his temper and ordered me to leave the house. My mother was no more, and what tender recollections I have of her ! I had none other to take my side and justify my views to him. True, I was disobeying his order. He taunted me with my refusal: 'You, a student of the Ramayana where obedience to the merest wish of the parent is dictated as a sacred duty !' But as I was young, I did not see my duty was to obey him, as I saw no moral obligation to *retrieve* a father's word as Sri Rama fulfilled his father's enforced promise to Kaikeyi.

"The upshot was I ran away from home to start a life of my own. You know already I was in the Railway shops at——. As I was a well-built youth, I started work in the iron foundry and in the smelting shops. It was uphill work to earn a decent living, to feel the cleanliness of the wonted daily bath, and have a supply of clean clothes. These were all difficult for a workman, and I could eat clean food only after dusk, after the day's labour.

“Some years went by, and I went to seek my father's forgiveness. He had taken my disobedience too much to heart, and soon after my arrival passed away. In his last moments he said: ‘I am afraid, young man, that in your marriage you will not be happy. I am sorry for the presentiment, but there is no helping it.’ I came back to my work and realized what I missed in the life about me, in the works of my favourite poets. The Sanskrit Ramayana is still my prized possession, and so also the works of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. The workman's life did not give me much time for reading either. I was quite alone, and Sanskrit literature was my only solace. I do not know why I did not leave the place, and take up other intellectual work, which is my hereditary profession as a Brahmin.

“When I was about twenty-four years of age, I was left with a ward of about twelve years. This girl Ri, I knew as a child of four. She was the daughter of a Maratha of the West Coast, speaking a different vernacular. A poor clerk of the workshop, he was living with his wife and this pretty daughter in a small hut, in a dingy place owing to low wages. This man was my only friend. This girl was my pal.

My friend's wife suddenly died after an attack of cholera, which was raging then, and the poor father, who had come away to foreign parts like myself, was sad after the event. He wanted me to marry his daughter, as he desired that she should be well looked after, when he was no more. But I was swarthy and she very fair. He too was a Brahmin, and he did not see why I should not marry his daughter. I gave my consent, as I had no kith and kin to go back to in my native land, and was married to the girl, with due ceremonies.

"I, who was addressed a 'Bada Bhai' (elder brother) became the husband of the girl. But for a couple of years, we did not live as husband and wife, as I thought my wife was too delicate and that she should grow up to sixteen years of age at least. The father also unfortunately met with an accident, and we were left alone. Watching her womanhood grow under my eyes, the animal in me one day got the better of my reason, and we became husband and wife. I was too much afraid to force motherhood on her at such a tender age.

"I had known a number of Anglo-Indian workers in the shops with higher pay. I had occasion to watch, from a distance, their habits, and the manners of their women-folk. Their

women seemed to me, according to my lights, to have no modesty at all in their behaviour to men-folk. I knew that some of the girls had sex experience, even before they were joined in wedlock. Their dancing with men was all too much for my delicate feelings, having never even seen Indian men and women go forth in the streets, arm in arm. I then believed, as I do even now, that the Indian way of man and woman walking together, apart, without touching, and without dangling in each other's arms when others see (though not to the extent of an unconcerned distance from each other) is the expression of a delicate human feeling. The custom of aping the European, to my mind, brings man and woman, not attuned to western modes of life, to the level of the beast, approximating to the conduct of animals in their heat. But their sex life somehow affected me. They had begun to use and understand methods to prevent child birth, even though they behaved as man and wife, as they considered they could not afford to rear a child. I taught my wife birth control that she might not have children at an early age, before she was, say, seventeen or eighteen, and here I sowed the seeds of evil in my married life.

“I do not know if I might have been happier, had I obeyed my father’s mandate and never left my old town. As I was singing, I soon found that my wife had an uncanny knowledge of rhythm. I thought I should be kindly to her and allow her to find her soul in self-expression ; for did not even the princesses dance in royal households, as Kalidasa has depicted in his dramas ? I then arranged for her to learn Northern Indian *solo* dancing, as I had witnessed in South India in younger days. Her slim form and her aesthetic taste soon brought her to the forefront. As it was an age of the renaissance of women, her capacity as a dancer led her naturally to the ‘cine’ world, which was just then starting, and I accompanied her to the shooting of the films. I soon came to be known as the husband of Ri, and pointed out as such. The masculinity in me rebelled, though by now I had risen to a preferment, and I touched no pie of her earnings. I soon hated myself—to be gibed at as the husband of a woman celebrity. What would Browning have felt, I said to myself, if he had not been the greater poet but a poetaster, and had been pointed out in society, merely as Elizabeth Barrett’s husband, as the Indian Vernacular put it.

“I did not relish my wife's leaning on the person of a male, or he to lean on her in the shooting of the film. I was jealous. To me, even now the person of a woman is sacred like a flower, that is so easily crushed. My Sanskrit education makes me feel that no man should touch the person of a woman, except the one to whom she is consecrated, as it were ; and even for the husband to be free with the woman's body within another's view, even to the extent of kissing and holding her in his arms, is a desecration.

“Her new vocation wrought a great change in my wife. She no longer wanted to have a child of me, as I was from a different community by birth and I spoke a different language when I was young. She began to prefer the art, which had made her famous. I found that we could no longer live as husband and wife, and she soon left me as she had then the means of earning her own livelihood in the film world. I prophesied to her in deep sorrow, ‘You will come back to me,’ varying the expression used by Upagupta, a disciple of Lord Buddha, to a courtesan, who tempted him ; and so my wife did, of her own accord, under tragic circumstances. Poor girl, she very little knew the temptations of the

cinema world. She tried to keep true to the marriage tie, as she said, but came to love the actor, with whom she had so often to act as lover and beloved. She soon found that she was with child, which meant her career had to be given up for some time. She felt that she had probably been infected.

“Temptation also came later to me, true, when my wife deserted me. I argued to myself why I should not take vengeance on society and run riot. The monogamic ideal of the Ramayana, the Hindu saying ‘Look on a woman as a mother or sister’, and Jesus’s teaching ‘Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart,’ were too powerful thoughts in my mind to throw off easily to the winds.

“As I knew that the child to be born might lose its eyes if I was not careful, I had engaged a good nurse to look after the child after delivery. I still hoped that I would forgive Ri and take her again as wife, and look after her when she became well. But Ri soon died of heavy bleeding as the Doctor’s certificate with me would show you. After she came back to me, on account of the risk of infection, I could not even possess her. I took pity on the poor infant, which had done

nothing to blight our happiness, and I sent her to an orphanage.

“I came back to this town, seeking old memories of childhood that I might forget the misery of *my own making*. Sixteen years is a long while, and I found the town all changed. I pitied myself for the mess I had made of my life, and so I went a-begging, wanting to die, though I knew I had some dues from the Railway to enable me to live upon, and sufficient for my little needs. And the painful memories of the past slowly faded away, and you know the rest of my story. I wanted in due course to open a girls' school, so that girls might have sufficient knowledge of health and disease, and be able to look after themselves in the modern world.

“My wife's last words were : ‘Bhai, allow me to call you so, as I did before you married me. You did me a lot of good, an orphan girl that I was. I have seen a lot of life in the last two years, which brought me no happiness, though I was praised and petted by all and sundry, whom I came across. You did not tell me the pitfalls of the life, into which I went headlong in the first flush of freedom. My father was wrong in having married me to you, whom I could no more look

up to, except as an elder brother. I have lost all I have earned. For the sake of my memories of childhood, forgive me for having forsaken you.'

"Even during the earlier days of my adolescence, I never gazed at the bright Hindu girls except as goddesses, and I could not even speak to them. I would only look up to their youthful faces and worship them, as I was left alone without a mother, or sister. Except to make a few enquiries, I had not talked to Ri's mother before my marriage. There is now no woman to bring me happiness, as I cannot stoop to a girl wife, with whom I could not feel as comrade. See how the Magistrate's daughter by soft talk wrenched the secret from me, that I had married Ri, but did no harm to her. Lastly, God has willed that my link with humanity, the little girl, should also be taken off my care. I am now going to the wild hills and the snows of the Himalayas. My voice will earn me the little food, I need to satisfy my hunger. I bequeath the cottage to Ri's girl as *a woman must have a roof*. What little is left will do for me when I can no longer walk, and my strength fails me. I shall be away from an inquisitive world, which would deny me a new avenue for my life's fulfilment, and

would dub me a murderer, for all the good I have done to those I have met with, in this short span of life. So many women have listened to my voice for three years now, but barely have I looked them full in the face during my talks, owing to my shyness in the presence of women. I have been smitten by the beauty of one woman, and the memory of it has been so painful. O the mystery of life, and the attraction of man to woman ! I do not want hereafter to descend to the level of the animal, and I shall not seek immortality through handing down life. Nature's impersonal beauty shall suffice for me, and I leave the world of my early childhood. Tell your friend: 'Judge not that ye be not judged.' "

I was left wondering at this man, who had such a zest for life and beauty, whose very strength had made him so over-masculine and good, but too soft and bashful to win a woman for himself as comrade, having thrown off the widow who sought him, the one chance for happiness, which recently came to him after the desertion and death of his wife. Lo ! modern education and routine of office have dried up the humanity in the Magistrate. The old order has crumbled, but has *not* changed,

yielding place to new, and that is the real trouble with the sons and daughters of India. Will a leader be yet born to preach and show them the way to a fuller life on this earth ?

Bombay,
July, 1936.

KUMARA GURU.

A SON'S SHADOW

It has been a wonder to me to see the change in the mental outlook of the Indian to-day, wrought by the impact of the intellect and materialistic ideas of the Western Mind. The imposition of the western system of education under the aegis of the British rule in India by Lord Macaulay, to provide eventually men, who will help to run the administrative machinery of Government (sic. clerks), has immensely affected the personal lives of Indians. I refer, not to the Government of the country and to its growing political institutions, but to that intimate personal matter of man, namely, his religious outlook on 'humanity and the universe'. It is barely three generations since western education gained hold on the intellect of the Indian population. The sons and grandsons of the earlier torchbearers of knowledge have now become educationists in schools and colleges, High Court Judges or Advocates, Doctors, Engineers, Scientists, and men holding high-salaried posts in the service of Government.

The Hindu imbibes philosophy from his

very mother's milk, even from the lullaby of the mother "Who art thou? Who am I? Where art thou? What is thy name? Who all brought thee into this world of life at each birth?" Surely such songs heard in childhood, familiar to all, would set every adolescent youth and girl thinking, as the meaning dawns on them. Nay, the well-known proverb "The father, mother, wife and son are but splinters of wood, tossed about the ocean of life,—destined to meet, but only to separate," forces the cultured Hindu mind to a philosophic and stoical attitude towards life.

Yet, we build hopes on our children that they may live far happier lives than we have done. Does not the Upanishad say "Aye, the wife is dear to thee, not for her sake, but for the sake of the self: the son is dear to thee, not for his sake, but for the sake of the self"? The hope that the son will follow the ideals which the father had held, but was unable to realise in his own life comes on the father slowly. The feeling grows that if one possesses a treasure, agricultural land, property or merchandise, the son would maintain the tradition, keep up the name of the family, from father to son. Especially is this so, in literary culture, or in the practice of the fine arts, such

as painting, sculpture or music, or for the matter of that, in sword-play. The wish for personal immortality, so persistent in middle age, perhaps fades away from the human mind as man reaches old age, if only he has a son, or a grand child. The immortality felt subconsciously in the child and the grand child, in the physical continuity of life, seems to take away the sting of death. As long as the occupation followed was that of the father in the intellectual or other classes, which had noble traditions, there was rarely much tragedy. But this age of transition, of the change of ideas and ideals, of freedom of movement and travel, brings its own tragedy in the lives of the men of our land.

I have recently had occasion to unearth, from various sources, the events and fortunes of the members of one of the first Hindu families affected by western education. The belief that the modern generation may perhaps benefit by the tale of their happiness and misery in two generations, has made me write these lines.

The year 1860 saw the entry into Brahma-pur of a young man, barely twenty years of age, with a rich golden complexion, like that of a ripe Alphonso mango, to take up work as Sanskrit Pandit, to teach that language in the

high school, newly opened in the town under the auspices of Government under a Principal, who was an Englishman. A scion of a family of Brahmin priests renowned for the performance of great *yagnas*,¹ he was left an orphan at the age of seven. The boy Somayaji, whose name itself is suggestive of his heritage, and whose Upanayana ceremony had been performed, drifted to one of the famous "tols," Sanskrit schools of the ancient type, at Nabadwipa in Bengal. He soon became the foremost pupil there, and finished the courses in *Kavya*² and *Nyaya*.³ On the requisition of the Collector of the district, to the "Tol", for the services of a young man, who showed qualities of leadership and winning confidence, and who could impress on the younger generation, Somayaji left for the town of Brahmapur to join the post of the Sanskrit Pandit.

Then for the first time, he exchanged the upper cloth, which his ancestors generally used to cover their chests with, for a tunic, and wore a shawl over the shoulder. The reports of the earlier pupils, or their sons, who had been at the school, wherein he stayed up

1. Goat sacrifices.
2. Sanskrit Poetry.
3. Logic.

to the year 1900, say that Somayaji's soul was full of the milk of human kindness. In middle age he was also the author of two Sanskrit plays, which have not yet seen the light of day. The first month's pay of twenty rupees seemed to transport him with joy. He had never known what money was, having read at the tol, and been fed by his Guru (teacher), who received money from temple lands allotted to the institution.* His village folk say that his forefathers for generations were regular conductors of annual goat sacrifices intended by them for the benefit of the agricultural folk, and partook of the sacrificial flesh. He was an ardent preacher of vegetarianism in later life and against sacrifices, even of cocks at the petty village shrines ; one would suspect that the sight of the bleating of the sacrificial goat before he left his parental home, should have sent a shiver through him. He would in the teacher's room, during talks, always discern and suggest a reason, tending to social good in all fossilised customs.

Soon after appointment, he married a Brah-

* So, no student lost his self-respect by begging for food.—K. G.

min lass, and at the age of twenty-five became the father of a son. Occasionally, his friends used to observe that he would suddenly leave the school for a week or so, and it happened to be on the same day of the year for seven or eight years running, after his advent to the high school. Nobody, not even his wife, knew why and where he went, but one day in the year 1870, he brought home a female child aged two, to replace a girl he had lost, to be fed at his wife's breast, and he named her Prema, or in short, Prem.

Somayaji was not a dialectician like other students of the 'tol', famous for their sophistical arguments. He foresaw that the path to the intellectual occupation of the future citizens of India lay through English education. He took up himself the study of English, starting from A, B, C, even before he sent his boy to school, as self education seemed second nature with him. He went, however, through a small ritual, consisting purely of a recitation of Sanskrit Vedic hymns, before starting the vernacular alphabet for his boy at the age of five. His son did not undergo a complete Sanskrit education, but was put in the high school, for this new education.

Somayaji performed his son's Upanayana at

the age of seven. The tantric ritual was left out, and the recitation of the sonorous Vedic hymns alone constituted the ceremonial. He taught the boy the 'Gayatri hymn' and went through the investiture, as he believed that the spiritual awakening in his boy was a solemn occasion. He, however, noticed that his son, when asked during the ritual to make his best choice from the three gifts before him, a Sanskrit book, a small sword and a silver rupee, intended to judge the proclivity of the young soul,* chose the last. For the second choice he took up the book. Somayaji, it was felt by the visitors, was instituting a reform. When questioned why he desired the Vedic hymns alone, he said "Musical sound, of all sensuous perception, is the most evanescent, and *Nada*⁴ alone could affect the psyche of man during life and after. Brahma is *Nadaswarupa*."⁵

At the age of fifteen, a few months before his departure to Calcutta for higher studies, Ganga Prasad was married, sacramentally

*The first represents the spirit of Brahminhood, the second the valour of a Kshatriya and the third the spirit of Vaisya (merchant).—K. G.

4. Sound.

5. Sound-form.

betrothed, to Prem, and of this event the youth's diary has the following record. "Father told me to-day I am soon to be married and on my asking to whom, he simply said "to Prem". I asked father if she was not my sister and how she came to live with us in our house. He simply said, "No, mother will corroborate the fact. Has she ever addressed you as Bhai (brother) ? She calls you *Arya Putra*".⁶ I then realised the meaning of the word : I recollected that I had noticed that Prem, now twelve years of age, had of late been shy towards me, and her face seemed to flush up occasionally, as she gazed at me. I was always too busy with my school studies to notice her life and activities. Father used to interest himself in her Sanskrit studies, and from childhood she was a help to mother in all household work. I, in a low voice, asked, 'Why should I be married so early ? My English Headmaster tells me, 'One ought not to marry young and burn the candle at both ends'. Father said, 'Who asks you to ? It is a betrothal before the fire, irrevocable, since marriage is a sacrament. It is being fixed up so that as intended for each other, you may

6. Son of the respected one.

grow together and get fond while young to enable both to live happily through all the trials of life. English boys in schools have their girl friends ; but the 'calf love' is not allowed to die down ; and here in our land, after the selection by the father of the betrothed, the same love for the girl generally blossoms forth into the finest flower of human experience, and the romance in wife and husband may never die even during married life. She to watch your growth into manhood and worldly advancement as her protector, and you to cherish her and place your laurels at her feet, for her to take them up and crown you king, that she may feel herself the queen. Don't you think she is lovely and good enough to be your consort in later life, as your mother has been to me ? ' I argued no further and consented to marry."

Somayaji's discerning intellect, and remarkable sanity may be gauged from his son, Ganga Prasad's notes, while at high school and later.

"Just after a visit to my English headmaster's residence, where he had invited some of us to tea, I had a talk with my father on the poverty of India, both in the villages round about, of the tillers of the soil, and in the city, of the labourers. The glamour of the white

china crockery and silverplated spoons, the table cloths, the cushioned furniture, and the large ward-robcs which I saw, had not left me. Father said, " We have fallen on evil days. Our past rulers, our men of valour, the Kshatriyas, are no more. The social distinctions and respective occupations in India, conceived as a plan for the well-being of society, are all broken up by foreign invasion of the Mohammedan, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British settled only temporarily in the land, except the Muslims, who stayed. We, Brahmins, in our heyday had no thought for the morrow, and were wedded to poverty. In the social contract, we relied on society to feed us, our wants being few, in return for our intellectual labour—though it should be said to our discredit, that we of late have become mere priests to teach ritual and to instil in men an unwholesome fear of God, and of the life after death—that we may devote our time to cultural studies in literature, science, philosophy and medicine, all written in our glorious Sanskrit, now a dead language. In those days, the men, who held that this literature was worth preserving at all costs, and for the love of it, handed it down from father to son, or teacher to disciple to later generations, were

indeed very praiseworthy men, though poor. I believe, the English Universities of Cambridge and Oxford have to-day similar institutions, whereby big libraries exist, and where professors reside, to whom are allotted the study and the propagation of their science and literature. 'Are individual riches then incompatible with intellectual development and the nurture of men with such special aptitudes?' 'At least our forefathers thought so.'

"We talked about discipline in life and I extolled the European, who was more disciplined than we were, in his orderliness, his bearing, his athletic life and devotion to games. But father said, 'you have seen in India only the comparatively rich European, and do not know how their workmen in the mills, factories and foundries live. When the rich have so many servants, it is not a difficult matter to look after one's personal matters. Even now the workman in England does not know the need for a daily bath, though the coldness of the climate is a partial excuse. Am I not disciplined in body? Did I not take the "*Dands*⁷ and *Baskis*"⁸ in my youth, and

7. Press-ups.

8. Leg exercises.

haven't I the *Suryanamaskars*⁹ in my middle age? Do I not take my early cold bath, sometimes twice daily, in all kinds of weather? I have only, besides a pair of sandals, four sets of a dhoti¹⁰ and a tunic. I wash them each day and I lack no personal cleanliness. The fault lies in much deeper causes. We to-day lack institutions, to hand down a tradition and the knowledge of the proper method of living, to the society at large. Owners of the land, too, extract severely from labourers of the soil, and have lost the sense of social Dharma.¹¹ Civilization cannot survive unless there is a settled form of government looking after the welfare of the people; and I do not know much of our 'Niti' *sastras*.¹² As a villager in early boyhood, though the houses were only thatched, with mud walls and floors, I feel that the crowding in towns, the lack of God's fresh air and sunlight tell heavily upon the health of the poor citizens, who lack food, and make them the poorer by inability to take up work.

9. Sun worship—involving a large number of bodily movements.

10. Loin cloth.

11. Righteous conduct.

12. Political Science.

To the youth's question as to the necessity of sacrament, the father said, "There are certain events in man's life in which we have to feel the wisdom of God, and the awe of creation. Man feels then lifted, as it were, into a new sphere of life, not only in the realization of his relationship to society, but of his own self-realization. These occasions are the birth of a child, Upanayanam, or the first awakening of the spiritual life of man, marriage with all its mysterious experience to come, the death of the parents, and finally, the anniversaries of their death. During these events, our minds are forced to review our relationship with the Universe and man, and solemnity should enter our soul. An unwanted asceticism is displayed at death, more because of the sudden rupture involved, both in the economic and the emotional life of those left to bemoan the loss. It is hardly necessary that there should be such beating of the breasts, but we should meet the inevitable with a certain calmness. On the anniversary days of the death of the parents, one perhaps recalls to one's mind the gratitude one owes them, and so to my mind, these rituals and ceremonies are the means by which the problems of life are brought forcibly to the minds of the masses. The death rituals convey

generally a certain theory of the human psyche, when their symbolism is understood."

* * *

Years 1882—88. Ganga Prasad, now the recipient of a Government scholarship for collegiate studies, left for the Presidency town. Somayaji spent a good portion of his income and of his past savings, that the boy might have all his books and comfortable lodgings in the hostel, and good food in the costly presidency town. The Gayatri¹³ and Sandhya¹⁴ of Ganga Prasad were cast to the winds. He mocked "the vain repetition in prayer of the heathen" along with his Christian padre teacher. It needs just be said for the sake of the story that Ganga Prasad graduated in Law, and soon about the age of twentythree, in the year 1888 found himself selected for the post of a District Munsiff in the judicial service, because of his talents. Prem and he started life together. Since the son left for the metropolis, the father was moving away further from any intimate knowledge of his son's mental life. The son's Government appointment had been keeping him at distant places. They had no opportu-

13. A hymn repeated 200 times a day.

14. Prayer in the morning and in the evening.

nity for a knowledge and an understanding of each other, as the father still continued as a teacher in the high school. Somayaji had then reached a pay of sixty rupees per mensem.

Year 1890. As Somayaji, now fifty years of age, fondled his grandson—barely a few days old, he told his son the past of his daughter-in-law, shedding tears of joy :

“In my ‘tol’ days, I fell in love with my Guru’s daughter. She was perhaps three years younger than myself. Moving intimately in the household as an inmate serving my Guru, I was treated as a son. My conscience dictated that I should only behave as a brother to her. The love-poems of Meghaduta and the Sanskrit dramas, which I was able to read at the age of seventeen aroused in me an eroticism, far earlier than in young men of my age. But she was above me in status, though a Brahmin ; she was already beyond my reach, though she did not leave for her husband’s home till much later. I had to stifle the emotions rising in my heart, and I had to smother the flame of my senses : I had to cover the shame of harbouring such love, which seemed an ingratitude to my Guru. Moreover, I felt that it was a sin to have fallen into love with a lass given away in marriage. Though

younger, she was as learned as myself in Sanskrit lore. It was she, your wife's mother, who has made me what I am to-day. I may tell you here that I have not been unfaithful to mother. When Indira left her father's house later, to join the priest to be his wife, I saw and felt that the soul in her was dead, and that it would soar no more in flights of imagination in poetry, of which she had been a student. Europeans tell us that we Hindus know of no romance in life. Pooh, what ignorance of our lives !

“ And when I knew of Indira's death, leaving a girl child born some three years after your birth, I brought her home from her father and step-mother. When you lost your younger sister, barely a few months old, this girl was fed at your mother's breast. I vowed that she should be married to you, fondly hoping that this young girl, the very image of her mother, would bring you happiness, and that you, a part of my own self, might find joy in a child of that *angelic* woman.* May this

* The idea of enjoying oneself seems far remote from the Hindu mind. Is this not a finer sentiment than that of Thomas Hardy's hero in *Well-beloved*, who falls in love with a woman at the age of twenty, with her daughter at the age of forty and

child bring you all happiness, and *be after your heart.*"

Somayaji arranged for a small vedic recital as he believed that the birth of a child was a solemn occasion for one to feel the mystery of creation. The son, however, was not pleased with the idea: why should he bow before an illiterate priest, who knows nothing beyond meaninglessly repeating the hymns?

* * *

The year 1895 brought in the first sorrow in Ganga Prasad's life. His wife was to bear another child, but she had miscarried after a bad fall. She was still in delicate health. Partly convalescing, she was laid up with typhoid fever, brought on after attending a party at his friend's house. The result of the attack was that though she recovered, she was struck with paralysis of one leg, which dried up and emaciated too badly to allow her to walk. The English Doctor in attendance said "She may probably recover after a daily massage, lasting four or five years, and then be her own self, but you must no longer be husband and wife."

again with her grand-daughter at the age of sixty.—
K. G.

Ganga Prasad had to engage an Indian nurse to attend to her elementary wants. Soon after, came the official news that he was elevated to the post of a subordinate judge.

Somayaji and his wife generally came once a year *unannounced* to the son, and stayed a few days, and before the son could write about his wife's serious ill health, the father suddenly turned up one day. Father and son were both unhappy ; and in their mutual sympathy and embrace, when the son mentioned the Doctor's warning, Somayaji said, ' My boy, your misery wrings a confession from me, if it may help you to steer your life. I long ago told you about Prem's mother ; I knew she was a true wife and bore six children loyally to her husband before she was even twenty-four. I was always following Indira's worldly life in her husband's home ; several of her children died. I saw her slowly emaciating under the severe burden of frequent child-bearing, which her husband had little cared for.

"The loss of your sister, and poor Indira's death changed my outlook on life. I saw the immense waste of human life, and learnt of the physical suffering of the mother in bringing forth a child. Then the wisdom of Kalidasa's

line from "Raghu-Vamsa," "*Prajayi Grihamedhinam*,"¹⁵ dawned upon me. High intellectual vigour and work seem to demand an enormous amount of self-restraint, but surely also an occasional satisfaction of the sex instinct. I have been more continent than even what the rules ordained, the religious injunction** to the masses handed orally from mother to daughter, to recollect the day of the week, and the phase of the moon before the satisfaction of the instinct. The intellect (or superstition) raises an artificial barrier against immediate satisfaction, so that man may rise to the 'human' status. Strong will alone can conquer the periodicity and volcanic nature of the urge in the male; the creative effort has to be diverted to the channels of art, literature, or religion. You can try to stifle and control as I have done, and God has been

15. Married for progeny.

** These were days prior to the publication of books on sex. Tuesdays and Fridays were the only days for sharing the bed. Women bedeck themselves with flowers in these evenings after visiting the temple. Newmoon and full moon days, the first day of the moon and the eleventh day in both the waning and waxing period of the Moon and the monthly period of women are taboo.—K. G.

pleased to give me no more children, but if you desire to live the easier and softer life, you can remarry. You are just thirty years of age, and have barely enjoyed seven years of married life. The Hindu lawgiver does understand the difference in the physical nature of man and woman. It is true that a man can love two women at the same time with his whole soul, as the sex urge lasts in man very long even upto the age of sixty and beyond, though I admit it is sheer cruelty for a man of fifty to marry a girl in her teens, as is done in society to-day. Your wife is being looked after by you ; she has had the experience of motherhood, and has a son to give her the emotional satisfaction and fruition of her psychic life. She has been a wonderful Hindu wife to you. The Hindu wife, very soon in married life, acts the ' mother ' to the husband. And if you but ask her, now that she has become an invalid and can be no more a mate, and her own life is in danger, if by chance she should conceive, she would not feel jealous. In fact, she would gladly consent to your living with your second wife, herself being the presiding deity in the household. You would not be *morally* responsible for her early demise, her life having just been saved from the jaws of death. I am

afraid of an astrological prediction of the tragic fate, awaiting the family on Prem's death.

Son—"Father, in spite of all your study of Sanskrit poetry, you are coarse; you hurt me in my pain; you tempt me to lower myself in the eyes of my European colleagues."

Father—"Why blindly adore the European? Two courses in life I pointed out to you, the one of self-restraint, and the other of marriage. The latter is certainly of a higher moral standard than clandestine relations, degrading both man and woman. Marriage in India, you know, is not a contract, as in Europe."

Son—"Do you suggest that the European in India has clandestine relations? As if we Hindus have not got prostitution in our midst."

Father—"The prostitute did not mate with every man. She was the preserver of the art of dancing in India, and was fairly attached to one rich man; and that is why 'anuloma' marriages have been recognised in Hindu society. Am I a tempter? far from it: your occasional meat diet and sips of wine are surely not going to help you in your self-control. Drinking wine is deemed a Mahapataka¹⁶

16. Great sin.

now. It at least paralyses the higher centres of the brain, if it does nothing else."

This confession and advice of the father did not somehow elevate him in Ganga Prasad's eyes.

Somayaji was thinking of retiring from the service of the school as he was nearing the age of fifty-five, and he could do so if he wished to. The grandson was about five years of age, and he ardently wished to retire from work and live with his son and grandson, and desired the 'education' ceremony of the grandchild to be performed. Ganga Prasad did not want to salute the priest at the ritual. The father asked if he might take up on himself the grandson's education, and Ganga Prasad, who was sorely feeling agitated about himself and his married life, thoughtlessly replied, "No more shall my son aim at being a walking lexicon, repeating the whole of "Amarakosha," the dictionary of words. I shall look after my son and you need not interfere."

Ganga Prasad then bought the child a cricket set to play with, as he himself had not in his childhood known children's games, and he believed, he had lived his life too seriously to enjoy it at all, without any play even in later years. Somayaji left his son's home, asked

the authorities to continue his services, and he worked there until the age of sixty. After the father's departure Ganga Prasad was feeling annoyed. He felt a sudden dislike for his father. He was even envious of his father that his mother was a healthy woman. Somehow, unreasonable as he felt it, he linked his unhappy married life with his father. That his father should now have an inkling of his private life, he detested ; he cursed his fate for his unhappiness, though wanting nothing of the good things of the earth. The father before leaving had warned him, of the very strenuous life he was leading without any leisure, and of the need for daily contemplation on the supreme values in life.

The next four years, Ganga Prasad worked laboriously at his court files, tending his wife when time permitted. His physical fondness for his wife was all a half satisfaction of his sex urge. His consumption of wine increased, despite his father's advice. He excused himself, "I at least forget my misery for the time being." He proposed to take a holiday to allay the fever in his brain, due to frustration in the norm of his adult life ; he hoped all would soon be well.

The year 1900. Somayaji desired in his

heart that his son should celebrate the appropriate ceremony, when a father reaches sixty years of age, but the son did not write about the coming event. Somayaji was hesitant of how he should spend the remaining years of his life, now that he was actively engaged for forty years in school, generations of pupils passing through his hands. Just before the sixtieth birthday, Somayaji's wife died, and he deeply mourned for her. Ganga Prasad, in spite of the intimation of his mother's sickness, had not arrived. Somayaji felt extremely sad that he had to light the funeral pyre of his wife himself, instead of the son, to whom it was the allotted task. He also then mourned the loss of his girl child long ago, that she was not alive to do the last offices, which a daughter owes her mother—to give the last bath to the dead body of the parent. The shock was too much for the man.

Reports were also brought that his son was not performing the "kriyas"¹⁷ for his mother. The son explained in a long letter that his wife had just been undergoing a caesarean operation, which prevented his coming. He added that Prem and he had been

17. Rites.

on a holiday during early spring. His wife looked charming and had almost recovered owing to the salubrious climate. In a moment of impulse he disregarded the Doctor's advice, and the male in him ravished her. Prem had to undergo the operation as her life was in danger. He was also in the throes of a transfer as District Judge.

On receipt of the news, the father in spite of his personal grief, went to meet his son and daughter-in-law. He found his grandson just learning English from an Anglo-Indian lady teacher, and had not even learnt the vernacular alphabet, or Sanskrit. He thought it no use discussing his grandson's education with Ganga Prasad, and came back resolving to spend the remaining years of his life at the 'tol,' where he had spent his childhood. Perhaps he observed to himself "students of the English school just taste the sweets of Sanskrit and forget the language later on. I must bring into being a band of students, who love the language", and he set out for the "tol" to rescue it from its slow decay.

The father still continued the yearly visits, but the son thought, they bespoke surveillance of his conduct. "*Is father still to be my silent monitor?*" They rarely talked, but Somayaji

just conversed with his daughter-in-law only to shed tears in viewing her invalid state, though her face shone with the brightness of Venus. He hardly ever dreamed, such would be his son's married happiness, when he brought home the helpless girl babe.

* * *

In the year 1905, Ganga Prasad was elevated to the High Court Bench. When his father heard of the news through friends, Somayaji said to himself "My son is a great man. I should go to honour him." As usual, he went to his son's house without prior intimation. When he saw the palatial building to which the son had removed, Somayaji felt himself, in his country clothes and sandals, and in deportment, quite a boor. The liveried servants, the bath-tubs, the red polished cement floors, the huge mirrors and pictures of English life on the walls, all astonished him. When Ganga Prasad saw his father, he was greatly pleased, and lay at his father's feet in obeisance in the Hindu way, but their mutual admiration was of a short duration. Their talk again dwelt on various matters.

Father—Why should you be paid such a large sum by Government for your services ?

Son—To keep the Judiciary from temptation.

Father—Is that the only way to estimate the character of Judges, who deal out justice unto men according to Law. Are there no other means of judging character? *Should 'character' be such a commodity in this world, that one should be placed beyond temptation of material gain?* That is European education and culture, is it?

The question of riches and poverty again cropped up. The son observed, "I calculated the other day that you spent about four thousand rupees for my collegiate education, and that amount is just over my pay for a month. Shall I engage servants and a decent house, that you may live in comfort in your old age, as you do not want to live with me?" The father said, "I earn my pension of thirty rupees, which feeds me and one or two souls in the village. *One can never repay in cash the debt to one's parents.* All the wealth of India cannot tip the scales against that debt, please learn.' By Somayaji's arrival without notice, Ganga Prasad could not put off a small feast arranged by him for his colleagues, where European table manners were observed. When the *Tamasha* was over, where his father was

not introduced, as he did not like such company, Somayaji enquired of his son of what he partook. "Pork and Beef" was the reply.

The father in his sorrow said "I do adore, I do not say that I worship, the cow. I do feel a warmth and glow, when I see your wife, even in her invalid state, put in the thilaka of kumkum¹⁸ on the face of the cow, the meekest of all creatures, and the sustainer of agricultural life. I do not know what to say to you. Your forefathers once a year ate mutton; the Muslim too does not touch pork; but you beat them all in your advanced ideas; you be a regular 'mlechcha'."¹⁹ Ganga Prasad in scorn quoted the Sanskrit verse "when a guest arrives, do thou kill a fatted calf" "What say you to that? Have you come to abuse me, father?" Somayaji said, "We have lost the spirit of *Ahimsa*.²⁰ Modern education has spoiled the Brahminic ideal of conduct, and it has set back the clock of time to a period before Lord Buddha's reform. I go, if you cannot bear me thus speak." The father had also, meanwhile, seen that his son's conduct with half-caste nurses looking after the invalid, was *not*

18. Vermillion mark.

19. Outcaste.

20. Abstention from cruelty.

quite innocent. Somayaji recollected Manu's saying "where woman is not honoured, the family perishes" and left for good with a heaving heart ; and Ganga Prasad did not stop him as the father's eyes seemed to him to be spying upon his actions.

* * *

The year 1910. "For five years, I have neither seen, nor heard from Ganga Prasad. Wherein have I estranged my only son ? I am not envious of the riches he now owns, and I never asked him about his earnings. My wants have always been few. Yes, I see now. During his training in childhood, whenever he put me questions, I seem to have defended the opposite cause. He praised the British civilization, and I espoused Hindu culture, as I found it depicted in Sanskrit literature and scriptures. He talked of European authors, and I of Kalidasa and Valmiki. He should have thought me antagonistic. The mental training I had given him, and my teaching of logic should have served him well in his work as a High Court Judge. But his personal life and mine differed in essentials. He was so rajasic (passionate), and I so calm and cool. The questioning spirit may increase knowledge,

but cannot create wisdom, which sympathy alone can. The village headman asks me, "Now at the close of your life, during its last moments, do send for Ganga Prasad." "Should I? Has he no sense of the duty, which he owes me; should he not consign my mortal remains to the flames? He did not come up when his mother died—but he was torn perhaps between his wife, undergoing an operation, and the last duty to his mother; I, who brought him up, carried him on my shoulders when he was weak, till he was strong; I, who did not sleep for nights when he lay between life and death in illness. He was the apple of my eye in his infancy, and yet we have separated in ideals, and we are far apart. He harps on rights, and I on duties. I sought the things of the mind, and he, material goods and sensual pleasure beyond limits. I love him still, though estranged. Aye—the son can never fully know the love of a father. I am so weak and unable to bear pain. What is he to me—he may be a High Court Judge in the eyes of the world—when he does not think of any personal service to me?"

"There is no use blaming him, it is my Karma. By what acts has he shown his love to me? God hath pleased it shall be so.

Fatherhood is an ungrateful task in the present day. My body, when life has departed, will, I am sure, be consigned to the flames by these students about me, who give ungrudging service. Ah! the 'tol' to which I have come back and worked ten years after my retirement. How can one man stay the hand of time? These students are my sons—the *Manasaputras*, sons of the mind. God save Ganga Prasad's soul, and bring to him a sense of the ultimate values in life. There is nobody, born of my blood, to carry on the knowledge of Deva Nagari (Sanskrit) and its splendid literature, the symbol of the cultural unity of India. Even my grandson has been kept away from me. Is individuality itself an illusion?"

The village munsiff had sent the telegram, but Ganga Prasad did not arrive. They waited the whole day. Somayaji's remains were cremated owing to the superstition of the villagers that they should not be kept overnight. Little did Somayaji know what prevented Ganga Prasad arriving. Yes, he arrived too late, only to see the ashes of his dead father. The atheism of Ganga Prasad was still rampant, and he performed no *Sraddhas*, which the father believed were necessary for the safe journey of the soul

through other worlds before his rebirth again in this world to achieve union with Brahma, or Buddha-hood when the bonds of Karma would be broken. "Let the dead take care of the dead," was all Ganga Prasad said to himself. He was by chance relieved of the cremation of the dead body of his father. He believed, he must act according to his convictions, but what was happening to him then ?

He came back to the Presidency Town to find his wife dead in the hospital, without even having had an opportunity to talk to him. He sent her body to a crematorium for burning over a gas flame, but he would not light the flame, as he felt the nemesis. His soul seemed to be in a void. His son, only an undergraduate, was away in England at Oxford, where his father had sent him to improve his studies and get his Degree. But Indu Bhushan was a gentleman at large, and shone only in the cricket field. Ganga Prasad went on working, writing out learned legal judgments, which eventually found a place in 'Law Reports.' The seeming purpose of his life, since his wife's caesarean operation, was to earn a little wealth for his son, to enable him to maintain the high standards of life, in which he had been brought up. On

the anniversary of his wife's death, came the ill-fated news of his son's demise far off, in the hospital due to pneumonia after exposure.

Ganga Prasad did not know what to do with himself. The vacancy in his mind could only be imagined. It is said '*man's extremity is God's opportunity.*' He suddenly sent in his resignation. His colleagues believed his mind was unhinged, but his thoughts were clear enough. He wrote out a letter to his bankers and to the Secretary to the Government, making over his entire investments in Government Promissory Notes and Port Trust Bonds for the creation of an endowment for the Chair of a Professor of Sanskrit in the High School at Brahmapur, just raised to a College. One clause therein was significant. The chair to be named "Somayaji Professor of Sanskrit" and funds not to be diverted to any other cause, so as to enable the Professor of Sanskrit to be of *equal* status and salary, as any other Professor in English or Science. His next step, as I truly guessed, was to proceed to Haridwar on the banks of the Ganges, where amidst the thick jungle, he sat in solitude, just coming down daily to the banks a little to satisfy his hunger. Every month scrupulously, he would appear with his passport, before a Magistrate

to obtain his Life Certificate, to forward it on to his Bankers that the endowment might become richer by his pension. After a few years of such life, even the Bank lost all trace of him.

Thus ended the career of a family, leaving no trace, the first fruits of European education in this country. True, the later sons of the soil, who read in schools and colleges, do not feel such tragedy, even though fathers, sons and grandsons are even now separated for economic causes to seek livelihood far from their native land; but an intellectual dishonesty is coming over the later generation, which quotes Wordsworth, Shelley and Tennyson and says that their poetry is nothing but 'Vedantic' in character.

The sad spectacle of the want of an innate love and pursuit of some noble object, in all classes, is still with us. The poor nowadays have even less to eat. The discharging of social duties is felt a burden. The agriculturist's son no longer wants to work in the field. After a smattering of the vernacular, he goes over to the town to work as a peon in an office, which he prefers, as it is less toilsome. The carpenter's son, as well as the weaver's, is just a millhand. The joy of handicraft seems to have

been lost. The seeking of pleasure in cinemas and talkies after the unwanted work has its sway in towns. Getting rich quick seems to be the end and aim of life to-day. Crossword puzzle competitions in English and vernacular magazines merely add to this fever. The intelligentsia take to gambling in the share market, and the illiterate in cotton figures and horse races. After a soulless work, all desire excitement. That is all, we can speak of as living *culture* (sic) even to-day.

Bombay.

September 1937.

KUMARA GURU.

A FRIEND'S SHADOW

The example of ideal friendship held up to the youth in modern education in India is that of Damon and Pythias, the two friends of Syracuse. The tale runs thus : Damon with democratic ideals aimed at the life of Dionysus, the tyrant, and when ordered to be executed, craved for a four-hour's interval to bid farewell to his wife and child. Damon's request was first denied, but was later granted, on Pythias, his friend, offering himself as personal surety, and the interval was even enhanced, as a matter of grace, to six hours by the tyrant. Though a well-wisher had Damon's horse killed, to prevent his return, Damon came back at the right time to save his friend, as the executioner was preparing to put Pythias to death. The unexampled friendship caused Dionysus to relent and pardon Damon, and both the friends lived to become his trusted companions in the State.

Whether such friendship is possible in the urban civilisation of the twentieth century, or whether it was the peculiar trait of the Greek, I cannot say. Perhaps, as Psycho-Analysts observe, there was a tinge of "the love of the

same sex" in the blood of the ancient Greek male, as one can read from Plato's Symposium. It may be that even Socrates' association with the young men of his time, and his discussions with them were but a sublimation of the same infirmity. To the Indian student of Sanskrit, the *Hitopadesa* has moral lessons to convey in its stories of the "acquisition of friends and the separation of friends". But they are mere fables, and the moral teaching is conveyed to us in the characters of animals. It is difficult for the adolescent mind to grasp all the human emotions and painful experiences in the pictorial description of the action of animals, especially in the story of the separation of friends; the affection of the lion and the bull to start with, is unbelievable, and the wiles of the jackals, which brought about and strengthened the friendship, and afterwards broke it up, cannot fully satisfy the mind of a boy of twelve, who reads the *Hitopadesa* at school. I suspected at that age, that the friendship of the lion and the bull was a fictitious affair, (as the Indian proverb goes, a story has no legs) and the natural enmity of the carnivorous animal to the herbivorous would show itself sooner or later; and the wiles of the jackals were just an excuse for

the story to teach political stratagem to the Royal Princes.

Many gifted men have written on the subject of friendship, but Cicero's Essay is still a classic. His observation that nothing is so difficult to preserve, as a lasting and unbroken friendship to the end of life is as true today, as it was two thousand years ago. The disruptive causes were stated to be three: the first, the immoderate desire for wealth in the generality of mankind; the second, the inordinate thirst for glory among the more liberal and exalted spirits, and the third, the most fatal to friendship, is that friends should become rival candidates for the dignities of the state, in which naturally both the first two factors operate. And today in British India, this competition for dignities of the State is very great, and is making havoc of the human relationship of the *elite*.

I wonder whoever started the idea of giving prizes for success in the educational field to children and youths. Perhaps, it is a relic of the Greek Marathon race, when youths competed for laurels, or of the age of chivalry and knight-errantry. I can understand an honour or title for one, whose life-long career, for the good of the State, or in the cause of

literature, art or science, deserves the appreciation of his compeers, as has been the custom in Hindu India. To my mind, such prizes or honours before the maturity of the individual are sure to set back his moral development, and warp to a great extent his social outlook. Montessori, the Educationist, tells us that the precocious and talented child feels ashamed, if given a prize, not shared by other children, in the infant classes and before it has reached the age of seven, and that the prize is a distinct and grievous hurt to its ethical nature ; for, a child does not know the social difference of ability, and it asks " Is this (intended) for me, what about others ? " The constant gifts of prizes would appear to make the child proud of the scar left by the wound, and feel it an honour, and the child slowly becomes callous to the sense of original shame it experienced. My recent perusal of Galsworthy's powerful story of " The Competitor " has urged me to write the story of two gentlemen, I came across, both as a family Doctor, and as one of the appointed executors of the will of Sadasivam. Their story runs on somewhat similar lines, but the Indian setting and the Hindu outlook on humanity should

interest my readers, and serve to carry away the lessons of their lives.

Sadasivam and Damodaran, after graduating in the Arts College, had their education in the College of Engineering, established by Government to attract Indian talent, for technical education and recruitment of the alumni, for its Department of Public Works. The two young men belonged to the *second* generation of students, to pass out of the College of Engineering in Madras, when it was situated in the palace of the old Nawab of Carnatic, and its extensions near the Marina.

From the College, only the first student, on the results of the three years' examinations got the Engineer's post. He was started on an initial pay of Rupees 350 per mensem with prospects of rising up to Rs. 1,600; and if endowed with high ability, he could rise even to the post of the Chief Engineer of the Province.* Naturally, therefore, competition

	Before 1892 Rs. per mensem.	After 1892 Rs. per mensem.
* Assistant Engineer	350— 550	250— 450
District or Executive Engineer	750—1,000	475— 650
Selection Posts :—		
Supdtg. Engineer	1,100—1,600	750—1,000
Chief Engineer	1,800—2,500	1,800—2,500

raged among entrants to the career. The scales were revised for Indians in the year 1892, when the Government had apparently come to the conclusion that Indian recruits from this College were inferior in knowledge and ability to English recruits from Great Britain, who formed the major part of the service. The Indians were started on Rs. 250 and could rise only to Rs. 1,050. The pay of the Chief Engineer, was however, left untouched, as they were presumably not expected to come up to that rank. Sadasivam and Damodaran entered the College after 1892.

The prospects of those who did not take the first rank every year, were poor ; their pay when they entered Government service was Rs. 60, and it rose up to Rs. 400, which they could perhaps receive after 30 years' service. The worldly advantages, therefore, depended on those rare chances of gaining the first rank, which caused real jealousy among the students, who rubbed shoulders in all their activities. This can be realized in proper perspective, only if mention is made, that of the total marks in the three years' examinations, 75% is allotted to written papers by an outside examining body, while 25% is allotted to practical work in the College. The marking

of the latter largely depends even now, on the whims and vagaries of the lecturers and professors of the College, including a Gymnastic Instructor, whose pay is barely Rs. 80 per mensem.

The College had not then different branches, and there was hardly any specialisation in the Engineers' classes. Both Civil Engineering and Irrigation Engineering (including Hydraulics) had to be studied by one and all. Electrical Engineering courses had not started; workshop practice was restricted to a little lathe work and the upkeep of an engine, burning crude oil. The reasons, of course, were that the Government required Engineers mainly to put up and look after their public buildings and irrigation works in the various deltaic systems of the province. Recruitment to the Engineer's classes of about fifteen to twenty students yearly, was by means of a competitive examination in the undergraduate courses of study, i.e., in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Dynamics and Freehand Drawing. Scholarships were awarded to the first two students, irrespective of social position or wealth, and generally sufficed for the fees. Similar awards of scholarships were made for

the first two in rank, on the result of each year's examination during the course.

For the first time the two youths met in the College, Sadasivam being the first, and Damodaran being the second in the entrance examination. I may now dilate upon their ancestry, the environment of their upbringing, and their achievements up to the age of nineteen, before entry into this Technical College. Sadasivam came from a village near the Tanjore District of a Brahmin family of musicians, who possessed a few acres of *Inam* (free of tax) wet lands on the banks of the Cauvery, bestowed generations ago on one of his ancestors as a Court Musician of the Tanjore Palace. The boy's mind was, through and through, that of a small peasant proprietor. He was the only son of his father and had even seen as a boy, his father at work in the rice fields—except for the ploughing prohibited by religion to the Brahmin caste—sowing the seeds, cutting and closing the small bunds of the village channels for watering and draining the fields. The father was a vegetarian and a worshipper of Vishnu in the home, though by birth, a Siva worshipper, and visited both temples. The father tried to teach the younger generation of pupils interested in

music, the simple devotional songs he had learnt from his parent in praise of Vishnu or Rama, but his voice having failed at the age of twenty-five, he was just a second rate teacher. The family shifted to the town of Kumbakonam very early in Sadasivam's life, and the father was often absent from the town when he had to attend to, or supervise agricultural operations during the cultivation season.

During school or College vacations, all the family spent their time in the ancestral cottage in the village. In fact, Sadasivam may be said to be 'a paddy bird.' The father's kitchen-garden in the village yielded sweet, juicy and fragrant vegetables, which his father and mother had manured and watered. He had tasted the coarsest of grains, including jaur and bajra in the shape of cakes, made of flour ground in a quern at home by his mother.

Sadasivam had come under the training of teachers of the Government College, which was then sending forth its best alumni into Government service. He graduated from the Government College at Kumbakonam; thanks to the tradition set up by Messrs. Porter and Gopal Rao, his outlook on intellectual life was to obtain a clear understanding of the fundamentals of the subjects, which he

read. In the Degree Examination, in his special subject, he just missed a first class, being the topmost in the second class (or division), and his rank was the fifth in the Presidency. Though he was sorry that he had missed the First Division, he consoled himself with the thought, that after all, there should be one such every year, who should just miss it. Later on, he found that he was really the second in rank among the students of the year, as the three others, who took a first class, belonged to a previous set.

Sadasivam went into the Engineering College, having had a special liking for irrigation works. The problems of the conservation of water, its evaporation, silting and drainage from fields, all interested him even as a boy. He purposely stayed away one year after graduating, to make a special study privately, before joining the College, and thus to secure, if possible, one of the scholarships for future study. In athletics, he did not take much part, but he took to the parallel bar for his pull-ups and pumping, and was a moderate player of the game of Tennis, while at the Arts College ; besides, he practised light Indian clubs. Now for the first time, he shifted to the metropolis to study in the College of Engineering. This

youth of nineteen was tall, healthy and light of step, though muscular, on account of the village life he had led. He was married to a village girl ; his wife had not joined him.

The more brilliant students in the arts courses, who took the first division, generally proceeded to England for higher studies with the object of entering the Indian Civil Service, if they could obtain scholarships, or could afford the money. Or, they appeared in the competitive examinations of the Government of India in the Finance and other Departments. If they got in, they had no additional courses to undergo. The second best generally underwent further studies in the Engineering or Medical College to get a decent start in life. If they could not afford these costly courses, which extended over four to five years, or had no aptitude for these subjects, they took to the course in Law. It was in these conditions that Sadasivam came to the College of Engineering.

Damodaran came of the city stock of Madras, his forefathers having settled there, years ago. Damodaran had never visited villages and knew only the city and its activities. His father was an agent of a British firm of wholesale importers of Lancashire piecegoods, and he also conducted the export

of Indian drugs (senna leaves, etc.) to foreign countries. He was also engaged in the business of distribution of flour of the Calcutta Flour Mills. The trade discount and commission brought the father a decent income, and all his savings were invested in the acquisition of buildings, houses and tenements in the city, so as to yield a steady addition to the income. The export business had recently undergone some reverses ; the acquired property had to be mortgaged for ready cash, for the clearance of pressing debts. He desired to pass for a rich man ; his lavish expenditure and the generous gifts to poor students in Madras, had cost him a decent sum ; and when money was not flowing, life became difficult. The losses in the share market also brought in a lower standard of living than he had recently been used to.

Damodaran, slimly built and medium in stature, was the youngest son, a student of the Christian School, and later of the Christian College. He even got a district scholarship to prosecute his studies. The atmosphere of the Christian schools had moulded, to a certain extent, Damodaran's views on life, and how, we shall see later on. The primary aim of these Christian Colleges and schools was the

conversion of the heathen to the Christian faith. The Christian educational institutions were, therefore, of a different type from Government Colleges, though the forms were kept. Except for studies in English Language and Literature, the teaching was of a much lower standard, as they were manned by English missionaries. The downfall in the business of the father had also affected Damodaran, and he got into the habit of working by fits and starts, owing to the distractions of his past rich life, and of occasionally working at high pressure. His father held generally at his residence, musical soirees of high class musicians, and as a temple trustee, had at his beck and call the "Nagaswaram"¹ players. Thus Damodaran had developed a fine taste for music. His ears delighted in good music and he would whistle away a few ragas.² Damodaran was also a zealous player of Tennis at school and college, as it was a metropolitan achievement for young students; and he generally brought with him two rackets to the courts with a swaggering air.

1. Indian musical wind instrument similar to the clarinet.

2. Melody types.

Damodaran and Sadasivam, thus brought together, observed each other curiously. The first student of the year was the monitor of the class, and he had to maintain discipline and mark the attendance in the absence of the teacher. This was particularly so, in the Drawing and out-door classes. There was a peculiar system of squads of three to four students in field work, and naturally they were at the head of two different squads.

Sadasivam was the first to break the ice for a free conversation during a leisure hour. Soon after the results of the Degree Examination were printed in the Gazette, Sadasivam had noted that Damodaran obtained the first place in the Second Division, there being four in the first class above the latter, one of them belonging to Sadasivam's set. Thus he compared himself with Damodaran, while he was the second in his set, Damodaran was the fourth.

Sadasivam :—“I looked up the Gazette to-day and I find that you top the list among those in the Second Class. I was in the same predicament last year. It gives one a peculiar happiness and an unhappiness too, that one has just missed a first class. Perhaps you appreciate the situation.”

Damodaran :—“Oh ! these Professors of the

Christian College never suggested to us decent text-books for study, and taught us Mathematics through notes, which we had to take down as they dictated."

Sadasivam :—"How then did you secure such a high place, without having studied text-books at all?"

Damodaran :—"So far as Mathematics went, I just tried to answer a few question papers of the previous years, and got the knack of solving similar problems. I was more absorbed in the study of English Literature, though not the prescribed text-books, and so I missed a first class in English too."

Sadasivam :—"Anyway, you should derive some satisfaction from the high place achieved, in spite of the odds in the matter of teaching of Mathematics."

One of the peculiar features of discipline in this College, adopted by the then Principal, a Military man, may be alluded to. He disliked the large tuft of hair behind the heads of the Hindu boys. He insisted that all students on coming to the College, should tuck in their tufts—huge in some cases—inside the caps they wore. It was a nuisance to the boys, because the caps, which just fitted the head, could not take in the large knot of hair. So Sadasivam

and Damodaran discussed it, and resolved to cut off their hair to avoid discomfort. They had already given up wearing caste marks on their foreheads, while attending College. Sadasivam decided to have a close crop of uniform level, and leaving only a small tuft, half an inch in diameter, to please the fancy of his mother. Having lived in the town and come across a number of Indian Christian students, who wore their hair in the European style, Damodaran, however, decided to have the European hair-cut. Some students followed Damodaran, while some others followed Sadasivam.

In the Tennis Court, Sadasivam and Damodaran generally played on the same side. Some of the Professors and Instructors of the College, both European and Indian, played in the College Courts, and by accident, one of the professors found that the two could combine well for playing doubles. Sadasivam had a fairly powerful service, and a good backhand stroke, by which he could both drive or place the ball, while Damodaran had a soft, but elusive service and a powerful right underhand drive. This combination gave the professors, who played at the College grounds, good Tennis. Thus they came also to represent

the College in the Inter-Collegiate Tournament. Of course, whenever they could get an opportunity for singles, the two chaffed each other for their respective weaknesses.

One day, a prize book of a copy of the 'Bible' was received by Damodaran from the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, given free to every one, who passes the Degree Examination. Sadasivam too expressed a wish to possess one, and they both walked to the 'Bible' house so that Sadasivam might get a copy on his friend's introduction. Thus Sadasivam, who had a knowledge of Hindu religious texts, through the songs he had heard his father sing, was introduced to Christian doctrines. His first reading of the Gospel of Matthew, Mark and Luke, inspired him, and he expressed to Damodaran his great admiration for the personality of Christ, and the similarity of Christ's teaching of love and cessation of hatred, to Buddha's. They discussed Christian conduct, and the self-abnegation required of a true follower of Christ.

Yet in Damodaran's case, as Sadasivam found, the book had a different effect and Damodaran said :—"They merely preach to save the heathen soul from hell, as Christian scripture denies the possibility of salvation for

members of other religions. The idea of God's chosen people is repugnant to me. Oh! the doctrine of eternal hell is a horror. I also know how Christian ethics are practised at my school. One of my relatives, a teacher in the lower classes, has to sign an acknowledgment for his salary for an amount much more than what he actually receives. The deduction is not shown in the receipt, but is accounted for as a direct donation to the College for its activities. The College adopts this dodge to obtain larger grants from Government than would otherwise be admissible.* I also know of certain cases, where some of the lusty youngsters have been tempted to become Christians through love of women, by the Missionaries' putting in their way some grown-up Indian Christian girls for marriage. Therefore, I cannot give much praise for their ways, as they think that the end justifies the means." Thus they began to converse often on religion and the ethics of good conduct.

* These irregularities were set right only after Lord Curzon's University Reform, when each Christian College or Institution had to maintain separate accounts of funds and expenditure for educational purposes.—K. G.

Sadasivam had noticed that Damodaran had generally digestive troubles attended with severe head-ache. He diagnosed constipation as the cause thereof—a natural disinclination to go to the Indian latrines of their houses, which were not exposed to sun-light in towns. He suggested to him a course of stomach exercises (as Damodaran was ignorant of Indian forms of exercises), and dwelt on the importance of a nervous training of going to the closet at an appointed hour. Needless to say, this improved Damodaran's health very much.

The story of their friendship would be incomplete, unless I recorded also certain events in the College to illustrate their nature. There was an Indian Tutor at the College, a decent player at Tennis, who, in his own student days, was a winner of challenge cups in College Tournaments. These young men always noticed that the Tutor lost the set against the European Professor, after winning five games to love. These longish games after the students had arrived at the Court, irritated them, and the kotowing Tutor was always known and talked about as a "Crow-catcher."

Again, during the first year, when students were generally afraid of European Tutors, most

of whom belonged to the 'soldier' class, who had undergone a meagre Engineering Education, Sadasivam had one day to carry a message to the wife of one of these soldiers (we shall call him Cumberland). Sadasivam was funky and requested Damodaran to accompany him. They called at the Cottages near the College Tennis Grounds, where these tutors put up. Mrs. Cumberland, it was noticed by them, was much older than Mr. Cumberland and was, in spite of her long skirt, very masculine in appearance and in conduct, and her breasts were quite undeveloped. The young men thenceforth designated Mr. Cumberland as "Plane Table's husband," alluding also to the Engineering Survey instrument.

The Survey camp during the first year's course centred round Pallavaram, a few miles off Madras, with broad streets and large open spaces, and houses scattered about for the detachment of British soldiers. The students were generally up before six in the morning, and proceeded to the work-spot for starting their chain and plane table survey of the roads and buildings. One day Damodaran's squad was in advance of that of Sadasivam. Even at about seven, the British soldiers in the

barracks would not be up. Damodaran, who had taken an offset from the middle of the road to the edge of the buildings, suddenly beckoned to Sadasivam, and on his approach, said :— “We have a sight to see here inside.” On peeping through the door, both of them found the soldiers in the barracks, sleeping with no covers on them, owing to the heat, and quite naked, without even pyjamas. Naturally the subject of their later conversation turned on the modesty of the male to the male, and why the British soldier lacked it. They concluded that these soldiers came from the very lowest social strata of the British, and had not gone far beyond the animal stage in regard to culture. They also noticed that the married officers' quarters were not more than a dozen in the town, while the soldiers in the bachelors' barracks numbered as many as three hundred to four hundred, all of them being adults between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five. The young men wondered what sort of life they should be leading, and the knowledge was forced on them that these soldiers were creating the problem of the Anglo-Indian community by their relations with the women of the lower strata of Indian society.

In the examination at the end of the first

year, Sadasivam lost the first place and became the second, while Damodaran gained the first. Later, in the course of the year, Sadasivam found for himself a slight difference in his own ways of maintaining discipline in the class from Damodaran's.

Even before the programmed visit to the irrigation works of the Cauvery, Sadasivam had known them, though not in a technical sense. He was proud that it was the native Tamil brain, which harnessed the Cauvery for the Trichy and Tanjore deltas. The works of the Upper anicut and the Grand anicut, both on the Coleroon, at the head and at the end of the island of Srirangam, where it branches off from the main river Cauvery, joins and again branches off, were the outcome of a magnificent idea. The British Government had only constructed, in place of the older anicuts and sluices in all the branches of Vettar, Vennar and Kodamuruti, modern structures and modern sluices worked by roller gates.

During the vacation, he undertook a trip to the Godavari and the Krishna to see on his own account how the huge floods of these rivers were harnessed, and he longed also to see the aqueduct, carrying the irrigation canal over the Godavari. He enjoyed the sight of the locks

of the river, unknown in South India, and the wonderful canals and the anicuts of the two river systems, travelling in the boats along with the merchandise of the few persons going up and down. He longed for a day when he would be able to do some original work, to help the poor agriculturists in bringing more land under cultivation, like Sir Arthur Cotton, to whom first occurred the idea of building the anicut over the Godaveri, where it is widest, using also the islands on the river.

In the irrigation camp, where the students were taken by the College authorities, for a visit to the head works and anicuts and channel works of the Cauvery river, an unfortunate incident happened. Crossing the river Cauvery below the anicut, they passed on to the Island, where the Coleroon branches off and the upper anicut has been built with Stoney's roller gates. The few European soldier-tutors accompanying the students knew not much of the ways of the Hindus. Most of the Hindu students rallied to bathe in the river near the upper anicut, after they had crossed to the island of Srirangam. At the head of that island there are bathing ghats, where scores of pilgrims generally bathe every year just after the floods subside, when an important Hindu festival

takes place at that time of the year. During mid-day, after the students had done the sketching of the sluices and shutter gates, all of them were bathing, and one student who waded along to the end of the wing wall, where there was a heavy scour, was unfortunately dragged away by the current, and was drowned. Sadasivam had noticed the missing student from over the ghat, and dripping wet, carried the news to one of the Tutors in charge. Damodaran had already bathed, and gone to the huts for food. The tutors immediately made arrangements by a countryboat to recover the body of the drowned young student, and to resuscitate him by artificial breathing, but all efforts proved futile. The tutors apparently feared they would be taken to task for this incident, as they had previously issued a warning to the students against swimming in the river, which was communicated to all in the camp.

The following conversation took place :

Tutor :—“ Damodaran, did you not convey to the students my warning that they ought not to bathe in the river ? ”

Damodaran :—“ Yes, Sir, I informed everyone.”

Sadasivam intervened and said:—“I was

not informed. Every old woman bathes at these ghats, and we deem it a sacred thing to bathe here. At least, I was not told that I should not bathe." Damodaran said, however, that he had communicated the order to all the students, but Sadasivam denied any knowledge thereof.

Soon after the talk, however, Damodaran came to Sadasivam privately and said that the Tutor was twisting his orders, as he had asked them only not to *swim* in the river. He could not very well dare to put it before the Tutor, and that was the reason why he had not crossed him, and that he (Damodaran) was really sorry about the turn the affairs took. The tutors in their report stated that the students disobeyed the instructions that they ought not to *bathe* in the river. Later, after the camp was broken up, Sadasivam got a black mark with several others, who confessed that they were bathing in the river, though all the students had done so, each at his own time and pleasure. Damodaran was not one of those, who were given a black mark, as he saw no reason to give out that he had bathed in the river.

During the second year of the course, Damodaran got married as his father ardently

desired the celebration of the marriage, so that Damodaran might be placed under the protection of some suitable and responsible person, who would look after his future career. Damodaran's wife was the daughter of Doraswami, an Executive Engineer in the service of the Government, recently transferred to Madras. After the betrothal ceremony, Sadasivam, who was invited to the function, congratulated Damodaran on his pretty and winsome wife. Towards the evening, one of the festivities of the marriage was a musical soiree by one of the famous women singers of the town. She belonged to the dancing class of women, but singing alone was the programme. Amongst the educated Hindus then in Madras, there were two opinions about the dancing of women, one anti-nautch and the other pro-nautch, and Doraswami belonged to the latter party. Sadasivam excused himself from attending it, though he said he liked music well enough, and would not budge from his determination, in spite of Damodaran's request to stay.

Later, Damodaran and Sadasivam conversed on the subject :—

Damodaran :—“ Why were you so particular not to stay for the Musical soiree ?”

Sadasivam:—“Well, I may tell you that before I left for the city, my father made just one request of me, that I should not attend the performance of the women singers of Madras, who are very famous. I cannot enter into the reason for his behest, but I thought I had better obey his command.”

Damodaran:—“Was it not rather silly of you, to have acted so without sufficient reason?”

Sadasivam:—“There may be a deeper reason. Well, let me complete my father's request. ‘Make it a point,’ he said, ‘of keeping this wish of mine until you have a daughter born unto you.’ Surely, he knows sufficiently of life and its temptations, to advise me to keep out of harm's way.”

Damodaran:—“How should it be so?”

Sadasivam:—“You are asking me too much, to know of my inner life. I was betrothed years ago, when I was a boy of fourteen and my wife probably seven years of age. We have not seen each other now at least, for three to four years. I have not had opportunities of knowing the ways or the mind of the girl, who has to be for good or for ill, my companion for life. For, modesty and reticence play a great part in the early life of our girls. I am glad

you have a fairly literate wife now, who has passed her lower secondary examination, and it is probable you will live with your father-in-law, while you are completing the course. The only members of the other sex I have talked to, are my sisters, my cousins and my mother. As things are in our society to-day, the chances of companionship with 'other' girls, who matter to us, to enable us to have a knowledge of their minds and to develop our sense of chivalry are absent, except it be, that we learn it by the love we bear to our mothers and sisters.

“When my blood is all warm by the sight of pretty young womanhood, and when I feel I should act like Sir Walter Raleigh to spread my cloak for them, lest their feet should become dirty, I vainly seek texts for guidance of my conduct in our religious books. Manu says, “Practise Brahmacharya (celibacy). Hold your mind in check till you have completed your studies and then think of marriage.” Yet, I have already been betrothed, for better or for worse, six years ago to a girl now aged thirteen, and society does not allow me yet to know her mind. I know only of one fact, she has been taught that to adore, worship and serve me, is her sole function in life. The Christian Bible

is no better guide to me. Christianity itself seems to be sexless. The old Testament tells us, woman is the 'Tempter' leading man to spiritual downfall; the New Testament is no better. It asks us not to look on woman with lustful eyes. Yet, the great rishis of the Hindus, as the texts tell us, our spiritual preceptors like Vasishta, had wives, as their partners in their search for spiritual life. The Hindu poets talk of "Swayamwara" or 'choice of a husband' by woman. All that is mere talk, and our social institutions lack life. The present order of society will let us know of woman, who is to be the partner in life, only after the animal instinct in man finds satisfaction. Is this culture and civilization? Let me wish you all happiness in your married life, that you may find your comrade in the wife you have wedded, as she is more educated than the ordinary Hindu girls of our society".**

The economic crash came on Damodaran's father soon after the marriage. He put in his

** These were the pre-war days when no books on the Physiology or the Psychology of Sex were to be had even in libraries. It may be noted that after the advent of Havelock Ellis' *Psychology of Sex* in six volumes, in the Connemara Public Library, they were the most popular books as the Librarian once affirmed.

insolvency petition, and went away north on a pilgrimage with his wife. Thereafter, Damodaran lived in his father-in-law's house, where he had a fairly happy time: this enabled him to get some training and tuition in his subjects from his father-in-law.

During the second year, Sadasivam found that as a monitor of the class, while he was very strict during the previous year, Damodaran was more lenient than himself and marked the class fellows present, though they came late, when they offered some excuse or other. When, however, he found that Damodaran had once billed for more coolies than had actually carried the instruments for the field work, he took him aside, and said "It was wrong of you to have done so, as I saw that the number of coolies in your squad was certainly less than in the bill." Damodaran excused himself by saying that he had himself carried the instruments, and he did not see why the College should benefit thereby, and pleaded absence of pocket money.

Sadasivam said :—"One has to be true even to the letter of the law. As the coolies were not engaged, you did wrong in billing for them. There is no harm done in asking your father-in-law for money. When Damodaran saw his

folly, Sadasivam said :—“ I am not a black-mailer and you may rest assured that I shall not report the matter to the authorities. I merely cautioned you in your own future interest.”

In the second year's examination, Sadasivam by dint of his observation and study carried away the Irrigation and Hydraulics Prize, and won the first place for the third year.

In the final year Sadasivam topped the list and Damodaran got only the second place. It was later found on an examination of the total marks that Sadasivam had beaten Damodaran by 25 marks in the aggregate of the Board's papers and by about 25 in the College marks for general conduct, punctuality in attendance and gymnastics, which naturally irritated Damodaran. He was quite fussy about it and had told some of his friends that owing to the low prospects, he would not complete his practical course and that he was going to take up his Master of Arts Examination by private study and become a teacher, where the prospects would be far better than those now fallen to him.

Sadasivam stealthily went to Damodaran's lodgings and advised him thus :—“ Better calm yourself. I say this in all humility,

not because I gained the first place, but because you should not waste your life. You ought to attend the practical course, without which the college certificate of Licentiate in Engineering, as also the University Degree, will not be awarded to you. These alone will enable you to get a decent job in life. There is no harm in your studying privately for the Master of Arts Course and taking a second degree in Arts. As your father-in-law is in an influential position, you will perhaps be able to get him to move the authorities to give you a better start in pay, than otherwise."

In the University Engineering Degree Examination, which is different from the College Examination, Damodaran got the first place, and Sadasivam lost it. But this could not affect the prospects in Government service. Later, Damodaran passed his M.A. examination as he stayed at home for one year after the practical Engineering course, refusing to accept a pittance of Rs. 60 per mensem, that might be offered by Government to an Engineer student, as a subordinate.

His father-in-law was then a Superintending Engineer, drawing the old scales of pay and in administrative charge of the Government House Division at Madras. This position

brought him occasionally into contact with His Excellency the Governor, and also the Private and Military Secretaries to His Excellency. Owing to the sudden crop of vacancies in the department (those were days before the advent of the Public Services Commission), Doraiswami put forth the pleas that Damodaran, if judged by the marks in the technical subjects, was fairly equal in ability to Sadasivam, and that the former was the first in rank in the Degree Examination, besides having the additional qualification of being a Master of Arts.

When Damodaran interviewed the Chief Engineer, he appeared in the best Tweed suit of "Moses & Co." with a decent fit seen to, by a European cutter. What with his smart dress and what with his polished talk in English, Damodaran had no difficulty in securing the Engineer's post! When Sadasivam heard of Damodaran's entry into the Gazetted rank in the service, he immediately congratulated him, and hoped they would also be comrades in service without the subdued bitterness in competition, of college days. Damodaran wrote to thank Sadasivam for his advice at a very crucial moment so as not to wreck his career in life.

Part II

Then the correspondence ceased, as usual with college mates after entry into Government service ; but Sadasivam and Damodaran met again when both were posted to the same Division. It was then that they were able to understand more of each other. Sadasivam had noticed that Damodaran had been stinting himself in the matter of dress and was not so lavish as in his college days. When asked as to the meaning of the change, Damodaran opened his heart as under :—

“ Soon after my appointment, my father returned from the north of India to bless me. But alas, he did not live long after. His last words to me were : ‘ I had always lived on the hope that you would bring back to the family ‘Lakshmi-kataksha,’ the Grace of the Goddess of Wealth, and I have just seen its commencement. I should like, however, to make one request, before the great silence overtakes me. Some of our poor relatives had deposited some money with me as an investment. All that money I have lost, and owing to my insolvency there is no legal obligation for you to pay the same. But I should like you to transcend the law, however,

and pay back the monies, only of the relatives in this list—i.e.—their principal amount with simple interest at the post office rate. You need not worry about my other debts incurred, and lost in the matter of my business. But this alone, you will take the trouble to find out and repay.' I promised to do so, and soon after, my father expired. Hence it is that I have been trying to save some money and I am slowly discharging the debts. From that day Sadasivam admired Damodaran as a second "Tom Tulliver" of George Eliot's "*Mill on the Floss*" and praised him for his conduct.

The few years of their residence in the same station brought them even to open their hearts to each other, on the inner working of their minds. Perhaps I should now let the readers know about their wives. Mrs. Sadasivam, Parvati, saw her husband only after he had completed his final examination and just before the consummation ceremonial, she is reported to have said to Sadasivam's sister, "I am so lucky in having such an 'Ajanabahu' (meaning, a tall and graceful person), for my husband." Her youthful ideal of conduct may be summed up in the words: "To serve the husband with the best food she can cook both palatable and nutritious, to dedicate her own

body to him, for the pleasure she can afford him, true to the ideal of service taught to her, by the examples of the lives of Sita (wife of Sri Rama) and Arundhati (wife of Vasishta) and bear him children."

Soon after consummation, Sadasivam desired her to be literate in the English language, though she knew the vernacular and could repeat the Tamil ballads from the Ramayana. She plainly refused to have anything to do with English, and said she found it difficult to learn the language. Slowly however, through persuasion, by appealing to her and showing up her ignorance of the meaning of even the Sanskrit slokas, which she was repeating during her daily worship, Sadasivam taught her Sanskrit in the Devanagari character, and she was at last able to read the Sanskrit Ramayana for herself.

Mrs. Damodaran, Kamala, however, was different in her outlook, and always wanted servants in the house to do the cooking, for instance. She said that her husband should afford her such comforts, and in the matter of her dress and appearance she was very particular to show herself up scrupulously clean. She wanted to be 'chic' and shine in

the drawing room by her vivacious and lively speech with all the friends of her husband.

Even their toilet differed. Parvati used during her bath the indigenous soap-nut powder to rub herself with, occasionally mixing with it powdered root of the lemon grass weed for lightly scenting her body, and turmeric powder, which slightly coloured her face yellow after wash. She cleaned her teeth with her fingers, using finely powdered charcoal and chalk. Kamala, who was taken up by the advertisements she read in English, being more up-to-date, used 'Pear's soap' "for her complexion," and did not think at all of the turmeric powder used by generations of Hindu married women, as an auspicious unguent. She had also come to use the English tooth paste and tooth brush for cleaning her teeth, and scented her kerchiefs with the alcoholic lavender water. Both of them coloured their finger tips with the aid of the wet paste of the henna leaves, which after wash left a red stain on the nails and skin for several days. But Parvati gave this up, some time after her first babe was born. The occasional pan consumed with lime and areca nut coloured their lips.

Even in the matter of coiffure, Parvati and

Kamala differed. Parvati parted her hair in the middle, using only plain cocoanut oil and she generally tied up her long and abundant hair into a big knot, as in one of Ravi Varma's pictures. She had given up plaiting her hair, as there was nobody to help her to do it. Kamala, however, who had much less hair, and of shorter length, parted it at the side, and used many scented oils like 'Keshranjan,' which were just then being got out in the Ayurvedic Pharmacies of Bengal; she plaited her hair, dividing it into a number of strands, sticking them by pins to keep them in position. Kamala wore flowers every day, sending for them from the market. Parvati latterly wore flowers, only when presented to her by Sadasivam, which she received with a smile from his hands.

Soon after entry into the department, both Sadasivam and Damodaran adopted the European style of dress. Having used the knickerbocker and the shirt with short sleeves in workshop practice, they found no difficulty in this change. Sadasivam would have nothing to do with ties, as he considered them useless, like the two hanging appendages on the goat's neck, and wasteful, and always wore a coat buttoned up to the neck with his turban

on ; while Damodaran adopted the English dress entirely with the tie and the hat.

In the earlier part of his career, Sadasivam had endeavoured to teach his wife to be literate in English, but he did not meet with much success. He was quite satisfied that she had picked up some Sanskrit. Consistent with his social position he desired to relieve her of all menial work in the house—as society expected of him. Here also he met with some obstinacy from his wife. Her argument was :

I have been used to work in my early home and my hands now crave to do some work. I do not mind pounding the rice and cooking, as these occupations keep me engaged. In fact, I am disgusted with the milk and ghee obtainable in towns where I have to live with you, and should like you to buy me a cow. I am anxious to look after it, as in the village, for our little needs of milk. Thus we shall have some food, which will not stink with bazaar ghee.”

Sadasivam had to accept the sound common sense of her ideas and frame of mind, that she should keep herself engaged during the whole day, while he was in office or on outdoor work. It is only latterly after a baby was born to her, that she gave up dish-washing.

She said, "It is an idle life for a woman only to dress, undress, and dress again, and I cannot be slothful". His living being thus cheap, his tastes simple, and his food vegetarian, he could save some money even from the earliest days of his official career, which he remitted to his father, still living in the village with his mother. The savings were invested by his father in the purchase of agricultural lands in his district from indebted ryots, or petty land-holders.

Parvati desired to get acquainted with Kamala ; so when she and Sadasivam called at Damodaran's, she discerned by the way Kamala wore the usual saree (of nine yards) that Kamala was a Vaishnavaita by birth. (There is a difference in the way of the inner fold of the saree, encircling the body below the waist, and in the outer fold going over either the right, or the left shoulder). Their women-folk are very orthodox even to-day and will not serve food, or even drink to other Brahmins, in ordinary metal vessels, but only in silver vessels, which are believed not to get polluted by touch. Thanks, however, to the advanced views of Kamala, Parvati was not served coffee, as usual in a silver vessel, and this action somehow prepossessed Parvati in

her favour, and out of this arose also a friendship between the two ladies, as between Damodaran and Sadasivam.

Though it was not then customary for womenfolk to speak with other men-folk, unless they were relatives, it was arranged between the friends that each of their wives should be allowed to talk to the husband of the other, in the matter of answering ordinary enquiries about their whereabouts or welfare.* Even in this matter, Parvati and Kamala differed. Parvati would, in her reply in Tamil to Damodaran, refer to Sadasivam as "your friend," while Kamala would, in English, refer to Damodaran as "my husband."

The occasion for the disclosure of their marital happiness to each other, arose thus :—

One day Sadasivam had noticed when they were both out together that Damodaran entered the European refreshment room at the Railway station and ordered for himself a couple of boiled eggs : Eggs were tabooed food for the Brahmin caste, and the Vaishnavaites were even more orthodox than the Saivaites.

* Purdah does not prevail in the Tamil land.
—K. G.

Sadasivam had not taken exception to Damodaran's eating them, for a vein of rationalism ran through both, and eggs were not considered by them to be a meat diet. The partaking of eggs, they said, did not wound their imagination, since the cruelty of killing sentient life was absent. Sadasivam, however, disliked the smell of eggs and so could never partake of it. Damodaran on being asked, explained that eggs were recommended by the Doctor as the cheapest tonic for his constitution.

Later, when they were alone, Sadasivam, who guessed sexual excess as the cause of his friend's run-down condition, enquired if it was not so. For the sake of the story, it needs just be said, Damodaran confessed 'My wife and I have always been sleeping together on a double cot ever since our consummation even after the birth of two children. My complaint about my wife is that she is voluptuous and exhausts me, as I can hardly control myself. When Sadasivam suggested separate cots for the future with some space between, Damodaran said "My wife would have none of the proposal. She says "She is much afraid to sleep alone." Then Sadasivam said, "You must ask for her co-operation in the matter."

He then related his own marital experience in these words—"My experience is just the reverse—my wife will not sleep on a cot as she is afraid of falling down, rolling in sleep. Soon after my nuptials, my mother was living with me for a year or so, to "start our establishment." We then generally slept in separate rooms, and had the marital embrace on fixed days of the week, when my mother would suggest to my wife to go over to my room. Even after my mother had left us, I saw the wisdom of separate beds, and we slept apart in the same room. Our lives started with a moderation, and though I felt it then irksome, it was really wise. My wife is more frigid than I expected her to be, but I confess that my wife has been happy, and I can affirm the Biblical quotation "I send my beloved to sleep." Fortunately, your children are cared for by the nurse, or your relatives, but in my case, the children's beds are laid between ours, and on the floor; and if my wife were to suckle the child in her attempt to put it to sleep, when I did need her, the rage which I would feel within me cannot be expressed in words. I would ask myself if the son was not a hindrance to the happiness of the father and the mother, though it be

temporary; and so, one is forced to learn patience with one's children."

Damodaran, from the early days of his official career, having broken orthodoxy in the matter of eating eggs and European cakes, found it an easy matter to invite his superior European officers generally to tea or lunch, whenever they passed through the station. Sadasivam never did so, and even found fault with Damodaran for the so-called social relationship with Europeans, when there was no reciprocity of feeling. Damodaran, however, thought it would certainly pay him in the long run to be on such quasi-equal terms.

During the couple of years, when they were at work in the same Engineering Division, they formed the habit of purchasing and studying together some of the classical works of English literature and exchanging notes and comments on them. Sadasivam had not cultivated a taste for English literature during his college days. His love for it was created by his present contact with Damodaran, and Sadasivam began to collect library editions of English authors. His spare hours after his out-door and office work were spent amidst these books, which meant nothing to his wife, as she had not the capacity to learn a foreign language.

Damodaran soon afterwards shifted to the presidency town at his wife's request to her father, who brought about the transfer, so that she might share in the activities of a life more exciting, and where the rounds of social calls were large. Damodaran also happened to become the sub-Divisional Officer of the Government House Estate, and again began his club life, and to dress quite smartly to please his wife: the atmosphere of the Division demanded it.

One peculiar feature of their later friendship was that after their separation from the same district headquarters, they corresponded at very distant intervals, and not as frequently as might have been normally expected. The proverb "Out of sight, out of mind" was true of them, but whenever they met for some reason or other, while passing through either of their stations, they talked for hours on various matters for "absence makes the heart grow fonder." The correspondence, once a quarter was just about their children's welfare, or illness in the family, but did not deal with their intellectual occupations, except rarely. Perhaps they had far too much domestic, or other interests engaging them.

Sadasivam was getting disgusted with the routine of the ordinary Assistant Engineer's life, and wrote to Damodaran to recommend him to Doraiswami for work in connection with certain tank restoration schemes and investigations of certain irrigation projects, which were then being mooted by Government, and thus be able to get away from the ordinary routine. After a few years of such work, when for the zemindari of V-Z-N-M under a Court of Wards, the special Collector in charge requisitioned the services of an Executive Engineer, to be deputed to draw up a scheme, and later, be in charge of the works, to harness a small river flowing from the hills and for digging some canals for several miles, so as to bring some land under cultivation, Sadasivam was fortunately selected for the scheme. Besides a small increase of pay as an Executive Engineer, he was also given some special pay by the Zemindari. The small anicut, which he built over the river emerging from the hills, and the canals, which were dug to irrigate the lands throughout the Zemindari were indeed a blessing to the people of the state. Besides, the afforestation of the hills and uplands was started, which brought in a slightly greater rainfall. The recurrence of famines in the

Zemindari, which was well-known for several decades, was put an end to.*

After some years, when his father died, he went down to the village to make satisfactory arrangements for the cultivation of his land and the execution of lease-deeds with the peasants. He then brought back with him his father's old neglected violin** and got it repaired at Misquith & Co., Madras, to keep up the tender memory of the gratitude he owed to his father. At this juncture he had to send his wife and two boys to the village, as his mother did not want any immediate change in her life and environments. So when he was left alone in the Zemindari, and his time hung very heavily on him, he began to practise on his father's violin and took lessons from the young budding musician and veena player, Das. This great musician had known Sadasivam's father and had a great respect for the family. Though Sadasivam compensated the musician for his tuition, it was a work of love for him and it

* Even to-day visitors to the Zamindari will learn that the tillers of the soil of V-Z-N-M bless his name as their benefactor.—K. G.

**The violin came to the Tanjore Court about the year 1800 and vocalists used it as an accompaniment.—K. G.

need hardly be said that with the patience and perseverance which were his characteristics, Sadasivam achieved a good control over the violin in a couple of years, and could play with soul, sweet melodic music. His fingers never tripped into disharmonious notes, and he enjoyed what little he could play.

Just before his return from the Zamindari, Sadasivam was honoured by Government by the award of the title of Rao Bahadur (generally granted to officers of the rank of Superintending Engineer) on the special recommendation of the Collector of the District. Damodaran wrote to Sadasivam, and Kamala to Parvati congratulating them on the title. They individually thanked them, but Parvati in addition replied, referring to herself, that "the mud too got the scent by association with the rose."

Two of Sadasivam's children had not come up to his expectations for an intellectual career. The eldest son unfortunately developed convulsions at an early age, which lasted up to the age of thirteen. The attack was attributed by the doctor to a slight concussion of the brain as a baby, when he should have fallen from the improvised hammock into which children are generally put to sleep, and

so his education was generally neglected, his health being considered more important. It was with the greatest difficulty that the boy was able to pass his matriculation at the age of seventeen. By that time he had also grown strong, though not highly developed in intellect.

His second child, also a boy, was more promising and it just chanced that Sadasivam could during the leisure hours of his official career look after this boy's education and bestow personal attention at his early age. The youngster was slowly coming to realise his father's hopes. His third child, a girl, took after the mother and was more fit for domestic duties and did not grow up as he wished her to be. Following therefore, the custom of his country, he had her betrothed at the age of eleven to a youth. His fourth child, also a girl, inherited his musical talents; she was besides, very quick of grasp and of a sociable temperament.

Owing to the varied capacities of his children, Sadasivam was non-plussed, and so he took the earliest opportunity to send his eldest son to the village to take up the management of his agricultural lands, instead of entrusting them to a tenant under an absentee-land-

lordism. His son was to cultivate the land under his personal supervision and to see to the payment of labour. This was indeed a good idea that had struck him, as the land yielded half as much more as he could have collected under a tenancy system and his son improved very much in health.

His wife after her last lying-in had not completely recovered from her exhaustion. Just then he realized all of a sudden that a deep love for his wife, differing greatly in character from his feelings till then for her, not merely because she was the mother of his children, had sprung up within him. "Was it the knowledge that she was losing her health, which changed his emotional attitude?" he asked himself. In spite of his moderation and consideration for his wife's health, as an expectant mother, and later when suckling her child, nature seemed too cruel to him to allow him to enjoy life, when he had just begun to love her for herself.

Her innocence and happy smile affected him ; but he was too sympathetic of her condition to request a marital embrace ; in spite of his sixteen years of wedlock, he felt very sorry, and jotted the following lines in his diary. "How cruel is Nature to rob woman of her

health and beauty when she has brought forth a few children. Should the animal in man seek then no more enjoyment of woman?" This psychological outlook turned his mind more towards music, which he had been learning merely as an art.

Sadasivam came back, when he had thus put in about sixteen years of service in Government, but all his past record was not quite well-known to the Government of Madras. The Collector merely reported that he was a clear thinker and a good executive officer. Soon after coming to the Presidency, about the time when he was due to get promotion to the rank of a Superintending Engineer, he had to serve under a young European Superintending Engineer, whom he had had no occasion to meet in his younger life as an officer.

Promotion was through confidential reports, in which the administrative capacity of the officer was reported on by the superiors, and officers adjudged. In two years' consecutive reports, officers under whom Sadasivam had worked had to report against him. One said, he was excitable in temperament. The occasion, not noted down in the report, was that he sent frantic telegrams to authorities all over the land, when a severe flood rose in one of the

rivers, though he had been at the spot, carefully taking in hand protective works for the bunds. The second said "He talks so loud as if his listeners were deaf, and he is seemingly rough with the subordinates." Sadasivam was duly warned on each occasion by the Chief Engineer and Secretary to Government, that these characteristics were such that he could alter his behaviour in these respects, and the continuance of such reports would debar him from promotion to administrative grades. The last report, Sadasivam confessed to me, was against him because he had reported against one of his European Assistant Engineers, who subsequently came to grief even under a European Officer.

It was then that the following remarkable incident happened. Damodaran was Under Secretary to Government while Sadasivam was holding a District Engineer's post, both posts being equal in rank. There was a proposal of Government to build a large technical institute at a mofussil station, where he was District Engineer. Plans and estimates were already sanctioned, but the commencement of the operations was not approved. Here Sadasivam committed an act of indiscretion in the purchase of some Manila jute ropes for the pulleys,

which should be used in hoisting big stones for the construction, valued at Rs. 2,000. According to the rules, he was not competent to authorise the purchase. The programme of building the institute fell through somehow, and the materials such as bricks, collected under orders of superior authority, were utilised for other works. Sometime after the purchase, the rope perished in the rains to which it was exposed, and a survey report was prepared to write off the item from the stock. Sadasivam was about to be transferred from the District, and the higher authorities questioned the propriety of the purchase. The net result was that the Government ordered the cost of the rope to be recovered from Sadasivam.

The Government resolution on the subject was pithily worded and signed by Damodaran in the following terms:—"Mr. Sadasivam had no authority to purchase the rope, and he having also not taken proper care of it, the Government consider he should be held liable for the cost, which will be recovered in suitable instalments" and the order added "he may be presented with the rope," and was signed by Damodaran as Under Secretary. Sadasivam first laughed at the hint that he was blocking

the way for Damodaran's promotion. At the same time, he felt acutely whether Damodaran should not have modified the order, and Sadasivam viewed the matter as a personal insult. He thought that Damodaran in his flair for linguistic excellence had not considered the effect on his feelings. This was the starting point when Sadasivam was dissatisfied with the conduct of Damodaran.

Subsequently Damodaran was always at Madras, and had every opportunity to meet higher officers of Government with whom he lost no time to make his acquaintance ; and his position subsequently as Under Secretary, without any direct supervision of labour or works, brought him into contact with all the senior officers. He was 'a jolly good fellow' for his European colleagues, as he offered them drinks, could play Bridge with stakes, and was popular at the aristocratic "East and West" Club in the city.

Soon after the above incident, Damodaran, had to submit papers to the Chief Engineer in regard to a vacancy in the grade of Superintending Engineer, with confidential reports, and character-rolls. He first felt it a painful duty, as he realised that Sadasivam might be superseded. An unhappy thought also

occurred to Damodaran at this moment. He had by this time in spite of his wife's costly ways of dress and adornment, been able to pay off the debts, which he had promised to his late father to discharge. He really had not put by any money for his five children, whose education was an increasingly costly affair. Fortunately he had only very promising sons, to whom a decent education should ordinarily suffice, and had no daughters, for whom he should under social convention provide a dowry for their marriage.

Being in the presidency town, Damodaran had no difficulty in looking after them, as he had engaged proper tutors for their education, though he could pay no personal attention to their intellectual development. That they were shaping well was entirely due to the atmosphere of their schools and colleges. One of his sons was a class fellow of Sadasivam's second son, and by emulation, both of them improved in their studies. Yet Damodaran thought he should amass a little wealth for his children, and perhaps argued to himself, as to why he should not submit the papers of Sadasivam, when he was discharging only his duty in his official career. The result, he knew, was a foregone conclusion, and Damodaran

superseded Sadasivam for promotion to the rank of Superintending Engineer.

Sadasivam felt cut up, as a sudden doubt of Damodaran's conduct at headquarters crossed his mind, and immediately came down to Madras, hoping to appeal against the decision of Government. It was just the time when some of his common friends were giving parties to Damodaran for his lift to the higher rank, and as it was known that Sadasivam was in Madras, he was also invited to the functions. For a while, Sadasivam could not make up his mind as to whether he should attend the dinners, or should cut himself off from every acquaintance of his, simply because another friend had superseded him in his official career. But he decided that, having come to Madras, he should not be so discourteous as to decline the invitations. Sure enough, Sadasivam did not call at Damodaran's, but only, at the friends' houses, he had just to congratulate Damodaran on his official lift.

Part III

Sadasivam met the Chief Engineer and explained that he had always done his best for the department and was senior to Damodaran ; and because he was out of touch with the pre-

sent senior members owing to his stay in the Zamindari, at a very crucial period of his career, he should not have been superseded. In fact, all Superintending Engineers who knew his work as an assistant, were no longer in service. The Chief Engineer said that Damodaran's promotion could not be revoked as he was considered the best fitted among the eligible. Moreover, it was a selection post, and Sadasivam's case would certainly be considered for the next vacancy.

When Sadasivam returned from Madras he communicated to Parvati the incidents there ; he told her that he partook of dinners in Damodaran's honour, and that he had even accompanied him one evening to the " East and West " Club.

Parvati :—“ I am unable to understand your conduct at all. Do you not feel your supersession ? I am so wrathful that you should have been lowered in the eyes of the world.”

Sadasivam :—“ Yes, dear, I love you all the more for your spirited words. True, I feel the loss of dignity among my compeers ; hence my trip to Madras, as I wanted to get my official rights recognised. But money is not all in life; and should I lose a friend ? ”

Parvati :—“How can he be your friend when he worked for his elevation before you.”

Sadasivam :—“I only expressed a doubt, but could I probe his mind ? He might have averted the supersession if he had wished to help me. Perhaps it is too much to expect generally of man.” He continued, “You will be interested to know that Kamala has since become a member of the “East and West” Club and I have seen her shaking hands only with Europeans, but not with the Indians in the Club.”

Parvati :—“I shudder at her conduct. For instance, my person is only for you to touch, you who took my right hand at the time of my betrothal. Perhaps she desires the feel of a European's hand. I hope no more is meant.”

Sadasivam :—“Why this calumny of your friend ? Surely, in your rage against my superior officials, you should not decry her”.

Parvati :—“I say this in confidence. In days gone-by she asked me, as she was telling me the story of East Lynne, “Why should a woman stick to one husband ?” I casually referred to the five ‘noble dames’ of our Sanskrit literature : Kunti, Droupadi, Ahalya, Mandodari and Sita. I said, ‘The first Princess was a polyandrist and had six lovers, loath

to mate with an albino husband. The second, her daughter-in-law, had five husbands. The mythological story of the reward of a prayer, said five times, for a husband in a previous life, is just the camouflage for their voluptuousness ; and Lord Krishna made her confess her desire for a sixth. The third lady desired a young man for once, instead of an old husband ; and only the last two dames were chaste both in body and in mind unto their husbands.' Then I put her a question, ' Why should your husband support you, and look after children born to another man ?' "

Sadasivam :—" How colossally ignorant of your goodself I have been all these years ! You are a veritable ' Socrates' in your wisdom and method of teaching."

But the story of Kamala's shaking hands with Europeans was the talk of all the country-folk round about Tanjore.

Before Sadasivam's promotion as Superintending Engineer came up, it was unlucky that he had to take orders from, and his work had to be reported on by Damodaran as Superintending Engineer. He certainly disliked this, and could not brook the criticism of Damodaran in regard to technical Engineering matters. Damodaran had come on tour to Sada-

sivam's district. Sadasivam, as long as he had worked under European officers, never maintained a social relationship with them, and his supersession made him bitter. He did not invite Damodaran to his bungalow as the visit was official, though he met him at the Railway station as official decorum required, since Damodaran had not written a private letter to him. Nor did Damodaran offer to stay with him on arrival.

After Damodaran's departure, Sadasivam said to his wife : " Damodaran has immensely changed since his official lift. I had heard reports that he made his peons carry his luggage from the train to outside the station, or *vice versa*, not engaging any station porter, and I have seen this for myself. He generally drives about in the Executive Engineer's carriages for road journeys he has to perform, and it is reported he would not incur any charges, except railway fares, though he draws the full travelling allowance. It is also said that he generally carries about with him, just a hundred rupee currency note and does not change it ; that every comfort outside his house is found for him either by engineering contractors, or by his assistants and district officers. It is a sad commentary on his life, and I won-

der what wrought this change in his mental outlook and brought in him an inordinate love of money. Perhaps it is no concern of mine to interfere."

The next day, the following conversation took place between Damodaran and Sadasivam in office.

Damodaran, with a smile : " You still carry about a book with you always ? "

Sadasivam :—" I suppose, you have not forgotten your own ways years ago. Perhaps you have, of late, given up reading any serious literature. Having come into contact with you once, I have kept up what I learnt from you."

Damodaram :—" Surely, you ought not to bring a book to your office. Don't you think that you are setting a bad example to your clerks, who might waste their time here and not do their work ? "

Sadasivam :—" What ? " murmuring to himself so as to be just audible, " Surely a district and an outdoor officer has a sufficient sense of responsibility of his official duties. Should I also learn as to how to maintain discipline in office at this stage of my career ? "

Later, when Sadasivam had cooled down, Damodaran desired to know what book the

former had brought with him, and he replied it was a *de-luxe* edition of Balzac's Old Goriot, in English.

Damodaran, with a smile :—“You have taken to reading French novels !”

Sadasivam :—“I am unable to understand the tenor of the word ‘French’. Have you ever read Balzac before ?”

Damodaran :—“Not yet”.

Sadasivam :—“Why then criticise what I am reading, and draw conclusions as to my tastes !”

Damodaran asked for the loan of the book. Sadasivam refused to lend it and said “I am not a lending library ; you have prospects of drawing over Rs. 1000 per mensem and could very well afford to buy the book if you wanted it.”

When Parvati was told these details she was sorry that Sadasivam should have lost his temper ; Sadasivam then expressed to her his regret and said, “Damodaran's official bearing as a superior, throughout his stay in office, had hurt me, and hence my refusal to give the book on loan to him.” Sadasivam, later, sent the book by registered post for Damodaran's perusal, and return, “enriched with annotations.”

Within the next six months, Sadasivam was

also promoted as Superintending Engineer, and things went on between them as usual, with perhaps a lull in their mutual affection and forbearance. Later, Kamala and Damodaran, even attended a social function at Sadasivam's on behalf of the latter's elder daughter, and gave a few presents at the function to Sadasivam's girl. The friends seemed to have become reconciled. Parvati, however, seemed dissatisfied with their conduct, as she instinctively felt that freedom and openness had left them. When Damodaran was granted the title of Rao Bahadur as Superintending Engineer, Sadasivan wrote congratulating him.

Just after Sadasivam's promotion, a dire misfortune occurred to Damodaran, who lost his eldest son after an attack of typhoid, in spite of the most up-to-date medical treatment. As soon as Sadasivam came to know of this event, he proceeded to Madras to condole with Damodaran, and the very first words of Sadasivam were, "Is there any justice in this world that you should have lost your eldest son, and that just at an age when he should go out triumphantly into the world when his parents would be proud of him. Nay, you have done nothing to deserve this. When such events happen, our helplessness is forced on our

minds, and we lose faith in a just God." Damodaran was not warm enough even in appreciating Sadasivam's visit, or the terms of condolence; Sadasivam was rather sorry that he had come at all, but gave no expression to his feelings, as he believed that Damodaran was perhaps too much engrossed in his grief to be voluble.

Soon after, an even greater misfortune befell Sadasivam. His wife Parvati met with an accident by a fall from a carriage, by which her spinal column got injured. This, in turn, affected her spinal cord, bringing about a paralysis of the lower limbs. Poor Parvati's life was despaired of, but with her genuine good health, nature seemed to have had the better of the day, and she survived.

But in spite of the loss of her activity and being completely bedridden, she was fully conscious and mentally alert, as usual, and Sadasivam felt very miserable. Even during her earlier illness after the birth of the last girl, a new thought arose in Sadasivam's mind. The long forgotten promise to his father came to his memory, and having been redeemed so long ago, he desired to listen to all types of melody, when he began seriously to study music. Latterly he took a particular pleasure in

hearing women sing. To his mind, unlike men singers, whose technique was certainly better, women always sang with soul, as music with them was an art and a joy.

During the long period of four years, when his wife was bedridden, his senses were really beyond his control, and the occasional pleasure of listening to a woman's musical voice became something like a drug habit. He was barely forty-two years of age and did not know where such a course would lead him to. He sneaked to their houses to listen to the music, much of which was erotic, but made it a point of coming home before 9 p.m. Many of these women were fallen women, but he himself, though pure in personal conduct so far, was already thought of, as having fallen from his moral stature, by his acquaintances and friends.

Very often, he would ponder, "Have I not to observe social decorum in these matters? Would I not fall in the estimation of my own children, who are beginning to understand life and its activities? Am I not falling off from my own ideal of the righteous life?"

Later on, Sadasivam was placed in charge of the famine operations of a certain district and a number of Engineering subordinates had to

be engaged. Full powers to recruit the men were vested in him. A number of young men belonging to his village, who had passed the subordinate examination of the college and were fully qualified, were employed by Sadasivam. An anonymous letter had reached Government, saying that Sadasivam had appointed favourites and that he was particularly disposed to help "poor relations". Damodaran, as the officer deputed by Government to enquire confidentially into the matter, had come down to Sadasivam's residence, (and it was his second visit after the latter's original supersession) and expressed sympathy for Parvati's condition. They talked of old days and of their childrens' future, and their varied capacities.

Damodaran enquired in an off-hand manner, why Sadasivam should have gone to the extent of appointing wholly the men of his district. Sadasivam argued the point thus: That he had done no wrong in the matter of recruitment as the men were fully qualified; that they had even received some monetary help from him for their studies, in the Engineering College and he had known the men and could testify to their character. True, they happened to be distant cousins, four or five times

removed. They could not study for the Arts course, being particularly weak in English. This feature seemed to be the characteristic of the boys of his community, being of the type who, though brainy, would work with their hands ; so he helped them to seek education in the Engineering College in the subordinate classes, which even a matriculate could join, and thus earn a better living after completing their course. Somehow, Damodaran was of opinion that Sadasivam need not have so openly favoured the men of his district as Hindu society recognised such relationship, and pointed out some harm might result to him. When Sadasivam was obstinate in his views, Damodaran said, "I have come on an official enquiry about the matter and have to send a report on the subject." This statement hurt Sadasivam, who came out with a home thrust "You of all persons, to criticise my conduct ; pray, remember the Gazetted post you got yourself was not through the door of open competition."

When Sadasivam was shown the anonymous letter, he said, "These men certainly are not my relations. In modern days, a son, a nephew, *i.e.*, a brother's or a sister's son, a son-in-law and a brother-in-law, *i.e.*, a wife's

brother or a sister's husband, may be defined as a relation, but these men, who are distant cousins in the parental line, are not relatives in the real sense of the term. They may observe, according to our religion, mourning for ten days, even for the deceased of the seventh generation from the common male progenitor. These customs are the relics of a village civilization, as village communal interests demanded such co-operation. I helped them with money for their education, because they were cases of deserved charity. In fact, these men always feel proud of a man, who has risen higher than they in the world, in the matter of education or wealth, and it is a frailty of human nature to claim and own kinship. You may write what you like in the report you have to submit, but I can conscientiously say I have done no wrong. Have there not been Europeans, who served in India and whose sons and grandsons got fat jobs in the other Imperial Services. Have they all got in by fair means only? The open competition in England is being held only for the Indian Civil Service!"

Damodaran had already obtained statements from the subordinates that they were Sadasivam's "poor relations," and he accordingly

submitted the report, which embodied a half-truth. Sadasivam knew full well that Europeans above him would not understand the nature of the kinship. "Would the insult of the home thrust be too much for Damodaran to bear? Would he take this to heart and bring down my *vaunted* pride as an open competition-wallah, though subconsciously it might be felt by him, when I did not mean it. Would he seek thus a way to go over myself to the rank of the Chief Engineer?" These were the thoughts passing through Sadasivam's brain after Damodaran had left. "Is it to become a question of open enmity between us" Sadasivam asked himself.

The Madras Government has two posts of Chief Engineer, one for Buildings and Roads, and the other for Irrigation. Sadasivam still hoped that in the vacancy of the Chief Engineer for Irrigation to arise shortly, he stood the best chance for promotion owing to his large irrigation experience, and the want of it in Damodaran. "Would Damodaran so manoeuvre things as to make me lose my promotion as Chief Engineer, carrying a seventy per cent rise in pay" were the doubts crossing Sadasivam's mind.

After Damodaran had left, Sadasivam in-

formed Parvati of the purpose of his visit, and the gist of their official talk. Amidst all this seriousness, Sadasivam's face suddenly lit up with a smile, which Parvati noticed. The reason was, as Sadasivam said to her, "I suddenly remembered a story circulating in Madras about Damodaran. It leaked out through his stenographer. The Chief Engineer had asked for a loan of a complete volume of Shakespeare from Damodaran, as he was known to be a Master of Arts in English. Damodaran sent his long neglected leather bound Cameo Pocket Edition with a note 'I am glad to know you take an interest in 'Sweet Will.''" The Chief Engineer returned the volumes later, with thanks, stating that he wanted the copy for the name of one of the characters, for his 'cousin' to solve a cross-word puzzle".

Parvati, who was waited upon by nurses and by her husband was melancholy that her life should drag on. Having lost all opportunity and strength to follow her own ideals of service to him, she even expressed herself in some such terms to Sadasivam. Nay, she pitied herself that she had done nothing in this life to deserve such pain, or to cause unhappiness to her husband.

“Was it the fruition of the sin of previous lives?” she asked.

Before her death came on as a Godsend, to put an end to her pitiable condition, Sadasivam wrote down her confidences, when fresh in his memory: “Kamala had not come to look me up, nor has she written to me enquiring of my condition for the last four years, though I am slowly sinking. Eh, the Dewan Bahadur’s wife! What shall I say of her?” I requested her to forgive her friend, it being her last few days to live. She replied, ‘You are noble; you can forgive your friend for all that he has done to you; even for carrying a tale against you that you are carrying on with public women, which cost your promotion to the Chief Engineer’s rank, but as a poor woman, I cannot forgive her. She is proud of the smattering of English she has, and her husband’s higher title on his promotion to the Chief Engineer’s rank. You took your leave so as not to serve under him, much before your time of retirement to attend on me. What does Kamala know? Can she milk a cow? Does she know when to sow the seeds of kitchen vegetables, or when the jasmine flowers? Has she cooked any decent dishes? Oh, poor Damodaran’s look in the face, when

she took the dishes from my hands to eat with relish in the good old days, when you even chaffed me for coming straight from the kitchen without wiping my perspiration. Kamala can only weep sentimentally on reading stories or 'novels' as you call them." He tried to pacify Parvati, but it was sad that both of them had to feel the loss of their friends and bear their lot.

After Parvati's death, Sadasivam thought he had nothing more to live for, as his second son had, by that time, taken his degree, and was able to obtain a junior instructor's post in his own college in Mathematics. The last girl was the only link, and he thought, he should hand her over to some young man, who would cherish her. He was more oppressed by the fact that Damodaran, in response to his son's letter intimating the demise of his wife, had not come up to him, or even written a letter for about two months after her death.

It was Sadasivam's wish that all the broken friendship should again be cemented by an alliance, if possible, the marriage of his second daughter with one of his sons, who was the class-fellow of his second son. This young man had entered the Agricultural College at Coimbatore for a degree in agriculture. Sada-

sivam was prepared to divide equally his self-earned property of agricultural lands among his four children, so that it would place his last daughter above want, and economically independent, and also that his daughter's dowry, (stri-dhana) of agricultural land would help to put to use the young man's scientific knowledge, as Sadasivam thought. He accordingly drafted his will, to get his daughter betrothed to Damodaran's son (those being pre-Sarda Act days). According to custom, he sent in to Damodaran her horoscope, and asked some of his friends to broach the subject in earnest to Damodaran. True, it would be a marriage of social reform, as they belonged to different subcastes, and as one sect worshipped Siva and the other Vishnu on ceremonial occasions. But he thought that there would be no difficulty with the advanced ideas of Damodaran. He was living in a fool's paradise, when Damodaran sent word through his friends, "It is not the question of the horoscopes agreeing, or my willingness ; it is to be put up before a council of elders, he being the follower of Sankaracharya, and I of Ramanuja, though all are Brahmins." This unhinged Sadasivam's mind, and it was the last stroke, he felt, when even to forgive would

almost be impossible; as he was human, he wrote the following in his diary:

“The institutions, in Hindu society at the present day, so function that man, i.e., the male, begins with the love of the body of woman, and ends later in loving her soul. Man will not have found all that human life has to give in the shape of psychic experience until a daughter is born to him, about whose future he has not had anxious thoughts. The son may gratify his heart, as the human tradition of family pride and greatness is of male ancestry. The mother teaches us to love life, the wife to realise a mystic comradeship, but a daughter does far more. Whether the girl will find a lover (a husband), who will cherish her, and who will not betray all her projected hopes of happiness, the questions of her anxious future and worldly comfort touch *the chords of human compassion*. Therefore, for the ordinary run of mankind (I include myself in the category), no male has a chastened soul, until he has felt the love for a daughter. As no one would like his daughter to be dragged into the mud, his own wishes for her welfare will check his personal conduct with other women. That was the underlying idea in my father's behest. Our

social etiquette and intercourse in modern days are not so healthy and vital as to lead to the marriages of our sons and daughters. Our parents make a hash of our lives by extracting promises from us, and they interfere too much in our lives. But interference is necessary; how else can knowledge and the tradition of noble living be handed down to posterity ? ”

At this juncture, a sudden thought struck Sadasivam that he should attempt to be a double first. It took the direction of an ambition, as he inherited his father's musical talent, that he should rise to some high position in the musical world. His long practice of the violin, though he had started it late in life, had given him very sound knowledge, and of late he had been sending for savants, at Tanjore (where he had settled down to be in a position to look after his ancestral and self-earned lands) to listen to his violin recital, whenever they turned up there, as he played the host to them. One day, Damodaran suddenly turned up on such an occasion, when Sadasivam put down his violin, and wanted no more to play on it.

Damodaran : “ Should you not like me to hear your violin recital ? ”

Sadasivam :—“ You have not all these

years expressed any wish for it. It is better, you do not hear my rotten play."

Damodaran : " I should like to hear you, all the same." After a recital for half an hour, when other musician friends had also turned up as usual, Damodaran made a remark " The violin is sweet to hear, but you do not have a clear sense of rhythm."

Sadasivam lost his temper, as he had not met his friend since his wife's death, and said, "Have you come to criticise my talent in the presence of others, who have been listening to me with some rapture as I can see from their faces, for, I look neither at my violin, nor the bow, as I play ? I would not have minded the criticism if I were alone with you. They are not here to listen to me, because I am my father's son. My dear man, I know you too started the violin, and gave it up within a year. Could you make these people stay and listen to you even for half an hour? Achieve something to make others happy, and then talk, or criticise. It is an idle affair to say you appreciate and know music. Achievement is not for a life of pleasure and ease. I thought your criticism in official life was sufficient, and I came away from office before my time, not brooking it."

Damodaran went away abashed. After his departure, Sadasivam was sorry for the turn of events, in having lost an opportunity for reconciliation and getting his daughter married to Damodaran's son. Still undaunted, he made some enquiries of the ancestry of Damodaran, as he was conscious of the fact that Damodaran's father did not occasionally use certain particular Tamil words, characteristic of Vaishnavites in conversation, in regard to items of food, worship, etc. He had a suspicion that it was only perhaps within the last hundred years, they were converts to Vaishnavite religion, and he was able to obtain documentary evidence in connection with certain properties, as also oral evidence. Damodaran's great grand-father having lost all his property, left his grandfather as an orphan, who changed his sub-caste so as to get a living in the temple at Srirangam, the home of Vaishnavites. His grandmother, who came from the Saivite sect, had also to change the manner of wearing her saree to enter the temple sanctum sanctorum.

These papers were entrusted to me, as his physician. He was not in a position to broach the subject again with Damodaran. He also found that Damodaran was avaricious and was

selling his second son to the highest bidder, as it were, so that it seemed to Sadasivam that Damodaran felt that his own exalted position as Chief Engineer would be recognised in society, only by the amount of dowry, which his son's wife would bring.

When Sadasivam passed away, owing to a sudden attack of pneumonia caused by worry and exposure, I was at his side, and he requested me after his death—as he had no hopes of surviving the attack, not having the will to live, and having lost also the savour of life as he said—to bring about by all possible means the marriage of his daughter with Damodaran's son, whom he had loved, having frequently met him along with his son in the hostel at Madras.

I, as the executor of his will, was aware that Sadasivam's daughter had a decent dowry, and it was only a matter of tactics to entice Damodaran into the marriage of his son, and I was able to bring it about. At the marriage, Damodaran praised his late friend, and said that he should have been very pleased if Sadasivam and his wife had been alive at that auspicious moment. I smiled, and I could hardly control the cynicism, which arose in me at Kamala's and Damodaran's conduct.

The reader may ask me, as a biographer, why their friendship was broken. I can see a trait in Sadasivam's life. From the very commencement he was trying to do good to others. But generosity is not always felt by the world as sympathy; strict adherence to principles in life creates a schism, and a man of principles passes off as a high-brow. So perhaps, the man, who either by power of the will, or even through sheer impulse, always goes out to do good, can rarely retain his friends, when he is also conscious of their foibles. Though one is tolerant of the weaknesses in temperament and character of one's friends, their sympathy may not be gained. In Lord Buddha's words, both Parvati and Sadasivam had committed the sin of "smooth self-righteousness."

Bombay,
December 1937.

KUMARA GURU.